

**Minute of the Management Committee meeting
held on **Tuesday 21 June 2022**
in the office of Blochairn Housing Association**

Present:

[REDACTED]

In Attendance:

Michael Carberry (Director); Patricia Davidson (Corporate Services Officer); Philip Morrice (Alexander Sloan – Auditor. Item 5 only)

1) Apologies

[REDACTED] is on Leave of Absence. Her work pattern is changing to 08.00 to 16.00, allowing her to attend meetings. However, this may not be permanent. *Post meeting note: [REDACTED] has missed four consecutive meetings and, under the Rules, she ceases to be a Committee member from the date of the last meeting. This means that only three Committee members need to stand for re-election at the AGM*

2) Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3) Adoption of the Previous Minute of **24 May 2022**

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

4) Matters Arising from the Previous Minute of **24 May 2022**

a) Previous Item 4(a) – Finance Assistant

Former Finance Officer at Cassiltoun Housing Association, Lorna Leishman, started a temporary post as Finance Assistant on 21 June. She will work two or three days per week on an agency basis. Support will continue to be provided by NG Homes finance staff

b) Previous Item 5(f) – Options Appraisal

The Committee noted the proposal from HRC Ltd, which had been issued with the agenda. It was agreed that this provided the required comprehensive review of the Association. After discussion the proposal was accepted

c) Previous Item 10(e) – Play Park

The Corporate Services Officer provided an update on progress with replacing equipment in the play park in Blochairn Place

d) Previous Item 17(f) – Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The Committee noted that the survey would begin within the next week or so. Invitations to take part would be issued by email and by post before Research Resource would embark on face to face interviews. The survey will be promoted on the Association's web site and Facebook page

5) Finance

a) Annual Accounts to 31 March 2022

The Auditor presented the accounts that had been issued with the agenda. He began by advising that the accounts presented a 'true and fair view' of the Association's financial position. The Covid 19 global pandemic had some impact but there was a healthy surplus at the year end. Net Currents Assets, a measure of how the Association can meet its debts, was strong and healthy. The Auditor advised that pension liability is a difficult issue to predict but it is

helpful that the Association's contribution to the pension deficit ends in October 2022. The Association performed had well, with low rent arrears and virtually no bad debts. Cash income was stable throughout the year and the cash position remained strong. Cash outflow was in investment in property maintenance and in property acquisition. The Auditor referred to the Contingent Liability. A court case involving the Pension Trust is due to be heard in late 2024. The outcome might result in some additional expenditure for pension scheme members. However, this will be on a pro rata basis and, with so few staff, should not impact greatly on Blochairn. Overall, the Association ended the year in a strong, healthy financial footing

b) Management Letter 2022

The Auditor presented the Management Letter. When the Auditor left the meeting, the Committee agreed on the responses to the issues raised. The Director will forward these to the Auditor

c) Loan Portfolio Return

The Director presented the Loan Portfolio Return which is due to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator by 30 June. After the discussion the Return was approved

6) Annual General Meeting/Special General Meeting

As [REDACTED] has missed four consecutive meetings she ceases to be a Committee member from the date of the last meeting. This leaves ten Committee members. At least one third or the nearest number thereto, must retire and stand for re-election. The three Committee members to retire are [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED].

There are two new nominations – [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. This gives the Committee a total of twelve members. As this is fewer than 15, there is no need for an election.

The Director advised that he had discussed co-option to the Committee with [REDACTED], [REDACTED]. He presented her CV, which shows her to be eminently qualified and experienced in finance matters. The Committee agreed that [REDACTED] could be co-opted at the next meeting.

It was agreed that Rosemount Lifelong Learning's director, Sean Morrow, could give a short presentation at the end of the AGM. North Glasgow Healthy Living Community's Director, Arlene Cooke, will attend to promote the pop-up opera to be held at Glenconner Park on 6 July. After the Tenant Bonus Scheme prize draw for June there will be a raffle draw for a £400 gift voucher for members attending the AGM.

The Committee noted the summary of changes in the Model Rules to be presented for approval at the SGM.

7) Health, Safety & Human Resources Sub Committee

This item was taken at the end of the meeting and staff left to allow a confidential discussion.

8) Tenant Bonus Scheme

The draw for June will be made at the AGM.

9) Items for Future Agendas

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

- b) The Director advised that a request had been received to consider the performance of the landscape gardeners. As there is no committee meeting in July it was agreed that this could be discussed. However, it was emphasised that Committee members must have an opportunity to consider matters in advance to avoid knee jerk reactions or decisions and to give an opportunity for discussion.

The Director advised that the last time Committee members were asked for a view on the gardeners' performance it was felt that it was OK. He advised that there are very few actual complaints. The men on site are doing their best and the foreman is very reliable. However, staff are not particularly happy with the company, overall.

It was noted that the Tenant Satisfaction Survey within the next week or so, might attract some comment.

Meantime, the Director asked the Committee to note:

- The basic gardening service was introduced 27 years ago
- It was recognised that many people don't know about gardening and are not inclined to spend time on it
- Streets in other areas often have unruly, overgrown gardens that detract from everything else around them
- Gardening is expensive and is a luxury that many people cannot afford
- Most residents have nowhere to store gardening equipment
- Efforts to make the area look as good as it can are constrained by costs
- Landscape gardeners are not well paid. It's not an attractive job. It's seasonal and insecure. There is a high turnover of staff
- Service quality can be erratic. Staff deal with problems as they arise
- There aren't lot of exceptional companies waiting to step in
- Most housing associations encounter the same problems
- Some big associations employ their own in-house tradesmen, including gardeners. But they encounter the same issues
- Work has become more difficult. Our climate has changed. We can no longer predict our weather
- We can have torrential rain in July and mild temperatures in November
- Often torrential rain is followed by hot, humid weather. Things grow quicker and thicker
- If the weather is horrendous when gardeners are due they can't return the following day. They're on to the next job
- The gardeners worked during the COVID 19 pandemic lockdown
- They helped us keep the area in some sort of order. They did it with half their staff in isolation
- They helped locate rat burrows during the serious rat infestation – they did so quickly and whilst operating at half strength
- Everything is paid for through rents and factoring charges
- The Housing Benefit Office wanted to deduct gardening costs from tenants' Housing Benefit. The Association refused to provide details
- Tenants must take reasonable care of their own garden under the Tenancy Agreement and Tenant Handbook

The Director emphasised that it is important that Committee members do not bring their own issues to the Committee table. Committee members

must resist pressure from others to get something on to the Committee agenda. Whilst it is important that the Association knows what residents think and about what they want; there are procedures for this. Residents must contact the office directly rather than contacting Committee members in the community. This is also very important for Committee members' wellbeing.

After discussion it was agreed that the performance of the gardeners would be further considered at the next meeting.

10) Any Other Competent Business

a) **Membership Application**

The Committee approved the membership application from [REDACTED], [REDACTED]

b) **Blochairn Recycling Centre**

The Committee noted the email sent by the Director on 9 June to Bob Doris MSP, copied to councillors and Council officials:

Good morning, Bob

Over the last week or so residents have been contacting us about the obnoxious smell from the Depot. As usual, we direct them to elected officials and professional officers, including SEPA. They're tired and frustrated and not satisfied with that advice. I know how they feel.

I spoke to someone yesterday who was so distressed that I must, again, relay residents' feelings to you and other relevant parties.

Issues include that the Blochairn Recycling Centre is

- *processing food waste which emits an obnoxious, foul smell that is so bad at times that people feel ill. It is depressing*
- *processing garden waste which contributes to the obnoxious, foul smell*
- *continuing to be used to compensate for problems at other Council sites that are more suited to the type of waste that is causing the problems*
- *processing household waste that includes food waste and 'tons' of dog faeces (oh, what the hell – dog shite!)*
- *not fully using sprays designed to mitigate the obnoxious, foul smell because workers can't breathe them in*
- *continuing to leave shutter doors open for long periods*
- *a source of rats that are again being seen in and around Blochairn Place (residents refuse to believe that the Depot is completely innocent in this regard)*

Residents are pointing out that it's nearly a year since the Evening Times' article and asking - is it really going to take pressure from the media to put an end to this? Or is civil disobedience required?

As I have said (see below) the City Council is trying to be a 'good neighbour'. And the workers on site are doing their best to keep thing under control. But it is not possible to prevent the obnoxious, foul smell.

For nearly 15 years we have stated vehemently that, until the Blochairn Recycling facility is used solely for non-perishable material, as was intended, this issue will not go away. The facility is 100 yards from

residential buildings. It is not acceptable that food waste and other perishable material is processed there. The community has waited long enough. Blochairn cannot continue to be used for food and household waste, irrespective of what other options are available to Glasgow City Council.

The Committee agreed that the MSP should be asked to organise a public meeting. The venue could be decided later. One option was to have an open-air meeting in Blochairn Place.

It was further agreed that a letter should be issued to Glasgow City Council advising them of the request to the MSP. The Council should be advised that the Association will seek legal advice on how action can be taken to halt the Blochairn facility from processing putrid waste

c) **Tenant Information Service**

The Director advised that Blochairn took part in a survey by TIS about working with Young People. In a follow up discussion, TIS wanted to hear about experiences of growing up in Blochairn. One quote has been received, so far:

'As you may know, I moved into Blochairn at the age of 13 and straight away felt welcomed and accepted. I remember the trips the housing would take us on which are now lovely core memories my siblings and I reflect on. I truly feel that BHA care about their tenants and any inquiries/problems we have are dealt with straight away. My family and I feel acknowledged, encouraged and most importantly heard. The little things we would receive through the post like 'the annual Christmas bonus, 'annual calendars' and Christmas chocolates really put a smile on our faces and created a positive impact. I also remember looking forward to receiving the newsletters and partaking in any of the competitions BHA offered. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for all your hard work. We won't ever forget your kindness'

d) **Pop Up Opera**

The Committee noted details of the pop-up opera to be performed at Glenconner Park on 6 July. This has been organised by North Glasgow Healthy Living Community

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