

# Management Committee Update

Issue 16

July 2019



Orkney Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Management Committee elected at our AGM in September each year. The Committee's role is to set and monitor our strategy and performance. Day to day operational management is carried out by the Leadership Team. Some of the Committee's main functions include: approving budgets, reviewing policies, diligent financial management, major decision making and organisational direction and good governance to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met. Management Committee are keen to issue an update following each formal meeting (6 per year).

## Points of interest from the meeting

### AGM Preparation

In order to meet the requirements of our Rules, this paper was presented to members containing details of member elections, proposed meeting arrangements, appointment of auditors and Secretarial Certifications.

*Members agreed that this year's AGM would take place on Wednesday, 18th September 2019 at 5.30pm, with refreshments available from 5pm, at Orkney College. This will be followed by a short presentation/Q&A session on the OHAL/Co-Wheels Car Club project with an opportunity to view/try-out the electric vehicles afterwards.*

Pictured from l to r: Bill Wallace, John Rodwell, John Stockan, Jason Taylor, Philip Cook, Elaine Grieve, Fiona Lettice

### Members present:

31 July 2019

- Philip Cook
- Elaine Grieve
- Fiona Lettice
- John Rodwell
- John Stockan
- Jason Taylor
- Bill Wallace

### Report & Financial Statements

The report and financial statements, having already been scrutinised by the Audit & Risk Management Sub-Committee, were presented along with a letter from the auditors assuring them that the accounts had passed all of the audit tests and that there were no matters to be brought to their attention. The Report & Financial Statements will be presented to general members at the AGM .

### Interest Free Loans

The Association has already benefitted from Scottish Government interest free loans to upgrade 56 heating systems. We have been accepted for an additional loan this year to upgrade another 38 properties. In addition to this, the Association was the first successful applicant to receive an interest free loan to help finance the upgrade of fire and carbon monoxide detectors.

### Disposal of Land in Rousay

The Association had been approached by the Rousay, Egilsay & Wyre Development Trust to purchase an area of land to develop their own affordable housing to encourage people to work and live on the island. This fits with our corporate outcome to make a 'Great Contribution to Community & Society'. As there are no plans to build in Rousay in future Members agreed to the sale.

### SHR Regulatory Framework Compliance

Members were updated on progress towards compliance since the previous meeting. A list of policies that have been updated were included with the addition of a Settlement Agreement Policy for approval. Progress on the 17 Regulatory requirements highlighted compliance with 12, working towards 4 and not yet complying with one. The Regulatory Standards were sitting at compliance with 45 with the remaining 5 being approved by Members at the current meeting.

### Summer Engagement Event

## Extension of Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act to Registered Social Landlords

Members received a report advising the implications of the above which is effective from 11 November 2019. In preparation for this eventuality back in early 2017, a Publication Framework, based on a model provided by the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations, was adopted. This focuses on what information should be made publicly available and where it can be found. There are 58 items contained within this Framework and to date, 45 are published on our website, 4 are in progress, 4 outstanding and one is not applicable. In addition to the Publication Framework, there is other work required in order to fully meet our requirements by November, for which a detailed plan was presented to members including training for staff.

## Development Update

- ⇒ Development of The Crafty site has been delayed due to Scottish Water not approving any developments in the West & South of Kirkwall due to capacity issues within the current sewer network.
- ⇒ Following discussion with OIC's Planning Department, we will draft a development brief for the site at Upper Sunnybank, Stromness in order to secure planning permission.
- ⇒ Due to the delays with The Crafty development plans for 6 new homes at Kirk Park, Orphir have been brought forward and, following a tender exercise, the design team have been appointed.

## Annual Reports:

- Annual Internal Audit Report - As well as providing assurance to members, they were informed of recommendations made during the year resulting from the audits conducted; Asset Management, Works Procurement, Estate Management and Anti-Fraud Arrangements.
- Annual IT Compliance Report - Outlines the ongoing work to manage IT security risks including obtaining Cyber Essential Accreditation and the addition of extra anti virus software for authorised users of our on-line banking system.
- Report from Audit & Risk Management Committee - Following thorough scrutiny members recommended Management Committee approve the Report & Financial Statements. They also received the Internal Auditor's Annual Report, Risk Management Report for Q1, Governance Report, Entitlements, Payments & Benefits Policy Annual Report.
- Orkney Care & Repair Annual Report - Included highlights from the past year - marking 30 years of Care & Repair in Orkney with some additional case studies to emphasise the variety of work delivered and the positive impacts on the lives of the service users.

## Welfare Reform Update

As the number of claimants increase, so does the value of arrears with the Association's average arrear being higher than the national average. Steps are being taken to mitigate this, such as the use of Allpay for direct debts allowing payments to be made on the day the tenant receives their benefits.

## Policy Reviews

A number of policies were updated to ensure compliance with the new Regulatory Framework and/or forthcoming Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act:

- Committee Member Training & Development Policy
- Communications Policy
- Customer Engagement Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Scheme of Delegations

In addition to this:

- Donations, Sponsorship & Membership Policy; was updated to incorporate the former Wider Role Policy.
- Settlement Agreement Policy; new Policy as required by the Regulatory Standards detailing how the Association would handle severance payments.

## Arrears & Bad Debt Write Offs

This outlined a change to reporting procedures to every quarter rather than annually. This will provide Members with a more accurate account of any irrecoverable debts - they noted the position for the first quarter.

## Resident Panel Update

The Panel have completed one tenant led inspection in Kirkwall with another to take place in Finstown in the next few weeks.

As well as the scrutiny project the panel have been planning for the forthcoming **Tenant Day** being held on Friday 30th August at the St Magnus Centre, starting at 10am. There will be lots of interesting local speakers on the topic of **"Staying Safe & Warm at Home"**.

For more information contact Suzy Boardman,



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