



Board Meeting – 26 April 2017

Agenda Item: 3

Subject: Minute of Board Meeting 29 March 2017

Prepared by: Alan Park

**Minute of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 29 March 2017 at 5.30pm in 119 Main Street, Ayr.**

Present:

**Tenant Members**

Liz Craig  
Kenny George  
Suzi Williamson  
Frances Maguire  
Georgina Dawson

**South Ayrshire Council**

John Hampton  
Ian Cavana  
William Grant

**Community Members**

Rhonda Leith (Chairperson from item 6 on)  
Roy Martin (Chairperson until item 6)  
Bobby Pyper  
Simon Leslie

In attendance: Jim Whiston  
David McGivern  
Alan Park (Minutes)

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Sandy Paton.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

Roy asked that any member with an interest in any agenda item declares that fact at the appropriate time during the meeting.

**3. Minute of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 22 February 2017**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2017 were accepted as a true record as proposed by Bobby Pyper and seconded by Georgina Dawson.

#### **4. Matters arising**

Jim confirmed that a report on the Board member reviews would be presented at the April Board meeting.<sup>1</sup>

The Board noted the content of the paper.

#### **5. Projects (Business development)**

Jim referred to site finding and updated the Board on matters regarding sites in McCall's Avenue in Ayr. We have also been invited by SAC to be involved in facilitating the affordable housing requirement on the site of the former Holmston House, also in Ayr.

William Grant referred to the site at Gardenrose, Maybole and suggested that given the demolition planned by SAC in Maybole that this project might be worth further discussion with SAC to see if it could be taken forward.

Kenny suggested that a map and a brief note of what is envisaged might be helpful to Board members for prospective new sites.

Jim confirmed that the Kings Arms project will start on 18 April with completion expected mid-January 2018. A 'sod cutting' PR event has been organised for 21 April 2017.

Jim confirmed that a joint bid will be made this week with Access to Employment for the People and Communities fund grant.

The Board noted the content of the paper.

#### **5 (a) Annual Corporate Plan Review**

Jim introduced the paper and reported good progress against the hard targets i.e. improving stock condition, focusing on rent collection and so on. We are also focussed on the softer targets such as tenant participation, service quality, improving the quality of engagement and tenant's scrutiny.

Jim confirmed that there are a few areas which will require continued progress over the 12-month period which include:

- Completion of the review of the life cycle costs model for the stock including compliance with the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (ESSH).
- Further developments to the value for money framework.
- Further support for tenant scrutiny.
- A more focused approach to our community engagement and promotional work.

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<sup>1</sup> Report on Board member reviews for April Board meeting

Jim confirmed there is a Board and staff away day planned for 17 May 2017 focussed on communication, both internal and external.

Jim confirmed that the financial health check has been refreshed and that the organisation remains in good health financially and that we can meet our obligations to our tenants and can also meet the lender's covenants.

Jim reported that we are well covered in terms of regulatory compliance self-assessment across the six regulatory standards.

Jim will discuss with his review group any potential conflicts of interest arising from the proposed merger of Aspire2gether and Access to Employment.<sup>2</sup>

The Board agreed with the recommendations.

## **6. Housing Management Activity**

David highlighted that most indicators are within target with the exception of relet times which was due to one particular property. David confirmed that for ARC reporting purposes we will be able to exclude this property from our statistics.

David indicated that rent arrears looks like being below target for the full financial year.

The Board noted the content of the report.

### **6. (a) Policy Reviews**

The Board approved the reviews as indicated.

### **6. (b) South Ayrshire Women's Aid**

Jim summarised the position to date in relation to the letter which had been sent by the Board of SAWA to individual AH Board members and in particular the grant conditions pertaining to the original individual property acquisitions. Jim confirmed that the offers of grant were for general needs housing and not for exclusive use by SAWA.

It had appeared that SAWA had accepted our position last year in terms of the unsustainability of the current arrangements given the financial losses we have incurred. Our Board had agreed last year that the leasing option was acceptable and it was noted that we have been more than accommodating in terms of the length of time they have taken to review their position from a business point of view. However, SAWA indicated that they were unable to enter a leasing arrangement due to the risks inherent in their business and it was therefore necessary to transfer the properties back into our main stock when they fell vacant. Our Board are not able to revisit the decision they took last summer but

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<sup>2</sup> Jim to discuss potential conflicts of interest at his next review meeting

are keen to find new ways of working with SAWA. It was noted that the Council have a duty and the lead responsibility with regard to homelessness.

Jim referred to the draft response he had prepared. In terms of the proposed discussion Bobby queried what would be for discussion – would we envisage going back to a discussion on the historic arrangement. Jim accepted that this would not be the case and agreed to alter the wording of the draft.

Rhonda summarised and said we had been exceptionally patient in terms of the time given to SAWA to progress the leasing option and void losses incurred. The original relationship was undermined by the lack of a service level agreement but we cannot continue to the detriment of our organisation.

Roy suggested that there are a couple of lessons to be learned – if informal meetings are held then a minute should be taken and timescales should be given in terms of response times we expect. Roy felt that the draft letter should make reference to the letter sent last July. He also queried the apology within it, which Jim explained referred to a misunderstanding, which had arisen due to timing of the delivery of a letter from us and an operational matter dealt with over the phone.

The Board agreed that the draft response be issued with suitable amendments.

## **7. Property Management Activity**

The Board noted the paper.

## **8. Financial Matters**

The Board noted the paper.

### **8. (a) Treasury Management – the Co-operative Bank**

The Board agreed to the recommendation and delegated authority to Jim to finalise an agreement with the Bank.

## **9. Marketing and Public Relations**

Rhonda asked that transport be made available for any Board member that needs it to attend the PR event for Kings Arms, Dailly.<sup>3</sup>

Jim confirmed that the website will go live next week.

The Board noted the report.

## **10. Operational Matters**

Rhonda was heartened to see the attendance figure improve against target.

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<sup>3</sup> Transport to be offered and organised if need for the PR event in Dailly

Jim confirmed that a further training event for managers had taken place yesterday and that the same consultants, Animate Consulting, will facilitate the Board/staff training event on 17 May 2017 to provide continuity. Georgina and Suzi offered to assist in the planning for the event. Jim to organise a mutually suitable date and time.<sup>4</sup>

An audit committee meeting will be organised for April or May.

Jim has asked for proposals for the governance review from two consultants. The date planned is 14 June 2017 – likely to be early evening.

The Board noted the report.

## **11. Any other business**

Ian Cavana offered the Board and staff his good wishes for the future as this may be his last meeting. On behalf of the Board, Rhonda offered all of the Councillors Ayrshire Housing's thanks for their contributions.

Documents signed –

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 February 2017.

Next meeting - 26 April 2017 at 5.30pm.

There was no other business and the meeting closed at 7.05pm.

Signed

Dated

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<sup>4</sup> Jim to organise a suitable date and time for a planning sessions with Board volunteers, staff and Animate