

Minutes of the Meeting with Management Committee held on **Wednesday 15 December 2021 at 6pm** via Zoom

**Minutes**

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| **Present:** | Callum Boughey, Vice Chair (PL) | Charlie Millar, Treasurer (CM) | Lee Murray (LM) |
| Tommy Divers (TD) | Angie Robinson (AR) | Natalie Barclay (NB) |
|  | Theresa Boyle (TB) |  |  |
| **In Attendance** | Paul Lennon, Depute Director (PL) | Elaine Hyslop, Housing Manager (EH) | Kennedy Chilambe, Senior Finance Officer (KC) |
| Richard Bolton, Community Development Officer (RB) | Paul Murphy, Corporate Services Officer (PM) |  |

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|  | **Agenda Item** | **Action** |
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| **1.** | **Apologies**  Apologies were **NOTED** for Alan Thomson, John Burton, Jolene Martin, Marek Dziekan and Cathy Brien, Director. | **PM to update register.** |
| **Chairs Remarks**  PL welcomed everyone to the meeting. |  |
| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest**  Kennedy declared an interest at agenda item 11.2 Finance Report. |  |
| **3.** | **3.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 17 November 2021**  Proposed **Lee Murray**  Seconded **Tommy Divers** |  |
| **4.** | **4.1 Matters Arising**  PL advised that the matters arising identified from the previous meeting has been incorporated into the meeting. |  |
| **5.** | **Health & Safety** |  |
| **5.1 Scottish Government Guidance**  PL reflected on the announcement yesterday by the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon regarding restrictions. PL advised committee that the vast majority of staff will be working from home during the restrictions. However due to the nature of the work undertaken by our maintenance team and Richard (community) to enable them to carry out their work, we will allow them to access the office when needed. And ensure all Covid protocol measures are followed by anyone visiting the centre/estate  Committee **APPROVED** this approach. |  |
| **5.2 Staff Arrangements**  After some discussion Committee **APPROVED** the request for a restricted number of staff to enter the office for example to sign up new tenants. The limited number of participating staff have to provide a negative lateral flow test result prior to accessing the building. RB advised that he was reviewing daily any activities due to take place in the Community Centre. |  |
| **6.** | **Correspondence** |  |
| **6.1 Regulator publishes latest quarterly report on the impact of COVID-19 on social landlords**  The correspondence was **NOTED** by committee and discussed by PL. |  |
| **6.2 EVH Pay Negotiations**  PL confirmed that the CPI figure for October was 4.2% and this figure will trigger a return to negotiations between EVH and the Union.  The correspondence was **NOTED** and discussed by committee. |  |
| **6.3 CIH Scotland Housing Awards**  PL advised Committee that the CIH Scotland Housing Awards took place recently and PM had attended it in his capacity as a CIH Board Member. While the co-op sometimes put articles in the Scottish housing news online, it would be a real boost all round if we were to be considered for recognition alongside our peers.  It is an awards event that is worth considering, with all in attendance in agreement.  Committee **AGREED** with the proposal for the Co-op to applyto next year’s awards. | **PM to work on a submission when the awards open again next year.** |
| **6.4 EVH & TPAS Conferences**  PM advised that EVH and TPAS had sent through the dates of their conferences for next year. However these dates may change due to any future restrictions. |  |
| **7.** | **Governance** |  |
| **7.1 Ethical Conduct and Notifiable Events**  PL advised committee that while there were no notifiable events, the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) had been in contact since the last meeting. They advised that during their annual risk assessment of RSLs, they were checking the last 3 sets of approved management committee minutes. SHR checked the co-op’s website and found they were not there. SHR also reminded the co-op that as part of the regulatory framework, we should have our minutes on public display. PL confirmed that this is indeed the case and that since rebuilding the website last year, the display of minutes was still to be done and apologised to committee for this oversight. PL also confirmed he communicated with the SHR, who were very reasonable during the discussions, also apologising and confirmed the issue would be fixed within a day or so. It was also confirmed that this was the case.  PL finalised by confirming that all approved minutes will be edited for GDPR purposes and uploaded as soon as possible after each committee meeting from now on. This was accepted by all in attendance. |  |
| **7.2 Payments, Benefits & Entitlements**  None |  |
| **7.3 Membership Report**  PM advised committee that no new applications for membership had been received since the last management committee meeting. |  |
| **7.4 Appointed Committee Member**  PL advised committee that Jim Mitchell attended our October meeting as an observer. Jim is interested in becoming a member of the management committee. A committee can appoint new members who have skills and input that will benefit them. PL added that Jim has knowledge and skills which would make him an asset to the committee. He is also currently a member and volunteer with VANL (Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire)  PL explained that it is the committee’s decision whether to appoint Jim Mitchell as an Appointed member of the committee rather than a Co-optee. As an appointed member Jim would have voting rights and would count towards the quorum of meetings.  All members **APPROVED** the proposal for Jim Mitchell to become an appointed member of the management committee of the Co-op. | **Jim Mitchell to be added to the register of committee members** |
| **8.** | **Strategy** |  |
| **8.1 Community Centre** |  |
| RB provided a presentation.  RB advised that we have 17 live funding projects across both Co-ops currently.  RB advised that we have a number of applications currently ongoing. The Supporting Communities fund is a big one for the organisation, however it is going to be extremely competitive this year. RB advised that he would speak to committee members, local people and staff to assist with developing the application form.  RB added that currently we are trying to deliver 18 months of work in the space of 4 months.  RB invited questions.  CM expressed his thanks to RB and agreed that it was important to get as much input as possible to ensure the application to Supporting Communities is as good as it can possible be.  RB advised he would provide people with the criteria to assist them, RB added that there was over 1000 people on the webinar when they were introducing the fund.  Committee **NOTED** the presentation from RB providing an update on the activities of the Communities team.  Committee thanked RB for his report.  PL thanked RB for all his hard work over the year.  **RB left the meeting.** |  |
| **8.2 Tenants Survey**  EH reflected on the recent changes to the guidance regarding home working again being the default for the vast majority of the staff. EH advised committee that more time was needed to evaluate service delivery options for tenants based on the current restrictions and future restrictions.  CM highlighted that communication with tenants was key. What numbers they need to use to access services and when they can.  EH agreed with CM and stressed the importance of offering a wide variety of options for tenants to communication with the Co-op. CM also recognised that the co-op is still providing a high level of service during the pandemic and no one is hard to reach.  EH advised that we are open to any ideas in how best to provide services to tenants during the pandemic and thereafter.  **Item deferred** | **To be brought to next meeting** |
| **9** | **Staffing** |  |
| PL updated the committee on staff covid cases, and general matters including staff development and qualifications gained by a staff member |  |
| **10.** | **Compliance** |  |
| **10.1 Prevention of Fraud and Anti-bribery Policy**  PL reflected on the need for the policy (previously discussed) and the procedures outlined in the policy if suspected incidents of fraud or bribery takes place.  PM pointed to the contact details of our external and internal auditors contained within the policy as well as other important contacts should a serious situation arise.  PL advised we will offer Fraud and Anti-bribery training to committee.  Committee **APPROVED** the policy. | **PM to look into providers** |
| **11.** | **Finance** |  |
| **11.1 Draft Budget**  **Item was deferred** |  |
| **11.2 Finance Report**  PL advised that Kennedy was leaving the organisation with our best wishes.  PL advised that the notice period was 4 weeks, however to assist the Co-op Kennedy is going to finish on the 31st of January.  **KC joined the meeting**  KC reflected on his time with the Co-op and thanked them for their collective support and encouragement they had given him over the years.  PL advised that the Co-op would be interviewing agency candidates for a temporary position this week for an initial period of 3 months. |  |
| **11.3 Rent Increase 2022/23**  PL referred to previous months’ discussions as well as the report on the rent increase. It was confirmed that under business planning, we should be looking at CPI + 1%. As stated in previous months there is an unusual hike in inflation with the current rate at 4.2%. Based on that we could be looking at 5.2% for 2022/23. Committee were strongly against such an increase, this was agreed by the management team and PL then advised of the areas we address and possible options.  It was agreed that :   * The staff would arrange their tenant consultation event with the rent focus group, inviting new people via the newsletter. * We consider the rent increase based on the lower of recent month’s inflation rises (3.1%). PL confirmed budgets were run on this figure and they work for the co-op. * If the CPI rate published mid-January is lower than the 3.1%, we consider that as an increase however indications are showing there will be no decrease.   CM supported as low a workable rate as possible and asked if staff had worked through different financial scenarios.  KC confirmed that we have stress tested the potential percentages. KC added that we asked all our contractors what rate they were planning to increase the cost of their services for 2022/23. KC advised that the Co-op is also a consumer of goods and our biggest costs come from purchasing goods and services from our contractors.  KC added that we have used the SFHA (Scottish Federation of Housing Associations) affordability calculator tool which factors in many aspects and works out if your proposed increase would be affordable to different household incomes  PL added that we have looked at ways to reduce costs, including reducing spend in various cost centres.  PL added that an invite to a Rent Review focus group is included in the document.  PL provided a presentation on the Rent Increase 2022/23, the consultation document is due to be sent to tenants alongside the latest newsletter at the end of this week.  PL explained the contents of the consultation document to the committee.  CM agreed that it was important that tenants got their say.  Committee **APPROVED** the proposals on the rent increase and it was confirmed a decision must be taken in January to meet notification deadlines. | **EH to arrange rent focus group meeting.** |
| **12.** | **Operations** |  |
| **12.1 AFTAR Update** |  |
| PL advised committee that the funding for the AFTAR project (Advice For Tenants And Residents) is up on the 31st of March.  PL & EH advised that they had both attended a meeting recently to discuss the funding position.  PL displayed a slide which showed the amount of money the project had managed to secure over the years for tenants and residents of Forgewood.  PL added that an application to the Bank of Scotland was waiting approval. However there would be a short term gap between the funding hopefully being secured. Any shortfalls in funding would be shared across the six landlords who are part of the project. PL also went over the costs that could be incurred but also stated that it may last for a one or two month period and funding could be in place by June.  EH emphasised how crucial the project has been for local people, especially people who have very little sources of support to deal with filling in forms many of which are online.  AR and CM both voiced their support for the project and the difference it makes to people.  Committee **APPROVED** the request to meet any financial shortfall with the other partner landlords. | **PL to report back on AFTAR** |
| **12.2 Festive Period Closure** |  |
| PL confirmed that the office would close on 24 December 2021 and reopen on Thursday 6 January 2022, also confirming staff use up two days annual leave to have the extended break. Exceptions in maintenance were discussed and Paul also confirmed he was constantly on call with Cathy also always available. PL was asked about contractors getting in touch and stated Alex would normally initially receive emergency calls from a contractor and take from there. Billy and Kieron would also be working between both co-ops during the break for litter picking and salt provision where required and always report back to others any updates. Answer machine, website, newsletter all updated to reflect the closure for the period and messages left on voicemail are listened to immediately as they activate an email to key staff.  Committee **APPROVED** the arrangements |  |
| **13.** | **Any Other Competent Business** |  |
| PL thanked the committee and staff for attending the meeting and wished everyone a very nice Christmas and a peaceful New Year. |  |
| **14.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Management Committee Meeting: 6pm Tuesday 26 January 2022 |  | |  |  | |  |  | | |

**Signed as a true record by the Chairperson**

**……………………………………………………………. Date …………………………**