



BEEM REGIONAL NETWORK

Minutes January 25th 2010

At Thistle House

Attendance

Jim Maryniak Eskview TRA. East Lothian (chair)
Kath Beaton Bannerfield TRA (sec) Borders
Harry Sunderland (Treas) Edinburgh Tenants Federation
Tina Beattie North Bughtlin TA Edinburgh
Jeanette Boyd Windsor Park TRA. East Lothian
Elaine Ferguson Midlothian Tenants Forum
Lillias Reid Midlothian Tenants Forum
Peggy Ferguson Eildon Tenants Organisation Borders
Ellen Robertson Midlothian Tenants Forum
Cathie Mc Arthur East Lothian T&R Panel
Sheila Rutherford McCallum Ratho Station RA Edinburgh
Gerry Moss Waverley Tenants Organisation (v chair) Borders

No Apologies

Minutes of 23rd November 09 meeting approved with the following corrections.

Page 3 Paragraph 2 should read Cathie Mcarthur and not Cath
Page 5 2nd line, closure of school was alleged.

Matters arising

Parliament visit – The committee will decide when to go. Suggested it would be good to go when there is a debate on the housing bill.

Capita conference – has been rescheduled to 22nd Feb George McGuinness and Kevin Paterson region 9 doing a workshop on the networks, feedback will be provided at next chairs/secretaries meeting. Tina said it would be the same presentation that was given to civil servants and this had been well received.

Housing Bill update

A copy of the slides from William Fleming's presentation to the chairs & secretaries was handed out. Jim explained that the bill was introduced into the Parliament and that the committee dealing with the bill had made a call for evidence which closes on the 4th March. TIS & TPAS doing two free events in Perth and Glasgow in February to encourage responses. Jim provided feedback and said that a sub group from the networks had been set up to develop a response.

Reports on meeting with Alex Neil and Mary Mulligan

Michael provided a copy of the note of the meeting with Alex Neil to all committee members. Jim gave feedback including that COSLA had now accepted the position that local authorities would come under the same regulator framework as RSLs. Appointments to the board of the independent regulator to be the same as the process for public sector appointments.

Jim explained that he was advised he could only give a verbal report on the meeting with Mary Mulligan as the paper Kevin had submitted was not to be copied. The committee queried this approach and Jim agreed to send an email to Kevin asking for clarification.

Feedback from chairpersons and secretaries meeting

Ministerial Sounding Board – this has been set up and will meet until the Bill has been completed. Danny Mullen was selected as the regional network rep for this group. The committee had a lot of confidence in Danny presenting the views of the networks effectively but were concerned as to why there was only 1 tenant rep on this group. They were advised that the minister had also agreed to a rep from the STO and TRAG (tenant regulatory advisory group).

Evictions groups – 2 representatives chosen were Hugh Wilson Fraser (R6) and Helen MacPherson (R2). A report will be expected from them. It was explained that the selection protocol was used for their selection to this group.

Committee event 18th May – Menzies hotel, Glasgow. Alex Neil and William Fleming to address committee members in the morning and the afternoon to be time for networking. The sub group planning the event will be meeting again on the 11th Feb.

It was agreed that during the networking event it was important to have minute takers and to leave time at the end to feedback. It was suggested that name badges could be colour coded and the committee members be split into 4 groups with each group discussing a different topic and the 4 chairpersons co-ordinating these groups would move round the 4 groups. The suggested topics still to be identified but could include the housing bill, housing charter, network development and anti-social behaviour.

Tina raised concerns that decisions the sub group had made have been changed and felt that the remit of the sub group needed clarified.

HRA report – This will be submitted to Alex Neil in advance of the next network chairs meeting with the Minister in March. The CIH are currently looking at the paper for accuracy. A draft copy was provided to each committee member.

Expenses- Scottish Government hadn't provided a report to the networks yet on this but would be provided prior to the next committee meeting. The issue of individual expenses had to be resolved.

Communication

Jim highlighted that he felt the committee were working against each other at times as they had agreed to improve communication with members but there was still a long way to go with this. The issue of updated minutes on the website was raised. Michael agreed in this instance to amend the minutes and email them to Gerry to put on the website. In the future this will be the role of the secretary. Gerry suggested that there be a session on the website at the next committee meeting and this was agreed. There are currently areas that have not been completed including committee profiles. The newsletter is nearing completion and Jim will have a final draft for the next meeting.

Gerry, Kath and Jim will be attending the CIH training pilot on behalf of BEEM. This will be 4 sessions over 3 months and after this will be open to all committee members.

CIH conference

Names were put forward from the committee to man the regional networks stand. These were Sheila, Harry and Gerry. A decision on those representing the networks will be taken and the committee will be informed whether they will be attending.

Garden Party

Each network has received an invite to attend. After discussion it was agreed that Jim and his wife would attend.

Regional roundup

Midlothian Tenants Forum

Three new members were voted onto the committee at the December meeting. Despite severe weather our January meeting went ahead on the 11th with a good turnout. The meeting was attended by John Burgoyne, Housing Manager and we had a lively question and answer session on housing issues with him.

The 350 tenants who had returned their surveys were entered into a prize draw and there were three lucky winners of shopping vouchers donated by the Council.

Our meeting on the 1st February is an open one. There are two speakers, a Housing Information and Advice Officer from the council and an Inspector with Lothian & Borders Police.

North Bughtlin Tenants Association

The recent extreme weather brought some unexpected benefits to North Bughtlin. While the majority of us were all doing our best to cope with the snow and very icy conditions, just as the rest of the country was, some unsung heroes were clearing paths for disabled and elderly neighbours; those with cars were collecting shopping for or taking neighbours to the shops and one tenant went as far as to continually and repeatedly spread grit on the most commonly used off road paths and on garden paths and disabled ramps. Repeated calls to the Council for grit bins refills were answered as soon as possible, despite the problems associated with this, and in general our area coped well.

North Bughtlin Tenants Association also received the news that their Neighbourhood Noticeboard will be installed this week. This is the result of many years campaigning, but eventually funding

was secured through the West Edinburgh Neighbourhood Partnership.

The development of Bughtlin Market has restarted and we have been told that the site will be cleared and construction of the 18 affordable units started towards the end of February. We are being updated on a regular basis through our contact at Mactaggart & Mickel.

Tina Beattie
Region 5 Edinburgh Rep
(For BEEM Meeting 25th January 2010)

East Lothian

ELTRP held a successful open day on the 15th December, to consult with tenants on what their views were to East Lothian Council proposal for a 3% increase on rents.

We are awaiting the outcome of our support contract which is due to be renewed in April.

Our treasurer has had his work cut out, with ELC request to cut our budget by 10%. We are also prioritising our workload, reviewing our internal policies and working with Council TP Representatives to review our Tenant Handbook.

We all enjoyed a fun evening at Christmas.

Borders

Update from Waverley Tenant's Organisation

WTO is in the final stages of securing the land to build play park facilities within Langlee. On the funding side we are delighted to announce that there are sufficient funds to build the proposed ball wall in Beech Avenue together with an additional promise of £5000 towards the play parks projects next to the community garden.

Waverley Housing announced a proposal to close their Galashiels Office. Waverley Tenants Organisation has been assured that this should not affect the service and there should be more contact by Waverley staff within the community.

Update from Eildon Tenant's Organisation

ETO has a new chairperson. Kirsty Wells from the Tenants Information Service is currently supporting the group as their tenant participation officer is on maternity leave.

AOB & Date of Next Meeting

The committee agreed to provisional proceed with the AGM on the 29th May 2010 at the Hilton Grosvenor in Edinburgh.

The date of the next two committee meetings will be Monday 1st March and Monday 12th April 2010 12 noon at Thistle House.

APPROVED