

RUTHERGLEN & CAMBUSLANG HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on
Tuesday 15th February 2022
at 5.30pm in the Association's Office**

Present:

Robert McLeary – Chair
Edward Harkins – Vicechair
Frances Cunningham
Jean Stewart
Maryellen McKeown
Eveline Thomson

In Attendance:

Elaine Lister - Director

AGENDA ITEM 1 – APOLOGIES

Apologies noted: Christine McPhail
Karen McCartney
Gary Gow
Geraldine Baird

AGENDA ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

AGENDA ITEM 3 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGG – 21st December 2021

Robert commented that the new style and content of reports and minutes of Finance Sub-Committee meetings were very full and informative. Frances agreed and stated that the narrative to the accounts and budgets was extremely informative.

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21st December 2021 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Frances Cunningham

Seconded : Maryellen McKeown

Agenda Item 3.1 – Matters Arising

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

It was noted that the review of the staff structure was nearing completion with a number of the revised job descriptions signed.

3.1.2 Office Opening/Working Hours (previous agenda item 3.1.4)

Members noted the results of the staff consultation exercise and the high level of support for the proposed changes to the office opening/working hours.

Edward noted that offices closing over lunch time now seemed a bit outdated.

Committee discussed that benefits to customers of the office opening throughout and any potential disadvantages of it closing ½ hour early.

Committee members commented that they had been unaware that the phones went off at 4pm every night.

After discussion members agreed;

- The office should not close for an hour each day and would remain open throughout
- Working hours would be 9am – 4.30pm Mon – Thurs, 9am – 3.30pm Fri
- The office would close one Wednesday morning to allow full staff meetings/training
- Phones would not go off until close of business, effective immediately
- The new hours would start from 1st April 2022 and would be reviewed after 6 months

3.1.3 Away Day (previous agenda item 3.1.5)

Committee members noted that the 'away day' would be held on Saturday 12th March in the office and would be facilitated by Angela Spence.

3.1.4 SHARE'S Annual Conference (previous agenda item 9.5)

Maryellen commented that remote meeting did not allow networking which was a large part of the benefits of attending conferences. Edward noted that many people were unable to connect remotely and would therefore be excluded.

Committee noted the change in arrangements and the decision of those attending from the Association had opted to cancel their booking.

AGENDA ITEM 4 – MINUTES OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

4.1 Minutes of Maintenance Sub-Committee Meeting – 15th January 2022

The minutes of the Maintenance Sub Committee Meeting held on 15th January 2022 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Robert McLeary

Seconded : Jean Stewart

Elaine referred to a number of questions Edward had asked and advised;

- The structural crack at the newbuild site referred to the boundary wall that had been present prior to the works starting
- The works required at Greystone Gardens were due to a leak from under the shower that had not been reported and had caused substantial flooding in the cavity under the floorboards
- An article would be in the next newsletter to explain the difficulties in sourcing materials and labour etc which have lead to delays in carrying out certain repairs

- The level of void repairs required had been as a result of the damage caused by the outgoing tenants

4.2 Minutes of Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee – 8th February 2022

The minutes of the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub Committee Meeting held on 8th February 2022 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Robert McLeary

Seconded : Frances Cunningham

AGENDA ITEM 5 – COMMITTEE DIGEST

5.1 Working Arrangements

Committee noted that staff were coming in 2 days a week and that the management team would review this arrangement to reflect the up-to-date advice from the Scottish Government.

5.2 SHR COVID Return – Quarter 3

Members noted the return for quarter 3

5.3 Model Rules

Elaine further explained the background to the decision-making process that the Management Committee had gone through for drafting the new Rules and, in particular, the decision to include the optional clause 43.1.12 which states:

A person will not be eligible to be a Committee Member and cannot be appointed or elected as such if:-

he/she is the spouse, partner, child (including adopted child or step child), parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of a Committee Member or of a governing body member of any other organisation in the Group

She advised that this clause had been omitted from the final draft of the Rules that had been issued to members prior to the AGM and subsequently approved. However, as it been referred to in the covering paperwork sent to members and mentioned in the presentation to members at the AGM, it could be viewed that members voted to accept Rules that included the clause. It was therefore a possibility that this could mean that the vote to approve the Rules would not be valid.

Committee considered the option of calling another SGM and re-presenting the Rules with the clause.

Members discussed the benefits and disadvantages of having or not having the clause in the Rules. It was highlighted that recruiting new members to the Management Committee had been identified as a priority objective for the Association and members agreed that not having the clause allowed the Association access to potential new members that would have otherwise been disbarred.

Concern was expressed at the potential, however unlikely, of having multiple members of the same family on the Committee which could allow a disproportionate influence over the decision-making process. After discussion it was felt this risk could be mitigated by use of the clause giving the Committee discretion to refuse a nomination and by having a clear policy on membership of the Management Committee.

Committee also discussed the requirement to submit a Notifiable Event and the process for doing so.

Committee agreed;

- That, on balance and with hindsight, the preference would be that Clause 43.1.12 should not be included in the Rules and therefore not call a Special General Meeting
- Elaine would contact the Regulator and take advice on the validity of the vote to approve the Rules
- Elaine would seek guidance from the Regulator on the governance implications of keeping the Rules as they were i.e. without the clause
- A Notifiable Event would be submitted in line with the advice from the SHR
- Elaine would draft a policy on Membership of the Management Committee for consideration
- Further training on Notifiable Events would be given to Committee members

5.4 EVH Membership

Committee noted that the Association has renewed its membership of EVH at a cost of £4,334.

5.5 Salary Increase 2022/2023

Members noted that, as a result of October's rate of inflation being above 2.5% the JNC had started negotiations on the salary increase for coming financial year.

5.6 Committee Attendance

Committee noted levels of attendance

5.7 Rental of Aspire Office

Committee noted the rental of unit.

5.8 Committee Training

Eveline asked if it would be possible to arrange Committee training on using the laptop.

Committee agreed that IT training should be arranged to coincide with members being issued with new tablets/laptops.

Edward gave members a report back on the training events he had attended recently. All were online and free.

AGENDA ITEM 6.0 – FINAL BUDGET 2022/2023

Edward noted that the budget figures seemed to show the surplus from factoring doubling to £4K. Elaine agreed to clarify the figures.

Committee noted the key points before approving the final budget presented.

AGENDA ITEM 7.0 – RENT INCREASE 2022/2023

Elaine advised that 17 responses to the consultation exercise had been submitted and noted that of these;

- 76% agreed with the proposal to increase rents by 2.5%
- 82% felt the consultation leaflet issued had given them enough information
- 53% were in receipt of some level of assistance with their rent (e.g. via Housing Benefit of Universal Credit)
- 41% reported experiencing difficulty in paying their rent as a result of COVID

Members noted the comments made by respondents and the fact that applications for Discretionary Housing Payment – Hardship had been made for those reporting financial difficulties.

It was also noted that the benchmarking exercise carried out by the Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum should that only three out of the 45 RSLs were consulting on an increase lower than 2.5%. It was further noted that a large number of Associations were proposing increases over 4%.

Members discussed the implications of the 2.5% increase on rents both on tenants and the Association's future financial position and discussed looking at a longer term plan for increases that would assist the budget setting process in the future.

After discussing the points raised in the report, members approved a final rent increase of 2.5%.

AGENDA ITEM 8.0 – SCHEDULE OF REPORTS & SUBMISSIONS

Elaine explained that the schedule was intended to give members information on what and when reports would be presented, thereby allowing them to hold the Director accountable for providing the information.

Members noted the schedule and the notes on the reports due for January and February.

AGENDA ITEM 9.0 – CORRESPONDENCE

9.1 Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum’s Report “Governance within the community based housing associations: ready for the future?”

9.2 Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum’s Briefing note on the main implications for social housing of Scottish Government’s Rented Sector Strategy

9.3 Request for Use of 36 Hamilton Road

Members discussed the request and raised concerns around insurance, keyholders and covering costs. Concerns were also raised at the proposal to store food in the unit and potential issues for neighbours.

Until clarification on these issues was available members felt unable to approve the request.

9.4 EVH Member’s Update – February 2022

9.5 Notification of EVH’s 25th AGM on Friday 29th April 2022. Closing date for nominations for the Board is 8th March 2022

AGENDA ITEM 10.0 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 Governance Course

Elaine advised that there was a limited number of places for SFHA members on Edinburgh Napier University ‘Leadership in Board Governance’ course. Expression of interest should be sent by 28th February.

No member wished to be put forward for the course.

10.2 Funding to Tackle the Cost of Living Crisis

Elaine advised that the Government had announced an additional £290 million package to address the impact of the rising costs of living.

AGENDA ITEM 11.0 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Management Committee meeting will be held on 22nd March 2022.

As there were no other items of business the meeting closed at 7.25pm.