

Minutes of the Meeting with Management Committee held on **Wednesday** **26 January 2022 at 6pm** via Zoom / in person at Forgewood Community Centre

**Minutes**

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| **Present:** | Alan Thomson, Chair (AT) | Callum Boughey, Vice Chair (CSB) | John Burton (JB) |
| Jolene Martin (JM) | Jim Mitchell (JML) | Lee Murray (LM) |
| Tommy Divers (TD) | Angie Robinson (AR) | David Hemmings (DH) |
| **In Attendance** | Cathy Brien, Director (CB) | Paul Lennon, Depute Director (PL) | Elaine Hyslop, Housing Manager (EH) |
| 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 Charlie Millar and Marek Dziekan. | **PM to update register.** |
| **Chairs Remarks**  AT welcomed everyone to the meeting. |  |
| **2.** | **Declarations of Interest**  None |  |
| **3.** | **3.1 Minutes of Previous Meeting held on 15 December 2021**  Proposed **Callum Boughey**  Seconded **Angie Robinson** |  |
| **4.** | **4.1 Matters Arising**  CB advised that PL would provide an update on the rent focus group meeting later in the agenda. |  |
| **5.** | **Health & Safety** |  |
| **5.1 Scottish Government Guidance** **on Covid**  CB reflected on the announcement the previous day by the First Minister Nicola Sturgeon regarding reducing restrictions. CB advised committee that more staff from Monday can return to the office environment. Therefore we are proposing to reintroduce reception staff to the Community Centre. Additionally all other staff members are working less from home and more from the office environment.  Committee **APPROVED** this approach. |  |
| **5.2 Coronavirus Health & Safety Policy**  PM explained the purpose of the policy on helping to ensure staff and committee’s safety.  Committee **APPROVED** the policy. | **PM to update policy register** |
| **6.** | **Correspondence** |  |
| **6.1 Tenant Health and Safety Assurance Survey**  PL advised committee that the Scottish Housing Regulator had asked the Co-op to complete a survey on Tenant Health and Safety Assurance. The survey had been completed by CB, EH, PM and Alex on behalf of the Co-op and returned it to the Regulator.  The correspondence was **NOTED** and discussed by committee. |  |
| **6.2 SHR Appointment**  PL confirmed that Helen Shaw had replaced Ian Brennan as Director of Regulation. Helen is currently an Assistant Director with the Regulator.  The committee **NOTED** the correspondence. |  |
| **6.3 EVH (Employers in Voluntary Housing) CHAS (Children’s Hospices Across Scotland) Donation** **Acknowledgement**  PL advised that the Children’s Hospices Across Scotland (CHAS) had written to the Co-op to thank the organisation for donating £75.  The committee **NOTED** the correspondence. |  |
| **7.** | **Governance** |  |
| **7.1 Ethical Conduct and Notifiable Events**  CB advised committee that while there were no notifiable events. |  |
| **7.2 Payments, Benefits & Entitlements**  None |  |
| **7.3 Membership Report**  PM advised committee that no new application for membership had been received since the last management committee meeting. No other update required discussing. |  |
|  | **7.4 Annual Programme of Meetings**  CB advised committee that PM had worked on an annual programme for the committee meetings for the year ahead. The programme sets out the majority of the business going to committee in the year.  Committee **APPROVED** the annual programme of meetings. |  |
| **8.** | **Strategy** |  |
| **8.1 Community Centre** |  |
| RB provided a presentation.  RB advised committee that we plan on applying for Investing in Community Funding 2023-26 (ICF). RB conveyed that it is expected that it will be very competitive and we will need to build the strongest possible funding application.  The ICF grant application need to address all four areas for action:   1. Tackling Poverty & Inequality, including Child Poverty 2. Developing and Sustaining Place Based Approaches 3. Community-led Regeneration 4. Ensuring a just transition to Net Zero  * Helping your community to take action on climate change as part of your project/service * Delivering your project in a climate-friendly way   The committee had a discussion on possible ideas for the funding application.  JML advised that he is a member of a faith group and Poverty Action North Lanarkshire which assists people suffering from the effects of poverty and could potentially link up with Richard.  Committee **NOTED** the presentation from RB and it was also agreed for committee members to email Richard or the office if they have any ideas which can be added to the large list of ideas already noted.  Committee thanked RB for his report.  RB left the meeting. |  |
| **8.2 Business Plan**  CB advised that we are still in the process of arranging the Business Planning Day, while wanting to ensure that we could safely meet in person without restrictions.  CB asked the committee which day would suit them best to attend a Business Planning Day, the committee universally picked a Friday as the day which best suited. |  |
| **9** | **Staffing** |  |
| **Modern apprentices**  Committee **APPROVED** the proposal discussed by CB.  **FINANCE OFFICER ROLE**  PL advised that the Co-op had interviewed agency candidates for a temporary position for a period of 3 months. One applicant impressed most and was offered the temporary position. Fortunately they could work with Kennedy during his notice period.  JB asked about the status of Bridges (Consultancy) and if there was any plans for its future.  CB thanked JB for the question and advised that it will be part of discussions at the Business Planning Day. | **EH to advise the staff of the extension** |
| **10.** | **Compliance** |  |
| **10.1 Risk Register**  CB advised committee that as a staff team we had updated the Risk Register. The register is populated by risks identified and the controls / actions in place to help mitigate each risk.  JB added that it would be helpful if we could assist tenants in some way with their heating and electricity costs.  PL advised that the Co-op had managed to acquire energy saving lightbulbs and radiator reflector panels from the Citizens Advice Bureau (Motherwell & Wishaw CAB) which will be delivered to tenants and will assist with energy savings. These will be provided on demand. PL requested 1000 of them from CAB and they have been delivered.  LM asked whether the Co-op had a record of all the EPC’s for all the Co-op’s stock.  PL advised that the Co-op did and it was available to view online at the website Scottish EPC Register.  CB advised committee that at the Business Planning Day we would collectively discuss the risks the Co-op faces and how we reduce the level of risk. |  |
| **10.2 Training**  PL advised that due to illness, the trainer will rearrange the training for staff and committee. It was preferred that the training takes place in person or in a hybrid format. |  |
| **11.** | **Finance** |  |
| **11.1 Rent Review Consultation Feedback & 2022/23 Rent Increase – Including Feedback from Consultation Event held 18 Jan 2022**  PL advised committee that as they were aware we had sent Rent Review Consultation to all tenants of the Co-op. We recently held a consultation event and all the feedback has been collated. PL advised that if we had followed the business plan assumptions the proposed rent increase would have been 4.2% + 1% resulting in rent increase proposal of 5.2%.  As a committee and staff team we didn’t think this was acceptable to propose to tenants, especially in these financial times. Therefore we proposed a rent increase of 3.1% to tenants. Previously discussed as the lowest of recent CPI rates. At the consultation event when the all the factors were considered and discussed, the tenants who attended agreed with the proposal. We also got in touch with any tenants who wanted to attend the event but were unable to. The tenants we contacted had no objections to the proposed increase. Some proposals from other RSLs were discussed, including increases at 5% and 6% suggested.  Committee **APPROVED** the rent increase of 3.1% for 2022/2023. |  |
| **11.2 Management Accounts to 31 December 2021**  PL advised that Kennedy had produced the Management Accounts to 31 December 2021.  PL advised that the income for period ending 31st December is £889,295. The majority of our income is from the core activity of letting houses for social rents. In the first 9 months of the year income from social rent accounted for 74% of our turnover.  The remainder was from Forgewood Community Centre, sale of services through our staff sharing arrangement and grants.  Covid19 restrictions continue to impact the income generation from the Community Centre, with the revenues down 33% on pre-pandemic levels.  PL reflected on the rise in energy prices which will affect the Co-op going forward.  LM added that he was available to discuss the energy market at any time. LM added that the recent tensions between Russia and Ukraine is causing further uncertainty in the energy market.  PL thanked LM for the offer.  PL added that through this year we have seen relaxation of some indoor activities which has in turn increased the income for the centre compared to budget. We have continued to strengthen our community partnerships and in the 9 months to December,21 we received grant income of £109,697 which is 12% of total revenues  As a result of the various charges we have concluded the period with a surplus of £62,617 after depreciation costs. In view of the current climate this is a good position to finish Q3 on and is much better than original budget projections.  CB discussed the Pensions deficit with committee. All points raised noted.  The management accounts were:  Proposed **John Burton**  Seconded **Alan Thomson** |  |
| **11.3 Draft Budget 2022/23**  PL advised that the budget is around 95% complete, however the wage increase for staff has not been set yet via the negotiations between EVH (and the unions. Therefore until this figure is agreed the budget cannot be finalised.  **ITEM DEFFERED** |  |
|  | **11.4 Working from home**  PL confirmed to committee that the working from home allowance is due to end in March 2022. This was accepted by management committee.  The committee **AGREED** to continue the payment to staff until the end of March 2022. |  |
| **12.** | **Operations** |  |
| **12.1 Housing Management Performance Report** |  |
| EH referred to the report provided.  EH advised committee that the average turnaround of calendar days with voids have increased from 4 days last year to 10 days this year.  The loss in monetary terms is £947.42 which is 0.11% of our annual rental income.  This compares extremely well to the Scottish landlord average re-let turnaround time of 56.30 days. The Co-operative is therefore performing very well in this area.  Further void and allocation information was also covered with performance good in these areas.  As explained since Covid-19 a monthly return (now quarterly) return has been requested to be completed and returned to the Scottish Housing Regulator. This allowing them to monitor the impact Covid-19 is having on all landlords and their performance.  On calculating the reporting figures the co-op has used the guidelines as outlined by the Regulator.   * Annual rental income is £860,439 * Gross arrears (current and former) are £19,485 * Gross rent arrears (current and former) are 2.26% of annual rental income * Former tenant arrears stand at 0.60% of the annual rental income   The gross arrears takes account of the amount of universal credit (housing costs) and housing benefit due which amounts to £5,674 and the former tenants arrears of £5,122.  The gross rent arrears for current and former is 2.26% of the annual rental income and is well below the Scottish average of 6.14%. This demonstrates they are being managed well given the impact of the pandemic.  Former arrears are still being rigorously pursued however success varies with each case.  Tenants will be kept well informed of any financial assistance that becomes available to them and will be displayed/advertised on our website, within our newsletters or when housing staff are liaising with tenants. In addition we will continue to signpost tenants to the AFTAR project to obtain assistance with financial inclusion and money advice. At present there are 2 funds the co-op is pursuing to help tenants cope better with tenancy arrears. It is not known how successful this may be.  All staff and committee will be kept abreast of any changes with welfare reform and legislation and any necessary training updates will be arranged for staff/committee when required.    Committee **NOTED** the report and passed on their thanks to Elaine and Susan. |  |
| **12.2 Maintenance Performance Report** |  |
| PL advised committee that in the third quarter we are continuing to see a level of normality within our repairs service. Restrictions were reintroduced in December, however we were still able to carry out internal repairs to our properties.   * Total number of emergency jobs for this period was 51 compared to 77 in 2020-21. * Average time to complete an emergency repair for this period was 2.7 hours compared to 3.8 hours in 2020-21. * No jobs failed our timescales within this or the comparison period from 2020-21. * Total number of non-emergency repairs for the period was 161. The total for the same period in 2020-21 was 133. * Average time to complete non-emergency repairs was 3.5 days compared to 2.8 days for the same period in 2020-21. * A total of 2 job failed our timescales in this period, compared to 2 jobs failing in 2020-21.   In the period we had a 100% completion record in gas servicing.  **Landscaping**  PL provided a presentation on the Landscaping Contract with a large number of photographs displayed as a slideshow for committee to view.  Following discussion by committee and staff, it was decided that committee would like the landscaping contract re-tendered.  JB added that from the photographs, it highlights that the fences need to be factored into future planning. | **Landscaping contract to be re-tendered.** |
| **13.** | **Any Other Competent Business** |  |
| CB highlighted the Motherwell Community Board to committee members advising that it was a forum which politicians attended and could be an effective vehicle to raise issues and concerns which could benefit the Forgewood area.  JB raised the issue of the cost of the bulk uplifts provided by the Co-op’s contractor. JB suggested moving back to providing skips to tenants. After discussion, it was agreed Elaine would take forward with Alex to allow all options to be explored. Committee would also be involved where interested.  The committee had a discussion around possible service delivery alternatives.  The discussion would be continued at a future meeting.  AT thanked the committee and staff for attending the meeting. |  |
| **14.** | **Date of Next Meeting** |  |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Management Committee Meeting: 6pm Wednesday 02 March 2022 |  | |  |  | |  |  | | |