

**Minute of the Management Committee meeting
held on Tuesday 26 January 2021
by Zoom Conference**

Present: [REDACTED]

In Attendance: Michael Carberry (Director); Matthew McDermott (Finance Agent).

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

2) Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3) Adoption of the Previous Minute of 24 November 2020

The minute of the previous meeting was adopted by [REDACTED] and seconded by [REDACTED].

4) Matters Arising from the Previous Minute of 24 November 2020

a) Previous Item 8(a) - Close Doors

The Director advised that the contractor will renew the glass in the doors

b) Previous Item 21(c) – Bulk Uplift

- c)** The Director advised that there had been 12 uplifts to 31 December with an average cost of £362.50. At this rate the annual cost would be £18,850. The rent review includes £18,000 for bulk uplift. It was agreed that it was necessary to continue with this service. How owners can contribute their share can be considered that the next meeting

5) Finance Report

a) Management Accounts to 31 December 2020

The Finance Agent presented the accounts that had been issued with the agenda. He highlighted variances from the budget which were mainly due to the effect of the Covid 19 lockdown. A major item is the start of capital repayments to the Unity Trust Bank loan. In answer to a question about NIC and pension contributions he confirmed that this required an adjustment at the year end. This will be presented differently from 1 April 2021. Overall the association remains in a healthy financial position

b) Rent Review 2021/2022

The Director presented the papers that had been issued with the agenda. When the Association borrowed £5.5 million in 2017 it was agreed that rent increases would be RPI + 1.5% until 2022 and then RPI + 1% until 2027. As RPI was 1.2% in December 2020, the proposed rent increase for 2021/2022 is 2.7%.

The Committee noted the draft budget, estimating income and expenditure; the effect of a 2.7% increase on current rents and the history

of rent increases since 2004. Over this 18-year period the Association's average rent increase has been 0.4% higher than inflation.

Estimated expenditure is £1,212,000, including £18,000 for a bulk uplift service and capital repayments on the £5.5m loan of £195,000. Estimated income with a 2.7% rent increase is £1,186,413, a shortfall of £25,587.

The Committee noted the affordability analysis of Blochairn rents in 2020 by Scotland's Housing Network. This shows that Blochairn's rents are affordable to its client group.

After discussion the Committee agreed to the proposed rent increase of 2.7% for 2021/2022. This proposal will be put to tenant consultation.

The Committee noted that the UK uses several measures to track prices, including the Consumer Price Index (CPI), introduced in 2003, and the Retail Price Index (RPI) which was introduced in 1947. RPI is generally about 1% higher than CPI. It was agreed that consideration should be given to whether RPI or CPI should be used in future rent reviews

6) Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)

a) New Staff Member

Associations are conducting face to face interviews. A recruitment pack will now be prepared for a Corporate Services Officer post

7) Staffing Sub Committee

The Committee noted that the Sub Committee did not meet in December but will meet with EVH within the next few weeks to discuss its review of the past 12 months, including [REDACTED].

8) Health & Safety

a) Covid 19

The Committee noted the latest Risk Assessment. All risks are considered to be 'Standard', taking account of measures taken to mitigate them. The office is not likely to open to the public before 1 April. Heightened anxiety and stress within the community and more aggressive and unreasonable behaviour, continues to impact on staff

9) Scottish Government/Scottish Housing Regulator

[REDACTED]

1) [REDACTED]

2) The Committee noted that the Regulator is being informed of disruption to services as a result of the Covid 19 lockdown

10) Tenant Bonus Scheme

The Committee noted that the cost of the Christmas Bonus 2020 was £22,710. The £75 bonus was paid to 274 (95%) tenants and payments were made to pensioners (over 60) and young people (under 16).

- 11) National Accommodation Strategy for Sex Offenders (NASSO)**
- a) **NASSO Awareness Group.** The Committee noted that, after lockdown, there will be further discussion with the NAG before further consideration by Committee on the future of the NAG
- b) **Freedom of Information requests:**
- **Police Scotland** – location of registered sex offenders within all Glasgow post codes has been added to the spreadsheet 2012 - 2020
 - **Glasgow Housing Association** – the FOI Commissioner is considering the appeal following refusal to provide a breakdown of the location of registered sex offenders within Glasgow Housing Association houses
 - **Scottish Government** – Bob Doris MSP; Ministers (Humza Yousaf – Justice; Kevin Stewart – Housing; Ash Denham – Community Safety); Gail Ross MSP and Rona McKay MSP have been asked to comment on why the Scottish Government does not hold figures for Scotland on
 1. Sex offenders released from prison without having anywhere to live, and
 2. The risk category of sex offenders released from prison without having anywhere to live
- c) **Block Profiling.** The Director has not yet drafted a draft letter to the Scottish Housing Regulator, MSP's and Councilors asking for comment on the system that requires allocations to be approved by Police or Social Work
- 12) Royston Strategy Group**
The next meeting is on Friday 29 January. Rosemount Development Trust has employed Gregor Henderson as Community Development Officer and has engaged Kevin Murray Associates to review the Royston Vision and Strategy document. Glasgow City Council's Strategy for the North East includes a proposal to designate Royston with 'Town Centre' status.
- 13) Internal Audit**
The Committee noted that the programme for 2021 includes Corporate Governance & Risk Management and Long-Term Maintenance Planning. In view of the impact of continued lockdown it was agreed that consideration should be given to postponing further audits until 2022.
- 14) Policy**
The Committee noted the Policy Diary issued with the agenda. Several policies are overdue for review. None are critical. However, this should be monitored with a view to bringing the diary up to date.
- 15) Training**
It was noted that the low engagement with training is due to lockdown and a reluctance to use Zoom or TEAMS for training.
- 16) Items for Future Agendas**
Committee members were reminded to advise the Chairperson or Director of issues they might want to discuss under future agendas.
- 17) Any Other Competent Business**

a) **Confidential Papers**

The Director reminded the Committee that confidential papers can be disposed of in the office, where they are shredded

- b) **Communications.** The Director advised that communication with residents is among the many challenges that the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown has presented for housing associations. During the first lockdown, in March 2020, the priority was to ensure that residents were well informed and aware of the support available within our community. Messages were posted on our website and on Facebook but not everyone uses social media or may have limited data. Hand delivering hard copy letters and newsletters raised questions about social distancing and PPE. The cost of posting was prohibitive. So, we looked for other ways to communicate.

Digital versions of letters and newsletters were developed with Handheld Community and communicated by text messages to mobile phones. This has worked well and we are able to see that messages are received and read. It also allows us to act quickly. Details of the First Minister's announcement on 5 January were relayed the following day <https://app.handheldcommunity.com/c/IW3>.

It costs £276.25 to post a letter to 325 households (325 x £0.85). Hand delivery might cost £100 - £150. There is also the cost of paper and envelopes. Text bulletins costs £6.50 (325 x £0.02).

It is proposed that this short, friendly, bulletin style of communicating will continue to be used after the Covid-19 lockdown is lifted. Paper copies will continue to be posted were required.

The Committee agreed that the format was good and should continue to be used. The Committee agreed that a formal arrangement can be agreed with Handheld Community to provide services for preparation and distribution of bulletins. This would be along similar lines to the agreement with Kiswebs to maintain the Blochairn's web site

- c) **Scottish Housing News.** The Director urged Committee members to sign up to the daily bulletin
- d) **AGM/Management Committee.** The Committee noted that the AGM is due on 29 June 2021. The Director will seek to identify and recruit new Committee members. Meantime, he emphasised the importance of retaining current Committee members. He thanked the Committee members for their perseverance, support and commitment to the Blochairn community over, what has been and continues to be, an extremely difficult time in Blochairn's history
- e) **Lazarous Chisela.** The Director advised that Committee member, Lazarous Chisela, is currently in Zambia where he is campaigning to be elected as the President of Zambia. He will remain on the Committee, attending meetings by Zoom. The Committee wished Lazarous every success in his campaign

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