

Please note – these Minutes have been edited to remove any commercially sensitive or confidential discussions

ITEM 2

MELVILLE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Minute of the Board Meeting held on
Wednesday 20 May 2020
at 5.00 pm via Zoom Video Conference Call

PRESENT: Caron Quinn
Glen Alexander
Lucy Bell (co-optee)
David Bond
Donna Bogdanovic
Andrew Dougherty
Hailie Johnston (co-optee)
Clare Marshall
Christine Moore (co-optee)
Terry Powell (co-optee)
Barbara Shearer
Bill Takhar

IN ATTENDANCE: Andrew Noble, Chief Executive
Morag MacDonald, Chief Operating Officer
Martin Sloan, Property Manager
Mary Monteith, PA to Chief Executive (Minute)

C QUINN IN THE CHAIR

1a. CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS

The Chair welcomed all to this virtual meeting especially the four co-optee members who were attending their first meeting.

**Action
Required
Note**

1b. DECLARATIONS OF ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Noted that there were no items of other business.

Note

1c.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	Action Required Note
	<p><u>Noted</u> that the Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer declared that they sit on the Board of Directors for Ironmills Developments Ltd. The Secretary is a member of Tenants' Representatives panel</p>	
1d.	APOLOGIES	Approve
	<p>Apologies were received from Paul Cameron. The Chair advised the meeting that this member had submitted a letter asking for a Special Leave of Absence from the Board for a period of three months. Members approved this request.</p>	
2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS BOARD MEETING 25 MARCH 2020 AND MATTERS ARISING	
2.1	<p><u>Noted</u> that the Board agreed that these were a true and accurate minute of the meeting held on 25 March. The minutes were approved by Clare Marshall and seconded by Glen Alexander.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p>	Approve
2.2	<p><u>Noted</u> that there were no matters arising.</p>	Note
2a.	MINUTES OF COVID-19 BOARD MEETING 22 APRIL 2020 AND MATTERS ARISING	
	<p><u>Noted</u> that the Board agreed that these were a true and accurate minute of the meeting held on 22 April 2020. The minutes were approved by Glen Alexander and seconded by Clare Marshall.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p>	Approve
	<p><u>Noted</u> that there were no matters arising.</p>	Note

3. COVID-19 Update

**Action
Required
Note**

3.1 **Noted** that the Chief Operating Officer explained that she would recap/update the information presented to the board at the April meeting:

- **Community support**

Good community support available for our tenants and we are working with and signposting resilience groups etc. It was noted that we have made our e-cars available for use by these Groups

- **Welfare advice service**

Welfare Advisers are very busy as number of cases up (now have a waiting list), but Housing Officers had previously been given some training, and they are continuing to help with simple/low level cases.

- **CHAI**

Advice is available to tenants online and CHAI are providing support via telephone and video calls.

- **Focus on current rent maintenance**

Focus remains on keeping current rents up to date – effectively crystallising the debt on the account and this will be looked at in due course.

- **Systematic phone round**

The phone round to offer help and assistance is continuing with help from Reception staff and these calls are being very well received.

- **Keeping up to date:**

- WBA advisors keeping up to date and issuing a daily update to housing staff
- In touch with solicitors re cases and court opening dates

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COVID-19 SFHA briefings and MVA updates on community initiatives are circulated ▪ In touch with AJ Gallagher our insurance broker regarding advice /guidance on whilst working from home and also for coming out of lockdown ▪ First Furlough grants has been received (for 6 staff) ▪ Weekly review of financial impact 	<p>Action Required</p>
<p>3.2 <u>Noted</u> that with regards to arrears:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ April's arrears were 3.12% (2.87% last year) – this is a sector wide issue. ▪ When reviewing the arrears by band the lower level arrears had increased the most (225 cases in January to 390 in April) with higher levels remaining more stable. ▪ Spike in Universal Credit claimants ▪ Slides showing weekly receipts were shown, but it was pointed that whilst this will continue to be reviewed, it was unlikely that this slide will feature in future updates as people pay at different times. 	<p>Note</p>
<p>3.3 <u>Noted</u> that the Board were given an update on what's next:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ We will keep in close contact with solicitor regarding legal action (particular care will be taken with cases arising purely as a result of the COVID-19 crisis). ▪ Modelling of cashflow will continue and whilst it was pointed out that we are still in a strong position, more information will be brought to the next meeting. ▪ Work continuing on planning for coming out of lockdown: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do all staff need to be office based all of the time ▪ Looking at pros/cons of remote working ▪ Safety issues of coming back to office/ transport ▪ Who is liable should something go wrong ▪ Getting back on track with our aims and aspirations. 	<p>Note</p>

3.4	<p><u>Noted</u> that the Chief Operating Officer was asked what was meant by who is liable – an example was given highlighting that should an incidence of COVID-19 arise as a result of a staff member travelling by public transport to the office. It was also noted that it has been confirmed that working from home is covered by our normal liability Insurance.</p>	<p>Actions Required Note</p>
3.5	<p><u>Noted</u> that it was queried whether staff had completed any sort of risk assessment whilst working from home – it was confirmed that this had been carried out.</p>	<p>Note</p>
3.6	<p><u>Noted</u> that it was agreed that the slides presented at the meeting would be uploaded into the document library in VBR.</p>	<p>MM to action</p>
3.7	<p><u>Noted</u> that the Chief Executive advised on following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Zoom meetings were working well and that it should be assumed that the June Board Meeting would be held this way. It was also agreed that a COVID-19 Update would be held in July. ▪ The AGM might be an issue as this must be a physical meeting. It was pointed out that the Regulator’s advice was that if this meeting was unable to go ahead, they be advised via the notifiable event process and that the meeting be held as soon as possible. ▪ 7 Staff now furloughed (including Development Manager and Head of Property Services) Staff are continuing to work from homes and the Property Manager has been out doing external and empty property inspection. ▪ No staff have been ill with COVID-19. ▪ Property – all services suspended except emergency/ safety repairs. Non-emergency and planned maintenance programmes are on hold, but tenants 	<p>Note</p>

are now wanting to know when these will resume. We are keeping in touch with our contractors.

**Action
Required**

- Gas servicing - there have been a few gas services that failed to meet their date for service – these have all been for COVID-19 reasons and have been recorded.
- Allocations – no allocations have been carried out since lockdown and it was stressed that we would need to ensure that appropriate protocols in place before these could resume. We have offered our voids to Midlothian Council for homeless accommodation. This had not been required as yet.
- Development sites remain closed.
- Preparatory work ongoing for the Limekilns site but will not see any progress until lockdown has been lifted.
- New Regulatory return relating to COVID-19 has been submitted to Regulator for April.
- Office remains empty but caretaking service continuing to check building.
- Staff visit once/twice per week to collect back up tapes and any mail that's been hand delivered.
- The Property Manager is looking at ways staff can work in the office once we can return.
- COVID-19 Risk Map has been uploaded onto VBR document library.
- AGM – our Rules state that the AGM should be a physical meeting (this is across the Sector). This may not be possible. Regulator is aware and Board will be kept updated on progress with this.

	Action Required Note
3.8 <u>Noted</u> that the members discussed Allocations of properties, the Chair noted that they know of one Association who are adopting new procedures and will be starting allocations from end of May. Another member commented that we could perhaps look at local authorities are doing their allocations and highlighted that one Council had only stopped allocations for two weeks.	
3.9 <u>Noted</u> that the Property Manager was asked about starting the planned maintenance programme again and he explained that he has been in touch with our contractors and that whilst most of their staff have been furloughed, the first couple of weeks programmes are ready for when we can recommence work, but it was stressed that we will have to ensure that social distancing measures can be adhered to. The Chair reported that she had heard that one Housing Association planned to use empty properties to allow planned maintenance programmes to continue to be done.	Note
3.10 <u>Noted</u> that further updates on the above will be given to Board as this situation evolves.	Note
3.11 The Board noted the contents of this report.	
4. GOVERNANCE REPORT	
Notifiable Events	
4.1 <u>Noted</u> that the Regulator has been updated on the current position with regards to both the COVID-19 situation and Limekilns.	Note
SPSO	
4.2 <u>Noted</u> that we have no complaints with the SPSO at present. The Chair highlighted the advice from the SPSO currently in place for complaint handling.	Note
	Note

4.3 **Board Recruitment** **Action Required**
Noted that the four co-opted members were attending their first meeting. **Note**

Board Training

4.4 Noted that all SFHA training/conferences have been suspended for the time being and it is not clear if these will be rearranged this year, but members were advised that if they identify any suitable training to let the PA know and the Chair and Chief Executive will review any requests. **Note**

Board Attendance

4.5 Noted that the Chair highlighted the Board attendance figures and noted that the use of virtual meetings may help to improve these. **Note**

Annual Assurance Statement

4.6 Noted that the Chief Executive explained that he would be looking to have more Board and staff input into this year's statement and it was hoped to have this ready for approval at the August Board Meeting. **Note**

Association Membership

4.7 Noted that the Board approved the cancellation of Association Membership. **Approve**

KPI

4.8 Noted that the KPI indicators not meeting targets were highlighted and it was agreed that Repairs satisfaction would be discussed at August Meeting. **Note**

Board Development/Summary of Actions

4.9 Noted that it was agreed that the Corporate Strategy would be added to the June Agenda. **AN to Action**

4.10	Noted that Board induction training will be arranged with Stuart Eglinton and will be held via Zoom. The PA will contact the new Members regarding dates	Action Required MM to Action
4.11	Noted that a member of the Audit Committee asked if the meeting postponed in April would be rescheduled. The Chief Executive pointed out that the next scheduled meeting of this Committee was 27 July and that there was more audit work scheduled for beginning of July. The Chair of that Committee confirmed that he was comfortable to wait until July to meet.	Note
4.12	The Board noted the contents of this report.	Note
5.	MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2020	
5.1	Noted that the Management Accounts to 31 March 2020 were presented and discussed by the Board in detail and the contents of the report were noted.	Note
5.2	The Board noted the position as detailed in this report.	Note
6.	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE REPORT YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2020	Action Required
6.1	Noted that the Property Manager explained that this had been a strong year working with our contractors and took Members through the report, highlighting:	Note
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the underspend in March was due mainly to work not done during March, although it was noted that there may be a few late invoices to be accounted for. ▪ Performance – excellent response times for emergencies, appointments made and met and average time to complete non-emergency repairs. Acknowledged that satisfaction was down slightly but 	

pointed out that 3,546 surveys were completed with only 5 feeling dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

**Action
Required**

- Slight underspend in voids
- Photographs illustrated the extent of house clearances required at some voids.
- Re-let times remain very good.
- 150 heating systems replaced over the year. 200 old style back boilers still to be replaced.
- Replacement roofs have made a significant difference to properties.
- Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detector Replacement programme has been temporarily suspended – this may impact on target completion date. The Chair commented that the completion date may change as a result of the pandemic
- Two of the properties that missed their Gas Servicing due to COVID-19. One has since been completed with one still to be done.
- Full ESSH report will be presented to the August Board Meeting.
- Details of community benefits provided by contractors were given.

6.2 **Noted** that that the Property Manager was asked about reasons for 48 refusals for replacement heating system. It was pointed out that there was a variety of reasons such as not wanting to lift laminate flooring/tenants have coal fire and do not wish to change.

Note

6.3 **Noted** that due to planned maintenance work not being done during to COVID-19 pandemic there was an underspend of £134k. Board were asked to give their in

Note

	principle approval to ring fencing this and carrying it forward to 2020-21. This was approved	Action Required
6.4	The Board noted the contents of this Report	Note
7.	ANNUAL REVIEW OF ALLOCATION AND EMPTY HOUSES 2019-2020	
7.1	<u>Noted</u> that the Property Manager explained that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ there had fewer relets than in previous year (73 compared with 153 last year). He noted that this was mainly due to there being no new developments completed. The highest group of relets were to homeless applicants (49%) ▪ 11 transfers were completed in the year 5 which were management transfers ▪ Increase in refusals (48) – no single reason noted and members were given an indication of the reasons properties are refused. 	Note
7.2	<u>Noted</u> that it was reported that all of our lease properties continue to run smoothly and any issues identified are quickly dealt with by our partner organisations.	Note
7.3	<u>Noted</u> that with regards to empty properties Members were advised: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Novus took an average of 6.5 days (target is 6 days) to complete repairs to empty properties. ▪ Average cost was £2,447 which is higher than peer RSLs be we use this time to improve the properties i.e. garden clearances, plastering and renewing internal doors. ▪ Members were shown pictures of how some of the properties were handed back to us and reminded that we do recharge tenants or work deemed their responsibility. 	Note

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Our average relet time of 12 days compares very well with the Scottish average of 32 days, but some to take longer and members were given an indication of the seven properties that took more than 20 days to relet and advised of the reasons for these delays. 	<p>Action Required</p>
<p>7.4 Noted that there were a few questions on this report from members:</p>	<p>Note</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What was the success rate for recharges – it was noted that this was variable, highlighting that we were usually trying to get money from former tenants. ▪ Given the costs for clearance works carried out – would it be useful to have our own employee. It was noted that this had been considered in the past but that it may be worth revisiting again. 	
<p>7.5 The Board noted the contents of this report</p>	<p>Note</p>
<p>8. REVIEW OF CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2020</p>	
<p>8.1 Minute removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential items or being commercially sensitive</p>	<p>Note</p>
<p>9. NEWBYRES UPDATE</p>	
<p>9.1 Minute removed or edited due to information relating to personal/confidential items or being commercially sensitive</p>	
<p>10. REGISTERS</p>	
<p>10.1 Noted that there were no new entries in the Registers, and these will be presented for signing when circumstances allow.</p>	<p>Note</p>

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|-------------|---|----------------------------|
| 11. | ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS | Action
Required |
| 11.1 | <u>Noted</u> that there was no other competent business. | Note |
| 12.0 | DATE OF NEXT MEETING | |
| 12.1 | <u>Noted</u> that the next scheduled meeting of the Board is Wednesday 17 June at 5pm (via Zoom). | Note |
| 12.2 | <u>Noted</u> that dates will be circulated for an additional COVID-19 update meeting in July. | MM to
action |