



BEEM REGIONAL NETWORK  
Approved Minutes for meeting of 14<sup>th</sup> March, 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  
Maureen Jarvis Edinburgh Tenants Federation  
Ellen Robertson Midlothian Tenants Forum  
Tina Beattie North Bughtlin Tenants Association  
Peggy Ferguson Eildon Tenants Organisation Borders

**Apologies**

There were none.

**In Attendance**

Michael Boal, Scottish Government

**Minutes** of 10<sup>th</sup> January, 2011 approved by Tina Beattie and seconded by Jeanette Boyd.

**Matters arising**

It has been noted that Pamela Warren has yet to take her seat on the committee. Pamela has had some difficulty in attending. Michael will contact her.

**Civil Service cuts**, Michael has confirmed that there will be cuts to officer numbers but that no firm decision is yet available.

**Regional Website**; this committee are happy with the BEEM website. Greg Hine has put forward a request to dispose of current regional website and redesign a completely new one, citing that the current site does not meet needs of organisation. This will be discussed at Chairs and Secretaries meeting.

**Bank Account**; The BEEM bank account will be topped up.

## **Correspondence.**

**Charter Discussion Paper;** This committee has recognised content of paper and notes that there have been no changes. There was a discussion on allocations policy and of the Choice based system in the Borders. It has been said that this system is attracting people from across the border to housing in the Borders, some of whom bring problems with them.

This item will be added to the next BEEM committee meeting agenda.

**Housing Benefit Reform Group;** This group is currently being formed and is looking for one person from the regional networks to sit on this. This is likely to be a two year project.

**Eric Allan;** from Aberdeen has passed away after a period of ill health. The committee discussed his experience and passion for tenant's matters and agreed to pass on condolences.

**Rose Bowie** has resigned as chair of Region 8 citing ill health.

**Hugh Fraser;** The committee has agreed to send congratulations on his being awarded the MBE for the many years serving his community.

**Gerry Moss** advised that he has not been successful in his application to sit on the board of the Scottish Housing Regulator.

## **Reports**

### **Chairs and Ministers Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> January.**

A discussion on the Housing revenue Account (HRA) took place. It has been strongly suggested that all sums over £250 spent by Local Authorities are to be itemised to show precisely where the funds are being spent. The committee welcomed this. Jamie Hamilton from the Scottish Government is preparing a paper on this.

No parliamentary business will be conducted after 22<sup>nd</sup> march, due to the coming Scottish Parliamentary Elections.

### **Chairs and Secretaries Meeting of 19<sup>th</sup> January, 2011**

A discussion took place around a paper which Hugh McClung has circulated with reference to his thoughts on the 'inappropriate distribution and misuse of Network emails and communications'.

Danny Mullen has written to all of the housing spokespersons of all of the main political parties at the Scottish Parliament in an effort to increase regional network sphere of influence, and to raise the profile of the network further. To date the Liberal Democrat Party has replied.

## **Newsletter**

Jeannette Boyd and Michael Boal reported back. All articles are to be with Gerry Moss by the end of March for inclusion in the next issue of newsletter.

Articles submitted must relate to the work of BEEM.

Articles for inclusion will include; Scottish Quality Housing Standard, Promotion of BEEM AGM, Housing Benefit Reform.

## **Scottish Social Housing Charter BEEM Response**

To be main agenda item at next committee meeting.

### **BEEM AGM**

The date of the BEEM AGM has been confirmed as 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2011. The venue most favoured is the Grovenor Hotel in Grovenor Street. All BEEM committee members will stand down at the AGM. All committee members who wish to do may then seek re-election provided they have been nominated in accordance with the constitution.

Michael Boal will send out election papers to all RTOs. These have been dispatched 20 working days prior to the AGM.

### **General Business**

**Finance;** Bank accounts are to go to Ann Bailey of the Scottish Government for audit.

The BEEM bank account balance is sitting at £360.00.

**The next Committee Meeting** will be on the 9<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 at Thistle House.

**The next Newsletter Meeting** will be held on the 11<sup>th</sup> April, 2011 at 10am in Thistle House

### **Regional roundup**

**Eildon Tenants Organisation;** Eildon Housing Association recently hosted a 'Lunch and Learn' session on how the economic downturn would affect the building programme- like dominoes, less government grants available, therefore more borrowing will be required so that this will have an effect on rents.

Our Tenant Participation Officer is to organise a date to discuss doing a group Road show together with Waverley Tenants Organisation, and Scottish Borders Tenants Organisation to different areas to encourage more members to join there respective groups.

Plans are available for a new development at Easter Langlee.

Our forthcoming Newsletter will contain information on a joint garden competition along with Eildon Housing Association. The last one held in 2009 was very successful but hard work and time consuming. Everyone is hoping for a good Spring.

Peggy Ferguson for Eildon

### **Significant events and meetings involving Edinburgh Tenants Federation [ETF] since the last BEEM meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2010**

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

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

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

23<sup>rd</sup> 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.

14<sup>th</sup> December 2010 - Representatives from 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

## **MIDLOTHIAN TENANTS FORUM**

There have been a few changes in Management at Midlothian Council Housing Department and Commercial Resources (previously known as Commercial Services). The Council's Tenant Participation Officer's contract with TPAS ceased at the end of January 2011 and has not been renewed. The Council has employed their own part time TP Officer who will support the group and continue to promote our interests.

We held an open meeting in Penicuik on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2011 that was not well attended. The main speaker was to have been the new Manager at Commercial

Resources but he fell ill and called off at the last moment. However the Chief Housing Officer attended and will supply him with feedback of the points raised.

The Chairman and Secretary attended an advanced Committee Skills event at TPAS on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2011.

## **EAST LOTHIAN TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' PANEL**

Due to inclement weather a number of meeting were cancelled.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2011 we brought our members together to celebrate "Burns" and took the opportunity to Review our project, highlighting our positives and seeking from our members their priorities for the next year. We had good feedback from Tenants on the performance of the Panel and our achievements and with a number of young people attending we were able to get their views on how they would like us to incorporate them in Tenant Participation, which enables us to set our goals for 2011/12, which will be to try and engage with people on the homeless register and young people.

On the entertainment side we had our usual treat of haggis, neeps and tatties accompanied by Pipes, Drums and Highland Dancers.

Three members of our committee have successfully had training on Fire Safety and our Admin Officer has also been trained in Fire Safety and First Aid.

In February we reconvened meeting with our Housing Convener who brought us up to date with East Lothian Councils Budget Proposals.

A number of our Tenant/Resident Associations invited their communities to complete a survey questionnaire on what their priorities were within their areas, returns were good and some of the issues were able to be addressed by Landscape and countryside and Transportation, by members of their staff attending the TRA meetings to discuss issues on what work could be done at short notice and explain budget restraints and timescales for others. This gave members a good feel as they felt they were at last being listened to.

In March members of the ELTRP attended East Lothian Learning Partnership Annual Conference New days/New ways/New Thinking, the main theme of the conference was to share how we could make change through learning, by working with local communities, working with children and young people and working with adults. There is a lot of this good work already going on, but we need to find more innovative ways of getting the message across to our wider communities.

We are moving forward in East Lothian with members of the communities being invited to take an active part in the regeneration of our town centres. There are already a number of project groups set up to take this forward.

Catherine McArthur for East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel.

Approved