



The Northern Light

Issue number 2—Summer 2011

Election of Office Bearers.

At the Annual General Meeting on 21st May, five of the former members of the Committee were re-elected and by due election, the office bearers were chosen as; Stanley Green MBE—Chairperson, Helen McPherson—Vice Chair, Richard (Van) Leiper—Secretary and Diana Foxcroft—Treasurer. From Stanley Green's proposal, Lenny Lawrence was also

Profile of the year

The past year has been a busy one for the Regional Network with consultation and discussion of the proposed Scottish Social Housing Charter and the restructuring of the Scottish Housing Regulator as well as consultation on the Eviction of Tenants for Rent Arrears and Safeguarding Rent Deposits in the private housing sector.

Committee members also attended a National Networks Conference and met with representatives of the Scottish Housing and Regeneration Directorate in Edinburgh and Glasgow. This in addition to regular Committee meetings and training for committee members.

Sadly the year also saw the passing of two stalwarts in tenant representation, our Chairperson Eric Allan and Charles French from the Moray area both of whom will be badly missed and hard to replace.

NOTICE

The next Committee meeting will be at 1130 on the 7th of July at Johnstone House, Rose Street, Aberdeen.

and the Committee is determined to make a positive response to any future discussion papers.

Finally we acknowledge the loss of our Angus membership who have decided that they are better joined with Dundee City in the Tayforth Regional grouping. Their input during the life of the Regional Network has been important.



Stanley Green MBE—Chairperson

Committee Membership

The Committee is presently badly under strength and members are needed to represent Moray, Orkney, Shetland and Aberdeen City. As elections are held at an AGM or an Extraordinary meeting held for that purpose, any person interested in filling a post on the Committee would be co-opted to that position. The Committee would like to encourage you to come forward and help run and improve the running of the Regional Network.

Representation of RSL tenants

As you are aware, the Constitution gives the criteria for membership of the Network. The question was raised on the ability of tenants with RSLs to be involved in the Network. In other regions, such tenants are members through being members of their local registered tenant, or tenant/resident association. One very active committee member of another Region is indeed Secretary on the Board of her RSL.

In the immediate future the Committee will be taking positive steps to encourage more participation from tenant groups in all our five areas and looking at ways to improve communication with our membership, especially those in the Northern Isles.

A Committee Members role

The Committee meets at least six times during the year and discusses housing issues pertinent to the region and nationally. Government from time to time produces documents for discussion relating to such issues and with input from the Regional membership, the Committee prepares responses to these documents. We have seen how these responses have been used in the Housing and Regeneration Directorate to build proposals to set before Parliament and leading to such things as the recent Scotland Housing Act which contained changes to the Right to Buy and the ongoing work on the Social Housing Charter.



Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary,
Helen McPherson, Diana Foxcroft and Van Leiper

Most meetings are held in Aberdeen but the Committee does try to meet at other venues, albeit only infrequently. Other meetings at a national level or with Ministerial staff may be arranged during the year. Members are reimbursed for travel expenses and if necessary, overnight accommodation.

Committee work can be very rewarding in the sense of a feeling of achievement when ideas fed into the system become items that improve the lot of tenants across the nation through new enactments and regulations. A member might not be able to attend all meetings but it useful for continuity if they make an effort to do so. Yet even in non attendance a member can still make input be letter or e-mail via the Secretary.

There are even opportunities for training to help members with leadership and management skills and give a better understanding of housing regulation and policies in Scotland. A certain level of commitment is necessary but a member may opt out if the work becomes too much or change in circumstances mean they can no longer attend meetings.