

**PARAGON HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED**

Minutes of Management Committee meeting

Online Video Conference Meeting

23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020

Present: J Anderson  
E Campbell  
M Hesketh  
K Menzies  
M Richards  
F Wallace  
S Young

Staff: M Torrance  
P Milne  
E Mathershaw

**GOVERNANCE / MINUTES ETC**

**1. APOLOGIES**

E McNie  
F Speirs  
L Hesketh  
S Robertson (SLA)  
M Binnie - Staff

**2. COMPOSITION OF COMMITTEE**

Sandy Young was welcomed to his first Management Committee meeting since he was elected at the AGM.

**3. MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

The draft calendar was considered and dates agreed. Starting time will be 1.30 pm but will be varied if circumstances dictate.

**4. ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

The Secretary provided details of nominations for elections

The following nominations were received

Secretary – Margaret Torrance  
Nominated by: Flora Wallace  
Seconded by: Michael Hesketh

Treasurer – Susan Robertson  
Nominated by: Elisabeth Campbell  
Seconded by: Michael Hesketh

Chair – Flora Wallace  
Nominated by: Elisabeth Campbell  
Seconded by: Susan Robertson

Vice Chair (Joint) – Michael Hesketh  
Nominated by: Elisabeth Campbell  
Seconded by: Susan Robertson

Vice Chair (Joint) – June Anderson  
Nominated by: Elisabeth Campbell  
Seconded by: Susan Robertson

There being no other nominations all were duly elected and Flora Wallace took the chair

## **5. APPOINTMENT TO REPRESENTATIVE BODIES**

Members considered appointments to representative bodies and the following were agreed

- SFHA – Flora Wallace
- EVH – Flora Wallace
- SHARE- Michael Hesketh
- TIS – Malcolm Richard

Noted good feedback from the TIS Rent Consultation session that Malcolm and Evelyn had made a presentation to.

## **6. GOVERNANCE ITEMS**

**Adoption of standing orders** – It was noted that Standing Orders were working effectively during the current situation but can be reviewed if required. The Standing Orders were adopted without change.

### **Composition of sub committees and remits**

The following appointments to sub committees were made.

#### **HOUSING MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT SUB COMMITTEE**

Susan Robertson  
Flora Wallace  
Michael Hesketh  
June Anderson  
Malcolm Richards

#### **FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES SUB COMMITTEE**

Flora Wallace  
Michael Hesketh  
Susan Robertson  
Elisabeth Campbell  
Fiona Speirs  
Malcolm Richards  
Rosemary Murray

#### **AUDIT SUB COMMITTEE**

Michael Hesketh  
Elisabeth Campbell  
Susan Robertson  
Lisa Hesketh  
Malcolm Richards  
Kathleen Menzies

#### **HEALTH & SAFETY SUB COMMITTEE**

Flora Wallace  
Susan Robertson  
June Anderson  
Malcolm Richards

Sandy advised he will consider joining a sub committee going forward.

Remits were adopted without change and sub committees were reminded to bring any suggested changes to Management Committee for consideration.

**Attendance** – no issues at this time and noted Susan Robertson on Special Leave of Absence. Noted Liz McNie now absent for 3 meetings as she had to cancel at short notice for this meeting.

**Membership** – the membership paper was considered and 19 memberships were cancelled for a variety of reasons including 15 missing five AGMs in a row with no apology. Current membership 140.

**Register of Interests** – All members have carried out annual check of entries

**Code of Conduct** – All members have signed Code of Conduct.

**Notifiable Events** – 2 reported to SHR on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and 16<sup>th</sup> April regarding service disruption due to COVID-19.

**Health and Safety Policy** – it was noted that this is the standard EVH policy as set out the EVH Health & Safety Policy and requires adoption annually. It was agreed to readopt.

#### **6 a) MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING 18<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2020**

There were no amendments to the minutes.

Proposed: J Anderson  
Seconded: E Campbell

***Minutes Approved***

**6 b) MATTERS ARISING**

None

**7a) CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC – SITUATION RESPONSE UPDATE – ROUTE MAP**

Management Team members provided an update on the current situation and service status. Situation under continuous review and office remains closed.

The investment programme works are on site including some new projects. Wullie Baxter, Programme & Regeneration Manager explained the Risk Assessment Method Statement (RAMS) required from all contractors. Good progress noted on Fire and Carbon Detector Alarm (FCMD) project, Over 800 installations to date. Boiler replacement and painterwork on site. Noted Id Verde had been appointed as landscape maintenance contractor from April and had been working on site from May.

There were questions in relation to FCMD and it was noted that the deadline is proposed to be extended. The view was this had not been well promoted by the Scottish Government to home owners and there discussions around consequences if owners do not comply eg insurance cover may be invalidated etc

Evelyn Mathershaw, Housing Manager provided an update on housing management issues

- Services ongoing
  - Properties being allocated but voids increasing
  - Arrears stable and most tenants have moved to bank transfer/ allpay for rent payments
  - Repairs are being caught up with a COVID-19 30 day response time in place for non urgent / emergency – ongoing discussion with TMG on progress and reinstatement of target times
  - ASB – cases being managed but have use different methods – staff have attended SFHA and SHN events and the Association compares well with what the sector is doing in this area.
  - Estates Team on site – social distanced and health and safety measures in place
  - Inspections ongoing and new digital form proving effective
  - Issues around waste collection, contaminated bin and rubbish in common area
- (Elisabeth Campbell left the meeting)*

- Universal Credit – real time portal now in use – seen as a positive improvement as able to give tenants up to date account information and improved cashflow

Sandy Young commented on similar experiences and there was discussion on the differing arrangements for uplifts and service pressures on waste collection in local authorities and how this was impacting on tenants and estate condition.

*(Elisabeth Campbell re-joined the meeting )*

- Homeless lets – noted that Scottish Government pushing for lets to homeless people as a priority and Evelyn reported on interactions with local authorities on this. She is trying to engage in discussion with them on assistance we can provide. J Anderson will highlight to Clackmannanshire Council.

## **7b) KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI) Q2 2020-21**

The KPI Dashboard Report was considered and performance noted

- Noted that repairs against target cannot be reported due to suspension of response times
- Gas – no failures by contractor but small number of people shielding so no access
- Void costs – lower but under review. Some works to be capitalised. There was discussion on how the processes for relet due to COVID-19 are adding to costs and time to let
- ASB – case management ongoing
- Close gradings – reinstated as now back on site – catching up with programme and have prioritised closes with lowest gradings
- Tenancy Sustainability – keeping under review given current situation/ using phone rounds for settling in visits
- Arrears – over target and COVID-19 impact noted. Some notices served and some sisted cases dur back to court and UC real time payments have helped
- Homeless – Section 5 referrals – none in Q2 but now coming through from Falkirk Council
- Complaints – noted downward trend in numbers
- EESSH – 91% compliant – heading towards 95% but noted some refusals and may have to look at some abeyances

Sandy asked how targets were set and it was explained that this would normally be done at strategy days in April but these had been cancelled so rolled over from last year. It was agreed that it would be useful to revisit.

## 7 c) DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

The background to a potential development site was considered. Wullie provided details of the proposed scheme and indicative costs. Scheme appraisal details awaited.

## 7 d) COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY & WEB SITE

A paper for consideration had been issued and each section was taken in turn.

**Web Site** – noted actions taken to secure new web site as previous supplier had given short notice to withdraw service. The Tenant Scrutiny Panel had been working on tender before this and some members of the group had taken part in an interview with the potential new provider. Malcolm Richards provided feedback on this and reported that they had satisfied that it is a stable and experienced business providing a good quality service. Sandy advised that he has had positive experiences with the company. The company can provide other enhancements to the site at additional costs going forward if required.

Members approved the appointment of Kiswebs as the web site provider,

**Communications** – Evelyn explained the background to this including work undertaken around Digital Inclusion and a funding bid to Connecting Scotland

*Evelyn Mathershaw left the meeting*

The recommendations to develop a strategy were approved.

*June Anderson left the meeting*

*Evelyn Mathershaw re-joined the meeting*

## 8 a) FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES

Minutes of 12<sup>th</sup> August 2020 and 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 noted as issued.

## 8 b) RBS Loan Facility

Pamela Milne, Finance & Investment Manager provided a background to recent discussion with RBS on the potential drawdown of £4 million revolving credit facility due December 2020. There have been discussions

on options and it may be possible to extend the availability of the facility by up to 12 months.

The issue of covenant relaxation in response to FCMD works and COVID-19 impact is also under discussion and there has been a positive response from the bank. Pamela is seeking more detail on what the bank requires and will bring forward proposals.

There was a discussion on the impact of COVID-19 and Brexit on costs and Wullie advised that he has been looking at costs and had been advised by QS that the BCIS<sup>1</sup> indices were increasing by 3.65 %.

Interest rates were discussed as this is an area of uncertainty.

Noted progress with Pensions Working Group and a meeting will be arranged to develop the Action Plan

The mid year financial review will be considered at the November meeting taking these factors into account.

### **8 c) Review of Schedule of Authorities**

Pamela took members through the proposed changes, some in relation to COVID-19 impact. The changes were approved.

### **8 d) Financial Conduct Authority Return (FCA)**

The background and requirements to the FCA return were considered

The return was considered and approved

### **8 e) OSCR Return**

The background and requirements to the OSCR return were considered

The return was considered and approved for submission

### **8 f) Equalities Report 2020**

Margaret Torrance, Director took members through the report. Noted national guidance awaited on collection and use of Equalities data. There have been discussions with the consultant producing this and he will review our current reports, provide comments and training. Rosie Murray suggested that it would be useful to explain to tenants and others why the

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<sup>1</sup> Building Cost Information Service

information is required and what difference that can make as people then might more inclined to provide it.

The report and planned actions were noted

### **8 g) F&GP Performance Reports**

**Complaints** – the commentary report was discussed and it was reported that work ongoing with TMG in relation to complaints around repairs

### **8 h) Insurance Renewal**

There are 3 policies in place

- legal
- office
- housing stock

The budget for this had been set but the latest renewal cost for the stock policy has come in over budget and Pamela was drawing this to the attention to the Management Committee. It has gone up 9% over the previous renewal . This had been discussed with broker and considered to be reasonable and in line with the market. Noted some claims for fire and flooding had pushed this up. There were questions around this and Wullie explained the circumstances as in past years these incidents had been low in number but we have had 3 major fires and water damage issues recently.

The renewal was approved.

### **8 i) Salaries Award**

EVH have asked for views on implementing the salaries agreement for 2021 given the current pandemic situation and economic situation. Staff members declared an interest and left the meeting.

The members agreed to feedback to EVH that a settlement around the agreement floor level would be acceptable.

Staff returned to the meeting

*Sandy Young left the meeting*

*Rosie Murray left the meeting*



## **9. HOUSING MANAGEMENT & INVESTMENT**

### **9a. Housing Management & Investment**

Noted minutes 18<sup>th</sup> August 2020 as issued

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

**Repairs** – JRW contract is in last year and decision will be required either To go to tender or negotiate an extension.

There were discussions on factors that will require to be taken into consideration eg market conditions,resources etc

Noted performance had been discussed in detail under KPI item.

*Rosie Murray re-joined the meeting*

### **9c. Programme Report**

Stock condition tender now returned. A QS report has been prepared and there are substantial differences in bid costs. The tender acceptance is within Director's authorisation limits.

The carry forward report was reviewed and noted underspends due to COVID-19 but works picking up. Considering injecting some other spend to increase spend eg fire doors, boilers etc. Good progress in FCMD programme and should meet original Feb 2021 deadline.

Wullie will update programme projections for mid year review

### **9d Eviction Reports**

None

## **10 COST PLAN / TENDERS**

None

## **11 . AUDIT COMMITTEE**

### **11 a) Audit Committee**

Minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> August 2020 previously circulated

## **11 b) Internal Audit**

Noted programme for 2020/21 and IA tracker progress and change of format

## **11 c) Q2 2020/21 Risk Reports**

The risk reports were considered and it was noted that in nearly all areas of risk that COVID-19 is having an impact. Commentary was provided on the actions taken. Noted that Pension Working Group set up and progress is now required.

## **11 d) Contingency Plan – Coronavirus Pandemic Impact**

A presentation was made on the effectiveness of the Contingency Plan in respect of how it responded to the pandemic. The plan has proved robust. The contingency around phone diverting was not sustainable for a prolonged office shut down. However alternatives were quickly put in place and work is underway on a longer term solution. There were discussions around communication and it was felt an earlier written communication would have been better but Facebook and web site were being used and there are actions underway to promote these.

It was noted that the Management Committee greatly appreciated the work of staff at this very difficult time and staff advised that they have felt supported by Management Committee who have continued the business of the organisation despite the circumstances. Committee asked that this be fed back to staff. There has been a learning culture as everyone has adapted to the situation.

## **12 HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **12a) Health & Safety Committee**

Noted minutes of 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020 had been previously issued

### **12b) Health and Safety Actions/ HWL**

- Office H&S Audit scheduled for beginning of December
- Landlord Manual set up visit to be arranged
- Asbestos – consultant appointed to review policy
- Daily Office inspections reinstated
- Worked with staff on Coronavirus Risk Assessment - continuous review
- Training on mental health run for staff on 8<sup>th</sup> October
- Will require to contact HWL re accreditation given current situation

## **13 REGULATORY ISSUES**

### **13 a) Annual Assurance Statement (AAS)**

AAS compliance and review programme set up with Sub Committees in order to prepare for November submission.

## **14 POLICY**

### **14 a) Policy Monitor**

Requires to be updated and reissued

### **14 b) Tenant Participation Strategy**

Evelyn took members through the Strategy and the work and consultation undertaken to produce it. Limited response to consultation. The strategy reflects the current situation and there are different ways to get involved from the traditional routes. It is of a shorter duration than usual in recognition that it will need to be revisited when COVID-19 restrictions are removed. The format will be changed for the published version to ensure user friendly.

The Tenant Participation Strategy was approved.

### **14 c) Risk Management**

This is still in draft stage and will be brought forward to next meeting

### **14 d) Smoking**

This requires annual review. Has been circulated to staff for comment / feedback. None received and no changes proposed. The policy was readopted.

## **15 Strategy**

### **15 a) Grangemouth Housing Masterplan**

Noted officers group at very early stages on discussion. Margaret also attending Clackmannanshire Council sessions on Community Wealth Building.

## **16 TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT**

### **16 a) Committee Appraisals and Training Plan**

Dates to be arranged to complete programme. Noted that this is essential

It was agreed a “lockdown” programme will be drafted to deliver training in bite sized bites and be based on responses required to current situation eg using Zoom and on previous needs identified

### **16 b) Induction**

On line pack in place. Some “bite sized” sessions to be set up

### **16 c) Conferences & Training**

EVH Mini Conference – Flora and Elisabeth to attend

SHARE Governance Conference Nov- members to confirm if they require a place booked

SHARE Annual Conference March - members to confirm if they require a place booked

## **17 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None

## **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2020 at 1.30 pm

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