

HILLHEAD HOUSING ASSOCIATION 2000

Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held on Wednesday 1 March 2017 at 6.30 pm in the Association's offices at 2 Meiklehill Road

Present:

C Taylor	J Shovlin
Cllr S MacDonald	L Scott
D Wilson	M Docherty
R Smith	

In Attendance:

- S Macintyre, Director
- M White, Corporate Services Manager
- E Sharkey, Housing Manager
- M Escreet, Welfare Rights Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Jamieson and B Devlin.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND DEFERRED ITEMS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Management Committee Meeting 1 February 2017

Page 2: Feasibility Study, Newdyke Road

R Smith enquired as to the update with this. S Macintyre advised that it had been confirmed there was no requirement for trial pits as there was sufficient depth for services. He advised laser surveys would be carried out instead. It was noted that no contract had been tendered as yet, and there followed some discussion on timescales. S Macintyre agreed to keep Cllr MacDonald informed of the situation should he be able to assist from the Council's end.

Page 2: OSCR

S Macintyre advised that he would liaise with Nicola Mandrel with regard to a possible session on governance for community groups.

Page 2: Universal Credit Payments

It was noted that there had been no further update received from Rona McKay, MSP on the proposed changes. However M Escreet advised that draft regulations from Scottish Government would be coming out, which would enable applicants to have a choice as to whether payments are made direct to the landlord or not.

M Escreet advised that these regulations were currently still out for consultation, after which they would require to go through a parliamentary process.

Page 5: Braes O'Yetts

S Macintyre advised that planning consent for this development was likely to be granted the following week, and that Barrat's were still aiming for a site start in June. It was noted however that the Association's houses were likely to be a bit later in the programme. S Macintyre highlighted this would result in a spend implication for the Association; however the tender submission would be based on the information available at the time.

Page 5: St Agatha's Primary School

S Macintyre advised that a response from the Council's Agents had yet to be received.

Page 7: Stage 3 Medical Adaptations

C Taylor referred to the under spend situation, and S Macintyre advised that more grant than expected had been received. It was noted that the backlog carried forward from the previous year had been completed, and that although some adaptations were currently outstanding, the process required meant they would not be completed before the year end. S Macintyre highlighted that any surplus funds could not be carried over.

Maintenance Services - Antonine Housing Association

D Wilson enquired as to the continuation of the above services, and S Macintyre advised that he had met with Antonine's Interim Director and Appointee Manager the previous week. It was noted that a follow up meeting had been intended to have taken place by now but due to recent staffing issues at Antonine this had not been possible. S Macintyre advised that a consultant had now been appointed to carry out an options appraisal. He also highlighted that three contracts were due to be re-tendered by October, and would result in further resources required if assistance was to be sought from the Association.

There followed some discussion on the Care and Repair service currently provided by Antonine Housing Association, and Cllr MacDonald confirmed this contract had recently been extended.

The minutes of the meeting were approved by L Scott and seconded by M Doherty.

Community Garden Sub Committee Meeting 3 February 2017

Page 2: Events

L Scott advised that the event arranged for the children of TLC and Happy Dayz nurseries previously scheduled for 13 April had been advertised on the Community Growing Project's Facebook page as now taking place on 30 March; however Committee had not been informed of any change. S Macintyre agreed to look into the matter.

Community Garden Sign Meiklehill Road

It was noted that this sign had now been erected.

The Minutes of the meeting were approved by L Scott and seconded by J Shovlin.

Special Management Committee Meeting 15 February 2017

It was noted that the above meeting had not been quorate; therefore a note of the meeting had been taken with details of the policy reviews and proposed amendments, the contents of which were noted.

Committee subsequently approved the policies considered at the meeting on 15 February 2017.

S Macintyre advised that he had yet to contact EVH to enquire whether any processes were in place regarding the monitoring of Drugs and Alcohol policies within housing associations.

4. FINANCE REPORT

Revised Budget 2017/18

S Macintyre referred to the previously distributed report and highlighted the changes made since the original budget was presented to the Management Committee earlier this year.

Committee noted the increase in salaries from 1.5% to 1.85%, and S Macintyre advised that the majority of EVH members had voted in favour of the 1.85% pay award.

It was noted that the committee training costs had been increased to £2,500 as agreed at the previous meeting.

S Macintyre explained that the reduction in subscription costs was due to the higher fee of £9000 paid last year which would continue to be drawn from as and when required.

Committee also noted the reduction in tenancy support costs and associated grant income.

Committee noted the net effect of these changes would reduce the net surplus in the year by £3,700 to £114,268 and that the levels of cash and reserves would also reduce by £3,700 to £1,269,690 and -£893,065 respectively.

Committee subsequently approved the Association's Budget for 2017/18.

5 HOUSING MANAGEMENT REPORT

i) HOUSING MANAGER'S REPORT

E Sharkey referred Committee to the previously distributed report and discussion took place as follows:

Current Tenant Arrears

Committee noted the current tenant arrears for January stood at 3.61%. However, E Sharkey highlighted that a substantial amount of Housing Benefit remained unpaid at the month end but received in early February which would have reduced the figure to 3.29%.

Committee noted the December arrears figure of 3.45%, and E Sharkey highlighted this significant increase from 2.79% in November had been due to a combination of Universal Credit in November and the anticipated increase in arrears around the Christmas period.

Former Tenant Arrears

Committee referred to the EDC former tenant arrears and noted they continued to reduce, with the arrears figure at the end of January being £19,831.49 or 0.59% of rent debit. E Sharkey highlighted this represented a reduction of £222.70 since November 2016.

Rent Payment Methods

Committee referred to the breakdown of payment methods and noted the additional method of Universal Credit. It was also noted that Direct Debit was also an option for tenants.

Voids & Lettings

Committee noted the properties which had become void during the period November to January, and the subsequent re-let information.

Anti-Social / Neighbour Complaints

Committee referred to the neighbour complaints received since 1 April 2016 and associated reasons and resolutions. E Sharkey highlighted that the number of complaints received had reduced over the past couple of years.

S Macintyre referred to the most common complaint being in relation to animals, and advised that the community police officers were currently working with the Dog Warden to tackle the issue of dog fouling in the area, and were looking into the possibility of local school children designing posters.

Allocations

Committee noted that the Association's withdrawal from the Common Housing Register had resulted in approximately 150 new applications, all of which had been

processed within an average of 6.43 days against a target of 14 days. It was further noted that in January there were 456 applications on the Association's Housing List. There followed some discussion on common housing registers and the possible need for a bespoke IT system to be developed in order for such a register to work adequately.

Nominations

Committee noted that lets to this group currently stood at 38%, and that should a further 5 nominations currently being considered for properties not yet ready to let be accepted, the total would then be 44.5%.

R Smith referred to the tenancies occupied by homeless nominations and raised some concern about levels of support available for neighbouring Association tenants. E Sharkey highlighted the issue of availability of replacements in suitable locations and advised that the Association would prioritise replacements when particular problems arose.

There followed some further discussion on the length of tenancy periods in temporary accommodation, and E Sharkey agreed to look into the length of occupancy in such properties in order to quantify this.

Universal Credit / Benefit Cap

Committee noted that the full roll out of Universal Credit had taken place on 2 November 2016, that there were currently 49 cases of which 44 were in arrears totalling £29,286.30 – representing 0.87% of total current arrears of 3.61%.

M Escreet advised Committee of the problems currently being faced following the introduction of Universal Credit. She highlighted that there were many tenants having to claim, largely due to the amount of people having changes in circumstances. She confirmed that, from the Association's perspective, the biggest problem was actually receiving the payments. She explained that by the time the first payment was received the tenant was already in arrears, and she advised Committee of the process of applications and completion of journals along with the associated problems being experienced.

There followed some discussion on individual payment dates and payment cycles, and M Escreet advised that the cycles had been monthly initially then 4 weekly, however hardly anything had been received after the December payment until February. She confirmed that most of the problems were administrative, as well as IT issues and related resources.

Committee noted that, as well as M Escreet and M Bisset, the housing officers were also assisting with claims. It was also noted that this was within the remit of K Wallace's new post.

M Escreet also advised Committee of another difficulty being faced in relation to there not being any specific contact at the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) to assist with any issues, whereas before there had always been contacts within Housing Benefit. She advised that although someone in DWP was now assisting with escalating any issues within the section, there was a limit to what could be discussed without the applicant being present.

It was agreed that Committee would continue to be kept up to date with the situation.

ii) EVICTION CASE NO. 110

Committee referred to the previously distributed report and noted the background information on the case, including the 149 contacts made or attempted with him over the 4 years of his tenancy and the failure to keep to various arrangements made regarding his arrears.

Following some discussion on the case, Committee gave approval to evict in the event that the tenant fails to keep to the current arrangement of £100 per week. It was noted that the tenant would be advised of this agreement.

6. PROPERTY SERVICES REPORT

i) APPOINTMENT OF GAS SERVICING AND REPAIRS CONTRACTOR

Committee referred to the previously distributed report and noted that interviews for the above contractor had taken place on 15 February 2017. The scores awarded for the 5 contractors were noted, and S Macintyre highlighted that analysis of the submitted tenders had been carried out by Thomson Cost Consultants.

Committee noted that the highest overall score had been achieved by Gas Sure (James Frew). It was also noted that tenants' feedback on the service provided by this contractor continued to be very positive.

Committee subsequently accepted the tender from Gas Sure (James Frew) in the sum of £109,763 (inclusive of VAT) and noted that a formal Building Contract would be prepared by Thomson Cost Consultants and signed by both the Contractor and the Association prior to the contract commencing.

ii) PHASE 11 PLANNED RENEWALS - PROJECT COMPLETION

Committee referred to the previously distributed report and noted that the completion of Phase 11 marked the end of the Association's planned renewal programme which had formed a key part of the promise to tenants at the time of the Stock Transfer.

Committee noted the investment made in upgrading and modernising the retained stock acquired as part of the Transfer, and agreed with the proposal to celebrate the milestone by offering a presentation to one of the residents at Phase 11 at their home. It was also agreed that some local and national press coverage would be invited, and S Macintyre highlighted that the contractor CCG, with whom the Association had worked closely with since Phase 5, was supportive of this plan and was keen in assisting with the celebration plans.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

i) DONATION REQUEST

S Macintyre advised that he had received a letter from a member of the local Monster Mash Up group, requesting a donation to support the group.

Committee noted an offer of support had previously been discussed, however when C Taylor had made enquiries she had been advised no assistance was required.

Following some discussion, it was agreed that S Macintyre contact Pat Loney to clarify the situation. Committee also agreed that in the event that support was required, the Association offer a donation of £100.

ii) COMMITTEE MEMBER

This item is minuted as confidential.

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

5 April 2017 (Strategy).

Minuted by: M White, Corporate Services Manager
7 March 2017

Chairperson's Signature:

Date: