

RUTHERGLEN & CAMBUSLANG HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on
TUESDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2021 at 5.30pm via ZOOM**

Present:

Robert McLeary – Chair
Edward Harkins – Vicechair
Geraldine Baird – Secretary
Jean Stewart
Frances Cunningham
Christine McPhail

In Attendance:

Elaine Lister - Director

Leave of Absence:

Jean Gow
Eveline Thomson

AGENDA ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES

Apologies noted : Karen McCartney, Nora Dillon, Gary Gow

AGENDA ITEM 2 – DECLARATION OF INTEREST

As a member of staff Elaine Lister, Director declared an interest in Agenda Item 9.1 – Pay Deal 2021.

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

AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING : 15th December 2020

Frances Cunningham advised that she had not left the meeting after agenda item 9.1 as stated in the minute. Christine McPhail confirmed that it had been her that had left.

The minutes will be amended accordingly

With the agreed amendments the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15th December 2020 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Frances Cunningham

Seconded : Jean Stewart

Agenda Item 3.1 – Matters Arising

3.1.1 Furlough/Employees Retention Scheme (previous agenda item 3.1.1)

It was noted that one member of staff remained furlough due to the current lockdown restrictions.

Committee approved the member of staff remaining on furlough on the same terms.

3.1.2 Aspire Board Meetings (previous agenda item 3.1.3)

Committee noted that this will be reported on at a later meeting.

3.1.3 Acquisition (previous agenda item 9.4)

Elaine advised that the owner of the property had informed the Association that the flat had been sold on the open market.

Edward noted that it was disappointing as this could have been an opportunity for the Association and that having a policy in place would help members react to such opportunities in the future.

Committee noted that the Draft Acquisition and Disposals Policy would be presented at the next meeting for consideration.

3.1.4 Note of Interest in Joining the Management Committee (previous agenda item 9.5)

It was noted that the information had been sent to the interested person.

3.1.5 Donation Request (previous agenda item 9.6)

Elaine advised that payment of the agreed donation can only be made directly into the bank account of the group and these are to be forwarded by the Brownie leader.

Committee noted that payment would be made once bank details were received.

3.1.6 Kitchen Replacement Programme (previous agenda item 10.1)

Elaine advised that programme was currently on hold as the surveys could not be carried due to COVID restrictions.

Committee noted that a revised programme would be provided.

3.1.7 Staff Christmas Donation (previous agenda item 10.2)

Elaine advised that she had excluded herself from getting this payment that been made to the staff.

Christine raised concerns about the payment being made as other activities had been cancelled or delayed due to COVID including the Committee 'away day' and the children's trip to the Panto. She expressed the view that if some things had been deferred the rule should have applied to everything of a similar nature.

Geraldine stated that she felt these concerns had some merit and questioned how the proposal had been raised.

Robert noted that it had been agreed by members as a one-off goodwill gesture.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – COMMITTEE DIGEST

4.1 Service Delivery Update

Elaine gave an update on how the Association had adapted the delivery of services in light of the lockdown restrictions imposed in January. She further advised that stricter controls had been put in place regarding staff coming into the office.

Committee noted the updated position and reiterated its commitment to continuing to provide services as far as possible.

4.2 SHR Monthly COVID Update

Committee noted that no return had been required to be submitted for December.

4.3 EVH Membership Renewal

Elaine advised that there had been no increase in the fees for 2021 and that additional services were being offered to support employers.

Committee approved renewal of full membership of EVH

4.4 Bank Signatories

Elaine explained that Dave Anderson had been approved as a signatory on behalf of the Association. As he had retired, Committee had to appoint a replacement.

Committee approved Elaine Lister as an authorised signatory

4.5 Internal Audit Tender

Elaine advised that the 3 year arrangement with Alexander Sloan to carry out the Internal Audit function had ended in 2020.

Committee approved Elaine preparing and issuing a tender for Internal Audit services for a 3-year period.

4.6 Tenants' Survey

Elaine gave the background to the proposal to carry out a survey of tenants that would;

- Ascertain how tenants have coped/are coping with the pandemic
- Gather their views on the support provided by the Association
- Ascertain how tenants' finances have been affected by the pandemic
- Determine how affordable tenants are finding rents, heating costs etc
- Obtain 'equalities' information

Geraldine stated that she was aware that the other Association she was involved in was carrying out a survey. That Association had provided a lot of direct support to tenants and was looking for information on the 'social' return.

Christine noted that the range and type of support services had to be linked to what could be reasonably funded.

Edward stated that he was uncomfortable with the need to balance the tensions between the need to balance business needs, increasing needs and meeting tenants wishes. Robert agreed and suggested collecting and analysing the data to identify the priorities for tenants that could then form the basis of a strategy.

Christine said the process would be a 2-stage one. Geraldine concurred and stated that she felt it was important the Committee was involved.

Committee instructed Elaine to draft a survey for consideration.

AGENDA ITEM 5 – RENT INCREASE 2021-2022

Elaine presented the report and advised that there had been 2 responses submitted as part of the consultation exercise although one was directly referring to repairs and therefore was not applicable. She outlined the nature of the other response and advised that she was intending to contact the tenant and invite her to meet to discuss the issues she had raised.

Edward referred to the comparison of average rents and noted that this was often not a clear comparison due to some Associations having more new build properties, more houses rather than flats etc. These could skew the figures and therefore really needed to be put in context to be meaningful.

Geraldine agreed and noted that a comparison also had to include rents charged by the Council and private landlords.

Elaine advised that she was intending to carry out a full review of the rent setting and increase process and that this would include the information presented to Committee to allow members to make a fully informed decision.

Members discussed the poor feedback from the consultation exercise. Elaine explained that the review would also include the methods of consultation to try to encourage tenants to engage more with the exercise.

It was noted that there had been nothing submitted that meant the Committee should re-consider the proposed increase.

Committee approved a rent increase of 2% from 1st April 2021

AGENDA ITEM 6 – RISK REGISTER

Elaine explained the background to her recommendation to form a short-life working group with Committee members and senior staff to;

- Review and update the current Risk Register
- Identify the key risks to the Association
- Make recommendations to the Committee on mitigation
- Develop processes for ongoing updates and reviews of the register

Edward advised that he had a particular interest in the risk management and had been involved in the process with other organisations. He stated that he saw risk management as a critical activity and one that the Committee should be actively involved in.

After discussion it was agreed that the 3 Office Bearers (Robert, Edward and Geraldine) would sit on the working group and instructed Elaine to arrange a meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 7 – CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

It was noted that there was no date as yet set for AGM and that an additional one-agenda meeting of the Management Committee may be required to approve the Annual Return on the Charter, depending on the submission date which is set by the Regulator.

There was a discussion on the need for a Staffing Sub-Committee due to the changes in the staff including one retirement and another member of staff returning from maternity leave.

Committee requested that the Staffing Sub-committee meeting be brought forward to March. With that amendment members approved the calendar .

AGENDA ITEM 8 – CORRESPONDENCE

8.1 EVH re: Pay Deal 2021

Elaine gave the background to the proposed 2-year deal negotiated by EVH and Unite the Union. She further advised that she had informally consulted with staff (both Union members and non-members) on the proposal in order to allow the Committee to make a fully informed decision.

Members fully discussed the proposal and the feedback from staff and noted that, while it was recognised that some staff might feel disappointed at the offer, it was felt that it was fair in the current economic environment.

Committee agreed to support the proposed offer and instructed Elaine to respond to the EVH survey on the Committee's behalf.

8.2 EVH Monthly Update

Committee noted this had been provided as part of the papers.

8.3 Minister's Letter

Members noted the letter from Kevin Stewart, Minister for Local Government, Housing & Planning.

8.4 GWSF Manifesto for the 2021 Scottish Parliament Elections

Committee noted this had been provided as part of the papers.

AGENDA ITEM 9 – AOCB

There was a general discussion on how the Committee could be given the opportunity to explore and discuss specific topics members were especially interested in such as developing other services. It was felt that topics often came up at scheduled meetings but that time restraints usually didn't allow for a full discussion.

It was agreed that the 'Away Day' had been very useful for such discussion but was not really enough. It was further agreed to explore the possibility of having a specific topic as an agenda item to allow focussed consideration.

As there were no other items of business the meeting was concluded at 7pm.