

Chair's Report 2023

Donna Bogdanovic

1. Opening Remarks

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to Melville Housing Association's Annual General Meeting. Whether you have been able to attend in person or via zoom can I thank you for taking the time to attend.

Housekeeping

Before I introduce those, who will participate this evening, I would like to run through some pointers to help the meeting run smoothly.

- As this meeting is being held via a hybrid method (in person and video conferencing) then all participants attending electronically other than those speaking will remain muted.
- During the meeting, we do not have any business on the agenda which requires a formal vote.

If, however, we ask for your agreement, or if we require a proposer and seconder, please raise your hand either physically or electronically and hold it there for until advised that you can put them down. This is so that we can accurately record the responses.

Introductions

We will only have two people speaking this evening:

I am **Donna Bogdanovic**, Chair of Melville Housing.

We also have **John McMorrow**, our Chief Executive. John will be standing in for Barbara Shearer, our secretary, who has submitted her apologies.

John will also present our audited accounts for approval.

2. Apologies

We have received several apologies for this evening.

The full list will be detailed in the minute of this meeting.

3. Previous Minutes

I now call upon John McMorrow to seek approval of the previous minutes.

Approval of minutes of previous AGM - John McMorrow

Thank you Chair.

Members should have copies of the minutes of our last AGM held on **Wednesday 14 September 2022**, in the papers circulated.

Can I ask for a proposer and seconder for agreement of these minutes as a true and accurate record by holding up your hand (either physically or electronically) (please hold it up to we note who is the proposer and seconder).

Thank you. I will now pass the meeting back to our Chairperson.

Donna Bogdanovic

4. Chair's Report

Key points this year:

Governance

- Board members showed great commitment during the year, attending scheduled Board Meeting, intensive strategy days and participating in a range of additional activities including recruitment panels and contract tenders.
- As well as attending training events, Board members have attended conferences to help develop their knowledge and skills.
- All board members have participated in an annual appraisal, reviewing their personal contributions, and overall, the Board performance has been excellent.

Regulator

- Housing Associations submit annual returns to the Scottish Housing Regulator – ARC, financial projections, etc. The Regulator reviews the information as part of their risk assessment of the sector.
- I am pleased to say that we submitted everything expected of us within the timescales required and we continue to be compliant with regulatory requirements.

Investment in our properties

We were able to spend the following investment set aside for properties:

- Spent £3.7m (£3.8m, 21/22) in repairing, adapting, and improving our properties:
 - Replacing 86 bathrooms (258 - 21/22)
 - Replacing 43 kitchens (77 - 21/22)
 - Replacing 27 roofs (37 - 21/22)
 - Replacing 136 heating systems (100 - 21/22)
- Invested £2.5m in developing new properties.
- We continue to receive positive feedback from tenants on our repairs and improvement programmes
- We invested £67,000 (82k-21/22) in medical adaptations supported by Government funding during the year, completing 52 adaptations, (80-21/22) helping people of all ages to continue to live independently and safely in their own homes. The average time to complete an adaptation was just under 24 days.

This work, alongside fitting new smoke and heat alarms and ensuring that all our properties (89.4% at end March) had an up-to-date Electrical Installation Inspection Certificate undertaken in the last 5 years, has meant our Property Team has been very busy.

Performance

- Emergency Repairs – made safe in an average of **1.86 hours** (Midlothian Council Average 7.30 hours)
- Non-emergency repairs completed on average in **7.56 days** (Midlothian Council 14.29 Days)
- Re-let of properties on average **17.08 days** (Midlothian Council 35.92 days), a very good performance minimising rent loss and making sure families are housed quickly
- Consistently high levels of satisfaction: **88.12%** (Midlothian Council 81.47%)
- Percentage of gross rent arrears of **2.60%** of compared to Midlothian Council of 8.66%)

Welfare Advice, Tenancy Support and Money Advice services

- During the year, our welfare advice services helped tenants access almost £646,00 (£408,464 21/22) in unclaimed benefits. This will have long term benefits for the individuals and their families, helping them to sustain their homes.
- The aim of our support services is to help tenants become established in their new homes, reducing tenancy failures and helping build stable, sustainable communities.
- Only 5 new tenancies failed to last 12 months representing 2.6% of tenancies. In 2008, the year before we commenced our support service, 25% of new tenancies failed within twelve months. These services make a real difference.

Communities

Our responsibilities go beyond our core housing functions – we have a much wider role to play in our communities

Some of the projects we are involved in:

Tackling Poverty:

- We accessed £75,000 to help tenants struggling with the cost-of-living crisis
- We continued to provide support and assistance to local organisations, including:
 - making a cash donation of £600 to the Midlothian Foodbank in December to help out over the busy festive period
 - donating £600 to the Dalkeith Storehouse Christmas appeal
 - making a donation of £500 to the Clydesdale Foodbank to help our tenants in Lanarkshire
 - donating £600 to the Mayfield Pantry, supporting this invaluable service which is run by MAEDT (Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust) as an alternative and more sustainable model to traditional foodbanks
 - helping Food Fact Friends, who run foodbanks in Penicuik and Woodburn, with a £600 donation
 - donating £600 to the newly established Central Dalkeith and Woodburn Community Pantry

Fundraising and supporting community organisations

- Continuing to promote and support the work of Mayfield youth charity Y2K including:
 - making a **£1,000** donation to help launch a pilot project aimed at encouraging more young people to successfully live independently
 - providing admin support to help keep down costs
- Helping out the Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust with their Gala Day in the summer and then with their Christmas Lights appeal in December.
- Donating unspent Melville funding from Cycling Scotland's Social Housing Partnership Fund to the Mayfield and Easthouses Pavilion, in order to make locally grown fruit and veg available all-year-round. The **£3,500** paid for the installation of an innovative Polycrub a sustainable. polytunnel/greenhouse hybrid, designed to withstand high wind speeds and the harshest of climates.
- Continuing our ongoing support of Arniston Rangers Youth Football Club, making a £350 donation to pay for much-needed new equipment for this Gorebridge-based team.
- Leasing a patch of land to a Gorebridge-based environmental group seeking to create, what's believed to be, Midlothian's first urban wildlife habitat.
- Promoting the work of tenants, Board members, local charities and community groups through our social media channels and our Voice newsletter.
- Making our meeting rooms free to use for the Dalkeith History Society.

Delivering safer, more attractive, and more sustainable communities

- Working with contractors to provide no-cost flooring to a further 20 Melville households, saving over 2,000 carpet tiles. Since the project began we have supported 100 households with more than 10,000 tiles saving some £20,000 for tenants.
- Working with Novus to take excess paint and distribute it to tenants, free of charge
- Working with Scottish Fire and Rescue to promote fire safety, with a particular emphasis on common stairs
- Continuing to promote the *Make a Stand campaign* to raise awareness of, and to take action to support victims of domestic abuse
- Encouraging recycling through our Voice newsletter and in the office to Melville staff
- Continuing to run our annual garden competition as a way of recognising tenants who look after their gardens and keep local neighbourhoods looking attractive

Digital events, skills, and employability

- Accessing and distributing 100 FREE Vodafone SIM cards to tenants, worth approximately **£10,000**.
- Continuing to promote and support the development of digital skills among staff, tenants and board members.
- Providing regular work experience placements for local high school pupils.

Health awareness

- Continuing to provide, support and maintain a public access defibrillator as part of a local life-saving network

Staff

- We said farewell to three staff members during the year:
 - Mary Monteith PA to CEO, working with Melville since December 2001.
 - Amelia Murdoch Tenancy Sustainment Officer, working with Melville since March 1989

Both have now retired, and we want to thank them for all their years of service to Melville Housing Association and wish them both well in their retirement.

- The other staff member that left during the year was Andrew Collinge our Welfare Benefits Manager who joined us in July 2015.

We undertook a staff restructure that has focussed on having more staff support tenants and we hope you are beginning to see the benefits of the new members.

I would like to thank the staff (past and present) for all their hard work during the year. They have performed exceptionally well.

Finally, we have been very innovative creating a 4-day working week which we are trialling which allowed us to keep our rent increase for 2023/24 to only 2.0%.

This is a significant saving for tenants and is much needed as the cost-of-living crisis affects everyone.

This is my first year as Chairperson and I want to express my thanks to my fellow Board members, both past and present, and to our staff for their constant support, which has made my first year enjoyable and rewarding.

Thank you.

I now invite John McMorrow Chief Executive to present our annual accounts as our Head of Finance is currently on maternity leave.

5. Report and Financial Statements

John McMorrow

Donna Bogdanovic

Thank you, John.

6. Appointment of Auditor

We now move on to the appointment of our auditor for the next year.

CT (formerly Chiene + Tait) have indicated their willingness to continue as auditors and have provided assurance that they have the processes in place to demonstrate their continued independence and objectivity.

The Board recommend the reappointment for CT for the next year.

Please can I have a proposer and a seconder for their appointment for the next year. Hold your hand up or use the electronic hand up so that we can record the outcome.

Thank you.

7. Election of Board Members

I will now ask John McMorrow to lead the next item on this evening's agenda, the election of Board Members.

John McMorrow:

Thank you Chair.

Our rules limit the maximum numbers on our Board at any time to 15 members.

We currently we have 12 members.

In accordance with rule 39.1, one third of the Board Members must stand down at each Annual General Meeting. In addition, co-opted members must stand down but are eligible for election to the Board.

The following members are standing down

- Donna Bogdanovic
- Andrew Dougherty
- Clare Marshall
- Bill Takhar
- Lucy Stang

All are seeking re-election, with the exception of Lucy.

A special thanks to Lucy for all her support over the years. Since we issued our AGM papers we have had another member standing down and not seeking re-election – Haillie Johnstone.

Yet again we wish to express our thanks to Haillie for the work she has done over the years.

We have one additional nomination to join the Board – Brain Wilkie.

As we have more vacancies on the Board than those standing for election, we are not required to hold an election by ballot and those mentioned earlier are therefore duly elected.

Board Membership for year 2023/24 is confirmed as follows:

Donna Bogdanovic
David Bond
Paul Cameron
Andrew Dougherty
Cathy Hanlon
Clare Marshall
Christine Moore
Caron Quinn

Barbara Shearer
Bill Takhar
Brian Wilkie

8. Prize Draw and Garden Competition winners – Donna

We will now hold the prize draw and then announce the winners of our Garden Competition.

Prize Draw

All Association members, with the exception of serving Board Members, are eligible to participate in the prize draw.

I will now ask John McMorrow to draw the winning ticket.

Garden Competition - John

This summer we have been running our annual Melville's Great Gardens competition.

Results and prize giving:

9. Closure of meeting - Donna

That is the end of the formal AGM business for tonight.

I would like to thank you all for your attendance this evening, and thanks to all the staff who were involved in arranging this evening's meeting and I now invite you to join us for