

Lochgilthead and encourage tenant views on the Social Housing Charter.

Central Region hold a members event in Alloa on the Charter & BEEM an event in Edinburgh. 50 plus questionnaires returned by tenant groups and individual to the BEEM committee on what tenants want to see in the Charter. Other network charter consultation responses submitted.

Jim and Rose head to Edinburgh for the 2nd Meeting of the Ministerial Charter Sounding Board.

December

Snow and travel chaos dominated the news and the regional networks meeting with the Minister for Housing & Communities falls victim to the weather – rescheduled for January 2011. On a more positive note Hugh Wilson Fraser, chairperson of the Southwest Scotland Regional Network had a trip to Buckingham palace to collect his MBE from the Queen in recognition of his commitment to voluntary work in his community.

2011 onwards

Networks meet with Minister for Housing & Communities, Alex Neil.

Network committees prepare to consult their members on the Scottish Social Housing Charter discussion document and work with the Scottish Government on their Strategy and Action Plan for Housing in the Next Decade.

2011 looks set to be another busy year for the Regional Networks. The CIH training will continue to be offered to committee members with at least three more courses being run for both Housing Policy and Leadership. There has been a healthy uptake for the March courses so far.

The Networks will be involved in helping to shape the Scottish Social Housing Charter both at a regional level and on a national basis following the publication of the Housing Charter discussion document in February.

The networks will continue to represent tenants interests on various issues relating to national housing policy in Scotland, will offer constructive suggestions, and be a progressive influence in delivering good quality outcomes for tenants. The Regional Networks will seek further opportunities to work alongside the Scottish Government and other stakeholders.

The AGM cycle starts again.



For more information on the regional networks check out; www.regionalnetworks.org.uk

A year (10 months actually) in the life of the regional networks

It's difficult to do justice to all the work of the regional networks in a short newsletter article, particularly the work of individual committees, so here are just some of the highlights since March 2010.

Facts and figures

With the support of the tenant participation team, the Regional Network Committees have produced 11 newsletters with a circulation of over 1,000 copies focussing on the activities of individual committees and gathering tenant group and tenants views on the Housing Bill, and the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Around 96 committee members attended over 50 individual committee meetings, they held 3 members events, 8 AGMs and participated in a wide range of Scottish Government consultations and Advisory Groups. And had 3 meetings with the Minister of Housing and Communities

March 2010

This was a particularly busy month for the Regional Networks. The Regional network committees submitted a paper to the Housing & Communities Minister, Mr Neil, raising their concerns regarding how some local authority landlords operate their Housing Revenue Accounts. The paper was written and coordinated by Hugh McClung, Central Network on behalf of the regional networks and was the first major policy issue that the Regional Networks have brought to the Scottish Government. This paper was the main topic of discussion at the 3rd meeting network representatives had with the Minister.

The committee member training programme being delivered by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) continued at pace with sessions in both Glasgow & Edinburgh on Housing policy and team working/leadership skills. The tutors even gave out homework to further test the vast knowledge of those in attendance!

March also saw the networks host an exhibition stand at the Chartered Institute of Housing in Scotland conference at the SECC in Glasgow to promote their work and the first round of successful Annual General Meetings covering West Strathclyde in Paisley, South West Scotland in Ayr,

and Highland & Argyll & Bute in Glasgow.

Danny Mullen represented the networks on the Housing Bill Ministerial Sounding Board and was more than a match for housing professionals in getting across the interests of tenants.

Kevin Paterson from the Glasgow and Eilean Siar network admirably represented the committees on the Housing Policy Advisory Group which considered the future direction of housing policy in Scotland and the issues set out in the discussion paper Fresh Thinking: New Ideas.

April

No less busy than March, the networks made a collective written submission on the Draft Housing Bill to the Local Government and Communities Committee. Danny Mullen gave evidence on behalf of the networks directly to this scrutiny committee. Danny provided a compelling case for the networks submission and for changes to the Bill which would protect tenant interests. Not to be out done Jim

Maryniak, chairperson of the Borders, East Lothian, Edinburgh & Midlothian (BEEM) regional network also gave evidence to the committee with the added pressure of having fellow committee members watch his performance from the public gallery.

East Dunbartonshire & Lanarkshire Regional Network met with Alex Neil MSP as part of a planned visit to the Parliament.

Network committee members attended a one day policy course in Glasgow, covering the Concordat between Scottish Government and local authorities, national outcomes for the Scottish Government, the operation of parliamentary committees, and relations between Scotland and the United Kingdom, a lot to fit in!

The AGM season continued with Central Network having their annual meeting in Livingston, where the proposed Scottish Social Housing Charter was considered.

A late influx of members meant it was standing room only!

May

The big news for May was the Regional Network Event in Glasgow which brought all committee members together. It was a packed day covering progress of the housing bill, with a keynote speech from the Housing & Communities Minister, Mr Neil who used the opportunity to talk about the recently launched Housing Policy discussion, "Fresh Thinking: New Ideas", with the networks being the first tenant audience to hear directly from the Minister about this.

Two further AGMs took place with Glasgow & Eilean Siar and BEEM, with much discussion on the Social Housing Charter.

A number of network committees also submitted responses to the Scottish Government's consultation on 'Eviction of Tenants in the Social Rented Sector'.

June

More successful AGMs, were held- Tayforth in Dundee and Northern Lights in Aberdeen. Tayforth Committee also held a seminar for tenants in Perth to gather views on what they wanted included in the Charter and the networks also hosted an exhibition stand at the TIS conference in Clydebank.

July

The summer holidays saw a quieter month for the networks, except for those lucky enough to attend Holyrood for the Queens Garden Party. Representatives from each network were invited to attend in recognition of all their hard work and commitment locally and nationally.

August

August saw the start of an ambitious consultation programme across the length and breadth of Scotland- organised by the Tenant Priorities team. This brought Regional network committee members, tenants and tenant groups, landlords and the Scottish Government and the Scottish Housing Regulator

together to start thinking about the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the modernised Scottish Housing Regulator. With Inverness setting the pace closely followed by Falkirk & Dumfries.

September

A further meeting with the Housing & Communities Minister took place and at Mr Neil's request the regional networks submitted a paper on the "Perceived Decline of Estates". This was ably compiled by Eric Allan from the Northern Lights Network on behalf of the networks.

Charter Events now moving to Aberdeen, Ayr and Glasgow.

More work on the development of Housing Revenue Account, guidance with network representatives meeting with Scottish Government officials and Audit Scotland.

Vince Heneghan from Tayforth, Tina Beattie from BEEM, Rose Bowie from East Dunbartonshire & Lanarkshire, and Jim Hendry from South West Scotland,

represented the networks on the newly established Ministerial Charter Sounding Board.

Final network responses to the Government's housing discussion, "Fresh Thinking: New Ideas" are submitted.

October

More Charter Events take place in Paisley, Dundee, Wishaw & Haddington. The networks host an exhibition stand and workshop at the Tenant Participation Advisory Service conference in Dundee.

Danny Mullen, secretary of Central Region, is given the Tenant/Resident representative of the year award as part of the Tenant Participation Good Practice Awards for his work both locally in West Lothian and nationally .

November

Final Charter consultation events held in Edinburgh & Lochgilphead. Steve Byrne, chairperson for Highland & Argyll & Bute network, takes to the airwaves on Argyll FM to promote the event in