

**Minutes of the Board Meeting held on
Wednesday 27 May 2020 at 6pm
via Zoom video conferencing**

Present:

S. Gaunt - Chairperson (SG)
K. Clayton
M. Flaherty
H. Gracie
F. Koroma
M. Overthrow

In Attendance:

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

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

Apologies:

Apologies were **noted** on behalf of Board Member J. Ayorinde, K. Barker, A. Edgar, E. Gotowicz, A. Louden and M. Smith.

At their Special Meeting on 29 April 2020, the Board **granted** leave of absence for a three month period to Board Members P. McGinlay MBE and E. McShane.

AM was pleased to report that P. McGinlay MBE was now home from hospital, adding that he had sent PM a card on behalf of the Board and staff. SG thanked AM and asked if he could also send flowers to PM from everyone at the Association. AM will arrange for this to be done.

Declarations of Interest:

Nothing to report.

2. Minutes of previous Board Meetings

(i) Decisions taken between meetings

Nothing to report.

(ii) Board Meeting 25.3.20 & Confidential 25.3.20

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

(iii) Matters Arising/Tasks

The Board **noted** that most of the tasks agreed at the Board meeting in March had been completed.

See Confidential Minute

3. Minutes of Sub-Committees and other Meetings

(i) Draft Finance, Audit and Corporate Services Sub-Committee 26.2.20

(ii) Note of Meeting of the Office Bearers 15.4.20

(iii) Special Board Meeting 29.4.20

See Confidential Minute

The Board **noted** the minutes of Sub-Committees and other meetings.

4. Matters for Discussion / Decision

(1) Implementation of Rent Restructure

See Confidential Minute

(2) AGM 2020 Arrangements

AM referred to point 4.4 of the report noting that the 9 Year Rule may apply to some of the 5 Board Members who will be standing down at the AGM this year. AM added that this would be discussed as part of the Board Appraisals this summer and reported to the Board in August.

With regard to the timetable for the AGM, AM advised that although this was a tentative programme, he hoped the Association would be in a position to follow the timetable through after the lockdown has been lifted. AM has discussed the AGM with the Association's solicitors, TC Young, who advised that it would not be possible to hold a virtual AGM. However, AM added that a Bill is currently going through the UK Parliament to allow virtual AGMs. Given the demographic of our membership, AM believes that this may not be the best option for Glen Oaks. AM added that it may be preferable to hold a physical AGM if we could find a suitable venue that would allow social distancing. AM advised that he would report back to the Board as soon as advice is available from the Scottish Government. The Board **noted** the proposed timetable for the AGM.

New Model Rules

AM proposed using TC Young to draft the new Rules which he hoped would be ready for the Board meeting in June. A Board Member asked if it was necessary for the Association to ask TC Young to draft the new Rules because they had already been involved in writing the guidance along with the SFHA. The Board Member also enquired about the cost of TC Young carrying out this work. AM advised that Glen Oaks has always used solicitors for such matters to ensure that everything is done correctly and recommended that we continue to do so. AM agreed to contact TC Young to confirm the costs of the work required. The Board **agreed** to hold an SGM at the same time as the AGM to consider the new Model Rules.

(3) Update regarding the impact of the Coronavirus on the Association

AM advised that the CMT and Senior Officers are having regular meetings to discuss the re-opening of the office at the appropriate time. The Office Bearers and M. Smith will also be meeting to discuss this issue. AM suggested either Monday 8 June or Tuesday 9 June for this meeting. SG and MF are available on either date. AM will speak to KB and MS to check their availability and will then contact everyone to confirm the date/time.

The Board discussed the difficulties experienced by two tenants who were due to move in to new homes at Arden Phase 5 and have been unable to do so due to the lockdown restrictions. The Board **approved** the proposed adjustment to the rent accounts for all tenants affected (including those who have now moved in) in order to take account of their actual move in dates.

The Board noted that the stair cleaning service charges would need to be adjusted for the three week period when stair cleaning was not carried out. AM confirmed that this will have to be reported to Glasgow City Council's Housing Benefit department and the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Board was pleased to **note** that JM and her team had been successful in securing grant funding from the Scottish Government's Wellbeing Fund which is allowing our goConnect and Starting Out Project staff to help tenants with welfare and energy advice, budgeting, digital support and food deliveries during the pandemic.

The Board discussed current rent arrears. AM advised that our tenants are facing real hardship at this time, adding that staff are working hard to provide support and advice while still encouraging tenants to pay their rent. A Board Member commented that although there has been a sharp rise in current rent arrears, Glen Oaks is well-placed to deal with the financial impact in comparison to other housing associations.

The Chairperson asked DW if the contractors were back on site at Arden Phase 5. DW replied that they were not back yet but were making plans to return when the Scottish Government's Route Map for moving out of lockdown advises that it is safe to do so.

In response to an enquiry from a Board member, NL confirmed that the Association had received the first furlough payment from the Government. AM advised that one third of the Association's staff had been furloughed.

The Board **noted** the impact of the Coronavirus on the Association and the actions that the Association is taking to mitigate its impact.

(4) Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) 2019-20

In response to a query about the number of complaints received during the year, AM advised that M. Hutcheson is arranging refresher training for staff about the recording of complaints.

On behalf of the Board, the Chairperson thanked staff for their work in preparing the ARC by the original submission deadline (which has now been extended to the end of July) despite the current challenging circumstances. The Board **approved** the submission of Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

5. Board Priorities

(1) Board Training

The Board **thanked** JM for providing notes from the training session on Rents and Affordability which were really useful for the Board members who had been unable to attend. The Chairperson commented that both this session and the recent Health and Safety training session had been very good.

(2) Rent Harmonisation

See Item 4(1) of Confidential Minute.

(3) Succession Planning and Staff Resources

AM advised that this item will be discussed with the Finance, Audit and Corporate Services Sub-Committee at their meeting in June. The Sub-Committee will also be looking at the job descriptions for the Corporate Management Team.

(4) Office / Community Hub

The Board **noted** that this item was currently on hold due to the coronavirus outbreak.

(5) Tenant Communication / Transparency

AM advised that the Association had issued a newsletter giving residents information about our services, and the support and advice we are providing during the current crisis. AM added that staff were also providing regular updates via Facebook and Twitter.

Some Board Members commented that they had not received a printed copy of the newsletter. AM replied that he would ask M. Hutcheson about this. The newsletter is also available on the Association's website and the document library on Decision Time.

6. Health & Safety

DW advised that, given the decision to close the Association's office at short notice, it had not been possible to carry out individual risk assessments on the proposed working areas of staff who would be working from home. DW added that no serious issues had been raised by staff with regard to working safely from home. However, some staff may need equipment from the office, e.g. office chairs, to make it easier and safer for them to work from home.

The Board **agreed** that staff should be issued with HSE Guidance Note INDG 226 and the EVH Model Policy on Homeworking. Staff will be asked to sign a statement confirming that they have read both documents and will take reasonable precautions to ensure their own safety and that of any others who may be affected by their work. The Board also **agreed** that the DSE questionnaire should be re-issued to staff, taking into account the new circumstances that staff are working in.

DW reported that the Association is continuing to carry out gas servicing. However, to protect both tenants and heating engineers, we are not insisting that tenants give us access to their properties during the lockdown. DW added that this will have an effect on the figures for next year's ARC return for Glen Oaks and also the majority of other housing associations.

With regard to bulk uplift, DW advised that he had asked the Association's Grounds Maintenance contractor to provide costs for uplifting bulk items if Glasgow City Council (GCC) does not resume this service. DW will update the Board on this issue at their next meeting in June.

7. Assurance Statement

(i) Assurance Statement Action Plan

NL reported that some of the completion dates had slipped as a result of the coronavirus situation and staff hoped to catch up with these. NL is currently working on Decision Time's Goals and Risks module and advised that she would enter the original agreed completion dates when she adds this work to the module. NL said that staff were trying to keep to the programme where possible. The Board **noted** the Action Plan.

NL will keep the Board up to date with any information from the Regulator regarding the Annual Assurance Statement.

(ii) Assurance Statement Review Programme

The Board **noted** the Review Programme.

(iii) Assurance Review of Regulatory Standard 3

NL advised that she had gone through Regulatory Standard 3 in detail and although a lot of the recommendations have been progressed, she believes that further improvements could be made. The Board **noted** the report.

8. Risk Management

(i) Strategic Risk Report

(ii) Strategic Risk Register

The Board **noted** the changes in controls due to the coronavirus lockdown and that the Board and Sub-Committee assurances have been updated. The Board **approved** the deletion of two strategic risks as detailed in the report. The Board **reviewed** and **approved** the Strategic Risk Register.

NL advised that the Decision Time Risk Module will be presented to the Finance, Audit and Corporate Services Sub-Committee at their meeting on 17 June 2020. In addition, a revised Risk Management Policy incorporating Target Risks will be presented to the Sub-Committee.

9. Notifiable Events

AM advised that he had updated the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) regarding the Association's repairs service, i.e. we are currently only able to carry out emergency repairs. The SHR advised that in future email updates would be sufficient for this type of information, rather than submitting a new notifiable event. The Board **noted** the report.

10. Business Plan Quarterly Review: April 2019 - March 2020

The Board **noted** the Business Plan Quarterly Review. NL confirmed that most of the items included in this report will be added to the Decision Time Goals module.

11. Staffing

See Confidential Minute

12. Membership

(1) Ending of Membership

The Board **approved** the cancellation of 2 shareholding memberships as detailed in the report.

13. Use of Seal - nothing to report

14. Policy Review

(1) Policy Register

AM advised that staff were currently working on the policies marked 'due for review'. The Board **noted** the Policy Register.

15. Community Regeneration

JM advised that four reports had been prepared for next week's Housing, Technical and Health & Safety Sub-Committee meeting to give an update on the activities and achievements of our goConnect and Starting Out projects. The reports will be uploaded to Decision Time shortly if any Board members would like to read them. The Board **noted** the report.

16. Matters for Information

(1) Attendance at Board Meetings: April 2019 - March 2020

AM commented that the average attendance figure of 76% at Board meetings was very good. The Board **noted** the report.

(2) Charitable Donations: April 2019 - March 2020

The Board **noted** the annual report on Charitable Donations.

(3) Management Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020

The Board **reviewed** and **noted** the Management Accounts.

See Confidential Minute

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

On behalf of the Board, the Chairperson thanked the CMT and staff team for their hard work during these challenging times. AM thanked SG for his kind words and the Board for their support.

20. Date and Time of Next Meeting

The next meeting will take place on **Wednesday 24 June 2020** at **6pm** via Zoom.

Signed:

Date: