

PARAGON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minutes of Management Committee meeting

Online Video Conference Meeting

19 October 2022

Present: J Anderson
A Anderson
E Campbell
B Lees
R Murray
M Richards
F Wallace

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

GOVERNANCE / MINUTES ETC

1. APOLOGIES

E McNie
K Menzies
F Speirs

2. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

Committee members agreed for Claire Munro to act as a co-optee from the next meeting.

3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CALENDAR

The draft calendar was considered with the usual pattern of dates and business. Committee members agreed to have a mix of meetings – daytime/evening and online/in office.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS 2022/23

The Secretary provided details of the nominations for election.

The following nominations were received.

Secretary – M Torrance

Nominated by: E Campbell

Seconded by: F Wallace

Vice Chair – June Anderson

Nominated by: E Campbell

Seconded by: F Wallace

Chair – F Wallace

Nominated by: E Campbell

Seconded by: M Richards

There were no nominations received for the Treasurer.

There being no other nominations all were duly elected and F Wallace took the Chair.

Committee members were asked to think for the next meeting if anyone would like to be the Treasurer and Joint Vice Chair.

Note – R Murray joined the meeting.

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
- SFHA – F Wallace

SHARE – there is no standing representative. However, M Richards agreed to be the SHARE contact.

TIS – there is no representative of the organisation. M Richards is a member of the TIS committee through an independent election, however he will be standing down at the next TIS AGM.

Committee members agreed to the above.

6. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

Adoption of Standing Orders - No proposed changes.

Committee members agree to adopt the standing orders.

Appointments to Sub Committees - The audit sub committee requires to recruit more members. A Anderson agreed to join the audit sub committee. R Murray advised if short on numbers she can join. If this is required we can do a rule 55 for R Murray to join if between meetings to appoint her. All sub committees to appoint chair at first meeting. ***Committee members agree***

members will remain the same with A Anderson joining the audit sub committee.

Appoint Whistleblowing Appeals Officer - L McNie is the Whistleblowing 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. L McNie is going to complete an online course on the subject.

Attendance Register – noted.

Membership Applications

There were six membership applications considered for approval (details noted on the membership paper).

The memberships were approved. The use of the seal was approved by the Management Committee.

Membership Cancellations

In accordance with the Association's Rules there were 11 memberships considered for cancellation (details noted on membership paper). 2 members requested their membership be cancelled; condolences were noted that two members were deceased and 7 memberships were cancelled under rule 11.1.3.

Membership cancellations noted/approved.

Total number of members – 127

Register of Interests – all members issued with record to check.

Payments, Benefits & Entitlements - None

Code of Conduct – all members required to sign code of conduct annually and these are being updated.

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 which requires to be re-adopted annually. M Torrance will check if the Landlord H&S policy requires to be re-adopted. ***Committee members agree to re-adopt the H&S policy.***

FOI/EIR/SAR Quarterly Report - Noted

M Torrance advised that after the AGM the SHR portal requires to be updated with AGM members attendance data and management committee members – this has been done. M Torrance will write to the lenders to advise of management committee changes.

6a. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 21 September 2022

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Proposed: E Campbell

Seconded: R Murray

Minutes Approved.

6b. Matters Arising

It was noted that the returns detailed in the minutes were all submitted in time.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

7a. PHA Route Map Progress

The office is now fully open to the public. There is still a mixture of staff working from home and the office.

We still need to be vigilant with covid and the flu as this has been impacting on staff absences lately. Staff have been issued with a reminder on taking precautions and it R Murray highlighted the need for good ventilation.

7b. Development Proposal

The paper for this proposal was not presented to the meeting as we need a further review of the information costs further and discussion with our solicitor. A preliminary discussion had been held.

7c. KPIs to Sept 2022 / Quarterly Reality Checks

Reactive Repairs – to note with the change of contractor we are still not operating to our target times for most reactive repairs. We are working to target for emergency and RTR.

CTS are giving no cause for concern and are working within targets. There has been a slight dip in CTS satisfaction with repairs but the number is small and we are working with them. Everwarm are running with a small backlog of outstanding repairs and are working hard to rectify. The main reason for this has been recruiting trades and backroom staff and trying to get their IT system up and running with our QL system. They are having to

manually process work orders and completions. This is why there is no detailed KPI report for reactive repairs at this time but there is no main cause for concern. There have been a low number of complaints regarding work quality.

Voids – relet days are high due to change over of contractor and Everwarm are performing well in catching up with void works.

Budgets – expecting figures to increase as some works still to be invoiced for Quarter 2. Currently working to a different regime for costing for reactive repairs and an internal audit is planned at year end to review VFM.

ASB Cases – there has been a slight increase in cases in Quarter 2. 1 category A case reported.

Close Gradings – noted there had been a steady improvement. Appointment of the Assistant Estates Officer has helped drive improvement.

Satisfaction with Property - there is no current data on tenants satisfied with standard of home when moving . This will be obtained as settling in visits reinstated.

Rent Arrears – arrears are increasing. Noted a recent eviction case where debt was in excess of £6k.

Voids Rent Loss - increased but within target. We did have a significant back up of void properties due to contractor change over but have now caught up so this figure should improve. We have re-implemented the void action plan and the team are working positively with the contractor.

Section 5 converted to offers – low numbers and reasons for refusal by applicant noted.

Factored accounts – starting to receive significant payments.

Recharges – Review recharges to be carried out.

Complaints – the full report has been uploaded. 95% responded to on time and 1 only complaint responded to over target in the first 2 quarters. Repairs are the biggest area of complaints but mainly due to communication rather than work quality.

Sickness rate – 5%. Noted recent increase as level had been low.

BBOOMS – Target 8 this year due to 3 being carried over from last year. Good progress to date with 6 concluded and an offer has been accepted on the seventh.

Medical adaptations – no data as figures to be input. There has been a slight delay with some minor medical adaptations especially with handrails because of need to source an alternative blacksmith.

Contracts / investments – once a contract is completed satisfaction surveys are sent to tenants. They are separate to KPIs.

W Baxter advised that the report will be updated with the figures.

Satisfaction numbers – Knowledge Partnership carry out a rolling survey which involved them calling 60 tenants from the full list every month and asking the standard ARC indicator questions. This allows capture in real time of what is happening that affects satisfaction levels.

When we changed contractor we sent 3 letters to tenants during the process and as a result of this satisfaction with how good we are at keeping people informed was at a high level. There has been a couple of slight drops in a couple of indicator levels. Overall, the only one that gives concern is around issues in estates where tenants are unhappy with factors outwith our control eg poor service in terms of bins etc. Our staff find when on site individual reaction is positive. If we receive a dissatisfied answer we give feedback and it is mainly about rubbish.

7d. Internal Management plan 2022-25

M Torrance updated the draft with the suggestions made at the August meeting and provided a summary of the changes. Given the fast pace of change in the sector at moment a cut off point was reached to make changes.

Note – B Lees left the meeting

Committee members agreed with the updates and approved the IMP.

8. FINANCE & GENERAL SUB COMMITTEE

8a. Finance & General Sub Committee

The draft minutes of the last meeting held on 14th October have been uploaded.

8b. Review of Schedule of Authorities

M Thompson advised that a few changes have been suggested to reflect the increase in costs. The changes were highlighted and M Thompson went through these. There was discussion of the levels being applied and if these were in line with practice in the sector.

Noted internal and external auditors review our schedule of authorities and check we have robust controls in place. There have been no issues identified with controls.

Committee members approved the changes.

8c. Equalities Action 2022

The action plan had been updated.

A data cleansing exercise had been carried out to ensure data was up to date and are now starting to collect new data with the updated form. Staff have received training on this and we will be looking for our external consultant to also carry out training with staff in the near future.

Good progress is being made to ensure compliant with the SHR requirements.

We will be carrying out an audit of the website and the office in terms of accessibility and are looking at language facilities.

8d. F&GP Performance Reports

The performance reports were uploaded.

Staffing / Recruitment – noted staff changes following recruitment. F Wallace and M Richards have volunteered to be part of interview panel for the Finance & Investment Manager recruitment. This recruitment is being managed for us by EVH. There are a couple of posts to advertise soon which are currently being covered by temporary staff.

EVH can run an online session on recruitment. If anyone is interested they should let M Torrance know. J Anderson noted her interest.

EVH is running a session for some staff next month on recruitment.

8e. Stock & Factoring Insurance Renewal

The annual renewal of the stock insurance is due. Noted that as part of the exercise there was an uprate in reinstatement values to ensure adequate cover. Noted part of increase in proposed costs is extra costs for properties at risk of floods. The Association has had a few high cost claims in the past couple of years eg recent storm damage , major fire . Previous patterns have been a low level of claims. If claims fall then there is an option to discuss with insurer. The insurance broker had negotiated a reduction of the original quote for the year but there is still a substantial increase.

Total costs for tenant and factored properties is £143,219.78 – up 31% from last year. The office policy has increased by 3.5%.

There are implications for owners in the communal policy and they will be written to and advised of their options eg self insure.

The recommendation is to accept the quote.

It was noted that the F&GP sub committee discussed this in detail at their last meeting.

Committee members approve the stock and factoring insurance renewal.

8f. Public Holidays 2023/24

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

9. HOUSING MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT

9a. Housing Management & Investment

The last meeting was held on 11th October and the draft minutes have been uploaded.

The main business considered was the AAS and charter report.

There were some good comments made by members and Tenant Scrutiny Panel members which have been added to the ARC report.

This was a joint meeting with HM&I sub committee and the Tenant Scrutiny Panel. The meeting was well received from both sides and we will look to hold a joint meeting in the future. Both groups brought a different dynamic to the meeting.

9b. Arrears / Voids / Repairs

E Mathershaw advised that the figures have been covered in the KPI report.

We were recently offered free training by the Energy Savings Trust on Fuel Poverty and Energy Advice which some staff have been booked onto. There is an opportunity on the back of this training for some members to attend a 3 day City & Guilds free course.

9c. Eviction Reports

E Mathershaw provided information on an eviction report which was approved by M Torrance and F Wallace. Members homologated the approval of the eviction report.

9d. Programme Report

W Baxter advised that his report was discussed in detail at the HM&I sub committee meeting.

The Everwarm contract is going well and we should have more accurate figures to report on by the next committee meeting.

We are holding a “meet and greet” event on Thursday morning for our staff and Everwarm staff. One of the main areas of complaints is around communication and Everwarm have been approachable in dealing with these.

10 COST PLAN / TENDER APPROVALS

None

11. AUDIT COMMITTEE

11a. Audit Committee

The last meeting was held on 27th September and the draft minutes have been uploaded. The main business considered was the evidence for the AAS and the summary report.

11b. Internal Audit

The Internal audit programme for this year was considered and recommend for adoption by the audit sub committee. ***Committee members also agreed to the programme.***

11c. Q2 2022 Risk Reports

M Torrance advised the risk reports have still to be updated.

12. HEALTH & SAFETY

12a. H&S Workplace Committee

Next meeting to be arranged.

Renewed contract with legionella contractor for stock and office.

M Torrance, W Baxter and E Mathershaw attended an Asbestos Duty to Manage course.

M Torrance and W Baxter will discuss meeting schedule with M Richards.

12b. H&S Stock Sub Committee

As above

12c. STEPS Group Update

The next meeting is being held on Thursday 27th October 2022.

13. REGULATORY ISSUES

13a. SHR – Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)

We are required to annually sign an assurance statement to confirm that we are acting in accordance with governance and statutory requirements.

We are self-certifying what we are doing and we are using the SFHA toolkit. Sub committees reviewed the evidence for the AAS in detail against the toolkit and looked at the internal audit reports. The evidence had been shared online with all members.

Our process was audited last year by our internal auditors and they were satisfied with our approach and that we were using the toolkit as a framework for assessing

As part of the review it was assessed that we are compliant in all areas with the exception of the Electrical Inspection Condition Reports (EICRs).

Electrical checks were previously required to be carried out on a 10 year cycle and the requirement is now a 5 year cycle. 68 were outstanding at the year end, March 2022 and this was reported in the Annual Return on the Charter (ARC).

There had been conflicting advice from various sources on how to report this. Initially it was understood that these would be treated as abeyances but now advised these are failures. Advice was taken from SHR and SFHA on reporting this. It was advised that these should be reported as failures at the point of signing off the AAS if still outstanding.

As at the start of business on the day of the meeting there were 42 outstanding with 4 due to be done today. We will include the figure as at tomorrow morning in the AAS. W Baxter advised that based on 42 outstanding this is less than 3% failures. We will add a line detailing what this is due to e.g. access issues, materials, covid, hoarding issues. We should be able to get done by the mid November apart from those tenants

we have found hoarding issues which are preventing access to property for the work to be carried out. Housing Management staff are working with these tenants.

The draft AAS was reviewed and it was agreed to include in the statement that the outstanding EICRs will be completed by mid-November and that we will be taking the same route we do with gas servicing by carrying out forced entry if required. Suggested to include that we are working with other agencies where required.

The draft assurance statement was put forward for approval.

F Wallace is required to sign the AAS and we will need to log a notifiable event with the SHR on the outstanding EICRs.

Committee members agree for M Torrance to update the statement with the above and to submit the AAS to the SHR.

14. POLICY ISSUES

14a. Policy Monitor

Noted.

14e. Allocations Policy

E Mathershaw advised that the policy was previously reviewed in depth with new points system following the changes to the 2004 Housing Act.

The policy is due for review every 5 years.

We held working groups for tenants and applicants and the HM&I sub committee carried out some exercises to look at the points system and the consensus was that the policy is fit for purpose.

There have been some minor changes in the policy to phrases.

One area that was felt we are not giving due priority to was insecurity applicants and this is one major change recommended to the policy. Propose to award additional social points to an applicant who is in a temporary situation and does not have exclusive use of a bedroom of their own.

On our existing waiting list there would potentially be about 200 applicants that may be affected and around 15 people who would get the additional points.

We will undertake a review of all applicants who have insecurity points and will implement the new points system from 1st December. For the first couple of months' we would run in tandem the old and new points system.

We allocate 50% of vacancies from our own allocations policy and 50% to the council.

It was noted that it is difficult to distinguish between different insecurities with other housing association and local authorities as some operate choice based lettings and not a points system.

Committee members approved the Allocations policy.

Standing Orders were suspended and members agreed to carry over the remaining agenda items to the next meeting.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9th November 2022. The time is to be confirmed.

Signed: Chairperson	
Date:	