

Dunbritton Housing Association Ltd.

**Minutes of Meeting of Management Board
Held at 6.00pm on Wednesday 13 February 2019
at the Abbotsford Hotel, Dumbarton**

Present: W. Clark (WC); Chair; S. MacQuire (SMacQ); S. Aitken (SA); Mike Appleton (MA); D. Clark (DC); A. Davey (AD); G. Mulvaney (GMu); J. Smillie (JS); A. Tuach (AT).

In attendance: A. Murphy (AM) CEO; T McShane (TMS) Operations Manager; P. Sweeney (PS) Asset Manager; H. Maitz (HM) Finance Manager; P Bradley (PB) Corporate Services Manager; Minute taker.

1. Welcome, Apologies and Declarations of Interest	ACTION BY
<p>WC welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance. He advised the Board that while the Board meetings are recorded, the recording is destroyed once the approved minutes are posted onto the website. He also asked all present to turn off their mobile phones. He reminded the Board that if they cannot attend a meeting they should email him in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>Apologies were received from G. Morrison (GM); B Walker (BW) and MA advised that he would have to leave the meeting at 7.30 pm. There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
<p>2. Minutes of Previous Meetings</p> <p>a) Board meeting of 16 January 2019 Page 2 paragraph 3 - SA pointed out a spelling error. The word 'Bard' should read 'Board'. Page 3 paragraph 4 – AD wanted it noted that he had asked a question about who would be attending the rent consultation meetings and TMS had now explained that it would be the Chair and Vice Chair to attend the meetings. Page 3 item 8 – WC confirmed that he had spoken to Melanie Tonks and she had confirmed that she would be happy to perform the opening ceremony at Succoth. WC and PB will meet with Melanie on Friday 15 February 2019. WC will get back to the Board with a proposed date for the official opening ceremony.</p> <p>The Minutes were proposed as a correct record by AT and seconded by AD.</p> <p>b) Audit & Risk Committee of 21 November 2018</p> <p>The Minutes were proposed as a correct record by SA and seconded by SMacQ.</p>	
<p>3. Matters Arising Page 1 – AM said that he had met with the HUB representatives last week and they are happy for DHA to participate in the Hub. They will now</p>	

meet with the other participants in the Hub to advise them that DHA wishes to join it and see if there are any objections although they do not think there will be any.

As soon as the representatives get back to AM he will sign up DHA as a member of the Hub. In the meantime, general discussions are ongoing about the type of work but he won't make any formal arrangements until the Association is confirmed as a member of the Hub.

Page 1 paragraph 3 – in relation to the new development at Helensburgh Golf Club, AM and TMS will be meeting with a representative from Argyll & Bute council to discuss specific details in relation to specialist housing provision within the development following an enquiry raised by Jackie Baillie MSP.

SA said that there may be an issue about access path from the Churchill estate and this needs to be addressed.

AM said he thought that this would be addressed through the planning application and PS confirmed this.

AD asked for clarification about the use of the word 'specialist', in terms of whether it applied to the type of house, or to the applicant's needs.

AM confirmed he understood that the Council had a number of individuals with support needs that they were looking to rehouse and that the properties require specific adaptations additional bedrooms and space for carers.

Page 2 – AM said that he and HM had checked on previous minutes of meetings and he does not intend to have the pensions consultants back in as there is no need to do so. He said that this has not been budgeted for and the Board **agreed** that there is no need to do so.

Page 3 – Post of Crisis Intervention Officer. AM said that following the staff member resigning the Management Team was currently reviewing this post and a report brought to the Board in due course.

Audit & Risk Committee of 21 November 2018.

SMacQ asked if progress had been made on the position of Treasurer, and the Board agreed that he should continue in the meantime.

AM asked the Board if they want him to review the minutes of the Board Away Day and bring the matter back to them to make a formal decision. The **Board** agreed with this suggestion.

AM referred to the Risk Register and said that PB was in contact with Zurich to bring in someone to help the Audit & Risk committee to identify and consider risks that are not currently apparent to the Association in terms of the wider environment so that we can review and update the Risk Register appropriately.

4. Corporate Services & Governance

a) Membership applications / cancellations verbal update

PB advised that there were no applications or cancellations to report.

b) Governance Report

AM took the Board through the report in detail and explained how he intends to build on this report. He asked the Board to advise him of the type of information they would like to be included in it.

He also said that he had included hyperlinks in the document to reduce the volume of paper; although he assured those Board members who may not have access to the internet that they were welcome to come into the office to review paper copies as and when required.

SMacQ said that he found the hyperlinks really useful.

AM went through each section of the Report.

Complaints - AM said that to support our business objective of continuous improvement he has spoken to staff to remind them of the importance of recording complaints that were front line resolution, and that this would support service improvements through 'lessons learned' and further develop a positive culture and good practice in relation to complaints. AM highlighted to the Board that it was vital that staff recognised an expression of dissatisfaction as a complaint without the person using the word complaint.

TMS said that the SPSO had recently carried out a consultation on the existing Model Complaint Handling Procedure (MCHP) and that from this there would be changes to the model. This would mean staff undertaking training on the new Model CHP.

Consultation document 'Housing Beyond 2021' - AM now has the responses from both Argyll & Bute and West Dunbartonshire councils and will summarise these into a report for the next Board meeting.

EESH 2 - PS said that the figures referred to in the EESH 2 report were completely under estimated and he will bring a report to a future Board meeting.

Freedom of Information - AM said it looks like this will apply to Housing associations with effect from November 2019 and he will try to bring an update to the next Board meeting.

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) – AM gave a general update and assured the Board that DHA's accounts are submitted as and when required each year.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) – AM said he had reviewed KPIs with the Management Team, and said it is important that they are achievable and challenging. He asked the Board to approve keeping them the same

for this year and this was proposed by SMacQ and seconded by SA. The Board **agreed** that the KPIs should remain the same.

AM went through performance in each of the key areas. He highlighted once area where the target had not been achieved and explained the reason why. There was an in-depth discussion around each performance area and AM said he is really happy with the effort being put in by staff and he has no concerns to report in terms of performance.

AM took the Board through the procedure for Board appraisal and training and confirmed that we aim to develop a training manual for the Association's Board and staff.

TMS gave a brief synopsis of the implications of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

JS thanked AM and the Management Team for a very useful report and suggested that it may be prudent to have Notifiable Events as a standing item on future agendas as we move toward developing Assurance Statements.

AM assured the Board that if a notifiable were to occur he would not wait until the next Board meeting, and he would notify the Chair immediately. He also advised that the next Board Away Day will be focused on developing the Association's Assurance Statement, and we are trying to schedule this for some time in June.

The report issued with the agenda was **noted**.

c) Adverse Weather Policy

PB said there was a minor adjustment to be made at paragraph 8.1 and it should read. 'When a decision has been taken to close the office then this will be communicated to staff, **the public and the Chair** as soon as is reasonably practical'

The Board **agreed** to this amendment and PB will ensure that this is changed.

The policy issued with the agenda was **approved**, subject to the above-noted change.

d) WDC letter – Regeneration of town centre

AM suggested that the Board consider any feedback they want him to take back to West Dunbartonshire Council on the regeneration of Dumbarton town centre and the High Street in particular.

There was an in-depth discussion around city centre regeneration in general with comments from AT on research he had done. AT suggested that local housing associations get together as a group to agree suggestions / proposals.

The letter from West Dunbartonshire Council also invited input from interested parties on the proposed Conversation Area for Dumbarton Town Centre.

GM provided positive feedback on the experience in terms of grant intervention in the Argyll & Bute council area and positive working relations ship with Historic Environment Scotland.

AM updated the Board on the Council's position in terms of enforcing repairs. Their powers are 'discretionary', and therefore in some cases the Council may elect no to do the repairs because of their own financial constraints.

He agreed that we need to develop a cohesive strategy, but the Council should take the lead on this.

AM confirmed he would email the Council to confirm the cohesive approach however asked the Board to email any comments to him and he will pass them on in due course.

5. Customer Services

a) Annual Rent Review Report

AM issued the updated survey results issued by the Glasgow West of Scotland Housing Forum today, then TMS went through the report in detail. TMS went through the responses from tenants in detail and she confirmed that there had been a poor turnout at the Helensburgh meeting and no tenants attending in West Dunbartonshire.

There was a full and frank debate around the implications of each of the proposed rent increases that had been consulted on; and the potential impact on the Association's Business Plan.

JS asked what was required in terms of the Business Plan. Following discussion both AM and HM confirmed that the business plan could support the 2.9% increase.

Following further debate and discussion WC asked for a show of hands from the Board for each of the proposed increases and the result was:

2.9% - 4 votes

3.4% - 5 votes

3.9% - 0 votes

Therefore the rent increase for 2019/20 was agreed at 3.4%.

AM confirmed that the letters advising tenants of the agreed rent increase would be issued before 28 February 2019 giving the required notice

AM took the opportunity to remind all Board members that the decision was a collective decision of the Board.

MA left the meeting at 7.30 pm

<p>b) <u>Welfare Reform Action Plan</u> TMS took the Board through the details in the Action Plan and confirmed that housing staff were taking a proactive approach in terms of supporting our tenants affected by Universal Credit and signposting them to the relevant agencies and services provided by both local authorities.</p> <p>She also confirmed that the January rent arrears were £97,728 which was currently 2.54% of Gross Rental Income (GRI) and that this was a really good position to be in towards the end of the financial year particularly considering the impact of Universal Credit.</p> <p>AM highlighted that tenants were being encouraged to pay their rent by Direct Debit and that the rent increase notification letters being sent out confirmed the Association were ending the option to pay via All Pay and Standing Order. The objective of this was to support direct payment of rent into accounts without delays and to reduce high processing and administration costs.</p> <p>There was a discussion around potential difficulties for those tenants who may not have a bank account. AM confirmed that other payment methods were still being offered i.e. payment by debit card and that the majority of customers had bank accounts.</p> <p>AM advised that the Management Team was considering removing the option for tenants to make cash payments at the office, bearing in mind potential security and safety issues.</p> <p>The Action Plan issued with the agenda was noted.</p> <p>c) <u>Write-off Report</u> AT asked if this report has to be approved by the Board and TMS said that it did as detailed within the Standing Orders for cases over £1,000. AM said that it was previously approved by the former Customer Services Committee.</p> <p>The Board approved the requested write off value of £5,937.08 as detailed in the report.</p>	
<p>6. A.O.C.B.</p> <p>1. PB advised the Board that following an ad-hoc review of a number of housing associations' websites the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) had given very positive comments about the volume and nature of information DHA provides on its website.</p> <p>2. HM reminded all Board members that they must submit all expenses claims by 31 March 2019.</p> <p>There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.45 pm</p>	
<p>7. Date of next meeting – Wednesday 13 March 2019</p>	