

**Minute of the Management Committee meeting
held on **Tuesday 28 January 2020** in the offices of
Blochairn Housing Association, 1 Blochairn Road, Glasgow**

Present: [REDACTED]

In Attendance: Michael Carberry (Director); Carol Niven* (Finance Assistant); Matthew McDermott* (Wylie + Bisset, Finance Agent). * Item 5 only

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. The Director advised that [REDACTED] had now missed four consecutive meetings and, under the Association's Rules, ceased to be a Committee member. [REDACTED]

2) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3) Adoption of the Previous Minute of **26 November 2019**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] With that amendment the previous minute was adopted by **Joan Reuston** and seconded by **Olga Vassiljeva**.

4) Matters Arising from the Previous Minute of **26 November**

- a) **Previous Item 4(a) - [REDACTED]**. The Director advised that the date of entry was 31 January and Home Report value [REDACTED] had been paid. The owner has paid [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] and will pay for [REDACTED]. It was agreed that the standard monthly rent for this type of property [REDACTED] should be charged
- b) **Previous Item 4(b) - IT Review**. The Director advised that iPads had been received. It was agreed that protective covers should be provided and that a wireless keyboard should be provided if requested
- c) **Previous Item 4(d) - Play Area Blochairn Place**. The Committee noted that GCC Neighbourhoods & Sustainability had advised that there would not be a charge for a mobile camera to investigate nuisance issues
- d) **Previous Item 3(f) - New Close Doors** – The Director advised that the major repairs contractor (AC Whyte) has agreed with the sub contractor (Martec) that damaged doors will be replaced with a thicker glass at no cost to the Association. Written confirmation is awaited
- e) **Previous Item 5 – Committee Appraisal** – The Chairperson advised that the appraisal process is almost complete and a report from EVH will follow

- f) **Working with Young People** – The Committee noted that a Christmas ‘Wee Issue’ had been issued, which included a concert tickets competition. The intention is to produce the ‘Wee Issue’ regularly

5) **Finance Reports**

a) **Management Accounts to 31 December 2019**

The Finance Agent presented the accounts and noted variances from the budget. He advised that the Association was in a healthy financial position and that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Projecting to 2021/2022, [REDACTED], covenants would still be met, if the financial plan agreed when the loan was taken out is followed. On the policy of buying back houses he confirmed that [REDACTED]

b) **Rent Review 2020/2021**

The Director presented the papers issued with the agenda. These followed the same format as in previous years. The draft budget indicated how much income is required, plus a ‘transfer to the sinking fund’ for future major repairs and loan repayments.

Staff costs includes for a 5th member of staff. Planned Maintenance includes for new fire safety regulations from February 2021; gutters, downpipes etc. to be replaced rather than painted and for new house doors at Contract 1. Loan repayments include [REDACTED] for January – March 2021.

When the Unity Trust Bank loan was taken out it was agreed that [REDACTED]

Details of how this would affect rent levels was presented. Details of the history of rent increases since 2004 showed that the average increase is only 0.4%, due to there being several years of below inflation rises and one rent freeze. Details of rent increase proposals from other housing associations showed that Milnbank is [REDACTED] the Wheatley Group is [REDACTED] and Spire View, is [REDACTED]. The Director outlined the history of low rents in Blochairn and Royston, which are well below the Scottish average. Only Blochairn’s 5/6 apts. are above the Scottish average. There are few houses of that size, mainly 3 storey townhouses. Built in Blochairn Place in 2011, with relatively low housing association grant, more private finance was needed and this meant higher rents. This brings up the overall average for all Blochairn rents. During discussion it was felt that Blochairn’s rents compare well to other associations and the service provided is very good. In addition, the Tenant Bonus Scheme allows for a cash return to tenants at Christmas. However, there is some general discomfort as rents increase.

After discussion the Committee agreed to the proposal, which will be put to tenant consultation. It was agreed that the overall rent strategy should be reviewed in August.

6) **Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)**

The Director advised that the Staffing Sub Committee had considered and approved the staff structure review. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A 5th staff member will be employed and there will be further discussions on the most appropriate role and grade. The Chairperson advised [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Director advised that this arrangement has been in place for more than 20 years. He described the history of the Association's out of hours service, including why every resident has his mobile telephone number. The Committee had previously considered this to be an exceptional service and one that was appreciated by residents. He gave examples of the type of situations he would deal with out of office hours. These were not only on maintenance issues. He had also dealt with anti-social and neighbour nuisance situations and he responds to office alarm calls. He emphasised that the Committee had recognised, in many other aspects of the Association's work, that Blochairn is not typical of other associations. It has a reputation for innovation. It was agreed that being able to speak to a member of staff in an emergency was an important service. Several committee members had sought advice outwith office hours. Committee members commented on the Director coming to work in 2018, when most offices were closed due to heavy snow. He had assisted and organised residents who were shifting snow and left his own car to walk home. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. After discussion the committee approved the Sub Committee decision and accepted the proposals in the EVH report.

7) Health & Safety

The Committee noted the update issued with the agenda. Policies on Lone Working and Stress Management will be considered after consultation with staff.

8) Scottish Government/Scottish Housing Regulator

a) Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)

The Committee noted the paper issued with the agenda. Wylie + Bisset have been appointed as Internal Auditors. A representative will attend the next meeting to discuss the programme. Invitations to tender for External Financial Audit services from 2020/2021 will be issued shortly. This had been noted as 'done' on the previous update in error. The paperwork had been completed but the advertisement was held until after the New Year

b) Notifiable Events

The Committee noted [REDACTED]

c) Criticism of the Scottish Housing Regulator

The Committee noted recent correspondence in 'Scottish Housing News' on criticism of the Regulator. The Regulator's response was also noted

d) Housing to 2040. A Vision for Our Future Homes and Communities

A copy of the Scottish Government's document was distributed

9) Tenant Bonus Scheme

The monthly prize draw was made for January. Winners were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

10) National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO)

The Director advised that the NASSO Awareness Group (NAG) has still to write to Ash Denham MSP, Minister for Community Safety. The Chairperson asked how many associations were in the NAG. The Director advised that there were 11 but that only 5 attended meetings regularly. The Chairperson asked how many members there were previously. The Director advised that, from memory,

there were 13 when the NAG was created. Originally, when the City Council proposed the Information Sharing Protocol on housing sex offenders, 32 associations refused to sign it. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Director advised that he has asked the Committee that question on numerous occasions over the past 16 years. On each occasion the Committee has been emphatic that it should.

Following Mark Cummings' murder in 2004, Blochairn was first to challenge the system of housing sex offenders. Blochairn led the Court of Session action to gain access to statistics on the distribution of sex offenders in Glasgow. The NAG has warned the Scottish Housing Regulator, Scottish Government Ministers, Glasgow City Council and others that there will be 'another Mark Cummings'. The Director advised that, under FOI, he has copies of 16 Significant Case Reviews in Glasgow since 2007. They are supposed to establish what went wrong and find ways to improve the system. Yet, they are never shared or published. He intended to read the 16 SCR's to look for common themes.

11) Royston Strategy Group

The Director advised that there had been a meeting on Friday 24 January.

12) Staffing Sub Committee

The Committee noted that, at the meeting on 14 January, the Sub Committee considered and approved the EVH staff structure review; appointed Wylie + Bisset as Internal Auditor; considered ongoing staffing issues and continued its ongoing review of Health and Safety procedures.

13) Policy

There was no report on this item.

14) Training

- a) The Committee agreed that a format should be established for Committee members to provide feedback on training courses and conferences
- b) The Committee noted flyers issued for various events
- c) Several Committee members expressed an interest in attending the SHARE conference on 13/15 March at Peebles Hydro Hotel

15) Items for Future Agendas

Committee members were reminded to advise the Chairperson or Director of issues they might want to discuss under future agendas.

16) Any Other Competent Business

a) Membership Applications

The Committee noted and approved membership applications from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

b) Buy Back

The Director advised that an owner, who had considered buying the Scottish Government share and renting out his house, has decided to sell and contacted the Association. Another owner contacted the Association for further information. It was agreed that the Director will liaise with the Finance Agent on these potential purchases

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