

RUTHERGLEN & CAMBUSLANG HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on
Tuesday 18th April 2023
at 5.45pm in the Association's Office**

Present:

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

In Attendance:

Elaine Lister

Elaine advised that Lorna Shaw from Research Resources was unable to attend the meeting to give the presentation on the Satisfaction Survey as intended.

This would be postponed until the next meeting in May.

AGENDA ITEM 1.0 – APOLOGIES

There were no apologies noted

AGENDA ITEM 2.0 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

AGENDA ITEM 3.0 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 28th March 2023 were noted as a true record.

Proposed : Maryellen McKeown

Seconded : Frances Cunningham

The Chair noted that the minutes of the 'in camera' meeting held on 14th March 2023 and for the section of the meeting on 28th March will be presented at the Management Committee meeting in May for approval.

Agenda Item 3.1 – Matters Arising

3.1.1 Development at New Road (previous agenda item 3.1.2)

Elaine advised that, in order to break the 'deadlock' it was proposed that the Association issue a 'letter of comfort' to the developer which detailed the costs the Association would be liable for in the event it subsequently pulled out after the developer had incurred the fees connected with the planning application process. This gave a measure of protection for both the Association and the developer.

Frances asked if feasibility studies had been carried out on the project and Elaine confirmed that these would have been done at the start of the project but given the length of time since then, she would clarify the position with Tom Martin who was acting on behalf of the Association.

Members discussed the project and acknowledged that pursuing development projects at this time was a potential risk due to the high costs of materials and labour and the uncertainty with the interest rates etc. However, it was members were keen to take opportunities to build new housing where financially viable and generally felt that the project should be 'kept alive' for the time until there was more clarity on the level of funding, the cost of private finance etc.

Elaine advised that she had been contacted about a project at Mountford Avenue which had been looked at previously but that the Association had withdrawn from due to concerns about the long-term financial position of the contractor. She reported that it appeared that a new team had been appointed and were looking for the Association to get involved.

Members recalled the project and the concerns and, in the light of the previous discussion on costs, risks etc, felt that it would not be prudent to pursue the project at this time but agreed that that if the project was presented as a design and build, this could be considered at a later date.

Elaine further advised that a potential development at the Mill Road was being discussed with the senior management team. The site belongs to the association and currently only has lockups on it. These are not in a great state of repair and are costly to maintain. It may therefore be an option to demolish these and build on the site.

3.1.2 Committee and Senior Staff Planning Day (previous agenda item 3.1.3)

Elaine advised that Angela would be presenting her notes, action plan and draft risk register to the Management Committee. Elaine proposed scheduling Angela's presentation for the meeting in June as May's agenda was going to be quite heavy with the ARC for approval, the Tenant Satisfaction Survey presentation etc.

Members recognised the importance of both the ARC submission and the results from the Satisfaction Survey and felt both required time for full discussion and consideration.

Committee agreed to the presentation being on the agenda for June's meeting.

3.1.3 Tenant & Resident Safety Compliance Review (previous agenda item 3.1.4)

Elaine reported on her meeting with Joe Dewar and advised that an action plan had been drafted with dates for completion to be agreed. This is due for presentation to the Management Committee at the meeting in June.

Elaine further advised that progress had been made on a number of key policies which would be presented to the Maintenance Sub-Committee for consideration prior to being recommended for ratification by the Management Committee.

3.1.4 Notifiable Event (previous agenda item 5.2)

Committee noted that there had been no further contact from the Scottish Housing regulator on the Notifiable Event submission concerning the change of external auditor.

3.1.5 Appraisal of Director (previous agenda item 5.4)

Committee members noted that this was ongoing pending the completion of the Individual Stress Assessment and the follow up with the Occupational Health Advisor.

3.1.6 Review of the Annual Assurance Evidence Bank (previous agenda item 5.8)

Committee noted the consultants approached for costs.

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

4.1 Minutes of Maintenance Sub-Committee Meeting - 21st March 2023

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

AGENDA ITEM 5.0 – COMMITTEE DIGEST

5.1 SHR's Annual Risk Assessment Outcomes

Elaine explained the background to the annual risk assessments carried out by the Scottish Housing Regulator, including the main areas of risk the assessments focus on and the range of information provided by each landlord that is considered as part of the assessment.

Members noted the outcomes across RSLs for 2023:

2023 Risk Assessment Outcomes

Level of Compliance	2023	2022
Compliant	131	136
Under Review	3	4
Did not meet Regulatory Standards	5	6
Require use of Statutory Powers	0	0

Reasons for Engagement

Reason	2023	2022
Tenant & Resident Safety	9	10
Governance	24	30
Finance	19	33
Planned organisational Changes	5	14
Service Quality	7	2
Stock Quality	5	5
Development	23	28
Systematically Important	24	24

5.2 SHR Visits re: Annual Assurance Statement

Elaine advised members that the Scottish Housing Regulator had announced its second programme of visits to 11 landlords to “understand their approach in preparing their statement and how they have assured themselves about compliance with regulatory requirements and standards”.

Members observed that the Regulator had stated that the visits would have a particular focus on;

- Compliance with tenants and residents safety duties
- The accuracy of the data submitted in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)

Members noted the Association was not included in this programme of visits and that a report on the Regulator's finding would be produced.

5.3 Share Application

Elaine advised that a share application had been received from a tenant.

Approval of the application was proposed by Robert McLeary and seconded by Frances Cunningham.

5.4 Validation of the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC)

Elaine referred to one of the SHR's stated focuses which was to accuracy of data submitted in the ARC and advised that many associations have the data independently validated as part of the assurance process for the governing body.

France advised that her organisation had been getting the ARC data validated for a number of years and that it had been an extremely useful and had highlighted areas where the data reported was not accurate. She did note that the exercise had been onerous and demanding at times.

Members discussed the importance of ensuring the data reported was accurate and the merits of getting that level of assurance on the Association's performance.

Committee approved investigating costs for getting an independent validation of this year's ARC return data.

5.5 Rent Protect at Home of CEO

Members discussed the protest organised by Scottish Tenants Organisation and agreed that the Association should back any action that prevents a reoccurrence of such an event.

5.6 Poverty Alliance Affiliation

Elaine advised that the Association had received an invite to take affiliation to The Poverty Alliance which was a network of organisations that tackled poverty and campaigned "for the rebalance in the distribution of power, wealth and resources".

Edward expressed the view that, while he supported the ideals of the Alliance, he did not see what value affiliation could bring to the Association. He stated that he felt the Association should be concentrating on what it can do to alleviate impact of the cost of living crisis within its own communities.

Karen agreed that the Association should be looking to help its own tenants first and foremost.

As the meeting had been going for the 2 hours allowed, Frances proposed suspending the standing order to allow for the remaining matters of business to be concluded.

This was unanimously approved.

The Committee had a discussion about they meant by 'engagement' as opposed to participation and what should be the Association's priorities. Edward reminded members that he had proposed having a 'cost of living summit' and had written a paper on how he thought this could be organised and what outcomes it could deliver. Karen noted that this had been being discussed for some time but that no progress seemed to be getting made.

Frances suggested contacting New Gorbals HA to see how they felt they had benefited from affiliation but Edward felt that this was just prolonging the decision.

After discussion and careful consideration, members agreed not to take affiliation with the Alliance.

Maryellen apologised as she had to leave the meeting at this point due to a previous commitment.

AGENDA ITEM 6.0 – TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

This agenda item was postponed as noted.

AGENDA ITEM 7.0 – COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

This agenda item was postponed due to the meeting already exceeding the 2 hours allowed under the standing orders.

AGENDA ITEM 8.0 – ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUP REPORT

This agenda item was postponed due to the meeting already exceeding the 2 hours allowed under the standing orders.

AGENDA ITEM 9.0 – CORRESPONDENCE

Committee noted the items of correspondence that had been received.

AGENDA ITEM – 10.0 AOCB

10.1 Staffing Sub-Committee Meeting

Edward advised members that some issues had been discussed at the staffing sub-committee meeting that he wanted to bring to members attention.

The recent recruitment exercise for an Asset manager had highlighted the problems recruiting across the sector and he had real concerns about the Association's ability to successfully fill the post. He suggested that members consider other options for covering the post and for providing support to the maintenance team in the immediate future. He proposed consideration be given to appointing a consultant to review the whole asset management function, including the structure of the section and its needs and priorities. He was also keen to explore the skills and knowledge currently within the department, identify any gaps and consider options for covering the management role from existing resources.

Robert supported the suggestion stating that while he acknowledged that that he felt getting someone in that was very experienced might initially be expensive, it would, in the long term, be cost effective. Elaine pointed out that savings were being made in not paying John's salary.

Robert was also keen to explore the option of not recruiting an Asset manager as was envisaged but using existing resources to manage the department and buying in additional expertise if required for specific exercises or projects.

Committee noted that money was being saved by not paying the salary for the maintenance manager and that this would help off-set any consultancy fees.

Members also felt that, given the importance of ensuring the stock is well maintained, the focus on tenant safety and the challenges of rising costs etc it was vital that the Association ensured the maintenance section was 'fit for purpose' and had effective systems and processes in place.

Members unanimously agreed to explore potential external consultants that could carry out the remit.

Edward also advised that the staffing-sub had looked at options presented for stabilising the administration department. He noted that there was a possibility of or perceptions of a conflict of interest in the close relationship between one member of the team and the Director. He had been advised that the staff member was on a temporary, job share contract but felt that any future proposals to either increase the job share hours and/or make the post permanent would need to be clearly discussed and recorded to ensure probity and transparency.

Elaine stressed that she had not presented any proposals or recommendations to the staffing sub because of the potential for a conflict of interests but had put forward points and options members may wish to consider. Any proposals or recommendations would be made by Wilma in her capacity of manager of the department. She further stated that she would not participate in these discussions and would leave the meeting in order to ensure transparency and openness.

Edward stated he felt a fuller review of the staffing structure was required to ensure that it was working. Frances agreed that there was a need to look at the structure in general but felt that the proposed staff survey would be an important starting point as this would help identify areas of pressures etc.

Elaine agreed and suggested that the Staffing Sub-Committee start to consider a remit and strategy for the review.

AGENDA ITEM 11.0 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Elaine advised that there were a number of large reports, presentations and discussions that were due to be put on the agenda for the next couple of meetings and asked if members would prefer to have an additional meeting in order to keep the agenda shorter and more manageable.

Karen expressed concern that even with an additional meeting, the scheduled meetings would go on for just as long.

After discussion, members agreed to see if an additional meeting at the start of June could be arranged.

The next scheduled meeting of the Management Committee will be on Tuesday 23rd May 2023. Elaine submitted her apologies as she will be on holiday.

As there were no other items of business the meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Signed by Chairperson	
Name	Edward Harkins
Date	23 rd May 2023