

RUTHERGLEN & CAMBUSLANG HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on
Tuesday 21st December 2021 at 5.30pm Held via zoom**

Present:

Robert McLeary – Chair
Edward Harkins – Vicechair
Geraldine Baird – Secretary
Frances Cunningham
Jean Stewart
Maryellen McKeown
Gary Gow

In Attendance:

Elaine Lister - Director

Leave of Absence:

Eveline Thomson

AGENDA ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES

Apologies noted: Christine McPhail
Karen McCartney

AGENDA ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Geraldine Baird declared that she was a current member of the Management Committee of North View Housing Association.

Robert McLeary declared that he was a current member of Clyde Gateway.

AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd November 2021 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Jean Stewart

Seconded : Maryellen McKeown

Agenda Item 3.1 – Matters Arising

3.1.1 Annual Assurance Statement (previous agenda item 3.1.4)

Committee noted that the amended statement had been uploaded on to the Association's website

3.1.2 CHAS Donation (previous agenda item 5.8)

Elaine advised it had not been able to have the advert for the new Administration Assistant included in the EVH Jobs Week fundraiser.

Committee approved a direct donation of £200 to EVH's fundraising for CHAS

3.1.3 Review of the Staff Structure (previous agenda item 6.0)

Committee noted that;

- The Engagement & Communications Manager was now carrying out the tasks outlined in the job description
- The Housing Manager was now overseeing all housing management activities
- The new Administration Assistant would be recruited in the new year
- Revised job descriptions for all staff were being issued for signing

3.1.4 Office Opening Hours (previous agenda item 9.0)

Committee noted that consultation with staff had been delayed due to the staff meeting being cancelled.

3.1.5 Away Day (previous agenda item 10.0)

Committee agreed that no booking should be made until such times as there is clearer guidance from the Scottish Government regarding social contact and meetings.

However, they recognised the importance of reviewing the Business Plan and, in particular, the organisational objectives.

Members instructed Elaine to look into alternative options for a review day.

3.1.6 Leave of Absence (previous agenda item 12.1)

Elaine explained that the Committee member had actually missed 4 consecutive meetings prior to the leave of absence request. Under the Rules, this meant that her membership of the Management Committee automatically ended. As such the request for a leave of absence was invalid.

Committee noted and instructed Elaine to write a letter of thanks for her service on behalf of the Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 4.0 – MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

4.1 Minutes of the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee Meeting – 18th November 2021

The minutes of the sub-committee meeting held on 18th November 2021 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Frances Cunningham

Seconded : Edward Harkins

There were no matters arising.

AGENDA ITEM 5.0 – COMMITTEE DIGEST

5.1 Working Arrangements

Elaine advised that, due to the increase of the new variant of COVID and the changes to the guidance from the Scottish Government, the phased return to full time office working had been suspended.

Edward commented that he thought this was a pragmatic approach and urged caution before making any permanent decisions regarding working arrangements.

Committee noted that the position would be reviewed by the management team after the Christmas break.

5.2 New Membership Application

Committee approved the application for membership.

5.3 Application to Join Management Committee

Elaine advised that the application to join the Committee met the required criteria and that, if approved, the applicant would join as a co-optee until the next AGM when she could stand for election.

Members noted that a new member was a positive move towards addressing the risk of the Association not complying with the Regulatory Standards regarding the composition of the Committee. It was further noted that this had already been highlighted by the Regulator who, in particular, raised concerns about the high percentage of Committee members with more than 9 years' service.

Members agreed that recruiting new members had to be a priority objective for the Association and discussed the option of establishing a working group that would take a focused, proactive approach to publicising and promoting membership of the Committee.

It was clarified that new members could join before the AGM as co-optees. It was also confirmed that neither co-optees or 'professional' members were paid

Committee approved the application to join the Management Committee and noted that she would be co-opted until the next AGM when she can stand for election.

Members also agreed that the Chair should meet with the co-optee in the New Year as part of the induction process.

After discussion the Committee agreed to forming a working group to take forward the recruitment of new members. The working group will consist of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Director and Engagement & Communication Manager.

AGENDA ITEM 6.0 – PROPOSED RENT INCREASE 2022/2023

Elaine advised that the rent increase was intrinsically linked to the draft budget for the coming year and in future years will be presented together for consideration.

She further advised that the draft budget was based on the assumption of a 2.5% rent increase.

Geraldine noted that 2.5% appeared to be one of the lowest increases being proposed within RSLs and expressed concern as to the impact of a low increase on the Association's future financial position.

Robert agreed and suggested that more information on the long-term impact of a 2.5% was required. Elaine noted that timing was an issue due to the requirement to carry out a full consultation exercise prior to giving tenants 28 days notice of their new rent.

Edward commented that comparisons could change and that time-restricted decision could only be made on the information available at the time.

He noted that there had been a thorough discussion on the proposal at the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee as part of the consideration of the draft budget. He advised that a number of scenarios and increases had been considered but that the decision had been that, given the current financial environment, COVID etc, 2.5% was a fair compromise for the both the Association and tenants.

Edward commented that such issues and discussions highlighted the need to take a longer-term approach to budgeting and increases.

After further discussion, members approved the proposal to consult with tenants on a 2.5% rent increase for 2022/2023.

Members also agreed to review increase process in order to allow a longer-term strategic plan and agreed that this should take place early in the next financial year.

AGENDA ITEM 7.0 – DRAFT BUDGET 2022/2023

Elaine reiterated that the rent increase and draft budget were linked and that the draft budget presented was based on an assumed 2.5% rent increase.

Robert reminded members that the draft had been discussed in detail at the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee which was now recommending the draft for ratification by the full Management Committee.

Members discussed some of the other assumptions made in the draft before approving the draft budget.

AGENDA ITEM 8.0 – COVENANT AMEDMENT AGREEMENT

Elaine explained the background to the amendment and the need to have it formally approved by the Management Committee.

After clarification of the details of the amendments, the agreement was approved by the Management Committee.

AGENDA ITEM 9.0 – CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 GWSF's 20/21 Charter Report

Elaine advised that the Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum's report on this year's Annual Report on the Charter was now available. The report also included a brief analysis of some of the COVID returns for the period April – September.

9.2 EVH Monthly Report

9.3 GWSF Monthly Update

9.4 SHARE Training & Development Brochures January – March 2022

9.5 SHARE's Annual Conference – 11th & 12th March 2022

Geraldine commented that she felt the cost of SHARE's residential conference had become excessively high over the past few years. Edward agreed that this was an issue but that it was important that Committee members ensured they took opportunities to update their knowledge and skills.

Jean stated that she had attended the SHARE conference in the past and had always found them extremely informative and enjoyable. She was also aware that a number of other Committee members had attended the conferences and found them useful.

After further discussion it was agreed that the conference should be booked for Jean, Karen, Edward, Robert & Maryellen.

Elaine was instructed to email all Committee members to ascertain if anyone else wanted to attend the conference on either a day or residential basis.

AGENDA ITEM 10.0 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Edward advised that the Scottish Government had issued a consultation paper 'A New Deal for Tenants'. Although the key objectives seemed mostly concerned with the private rented sector there are some that could apply to all of the rented sector such as;

- Creating a new Housing Standard covering all homes

- Regulating to a set of minimum standards for energy efficiency and zero emissions heating

The consultation document was available at

<https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/consultation-paper/2021/12/new-deal-tenants-draft-strategy-consultation-paper>

AGENDA ITEM 11.0 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Management Committee meeting will be held on 18th January 2022.

As there were no other items of business the meeting closed at 7.30pm.