

Minutes of the Board Meeting
held on Wednesday 18 January 2023 at 6pm
in person in The McGinlay Suite at the Association's offices
and remotely via Zoom

Present (in person attendees):

Simon Gaunt, Chairperson (SG)
Kerry Clayton
Patricia Gallagher
Helen Gracie
Fiona Koroma
Kimberly Barker

Present (remote attendees):

J. Ayorinde

In attendance:

Nicola Logan, Interim Chief Executive (NL)
Donald Weir, Technical Director (DW)
Kirsty Wilson, Housing Services Director (KW)
Tricia Bridges, Corporate Services Officer (PB)
Catherine Sloey, Corporate Services Assistant (CS) (Minutes)

Welcome

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for attending. SG also wished everyone a Happy New Year.

1. Apologies and Declarations of Interest (including agenda item to which this refers)

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Board Members Allan Edgar and Michael Smith. David McDonald did not attend the meeting.

Declarations of Interest:

None.

2. Health and Safety

(1) Health & Safety Report

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

DW advised that he had prepared some documentation that will require to be signed by the Chairperson. SG agreed to sign the documents at the end of the meeting.

DW provided updates on the following:

Lone Worker Application: DW advised that the Lone Worker app had been reviewed for its effectiveness after concerns had been raised by some staff members. DW has compared the Lone Worker app with similar applications and advised that they all worked in the same way. DW confirmed that the Association will continue to use the Lone Worker app. DW advised that a minor issue with the “Ally” tags attached to staff identity badges has now been resolved. DW confirmed that, in the event of an emergency, staff still had access to the mobile app. In response to a suggestion from a Board member, DW agreed to implement regular checks to ensure the effectiveness of the “Ally” tags.

Electrical Servicing: DW hoped the process would be complete by the end of March 2023.

Dampness and Mould: DW advised that he was working on a new procedure. It was **noted** that the guidance from the Scottish Housing Regulator would be published shortly. Key information from this guidance would be incorporated into the final Glen Oaks procedure. DW added that the Technical Team will continue to monitor issues of mould and dampness very closely.

At this point in the meeting, a fire evacuation drill took place. Following the evacuation drill, the Board asked DW to discuss the following issues with the Health and Safety Officer:

- Ensure all new staff receive fire safety training during induction;
- Ensure adequate fire exit signage is in place;
- Ensure path behind the building is clear of obstacles;
- Ensure exit areas are disability friendly, including making sure that fire doors can be opened easily;
- Sensor light to be added to the outside area;
- Remind all staff of the location of the muster point.

3. Minutes of Previous Board Meeting

(1) Decisions Taken Between Meetings

Nothing to report.

(2) Board Meeting 30.11.22 & Confidential 30.11.22

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

A Board Member sought clarification on the differences between the Confidential Minutes and the Public Minutes that are published on the website. A short discussion took place on the format of the Minutes. The Board **agreed** that it was important to ensure that the published Minutes were as transparent as possible.

A Board member commented that best practice is for confidential information to be redacted (instead of being recorded in a separate Confidential Minute). NL will ensure that this is done. The Board **agreed** that the published Minutes should not include personal data or commercially sensitive information. The Chairperson proposed that the current level of detail in the Minutes should be retained. The Board **agreed** with this proposal. The Board further **agreed** that NL should ask the Data Protection Officer to read the Board Minutes before they are published on the website.

(3) Matters Arising 30.11.22: Actions/Decisions

The Board **noted** the Actions report and discussed the following:

- **Residents Survey:** NL advised that this item was included in the Interim Chief Executive's Report (Item 2).
- **Asbestos Checks in Void Properties:** DW advised that he is still waiting on a response from ACS re his invitation to attend a meeting of the Housing, Technical and Health & Safety Sub-Committee to provide a brief overview of asbestos risk. DW added that Legionella training for Technical staff has been arranged.
- **Board and Staff Event:** NL advised that she had agreed with the Chairperson to cancel this event (which had been proposed for January 2023). NL added that the event may be re-arranged later in the year.
- **Arden Community Hall:** - **See Confidential Minute**
- **Meeting Calendar:** The Board discussed this item and **agreed** that (**See Confidential Minute**) should compare Glen Oaks' meeting calendar with (**See Confidential Minute**) calendar to ensure that she is able to attend the Board meetings of both organisations.
- **Management and Contingency Plan and Health & Safety Manual:** DW confirmed that both documents had been updated.
- **Planned Maintenance Programme:** DW confirmed that tenants had been informed of delays/extensions to the kitchen and bathroom replacement programme.
- **Strategy Event:** NL confirmed that this event will take place on Wednesday 22 February 2023 in the Association's office.
- **Board Appraisals:** NL confirmed that this year's Board appraisals will be carried out by SHARE. However, other options would be explored for next year.

The Board **noted** the Decisions report.

4 Minutes of Sub-Committees and Other Meetings

(1) Draft Finance Audit and Corporate Service Sub Committee Minutes 14.12.22

Noted.

5.0 Matters for Discussion / Decision

5.1 Interim Chief Executive's Report

The Board **noted** the report. NL highlighted the following:

- (1) Board Strategy Event (22.02.23):** NL confirmed that the Board Meeting scheduled for 22 February 2022 would now be the Board Strategy Event. The focus of the meeting will be the Business Plan and Strategy discussion. NL will liaise with the Chairperson regarding the agenda for the event.
- (2) Residents Satisfaction Survey:** NL advised that the key points of the Survey will be summarised along with the results of other recent surveys and feedback from the rent consultation. This summary report will be circulated to the Board prior to the Board Strategy Event and the Board will be asked to review the outcomes at the meeting.
- (3) Staff Business Planning Session:** NL confirmed that the Staff Business Planning Session will take place on 1 February 2023. Feedback from the staff session will be reported to the Board Strategy Event.
- (4) Rent Increase:** NL advised that a statement from the Scottish Government is expected tomorrow, to confirm the removal of the rent cap which will allow housing associations to give tenants 4 weeks notice of any rent increase to be applied from 1 April 2023.
- (5) Board Appraisals:** NL confirmed that this year's Board Appraisals would be carried out by SHARE between March and April (either in person or via video link).
- (6) Board Training:** NL advised that there will be a short GDPR training session at the start of the Board Meeting on 29 March 2022.
- (7) Arden Community Hall: - See Confidential Minute**
- (8) Tenders:** An internal and external auditor tender exercise was due to take place in March/April this year. However, due to the particularly high workload over this period, NL asked for Board approval to move the tendering exercise to a later date.

NL advised that the Association's Financial Regulations state that "A competitive tendering exercise will be held every five years at a minimum" and confirmed that the Association's last tender exercise for auditors took place in 2020. In response to a query from a Board member, NL confirmed that she was happy with the performance of the internal and external

auditors. The Board discussed the proposal to delay and **agreed** to carry out the tender exercise next year. The Board **noted** that NL will be asking for two volunteers from the Board to take part in the selection of the Auditors when the tender exercise takes place.

Support for Interim Chief Executive: The Chairperson raised the issue of the additional duties taken on by the Interim Chief Executive, commenting that it was essential that NL received appropriate support from the Board. NL advised that she was managing her workload and prioritising critical business.

Investors in People (IIP): A Board member asked if an Action Plan had been prepared following the latest IIP Assessment and if the actions had been progressed. NL advised that she would update the Finance, Audit and Corporate Services Sub-Committee on the progress of this item.

5.2 Rent Consultation (2023/2024) Feedback and Review of Service Charges

KW reported that, unfortunately, the survey response had been lower than in previous years. KW advised that the rent consultation had been carried out by CX Feedback who had commented that the lower response rate was a trend experienced by other housing associations.

The options offered to tenants were 6%, 7% or 9%. The Board **noted** that the preferred option was 6%.

KW advised that two consultation drop-in sessions had been held in the Association's office. Although attendance at both events was low, at least 50% of attendees were helped to access support. The main theme raised by tenants was the cost-of-living crisis.

With regard to the overall feedback, it was noted that the Association had received a higher number of negative responses compared to positive comments. KW advised that comments relating to dampness/mould had been prioritised. The Board **noted** that all negative comments would be followed up. KW spoke about refresher training for staff on complaints to ensure the recording of complaints was accurate. Tenants who had provided feedback on our service had been contacted to ask if they would like their comments to be recorded as a complaint.

KW confirmed that service charges derived from the actual cost of the service provided and were only applied to tenants/owners who receive the service.

KW highlighted that Sharing Owners had expressed concern that their tenure was not value for money. Having reviewed the management costs for our shared ownership properties, KW proposed that the Management Fee remains at the 2022/23 level. The Board **approved** this proposal.

KW asked the Board for questions or comments:

- The Board was concerned with the increase in negative comments and was pleased to **note** that staff had been prioritising contacting tenants to discuss their concerns.
- Board members commented on the differences in the responses in terms of age. It was noted that the increasing level of elderly people over the next 10+ years would have an effect on stock levels for this demographic.
- A Board member asked if future reports could include the affordability information. KW would be happy to provide this.
- The Chairperson referred to a tenant's comments on energy pumps. SG suggested contacting the tenant and inviting them to join the Service Improvement Group. The Chairperson also noted there was a significant number of comments concerning the condition of the closes. SG suggested that once the new Estate Co-Ordinator is in place, they could take photographs of closes to document the progress of improvement work. The photographs could also be published in the Association's Newsletter. A Board member asked if the Board could accompany the Estate Co-ordinator during their inspections and KW advised that this can be arranged.

The Board thanked staff for the level of detail provided in the report and approved:

- **A rent increase of 6% for 2023/24.**
- **The application of the Service Charges as detailed in the report.**
- **The proposal to retain the Management Fee applicable to Sharing Owners at the 2022/23 level.**

A Board member suggested that since the Association is not planning to grow/develop in the near future, it could be a good time to consolidate and focus on tackling some recurring problem areas. KW advised that feedback on this could be included in the cover letter that will be sent to tenants with the rent increase notification pack.

NL & KW suggested advising tenants that as the rent increase is not being applied until period 2, the Association will actually be losing some rental income because this will mean an average net increase of 5.4% over 12 months.

5.3 Factoring Management Fee Annual Review

DW spoke to his report and sought approval to increase the Factoring Management Fee for 2023/24 by 6%. DW referred to the 2022-23 Review of 118 RSLs and Council and commented that Glen Oaks' management fee is higher than the majority of its peers. The Board **approved** an increase of 6%

to the Factoring Management Fee for 2023-24.

5.4 Proposed Repairs Contracts Uplifts

(i) Reactive Maintenance Contract

- **See Confidential Minute**

(ii) Void Maintenance Contract

The Board **noted** that negotiations are ongoing with regard to aspects of the schedule of rates which means that DW is not making any recommendation at this time.

(iii) Gas Servicing and Maintenance Contract

DW advised that GasSure is a reliable contractor and has performed well for the duration of the contract. The Board **agreed** to accept the proposed uplift of 12.3% for the next financial year as per DW's recommendation.

5.5 British Gas Void Care Contract

DW spoke about the positives of continuing to use this service as other options were more costly and would increase the workload for staff. If approved by the Board, DW requested that the agreement is signed at the end of the meeting.

The Board **approved** the re-appointment of British Gas (trading as VoidCare) to manage the switch-over of utility accounts at void properties and **agreed** to sign the agreement at the end of the Board meeting.

6. Board Priorities

The Board **agreed** to discuss Board Priorities at the Board Strategy Event.

7. Assurance Statement

(1) Regulatory Standard 7

NL advised this report was for information only and confirmed that there have been no disposals and no security granted during 2022/23. NL added that all relevant documentation is contained in the Evidence Bank on Decision Time. The Board **noted** the report.

8. Update on the Association's Development Plan

Nothing to report.

9. Risk Management Update

NL advised that there had been no updates during the past month. NL

added that Risk and Risk Appetite will be on the agenda for the Board Strategy Event. The Board **noted** the report.

10. Notifiable Events

Nothing to report.

11. Staffing Update

A closed session was held by the Board at the end of the meeting.

12. Membership

Nothing to report.

13. Use of Seal

The Board **noted** that the Seal has been used once since the previous Board meeting to issue a share certificate.

14. Policy Review

(1) Policy Register

The Board **noted** the amended review dates and approved the Policy Register.

(2) Notifiable Events Policy

P. Bridges advised that the Notifiable Events Policy had been reviewed and updated to reflect the guidance issued by the Scottish Housing Regulator. The Board **approved** the Notifiable Events Policy.

15. Community Regeneration

(1) Funding Update

KW spoke to her report and highlighted recent successful and unsuccessful bids made by goConnect:

- Successful Bids - Scottish Housing Fuel Support Fund (£23,286) and Cost of Living - Community Anchors Grant (£20,000). KW confirmed that the team is currently working on distributing the funds awarded.
- Unsuccessful Bids - Community Capacity & Resilience Fund and Financial & Digital Empowerment Fund. Both bids had been unsuccessful due to the high volume of applications submitted.

KW commented that a lot of charities would struggle with applying for funding grants going forward and suggested revising the size of future submissions. KW confirmed that the Association has received funds from the

Wellbeing Fund to spend on clubs/classes for tenants and advised that a new series of classes started in September. Staff have applied for 2 grants in this quarter which (if we are successful) would cover the salaries of the goConnect staff.

The Board **noted** the report.

(2) Project Overview

KW advised that the goConnect project has evolved significantly since the last audit of the project in 2017. Following a review of the goConnect project, KW recommended the development of a more structured framework to ensure effective evaluation and monitoring of the Association's wider role projects. KW advised that staff are currently looking at the best way to measure social value in monetary terms, commenting that this would help us to provide evidence to funders of the benefits of investing in our projects.

KW spoke about the goConnect project's befriending service. Following advice from the Association's solicitors, the befriending service has been suspended to allow staff to evaluate the methods used to record and monitor the service. KW advised that the Association had been in the process of re-applying for funding when the decision was taken to suspend the service, however funds had not accepted or received and KW confirmed that Glen Oaks was not in breach of any grant funding.

KW proposed that the Association carry out an internal audit of our wider role activities and services in 2023-24 for risk and assurance purposes. The Board **agreed** that the Finance, Audit and Corporate Services Sub-Committee would discuss this item at their next meeting.

KW referred to the Community Regeneration Strategy which had been presented to the Board last year, noting the Board's comments about tenant needs/aspirations. KW suggested carrying out a survey of all tenants by the end of March 2023 to ask for their views. Feedback from the survey will be a vital part of the review of the Community Regeneration Strategy in order to ensure that the Association's priorities are achievable and reflect the needs/aspirations of our tenants. The Board **agreed** with this proposal.

The Board **noted** the update on the staffing of the goConnect project and the funding applications made to cover the salary costs of the team. KW advised that a full review of the Money Matters service provided by the Association will be carried out and reported to the Board for decision. The Board **agreed** that this matter should be reviewed/discussed at the Board meeting in March 2023.

SG thanked KW for her report and agreed it was critical to show transparency and value for money for the Association's wider role projects.

16. Matters for Information

Nothing to report.

17. Report Back from meetings / Conferences Attended

Nothing to report.

18. Correspondence and Other Matters for Decision

The Board **noted** the report. Board members were asked to let P. Bridges know if they would like to attend the EVH or SHARE Annual Conferences.

19. Any Other Competent Business

(1) Eviction Report

KW explained that Eviction Reports were usually discussed by the Housing, Technical and Health & Safety Sub-Committee but due the timing of the next meeting it has been brought to the Board for consideration. The Board discussed the report in detail (**See Confidential Minute**)

The Board **granted permission** to proceed with the eviction.

(2) Staffing Matters

All staff members were asked to leave the meeting room while the Board discussed this confidential item.

20. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday 22 February 2023 at 6pm**. This meeting will be the Board Business Strategy event. Any critical business issues will be covered at the beginning of the meeting.

Signed:

Date: