

RUTHERGLEN & CAMBUSLANG HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on
Tuesday 28th March 2023
at 5.45pm in the Association's Office**

Present:

Edward Harkins – Chair
Robert McLeary
Frances Cunningham
Maryellen McKeown
Karen McCartney
Natalie Kirk
Karen Kirk
Eveline Thompson

In Attendance:

Elaine Lister (to agenda item 6.0)
Jim Kerr

AGENDA ITEM 1.0 – APOLOGIES

Apologies noted: Gary Gow

AGENDA ITEM 2.0 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

It was agreed to take Agenda Item 6 first.
Elaine introduced Lorna Shaw from Research Resources who attended via zoom.

Due to difficulties with the sound levels, it was agreed to postpone the presentation until the next meeting when Lorna will attend in person.

Edward asked members for a private discussion on some matters without staff being present.

Elaine and Jim left the meeting.

Upon their return the meeting resumed in line with the agenda.

AGENDA ITEM 3.0 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 7th February 2023 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Maryellen McKeown
Seconded : Karen Kirk

Agenda Item 3.1 – Matters Arising

3.1.1 – Election of Office Bearers (previous agenda item 3.1.2)

Members noted the advice from the Scottish Housing Regulator to seek the advice of a solicitor. They discussed if the position was actually 'acting chair' until voted on after the AGM and recognised the importance of clarity to ensure compliance with the 'five year rule'.

Members agreed to seek clarity from the Association's legal advisers nearer the time at the start of 2026.

3.1.2 – Development at New Road

Elaine gave an update on the funding application for the project and members noted that it was looking favourable that approval would be given. However, Elaine advised that there was a bit of a 'chicken and egg' situation in that the Scottish Government won't give formal approval until all the permissions have been given by South Lanarkshire Council, but the developer does not want to incur the cost of making the necessary applications without confirmation the project will definitely go ahead.

Members discussed the project and, whilst keen to continue to develop new homes, recognised that potential financial impact and therefore want to have a further discussion on the financial risks.

Members asked for a report on the financial risks attached to the project to be presented to a future Finance, Audit and Risk Sub Committee.

3.1.3 – Committee & Senior Staff Planning Day (previous agenda item 5.1)

Members that attended the Planning Day agreed that it had been useful and informative. It was felt that there had been some robust discussion on the risks and challenges facing the Association and how these could be mitigated.

It was noted the Angela Spence, who facilitated the event, was preparing notes from the discussions which would be presented to the full Management Committee for further discussion.

The Risk Register would then be updated.

3.1.4 – Tenant & Resident Safety Compliance (previous agenda item 5.3)

Committee noted the appointment of Joe Dewar to carry out a review of the Association's compliance with the tenant and resident safety requirements. Reference was made to the discussions at the Maintenance Sub-Committee regarding the requirement for such a review at this time.

Members discussed the importance of, not only ensuring compliance, but also the need to be able to demonstrate compliance. It was noted that this was a key focus of the Scottish Housing Regulator who would be carrying out visits to Associations where there were concerns.

Members also discussed the quality of the relevant policies, procedures and registers and the need to ensure they were up-to-date. It was acknowledged that members had to be given assurance that these met with requirements and that this would, potentially, be onerous in the absence of an Asset Manager.

Given the importance of ensuring members were fully assured of the Association's compliance, members confirmed their support of the review being carried out.

3.1.5 Asset Manager's Recruitment (previous agenda item 5.4.1)

Edward advised members that the recruitment exercise had not been successful and no appointment had been made. It was noted that only 3 applications had been received and that one candidate, despite confirming their attendance at the interview, did not contact EVH to arrange the Management Test and did not submit their presentation by the deadline. After discussion with the panel, it had been agreed to withdraw the invite to interview.

Members discussed the problems of recruiting and Frances confirmed that this was a real problem being experienced across the sector. It was acknowledged that it was now an expectation that home working would be offered by employers and that this seemed to be a key factor in attracting candidates.

Members agreed to refer further consideration on the recruitment for the post as well as how to support the maintenance department in the meantime to the Staffing Sub-Committee.

3.1.6 Temporary Receptionist (previous agenda item 5.4.3)

Members noted that the temporary receptionist had left and that there was no one on EVH's temporary books to cover the vacancy. Concern was expressed as to the number of changes that the department had experienced in the past year and members agreed that a strategy had to be developed to ensure that there was some stability for the department and the other sections who had had to provide cover.

Members agreed to refer the development of an action plan for the department to the Staffing Sub-Committee.

3.1.7 Rent Increase 2023 (previous agenda item 6.0)

Committee noted that the increase letters to tenants had been issued before the 28th March in line with the requirements to give them 28 days notice.

AGENDA ITEM 4.0 – DRAFT MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

4.1 – Minutes of Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee: 14th February 2023

Members noted that these would be presented at the next Management Committee Meeting

4.2 Minutes of Maintenance Sub-Committee: 15th February 2023

Robert advised that a number of the issues raised at the meeting had now been addressed.

Members noted the draft minutes and that these would be presented for approval at the next Maintenance Sub-Committee.

4.3 Minutes of Housing Management Sub-Committee: 28th February 2023

Members noted the draft minutes and that these would be presented to the next Housing Management Sub-Committee meeting for approval.

AGENDA ITEM 5.0 – COMMITTEE DIGEST

5.1 External Auditor

Elaine gave the background to the sudden withdrawal of Azets as the Association's external auditor and the need to quickly identify auditors for this year.

Edward queried why Azets had been approached to tender and Elaine explained that they could only not act as the auditor under the current arrangement which had been in place for a number of years and therefore contravened their reviewed Ethics Policy. They could however be re-appointed under a new contract.

Elaine also confirmed that the table detailing the costs gave the costs previously paid to Azets and the third set of costs were actually submitted by Wylie and Bisset, not French Duncan.

With this clarification, members noted the appointment of Chein & Tate as the Association's External Auditor for the next two years and that a full tendering exercise would be carried next year.

5.2 Notifiable Event

Elaine explained that the change in the Association's External Auditor was a notifiable event and, accordingly, she had submitted notification and the requested additional information.

Committee noted.

5.3 Meeting with Scottish Housing Regulator

Committee noted the topics that were raised by the Regulator and acknowledged that recruiting new members to the Management Committee was required in order to ensure a diverse range of skills, knowledge and experiences. Edward advised that this was a priority for the Engagement Working Group and that a full recruitment exercise would be carried out prior to the next AGM.

Members also discussed the Regulator's requirement for minutes to be more detailed and to demonstrate that members had;

- Understood the issues under discussion
- Fully assessed the implications and risks to the Association
- Gained sufficient assurance
- Understood the requirements of the Regulatory Framework

It was acknowledged that this meant that the format and content of reports to members had to give sufficient information and details to allow informed discussions and decisions.

Members agreed to discuss the format and contents of future reports to get the balance between ensuring sufficient information is given with the need to avoid overly complex or overwhelming reports.

5.4 Appraisal of Director

Members agreed for the Chair and Secretary to take this forward with the Director.

5.5 IT Audit

Jim gave members an outline of the increased risks that organisations were facing from hackers and cyber attacks as well as the demanding requirements to protect personal data under General Data Protection Regulations, Data Protection legislation etc.

Members agreed that ensuring that the Association was fully protected had to be viewed as a priority. It was also felt that it was important for the Association to keep its systems and procedures up to date to provide an efficient and cost-effective service delivery.

Members approved the appointment of Lugo Ltd to carry out a full review of the Association's infrastructure, software, security etc

5.6 Let of Aspire Unit 11

Committee noted the potential let of Unit 11 to 1st Class Credit Union and the negotiated terms.

5.7 Sale of Units at Hamilton Road

Members noted that the sale of the 2 commercial units at Hamilton Road had been concluded.

5.8 Review of the Annual Assurance Evidence Bank

For the benefit of the new members, Elaine explained the need for the Association to submit an Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Regulator that stated that members of the Management Committee were fully assured that the Association was compliant with the terms of the regulatory requirement and standards. She further explained that the submission was an important part of the regulator's assessment of the Association and its Engagement Plan.

Members acknowledged the need to ensure that the Association had an easily accessible bank of evidence that demonstrated compliance that was appropriate and up-to-date. At the previous meeting it had been agreed to have a programme for reviewing individual requirements and standards but Elaine proposed that a full comprehensive review was carried out by an external and independent consultant to ensure impartiality and, thereafter, follow a programme of individual reviews.

Frances advised that her organisation had carried out a similar exercise which, although relatively expensive, had been extremely useful and had given Committee members the level of assurance they required.

After discussion, members agreed to an independent review being carried out and asked Elaine to get 3 quotes from suitable companies/consultants.

5.9 Scottish Housing Regulator's Engagement Plan 2023

Members noted that 2023 Engagement Plan assessed the Association as 'compliant' and would be published on the SHR's website on 31st March.

AGENDA ITEM 6.0 – TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

This item was postponed until the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM 7.0 – COMMITTEE APPRAISALS

For the benefit of the new members, Elaine explained the requirement for members of the Management Committee to participate in an annual 'appraisal' to ensure that collective Committee has the range of skills, knowledge, diversity and objectivity needed to properly carry out their obligations and responsibilities.

Members stated that they felt that last year's appraisals process which had been carried out by SHARE had not been particularly beneficial and had been rather off-putting and demoralising.

Edward advised that he was keen to see a 360 degree approach to this year's appraisals and suggested getting more information on the best way for this exercise to be carried out

Members agreed to Edward finding out more information on 360 degree appraisals

AGENDA ITEM 8.0 – COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

Due to the time, it was agreed that this would be postponed to the next meeting.

As the meeting was reaching the 2 hour limit allowed in the Standing Orders, Frances Cunningham proposed suspending the Standing Orders. This was seconded by Robert McLeary.

AGENDA ITEM 9.0 – ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Jim gave an update on the activities of the working group.

Edward noted that he was keen for the Association to work with agencies and/or other organisations to support identifying how the Association could best achieve its aims and objectives. Elaine advised that she had contacted Tenants Information Service and was arranging a meeting with them to explore how they could support the Association and/or signpost to other potential agencies the Association could work with.

Edward suggested getting in touch with some local Association's that had experience in engaging with their communities such as Cassiltoun HA.

This would be followed up by Jim and Elaine.

Jim advised that the Association had been approached by the organisers of Landemer Day asking if it would be willing to make a contribution to the event. Last year the Association sponsored the Fun Run and made a cash donation. An equal financial donation was made to the Summer Fest event held in Cambuslang.

It was agreed to make a donation to both events and members requested that Jim explored the options for sponsoring a specific activity.

AGENDA ITEM 10.0 - CORRESPONDENCE

10.1 EVH Member's Update – March 2023

10.2 GWSF Monthly Update – March 2023

10.3 GWSF Report – Tenancy Sustainment & Intensive Housing support for Vulnerable Households

Robert, Karen & Maryellen requested copies of the report

AGENDA ITEM 11.0 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 – Lease of Hall in Caledonian Centre

Elaine advised that there had been a request received to lease the big hall in the Caledonian Centre for a weekly dance class.

Natalie stated that the request was from a young lady that lives in the Cambuslang area who was looking to run two classes per week for local children. She stated that it would benefit the community to have more events that could promote the centre.

Members unanimously agreed to allow the lease.

10.2 – Insurance Renewal

Elaine advised that the Association insurance policy was due for renewal but that indications were that getting costs were going to be higher than previously due to;

- Re-insurance costs becoming more expensive which then impact on the insurance costs provided
- Claims due to severe weather events becoming more frequent and more severe
- Companies that have dealt with social housing have consistently lost money over the last 5 years
- Insurers leaving the housing sector as they are not making money and do not see any prospect of doing so
- Predications of more liability claims as the cost of living crisis continues
- The index linking on buildings running at 20% which then directly impact on claims costs and insurance premiums

A fuller report would be given to the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub Committee.

Members noted the difficulties being faced by the sector and the impact on the Association's insurance costs.

AGENDA ITEM 11.0 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 18th April 2023.

As there were no other items of business the meeting closed at 8.05pm.

Signed by Chairperson	
Name	Edward Harkins
Date	18 th April 2023