

**WELLHOUSE HOUSING ASSOCIATION  
MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON  
25 February 2021 at 6PM - VIA ZOOM**

**1. Welcome, Sederunt & Apologies.**

**Present:**

Darron Brown	Chair
Maureen Morris	Vice-Chair
Michelle Harrow	Committee Member
Jane Heppenstall	Committee Member
Sarah Morris	Committee Member
Carol Torrie	Committee Member
Shona McKenna	Committee Member

**In Attendance:**

Martin Wilkie-McFarlane	Director
Carol Hamilton	Housing & Customer Services Manager
Bill Black	Assets & Maintenance Manager
Linda Logan	Minute taker
Grant Arthur	Glasgow City Council (Item 5 only)
Sandra Davidson	Finance Officer (Items 6 and 7 only)

**Apologies:**

Clare Monteith	Committee Member
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The Chair welcomed Grant Arthur (GCC) and Sandra Davidson (Finance Officer) to the meeting. He advised committee that Stewart McIntosh had resigned from the committee due to work/personal circumstances. Thanks for Stewart's contribution had been expressed. He encouraged local committee members to engage with other residents who may have an interest in submitting an application to join the committee.

**2. Declarations of Interest.**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of the Committee Meeting of 28 January 2021.**

**Resolution:**

The minute of the Committee Meeting of 28 January 2021 were proposed by Jane Heppenstall and seconded by Michelle Harrow as an accurate record of the proceedings.

**3.1 Minutes of the Policy Review Meeting of 28 January 2021.**

The minute of the Policy Review Committee Meeting of 28 January 2021 were proposed by Jane Heppenstall and seconded by Michelle Harrow as an accurate record of the proceedings.

#### **4. Matters arising and actions from the minute report.**

There were no matters arising that were not covered in subsequent agenda items.

#### **5. Anti-Social Behaviour Packages.**

The Housing Manager presented the report to update committee on support packages offered to landlords by Glasgow City Council for effectively managing Anti-Social Behaviour in the community across all tenures which would reduce the number of unresolved complaints and allow the Housing Officers to prioritise the collection of rent arrears.

She drew committee's attention to appendix 1 which highlighted 73 unresolved cases which were closed due to insufficient evidence being available. Lack of corroboration coupled with reluctant witnesses are the main reasons why cases cannot be resolved. She noted her concern that tenants could feel unsupported where suitable solutions cannot be found. She asked committee to note that a recent case that had been lodged in court and a date set for March 2021. The costs associated with this action are estimated to be between £3-4K for action against one household. She clarified that £2,100 of this cost was for 3 anti-social behaviour orders in the same case. This cost does not include the housing officer time. She asked committee to note that the Wellhouse ASB policy was currently being reviewed and options with external support were being explored to ensure effective outcomes for our customers and to enable officers to concentrate on the collection of rent. She recommended that for a period of one year that consideration be given to have our ASB cases managed by GCC staff. She noted the options and associated costs as outlined at appendix 2, asking that the gold package be given further consideration by committee. She provided feedback on outcomes from partner organisations, who had indicated favourable benefits of the service and a reduction in timescales.

Carol Torrie sought clarification on the difference between the Gold and Silver package.

Grant, thank committee for the invite to the meeting. He explained that the Silver package caps referrals at 5 cases whereas the Gold package would give the Association unlimited access.

Jane Heppenstall sought an explanation on the discrepancy in the timescales in which the Association receives information from the police and the time in which GCC's anti-social team is able to access information.

Grant explained that the team actually has their own police intelligence officer that works within the GCC team which allows them direct access to information and checks can be carried out timeously. He highlighted that if they felt there was enough evidence, the Council lawyers would deal with the ASB costs; in addition, recovery costs would be included within the Gold package. Eviction costs would be the Associations responsibility.

Michelle Harrow asked if a mediation option was available. Grant confirmed that he managed the City's ASB services which covers all tenures across the city. He stated that they would always explore mediation if possible.

Michelle sought clarification if covert surveillance was used. Grant stated that they do have covert cameras however this was always used as a last resort. Michelle stated that given that a lot of these cases happen out of hours, how are the team gathering information to support the case.

Grant reiterated that they require complainers to come forward to confirm what has happened unless there is police involvement then they would use the police evidence.

Michelle asked what the out of hours service looks like in practical terms and was the service going out and gathering evidence. Grant confirmed that present they use the noise officers who work until 3:30am to cover cases, however, if need be, they will have officers come out to make a more targeted approach.

The Director sought clarification on whether mediation; covert surveillance and out of hours officer visits were included within the Gold package. Grant confirmed that these services were all included within the package.

Lengthy discussion ensued with regards the Council charges for this service whereas other Councils provide the service free of charge. Grant explained the Council, had not been willing to provide the service free of charge due to them being unable to fund the service. He stated that some Councils have now started charging for services. There was further discussion on whether equipment would be put into complainers' homes to record anti-social behaviour. Grant confirmed that noise officers would visit with noise decimal meters however they would not leave equipment in someone's house due to the possibility of the evidence being tampered with, which could be challenged in court.

There were no further questions. The Chair asked if committee were in agreement with the proposal to purchase the Gold package for a period of one year, with an annual review thereafter.

**Resolution:**

**Committee noted all the packages as discussed.**

**Approved purchase of the Gold Service package for 21/22 subject to annual review.**

**Carol Torrie proposed and Maureen Morris seconded the purchase of the gold service package for 21/11 subject to an annual review.**

**Grant Arthur left the meeting at this time.**

**6. Management Accounts – December 2020**

The Director presented the report to provide committee members with a comparison of the estimated and actual financial position to 31 December 2020. He expressed his thanks to Sandra Davidson for her assistance in the completion of the accounts.

He provided a brief overview of the Statement of Comprehensive Income and variances. The budgeted surplus for the period to 31<sup>st</sup> December was £457,650. The actual results for the period show a surplus of £796,091, a favourable variance for the period of £338,440.

The overall variance arises from:

Operational activities £336,506 – favourable variance  
Net interest and other £1,934 – favourable variance

He asked committee to note that the Repairs and Maintenance budget showed an underspend of £368,230 which had come as no surprise due to the majority of contractor staff being furloughed due to covid-19 and only emergency repairs being carried out. The Maintenance Manager confirmed that works were just beginning to get back on track when the second lockdown began. He noted that due to the current circumstances planned works for this financial year, would move to next year however they will endeavour to pull works forward where they can.

The Director asked committee to note at page 26, the Statement of Comprehensive Income, which highlighted actual performance against the budget. He noted a significant adverse variance of £7,222 in commercial rents, from a budgeted figure of £41,198 which was in the main due to the revised rental figure for 17-19 Newhills Road being implemented but also the service charge at the Hub no longer being charged after July. Stage 3 Medical Adaptation Grant Income showed a favourable variance of £14,013 which was due to the original annual budget for Stage 3 HARP funding being £33,000 however this had increased to £55,000 throughout the year.

He noted the underspend in salaries of £15,552 due to replacement of the Estate Warden Supervisor not being in post in the first quarter of the year and pension savings.

The Statement of Financial position showed that housing properties had increased by £217,295 which was in the main due to bathroom and boiler replacements amounting to £89,00 and an additional £38,000 being spent replacing the boiler in the Hub. The purchase of an individual property on the open market added an additional £85,000, funded through HAG funding and covered by DRS.

The pension deficit reflects the revaluation of multi-employer DB scheme due to the new accounting treatment for pensions. There will be another valuation prior to the year-end which will more than likely re-introduce the liability.

Reserves had increased by just over £796,000 to over £7.3M in line with the surplus made for the period.

There were no issues with covenant compliance

The Director noted that the cash position continues to increase and reflects a healthy financial position finishing the period at £2.7M

#### **Resolution:**

**Committee approved the management accounts for the period to date.**

**The management accounts to 31 December 2020 were proposed by Maureen Morris and seconded by Sarah Morris**

## **7. Budget 20/21**

The Director presented the 2<sup>nd</sup> Draft Budget to members with details of the expected financial position of Wellhouse Housing Association for the financial year 20/21 and to highlight any minor changes from November where committee had approved the 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the budget.

To provide committee with additional confidence, the Director, had asked Azets (external auditors) to scrutinise our assumptions, sensitivity analysis and the appendices of the report. He drew committee's attention to appendix 2 which provided the auditors comments and further assurance.

He asked committee to note the main changes from the November budget in relation to the rental increase which had been reflected at 1.5%. This had increased and approved by committee at its meeting of January 2021 to 1.7% to take account of October CPI +1%, and following consultation with tenants. This had reflected in a slight increase of around £6,500-£7,000 in rental income and increased the budget surplus and cash position by the same amount

Salaries were uprated by an assumed rate of 1.0% which reflected the current agreement between the Union and EVH. He stressed that all staff had supported a 0% increase however the joint negotiating council has now come back proposing a 0.8% increase, which will result in a favourable variance from the report that was presented in November.

#### **Resolution:**

**Committee noted and approved the proposed 20/21 budget.**

**Shona McKenna proposed and Jane Heppenstall seconded the 20/21 budget.**

#### **8. I.T. Strategy.**

The Director presented the report to outline our approach to migrating to a new CRM and to seek committee approval.

He clarified that our current database was SDM, a system that is common in the housing sector, however it is decades old and no longer fits our needs. We are required to do too many work arounds to get results leading to the potential for error and inefficiency. The system had frequent drop outs when being used over the VPN, does not have a remote working facility nor a customer portal and has very little back room support.

The Director provided background information on a new CRM, HomeMaster, that is widely used in England and had come onto the market in Scotland a couple of years ago. He has had several conversations with Homemaster's CEO, all staff have had demonstrations and attended targeted presentations relating to each team's requirements. Testimonials have been taken from other Glasgow based Housing Associations and site visits have been made to ensure the database will do what we require it to do. He informed that it was a cloud-based system which would enable us to work remotely and for use during home visits. He highlighted that the system fits in well with our IT Strategy which includes upgrading broadband, our approach to back-ups, business continuity and disaster recovery.

He reported that since our last meeting Hiper and HomeMaster have met and agreed that the system would be beneficial for our ambitions to have a more secure system and alleviate our need to do old fashioned tape back-up on a daily basis.

The Director proposed that we purchase HomeMaster. He asked committee to note that it will cost £10,000 more than we are currently paying however in the last financial year we paid just under £23,000 for SDM due to the need for additional support from SDM and consultants. He

noted that since 16/17 the Association has spent in the region of £94,000 on SDM as outlined at appendix 2 of the report.

He sought committee members comments and questions.

Maureen Morris expressed her surprise at SDM costs over the years. Given the positive feedback from staff on the new system she thought it would be a positive to move to a more user-friendly alternative.

Committee discussed the onerous and uncertain task of manual back-ups and for the new system allowing us to move to a paperless office in line with our sustainability policy.

The Chair noted that committee had discussed the IT system for years and that it was time to ensure our CRM was fit for the future.

#### **Resolution:**

#### **Committee:**

**Approved the I.T. Strategy plan;**

**Approved the termination of the contract with SDM;**

**Approved the cost of £23,000 to implement the I.T. Strategy, which was an increase of £10,000 on current costs;**

**Instructed the Director to bring quarterly progress updates to committee.**

**The I.T Strategy plan and associated costs were proposed by Michelle Harrow and seconded by Maureen Morris.**

## **9. Development.**

The Director reported to progress on development plans in Wellhouse. He stated that progress for our development opportunities remains frustrating. We have formally expressed our desire to develop Phase 8 which is owned by Wellhouse. Foul water capacity exists for this site. No progress has been made due to Covid restrictions in 20/21. In addition, we have expressed an interest for the sites owned by the Archdiocese and Glasgow City Council. He noted that all phases are dependent upon a response from the authorities dealing with foul and ground water flood mitigation issues within Wellhouse. He discussed the valuation received for the Archdiocese site and progressing to ground and undermining investigations once permitted to do so. He sought approval to approach the Archdiocese to open further negotiations with them in respect of the future purchase of the land.

He reported that Scottish Water had completed a CCTV survey of the drains. He noted that even with a retrofit of rain gardens we would still need an attenuation tank to mitigate flood prevention. The last quote was in the region of £800,00. A further meeting has been set up with Scottish Water, our Development Agent and the Director, he will update thereafter.

The Chair sought clarification on the outcome of their meeting with Ballie Ballantyne. The Director confirmed that himself and the Chair had met with Ballie Ballantyne, who had inquired after the vacant and derelict land fund on our behalf. He asked the Chair to note appendix 2 where we had



been informed just at time of writing, that the land had not been derelict for long enough for us to qualify for this funding. The Chair expressed his disappointment that we were not eligible for the funding and acknowledged the Directors frustration and efforts to try and move the development programme forward.

**Resolution:**

**Committee;**

**Noted the development update and instructed the Director to bring future progress reports;  
Approved the opening of further soft dialogue with the Archdiocese of Glasgow;  
Approved the exploration of flood prevention work.**

**Approval to progress with further dialogue with the Archdiocese and further exploration of flood prevention works was proposed by Maureen Morris and seconded by Carol Torrie.**

#### **10. KPI Report – Quarter 3 – Sept – Dec 2020**

It was noted that the purpose of the report was to bring to the attention of committee performance in relation to Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for the period Sept – Dec 2020. Committee were asked to note for information the KPI monitor at page 88 of the report.

The Housing Manager stated that rent arrears continue to be of concern and would be discussed in a separate report. Tenancy offers refused were within target, with relet times being lengthier than normal at an average of 33.47 days due to delays in processes due to Covid 19. She was pleased to report from a recent survey that tenants who responded in Q3, all indicators as highlighted at appendix 1 were all within target for the first time. A very positive outcome.

The Assets & Maintenance Manager reported that contractors continue to perform well given the ongoing Covid situation. He drew committee's attention to the comparison graphs as highlighted at appendix 2. He confirmed that gas servicing had been completed on 219 properties which were due for gas servicing. 16 of these properties went to forced access level and none went over the service date, however a high level of staff time has been spent to make sure the service has been carried out within timescales.

Michelle Harrow considered that service delivery performance had been exceptional during these difficult times.

**Committee noted the Key Performance Indications for the period Sept – Dec 2020.**

#### **11. Operational update:**

**Director:**

**Recruitment:**

The Director informed committee that recruitment of the Finance and Corporate Services Manager had been on ongoing. The recent recruitment process had not been unsuccessful. He has had dialogue with the Chair and the Chair of the Staffing Committee who had agreed to the use an

agent to recruit in the short-term at a cost of approximately £5,000. Costs are within the Directors delegated authority, however, he sought confirmation from committee that there were no objections. There were none. He will progress; in consultation with the Chair and Staffing Chair and report to committee as the need arises.

#### **Insurance Tender:**

The Director noted that our insurance requires renewal. He asked members to consider the recent insurance review as undertaken by the Association and to ratify the confirmed placement of insurances with Ocado based on the pricing, cover analysis and quality scoring. The overall cost of the tender was £40,235.71 which was slightly lower than the renewal price 3 years ago. There were no issues regarding cladding on any of our properties.

#### **Resolution.**

**Committee approved the confirmed placement of insurances with Ocado at a cost of £40,235.71 per annum.**

**Shona McKenna proposed and Jane Heppenstall seconded the confirmed placement of insurances with Ocado at a cost of £40,235.71 per annum.**

#### **Internal Audit:**

The Director reported that the Internal Audit contract expires at the end of March and requires to go to tender. He proposed that a joint tender be explored the EHRA, 4 of who's internal audit tenders as due at the same time which may bring economies of scale. Provanhall HA will lead on the proposal.

#### **Resolution:**

**Committee approved a joint EHRA internal audit tender being explored by Provanhall Housing Association**

**Maureen Morris proposed and Michelle Harrow seconded the proposal.**

#### **Proposed salary awarded 2021:**

The Director noted that negotiations are now complete. He asked committee to note the letter detailing the recommendations at appendix 1. The original proposal for a 0% increase which was supported by both staff and committee. Following negotiations, a 0.80% increase was proposed.

#### **Resolution:**

#### **Committee;**

**Noted that negotiations are now complete and EVH are now asking for full member organisations to vote on the outcome of salary negotiations.**



**Committee approved the 0.80% salary increase as at April 2021**

**Shona McKenna proposed and Michelle Harrow seconded the approved 0.80% salary increase as at April 2021.**

**Housing Manager.**

The Housing Manager stated that we continue to allocate properties and conduct viewings in accordance with legislation. All tenants have received notification of the rent increased for 2021. Income Advise continues to perform well with financial gains for tenants of £213,569 from April 2020. She highlighted further projects undertaken in relation to the SSTV Children’s’ appeal, the fuel and good parcel fund, the digital support project, the WEE-G fund and 31 awards being made to household in crisis resulting from the EHRA fund. Additional funding continues to be explored. Rent collection continues to be a priority and was subject to a separate report.

She asked committee to note that the Scottish Government had requested that the Next Steps project resumes after the delay due to Covid 19. A meeting with committee members, staff and tenants will be arranged to implement the action plan.

Two complaints training session have been arranged for all staff members in March which will complete the action point arising from the ongoing audit.

**Maintenance Manager:**

The Maintenance Manager stated that work on the Newhills shop units will commenced on 22<sup>nd</sup> February with good progress being made. Due to lockdown restrictions, veranda works will restart on 1<sup>st</sup> March. Kitchen replacement and decoration in the café has been completed, committee noted the photographs of the significant improvements at appendix 3 of the report. Day to day contracts are out to tender.

Committee noted the contents of the report.

**12. AOCB**

Committee sought an update as to whether Connect Community Trust had paid the invoice issued for dilapidation works required at Newhills Road and the Café. The Director stated that to date CCT had not paid the invoice issued.

There was no further business. Meeting closed 8pm.

Next Meeting: 29 April 2021, 11am via Zoom.

I certify that the above minute has been approved as a true and accurate reflection of the proceedings:

Signed (Chair) .....

Date:.....