



Board Meeting

Wednesday 25 November 2020 at 5.30pm

The meeting will be held through a MS-Team online conference as provided for in article 71 of the Articles of Association. See the Basecamp post for the specific arrangements. At the start of the meeting, there will be a presentation on developments in governance and regulation.

Agenda

- 1) Welcome and apologies
- 2) Declarations of interest
- 3) Minute of the Board meeting of 28 October 2020 (enclosed)
- 4) Matters arising (paper enclosed)
- 5) Business development
 - a) Minute of the Development Committee of 21 October (enclosed)
- 6) Housing management activity
 - a) Consultation on a potential rent increase (paper enclosed)
 - b) Minute of the Tenancy Matters Committee of 2 November 2020 (enclosed)
- 7) Property maintenance activity
 - No additional items
- 8) Financial matters
 - No additional items
- 9) Operational matters (paper enclosed)
 - a) Minute of the Human Resources Committee of 28 October 2020 (enclosed)
 - b) Quarterly Board and Director effectiveness report (enclosed)
- 10) Any other business
 - a) Publication of Board papers
 - b) Date of the next Board meeting – Wednesday 27 January 2021



Board Meeting – Wednesday 25 November 2020

Agenda Item: 3

Subject: Minutes of Board Meeting 28 October 2020

Prepared by: Kirsty Broadfoot

Minute of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 28 October 2020 at 5.30pm via MS Teams

Present:

Tenant Members

Kenny George
Amanda Bryan
Georgina Dawson

Community Members

Simon Leslie – Chair
Mike Tomlinson
Bobby Pyper
Gemma Collins

In Attendance

Jim Whiston
Kirsty Broadfoot – Minutes (except 10c)
David McGivern (except 10c)
Alan Park (except 10c)

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Rhonda Leith, David Porte and Caroline Donald.

2. Declarations of interest

No matters were raised.

3. Minute of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 26 August 2020

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 August 2020 were accepted as a true record and were proposed by Bobby Pyper and seconded by Amanda Bryan.

4. Minute of the Board meeting held on Wednesday 2 September 2020

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2020 were accepted as a true record and were proposed by Bobby Pyper and seconded by Mike Tomlinson.

5. Matters Arising

Jim confirmed that Jordan Dunlop was unable to take up the position on the Board. Three new tenants are very keen to join; Anne Wason, Alice Craig and Tommy Maughan. Anne and Alice were members of the Tenant Scrutiny Group. Their first Board meeting will be November and Jim and Caroline will contact them prior to that to get them settled in. A fourth tenant was also keen to become

involved and will join the scrutiny group due to the spaces now being filled on the Board.

The Board approved the appointment of the three new members with immediate effect.

6. Business Development

6a. Performance Digest for the period 1 April to 30 September 2020

Jim summarised the key points from the Digest. In particular, the excellent work of the Housing and Money Advice officers in ensuring that arrears were kept below 1%. Repairs service has been affected by the pandemic, however they are working through the backlog of repairs. They have also had to cope with staff absence but hope to be back to a full complement soon. Arrears recovery and void performance has been close to normal. Jim advised that our performance was compared well with other similarly sized housing associations. David added that he feels we are performing at a higher level than many other organisations in terms of arrears recovery etc. and this will assist us as we meet the challenges of the coming months. He went on to advise that we currently have 28 void properties, but the allocations team are working extremely hard to address this.

Bobby and Simon thanked all the staff who have ensured such good results in the circumstances.

6b. Delivery Plan progress to date

Jim advised that good progress is being made against most targets and went on to highlight the key updates. The use of the hub is being looked at.

7. Housing management activity

7a. Minute of the Tenancy Matters Committee of 2 October 2020

The report was noted.

8. Property maintenance activity

No matters were discussed.

9. Financial matters

9a. Management Accounts for the 6 months ended 30 September 2020

Alan gave an overview of the accounts and thanked the staff for their hard work during these uncertain times. He advised that the accounts show good performance across most areas. He went on to discuss the pertinent points on the cash flow statement, noting that £2M has been generated from rents. The Allia bond of £8M was drawn down in August resulting in a final balance of £8.2M at the end of September. Alan went on to summarise the income and expenditure account, highlighting that additional expenditure had been set aside for extra close cleaning as a result of the pandemic. A flat had been sold which had been on the market for several months. Alan summarised the performance indicators and confirmed that ratios had increased due to the Allia borrowing. A general discussion followed about repairs and allocations with David advising that repairs are being reported and the team are working hard to ensure repairs are carried out on time. Risk assessments are being carried out with void properties, which is

affecting the time taken to allocate them. Kenny expressed thanks about the additional close cleaning. David advised gutter cleaning will be carried out on a cyclical basis in future.

The Board approved the Management Accounts for the six months ended 30 September 2020.

10. Operational matters

Jim updated the Board regarding gas safety checks, confirmed that good progress has been made since the last meeting with less than 0.5% of properties without a current certificate. A new Board training handout will be updated to include the new members and Kirsty will circulate this. ¹ Jim went on to advise that ANCHO have taken over as the lead association for planning of the next Eydent conference. They are hopeful this will take place next autumn. He confirmed that Elba Street will be finished week commencing 2 November and that we have established a good relationship with the Health and Social Care Partnership.

10a. Minute of Audit Committee of 26 August 2020

The Board noted the Minute.

10b. Annual Assurance Statement

Jim updated the Board on the main points. He noted that the submission date for the statement had been moved to November. He advised that we can issue a 'clean' statement. He discussed the form of words to be used and asked for Simon to sign the letter.

The Board agreed the wording of the assurance statement.

10c. Employment matter

The Board received a verbal report on a proposed voluntary severance payment from the Director. The Board authorised the Director to conclude matters on the reported terms.

11. Any other business

Jim updated the Board that EVH are looking for guidance from member associations on a possible pay increase. Jim asked Simon for his thoughts, he feels we are best not to commit to a decision just yet. Jim will revert to EVH with the general comments of the Board.

11a. Publication of Board papers

It was agreed that all papers could be published subject to the removal of covenants information.

11b. Date of next Board meeting

Wednesday 25 November 2020.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 6.20pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

Signed

Dated

¹ Kirsty to update and circulate Board handout



Board Meeting – Wednesday 25 November 2020

Agenda item: 4

Subject: Matters arising including outstanding matters from earlier meetings

Prepared by Jim Whiston

Ref	Date	Subject	Progress	Complete?	Due by Board:
B491	2 September 2020	Recruitment of additional Board members	Vacancies now filled.	Yes	October 2020
B492	28 October 2020	Board meeting and development handout	Issued.	Yes	November 2020

Completed Items will be removed from the following month's report. An archive of previous reports is retained for reference within the bound Board papers.

Minute of the Development Committee held on Wednesday 21 October 2020 at 4.30am as a MS-Teams meeting.

Present:

Amanda Bryan
Bobby Pyper - Chair
Mike Tomlinson

In attendance:

David Glennon
Jim Whiston – Minutes

1. **Apologies**

There were no apologies

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No matters were disclosed.

3. **Minute of the meeting held on 12 August 2020**

This were noted as a correct record.

5. **Development Report**

The Committee reviewed the contents of the report. The efforts being made to resolve the issues with regard the statutory consents for the northeast Troon project were outlined. It was noted that the South Harbour Street project is to be recommended for approval at the next meeting of South Ayrshire Council's Regulatory Panel and it was understood that the Council's formal agreement to the sale of the Queen's Terrace, Maybole site would be finally forthcoming later this month.

The Committee agreed that further work needs to done to firm up the use of the hub facility despite the current uncertainties. Jim undertook to report in more detail on the matter to the next meeting of the Committee.

6. **Any other business**

The potential to achieve greater use of prefabrication (modern methods of construction) in our development programme was discussed.

It was agreed to appoint Mike Tomlinson as the standing chair of the Committee.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 16 December 2020 at 10.30am.

The meeting closed at 5.30pm



Board Meeting – Wednesday 25 November 2020

Agenda Item: 6a

Subject: Consultation on Potential Rent Increase

Prepared by: Jim Whiston

Recommendation: to agree the basis of the consultation.

Introduction

Every year, Ayrshire Housing consults with its tenants on any potential rent increase prior to it being confirmed by the Board. The Board normally agrees to any rent increase at its February meeting. The final decision will take account of any comments received from tenants and work to finalise a budget for the 2021-22 financial year.

For the past ten years, the Board has consulted on the basis of a possible cash increase rather than, as before, with reference to the Retail Price Index based formula which underpinned the association's original business plan.

As in recent years, it is suggested that consultation will be through a dedicated letter to each tenant, the website and social media. In addition, we continue to seek the views on the proposed increase and our services from a panel of interested tenants. The consultation will also provide feedback on what tenants think their rent payments will cover, for example, on whether the association should continue to grow. Responses can be compared with the last independent survey of tenants' views.

The Proposal

It is proposed to consult on the acceptability or otherwise of a no more than £1.27 a week increase for a typical 3 apartment house. In percentage terms, this equals a 1.5% increase. Last year, we consulted on a £2.60 a week (2.9%) increase. As well as being likely to meet current business requirements, it appears to be in broadly line with possible increases amongst comparable landlords.

Justification

In proposing a figure for consultation, we have sought to reconcile the financial pressures on many tenants, particularly at this time, with the value that, from recent surveys, they attach to the high level of service that is provided. The 2019 independent survey again confirmed that the majority of tenants consider that they receive value for money for the rent that they pay.

An 1.5% increase is also considered a reasonable figure given ongoing uncertainty around income generation and costs. It appears to be in line with the figures that other landlords are beginning to consult on.

By way of comparison, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 0.7% in September. The Retail Price Index (RPI), which includes housing costs, was 1.1%.

Recommendation

The Board is asked to agree to the consultation on the above basis.



Board Meeting: Wednesday 25 November 2020

Agenda Item: 6b

Subject: Minute of Tenancy Matters Committee held on Microsoft Teams on Monday 2 November 2020

Prepared by: Margaret Woods

For noting

Present: David Porte
Georgina Dawson
Bobby Pyper

In attendance: Margaret Woods
Dawn Bigham

The Panel had been asked to consider a case where the association had been granted Decree for Recovery of Possession of a tenancy because of non-payment of rent lawfully due and Antisocial Behaviour.

The Panel noted the reasons for the rent arrears and that any actions required in accordance with the Associations procedures had been followed.

The Panel also noted that action was also being taken regarding serious antisocial behaviour involving the tenant and visitors to the property.

The Panel asked several questions regarding the antisocial behaviour and, whether support was in place to assist the tenant should the eviction proceed. Dawn confirmed that she had spoken to the tenant's support worker this morning and that assistance would be in place for the tenant to seek alternative accommodation.

The Panel appreciated all the hard work and were satisfied that the Association had taken all necessary actions required.

The Panel members unanimously agreed with the recommendation that the Decree should be enforced.



Board Meeting – Wednesday 25 November 2020

Agenda Item: 9

Subject: Operational matters

Prepared by: Jim Whiston

Recommendation: to agree to reissue the Freedom of information and Environmental Information Policy

Coronavirus issues (including health and safety)

A sixth monthly report has been made to the Scottish Housing Regulator on the financial and operational impact. This was made available to Board members earlier in the month. This continues to show excellent performance with respect to arrears and letting including support for homelessness provision. The next report will be able to show the contribution of the successful letting of the new Elba Street development.

Working with our contractors, the repairs service is now moving to more normal levels. We are however encouraging tenants to show patience given the continued restrictions on our contractors. We continue to take steps to improve call handling to cope with the increased volume and address staff absence.

The position on gas safety checks is being carefully monitored to ensure that we are conforming to the latest advice issued by the Health and Safety Executive and Gas Safe (the registration body for the gas installation industry). The reasons for any failures to maintain a current safety certificate are carefully recorded with our contractor to ensure that we are taking reasonable steps to comply with the regulations in the current circumstances. Notwithstanding this, we are now achieving near normal levels of compliance by applying our standing procedures rigorously.

The office working arrangements have been reviewed further to reflect the recent changes on face coverings and masks. Given that it is now clear that home working will remain the default arrangement for several months, another staff welfare survey and further health and safety support are being issued.

Board effectiveness and governance

See the separate quarterly report.

Eydent

A meeting of the chairs and chief officers is being arranged over the coming weeks.

Placement opportunities within Ayrshire Housing

This activity is in abeyance for the time being.

Staffing issues

The Human Resources Committee meet on 28 October. The minute of the meeting is below.

Staff pension schemes

A report was made to the Human Resource Committee on the current state of the two Schemes. Since then, we have received confirmation from the Scottish Housing Association Pension Scheme that following their own risk assessment, we remain a “low risk” member.

Audit Committee

The Committee next meets on 25 November 2020.

Community engagement and publicity

A verbal report on impact of the three projects that we have supported through the Scottish Government’s Supporting Communities fund will be made at the Board meeting. An application to a similar fund is being made to support further work by Care and Share.

We are also making a grant to Vics in the Community to support their youth work.

We are actively using social media to communicate with our tenants and the general public, and to promote the work of our partners.

The completion of the Elba Street project and the planning application for South Harbour Street have received press coverage, as well as our statement in support of Barratt’s (unsuccessful) planning application for a development at Monkton.

Notifiable events and disposals

As noted above a return is submitted each month to the Scottish Housing Regulator on the impact of the Coronavirus restrictions. This covers information on arrears, voids and our cash position and, from June on, any legal actions.

The Regulator is being informed of a notifiable event – the execution of a settlement agreement with an employee, the terms of which are in accordance with the association’s policy on such agreements.

There have been no disposals since the October meeting.

A consolidated report on notifiable events and disposals in 2020 will be given to the Audit Committee in February 2021.

Freedom of Information and Environmental Information Policy

It was agreed to review this policy after its first year. The Board is asked to agree that no changes are required. An annual report on requests under this policy and our Privacy Policy will be made in June alongside the report on complaints and complements.

Board Meeting – Wednesday 25 November 2020

Agenda Item: 9a

Subject: Minute of Human Resources Committee held on 28 October 2020 at 4.30pm

Prepared by: Kirsty Broadfoot

For noting

Present: Amanda Bryan
Bobby Pyper
Mike Tomlinson
Gemma Collins
Simon Leslie

In attendance: Jim Whiston
Alan Park
Kirsty Broadfoot (Minutes)

1. Appointment of Chair, welcome and apologies

After discussion, Bobby Pyper agreed to act as Chair of this meeting. It was noted that Kenny George had been appointed as Chair of the Committee at the previous meeting.

Apologies were received from David Porte.

2. Declarations of Interest

Jim stated that he, Alan and Kirsty are members of the Scottish Housing Associations Pension Scheme.

3. Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting of 16 October 2019.

These were noted.

4. Annual Staffing Report

Jim discussed the key points in the report. He explained that, due to increased volume of work, the association is looking to make the part time Project Manager post full time, with immediate effect. Jim summarised the report on absence, noting that we have an absence management policy in place. He then discussed the table on pay grades by gender. Bobby asked if ours is comparable with other Housing Associations of a similar size. Jim said he could check with EVH. ¹ Amanda noted that we have no employees with a disability. Jim commented that we have an open recruitment policy, but that a possible move to more flexible working in the future may encourage more disabled people to apply. The Board noted the contents of the report and approved the adjustment to the establishment.

5. Pensions Update

Alan advised the Committee that we have two pension schemes and that both are coming to the end of their current actuarial valuations. There has been

¹ Jim to check with EVH.

volatility in funds due to the pandemic. The Committee noted the update on pension provision for the association and agreed to the retention of Punter Southall for advice where needed.

6. Staff Development and Succession Planning

Jim spoke about the Employee Wellbeing Surveys and updated the Committee that the one scheduled for this year had had to be put in abeyance due to the pandemic. He confirmed that smaller scale surveys had been carried out earlier in the year and feedback from staff had been largely positive, a few issues around IT and communications had been identified and have now been addressed. Another survey, linked to DSE, is to be carried out within the next few weeks given that staff will be working from home until well into the New Year. Jim went on to update the Committee on the association's arrangements for succession planning for the Director as part of the Business Planning process as well as general staff development. Jim spoke about the EVH Remove Working Policy, advising that we have amended it only slightly to reflect our specific working arrangements. He clarified that although it can be issued now, applications under it will not be considered until we once again have a settled working arrangement for all staff

The Committee agreed the actions on future working and policy and practice development.

7. Any other business

Bobby asked Simon to comment on the issue of the EVH pay award, which Jim had posted on Basecamp. EVH are looking for guidance on the issue. Simon felt it was best to discuss this at the end of the main Board meeting.

The meeting closed at 5.10pm.



Board Meeting – Wednesday 25 November 2020

Agenda Item: 9b

Subject: Quarterly Board and Director effectiveness report

Prepared by: Jim Whiston

For noting.

Induction meetings

Induction meetings have taken place with the three new members. The code of conduct has been signed in each case.

Declarations of interest

As separately reported, the declarations are being updated for the Board and staff teams.

Board member materials

The Board meetings and development handout will be reissued with the new members details. The Board member's handbook will also be reissued to reflect the changes to the Committees.

Training

The 2020-21 programme is being implemented.

Board member reviews

These will be carried out early in the New Year with a report to the April 2021 Board meeting.

Director's review

The quarterly review meeting is to take place on 18 November.