

Minutes of the Western Isle Forum 24th August 2011

Sederunt:

Colin MB Scott	Disability Activist	Stornoway
Alasdair MacKenzie	Vice-chair WIFTRA	Ford Terrace, Tong
Kevin Paterson	Chair WIFTRA	North Lochs
Elizabeth Murray	Forum Member	Ness
Anne Maclean	Forum Member	South Dell
John Maciver	Operations Director	HHP
Katrina Palmer	Operations Manager	HHP
Mark Joseph	Forum Member	Cearns
Rachel Paterson	Minute Taker	Guest

Apologies received:

Etta MacKay	Secretary WIFTRA	Cearns CA
Angela Quail	Forum Member	Bayhead CA
Paul Aldred	Forum Member	South Harris CA
Reg Gambier	Forum member	South Lochs
Kris Westerman	Forum Member (TRAG Rep)	Gleann Dubh

Item		Action
1.	<p><u>Welcome</u> Kevin opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. In the absence of the secretary he asked the committees agreement for Rachel Paterson to minute take with Etta to compile them. He especially welcomed Mark Joseph and Katrina Palmer to their first meeting.</p>	RP/EM
2.	<p><u>Apologies</u> Etta MacKay, Angela Quail, Paul Aldred, Reg Gambier and Kris Westerman</p>	
3.	<p><u>Previous Minutes</u> The minutes from March were unavailable but the note of the 10th May executive and the actions were noted below.</p>	
3.1	<p><u>Matters Arising</u> PAIH 2011 Annual report the committee noted the action and agreed the artwork. Cearns Community Rep will be Mark Joseph. TPAS Conference the places for conference for the forum was limited to four, the protocol for deciding places to be sent out to members. (KP done 3rd July 2010.) (All, in discussion on the 10th May it was decided to choose the members of the forum who would be offered places at TPAS on the following criteria: 1. Activity within the Forum (Office Bearers, TRAG membership etc. etc) 2. Participation in forum events (Local Conferences, working groups, focus groups etc.) 3. Participation at conference. (Workshop attendance etc..) 4. Past years attendance. (Those who had attended many conferences would stand aside for those who attended fewer.) It was felt this was the only way to fairly distribute the four places. The office bearers are Etta, Kevin and Alasdair who would get priority under section 1 and Kris</p>	<p>KP</p>

	<p>as TRAG rep.</p> <p>Participation in forum events Kevin – chaired three conferences and facilitated 2 focus groups. Alasdair assisted in charring Lewis conference and attended Region 9 AGM. Kris attended 2 focus groups and TRAG plus the CPAG training. Etta, the Gibson Project working group along with Alasdair, Kevin and Colin. They would therefore get priority under section 2.</p> <p>Participation at conference – it was felt that all delegates participated well at conference.</p> <p>Past Conferences. Although Etta had attended many TPAS conferences she was entitled to priority under section 1. Reg had attended two conferences. Kevin had not attended last year. Alasdair had priority under section 1 and 2, Kris had only attended 1 but had priority under sections 1 and 2. Angela had attended many conferences and although enthusiastic priority had to be given to others.</p> <p>The places are to be offered in the following order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Etta MacKay 2. Kevin Paterson 3. Kris Westerman 4. Alasdair MacKenzie 5. Reg Gambier 6. Mark Joseph 7. Angela Quayle 8. Anne Munro Maclean 9. Colin Scott 10. John Cole <p>However with there being a maximum of FOUR places available to the Forum the top four will be our delegates with Reg being first reserve. I am sorry if some of you feel disappointed by this selection and will be happy to discuss it either in person or on the phone 01851 860555.)</p> <p>Regional AGM – Alasdair Mackenzie and Mark Joseph to attend.</p> <p>Lewis Conference great success – Thanks to Alasdair for taking photos (report circulated).</p> <p>Revaluation Manor Park LIFT properties Kevin had written to Keith Brown (Housing Minister) seeking assurance over future LIFT marketing. Minister’s reply was circulated.</p> <p>John Maciver explained all purchasers had completed some taking smaller equity stake.</p> <p>Action from March letting standard report the final report was circulated and John Maciver to bring to attention of management team.</p>	
4	<p><u>Glasgow and Western Isle Regional Network News</u></p> <p>Report of AGM circulated congratulations to Mark Joseph for being elected Regional representative for the Cearns Community Association.</p> <p>Mark and Kevin to attend conference with minister and Kay Blair Chair of the Scottish Housing Regulator. The group then discussed topics they would like to ask questions on: (Inserted note)</p> <p>Subjects :</p> <p>it was felt that subjects for questions to the minister should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development 2. Fuel poverty 3. His role with the SHR. 4. The definition of affordable housing. 5. Landlord powers <p><u>Development.</u></p> <p>It was felt we should ask how the Scottish Government intends to fulfil its promises on the number of new affordable houses for Social Rent, and whether mid-market and</p>	

	<p>NHT new builds would be included within their figures.</p> <p><u>Fuel Poverty</u> It was felt we should ask if the Scottish Government were confident of meeting their targets and if the SHQS would deliver what they hoped it would in alleviating fuel poverty.</p> <p><u>His Role with the SHR</u> It was felt that we must seek clarification on his role as Housing Minister in regards to the checks and balances necessary with a new independent SHR and how he intends to ensure that tenant's views are properly collected during self-assessment.</p> <p><u>The definition of affordable housing</u> It was felt that affordable housing was now being used to encompass a lot of house types that were usually excluded for example mid-market rentals and some forms of shared equity, it is important to get a clear definition of affordable housing from the minister.</p> <p><u>Landlord powers.</u> The number of properties with under-occupation throughout Scotland has led to many Social Landlords seeking powers to force people to give up their homes and move into smaller properties. It was felt that we must seek a categorical assurance from the minister that he will never give landlords these powers.</p> <p>This sets out what we aim to get from our questioning, but to ensure we get the right answers we must of course be extremely careful how we word them.</p> <p>Suggestions:</p> <p><i>How does the Scottish Government intend to fulfil its promises regarding the number of new build homes for affordable rent?</i></p> <p><i>How will you as Housing Minister ensure that your government will meet its targets on fuel poverty and the SHQS?</i></p> <p><i>What will your role be within the new SHR and how do you intend to ensure that the checks and balances are in place to guarantee that tenant's views are properly collected during the self-assessment process?</i></p> <p><i>What level of rental do you think constitutes affordable housing and why is there no definitive Government definition of affordability in housing, and why are you including mid-market rentals which are often nearly twice the average social rent as affordable?</i></p> <p><i>Can you as Housing Minister categorically promise that you will not give landlords the power to force people to leave their homes due to under-occupancy?</i></p>	
5	<p><u>Treasurers Report</u> The report was noted with specific reference to HHP grant of £1500.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Uist Conference 2010</u> The Uist conference was being held on Saturday 3rd September at Balivanich Community Centre. The forum would again chair the event, Mark and Alasdair volunteered to attend with Alasdair again in charge of photography. Report for next meeting.</p>	KP

7.	<u>Newsletter</u> Committee noted HHP Homeward input by WIFTRA and agreed to produce newsletter for next meeting.	KP/MJ
8.	<u>Charter Submission</u> WIFTRA and HHP joint response to initial Charter discussion paper was circulated. It was agreed HHP would invite WIFTRA to Charter Training session Kevin to email round committee with formal invite. Kevin to draft response and send around in late October.	KP
9.	<u>Investment Plan Update</u> John Maciver gave an update on the investment plan and the repairs and maintenance contract he also discussed the Development programme and the pressures on HHP's business plan. HHP is on target to meet the SHQS and all its pre-transfer promises. He was asked about hard to let properties in South Uist- HHP have six properties empty in Uist they were doing their best to let them. This would have negative effect on Business Plan and letting performance. He was asked about utility meters and who owned them – these are owned by the utility company that supplies the house. He was asked about caravans in Westview Grove – these are being advertised for sale and site will be cleared. He was asked about the naming of the Gibson Site (Moldova Court) which had caused some discussion amongst the local residents – the board had reconsidered and the name Gibson Gardens would be registered. He also pointed out that they had managed to save the large tree and make it a feature of the site.	
10	<u>Rent Guarantee</u> The five year rent guarantee was ending this year and the committee expressed their desire to be involved in the process at the earliest opportunity, John Maciver assured the committee that it was HHP's intention to consult with as many tenants as possible on any rent changes. He also intimated HHP's wish to simplify the rent structure and that he would be consulting with tenants on these changes.	JM
11	<u>AOCB</u> Kevin asked if the Committee would be willing to donate prizes to Uist Conference – agreed two £20 vouchers Kevin to organise.	KP
11	<u>Next meeting</u> The next meeting will be November 2 nd 2011 in HHP's meeting room. The starting time will be 18:00 hrs.	EM