

PARAGON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED
Minutes of Management Committee meeting
Hybrid Meeting
22 January 2025

Present: A Anderson
J Anderson (online)
E Campbell
S Gilbert
B Lees (online)
D McLean
L McNally (online)
J O'Meara
M Richards

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

GOVERNANCE / MINUTES ETC

1. APOLOGIES

E McNie
K Menzies

2. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE

No changes

3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CALENDAR

The February meeting will be at 6.00pm.

4. GOVERNANCE ITEMS

Attendance – K Menzies has missed 3 meetings in a row due to work commitments.

Membership Changes

In accordance with the Association's Rules there was 1 membership considered for cancellation (details noted on membership paper). Condolences were noted that the member is deceased.

Membership cancellation noted/approved.

There was 1 membership change of category request (details noted on membership paper). ***Change of category request was approved.***

Total number of members – 121

Register of Interests - M Richards has resigned from EVH executive committee. M Torrance advised that EVH thanked Paragon for their continued support.

4a. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 11 December 2024

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Proposed: M Richards
Seconded: E Campbell

Minutes Approved.

4b. Matters Arising

All covered in agenda.

M Torrance advised that we had received two quotes for the provision of treasury advice. The F&GP sub committee reviewed both quotes and agreed to appoint Allia. Senior staff progressing next steps with Allia.

5. BUSINESS ITEMS

5a. Rent Increase

M Thompson took members through a presentation on the rent increase options.

E Mathershaw provided members with feedback from the tenant consultation survey.

Rent increase options of 3.9% and 4.5% were considered and the impact each of these options would have on tenants and the Association were discussed.

After consideration the management team have recommended an increase of 3.9%.

Proposed programme was outlined

The interest covenant restriction will apply again at start of the new financial year. As part of the refinancing exercise we will revisit the covenants.

Feedback from tenants from the survey returned is that tenants still have concerns on affordability. Cost of living is still an issue.

There was discussion on the increase in costs of materials and the impact of NI contributions and what effect these may have on the association.

The underlying rent assumptions in business plan were discussed. The requirements for SHNZS is still unknown and what the costs of this will be. Increasing costs in building costs were discussed.

There was discussion on introducing the phased rent harmonisation using an element of rent capping offset by void rent increases for new tenancies This will depend on the management committee approving the updated rent policy at the next meeting.

On a majority vote the management committee members approved a rent increase of 3.9%.

Management committee approve lock up rent increase of 3.9%.

There was a discussion on maintenance costs for lock ups going forward as some elements now nearing end of useful life.

Management committee agree service charges be applied as per the schedule on the report.

Tenants' allowances to be reviewed as part of budget exercise in March.

A transitional rent cap be applied at £20 maximum monthly increase to be offset by harmonised rents being applied to relets where rents are increasing (this depends on the approval of the new Rent Setting Policy being approved prior to year end)

Note – B Lees left the meeting.

6. FINANCE & GENERAL SUB COMMITTEE

6a. Finance & General Sub Committee

The sub committee were given an update on the staff pension consultation. The F&GP agreed S Gilbert to join the working group to fill vacant committee place Noted progress on consultation and input from specialist adviser.

7. HOUSING MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT

7a. Housing Management & Investment

The draft minutes of the last meeting held on 9 December 2024 were circulated.

7b. Arrears / Voids / Repairs

E Mathershaw provided an updated to the report.

Current Tenant Arrears - 3.83%. It was noted that the team are doing well in working towards decreasing arrears. Requirement to verify all tenant rent increase on the UC portal which is a timely task.

Repairs – will re-circulate updated version of the report.

Sureserve will be recording their own KPI performance and from the 1st April they will produce a report on this make available online to tenants.

ASB – a comprehensive review of the ASB policy is underway. There is a working group who will review the policy and an internal audit on ASB is being carried out this year.

Team doing well in difficult circumstances

7c. Programme Report

W Baxter provided an update on the programme report.

- Painterwork - onsite
- Planned Maintenance – surveys complete and work now out for pricing
- Electrical Works – 10 properties remain outstanding due to access issues.
- EICRs – programme ongoing and separate report showing breakdown
- Central Heating Boilers – onsite, progressing well
- Roofing & Rendering - scaffolding up
- Fire doors – Fire risk assessment ongoing
- Kitchens – ongoing, installing approx. 8 kitchens a week
- Sanitaryware – ongoing, new specification well received.
- Communal Storage Tanks – ongoing legionella tests carried out in 30 blocks. 9 tanks to change over.

BBOOMs – to date 2 acquired and 2 secured from target of 5.

Bo'ness Commissioner Street Development – W Baxter provided an update following the fire at the block of flats. We are now looking at a possible handover of April 2026.

Westquarter development – handover due May / June 2025. Progressing well.

Gas Servicing - no failures

Medical Adaptations – to date none complete due to late award of grant funding. The Scottish Government have committed to increase the budget next year.

Finance report – Budget £3.3m. Spent £1.2m. Valuations coming in next couple months.

Insurance claims – to note

EICRs – to note - report shows breakdown

The Open Space Maintenance contract for Stirling and Clacks is out for tender on the Public Contracts Scotland portal.

8. COST PLAN / TENDER APPROVALS

None

9. AUDIT COMMITTEE

9a. Audit Committee

Date to be arranged.

Post meeting note – date set for 25th February

9b. Internal Audit

The IT / Cyber Security internal audit was completed- draft report awaited . Good feedback from the internal auditor. The Disaster Recovery plan is being updated and has to be finalised. This will go the to next audit sub committee meeting for consideration.

Remaining Internal audits for cash in bank, gas servicing and ASB will be carried out before the end of the financial year.

External audit services will be reviewed by Audit Committee.

10. HEALTH & SAFETY

10a. H&S Workplace Committee

The next meeting is due to be held on 11th February.

10b. H&S Stock Sub Committee

The next meeting is due to be held on 11th February.

An internal staff group has met to go through the updated LHS manual.

We will need to report on new SHR ARC requirements from next year on certain aspects of damp, mould and condensation. One Aico monitor installed in a property. At the end of the meeting an anonymised demo of the monitoring site will be shown to members.

11. REGULATORY ISSUES

11a. ARC Return – Indicator Changes

The SHR is set to introduce new indicators for social landlords surrounding damp and mould and fire from submissions due on May 2026.

12. POLICY ISSUES

The rent setting policy will be considered at the next meeting.

H&S policies currently show on the policy register under F&I – the register will be reset to show these under H&S.

13. STRATEGY, POLICY & RESEARCH DEVELOPMENTS

13a. Grangemouth Housing Masterplan

No update

13b. Clackmannanshire Wellbeing Economy Anchor Partnership

M Torrance is attending a meeting on Thursday 23 January.

14. TRAINING / INFORMATION

14a. Training Plans / Appraisals

The annual stock tour/induction will be on Friday 28th February. As part of the stock tour it was suggested visiting –

- Westquarter development
- Properties in Denny where roofing and roughcasting works are ongoing
- Stirling – open space maintenance contract out for tender

M Thompson will email dates to members for a finance “master class” session and will go through a set of management accounts.

Noted there is a finance module on the SHARE LMS.

An eLearning Group has been set up by members of the F&GP Sub Committee and over the next four Fridays at 1.30pm any member who can attend the office is invited to join in and there will be mutual support and support from staff on any technical elements of SHARE e-learning modules.

14b. Conference & Training Schedule

SFHA Housing Management Conference – A Anderson and J O’Meara are booked to attend.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 12th February 2025 at 6.00pm.

Signed: Chairperson	
Date:	