

**STIRLING TENANTS ASSEMBLY
MEETING HELD IN MAYFIELD CENTRE, ST NINIANS,
ON 20th JANUARY 2015 at 10.30am**

Present:

Alec Lamb, Dolly Gemmell, Thomas Brown, Anna Johnston, Hugh McClung, Philomena McClung, Michael Griffiths, Meg de Amasi, Emma Meldrum STP.

Apologies:

Moira Robertson, Richard Waddell, Delia Waddell, Cathy Traynor, Cathy Brown.

Hugh welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked if anyone objected to Anna taking notes in Moira's absence. This was agreed.

Minutes of meeting held on 16th December 2014 and matters arising:

Acceptance of minutes was proposed by Alec, seconded by Michael.

New Build – Anna indicated that the new build at Cornton is still not completed. Hugh will contact John McMillan and ask him to come to a meeting and explain the delay. Thomas had spoken to John McMillan who had told Thomas that the bungalows at Culthove would be starting in January. This does not now seem feasible and Hugh will raise this as well.

Misplaced cheque – Dolly has now cancelled the missing cheque and issued a replacement.

Station Square Development – Artists from Station Square Development will be attending the STA meeting on 17th February 2015.

National Event held on 18th November 2014 – There is an addendum to Hugh's report given at the last STA meeting. It appears that Scottish Government were pleased with the outcome of the meeting. Some of Hugh's comments had gone on public record and, although he has had no response from Scottish Government, he has heard unofficially that some officials had not been happy about his comments. Housing Development Partnership Group has now been set up to monitor the situation over the next 5 years. There are 2 chairpersons, 1 from Government and 1 from the other stakeholders. Hugh will be raising the matter at Central Regional Networks that we are unhappy about there being only 1 tenant representative. Can the STA recommend that there should be 1 tenant from each of the Regional Networks? TPAS and TIS have indicated that there are not enough tenant representatives. This will be raised at the next CRN meeting. Emma wondered if CRN needs to do a marketing push as it seems that other organisations do not know who they are.

Chairperson's Report:

Consultation from Scottish Government on Disposal of Land - Hugh is against disposal of land. Current rules state that Ministers must be consulted about cost, and discussions and consultations must be held with tenants. Now they are saying that any land with a value of less than £10,000 need not be reported to Ministers but communities must be consulted. We fought for 4 years to get land disposed of at market value, not below it.

Report from HAG and TPAS – will be covered later in meeting.

Secretary's Report:

Letter from Scottish Regulator – Philomena has received a letter from the Scottish Regulator, the details of which were circulated. Apparently, they had set up a tenants panel who had prepared a report which stated that they had only managed to contact 1 in 4 of the groups. This is not seen as acceptable. It appears that the only groups who are contacted are those

who are online. A representative from the Regulator will be attending the next CRN meeting, and this matter will be raised by Hugh and Philomena.

Steven McCabe – Steven would like to involve tenants in the arrears procedure and would be interested in attending an STA meeting. Philomena will contact Steven to see if he would be willing to set up a small Working Group to work with him – Philomena, Dolly, Thomas and Anna expressed interest in being on this group, meeting with Steven, and reporting back to STA.

Treasurer's Report:

£7,172.69. Hugh was asked by Dolly if he could request that DMS Office Supplies send a bill instead of having to be paid in cash.

Housing Advisory Group:

Rent Arrears – A report will be presented at the next meeting on 23rd January 2015. There will also be a report on what is to be done.

Falkirk Council Pension Fund – Investment in New Social Housing – A lengthy discussion took place regarding the fact that on 17th March 2014 the Falkirk Council Pension Fund Pensions Committee had agreed a £30 million investment in social and affordable housing with Hearststone plc, a specialist residential property fund manager. Places for People will be delivering the first stage of the fund's investments via Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association Ltd which currently owns and manages 174 homes in Cornton and Cultenhove. Originally we had agreed to the release of £2 million rising to £4 million from HRA, depending on match-funding from Scottish Government, but the proposal for the HAG meeting is to allow a development sum of £600,000 being procured from the NHT and a similar sum from Stirling Council. This would be channelled via Castle Rock into new buildings. Stirling Council's building would have to be shelved to allow for this to happen. Thomas had been told by Cultenhove Opportunities Partnership (COP) that, although they are in favour of building being continued, they do not want it done by Castle Rock Edinvar as they do not maintain their existing properties, monitor tenants, or carry out repairs in a timeous manner. Anna said that the same situation existed with the Castle Rock properties in Cornton.

It was unanimously agreed that we will move against this proposal at the HAG meeting on 23rd January 2015.

Rents 2014/2015:

Emma reported that not very many questionnaires have been returned so far. This will be reported at HAG meeting.

Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 (TPAS Session):

There will be 2 open sessions on 23rd February 2015 to discuss the implications of the above Act. Sessions will be held in the Wallace Room at Old Viewforth, the first one from 2.30 to 4.30 and the second one from 5.30 to 7.30.

Repairs Meeting:

Only Philomena and Emma had managed to attend the last Repairs Meeting. However, they had been shown the new system for handling repairs – this is a big improvement on the previous system. Next Repairs Meeting will be on 28th April 2015.

Any other competent business:

1. Hugh is going to ask John McMillan to clarify what is happening about 2 plots of land

which had been intended for housing but were now considered unsuitable. There are Council garaged on one of the sites. Hugh will keep STA advised.

2.Emma reported that she had been contacted by one of the Church volunteers in Raploch to say that they are holding a session in St Mark's Church on 24th February to discuss sanctions. Thomas said that COP are employing an officer to discuss the same problem.

3.Rent consultation is ongoing.

4.Website – Emma has contacted Cami to see if he can meet Emma on 28th January to discuss progression of the website.

5.Thomas asked for advice regarding the fact that Council Tax for new builds is much higher than Council Tax on similar-sized properties in same area. Thomas will let affected tenants know that each individual has to make their own approach to the Assessor.

6.Meg intimated that there is no progress being made with kitchen replacements in Raploch. Hugh advised that there is a schedule for replacement kitchens, windows, etc. Meg will contact the Council again.

Date of next meeting:

17th February 2015 at Hillpark Centre, Bannockburn.