

**Minute of the Management Committee meeting  
held on **Tuesday 28 July 2020** by Zoom Conference**

**Present:** [REDACTED]

**In Attendance:** Michael Carberry (Director); Carol Niven (Finance Assistant), item 5.

- 1) Apologies**  
Apologies were received from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].
- 2) Declarations of Interest**  
[REDACTED] declared an interest in item 5(b) and did not take part in the discussion.
- 3) Adoption of the Previous Minute of 30 June 2020**  
The minute of the previous meeting was adopted by [REDACTED] and seconded by [REDACTED].
- 4) Matters Arising from the Previous Minute of 30 June 2020**
  - a) Previous Item 4(a) - New Close Doors.** The Director is still liaising with the main contractor, AC Whyte. Furlough during lockdown has complicated matters
  - b) Previous Item 5(a) – SHAPS.** The Director advised that SHAPS' investment is orientated towards the United Nations ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) standards. Full details are available on the SHAPS web site
- 5) Finance**
  - a) Annual Accounts to 30 June 2020**  
In the absence of the Finance Agent, Carol Niven gave a brief report on the accounts. She described variances from the budget, many of which are due to the Covid 19 lockdown. She confirmed that the Association's financial position remained healthy and that banking covenants are being comfortably met
  - b) Buy Backs**  
The Director presented the paper issued with the agenda.

The Association has bought 3 houses:

• 11 June 2019.	18 Blochairn Place 2/2.	2 bed.	£ [REDACTED]
• 31 January 2020.	28 Dunolly Street 1/1.	3 bed.	£ [REDACTED]
• 26 June 2020.	20 Blochairn Place 2/1.	3 bed.	£ [REDACTED]

The general principle is that an owner would recognise that selling directly to the Association would save on the costs of a Home Report and Estate Agent fees, as well as the inconvenience factor, with regard to viewings, etc. The Association would arrange an independent survey and offer to buy at the valuation provided.

A higher price was paid for [REDACTED], as the owner was selling the house on the open market and had indicated that he might sell [REDACTED]. It was valued at £ [REDACTED].

Three surveys were carried out in July 2020. [REDACTED], which reflects the current market due to Covid 19. One owner has indicated that the minimum that would be considered would be £ [REDACTED].

When [REDACTED], there was no pattern found in other association's rent setting for buy backs. Several associations indicated that they charge the normal rent for that size and type of house. Blochairn decided to set the rent using an estimate of the costs of using cash reserves and likely mortgage costs for a mortgage. The normal rent was £[REDACTED]. The rent was set at £[REDACTED].

The decision to charge a higher rent was not unanimous and it was agreed that rents for Buy Backs could be reviewed if considered unaffordable to existing tenants (transfer applicants) or to housing list applicants. In January 2020, rent for [REDACTED] was set at the normal rent.

The house at [REDACTED] has been provisionally allocated, with the rent to be confirmed. The normal rent for this size and type of house is £[REDACTED].

The Director recommended that the Association should

1. Offer to buy a 2 bedroomed house at Blochairn Place, valued at £[REDACTED], for £[REDACTED].

The Committee agreed with this recommendation.

2. Set rents for buy backs at the going rate for that size and type of house.

There was a lengthy discussion on this. The Director reiterated that there is no set pattern for rent setting for Buy Backs in other associations and he recommended a simple process; one that was not unnecessarily complicated. The purchase price may vary for numerous reasons, including market conditions and timing. In response to a question about the condition of houses and likely repairs he suggested that this would be considered in the valuation and should not be considered when setting rents.

A comment was made that the Association must be careful of buying several houses at more than £100,000 and of the impact on cash reserves. The Director advised that the principle of buying houses within the immediate area had been well established. The original proposal was to establish a bank fund of around £250,000 to allow offers to be made as houses become available. The Finance Agent advised that this was not required as the Association had adequate cash reserves.

This matter is under constant review as the Management Accounts are considered every 3 months. It was considered when the Budget for 2020/2021 was considered and approved. The Management Committee minute of 25 February 2020 includes: 'He advised that £280k had been allowed for 'buy backs'; one in April (£[REDACTED]) and, possibly, two (£[REDACTED] and £[REDACTED]) later in the year. The cash position allows for these to be bought without bank loans, but this will continue to be monitored'.

In response to a question the Director advised that he recommended establishing the principle the rents for buy backs are set at the normal rate for the size and type of house. Flat [REDACTED] could be considered separately. In response to a question on whether a refund would be offered if the rent was reduced, the Director advised that the rent had been set based on the position at the time. It allowed for a review. If the rent was reduced based on an alternative view now, there was no question of a refund being paid.

After discussion, the Committee agreed that rents for Buy Backs could be set at the normal rate for that size and type of house at the time of purchase. The rent for [REDACTED] should remain at its current amount until the rent review in January 2021.

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

**a) New Staff Member**

The Director advised that he was reviewing sample job descriptions. These varied with the size and type of association. He would shortly begin discussions again with EVH. In response to a question he reminded the Committee that the proposal was to employ a Corporate Services Officer to cover issues, such as, health and safety; data protection; freedom of information, etc.

**7) Staffing Sub Committee**

The Sub Committee has not met since 14 January 2020.

**8) Health & Safety**

The Director provided an update on Covid 19

- In response to a question he advised that a risk assessment, using the EVH template, had been circulated and posted on Committee iPads
- Enquiries with other associations reveal a range of approaches to reopening to the public. An announcement is expected from the First Minister on Thursday 30 July
- One Director wants to start a discussion as to why there was any doubt about whether housing officers are 'key' workers and our offices are 'essential'
- Blochairn's office can be reconfigured by Monday 3 August, if required
- The Director recommended opening using an incremental approach. It is important that the impression is not given that everything is back to normal
- The Committee agreed that opening times can be restricted, e.g. 10.00 - 12.00 and 14.00 - 16.00 or 14.00 - 17.00. In response to a question the Director agreed that an appointments system would be considered
- The Committee agreed that staff can take separate 45-minute lunch breaks to help manage use of kitchen facilities
- Contractors are working normally, with social distancing measures. Non-emergency repairs are being carried out
- Staff continue to liaise with the Royston Coronavirus Response Group to support vulnerable residents. Food parcels are now being collected from the community hub rather than being delivered to the door. The overall service is gradually being wound down
- The heightened anxiety and stress within the community continues to impact on staff. There is more aggressive and unreasonable behaviour. Some residents act as though the office is operating normally
- The Director and the Housing Services Officer, in particular, have now worked through more than 4 months of lockdown with a reduced staff level
- Danielle's daughter's nursery is open and she is able to work Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10.00 - 15.00, and as normal on Monday and Friday. Carol has returned to working in the office
- Support staff will be based in the Committee room

**9) Scottish Government/Scottish Housing Regulator**

**a) Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)**

The Committee noted the paper issued with the agenda. There has been no change from the previous update

- b) **Consultation**  
The Director advised of the consultation on procedures for statutory returns. This has been posted on Committee iPads. Annual Assurance Statements are due by 31 October. The Regulator will listen to requests for a delay but this is unlikely to be required by Blochairn. There is a proposal to delay publication of Engagement Plans. Again, this is not an issue for Blochairn
- c) **Notifiable Events**  
The Committee noted that there had been no recent discussions
- 10) **Tenant Bonus Scheme**  
The monthly prize draw has been suspended. Several draws would be made at the first meeting in the office after lockdown has ended.
- 11) **National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO)**
  - a) After lockdown there will be further discussion with the NASSO Awareness Group (NAG) before further consideration by Committee
  - b) Freedom of Information requests will be submitted to Police Scotland and to Glasgow Housing Association to obtain updated statistical information
- 12) **Royston Strategy Group**  
There was no report on this item.
- 13) **Policy**  
The review of the Allocation Policy will be considered after lockdown is lifted.
- 14) **Training**  
The Director advised that the SHARE bulletin for September – December was now available and will be posted on Committee iPads.
- 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) **Internal Auditor**  
Internal Auditors have advised that some work can be done remotely so the visit in September, to examine IT procedures, may go ahead.
- 17) **Any Other Competent Business**
  - a) **Meetings.** It was agreed that Committee meetings and an AGM would be held in the office as soon as Scottish Government guidance allows.

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