

**Minutes of the Board Meeting
Held on Wednesday, 17 January 2024 at 6pm in person in
The McGinlay Suite in the Association's offices**

Present

Johnson Ayorinde (JA)
Allan Edgar (AE) (Remote)
Patricia Gallagher (PG)
Simon Gaunt (SG)
Helen Gracie (HG)
Fiona Koroma (FK)
Michael Smith (MS)

In attendance

Nicola Logan, Chief Executive Officer (NL)
Cindy McNeill, Finance Director (CM)
Donald Weir, Technical Director (DW)
Martha Hutcheson, Corporate Services Manager (MH)
Catherine Sloey, Corporate Services Assistant (CS)

1.0 Apologies and Declarations of Interest

Resignation:

SG opened the meeting by advising that, due to work commitments, Allan Edgar, had submitted his resignation. His last meeting would be 27 March 2024. The Board **noted** his resignation.

SG thanked AE for his commitment and support to the Board and his valuable contributions made over the years. On behalf of the Board, he wished AE all the very best for the future.

Staffing:

SG advised Board that, unfortunately, JS had taken unwell and would not be able to attend the meeting. On behalf of the Board, he passed on his best wishes.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Board members Jennie Robertson, Emma Brown and Joyce Slicer.

Declarations of interest:

Item 5.4: MS declared an interest in this item therefore would leave the room when this item was being discussed.

Damp and Mould Discussion: SG advised that, unfortunately, the speaker was unable to attend the meeting. DW to rearrange the date.

2.0 Health & Safety

2.1 Health & Safety Report

DW apologised for the late publication of his report. He took the report as read and highlighted the following issues.

(MS joined the meeting)

Fire Safety - DW provided an update on the new escape route from the Board room and agreed to arrange a fire evacuation drill at the next Board meeting.

NL mentioned that the Scottish Housing Regulator had recently carried out their annual review and requested additional information on electrical safety. NL confirmed that she had responded with progress made on outstanding works. The Regulator confirmed that they were content with the update received.

Board discussed the request and as the Regulator was focusing on H&S, it was important that the presentation discussion on dampness and mould was not postponed for any length of time.

The Board **noted** the Health & Safety report.

3.0 Minutes of previous Board Meeting

3.1 Decisions taken between meetings

Nothing to report.

3.2 Board Meeting 06.12.23

The Minutes were **approved** as an accurate record of the meeting.

3.3 Matters Arising / Actions / Decisions

The Decision and Action reports were **noted** by Board. The Action report was updated as follows -

Fire Exits Office – new route to be operational by end of February 2024. DW to follow up.

CEO Appraisal – SG, MS and NL to agree a date at the end of the meeting.

SHN Performance Analysis Visit – Meeting scheduled for 28 February 2024. A recording of the meeting would be uploaded to Decision Time for members unable to attend the meeting.

Tenant Participation / Community Engagement Training – Board members to respond to CS with their availability.

Community Clause (Scotland Excel Framework) – it was noted that the link within DW's report was not accessible. He confirmed that Scotland Excel were committed to offering staff the Living Wage. A short discussion followed and Board content this item could be closed off.

Damp and Mould Presentation – DW to rearrange the date.

Board Development Programme (Fearless Leadership) – NL to check availability of speaker and update Board at March meeting.

4.0 Minutes of Sub-Committees and Other Meetings

Nothing to report.

5.0 Matters for Approval

5.1 Chief Executive's Report

NL took her report as read and highlighted the following issues -

Board Training and Development Plan – NL to bring to the March Board meeting.

New Social Housing Net Zero Standard in Scotland – NL asked Board members to let CS know if they want to attend the training session run by the Tenant Information Service.

SFHA Digital Governance – NL advised Board that the document was particularly useful for hybrid meetings. It was noted that NL would present a summary of the document to Board at a future meeting.

Human Rights Assurance – NL reported that the Regulator had queried Glen Oaks' statement on human rights and whether the organisation was compliant. However, NL advised that she responded and confirmed that Glen Oaks was compliant and plans were in place to further embed human rights across the organisation.

The outstanding Notifiable Event was raised by a Board Member. NL advised that that they were awaiting information from the insurers before this could be closed off.

The Board **noted** the Chief Executive's report.

5.2 Rent Consultation 2024/25

As JS was absent, NL spoke to the report and consultation exercise.

From the pre-Christmas tenant consultation exercise, Board members were asked to consider the feedback received from tenants and agree a proposed rent increase of 4%, service charge and Management Fee proposals. In addition, a decision was required on whether the Management fee applicable to Sharing Owners should be retained at 2021 levels.

Referring to the rent increase, NL advised that a wide consultation exercise took place, including various methods of communication from SMS texts, telephone calls, postal votes and reminders were sent. The options proposed to tenants were 4% or 5%. The most popular choice was 4%.

NL was pleased to report that a lot of positive feedback was received from tenants on the work being carried out by Glen Oaks. She highlighted that the team would ensure that any negative comments were followed up as soon as possible.

Referring to the affordability assessment carried out by the Scottish Housing Network, it concluded that the rents were affordable.

NL advised that one of the attachments to the report was an exercise completed by the GWSF rent forum, which showed that Glen Oaks' proposed increased was one of the lowest.

A Board discussion followed on the outcome of the consultation exercise and the various factors involved to ensure that the increase was affordable and reasonable. **See Confidential Minute**

The Board **approved** a rent increase of 4%.

Service Charges 2024/25

A short discussion took place on what would be fair to charge the tenants.

The Board **agreed** that Glen Oaks would subsidise the contractor's increase to Darnley tenants by 50%.

Management Fee for Shared Ownership

NL reported the fees had remained static over the last few years and asked for Board approval to increase by 4%. A short discussion took place on this proposal and it was agreed this seemed reasonable.

The Board **approved** an increase of 4%.

On behalf of Board members, SG asked NL to pass on their thanks to LS for the production of the documents and data provided, which had been really useful.

5.3 Annual Factoring Management Fee Review

DW spoke to his report and sought Board approval to increase the annual factoring management fee for 2024/25 by 4%.

A discussion took place on the proposal, which took into consideration comparisons with other Registered Social Landlords.

The Board **approved** the increase to the management fee of 4% for 2024-25.

5.4 Arden Phase 6 Development

(MS declared an interest in this item and left the meeting)

DW spoke to his report and the recommendation to Board to submit the amended project proposal for the Arden Phase 6 development, which was an update on his report presented to the Board in May 2023.

The Board gave **approval** to submit the amended Project Proposal.

6.0 Matters for Approval

6.1 Rechargeable Repairs and Former Tenant Write Offs

(MS rejoined the meeting)

The Board were asked to approve the proposed write off for the Former Tenant Arrears, court costs and rechargeable repair costs to the sum of £43,325.55.

A lengthy discussion took place on the figures presented within the reports and Board members asked for clarification that no current tenants would have rent arrears written off.

As JS was absent, NL agreed to check the data within the report and feedback findings to

Board.

The Board agreed the following:

- Write off to be approved after clarification that the figures related to former tenants and not current tenants.
- Board members requested a clearer coding for the write off criteria.
- CMT to prepare a trend analysis on amounts written off in previous years and circulate to Board.
- Board approved the write off for rechargeable repairs.

6.2 Insurance Renewal

CM advised that, as previously stated, it was proving extremely difficult for Housing Associations to obtain insurance through a procurement exercise, which was due to several reasons. She asked for Board approval to renew the Association's insurance contract with Zurich for another 2 years.

The Board **approved** request to renew the insurance contract with Zurich for a further 2 years.

7.0 Performance Reports – (for information)

7.1 Risk Management

To ensure the Risk Management report was being discussed fully and actioned appropriately, a Board member asked for clarification if the report was presented at a Sub-Committee meeting. It was suggested by Board that it would be useful to make the format of the report more user friendly.

NL confirmed that all relevant reports and risks were discussed at Sub Committee level. She agreed to review the format of the report.

The Risk Management report was **noted** by Board members.

7.2 Equality and Diversity Survey

NL advised that the survey had been anonymous, however, the next Newsletter will include an article asking if tenants would like to provide some further information.

The CMT will now progress the plans for embedding equality, inclusion and human rights in all aspects of the Association's work. This will involve training for Board and staff members.

Housing Diversity Network – NL reported that by becoming a member, Glen Oaks would have access to a lot of useful data and information.

The Board **noted** the Equality and Diversity Survey.

8.0 Assurance Statement

8.1 Assurance Review Timetable

The Board **approved** the Assurance Review timetable.

9.0 Strategy and Policy Review

9.1 Strategy and Policy Register

The Board **noted** the Strategy and Policy Register.

9.2 Void Management Policy

DW commented that this policy would normally go to the Sub-Committee, however, the December meeting had not been quorate. He reported that the main amendment was in relation to the provision of electric showers.

The Board discussed this amendment and considered it was reasonable.

The Board **approved** the Void Management policy.

9.3 Rent Arrears Policy

In the absence of JS, NL spoke to the report.

NL highlighted that the CMT were working on removing procedural elements from policies. It was noted that JS had highlighted all the amendments in her report.

A Board member mentioned that she had previously raised some questions with JS, including clarification of the purpose and frequency of issuing the census form.

The Board **approved** the changes to the Rent Arrears policy, subject to clarifying the points raised separately to JS, which NL will follow up.

10.0 Report back from Meetings / Conferences Attended

Nothing to report.

11.0 Any Other Competent Business

- 11.1** Board Membership – In light of AE stepping down as Board member, SG suggested this would be a good opportunity for Board members to consider potential new members that might be interested in joining the Board. This would be a useful route before going on to advert. Board members discussed the current skill gaps.

It was raised that that due to the diversity of tenants and the number of different nationalities, it would be useful to consider diversity when recruiting new external members. In addition, it was noted to consider geographical representation. It was highlighted that it would be good to have a representative from the Pollok area.

12.0 Date and Time of Next Meeting

The meeting concluded at 7.35pm. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, 27 March 2024 at 6pm.