

**STIRLING TENANTS ASSEMBLY
MEETING HELD ON
TUESDAY 19th March 2013
IN Victoria Hall, Dunblane
AT 10.30AM**

1.Present: Hugh McClung, Philomena McClung, Dolly Gemmell, Cathy Traynor, Peter Palgrave, Catherine Brown, Thomas Brown, Peter Pelgrave, Tony Kelly [TPAS]

Apologies: Alec Lamb,, Michael Griffiths, Moira Robertson, Meg Amasi, Richard Waddell, Delia Waddell, Anna Johnston, Emma Meldrum STP

2. Chairperson Hugh's opening remarks.

Hugh advised that as Moira was unable to attend Tony would take a minute.

3. Approval of minutes [15.1.13] and matters arising.

Proposed Philomena McClung, Seconded Peter Pelgrave

4 Matters arising:

2 new gas fitters have been appointed, so should see improvement in response times.

4.7 Peter reported that John McMillan stressed that the 4hrs emergency response category is flexible and staff are expected to check about household circumstances (are there elderly, disabled or young people effected) and this should be reflected in the category / timescale awarded. It was considered important that tenants knew that they would receive a positive response when advising staff of potential issues and a fear that they do not and there was concerns that it isn't known if the staff asked as a matter of course.

Members felt that a tick list of the questions to be asked at every enquiry should be developed and used.

It was generally felt that STA activity on emergency repairs has been listened and responded to.

5.2 STA funding cannot be used for gifts. It was agreed that those wishing to contribute should see Phil.

Peter asked for clarification on distributing Council notices to tenants and in particular how he would know if a property was tenanted or not. Considered important to get clarification on roles, especially for Voices.

5 Chair's Report

Hugh has been busy with considerable activity by chair, over Welfare Reform. Focus has been seeking to minimize the impact of the "Bedroom Tax".

Govan Law Centre has coordinated a petition seeking to prevent evictions as a result of "Bedroom Tax".

There still seems to be a lack of information to pensioners on the Bedroom Tax, as many still think they will be affected.

6 Secretary's report

A paper on discretionary housing payments was distributed.

Members were asked if they wished to attend the TIS annual conference. It was agreed not to attend.

7 Treasurer's report

Held till next meeting

8 AGM Progress Report

Minute of last year's AGM is going out next week.

The Provost, Mike Robbins and John MacIver will not be attending and sent their apology.

Tony Kelly to seek to gain the contact details for Kevin Murphy (previous STA member) from Council, so he can be invited

Black and red purses have been purchased

An anniversary newsletter is being produce and aim is to post with next Open Door.

Hugh is providing Council with a short story for Open Door.

Producing a DVD of the AGM has proven to be too expensive.

9 Housing Advisory Group

Hugh asked about Discretionary Housing Payments at HAG meeting and was concerned that the Council isn't making the best use of their discretion and budget of approx. £80k. The Council appears only to want to use it to pay removal costs. Given that there will be so few available transfers concerns were expressed about a potential under spend if this is maintained.

The content of the DHP report was challenged by STA members at the HAG meeting.

There is believed to be 879 Stirling Council tenant's homes affected (1100 if housing association properties are included). 461 had been visited by Council officers. Of this 43% had agreed to down size but there were no properties available. Concerns were expressed that so few successful visits have been achieved.

It was felt that there was a potential problem with a clash between allocations policy and Bedroom Tax requirements. Council policy is children over 7 shouldn't share but it is 10 with Bedroom Tax. Members were concerned that this may result in changes to the allocation policy. Carol Hamilton has said it will not.

Day Care Services: increase in charges remains a major concern. It has risen from £2.20 a day to £9.60 per hour. Impact is that many are being denied this service.

10 Welfare Reform Triggers

Consultation letter received from Tony Cain. It is a very technical and complicated consultation from the Scottish government. STA didn't confirm a preference.

11 TPAS conference

It was agreed to send 6 delegates from STA. This (with the free place on offer) maximizes places within budget.

Cathy, Dolly, Mary, Hugh, Michael and Moira will attend.

12 Council Open Day 20 April

STA will have a stall. Mary, Phil, Cathy will attend (others are welcome)

13 AOB

Peter asked for advice on rural broadband services He was advised to speak with MSP and / or MP.

Peter reported that 2 tenants reported a council letter saying that as they were in rent arrears they will not be covered by the insurance policy. This should be more widely known, especially with the potential impact of Bedroom Tax.