

**Minutes of the Board Meeting held on
Wednesday 23 June 2021 at 6pm
via Zoom video conferencing**

Present:

S. Gaunt - Chairperson (SG)
J. Ayorinde
K. Barker
K. Clayton
M. Flaherty
F. Koroma
M. Overthrow
M. Smith

In Attendance:

A. McKee, Chief Executive (AM)
N. Logan, Finance Director (NL)
J. Murray, Housing Services Director (JM)
D. Weir, Technical Director (DW)
M. Hutcheson, Corporate Services Manager (MH)
P. Bridges, Corporate Services Officer (Minutes)

Observer:

Julie-Ann Cloherty (SHARE)

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

Apologies:

Apologies were **noted** on behalf of Board Members A. Edgar, E. Gotowicz, H. Gracie and A. Loudon.

At the March Board Meeting, the Board **agreed** to extend P. McGinlay MBE's leave of absence until after the AGM in September 2021.

Declarations of Interest:

Nothing to report.

2. COVID-19 Update - verbal report

AM advised that the Scottish Government hoped that all areas of Scotland will move to Level 0 from the middle of July which will include a reduction in social distancing. The Government then plans to lift all major remaining legal coronavirus restrictions on 9 August, if possible. The Scottish Government continues to encourage support for home working. It does not recommend the immediate return of all workers to offices and would prefer businesses to adopt a phased approach to returning to offices. AM commented that the Scottish Government's Strategic Framework update paper suggests that there may be a further resurgence of Covid-19 cases in Autumn, noting that the Association would follow any changes to Government advice at that time.

AM discussed the Association's response to the latest Government guidance with the Corporate Management Team and the Senior Officers before preparing this report for the Board.

AM asked the Board to consider the following proposals:

- Our current service will remain as it is, i.e. the majority of staff working from home, until Monday 30 August 2021.
- From Monday 30 August (this date will be kept under review in case the advice from the Scottish Government changes) it is planned to move to the next stage of our service delivery during the pandemic, i.e. arranging appointments in the office for tenants who are unable to contact us by any other method. We will have a limited number of staff in the office to deliver the appointment service and to ensure we can continue to carry out other essential tasks, e.g. allocations and repairs. AM advised that the Association's Senior IT Officer had demonstrated the 'Near Me' video consulting system to the CMT earlier that day. This system, which is used by the NHS, would allow staff to invite tenants who have a smart phone and an internet connection to join a video call (tenants would not need to download an app). The CMT thought this would be a very useful addition to the current contact methods used by the Association.
- From 30 August until the end of October it is proposed to keep the majority of staff working from home, unless they are required to be in the office to deliver our service. AM added that staff will be involved in the planning process for our service delivery during this period which will include deciding how many days of the week we will be offering appointments and which colleagues will be required to be in the office on those days. AM assured the Board that the measures already in place in the office will remain to protect colleagues and customers. These include social distancing; wearing face masks when moving around the office; using hand sanitiser regularly; and the staff kitchen and staff room not available for use.

- It is proposed to discuss our longer term proposals for a potential hybrid form of working for staff with increased working from home.

AM thanked the staff team for the excellent way in which they have adapted to continue to deliver a great service to our tenants during the pandemic.

The Board was very keen to ensure that any changes to our service are communicated clearly to our tenants. AM agreed and advised that he will update tenants via the newsletter on the changes we are planning (which will be subject to Government advice and current restrictions).

The Board **noted** the report and **supported** the planned approach to the pandemic in the coming months.

3. Minutes of previous Board Meetings

(1) Decisions taken between meetings

Nothing to report.

(2) Board Meeting 26.5.21 & Confidential 26.5.21

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

(3) Matters Arising/Tasks

The Board **noted** the Matters Arising/Tasks report.

4. Minutes of Sub-Committees and other Meetings

(1) Housing, Technical and Health & Safety Sub-Committee 2.6.21 (draft)

The Board **noted** the draft Housing, Technical and Health & Safety Sub-Committee Minutes. NL apologised for the Minutes of the recent Finance, Audit and Corporate Services Sub-Committee meeting not being available for this meeting and advised that they will be presented at the next Board meeting.

5. Matters for Discussion / Decision

(1) Five Year Financial Projections

NL advised that the Five Year Financial Plan is based on the Association's Business Plan and is submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator every year. The Business Plan approved by the Board in March 2021 has been updated to reflect the opening balances from the year-end financial statements and forms the basis of the Five Year Return. The Board **approved** the Five Year Financial Projections for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 30 June 2021.

(2) Loan Portfolio

NL advised that the Loan Portfolio is submitted to the SHR annually. The document details the Association's loans with each lender, the covenant compliance with the loans, and the amount of security in place. NL asked the Board to note the substantial investment Glen Oaks has made in its housing stock, adding that the new build development has boosted the valuation of all of the Association's properties. A Board member suggested that the Association's Business Plan, Annual Report and Assurance Statement should reference the fact that we have invested a lot in our properties and are now seeing a return. The Board **approved** the Loan Portfolio Return for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 30 June 2021.

(3) Treasury Report

The Board **noted** the report.

See Confidential Minute

(4) Reactive Repairs Service

The Board **noted** the report.

See Confidential Minute

(5) Business Plan - updated text

AM advised that he had updated some of the text in the Business Plan in relation to Covid-19, following comments from the Board at a previous meeting. The number of staff employed by the Association has also been amended to reflect the full-time equivalent and an updated ARC comparison report has been added. The Board **noted** and **approved** the amendments to the Business Plan.

(6) Update regarding the Association's AGM

AM advised that the Association's new Rules, which were approved at the Special General Meeting in 2020, allow for the AGM to be held as an actual meeting (with people attending in person) or as a virtual online meeting (similar to the format used for our 2020 AGM). AM added that the opportunity to hold an actual meeting will depend on the Scottish Government's Covid-19 guidance on gatherings. AM noted that the usual venue for the AGM (the Association's McGinlay Suite) may not be suitable due to social distancing restrictions. AM agreed to look at other possible venues in the local area. The Board **noted** the report and **approved** the recommendation to delegate to the Chairperson and Secretary to make a decision (based on the advice of the Chief Executive) on whether our 2021 AGM can be held as an actual meeting or an online virtual meeting.

(7) Board Appraisals

AM thanked Julie-Ann Cloherty from SHARE for coming along to observe the meeting. J. Cloherty gave a brief presentation on the process for conducting the annual Board Appraisals. The Board **approved** the arrangements for the appraisals which will be carried out by Olwyn Gaffney from SHARE. The Board **noted** that SHARE will prepare a report for the August Board meeting on the outcome of the Board Appraisals. AM advised that SHARE had also been asked to conduct a 360° Review of the Chairpersons of the Board and both Sub-Committees. The Board **agreed** to discuss the arrangements for this year's review of the performance and effectiveness of the Board and both Sub-Committees at the August Board meeting.

(8) Sub-Committee Performance Report

AM advised that the Association is required to carry out an annual review of the effectiveness of our Board. It is also necessary to assess the performance of both Sub-Committees on an annual basis because the Sub-Committees have delegated authority relating to certain areas of our business. The Association had asked SHARE to attend meetings of both Sub-Committees to review their performance. The Board **noted** that in SHARE's professional opinion both of the Association's Sub-Committees conduct their business in accordance with their Remit. The Board discussed the reports provided by SHARE and confirmed that they **agreed** with the findings of the reports.

(9) G8 Group Update

AM advised that membership of the Group has recently increased to 9 following the return of Berwickshire Housing Association, although the Group will still be called the G8 Group. AM reported that members of the G8 Group had recently taken part in training on reducing the carbon footprint of each of their associations. This initiative was led by West of Scotland Housing Association with the training being provided by Keep Scotland Beautiful. AM advised that he plans to use the information gained from the training to develop a strategy to reduce Glen Oaks' carbon footprint in due course. The Board **noted** the report.

(10) Tenant involvement in Development and other issues affecting our communities (verbal update)

This item was not discussed due to pressure of other business and will be discussed at the August Board meeting.

(11) Glen Oaks' 30th Anniversary (verbal update)

AM reported that the staff working group set up to discuss the Association's 30th Anniversary had not met yet due to staff sickness and different work patterns for colleagues. AM advised that it was planned that the group would meet prior to the August Board meeting and a written report will be prepared for the Board to discuss. In the meantime, it is planned to alter the Association's letterhead and email footer to refer to our 30th anniversary. The Board **approved** this proposal.

(12) Report on recent Staff Survey

The Board **noted** the results of the recent staff survey and was pleased to **note** the positive feedback from the staff team.

See Confidential Minute

6. Board Priorities

- (1) Board Training**
- (2) Rent Harmonisation**
- (3) Succession Planning and Staff Resources**
- (4) Office / Community Hub**
- (5) Tenant Communication / Transparency**

On hold during the Covid-19 pandemic.

7. Health & Safety

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

8. Assurance Statement

(1) Assurance Statement Review Programme

NL advised that an update on evidence collection and storage will be prepared for the August Board meeting. The Board **noted** the Assurance Statement Review Programme.

(2) Standards 1 & 2

The Board **noted** the review of Standards 1 & 2.

9. Update on the Association's Development Programme

The Board **noted** the report.

See Confidential Minute

10. Risk Management

(1) Risk Management Update

NL advised that there had been no significant changes with regard to Risk Management. The Board **noted** the report.

11. Notifiable Events - *nothing to report.*

12. Staffing - *nothing to report.*

13. Membership

(1) Ending of Membership

The Board **noted** the report. AM added that the family of the late Raymond and Liz Rice have organised a fundraiser to thank the NHS staff who looked after their parents. The Board **agreed** with AM's proposal to offer a £40 donation to the fund.

14. Use of Seal - *nothing to report.*

15. Policy Review

(1) Policy Register

The Board **noted** the Policy Register.

15. Community Regeneration

JM updated the Board on the work being done by our goConnect and Starting Out projects.

Active Arden

We recently asked local primary school children to take part in a logo competition and we now have a fantastic new logo for Active Arden (further information about the new logo and the competition winner will be included in the next newsletter). We have also restarted our Walking Group which is run in conjunction with Glasgow Life.

Community Garden

As part of our Active Arden initiative, we have been working to develop a Community Garden in Arden. An area of land has been identified for this project and staff have met with our contractor to ask for their help with this via the community benefits clause in the development contract. JM added that Urban Roots are currently carrying out soil testing on the site for the Association. JM advised that a student from Glasgow University is leading this project for the Association and is preparing a 3 year strategy document which will consider community growing, employment and volunteering opportunities.

Staff are working with a group of tenants who are very interested in this project. JM advised that staff are looking to constitute the tenants group in order to allow them to apply for grants. Staff hope to arrange an event within the Arden estate to encourage further resident participation.

Mental Health

JM advised that mental health services in Glasgow are at crisis point. Glen Oaks has initiated the development of a framework to support residents with mental health issues following recent suicides in the Arden area. The Association and partner organisations will be looking at providing support, sporting activities and gaining Safe Communities accreditation. The Association has also received funding to provide an additional 3 befrienders to support our residents.

Digital Support

JM advised that staff continue to provide our residents with digital support. Our digital lending library now has 35 tablets and mobile wi-fi units which tenants are able to borrow to help them get online.

The Board thanked JM for the update and were very pleased to **note** the work being done by both projects to support the Association's communities.

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.

19. Any Other Competent Business

(1) CIH Awards

A Board member suggested submitting an entry to this year's CIH Awards (which will be back in person this November). The Board discussed this proposal and **agreed** to submit an entry on behalf of our Community Regeneration projects. The Board asked AM to discuss this matter further with the Corporate Management Team.

20. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next Board meeting will take place on **Wednesday 18 August 2021** at **6pm** via Zoom.

Signed:

Date: