

## PARAGON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minutes of Management Committee meeting

Hybrid Meeting

18 October 2023

Present: A Anderson  
E Campbell  
S Gilbert  
E McNie  
K Menzies (online)  
R Murray (online)  
M Richards  
F Wallace

Staff: M Torrance  
E Mathershaw  
W Baxter  
M Thompson  
M Binnie

Observer: M Hesketh

### GOVERNANCE / MINUTES ETC

#### 1. APOLOGIES

J Anderson  
B Lees  
C Munro

#### 2. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

S Gilbert was welcomed to the management committee after being elected at the AGM.

F Speirs has resigned from the committee from today due to personal circumstances. Fiona's service to the Association has been very valuable and best wishes and thanks were offered.

M Hesketh wishes to join the committee. He is an experienced committee member and a past chair of the Association. It was proposed that he fill a the casual vacancy and would take office from the next meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. ***Committee members agreed.***

### **3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

The draft calendar was considered with the usual pattern of dates and business. Agreed to adopt dates and will email members to arrange the time for each meeting based on best availability of members in order to maximise attendance.

### **4. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS 2023/24**

Noted that there has been discussion in past on succession planning and this has resulted in all office bearers posts being filled.

The Secretary provided details of the nominations for election.

The following nominations were received.

#### **Chair – A Anderson**

Nominated by: E Campbell

Seconded by: M Richards

#### **Vice Chair (Joint) – J Anderson**

Nominated by: A Anderson

Seconded by: E Campbell

#### **Vice Chair (Joint) – F Wallace**

Nominated by: A Anderson

Seconded by: E Campbell

#### **Treasurer – M Richards**

Nominated by: A Anderson

Seconded by: E Campbell

#### **Secretary – M Torrance (Staff)**

Nominated by: E Campbell

Seconded by: M Richards

There being no other nominations all were duly elected.

Each sub committee will appoint their Chair at their next meeting.

F Wallace was thanked for her service as Chair over the last 5 years.

A Anderson took over as Chair.

A Anderson thanked everyone for their support and members thanked her for taking on the role.

## 5. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO REPRESENTATIVE BODIES

Members considered appointments to representative bodies and agreed for the members to remain as they currently are.

- EVH – F Wallace (reserve member M Richards)
- SFHA – F Wallace

*Note – R Murray joined the meeting.*

SHARE – there is no standing representative. M Torrance will enquire if SHARE is looking for Board members. SHARE have recently rebranded and have a new director.

TIS – E Mathershaw is now a TIS board member.

***Committee members agreed to the above.***

### GOVERNANCE ITEMS

**Adoption of Standing Orders - No proposed changes. *Committee unanimously members agree to adopt the standing orders.***

### **Appointments to Sub Committees –**

#### **Housing Management & Investment Sub Committee**

A Anderson  
R Murray  
S Gilbert  
J Anderson  
F Wallace  
E Campbell  
M Richards

#### **Finance & General Purposes Sub Committee**

A Anderson  
F Wallace  
M Richards  
S Gilbert  
M Hesketh  
E Campbell

#### **Audit Sub Committee**

M Richards  
M Hesketh  
S Gilbert  
E Campbell  
K Menzies

## **H&S Sub Committees (workplace and stock)**

M Richards  
F Wallace  
J Anderson  
E Campbell  
S Gilbert  
R Murray

**Appoint Whistleblowing Appeals Officer** - L McNie is the Whistleblowing Appeals Officer as previously agreed. This post needs to be a committee member who is not an office bearer to deal with appeals as outlined in the policy. ***Committee members agreed for L McNie to remain the Whistleblowing Officer.***

**Attendance Register** – noted.

## **Membership Cancellations**

In accordance with the Association's Rules there were 7 memberships considered for cancellation (details noted on membership paper). Condolences were noted that two members were deceased. Both members will be sadly missed. They were strong supporters of the Association. 2 memberships had no forwarding address and 3 memberships were cancelled under rule 11.1.3.

***Membership cancellations noted/approved.***

*Total number of members – 122*

**Register of Interests** – all members issued with record to check. Almost all records have been checked and returned.

**Payments, Benefits & Entitlements** - None

**Code of Conduct** – all members required to sign code of conduct annually. Almost all have been returned.

**Notifiable Events** - None

**Decision Register** – To note, no new registers.

**Re-adoption of Health & Safety Policy** – This is the standard EVH policy for the office and landlord policy which requires to be re-adopted annually. ***Committee members agree to re-adopt the workplace and landlord H&S policy.*** Members were reminded that we were recently audited on both manuals and the audit report was good.

**FOI/EIR/SAR Quarterly Report** – Q2 report to note. A question was asked of the outcome of the late FOI response. The FOI was not initially

dealt with as a FOI request due to how it was received and was an administrative oversight. The response has been made. Steps have been put in place to ensure this does not happen in the future.

**6a. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 20 September 2023**

Correction to the minute noted – A Anderson was in attendance.

There were no other amendments to the minutes.

Proposed: L McNie

Seconded: M Richards

***Minutes Approved.***

**6b. Matters Arising**

The roofing works in Menstrie are onsite.

**7. BUSINESS ITEMS**

**7a. Development Update**

To be covered under programme report.

**7b. KPIs to Sept 2023 / Quarterly Reality Checks**

Commentary was provided as per the report. Senior Staff went over the relevant indicators and there was discussion around the use of indicators. Noted actions being taken in relation to performance. The void relet days still over target but progressing in the right direction. The sickness absence data requires to be updated.

**8. FINANCE & GENERAL SUB COMMITTEE**

**8a. Finance & General Sub Committee**

Minutes of the last meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> August to follow.

**8b. Review of Schedule of Authorities**

M Thompson advised there are two proposed changes.

Page 8 - increase goods and services to be authorised by Director/Depute Director up to and including to £50k.

Page 22 – due to increase in repair costs, suggest increase authorised amount for senior staff to raise work order up to £12k from £7.5k.

***Committee members approved the above changes to the Schedule of Authorities.***

**8c. Equalities Action Update**

The updated equalities action plan was uploaded.

Senior staff have training tomorrow on Equality Impact Assessments.

A data cleansing exercise had been carried out on existing data and new data is now being collected to ensure accuracy.

An equalities report will be brought to committee and will be included as part of the F&GP sub committee quarterly reports. Equalities data to be breakdown to local authority area for tenant profile.

**8d. F&GP Performance Reports**

The complaints report has been uploaded.

The sickness/absence report has still to be uploaded.

**8e. Stock & Factoring Insurance Renewal**

The annual renewal for tenanted, factored and office policies is due on 29<sup>th</sup> October.

There has been an increase in premium which is expected.

M Thompson and W Baxter attended an SFHA meeting on insurance for the housing sector. The British Insurance Association reported that some providers are pulling out of the social landlord market and those left are increasing their costs. Advice has been given to start negotiations with insurance providers 8 months in advance.

An index linked increase in value of all properties of 5% resulted in an increase in the value. The premiums are calculated on the valuation.

Initially the insurer wanted to increase the premium by 25% due to some relatively high claims over the past 4 years. However our Insurance Brokers entered into negotiations on our behalf pointing out that claims has slowed down in the past year and this brought the premium increase down to 5%.

Note – *W Baxter joined the meeting.*

The cost for the tenanted and factored insurance policy has increased by 17% compared to last year.

There has been an increase in the flood excess. We have over 300 properties deemed to be at risk.

A question was asked if this is the best deal. Confirmed broker went to current provider and out to the market and this is the best deal.

Members are requested to approve the Insurance Renewal for 2023/24 for the tenanted and factored policies with NIG.

***Committee members approve the stock and factoring insurance renewal.***

**8f. Pool Car Leasing**

The current lease agreement for 3 vehicles is due to end in Nov/Dec.

We intend to take out new three-year lease agreements on similar vehicles which would cost the Association £38,861.70 including initial payments and vat over three years.

Members are asked to approve that the Association enter into a new three-year pool car lease agreement for two cars and a van.

***Committee members approved.***

**8g. Public Holidays 2024/25**

***Committee members approved the public holidays as per the issued list.***

**9. HOUSING MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT**

**9a. Housing Management & Investment**

The draft minutes of the last meeting held on 9<sup>th</sup> October noted.

The main focus of the meeting was the Annual Assurance Statement.

The Annual Report on the Charter has been uploaded.

**9b. Arrears / Voids / Repairs**

Covered in KPIs discussion

**9c. Programme Report**

W Baxter advised the report was uploaded and there have been no major changes to the report since the previous one. The report was discussed at

the HM&I subcommittee meeting, therefore he did not intend to go through the full report.

Main points to note:

The painterwork contract tender cost has come in twice the budget, therefore further analysis will be done.

Gas services up to date and no failures.

Commissioner Street Development – work has started onsite and committee will get to see the site at the stock tour. Still to review development agreement for final sign off.

BBOOMs - 3 purchased to date this financial year.

We have submitted a bid to Clacks Council for BBOOMs in the Clacks area.

A possible development which is in the early stages of planning was discussed. In response to a questions asked it was confirmed the suds area will be below ground. ***Committee agree to pursue interest the development.***

## **10 COST PLAN / TENDER APPROVALS**

None

## **11. AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **11a. Audit Committee**

The last meeting was held on the 13<sup>th</sup> October. The draft minutes were uploaded.

### **11b. Internal Audit Tender Update**

M Torrance advised that the quality scoring has to be completed on the tenders submitted. K Menzies will assist with this.

### **11c. Q2 2023 Risk Reports**

M Torrance advised that the risk report presentation was uploaded.

There was discussion on the support currently available. The Association employs the services of a Wellbeing consultant. This is available for staff and committee. Regular surveys are carried out with staff and the WHO's 5 questionnaire is used as a basis for the survey. The Association has been recently recognised within its sector as having good practice in this area.

It would be difficult to provide any kind of mental health/wellbeing support directly to tenants as an organization but we are able to sign post and refer.

Stirling Council has shared a directory of support services.

## **12. HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **12a. H&S Workplace Committee**

The last meeting was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> August and the draft minutes were previously circulated.

### **12b. H&S Stock Sub Committee**

The last meeting was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> August and the draft minutes were previously circulated.

### **12c. STEPS Group Update**

The next meeting is being held on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November and the group will be organising a themed lunch that committee members are invited to attend.

One area of work that the group is looking at Menopause issues in the workplace.

## **13. REGULATORY ISSUES**

### **13a. SHR – Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)**

The draft AAS was circulated. It is based on the evidence reviewed and assurance by sources such as internal audit.

The first three paragraphs are fairly standard.

The SHR have asked for a specific focus on Equalities and H&S, therefore these have been specifically detailed in the AAS.

Reference is made in the statement to our recent H&S audit on the Landlord manual to support assurance and noted that our work on equalities is being guided by a specialist consultant.

EICRs - last year these were not all done. This was noted on the AAS with an explanation to why and what actions are being taken.

Again, this year there are some outstanding and we have noted this with further explanation as to why and what action is being taken.

Overall the view is that the Association is materially compliant.

The draft assurance statement was put forward for approval.

A Anderson is required to sign the AAS as chair.

***Committee members approve the AAS to be submitted to the SHR.***

#### **14. POLICY ISSUES**

##### **14a. Tenant Participation Strategy**

The draft Tenant Participation Strategy was previously approved for consultation and extensive consultation with key stakeholders was carried out.

We will now need to draft a Foreword for the Strategy and review the Tenant Participation Policy and develop a TP Action Plan.

***Committee members approved the Tenant Participation Strategy.***

##### **14b. Rent Harmonisation Update**

A consultation exercise was carried out and a meeting is being held next week to decide on the next steps.

A report will be tabled at the November committee meeting.

##### **14c. Draft Unacceptable Behaviour Policy**

The draft policy has to be approved for consultation. Part of the consultation process will be to review with our Data Protection Officer in respect of GDPR.

***Committee members approve the draft policy for consultation.***

#### **15. STRATEGY, POLICY & RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS**

##### **15a. Grangemouth Housing Masterplan**

Looking to arrange a meeting with partners.

##### **15b. Clackmannanshire Wellbeing Economy Anchor Partnership**

M Torrance has attended recent meetings. There is a Fair Work Charter for employers and the group are looking at how to get employers to adopt the charter. W Baxter will join the working group on this.

## 16. TRAINING / INFORMATION

### 16a. Committee Induction / Stock Tour

The committee induction and stock tour will be held on Friday 27<sup>th</sup> October. The suggested programme for the stock tour was circulated.

### 16b. Conference & Training Schedule

To note

## 17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

M Thompson advised that as A Anderson has been elected as Chair that she be added as a signatory on the bank accounts. Not proposing to remove any current signatories. ***Committee members approve A Anderson to be added as a signatory on the bank accounts.***

A Anderson thanked everyone for a productive meeting.

### DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2023. The time will be confirmed.

<b>Signed: Chairperson</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	