

GLEN HOUSING ASSOCIATION
MINUTE OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT MEETING
WEDNESDAY 19th APRIL 2023

PRESENT: Graham Ross (GR) - Chair
Barry Allan (BA)
Isobel Muirhead (IM)
John McArthur (JMc)
Shane Garrioch (SG)
Trevor Newman (TN)
Stuart Thomson (ST)

IN ATTENDANCE: T Thomson (TT), Thomson Cooper
I Byers (IB)
K Milne (KM)

1. APOLOGIES & DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Apologies: Alison Crook (AC)
P Milne (PM)
Josie Smith (JS)
A Dickie (AD)

Declarations of Interest: None

2. MINUTES

2.1 Minute of Board of Management Meeting 22nd March 2023

The above Minute was proposed by JMc, seconded by SG and approved as a true record of the meeting. IB asked that Item 3.2.1 (Arrears Report), be amended to accurately reflect what he meant as follows:

It should be noted that there is approx. £6k included in this figure which relates to the 3 decree cases noted in the Background Report at Item 5. IB opined that staff really couldn't have done anything different to alleviate getting to this position for these cases– it's really just down to tenant circumstances. Decree paperwork where the tenant has been given a lengthy jail term, was anticipated before the end of March, however delays by the Court will likely see this slipping into the next

financial year, thus adding to the current tenant arrear as opposed to the former tenant arrear figure.

2.2 Matters Arising from the above Minute

- 2.2.1 IB referred to Item 2.2.1 and confirmed that Changeworks had, just today, had word from the Scottish Government that the grant award is imminent (within the next week or so), no amounts or conditions known at this point.

IB confirmed that if the award letter was not forthcoming in the next couple of weeks, then Changeworks, who are also working on behalf of a lot of other organisations, will be chasing this.

In the meantime, AD has spoken with Changeworks in terms of giving a presentation to the Net Zero Working Group (but open to all), on the Tenant Engagement works that will ensue. IB suggested Thursday at 3pm for the presentation but added that an evening could also be arranged if required.

- 2.2.2 IB referred to Item 2.2.2 and confirmed that Aberlour had now paid the rents for the vacant flats for April. On a more positive note, one funding decision has been approved by Fife Council, with an anticipated allocation from early May. The other 2 with Angus Council are also looking positive.

GR pondered how long the Association should allow this to continue, should it happen again in the future – particularly with nearly 14k applicants on the Fife Housing Register - general needs list. BA commented that it would still be his preference to keep the flats for their intended use. IB confirmed that ultimately, it will be a decision for Board to make should the situation arise again, however, he did also advise that Aberlour are definitely aware that there is the potential of losing the facility. JMc suggested the Allocations Policy be reviewed to ensure there is an option to allow for a change of use, if required. IB suggested this was the case, however, he would confirm.

- 2.2.3 JMc referred to Item 4.1.1 and suggested this statement should be more explicit, i.e. Board expects to see a report on the statistics within the Annual Report – in recognition of the funders and the work by staff. Those present agreed.

ST added that he had been approached by a tenant who objects to having to carry out an Income & Expenditure exercise as they felt that being on benefits should suffice. IB confirmed that if a tenant objects, then there are other routes to assistance, generally signposting to other agencies. JMc also suggested that if a tenant does offer up information, this can open up other avenues of assistance that Glen can provide, e.g. budgeting advice.

3. FINANCE AND STAFFING MATTERS

3.1 Financial Report for the year to 31/03/2023

TT presented this item and referred Members to the detailed report accompanying the Draft year-end Management Accounts. The accounts as presented were **approved**.

- 3.1.1 BA referred to the Loan Portfolio and in particular the 71% of loans on variable rate. No immediate need as they are not up for review until 2024 at earliest, however worth having a plan of action in terms of the likelihood that the interest rate is not going to come down. IB agreed and confirmed that AD had already done some background work as she'd been in discussions with Triodos and CAF in terms of the Net Zero Fund and the resultant projections.

3.2 Arrears Report to 31/03/2023

IB presented this report. The report was noted with the following discussed/clarified:

- 3.2.1 Present Tenant Arrears – Table 1 – arrears figure is down, however, not as much as IB would have liked – still awaiting decrees at this date and chasing with the solicitors.

IB referred to Column D - Technical Arrears and asked members to recall previous conversations on how this figure has been manually adjusted to date. For the figure at 31/03, this was automatically calculated by the HomeMaster system – IB manually checked and got it to within pennies, therefore content to free up staff time by now using the system generated figure.

- 3.2.2 GR referred to conversations on changing the target % and asked if there was ever a decision made on this. IB confirmed his understanding is that this will be decided when the Business Strategy/Action Plan comes back to Board.

4. GOVERNANCE

4.1 Board Development Action Plan Review

GR presented this report which was **approved**.

4.2 Internal Audit Report – Budget Setting & Control

IB presented this report – overall a good audit report. Members and IB agreed, however, that the recommendation to present a draft budget to Board in December would suggest that there had been no prior discussion on the budget proposals before the draft budget is

presented to Board in January, which is not the case. IB suggested that AD will likely cover this in the Management Comment.

5 HOUSING MANAGEMENT REPORTS

5.1 Repairs Report (Jan - Mar 2023)

IB presented this report which was **approved** with the following noted:

- 5.1.1 Item 1 - Contractors' Reactive Repair Response Times – IB commented that a higher (for us) volume of repairs has added to the challenges of contractors' timescales/scheduling. GR commented on the downward trend in repairs response times – IB advised that the emergency repairs included a lot to the new gas maintenance contractor which should improve. The urgent category, he concluded should have been much better.
- 5.1.2 Item 3 – Electrical Safety – IB advised that there is a bit of debate in the sector in terms of the Annual Return on the Charter reporting on this matter – SFHA recently ran a session with Christine Duggan who is seeking clarity from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) on this.
- 5.1.3 Item 4 – Reactive & Void Repairs over £1000 – IB referred to the Decoration Works of £1004.40 which should have been noted as Rechargeable.
- 5.1.4 Item 5 – Decoration Allowances – IB clarified the figures here should have been £900 issued, £728.31 spent.

5.2 Void Report (Jan - Mar 2023)

IB presented this report which was **approved**.

- 5.2.1 Item 2 - Comments on Trends and Observations – ST referred to the fact that most voids are requiring more work and asked for clarity on this. IB confirmed that there had been some particularly bad voids this year, however, what he was referring to in the report was more about the volume of small jobs, e.g. door handles, light switches, kitchen unit repairs, etc, which is primarily due to the age of the majority of the stock. These small repairs are carried out by the Caretaking team who have time constraints. This target, as with the Arrears target, will also be touched on in the Action Plan of the Business Strategy.

5.3 Recharges Report (Jan - Mar 2023)

IB presented this report which was **approved** as presented.

5.4 Complaints & Compliments (Jan - Mar 2023)

IB presented this report which was approved.

KM confirmed that the website delivery failure had been fully investigated, with no obvious outcome as to why the sender's email had not been received when originally sent. The complainant was fully informed of this process.

6. POLICY REVIEWS

6.1 Insurance Policy & Procedure

BA commended the renewal premiums presented and advised the average in the sector is between 20 – 30%, some reporting increases of 120%!

JMc referred to the report being marked "for approval", however, KM advised the renewal premiums were reviewed by AD and accepted; the Insurance Policies and Procedures were "for approval" by Board.

IM referred to the 'Thistle' Tenant Risk Home contents Insurance and asked if there were statistics on how many of our tenants did take up this insurance. IB confirmed that he had asked SFHA if this was available and had been informed that the underwriters do keep statistics, however, not in the format that we would be looking for – overall SFHA members' tenants.

BA commented that he had been hearing some negative feedback on the policy over the years and IB confirmed that a recent poor experience by one of our tenants is what had driven him to ask the questions of SFHA. In terms of promoting the service to tenants, he confirmed he is less inclined to do that, rather, it's an awareness raising exercise.

7. MEMBERSHIP

No applications for Membership

8. USE OF SEAL

No requirement for Use of Seal.

9. AOCB

None intimated.

Meeting concluded at 7.30pm