

Abronhill Housing Association

Remote Meeting of the Management Committee held on Thursday 25 November 2021 via Zoom at 17:00hrs

Minutes

Present:	P Broadwith	R Russell	I Smith
	D Brown	W Noon	J Kelly
In Attendance:	S Macintyre	J Daisley	

	Agenda Item	Action
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Apologies were received from C Burns and A Smith.</p>	
2.	<p>Declarations of Interest</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>	
3.	<p>3.1 Minutes of Management Committee (held on 28 October 2021)</p> <p>Item 7.1 R Russell advised that he had requested that when using abbreviations in reports that the full name is used in the first instance and then the abbreviation included in brackets and used thereafter.</p> <p>Acceptance of the minutes, which, had been circulated in advance, was proposed as a true record of the meeting of 28 October 2021 by R Russell and seconded by J Kelly.</p> <p>3.2 Actions/Decision List from Meeting held on 28 October 2021</p> <p>S Macintyre informed the committee that the decree for eviction that was discussed at the last committee meeting will no longer be carried out as the tenant has terminated the tenancy and returned the keys to the Association.</p>	
4.	<p>4.1 Matters Arising</p> <p>S Macintyre advised he is waiting on indicative costs from NLC regarding the Energy Efficiency works and he will enquire if they are applying for the Social Housing Net Zero Fund from the Scottish Government that was mentioned last month in the Glasgow West of Scotland Forum of Housing Associations (GWSF) update.</p>	

	<p>S Macintyre advised that any discussions on the EVH pay award for 2022 would not take place until next year as most Association's agreed to put negotiations on hold.</p> <p>S Macintyre informed the committee that the draft legal agreement for the new build properties would be signed by Clyde Valley this week and returned to the Association's Solicitor.</p> <p>P Broadwith advised that he had spoken to S Macintyre regarding the closure of the Post Office on 26 November 2021. The feasibility study will be postponed to see if there is further development from the private company who had shown interest in taking over the Post Office.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Health & Safety and Cyber Security</p> <p>5.1 Corona Virus Update Report</p> <p>S Macintyre advised that the ventilation unit in the office has now been installed that a more formal return to the office is planned for week commencing the 6 December. Staff will be based at the office on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and work from home on Monday and Friday. Any appointments will have to be made in advance and the office will not be open to the public. This will remain under constant review and the Association will follow government guidance.</p> <p>R Russell asked if the credit union would be returning to using the Association's office. S Macintyre advised not at this time.</p> <p>S Macintyre advised that the Association with the support of I Symington from the AFTAR project will be applying for fuel funding for our tenants. This will be in the form of fuel vouchers. I Symington will assist the Association with the application.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>There were no items of correspondence.</p>	
<p>7.</p>	<p>Regulatory, Notifiable Events & Governance Matters</p> <p>7.1 Policy Review Report</p> <p>S Macintyre discussed the report that had been issued to committee members. Five policies are pending approval and can be presented to a policy review committee. There are also three key housing management policies that are outstanding. These would require some degree of tenant consultation to be included before being presented for approval.</p>	

	<p>It was agreed to hold a policy sub committee in January 2022. S Macintyre and J Daisley will look at dates and enquire on committee availability. Three committee members are required for a sub committee meeting to take place.</p>	
8.	<p>Strategy/Development</p> <p>8.1 Strategy Day</p> <p>An outline plan for the strategy day along with the current business objectives and delivery plan for the current year were issued with the committee papers.</p> <p>R Russell asked if the committee could discuss energy efficiency and the way forward as part of the strategy day.</p> <p>S Macintyre suggested that we ask consultants to complete a desktop analysis of the Association's properties and provide costs/solutions on how we can increase the energy efficiency of our properties.</p> <p>W Noon asked if succession planning could be discussed at the strategy day. This is one of the current business objectives.</p> <p>W Noon suggested looking at the current staff structure.</p>	
9.	<p>Staffing</p> <p>9.1 Flexible Working Policy</p> <p>The committee were asked to approve a flexible working policy. The policy is based on an EVH model policy. The policy will allow the Association to consider staff requests for flexible working. Currently employees are allowed one request per year. Previously the Association would have used the EVH model policy.</p> <p>J Kelly asked if staff have to put a request in writing if they wish to work from home. S Macintyre advised that if a formal request to work from home was agreed then the employee's contract would have to be amended. The committee have previously considered a remote working policy. The committee approved the policy.</p>	
10.	<p>Finance & Audit</p> <p>10.1 Rent Arrears Internal Audit Report</p> <p>A Cameron discussed the rent arrears internal audit report, which had been included with the committee papers. A Cameron carried out sample testing to ensure compliance with policies and procedures and has given the audit reasonable assurance. The percentage of rent arrears is 7.9% of the annual gross rent debit. The Scottish Average is between 4% and 5%. There are a number of high value cases with large outstanding balances. The balances are reducing and it will take time for the arrears to reduce.</p>	

	<p>A Cameron has recommended that the rent arrears policy is reviewed, as it is currently out of date. All processes are being carried out correctly by the housing officers.</p> <p>R Russell asked about the number of tenants who have outstanding arrears. A Cameron advised that the audit was based on gross rent arrears, which includes technical arrears, which are payments due to the Association from Housing Benefit and Universal Credit. Housing Benefit is paid four weekly in arrears and rent is charged monthly in advance. A double housing benefit payment is due to be paid to the Association in November 2021.</p> <p>S Macintyre advised that the report is for the committee's information and a follow up report will be carried out by A Cameron to ensure the recommendations are completed. The report will also be given to the Association's external auditor.</p> <p>A Cameron confirmed that the Scottish Average figure for rent arrears was taken from the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) submissions for 2020-21. P Broadwith commented that although the rent arrears figure is higher than the Scottish Average the process is being handled well by staff.</p> <p>J Kelly asked about the timeline for the recommendations to be completed. S Macintyre advised this would be discussed under item 7.1 Policy Review Report.</p>	
11.	<p>Operations</p> <p>11.1 Rent Increase 2022/23 Report</p> <p>S Macintyre discussed the rent increase report. In previous years, the Association has increased rents by Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus a notional percentage increase. Inflation has been increasing and the CPI figure for October 2021 is 4.2%. The SFHA affordability tool has also been used to show the results of a 4.2% increase across a number of household types and sizes. A rent level comparison across other landlords is also included in the report along with a survey carried out by GWSF on potential increases for 2022/23. Our finance agent FMD have also supported an increase of 4.2%.</p> <p>The committee discussed the proposed rent increase and agreed to consult tenants on an increase of 4.2%, as this will allow the Association to continue investment in properties.</p> <p>D Brown suggested the Association look for further funding opportunities that will support our tenants.</p> <p>Feedback from the rent consultation will be brought to a future committee meeting for discussion before final agreement on the rent increase.</p>	

	<p>11.2 Christmas and New Year Holidays</p> <p>The committee agreed the dates for the Christmas and New Year holidays. The office will close at 12:30 on Friday 24 December and re-open at 09:00 on Thursday 6 January. J Kelly suggested bringing this to an earlier committee meeting next year.</p>	
12.	<p>Deferred Agenda Items</p> <p>No items were deferred.</p>	
13.	<p>Any Other Competent Business</p> <p>P Broadwith thanked J Daisley for issuing the EVH A-Z Guides for Social Housing along with an abbreviation list.</p> <p>NLC Energy Efficiency Work – R Russell discussed the increase in specification for the work. S Macintyre advised that the committee had not seen the revised specification. R Russell suggested that further investigation is required. Following discussion the committee agreed to wait for further information on cost and specification to be received from NLC.</p> <p>R Russell asked if a site visit to the new build could be arranged for committee and asked about a development sub committee meeting. S Macintyre will contact A Moore and Clyde Valley to arrange a site visit.</p>	
14.	<p>Date of Next Meeting: 3 February 2021 at 5pm via zoom</p>	

Signed as a true record by the Chairperson

..... **Date**

Copies of committee reports are available on request.