



BEEM REGIONAL NETWORK

Approved Minutes for meeting of 10th, January, 2011.
At Thistle House, Edinburgh

Attendance

Jim Maryniak Eskview TRA. East Lothian (chair)
Jeanette Boyd Windsor Park TRA. East Lothian
Elaine Ferguson Midlothian Tenants Forum
Lillias Reid Midlothian Tenants Forum
Gerry Moss Waverley Tenants Organisation (v chair) Borders
Catherine McArthur East Lothian T&R Panel
Sheila Rutherford McCallum Ratho Station RA Edinburgh
Tina Beattie North Bughtlin Tenants Association Edinburgh

Apologies

Ellen Robertson Midlothian Tenants Forum.
Maureen Jarvis Edinburgh Tenants Federation
Peggy Ferguson Eildon Tenants Organisation
Pamela Warren Scottish Borders Tenants Organisation

In Attendance

Michael Boal Scottish Government
Anne Cook Scottish Government

Minutes of 11/10/2010, approved by Gerry Moss and seconded by Lillias Reid

Matters arising

Borders Committee Vacancy

Pamela Warren has agreed to apply for the position and as the only candidate she has been elected unopposed to the position. Pamela attended the BEEM tenants conference in November last.

Civil Service Cuts

Anne Cook advised the committee that the current round of civil service cuts in the Scottish Government will have an impact on the Tenant Participation Team and that there will be fewer officers in future. Anne will advise when firm changes are in place.

Correspondence

There was no correspondence. It was thought that because of recent inclement weather, most meetings had been cancelled.

Reports

a. Chairs and Secretaries Meeting

The last Chairs and Secretaries meeting was cancelled due to bad weather. The next meeting will be on the 19/1/2011. As Sheila Rutherford cannot attend, Gerry Moss will attend in her place. Subjects to be discussed will include Housing Benefit cuts and its impact on Scottish tenants. Security of tenure will also be discussed.

b. Chairs and ministerial meeting

The last Chairs and Ministerial meeting was cancelled due to bad weather. The next meeting will be on 19/1/2011.

c. Newsletter

A meeting of the newsletter has been called for February. Articles on Scottish Housing Standard will be the leader and all other articles are to be received by end of February.

d. Website

Gerry reported that the website was working well and was being kept up to date. A member of another regional group has been canvassing opinion on upgrading the web site. It was the opinion of this group that this was not necessary as the site had to be kept as simple as possible and better use of the site could prove beneficial.

e. Feedback from Members Charter Conference.

It was agreed that this was a good event and reports from member groups have been very positive. Attendees felt that because this was a tenant only event, attendees could contribute more.

f. Charter Sounding Board.

At the last sounding board meeting, it was agreed that they had received some good responses to the consultation.

General Business

Finance-Bank Account. The cheque signatories had now been changed.
The BEEM bank balance stands at £316.25.

Regional Roundups

MIDLOTHIAN TENANTS FORUM

MTF's AGM was held on Saturday 27th November 2010. The event was well attended despite the snow which had started the evening before.

All Committee members stood down and the AGM was chaired by the Independent Advisor.

It was agreed that we do a secret ballot to elect the new office bearers this was conducted and Alex Robertson was unanimously voted in as Chairman, Ian Fleming as Vice Chair, Lillias Reid as Secretary and Ellen Robertson as Treasurer. There are 6 other Committee Members.

There were two speakers:

Kevin Anderson the new Head of Housing explained that the Housing Department is due to be inspected in 2011 and at present they are going through a process of validation and reviewing. This has led to updating of policies and setting up a performance monitoring framework which would be cross referenced to ensure it happens. They were also looking at other ways of engaging with the stakeholders and soon tenants will be able to pay rents online once the website has been updated. They had also improved the process for voids and there was evidence that this was working. Kevin said that he was keen to improve the department's image and credibility in the future. He spoke about future challenges with regard to safety and public protection being paramount and they would be working with other agencies to tackle ASB. The homeless targets would be a challenge as they no longer could make judgement calls with regard to this but he was hopeful that the newly structured housing department would be able to address this all in the future.

Steven Clark the Senior Strategy Officer spoke about the Tenant Participation Strategy which was due to be updated in 2011 and mentioned that they were in the process of appointing a Tenant Participation Officer. He went on to talk about the benefits of tenant participation and why it is important. He also spoke about the new Scottish Social Housing Charter. He then looked at the aims of the TP strategy 2008 – 2010 and the key activities which had been carried out in 2008 -2010. He saw the key activities for 2011 were to find ways of increasing the number of people the Council engage with, the Council need to demonstrate that they are acting on the feedback they get and involving tenants in the assessment of the service.

The December MTF meeting was held over until the 20th due to the snow. This was a normal committee meeting and we set up our diary of meetings for the next 6 months and we will be having the head of housing as our first guest speaker. Then as he appoints his new department heads we will be inviting each to one of our meetings to

explain their new role within the department. This way we will make ourselves known to them and hopefully this will also help us to work in partnership in the future. The Council are also appointing a TP officer part time to work with us this person won't start until the end of January.

EDINBURGH TENANTS FEDERATION

Significant events and meetings involving Edinburgh Tenants Federation [ETF] since the last BEEM meeting on 11th October 2010

30th October 2010 - ETF held their 20th Anniversary 'Shindig' celebration. A great time was had by all who attended.

6th November 2010 joint conference with City of Edinburgh Council to discuss with tenants and landlords their views regarding the proposed Scottish Social Housing Charter.

11th November 2010 Meeting with Neighbourhood Partnership convenors to discuss improving opportunities for Tenant participation within Edinburgh's community planning arrangements.

23rd November 2010 a representative of ETF attended with representatives of the City of Edinburgh Council, the Guardian Awards Ceremony in London. ETF and the Council jointly won the 'Innovation and Progress - Skills Development' award for their work in raising awareness of mental health issues for tenants and offering training for front line staff in Applied Suicide and Safetalk.

14th December 2010 - Representatives fro ETF attended the Tenants Participation Working Group [TPWG]. A City of Edinburgh Group made up of elected councillors, senior council officers and tenant representative to discuss the development for the new Tenant Participation Strategy [2011 -2014] also to monitor progress in achieving the aims of the current Tenant Participation Strategy.

Due to the very inclement weather in November/December a great many of meetings have had to be rescheduled in the New Year.

Maureen Jarvis
Edinburgh Tenants Federation

AOCB

There was none.

Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 14th March,2011. 12 noon at Thistle House Edinburgh.