



**STIRLING TENANTS ASSEMBLY
MEETING HELD AT BANNOCKBURN COMMUNITY CENTRE
ON 20th OCTOBER 2015 AT 10.30am**

1. Present:

Alec Lamb, Thomas Brown, Kathy Brown, Anna Johnston, Hugh McClung, Philomena McClung, Delia Waddell, Richard Waddell, Moira Robertson, Brian Telfer, George McArthur (Stirling Council).

Apologies:

Michael Griffiths, Cathy Traynor, Meg de Amasi, Dolly Gemmell, Emma Meldrum (STP).

Hugh thanked everyone for attending and welcomed George McArthur to the meeting.

2. Minutes of Meeting held on 15th September 2015:

Acceptance of minutes was proposed by Moira, seconded by Delia.

3. Business arising from Minutes:

Item 4 – It was agreed to not go ahead with the purchase of lapel badges.

Item 5.1 – A meeting is to be held with tenant representatives and the Scottish Housing Regulator. Hugh felt this would be an interesting meeting.

Item 5.2 – Hugh, Philomena, Alec, Richard and Delia had attended the “Spotlight on Social Housing Provisions of the Housing Act”. Delia reported that it had been difficult to hear the speakers and Richard expressed surprise that there had been no Councillors or MSPs present.

Item 5.4 – Hugh has written to Robert Steenson advising him of the STA’s decisions regarding Housing Advisory Group meetings. Moira had also written to him as an individual. Housing Advisory Group meeting due to be held on 6th November has been postponed until 25th November, and there will be no meeting in December.

4. Rent Consultation (George McArthur):

George circulated a paper giving details of officer recommendations concerning the 2016/17 rent consultation. An increase of 1.0% is expected and a full breakdown of the cost pressures was included in the report. Landlords must consult tenants’ organisations on the rental strategy.

Following everyone having an opportunity to peruse the paper, the following questions were raised:

- Moira asked if the feed in tariff income was for new installations. George replied that it is anticipated that the Council will continue doing this. Emphasis is to get the ones that are started up and running. Hugh said that as this is an anticipated income it may well be that if there is a shortfall of this income in the future it will be expenditure instead.
- Concerning the investment programme, Hugh pointed out that it had been said at Housing Advisory Group meetings that we would look at roof programmes because of continued heat loss during the winter months. There is no point in the Council paying for external walls being rendered if heat is going through the roof. George’s response was that loft insulation is more effective than roof insulation.

- Concerning commercial property income Hugh said that Steadfast Homes is a company set up by the Council. Property purchases in the past have been generated from the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund. At the Housing Advisory Group it had been emphasised that purchases from the Housing Revenue Account need to be made in consultation with the Stirling Tenants Assembly. Hugh asked where the money had come from to purchase the properties – had it come from the Housing Revenue Account? We need to be clear about where any income from the commercial properties will go. George will find out where the money originated from and will advise Hugh accordingly.
- Hugh asked what effect the introduction of Universal Credit is likely to have on rent arrears. This benefit will be paid in arrears and will include an amount for rent. Alternative payment arrangements can be applied for. Moira queried whether claims for alternative payment arrangements will be automatically updated when rent increases occur. George said that this would be done automatically.

5. Reports:

Chair – Hugh has been asked to make a presentation to the Cabinet Secretary regarding tenants’ input to the new Housing Strategy. We will be consulted early in the New Year and Hugh will report back *via* the Central Region Network.

It has been agreed that the Scottish Government will increase marginally the amount of investment for new social housing.

Currently we have a system in place whereby if there is a proposal to build social or private let accommodation 25% must be allocated to social rented accommodation. There is a plan to relax this, but this will not take away from the Government’s responsibility of building social housing. What they are saying is that they want to relax the 25% so that it is done on a needs analysis. Hugh emphasised that nothing is settled yet.

Central Region Network is on 27th October – Hugh and Philomena will be unable to attend.

Secretary – Philomena took orders for 2016 diaries for members.

Catering has been booked for lunch following the meeting on 15th December at the Mayfield Centre.

Treasurer – Moira reported that the second payment from Council is due and Philomena will e-mail Carol Hamilton about this. Dolly had advised that she is arranging the monies required for the TPAS Conference.

STA Website – It was agreed to purchase a Photoshop programme which will help in posting photographs to the updated website. Approximate cost £60.

6. TPAS Conference:

Dolly will take Anna, Moira is going by bus, and Hugh and Philomena will take Brian and Michael.

7. Any other competent business:

- Moira distributed copies of the last meeting of the Repairs Group. As she had reported at a previous meeting she and Emma have been working together on a survey regarding cost of heating in rural homes but, owing to pressure of work, Emma has been unable to process the input yet.
- Philomena will speak to Cathy about her non-attendance at recent Housing Advisory Group meetings.

8. Date of next meeting:

17th November 2015 at 10.30 a.m. at Hillview Community Centre.