



MARYHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 1ST MARCH 2021 AT 6.00 PM VIRTUAL MEETING VIA TEAMS VIDEO CALL

Board Members	Attended	Apologies
Roger Popplewell (RP)	✓	
Caitlyn Maccabe (CM)	✓	
Colin O'Hara (CO)		✓
Isabella McTaggart (IM)	✓	
Janaki LakshmiNarayanan (JL)	✓	
Jenny Crowe (JC)	✓	
Lindsay Forrest (LF)	✓	
Najah Plakaris (NP)	✓	
Paul Imrie (PI)	✓	
Raphael Rickson (RR)		✓
Richard Turnock (RT)		✓
Tim Holmes (TH)	✓	

Officers	Items
Bryony Willett (BW)	1-12
Jennifer Simon (JS)	1-12
Rebecca Wilson (RW)	1-12
Karen Fee (KF)	1-12
Alistair McArthur (AM)	1-12
Robert Reid (RRe)	1-12
Lesley Carnegie (LC)	1-12

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1.	Welcome	
1.1	As RP was experiencing difficulty joining the video call, the Board elected PI as Chair. PI welcomed everyone to the meeting, with apologies noted from CO and RT.	
2.	Approval of previous Board Minutes	
2.1	Board approved the minutes from their meeting on 28 th January 2021.	
5.	Feedback and approvals from Audit & Risk Committee	
5.1	This item was taken first while awaiting RP. PI provided an update from the Audit & Risk Committee meeting held on 11 th March 2021.	
5.2	The Committee considered a report from the internal auditor on arrears management, where a weak assurance rating had been given. A new performance management framework including management monitoring would be implemented by the team by the end of March to improve this area. The Committee also approved the Internal Audit Plan for the next year.	
5.3	The quarter 3 management accounts were approved, and it was noted that spend on repairs and improvements was still being impacted by covid	

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5.4	restrictions. Continued progress was noted on the audit action tracker and arrangements for the upcoming annual external audit were approved.	
5.4	Committee also approved the recommendation that Board approval in principle be sought to renew the £3.44m fixed rate due to mature in June 2021 as part of the quarterly treasury update.	
5.5	In relation to the risk register it was noted that two risk scores had increased: covid impact and housing allocations & waiting lists.	
5.6	Finally, two health and safety audit reports were considered, relating to lift safety and electrical safety. While lift safety was rated as having adequate assurance, electrical safety was rated inadequate. Improvement actions had been identified by management to ensure weaknesses were addressed.	
3.	Action Tracker	
3.1	RP joined the meeting and thanked PI for stepping in as Chair.	
3.2	In relation to the action tracker, IM asked if there was an update on the decision on whether the money from the sale of the shop at the Locks could be spent within the local community. BW advised that it was proposed to use this to extend the CCTV currently in the area, and to help support future acquisitions. BW advised that a formal report would be brought back to Board once the sale of the shop was confirmed. It was agreed that this item should be closed on the tracker.	
3.3	Board then approved the updates to the Action Tracker including the other actions proposed for closure.	
4.	Chair's Update	
4.1	RP provided an update on activities he had been involved in since the previous Board meeting. These included completing the CEO's appraisal with PI, LF and NP, as well as a discussion on the role of the Company Secretary, with an update coming back to Board on this in due course.	
4.2	RP had also reviewed and approved a range of items, including a recruitment pack for the new Board member, a press statement for Rothes Drive, and responses to the letters received from a tenant and from the Tenant Service Improvement Group as part of the recent rent consultation.	
4.3	RP had also agreed the letter going to EVH confirming the Association's response to the recent staff salary consultation. He had also attended Audit & Risk Committee.	
6.	Feedback from conferences / training	
6.1	NP had attended a Governance Masterclass between November and December, which was very helpful and interesting. NP advised she would	

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6.2	<p>be happy to pull some notes together if anyone would like any further information.</p> <p>JL had attended as session on what questions Board should be asking in relation to development. JL noted that this was a good course that she had found very useful.</p>	
7.	Overall Assurance Position	
7.1	<p>BW introduced this item advising that, before lockdown, officers used to present slides for all areas of assurance. This had stopped when lockdown forced a change to video calls, however slides were going to be used tonight just for the key areas of assurance. Feedback would be welcomed in the Board review on the effectiveness of this new approach.</p>	
7.2	<p>BW provided a summary of the main updates on the Assurance Dashboard since the previous quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to housing showed a continued backlog of households seeking housing and a backlog of empty properties which were waiting to be let. These would be addressed by the end of March 2021. JS updated that the backlog had reduced to 150 by the Board meeting. • A number of governance areas had been addressed by the successful recruitment of new Board members and a succession plan now being in place for the Chair and other office bearers. • Developing a formal performance management framework for the CEO had been identified as a new improvement action – this related to standards 4, 5 and 6. • The assurance rating for Health and Safety had changed to ‘working towards compliance’ because of areas for improvement now identified in relation to electrical, gas and water safety. • Whistleblowing refresher training was now complete so this area would change to green. This was a correction to the papers presented in the meeting. 	
7.3	<p>CM asked whether there were any areas for concern raised by customers in relation to decreased satisfaction on value for money. BW advised that this result was from the 2018 survey and customers were more concerned about the quality of their homes than the actual level of their rent.</p>	
7.4	<p>RT had submitted a question via email, asking if management were satisfied that there were no other areas that had moved to non-compliance, or that were at risk of doing so. BW confirmed that there were no areas of high risk looming, with health and safety being the main concern and the rating for this having already been changed.</p>	
7.5	<p>KF then presented a slide on Finance, focusing on the exceptions highlighted in the Board assurance paper. These included variances in relation to bad debts, voids, repairs, cyclical and investment works, utilities and overheads.</p>	

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7.6	<p>JS presented a slide on Performance, focusing on the exceptions from the assurance paper. This included the backlog of housing applications and lets due to covid. TH asked about the lettings quotas, noting that the actual performance was quite different to targeted levels. JS advised that the target for Section 5 lets to homeless households had been increased this year in agreement with Glasgow City Council. However it had been difficult to receive sufficient referrals from the council as North West Glasgow was not a first choice area for many of the homeless households they were working with. This had been experienced by other associations in the area as well. As Section 5s were not being received more lets had been made from the waiting list instead.</p>	
7.7	<p>JS then went on to highlight other exceptions including an increase in anti-social behaviour and estate issues due to routine inspections and visits being restricted. However the new bulk uplift service was receiving positive feedback.</p>	
7.8	<p>It was noted that there was still one overdue gas service, caused by the tenant refusing access due to health concerns. The customer was due to receive their covid vaccination soon and had agreed that they would then permit access. However if this did not happen in March then legal proceedings – which had already been started – would be progressed.</p>	
7.9	<p>RRe presented slides highlighting the exceptions from the Complaints and Customer Feedback report. This included learning from the anti-social behaviour (ASB) satisfaction survey around effective communication and information sharing. RRe advised that the Housing Team would be receiving ASB training in the next month, and that improved procedures and guidance for staff were being developed.</p>	
7.10	<p>TH noted that some of the issues being raised by customers around communication, getting back to people, and long standing issues not being resolved had been discussed by Board 12 to 18 months ago. RRe advised that the feedback showed that communication had improved for live cases but that the issue remained with ‘after care’ and ensuring that as well as separate issues being addressed the overall ASB case was fully resolved and monitored. The improved procedures being rolled out in March and April would cover this.</p>	
7.11	<p>JC asked if there had been a change in the process of reporting issues or queries, as customers were no longer always getting to report to the same officer. RRe explained that this had been caused by the temporary move to specialist housing teams, but April would see a return to having a specific Housing Officer for each area.</p>	
7.12	<p>BW presented a slide on the Health and Safety assurance report. As already noted, this area had been changed to ‘working towards compliance’. Gas safety would be covered as a separate item on tonight’s agenda. The recent audit of electrical safety had identified a number of issues including one critical issue around documentation not being robust, and not providing sufficient evidence that electrical problems had been resolved.</p>	

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7.13	BW advised that the notifiable events on gas and water safety were both still live with the Scottish Housing Regulator. BW would be discussing with the Regulator whether the electrical safety findings were also notifiable. The Regulator had been sent the audit report and the Association's management responses and would be meeting with BW on 11 th March to discuss and confirm.	
7.14	TH noted that the overall feel was that the Association was weak on landlord health and safety. TH suggested that the Association was too reliant on auditors, contractors and consultants, and that consideration should be given to becoming more robust and skilled in-house. This could be achieved through training or through recruitment over time.	
7.15	JC agreed with this point, asking if there was a capacity or training issue within the team. BW advised that current training requirements were up to date, however the training requirements for each post could be re-visited to ensure that there were sufficient skills in-house. The upcoming review of the Property Team structure – routinely carried out in the first two years after a restructure – could also consider whether the roles and skills were sufficient within the team.	
7.16	PI agreed that this was an area of concern and that it would be a positive step to strengthen the skills of the team and identify and fill any skills gaps. The upcoming review should include a detailed skills analysis, with the understanding of certificates and reports coming back from contractors being of key importance.	
7.17	TH agreed and noted that management should consider what they need the Association to be able to do internally, and then look at what the existing roles are and what they should be. It would be important to identify Responsible Officers for each key area of landlord health and safety.	
7.18	It was agreed that in-house landlord health and safety skills would be reviewed as part of the upcoming Property Team review, and that the Health & Safety Training Matrix would then be revisited and suitable training provided to strengthen the team's skillset.	BW
7.19	TH asked why all staff were not trained in using fire extinguishers. LC advised that this was in line with the current internal policy that staff should not tackle a fire but should evacuate the building immediately.	
7.20	Board then approved the Assurance ratings proposed by officers.	
7.21	NP left the meeting during this item.	
8.	Potential Carbon Monoxide Poisoning	
8.1	JS introduced this item, noting that the Board papers included the full report and the Association's management responses. This related to an incident where a boiler identified by the contractor as 'at risk' at a service	

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8.2	<p>at the end of August 2020 had not been replaced and the tenant had continued to use it against advice, posing a potential risk to their health. There were three critical issues identified with appropriate improvement actions to address each one.</p> <p>RT had submitted a question via email to request an update on the status of discussions with the Health & Safety Executive (HSE). BW advised that no update had been received yet. <i>[Following the meeting HSE have closed the incident without requiring any other information or improvement actions from the Association.]</i></p>	
8.3	JS confirmed that all agreed improvement actions would be concluded by 31 st March 2021.	
8.4	RP noted that the new contract for gas servicing would be procured in the next financial year. JS confirmed that all learning and new procedures would be incorporated into the new contract.	
8.5	JS advised that the upcoming audit of gas safety was being brought forward, and would now report to Board in May 2021. PI asked if the audit would include testing to see if the agreed procedures were being followed. JS confirmed that the audit would include sampling CP12's to confirm compliance and any identify further improvements required.	
8.6	Board then approved the actions to improve the management of gas safety generally, and to fully mitigate the potential risk caused by the failure to replace an 'at risk' gas appliance timeously.	
9.	Development Feasibility Studies	
9.1	AM introduced this item summarising the purpose of the paper.	
9.2	CM asked if the conversion rather than demolition proposal for the Job Centre site would affect the ability to purpose the property for mid market rent as the existing building is quite dated. AM advised that the property would be stripped right back so it will be built to the standards of a new build and will appear like a new build, so it will still be attractive to prospective tenants. PI noted that it was difficult to imagine this as the current appearance was not pleasing. AM advised that the current panels would be removed and likely a new modern skin put on, so it would look quite different. The architects were currently working on this challenge and would of course bring drawings back to be considered.	
9.3	Board then retrospectively approved the second stage feasibility studies for Maryhill Road (Job Centre), Shawpark Street, and Ruchill/Shannon Street.	
10.	Subscriptions and Affiliations	
10.1	RP introduced this item noting that this was an annual paper to confirm subscriptions for the new financial year. It was noted that RT sits on an Advisory Board for HouseMark Scotland, which was relevant to this paper	

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10.2	<p>though not a direct interest. RT had advised via email he was happy to approve the changes proposed in the paper.</p> <p>BW advised that it was proposed that the subscription for the ACS Landlord Health & Safety Manual be discontinued as recent audits had shown it was not sufficiently robust. TH asked if this was received as part of EVH membership. BW advised that the Organisational H&S Manual was included but the Landlord Manual was an optional extra with a cost attached.</p>	
10.3	<p>The other proposed change was a potential move away from HouseMark – who provide UK-wide performance and cost benchmarking – if an alternative for cost benchmarking could be identified that would ensure Board continued to receive adequate assurance in this area.</p>	
10.4	<p>Board approved the future affiliations for the Association, including the cancellation of the subscription to the ACS Landlord Health and Safety Manual.</p>	
10.5	<p>Board delegated authority to the CEO to cancel the HouseMark subscription in April 2021 if a better value for money alternative on cost benchmarking could be found.</p>	
11.	COVID impact and relaunch summary	
11.1	<p>RP introduced this item explaining that the paper was written prior to the latest announcements on Scotland's route map out of lockdown. More work would be carried out as things change and become clearer. However there had been little change since the previous meeting.</p>	
11.2	<p>TH thanked officers for providing the furlough information requested at the last meeting. RP noted that you could see from this which associations had in-house repairs teams as the furlough rate was much higher.</p>	
11.3	<p>The Board noted the COVID Impact Analysis as at 17th February 2021 and the progress on relaunch planning.</p>	
12.	CEO Report	
12.1	<p>RP advised that a delegated decision had taken place between meetings to put NP forward as the Association's nominee for EVH. Board approved this delegated decision.</p>	
12.2	<p>Board approved granting a licence to occupy to Turner Property Services to occupy 0/3, 120 Fearnmore Road to use as a site office while the air source heat pump contract is delivered. Board noted that the Leasing Properties Policy would be updated to reflect this. This was not noted in the CEO report.</p>	JS
13.	Meeting Review	
13.1	<p>All officers left the meeting so Board members could carry out their</p>	

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13.2	meeting review. It was agreed that the slides used for the assurance session had added nothing to the discussion and that in future it would be better to structure the discussion around reference to the individual reports.	BW