

CASSILTOUN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

MINUTE OF MEETING OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 25TH JANUARY 2023 AT 6.00 PM IN CASTLEMILK STABLES, 59
MACHRIE ROAD/VIA ZOOM

Present: Anna Stuart MBE George Kelly
Evelyn Ferguson Julie McNeill
Chris O'Brien Richard Sullivan (joined the meeting at 6.12 pm)

In Attendance: Clair Malpas Chief Executive Officer
Paula Brownlie Head of Corporate, HR & Finance
Fiona McGowan Director of Operations
John Williams Asset Manager
Amanda Laing Finance Manager
David Davidson Pension Adviser (Part Meeting, Zoom, left at 6.10 pm)

1a. WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, SEDERUNT & APOLOGIES

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was no fire drill tonight and reminded Board Members of the evacuation procedures.

Apologies were received from Teresa McGowan. *Redacted as contains sensitive information.*

The Chairperson enquired if all board members had received their board papers on time and if they had read over them and understood them. All board members confirmed that they had received their papers on time and that they had read and understood the papers.

1b. QUORUM

As per the Association's Rules, the Quorum for the Board of Management Meeting stands at 4 members. Today's meeting is therefore quorate.

2. CONFLICT OF INTEREST (PERMANENT REGISTER)

Item 3b, Pension Update: Chief Executive Officer, Director of Operations and Head of Corporate Services, HR & Finance and Asset Manager registered an interest. They will all leave the meeting when this item is discussed.

Item 5, Pay Award 2023/24: Chief Executive Officer, Director of Operations and Head of Corporate Services, HR & Finance and Asset Manager registered an interest. They will all leave the meeting when this item is discussed.

3a. MINUTE OF MEETING HELD ON 23RD NOVEMBER 2022

The minute of meeting held on 23rd November 2022 where noted and approved on the motion of Anna Stuart MBE and seconded by Evelyn Ferguson.

3b. MATTERS ARISING FROM MEETING HELD ON 26TH OCTOBER 2022**All staff left the meeting**

Redacted as contains sensitive information.

Staff rejoined the meeting.

Page 9, Item 10, Housing Management Software: The Asset Manager informed the Board that there would be a live demonstration of a new Housing Management software on 31st January 2023. The Chair and Vice Chairperson will attend on behalf of the Board. Tender opening will take place at 12 noon on 3rd February 2023. Both the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson will attend.

Page 11, Item 11, Telecoms/Leaseline: *Redacted as contains commercially sensitive information.* The Senior Leadership Team were taken through a demonstration of the new system on Monday 30th January 2023.

There has been an assessment carried out of the Wifi points within the office. A report on the findings will determine how much of the *redacted as contains sensitive information* budget we need to spend in terms of installing access points ie the strength of wifi around the building.

In relation to the new phone system, Teresa McGowan enquired if there would be any additional rises to the costs provided. *Redacted as contains commercially sensitive information.*

3c. ACTION LIST FROM MEETING HELD ON 23RD NOVEMBER 2022

	Details	Person Responsible	Status
Actions from 26th October 2022			
1.	Corporate/HR report to include within Equal Opportunities statistics information in relation to protected characteristics	HCHR&F	Staffing Sub Committee approved new Equal Opportunities form for board and staff that will include information in relation to protected characteristics. The Head of Corporate, HR & Finance informed the Board that the form will be sent out to both the Board and staff via a google doc form.
2.	Conflict of interest register to be updated with regards to Agenda Item 7 for CEO and HCHR&FR	HCHR&F	Completed
3.	<i>redacted as contains sensitive information</i> to investigate if there were specific areas in the Tenant Satisfaction Survey that highlighted specific areas that had higher levels of dissatisfaction compared to others	HM	Director of Operations intimated that <i>redacted as contains sensitive information</i> had provided this information.

			<p>The information will be issued to the Board and will be presented at a future meeting via a powerpoint presentation.</p> <p>However, there was no one particular area that showed higher levels of dissatisfaction compared to others.</p>
4.	Rent consultation – approval to consult on 7.1 & 8.1%	HM	Completed
5.	<i>redacted as contains sensitive information</i>	DoO	Completed
6.	<p>Procurement of Cloud/Hosted Integrated IT System</p> <p>Approval to delegate authority to Asset Manager to carry out shortlisting of Stage 1 Applicants</p> <p>Arrange timing and format of Stage 2 demonstrations and current client site</p> <p>Approve any other relevant Stage 2 quality documentation</p> <p>Approve pricing mechanism for Stage 2 applicants</p>	AM	Asset Manager updated the Board under Matters Arising
7.	<p>Telecoms/Lease Line</p> <p>Approval granted to give delegated authority to Asset Manager</p> <p>Enter into a new contract with <i>redacted as contains sensitive information</i> for the provision of a telecoms contract for the Association and Nursery</p> <p>Enter into a contract for the provision of a leased line service to future proof the broadband/WIFI services being provided by the Stables Building</p>	AM	Asset Manager updated the Board under Matters Arising
8.	<p>Policy Register updated with regards to approved policies</p> <p>Assignment Policy</p> <p>Joint Tenancy</p> <p>Mutual Exchange</p> <p>Subletting</p> <p>Succession to Tenancy</p> <p>Allocation</p> <p>Rent Management</p> <p>Factoring</p> <p>Neighbour Relations</p> <p>Void procedure</p> <p>Tenants privacy notice</p> <p>Staff to be informed</p>	HCHR&F	Completed
9.	<i>redacted as contains sensitive information</i>	HCHR&F	Completed

10.	<i>redacted as contains commercially sensitive information</i>	DoO/CEO/AM	<i>redacted as contains commercially sensitive information</i>
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4. **CHAIR'S REPORT**

Kim McKee, Board Member had tendered her resignation from the Board of Management *redacted as contains sensitive information*. The Board expressed their thanks to Kim for all her hard work and commitment during her time on the Board.

29th November 2022: Although we are now in 2023, the Chair intimated that his report begins with the Share Corporate Governance and HR Conference which took place on Tuesday 29th November 2022. Our Head of Corporate, HR and Finance presented a Health and Wellbeing workshop. Karen Graham our Corporate Services Officer also attended. There was a variety of other workshops including: Marketing and Board Recruitment, Legal Updates, Developing Young Staff, Has the Pandemic Changed Customer Expectations and Organisational Culture and a few more. This was SHARE's first person to person Conference and was a very enjoyable experience for all.

8th December 2022: I attended with the Vice Chair, the CHA Framework tender opening. A number of companies had put forward their tenders to achieve inclusion on the Framework. Laura Edwards and Tom Atkinson are to look at the submissions and bring a report back to the Board.

14th December 2022: The Chair attended the Christmas lunch with staff and other board members at the Croft. All those attended enjoyed their lunch.

9th January 2023: Attended the Staffing Sub Committee. Decisions made are reported under Agenda Item 19, Sub Committee and Subsidiary Decisions.

20th January 2023: Attended the Special Board Meeting re a Confidential Matter.

redacted as contains sensitive information the Chair reported that he was unable to attend the EVH SHAPS Pension Workshop on 19th January and the Chairs Network on Monday 23rd January 2023.

The Board noted the contents of the Chair's report.

5. **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BI MONTHLY REPORT**

The Chief Executive Officer presented the above report previously circulated with the agenda.

Update request from SHR on Annual Assurance Statement

The Board were aware as part of our Annual Assurance Statement, we declared that the Association had 29 EICR's outstanding. This was due to tenants not engaging with the Association.

In January, the SHR requested an updated position. The Association had 29 EICRs outstanding in January but appointments were arranged for 15 tenants with a further 2 scheduled to be completed at the same time as the tenant's gas service. At the present time, we currently have 8 tenants that we cannot gain access.

The SHR have confirmed that are happy with our response but wished to be kept up to date with our position at the end of February 2023.

Mould and Dampness

Due to a recent case in England, there is more attention from the SHR and tenants on issues around damp and mould in their properties.

The link to the letter from the SHR re the matter was circulated to Board members.

In two recent cases of extensive mould, we have asked for a specialist mould contractor to assess the properties to make recommendations.

In light of the recent case and looking at the English Housing Ombudsman report on damp and mould, the Association will be reviewing its documentation and processes around the identification of mould and the communications we provide to our tenants around the matter.

It is crucial that we keep accurate and up to date data, ie can you prove the number of times you have been put to the property; can you prove how you plan to rectify the issue; can you prove how you plan to increase ventilation in the property if required; is the central heating being put on; are fuel vouchers required. We should be recording all of this information.

A full report with any actions and recommendations will be provided to the Board at a future meeting.

Richard Sullivan enquired how many reports do we get in regards to mould and dampness and how does it compare to other Housing Associations. The Chief Executive Officer reported that we don't collect this information collectively. However, this is likely that we will have to report on this.

Tenants to be educated how to prevent Damp and Mould. The Chairperson enquired if this information could be put on a poster and erected in properties.

Staff will be attending training sessions on Damp and Mould. A Mould Consultant will be attending the office on 15th February 2023 to train staff on this area. This training will be certificated.

As the Board are aware, the media request around damp and mould was a notifiable event to the SHR. This matter has now been closed off. To give Board assurance, this matter was dealt with very quickly. The Chief Executive Officer was aware of the matter and the staff were able to provide her with the information to respond to the media.

Industry Updates

The Board were given Industry Updates in relation to

1. 2 x Engagement Plans with other Housing Associations
2. Housing Ombudsman (England) report on Damp and Mould
3. SHR focus areas for risk in the sector

CEO Training/Networking

The Board were given details on the Chief Executive Officer's training and networking from October 2022.

IT and Digital Update

Our quarterly proactive visit from *redacted as contains commercially sensitive information* is due on 16th Jan 2022

redacted as contains commercially sensitive information is operational

Telephone system and lease line procurement completed and contracts awarded

Procurement for new housing management software in progress

Exercise to delete unnecessary historic and duplicate data is taking place with staff

Inflationary Pay Award

redacted as contains sensitive information

After discussion, the Board unanimously approved the undernoted pay award for 2023/24

redacted as contains sensitive information

All staff rejoined the meeting.

Internal and External Audit

Our internal auditors have completed an assessment on our approach to risk management. Their findings will be presented to the Audit and Risk Sub Committee at their meeting in February 2023.

The Association is getting prepared for our external audit with a pre meeting set up for 2nd February 2023.

Cyber Essentials and Insurance

redacted as contains commercially sensitive information is assisting the CEO with information for the renewal of Cyber Essentials.

The CEO is progressing the Association's Insurance renewal. With the costs increasing in the market, it is likely that our premiums will increase.

Subsidiary Board Minutes

The Board minutes from the Nursery and Trust board meetings were circulated to the Board for their information.

Cassiltoun Stables Nursery is progressing well. *redacted as contains sensitive information.*

Cassiltoun Trust are working towards plugging all the information from the Stock Condition Survey for the Stables into the 30-year business plan. Our Asset Manager is working with Fettes McDonald to carry out this piece of work.

The Board unanimously approved the contents of the Chief Executive's Bi Monthly Report.

6. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS – DECEMBER 2022

The Finance Manager presented the Management Accounts for December 2022 previously circulated with the agenda.

On page 1 of the report, the Board will note that the budget for the period to December 2022 projected a surplus of around £420k. Based on the results to date, the actual surplus is sitting around £695k. Therefore, there is an overall positive variance of around £275k at this point in the year.

The main variances to date are:-

Lower rents (£39k)
Higher voids (£17k)
Higher other income £22k
Lower repair costs £208k
Lower staff overheads £21k

Lower other overheads £80k

The Finance Manager explained that with regards to reactive maintenance costs, they include accruals to December of £131k reflecting invoicing delays. Void repair spend at £74k accounts for 15% of the reactive spend. The cyclical spend variance at this stage is a timing difference only. A review of repairs spend will be undertaken over the next couple of months to identify where any reallocations are required.

With regards to Overheads, there is savings at this point of the year. However, we will give this information to budget holders who will make any expenditure that is needed this year.

There is an overspend against the housing/building consultancy. This relates partly to phasing of expenditure as well as additional ongoing projects. These costs will be monitored closely to the end of the financial year to minimise any potential overspend.

For the balance sheet, it is now incorporating major repairs that have taken place within the period. It also takes into account the two vans that we have purchased recently.

No issues with regards to the cashflows. Cash balance at £4.4m.

redacted as contains sensitive information

The Chairperson intimated that the Bank of England is 5.1% and enquired if this will affect our loans. The Finance Manager confirmed that our loan interest is sitting under budget to the end of the quarter reflecting lower interest rates in the early part of the year.

Rates will be higher for variable debt for the remainder of the year, this is in line with expectations due to the current economic climate.

After discussion, the Board unanimously approved the Management Accounts for December 2022.

7. PROPOSED RENT INCREASE 2023-24

Chief Executive Officer presented the above report previously circulated with the agenda.

At the Board meeting on 23rd November 2022, the Board of Management considered various factors when considering the levels of rent increase to propose when consulting with tenants. This included:

- Affordability for tenants
- General levels of inflation in the economy
- Impact of proposed rent increases on the annual and long-term budget
- Current cost increases in the business
- Uncertainty due to the Scottish Government freezing/capping rents and evictions

At the meeting, the Board agreed to consult with tenants on an increase of either 7.1% or 8.1% and also gave the tenants the option to propose an alternative figure.

Since the Board Meeting of 23 November 2022, the Scottish Government have confirmed that there will not be a rent cap in place for social housing landlords from the 1st April 2023. This means that any rent increase set by the Board of Management will be implemented in full.

Since the meeting of the 23 November 2022, the reported rate of inflation (CPI) has increased from 10.1% to 10.7%. Inflation is still predicted to remain at high levels for at least a further year.

redacted as contains sensitive information

In terms of our Suppliers, Contractors and New Areas of Operation, the staff team are ensuring that they achieve best value for any contracts/work that they are committing the organisation to for the 2023-2024 year.

The latest GWSF survey of members was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. It illustrates the levels that organisations are intending to consult on and the rates vary from 0% to 9%. The most frequent option quoted is 5%. If Cassiltoun opts for 7.1% it is likely to be at the highest end of rent increases for the sector.

The SHR is likely to look at whether the Board has:

- consulted with tenants
- considered affordability issues
- considered the impact on its Business Plan
- how the rent increase benchmarks locally and nationally

Rent Consultation Results

The rent increase consultation was similar to last year using an external firm to obtain a random sample of at least 100 replies, as well as from our newsletter article and emails sent in. In total we had responses from 189 tenants which is circa 17% of our tenants. We had 12 returns directly to the office. The results from these were as follows:

- 7.1% - 5 tenants opted for this option
- 8.1% - 5 tenants opted for this option
- Other – 1 tenant stated that it should be 0% the other 5%.

The External Company were able to speak to 177 of our tenants. The full report was attached to the report as Appendix 3.

The main findings were as follows:

- 7.1% - 99 tenants opted for this option
- 8.1% - 10 tenants opted for this option
- Other – 68 tenants opted for this option

In terms of affordability of rent payments, the *redacted as contains sensitive information* report found that:-

- 47% of all respondents stated that they find their rent payments either very or fairly easy to afford
- 42% stated that they were just about affordable
- 10% stated that they were difficult to afford.

Rental income represents 95% of the Association's revenue receipts and needs to remain affordable and comparable to other social housing providers.

redacted as contains sensitive information.

The Chief Executive reminded that anything less than inflation +1% impacts on our 30 year Business Plan.

After discussion, the Board unanimously approved a 6.6% rent increase for the period 2023/24 redacted as contains sensitive information.

8. TENANCY SUSTAINMENT – CHARTER BENCHMARKING

The Director of Operations presented Tenancy Sustainment Charter Benchmarking information via a powerpoint presentation as requested by the Board of Management.

After discussion, the Board noted the contents of the Tenancy Sustainment Charter Benchmarking presentation.

9. PROCUREMENT OF CONTRACT ADMINISTRATOR 2023-2026

The Director of Operations presented the above policy previously circulated with the agenda.

The purpose of the report was to advise the Board on the procurement of a Contract Administrator and make proposals for appointment of a preferred supplier.

redacted as contains sensitive information.

10a. ABANDONMENT POLICY

The Director of Operations presented the above policy previously circulated with the agenda.

After discussion, the Board unanimously approved the revised Abandonment Policy.

10b. CHIP AND PIN POLICY

The Director of Operations presented the above policy previously circulated with the agenda.

As the Board are aware, this policy was reviewed in September 2022 year and the policy renewal date was due to 2025. However, this policy is required to be renewed annually as per legislation.

The Board unanimously approved the revised renewal date of September 2023.

11. CORPORATE/HR REPORT

The Head of Corporate, HR & Finance presented the Corporate/HR Report previously circulated with the agenda.

redacted as contains sensitive information

The Chief Executive Officer stressed the importance of board training and that as per the Regulatory Standards, our Board should be keeping their knowledge and skills up to date.

The Board unanimously approved the contents of the Corporate/HR Report

12. COMPLAINTS REGISTER

The Head of Corporate, HR & Finance presented the Complaints Register for the period 1st October 2022 – 31st December 2022.

During this period there were 19 complaints received with one being escalated to stage 2.

17 complaints were handled within timescales. Two stage 1 complaints were handled outwith timescales. Extension of time letters were issued to the tenants concerned regarding these complaints. The first complaint required an extension to time as we were awaiting a response from a contractor. The second complaint required an extension to time due to a staff member being on annual leave.

Of the complaints raised at Stage 1, 15 complaints were upheld and 4 were not upheld.

At stage 2, we had one complaint which was not upheld.

The Director of Operations intimated that the communication issues could be in relation not giving tenants a timescale when a member of staff will phone them back. It is hoped that our new telephone system may assist this issue.

Our staff have received refresher training on Handling Complaints on 7th December 2022w which was carried out by *redacted as contains sensitive information*.

Two compliments were received regarding two members of staff.

The Board unanimously approved the contents of the Complaints Report.

13. GDPR/FOI

13a. QUARTERLY RETURN TO SCOTTISH INFORMATION COMMISSIONER

The Head of Corporate, HR & Finance presented the quarterly Return to the Scottish Information Commissioner for the period 1st October 2022 – 31st December 2022.

During this period, we had received 2 x SAR requests and 2 x FOI requests.

The Board unanimously approved the contents of the Quarterly Return to the Commissioner. The Return will be uploaded to the Scottish Information Commissioner portal.

14. CORRESPONDENCE

SHARE Conference, March 2023: Anna Stuart had previously intimated that she wished to attend the SHARE Conference. However, Evelyn Ferguson has also expressed a wish to attend. ***The Board approved for Evelyn Ferguson to attend the SHARE Conference.***

EVH Annual Conference 19-21 May 2023, Dunblane Hydro: Richard Sullivan, Anna Stuart MBE and Evelyn Ferguson expressed an interest to attend the conference. Names will be pulled from a hat as two Board Members will attend on behalf of the Association.

redacted as contains sensitive information.

15. APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

None

16. **USE OF ASSOCIATION SEAL**

None

17. **ENTITLEMENTS, PAYMENTS & BENEFITS REGISTER**

None

18. **NOTIFIABLE EVENTS**

redacted as contains sensitive information

19. **SUBSIDIARY AND SUB COMMITTEE DECISIONS MADE BETWEEN 24TH NOVEMBER 2022 – 25TH JANUARY 2023**

Cassiltoun Trust – 7th December 2022

- Management Accounts to 30th September 2022 - approved
- Board Member Role Description – approved
- Risk Register - approved

Cassiltoun Stables Nursery – 7th December 2022

- Management Accounts for Sept/October 2022 – approved
- *redacted as contains sensitive information*
- 6 month traffic light report – approved
- The Board approved the revised Governing Body Member Role Description.
- The Board noted and approved the Parent/Carer Participation Policy.

Staffing Sub Committee - 9th January 2023

- Julie McNeil elected as Chairperson of Staffing Sub Committee
- *redacted as contains sensitive information*
- Equal Opportunities Forms – approved
- Policy approvals
 - R&S Policy – changes recommended by Staffing Sub Committee to be incorporated
 - Attendance Management
 - Disciplinary
- Public holiday – approved to grant 8th May as a public holiday in honour of Kings Coronation

20. **AOCB**

Board Membership: Anna Stuart MBE intimated that a new tenant has moved into the area and she will approach her to see if she would be interested in joining the Board.

The Chief Executive Officer also intimated that she had been in discussions with an interested person

Refresher training on Conflict of Interest, Notifiable Events, Code of Conduct etc: Refresher training has been arranged with Stuart Eglinton on 31st January 2023 at 6pm.

March Board Meeting: The March Board meeting is scheduled to take place at 6pm on 22nd March 2023. Approval was sought to reschedule the March meeting to 29th March 2023. ***The Board unanimously approved for the meeting to take place on 29th March 2023 at 6pm.***

21. **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 22nd February 2023 at 6.00 pm

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 7.50 pm

Signature
Chair of Board of Management

Date