



# MINUTES OF BRIDGEWATER HOUSING ASSOCIATION

## VIRTUAL BOARD MEETING

**Venue:** Bridgewater Housing Association Offices, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
Bridgewater Shopping Centre, Erskine.

**Date:** 22 April 2020

**Time:** 6.30pm

### Present:

Alastair Morris Chair, Heather Stirling Secretary, Angela Westrop Board Member, Frank Bradley Board Member, Ken McIntosh Board Member, Denise Love Board Member, Suzanne Austin Board Member, Jim Sheridan Board Member, John Paterson Board Member

### In attendance:

Ian McLean Chief Executive, Ruth Brogan Head of Housing and Customer Services, Gary Stapleton Technical Services Manager, Angie Kennedy Head of Finance, Scott Currie Corporate Services Manager

Item	Details	Action
	<b>GOVERNANCE</b>	
<b>1.</b>	<b>Welcome and Chairs remarks</b>	
	The Chief Executive welcomed everyone to their first Zoom meeting. In order to ensure that the business was conducted effectively and efficiently, the Chair had agreed that the Chief Executive could manage the meeting and the items for discussion. Everyone was in agreement to this.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Apologies</b>	
	Apologies were received from: Robert McNally and Aileen Naismith, Craig McGarry	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Declarations of Interest</b>	
	Members were invited to declare any interest in any of the items on the agenda, in terms of the Association's published policy.	
	There were no declarations made by those present.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Minute of Board Meeting of 19 February 2020.</b>	
	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Board meeting held on 19 February 2020.	
	Members approved the minutes as a correct record of the meeting as <b>PROPOSED</b> by Angela Westrop and <b>SECONDED</b> by Ken McIntosh.	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Matters Arising</b>	

5.1	<p>In relation to item 7 the Housing and Customer Services Manager provided additional information in relation to service charges which was either omitted from the last report or was incorrect and the Board <b>NOTED</b> the position.</p> <p>In relation to item 8, the Chief Executive reminded members that following a discussion it was agreed that the budget should be re-presented without depreciation being included. However the CEO further reported that the HoF had taken advice from the Auditors and had consulted with other similar sized Housing Associations as well as the FLAIR Associations and requested that the Budget should be approved as presented. One member had been particularly concerned about the previous presentation of the Budget figures and they now confirmed that they were content for the Budget to contain depreciation. Members <b>APPROVED</b> this position.</p>	
<b>MATTERS FOR APPROVAL</b>		
6.	<b>Covid 19 Report and Notifiable Event</b>	
	<p>Members were invited to consider a Covid 19 Coverall report. The Chief Executive reminded members of the original Notifiable Event which centred on the closure of the office and the reduction in service delivery. He indicated that this report attempts to bring all of the information together to assist members to understand the effect of the pandemic on service delivery and how the Association is handling the various challenges which the pandemic is throwing up. The report also provides for the Board to homologate the earlier written resolution which allowed the Board to meet virtually and sought to obtain approval for a new sub- committee to be established to deal with emergency issues.</p> <p>The report provided information on the Government’s Job Retention Scheme and steps which have already been taken to take advantage of the scheme and the members of staff who have already been furloughed and reminded members of their decision to budget for a community chest fund to help people in certain circumstances.</p> <p>Additionally the report provided further information on Gas Safety and in particular about one customer who is shielding and who has refused access to allow us to carry out an inspection of his gas boiler. Given the steps we have taken in order to get the boiler inspected and our record management, we believe that we have not breached the regulations.</p> <p>The report up-dated members on the current situation in relation to our Reactive Maintenance Contractor. However the CEO further reported that things have moved on since the report was written and MPS have now suggested that they will withdraw their services giving 10 days’ notice. The Association is taking legal advice and taking steps to mitigate this decision.</p>	
6.1	<p>Members <b>APPROVED</b> the following recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homologate the Notifiable Event, subsequent up-dates and operational decisions taken by the Chief Executive so far.</li> <li>• Homologate the Special resolution dated 1 April 2020.</li> <li>• Agree that sub-committee meetings should be discontinued for the foreseeable future and at least until such times as things begin to get normal again.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the establishment of a Covid 19 Emergency Committee and the terms of reference set out in section 3 of this report.</li> <li>• Approve participation in the UK Government’s Job Retention Scheme but at full pay and conditions as at 1 April 2020 and delegate to the Chief Executive authority to make decisions on appropriate staff to furlough.</li> <li>• Approve the list of staff members to be furloughed at section 4</li> <li>• Agree that the Chief Executive has delegated authority to distribute the Community Fund as appropriate and instruct him to report monthly to the board on its distribution.</li> <li>• Homologate the decision to increase the hours of the housing Support Co-ordinator to 35 hours per week.</li> <li>• Note the information requirements from the SHR</li> <li>• Approve the SHR monthly report for March 2020.</li> <li>• Delegate to the Chief Executive authority to authorise agreed temporary arrangements with each contractor to meet a portion of their costs, each relative to the scale of Bridgewater’s particular contracts and ensuring value for money as appropriate.</li> <li>• Otherwise note the contents of this report.</li> </ul>	
<b>7.</b>	<b>Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a report by the Corporate Services Manager, the purpose of which was to seek approval for a policy intending to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. The CSM indicated that from a practical point of view the Association requires such a policy if it is to obtain grant funding from other bodies but in any event this is a useful guide for staff when they come across sensitive situations which involve the possible abuse of children and vulnerable adults. Members generally considered this to be a good idea but were also mindful that staff would have to receive training on the policy. The CEO agreed and responded that the policy would only work effectively if staff operated it effectively and were trained in its application. He undertook to find suitable training from either the council or elsewhere.	
<b>7.1</b>	Members <b>APPROVED</b> the policy	
<b>8.</b>	<b>Special Written Resolution for Homologation</b>	
	The Chief Executive reminded members that he had sent out a special written resolution which would allow Board Meetings to take place virtually rather than face to face. This was necessary in terms of the Board’s rules and required at least two thirds of Board Members to agree to the resolution. He further reminded members that there was overwhelming support for the resolution.	
<b>8.1</b>	Members <b>HOMOLOGATED</b> the Special Written Resolution.	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Key performance Indicators – January to March 2020</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a report prepared by the Leadership Team which outlined the Association’s performance against its 19/20 key performance indicators and despite a short “blip” towards the end of the financial year, performance was good to very good. The Association and Board Members could be proud of what they had	

	achieved during 19/20 and bearing in mind the significant challenges which face the Association in 20/21.	
<b>9.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the position.	
<b>10.</b>	<b>Major Investment Programme Report</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a comprehensive report, prepared by the Technical Services Manager on the Associations major investment in its stock and other assets. The TSM discussed with member's progress and in some cases the lack of progress in relation to the programme and consequently actual investment in our assets. Most notably the re-roofing works which will have a significantly positive impact on the Association's finances but which still has to be done. The TCM also spoke about our ability to meet ESSH targets and that a rethinking of testing will mean the need for less expenditure on our stock. Members were concerned that this would mean that more tenants would not get the benefit of the insulation works and would like to have seen saved expenditure spent on this work. The TCM and the CEO reminded members that there is no way of knowing what implications of the current pandemic rules might be and that it would not be prudent to commit spending until we know what these are likely to be.	
<b>10.1</b>	Member <b>NOTED</b> the position	
<b>MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION, COMMENT AND NOTING</b>		
<b>11.</b>	<b>High Arrears Report January to March 2020</b>	
	The Housing and Customer Services Manager spoke to her report on the Association's high arrears cases and in the context of our overall arrears position. She indicated that we have not met our annual target but that is likely because of an initial implication of the Covid 19 consequences and people beginning to lose their jobs. She reported that this is likely to continue and our arrears levels are likely to increase. She confirmed that the Association was pursuing the Boards policy of not "chasing arrears" and supporting people to locate welfare support where that is needed but at the same time telling people that if they can pay their rent then they are expected to pay it.	
<b>11.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> this report.	
<b>12.</b>	<b>Renewal of Insurances</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a report by the Head of Finance, the purpose of which was to confirm the renewal of insurance policies and a slight reduction in costs.	
<b>12.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the report	
<b>13.</b>	<b>Minute of the Health and Safety Working Group Meeting – 29 January 2020.</b>	
	Members were invited to consider the minute of the Health and Safety Working Group meeting held on 29 January	

<b>13.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the minute	
<b>14.</b>	<b>SHR Letter to All Landlords – 15 April 2020</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a letter from the SHR indicating the kinds of information which they will require Association's to provide them with from April 2020 in order for them to gauge the impact of Covid 19 on the sector as a whole and which they will use to report to the Scottish Government. The CEO reported that the Association had compiled the information for March as a test run to see whether it was possible to compile the information easily and the report was attached.	
<b>14.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the letter and <b>NOTED</b> our March report	
<b>15.</b>	<b>Wylie and Bisset – internal Audit Annual Report – March 2020</b>	
	Members were invited to consider a report from the Association's Internal Auditors, the purpose of which was to provide comprehensive information about the Association's programme of internal audit during 19/20. The report provides very good assurance in relation to all of our internal audits.	
<b>15.1</b>	Members <b>NOTED</b> the report	
<b>REGULATORY ISSUES</b>		
<b>13.</b>	<b>Notifiable Events</b>	
<b>13.1</b>	There were no notifiable events for consideration.	
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		
<b>14.</b>	<b>Issues which the Chair has agreed as urgent</b>	
<b>14.1</b>	There were no urgent issues	
<b>15.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting to be confirmed</b>	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chair)