

## **PAISLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION**

### **MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24 AUG 2020 AT 2.00PM**

**Due to the Corona Virus, we are unable to have face to face meetings. This meeting was a virtual meeting. Chief Executive chaired this meeting.**

Present: Jim Weir, Eileen Graham, Lisa-Jane Dock, Ian Johnstone, Sandra Loney, Michelle Hart, Karen McMillan, Saroj Bains and Mairi Maclean

In Attendance: Kathleen McCutcheon, Lorna Colville and Sandra Marshall.

Guest: Steven Cunningham, Partner, Alexander Sloan

It was noted that the order of the meeting will be amended - item no.3 now will be after item no.5.

#### **1a) APOLOGIES**

Apologies received from Beth Arthur and Scott Turo is on special leave.

#### **b) RECORD ON ANY POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

None

#### **2a) MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27/7/2020**

Proposed by Eileen Graham seconded by Jim Weir.

#### **b) MATTERS ARISING**

Chief Executive updated the Board re Offer of Grant for Westerfield. Only one more item to sign, which should be completed by tomorrow.

#### **4) ANNUAL AUDIT COMMITTEE REPORT**

Head of Finance and IT confirmed that one of the main purposes of the Audit Committee was to monitor strategic risks to the Association. Although due to the Pandemic, the last meeting of the Audit Committee was February.

It was noted the risks around Covid have been the main focus of the SMT over recent months.

It was also confirmed that, due to the office closure, the revised date for the Internal Audit would now be March 2021. The Chief Executive advised this would now also include the Governance around the Pandemic and the Association's handling of this.

It was noted the Audit Committee will revert to the existing schedule; therefore the next meeting will be due on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2020.

**Board approved the report, in particular the approval of the Internal Financial Controls Statement, with in the Financial Statements.**

**5) FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2019/2020 (INCLUDING ANNUAL ONLINE ACCOUNTS RETURN AND SHAPS ANNUAL RETURN)**

Steven Cunningham, Audit Partner, Alexander Sloan explained the Statement of Comprehensive Income and Statement of Financial position for year ended March 2020. He then confirmed that we had a clean audit and that the financial statements give a true and fair view of the Association's affairs and has been properly prepared in accordance with legislation. It was noted that Covid has been added as a new note with in the Financial Statements, it is also noted in the management letter as a risk. Despite this he confirmed that all the evidence required had been provided and he thanked Finance Dept. for their assistance during this difficult time.

The management letter noted the Auditor's point for action and PHA's response; that the Internal Audit has been delayed until March 2021.

It was noted that a Board members' name was miss-spelt and this should be rectified.

Chief Exec asked what the approval process is, under the circumstances. Steven Cunningham said that the most efficient way was to use DocuSign. The board agreed the paperwork will be e-mailed direct to Office Bearers, who will sign and return the financial statements via the DocuSign process.

The Board noted the report and in particular:

- Approved the proposed amendment to the Accounting Policy
- Approved the Financial Statements for the year to 31 March 2020 and Board Statements there in.
- Delegated authority to the Secretary and two of the Board Members to sign the Financial Statements on behalf of the Board, via DocuSign
- Delegated authority to the Secretary and the Chair to sign the Letter of Representation.
- Noted the Auditors' Management Letter which includes the formal response by the Board.
- Noted that the Annual Online Accounts Return for 2019/20 will be prepared in accordance with the Scottish Housing Regulator's policy document "Financial Viability of Registered Social Landlords: Information Requirements" and the approved Financial Statements.
- Delegated authority to the Head of Finance & IT to submit the Online Audited Financial Statements Return to the Regulator, by the revised deadline 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020, on the Board's behalf, along with the 3 attachments requested by SHR.
- Delegates authority to the Head of Finance & IT to submit the SHAPS annual financial viability return by the deadline 28th September 2020

### **3) MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS Q1 – APRIL20- JUNE 20**

Head of Finance and IT confirmed that we had a larger surplus than predicted in the budget. This is mainly due to savings in staff recruitment, which has been delayed and receipt of the furlough grant. Voids have significantly increased during the first quarter, but we are looking to action these from now. Arrears are also starting to creep up a little and by end of the year the Head of Housing Management has estimated to rise to 4% rather than 2.5%, as originally budgeted.

**Board noted the report and approved corrective actions proposed.**

### **6) ANNUAL REPORT ON ENTITLEMENTS, PAYMENTS, BENEFITS, GIFTS AND HOSPITALITY**

Chief Exec confirmed that this report was originally scheduled for the March meeting and that the Corporate Services Officer will action from now on.

**Board Noted.**

### **7) UPDATE ON CORONA VIRUS**

Chief Exec provided update on what services are returning to some form of normality, confirming that whenever we do return to the Office we will not be open to the public, but will have an appointment only system. The SMT are planning to meet to discuss longer term implications of furlough, tenant redundancies, higher debt as well as what planned and cyclical maintenance we can potentially achieve. HA's are under pressure to have a 0% rent increase next year or a low an increase as possible. We will be looking at this before the end of the year. Chief Exec also confirmed that the Business Plan and Internal Audit have been re-scheduled to March 20/21. The Assurance statement will be on the Agenda for either Sept or Oct board meeting. We are looking to try to resume a normal schedule of sub meetings from September onwards.

**Board Noted.**

### **8) UPDATE ON ASSURANCE HOUSE**

Chief Exec confirmed that meetings / updates have been difficult due to holidays etc, but our Senior Clerk of Works is now back at work, so he is keeping on top of issues like the snagging and additional Fire requirements. Hopeful that within the week that we will be able to update information to Building Control.

The plan will be when the staff go 'back to work', this will be in Assurance House rather than 64 Espedair Street. We now have to think about what we will do with 64 and have a letting agent coming in to have a look over the property as well as considering all possible options.

We are now fully out of 62 Espedair Street.

Question about how Orchard Street was coming on. Chief Exec confirmed there was a meeting with the Council last week, at which we realised how much the proposed plan had been affected by furloughed staff in Graham and Sibald ( doing valuations)

and also not being able to go into peoples homes. We have several properties in the pipeline waiting for valuations. Expect that things will start to improve within the next 6 weeks.

**Board Noted.**

### **9) AGM & APPRAISALS FOR LONG SERVING BOARD MEMBERS**

The paperwork for AGM/SGM is due out this week. No further nominations for the board. We will have 12 members and 3 vacancies. The long serving board members (over 9 years) have had their appraisals and we can confirm that all are committed to staying on the board and all have the skills and competencies required to be board members. We will look to have other board member appraisals completed during Sept and a report to the board will be due at October's meeting. PSPS appraisals will be due in similar timescales.

**Board Approved**

### **10) RESOLUTION AND NOTICE FOR SGM**

Chief Exec confirmed the main change to the rules is to be able to have virtual meetings. The SGM will be 6.30pm on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

**Board Approved.**

### **11) NEW MODEL RULES**

Chief Exec confirmed that we no longer need approval from SHR to change our rules but we do have to send a copy of the new rules (once approved) to our lenders.

**Board Approved.**

### **12) CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION FORMS**

Corporate Services Officer apologised, but due to sickness, had not e-mailed the code of conduct forms to board members. This will be completed by September meeting.

**Board Noted**

### **13) PAY AWARD DISCUSSION WITH UNITE UNION**

Chief Exec had discussion with the board about this pay award letter, in particular, the fact that EVH did not follow due process as there was no consultation to members. Chief Exec will send original e-mail to board members. The Board confirmed that they would like the Chief Exec to express their concerns to EVH about how EVH actioned this pay award discussion with Unite union.

**Board Noted.**

#### **14) AOCB**

- Chief Exec confirmed that we would be re-starting scheduled meetings for the sub committee's next month.
- Chief Exec let everyone know that we had purchased 2 electric bikes at the beginning of the years and during lockdown, staff have been using them for a week at a time. If any board member wishes to try out the electric bike, please let Sandra Marshall know. We can check our diary to see when they will be available. Whoever has them, will then organise to take them to the next person on the Sunday.
- Board member asked about potentially consolidating technology for board meetings. Chief Exec as said that we had struggled a little bit with technology. We are looking at getting mobile phones for staff at the moment with a view to looking at laptops in September. Chief Exec confirmed that this will be looked at in October. Board members should not be struggling to volunteer to participate in the meetings, but it will be likely that the same solution will not suit everyone so will be looked at on an individual basis.

#### **15) DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Next meeting will be on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 at 6.30pm – after consulting with board members about reverting back to usual time in the evening.

Meeting finished at 3.25pm