

RUTHERGLEN & CAMBUSLANG HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
held on
Tuesday 20th February 2024
at 5.45pm in the Association's Office**

Present:

Robert McLeary
Frances Cunningham
Natalie Kirk
Karen McCartney
Gary Gow
Mary Ellen McKeown

In Attendance:

Jim Kerr – Assistant Director

AGENDA ITEM 1.0 – APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from James Ross, Karen Kirk and Elaine Lister.

Members were asked if anyone wished to be considered for the position of Chairperson and Frances Cunningham advised that she was willing to fulfil the role as Chair of the management committee until the Association's AGM in September.

Committee approved the appointment of Frances as Chair of the management committee until the Association's AGM in September.

AGENDA ITEM 2.0 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Natalie Kirk declared an interest in agenda item 4.1.3 as she was a member of the Community Committee for the Caledonian Centre.

AGENDA ITEM 3.0 – NOTIFIABLE EVENTS

Members noted that two notifiable events had been submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator, the first being Edward's resignation as Chair and secondly the withdrawal from the development at New Road, Cambuslang with further information being supplied to the Regulator.

AGENDA ITEM 4.0 – MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 23rd January 2024

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd January 2024 were noted as a true record.

Proposed: Natalie Kirk
Seconded: Robert McLeary

Agenda Item 4.1 - Matters Arising

4.1.1 Aspire Lets

Members noted that the unit within the business centre in rent arrears has made a further payment to reduce the arrears balance but has not made sufficient payments to clear the arrears. Association staff are in contact with the tenant regarding recovery of the arrears as per the lease agreement and the tenant has advised that they will make a payment by the 16th February 2024 to clear all arrears. Staff have advised that if the account is not fully brought up to date, the Association will be passing the matter to its solicitor.

Members also noted that the new tenant for Unit 10 has now taken up occupancy of the unit following some alterations being carried out. The tenant has requested that they place a sign on the front door of the business centre for visitors, but members refused this request on the basis that it would create a precedent for other business units to make this request. Alternative solutions for this request are to be sought.

4.1.2 Repairs and Maintenance Void Framework

Members noted that tenders have been returned and are being checked against the selection criteria. Each Association in the partnership will carry out its own quality check to give an average for each tenderer and surveyors will be checking costs. Once all scores have been collated, the contractors that meet all the criteria will be added to the framework.

All further updates will be reported to the Maintenance Sub-Committee going forward.

4.1.3 Caledonian Centre

Members were advised that further meetings with South Lanarkshire Council and the nursery administration are being arranged and issues with the title deeds and the registration of the actual building have been identified and are being investigated.

4.1.4 Director's Appraisal

Robert referred to the agreement made at the previous meeting that the Director's Appraisal was to be carried out by Robert and Frances with support from Angela Spence.

He suggested that as Angela has already worked closely with the Association on previous pieces of work, it may be beneficial to obtain support from another independent source e.g. EVH

Committee agreed to obtain alternative support to enable the Director's appraisal to be carried out.

AGENDA ITEM 5.0 – DRAFT MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS

5.1 Minutes of the Maintenance Sub-Committee Meeting – 30th January 2024

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

AGENDA ITEM 6.0 – ANNUAL RENT INCREASE 2024

Members discussed the key points of the Annual Rent Increase report and noted;

- The results of the consultation exercise (55.7% of respondents voted for 5% increase with limited investment in the stock for 2024/2025).
- Inflation running at 4.6%.
- 28% of GWSF members that participated in the rent increase survey were increasing rents by 5%, with just over half increasing their rents by over 5%.
- The Association's average rents compared with those of South Lanarkshire Council, the peer group and the Scottish average.
- The impact of a 5% increase on average rents.
- Affordability of the Association's rents.
- The impact of the cost of living crisis on tenants.
- Increased costs of materials and labour.

Members also considered the potential implications of limiting the planned maintenance works carried out in the coming year on the Association's long term financial forecast as well as its ability to maintain the stock to the highest standards.

After discussion and taking into account discussions at previous management and housing management sub-committee meetings, members felt a 5% increase was a fair balance between protecting the Association's future financial stability and continuing to support tenants through the current economic challenges.

It was unanimously approved to increase rent by 5% for 2024/2025.

AGENDA ITEM 7.0 - FINAL BUDGET 2024/25

Jim advised that the final budget proposal and been discussed at length at the Finance, Audit & Risk Sub-Committee held on 13th February and was being recommended to the Management Committee for approval.

Committee noted the key points contained within the Final Budget Report before approving the Final Budget for 2024/25.

AGENDA ITEM 8.0 – PARTICIPATION, ENAGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION REVIEW

The report on the thematic review of Tenant Participation was presented and committee members noted that the review will include an outline of what tenants and residents can expect from their landlord and the outcomes that landlords should be delivering.

Members noted that the review of the regulatory framework also included;

- Strengthening the emphasis on landlords “listening to tenants and service users”
- Introducing a requirement on landlords to provide tenants, resident and service users with appropriate ways to feedback and raise concerns.
- Introducing a requirement on landlords to consider feedback and concerns raised and provide quick and effective responses.

Jim advised that the review of the Association’s Participation Strategy has been started but a key part of developing the Association’s approach to participation, engagement and consultation will be getting a sound understanding of the needs, expectations and priorities of service users.

Committee recognised the need for the Association to strengthen its approach to engagement with service users and welcomed the review of the policy. It was noted that this had been an ambition of the Association for a number of years and was a key objective in the draft business plan.

Members discussed the types of information that could be gathered as part of the proposed survey and acknowledged this information would underpin and support the development of the Association’s approach to participation and engagement.

Members approved obtaining proposals and costs from 3-4 research companies in order to commission a full opinion survey.

AGENDA ITEM 9.0 – COMMITTEE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2024

Jim advised that, based on the individual and collective Committee appraisals, along with the review of the Assurance Evidence Bank, a number of areas of training had been identified.

Members acknowledged that training on key policies and documents was required in order to ensure all members had the skills, understanding and knowledge needed to properly carry out their roles and responsibilities. They discussed how these training sessions could best be delivered given the amount of important work that was already being brought to meetings.

It was agreed that the training sessions would be best delivered through a mixture of dedicated training meetings and as part of the scheduled monthly meetings.

AGENDA ITEM 10.0 – NEW REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The report giving a summary of the key points in the new regulatory framework was presented with an overview of changes were provided. Members noted that the new framework will come into effect on the 1st of April 2024.

Committee also noted that the Annual Return of the Charter will be comprehensively reviewed during 2024 and the Regulator would be establishing working groups to consider and consult on the current indicators and any proposed changes.

AGENDA ITEM 11.0 – COMMITTEE DIGEST

11.0 Meeting with the Scottish Housing Regulator

Jim advised that as part of its annual risk assessment, the Association's Regulation Manager, Joyce Stewart, met with Elaine and Jim primarily to get clarification on some points that had been picked up through reviewing the minutes of recent management committee meetings.

Points discussed included;

- The Association's decision to withdraw from the New Road development project
- Clarification that the 'staff restructure' referred to only consisted of a review of job descriptions, titles etc and did not include consideration of redundancies
- The number of attendees at some meetings was low with only 5 attending on a fairly regular basis
- How performance is reported to members of the Management Committee
- Edwards's resignation and appointing a new Chair
- The governance structure and the option of not having sub-committees and having all business discussed at one monthly meeting of the governing body, more commonly now called The Board apparently.

Members discussed the governance structure and the option of having only one Committee meeting per month that considered all items of business. This would negate the need for sub-committee meetings. Concern was raised about the practicality of getting through all items of business and allowing proper discussion on important matters all within the 2 hours allowed for in the standing orders.

Members;

- Noted the topics discussed at the meeting
- Noted that, following on from the meeting, 2 Notifiable Events were submitted relating Edward's resignation and the decision to withdraw from the New Road development.
- Agreed that the governance structure would be an agenda item for the Planning day

11.2 EVH Representative

Committee agreed that it was not necessary to replace Edward as the depute representative on EVH's executive and requested that all updates from EVH be circulated to all management committee members as and when they are received.

11.3 Policy Working Group

The meeting of the Policy Working Group provisionally scheduled for Wednesday 21st February could not go ahead due to being inquorate. Policies will therefore be required to be brought to monthly management committee meetings for approval.

11.4 Pay Negotiations 2024

Members noted the progress on the negotiations between EVH and Unite the Union and that there had been a formal failure to agree. It was also noted that the matter had now been referred to ACAS and that further updates will be given by EVH as the employers representative.

11.5 Planning Day

Jim advised that Elaine was looking to get the annual planning day organised as soon as possible as there were a number of key matters for consideration.

Committee discussed the venue for the day and it was agreed that it would be difficult for some members to commit to 2 days and an overnight stay. It was therefore agreed that a one-day event in a venue within easy reach would be more suitable.

Members also considered the agenda for the day, taking into account the priorities and current demands on the Association.

Members agreed a draft agenda to cover;

- The Business Plan
- Governance structure
- Content & format of reports
- Performance reporting
- Progress tracking
- Committee Training (possibly some Finance based training provided by FMD)
- Use of technology

Committee members to provide Jim with their availability over the next month to six weeks to allow for a suitable date and venue to be confirmed.

11.6 Scottish Housing Regulator – Thematic Review

Committee noted that the Regulator had announced that it is undertaking a Thematic Review of Tenant Participation that will include what tenants and residents can expect from their landlord and the outcomes that landlords should be delivering.

As part of that review online focus groups are being held, facilitated by TPAS.

Members noted the dates and times of the focus groups meeting and the booking arrangements for anyone wishing to attend.

11.7 Glasgow West of Scotland Forum – Affiliation Renewal

Jim advised that the Association's affiliation fees to the Glasgow t& West of Scotland Forum (GWSF) for 2024/2025 were due for renewal and that these had increased from last year's fees of £1,674.00 to £2,121.00 for 2024/25. The increased fees resulted from a restructuring to bring the fees of member associations out-with Glasgow up to 50% of the equivalent Glasgow fee, as agreed with members in the consultation late in 2022. They also incorporate an increase of 4.5%.

Members discussed the benefits of membership of the forum and agreed that the forum, as a representative of the sector, should be supported, especially in the challenging times the sector was facing. Committee members unanimously approved the renewal of the GWSF Affiliation Fees.

11.8 SHARE Membership Renewal

Jim advised that the Association's membership of SHARE (the learning and development organisation for Housing Associations & Cooperatives) was due for renewal for 2024/25.

Member noted the changes to membership and that Corporate membership for all committee members would be of £2,500 for the year and individual staff memberships of £150.00 per member of staff for the year.

After discussion around the benefits of attending SHARE's training services and conferences for committee and staff members, members approved the Corporate Membership with SHARE for 2024/25 on the basis that the Association will monitor the use of the new membership over the year and at the next renewal adjust as required.

AGENDA ITEM 12.0 – COMMITTEE DISCUSSION

There were no further topics discussed.

AGENDA ITEM 13.0 – CORRESPONDENCE

There were updates from EVH and GWSF, and as per previous discussions at Agenda Item 11.2, these updates will now be automatically circulated to committee members.

AGENDA ITEM 14.0 – AOCB

14.1 Staffing Sub-Committee

Jim advised that a Staffing Sub-Committee would need to be arranged in light of some changes within the staff and asked for clarification as to who sat on that sub. Karen McCartney, Robert and Frances confirmed that they attend the staffing sub-committee meeting.

14.2 Committee Laptops

Robert enquired about the renewal of committee laptops/tablets and it was agreed that this could be discussed at the planning strategy day with a view to reaching a decision on the way forward.

14.3 Long Service Awards

Committee discussed long service awards for existing committee members and staff and agreed that this should be investigated.

15.0 – DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 19th March 2024.

As there were no other items of business the meeting closed at 7.20pm.