

Minutes of a Meeting of the Management Committee of Orkney Housing Association Limited, held in the office and via Zoom on Wednesday, 04 October 2023 at 10.30am

Present: In person: Fiona Lettice (Chair), Philip Cook, Brian Kynoch, Mary Ann Lewis, Bruce Pilkington, John Rodwell, Mervyn Sandison and John White.

In attendance: Craig Spence (Chief Executive – CE)
Mhairi Hughes (Secretary / Head of Corporate Governance – HCG)
Anne Fletcher (Depute Chief Executive – DCE)
Amy Brough (Minute Taker)

The Secretary welcomed all to the meeting. With this being the first meeting since the AGM, she went through the process of electing the new Chair and Vice-Chair.

PART 1 – STANDING ITEMS

1.1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Roella Wilson, Kate Hayes, Paul Scott (Director of Operations) and Dean Campbell (Building Services Manager).

1.2 Election of Chair and Vice Chair

The Secretary asked for nominations for Chair. Brian Kynoch nominated Fiona Lettice who confirmed she was willing to accept the nomination, this was seconded by John White. There being no other nominations, Fiona Lettice was duly elected as Chair.

The secretary asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. There were no nominations. The Chair asked members to consider making nominations, and this would be revisited at item G1.

The Secretary then handed over to the re-elected Chair.

1.3 Declarations of (a) interest and (b) hospitality given/received in last 12 months for any items on the agenda

There were none.

1.4 Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 30 August 2023

An error was noted at 1.3, *Minutes of Management Committee meeting held on 31 May*; the date should read '26 July'. With this change, the Minutes were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were proposed by Philip Cook and seconded by John Rodwell. The Minutes were later signed by the Chair.

1.5 Matters Arising & Deferred Items (Paper No MC/23/42)

1.5.1 Care & Repair Tender (Item 1.4.2, 30.08.2023):

The CE said that an extension is in place until 31 March 2024. Discussions have commenced for service delivery and costs for 1 April 2024 onwards.

1.5.2 OHAL/OIC Joint Seminar (Item 1.4.2, 30.08.2023):
Members noted that, as part of OIC's Housing Strategy work, a series of seminars involving OIC officials, Councillors and external partners has commenced. The CE, Chair and Brian Kynoch attended the first session, and the same two Committee members are planning to attend future sessions, accompanied by relevant OHAL staff. The Chair and Brian Kynoch informed Members that the first session had taken place on 28th September, had been a positive session, and felt OHAL's presence there was important.

1.5.3 OHAL Workshop, Hatston (Item AOCB, 26.07.2023):
Members were informed that the CE, DO and Senior Building Officer viewed the property at Hatston. The space available was bigger than anticipated and they were inclined to offer to take 33% of the space, failing which, they will continue to look for longer-term premises, once the position with the C&R Tender is known.

Members suggested exploring Community Asset Transfer, and the CE will look to take this forward.

1.6 **Future Meeting Dates:**

Wednesday 25 October, 10.30am – Health & Safety Working Party – the HCG advised this date would change due to staff availability.

Wednesday 15 November, 10.30am – Performance & Resources Sub Committee

Wednesday 22 November, 09.45am – Audit & Risk Management Sub Committee Training Session

Wednesday 29 November, 10.30am – Management Committee

Wednesday 06 December, 10.30-12.30 – Strategy/Planning Workshop with Christmas Lunch (Venue TBC)

PART 2 – STRATEGY

S1 Annual Business Plan Programme (Paper No MC/23/43)

S1.1 The CE's paper sought members consideration, input and approval of the proposed process and timetable for business planning and the production of updated appendices for 2023/24 as part of the Association's Business Plan covering 2022-25.

S1.2 Following a discussion on the process and timetable, members agreed that the work to support development of updated detailed appendices for 2024-25 as part of our Business Plan is progressed, and approved the process as set out in Section 3 of the paper.

PART 3 – GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

G1 Sub Committee Membership and Election of Chairs (Paper No MC/23/44)

The Chair asked for nominations for Vice-Chair. John Rodwell nominated Brian Kynoch who confirmed he was willing to accept the nomination, this was

seconded by Bruce Pilkington. There being no other nominations, Brian was duly elected as Vice-Chair.

G1.1 Following discussion, sub-committee membership was confirmed as:

<u>ARM</u>	<u>P&R</u>	<u>Staffing</u>
John White*	Roella Wilson*	Fiona Lettice
Philip Cook	Brian Kynoch	Brian Kynoch
Bruce Pilkington	Fiona Lettice	John Rodwell
John Rodwell	Mervyn Sandison	
*Chair		

<u>Health & Safety Working Party</u>	<u>Joint Union/Management Sub-Committee</u>
Bruce Pilkington	Philip Cook
Mary Ann Lewis	Bruce Pilkington
Roella Wilson (tbc)	

John White confirmed he was willing to continue into the second year of his 3 year term, as ARM Chair. No election was therefore necessary.

The Chair nominated Roella Wilson as P&R Chair, who had previously confirmed her willingness to accept the nomination, this was seconded by Philip Cook. There being no other nominations, Roella Wilson was duly elected as P&R Chair.

G1.2 Company Secretary: It was unanimously agreed that the HCG should continue as Secretary.

G1.3 EVH Representative: Philip indicated his willingness to remain as Representative with Roella Wilson to remain the substitute. The point of contact would remain the Company Secretary who can relay matters of importance.

G1.4 The HCG will speak to Kate to see if she would like to join a Sub Committee. Mary Ann Lewis indicated she did not want to join a Sub Committee other than H&SWP meantime until she learns more about the Association. The HCG will check with Roella if she wishes to remain on the H&SWP.

G1.5 A Member queried if MC can consider the Standing Orders for Committee Business regarding membership levels in the sub committees. Following discussion, a member proposed that MC set aside the requirement at section 2.1 in both Terms of Reference for the P&R and ARM subcommittees, amending the minimum requirement of members to four for ARM and P&R until the AGM next year.

G1.6 Members agreed it would be useful to explore having an annual meeting of the Joint Union/Management Sub-Committee. The CE explained that its defined purpose is for negotiating terms and conditions.

G1.7 Philip Cook advised he is happy to continue as a MC member until the AGM in 2024, after which he intends to retire for personal reasons.

- G1.8 Members:
- Elected Brian Kynoch as Vice-Chair;
 - Discussed and agreed membership of the Sub-Committees and Working Party as detailed at G1.1 above.
 - Elected Chairs of the ARM and P&R Sub-Committees as required;
 - Agreed that the HCG should remain Company Secretary;
 - Agreed who should hold the position of EVH Representative and Substitute; and
 - Agreed to amend the Standing Orders as relating to Sub-Committee membership levels, as per G1.5 above, until the 2024 AGM.

G2 SHR Annual Assurance Statement (Paper No MC/23/45)

- G2.1 The HCG gave an overview of the contents of the paper which detailed all the assurances provided to members to enable them to be as informed as they can be, to make a reasoned decision on approving the Annual Assurance Statement. The full digital evidence bank in the dedicated, secure, members group in Microsoft Teams is kept updated and can be accessed by members whenever they wish.
- G2.2 She explained that the SFHA had updated their Self Assurance Toolkit and a summary of the changes and the Association's responses were detailed in the paper.
- G2.3 A Member queried at 5.4: RR13, if an update had been presented to the July MC meeting, and the HCG advised it hadn't been presented, but hoped it would be presented to MC by the end of January 2024.
- G2.4 A Member queried in Attachment 4, the second last paragraph, if the Association was meeting its duties in relation to tenant safety as 4 properties were unable to be accessed. The HCG and CE assured Members that Association staff are engaging with the tenants and relevant third parties to try and gain access to undertake the EICRs which are classed as being "in abeyance". Members discussed where the responsibility would lie if there was damp/mould or a fire etc, and also the effect on the tenants' neighbours. A Member queried if these four properties were on the Risk Register. The CE informed Members that the DO would be asked to provide an update on the current position with each property to the next meeting.
- G2.5 Members acknowledged the very complete and detailed report.

Following brief discussion, members:

- a) agreed that the information contained in the paper, attachments and evidence bank provided sufficient information and evidence to enable them to make an informed decision regarding the format and content of the Annual Assurance Statement; and
- b) authorised the Chair to sign it and the Head of Corporate Governance to submit it to the Scottish Housing Regulator on their behalf.

G3 Recruitment & Training Update (Paper No MC/23/46)

- G3.1 The HCG presented the report which covered recent successful recruitment. Members were pleased to note that the Building Services Manager has now started with the Association, bringing a range of transferrable skills and knowledge essential to the role.
- G3.2 Members noted that a Trainee Finance Assistant has been appointed and is due to start next week. The CE provided an update to Members on the C&R Services Assistant recruitment, and how the post is going to be filled meantime.
- G3.3 Interviews for a Director of Finance had recently taken place and members were informed a candidate had been appointed and is also due to start next week. A Member who had been on the selection panel noted that Aspen had provided a good service, with a robust process and there had been a good outcome from using them. The DCE informed Members there would be a handover period.
- G3.4 Future recruitment is being considered following two recent resignations.
- G3.5 Currently two staff members are operating in interim appointments and authority was sought to extend these until 31 March 2024. A Member queried why the interim appointments were being extended rather than finalised. The CE informed Members that the Workforce Strategy had not been finalised yet, but these two temporary roles were working well.
- G3.6 Progress with staff professional training and development qualifications was presented and noted.
- G3.7 Management Committee:
- Approved the extension to 2 interim roles as detailed in Section 7 of the paper;
 - Noted the progress with recruitment; and
 - Noted progress with professional training and development.

G4 Resolutions & Applications for Membership (Paper No MC/23/47)

- G4.1 A Member queried if general members are informed when membership is cancelled due to having missed and/or not submitted apologies to 5 AGMs in a row, in accordance with the Rules. The HCG informed Members that this is explained in the AGM invitation letter issued to all general members annually.
- G4.2 Members approved the resolution in respect of one shared ownership disposal and noted the cancelled memberships.

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

P1 Development Report (Paper No MC/23/48)

- P1.1 The DO's report updated members on progress with current and proposed developments. Members were informed that, following a meeting with both OIC and the Scottish Government's More Homes Division regarding future developments, it was hoped that a Strategic Housing Investment Programme will be finalised and issued to OIC by the end of October.
- P1.2 Three NSSE properties at Yorston Drive, Stromness remain unsold, OIC have indicated they are potentially interested in buying these. Future development at Corse West (Soulisquoy) is being progressed by OIC, who are installing the infrastructure and where the Association plans to develop around 60 new units, subject to funding. Discussions with the Scottish Government on plans for properties at Walliwall 9 are ongoing.
- P1.3 Projects at Walliwall 6 & 7 have completed handovers of all rented units, with the NSSE properties expected to be occupied over the next few weeks once sales are finalised.
- P1.4 Members discussed publicising when properties are completed and handed over, when it is appropriate to do so.
- P1.5 Members noted the current position with the development programme.

PART 5 – ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

None

PART 6 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

I1 Cost of Living Report (Paper No MC/23/49)

- I1.1 The DO's report highlighted the continued impact the cost-of-living crisis is having on tenants. OHAL staff continue to engage, both locally and nationally, with support organisations which augments the support offered by our staff and allows access into funding streams. Members noted that rent arrears were comfortably under our Key Performance Indicator of 5%, though this is anticipated to rise in the coming months.
- I1.2 Staff are in the process of submitting a funding bid to the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund. This will enable the Association to offer interventions using a cash-first approach to assist tenants who need debt relief with their energy and fuel costs. As has been done the previous years, staff will be undertaking Winter Support Calls contacting tenants to offer bespoke help and advice.

11.3 Members also received a number of national updates.

11.4 Members noted the contents of the report.

12 Write Offs (Paper No MC/23/50)

12.1 Members received a report which required their explicit permission to write off an irrecoverable debt. Background information to the case was provided and considered. Following discussion, members agreed to the write-off proposed in case 52524. Members queried if some of the debt could be taken from the Tenancy Sustainment Fund.

12.2 As this case involved the Association trying to support someone to sustain their tenancy, members further instructed the CE to investigate if the Tenancy Sustainment Fund could be used to fund some of the write off. Members noted the remainder of the paper.

Any Other Competent Business

The Chair informed Members they had received a thank you note from Linda Forbes' partner, and read it out.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 1.12pm.

Signed:

Date:

Chair