

Knowes Housing Association
Management Committee Meeting
Tuesday 2nd March 2021 at 6.30pm
Meeting conducted electronically

MINUTE OF MEETING

In Attendance

Pierre De Fence, Director
Joe Wilson, Property Services Manager

Sandra Love, SCSO

Present

Rhona Polak
Lynsey Chrystal
Yvonne McDonald
Hilary Edgar
Ross Campbell Anderson

Katie Devaney
Steven McCabe
Janet Cassidy;

Guest

Steven Gillies from Admin Control

Apologies

Billy Stevenson
Gary Clark
Cllr Lawrence O'Neill

1.1 **Q & A re Admin Control**

Steven Gillies hosted a short remote question and answer session with Committee Members to address any problems/queries they had regarding the Admin Control functions. Steven recommended that Members download the Admin Control app as the system functioned better when it was used to view papers etc.

2. **Declaration of Interest**

None

3. **Correspondence**

Pierre advised that there had been one item of correspondence from Sandra Love, Knowes' Senior Corporate Services Officer. The correspondence advised that Sandra wished to hand in her notice as she wanted to retire and end her employment at Knowes in 3 months time. The Committee said they would be sorry to see Sandra go and wished her all the best. At this point Pierre said the place wouldn't be the same without her.

4.	<p><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting of Tuesday 2nd February 2021</u></p> <p>The minute of the meeting was agreed and approved subject to section 11 where the EVH report section should simply advise ‘The report was made available to Committee and it was noted.’</p> <p>Proposed by Yvonne McDonald, Seconded by Katie Devaney</p>
4.1	<p><u>Minutes of Housing Sub, Audit Sub and Finance Sub</u></p> <p>The minutes were made available to Committee.</p>
5.	<p><u>New Share Members</u></p> <p>Sandra advised there had been no new Share applications</p>
6.	<p><u>Director’s Report</u></p> <p>Stock Control Year to Date as at 26th February 2021</p> <p>✓ Mortgage to Rent / Buy Backs Sale of Hillend Crescent, we are leasing this to WDC for temporary accommodation for a period of time, then they will purchase it. Buy back 1 property in Burnbrae Street</p> <p>Total properties 1047 rented (including Dunn St respite centre). 689 owners</p> <p>Covid 19 Measures</p> <p>Since our last meeting there has been an update from the Scottish Government. It appears we will be going back to the tier approach on an area by area basis, although it is not clear the timescale of when we are likely to go back to tier 3 or lower, therefore for now the status quo remains as below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repairs and Maintenance We are carrying out emergency repairs and gas servicing, we have now suspended routine repairs in line with the Scottish Government advice. We are continuing with landscape maintenance and close cleaning, our kitchen replacement project was planned to start in November, however this has now been put on hold again. • Voids We are now processing all voids in line with our Covid procedure • Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We have 1 member of staff off sick ○ 1 member of staff is now on furlough • Communication with tenants The rent letter has been sent which includes an update on a variety of matters including the rent counter closure. We will be working on the next newsletter soon.

We have launched a facebook page, which has regular updates,

Our Winter newsletter was sent out in December

- **Communication with Committee**

The Committee portal is now up and running. If anyone requires additional training let Pierre or Sandra know. Induction sessions are ongoing with new committee members as required and new members are asked to arrange sessions directly with the Director and Senior Management Team.

There will be a short session on the Admincontrol portal at the start of the meeting

- **Financial Impact**

We continue to maintain a stable position, rent arrears are relatively stable but fluctuate month to month, Universal Credit is a major issue for our staff. Void loss is within our target.

Abbeylands Road bowling and tennis court sites

We have now seen the draft SHIP and this site is included in the SHIP, however it is not noted as a “priority” project. In discussions with WDC I am told that there will be funds within the SHIP to allow this project to proceed. Time will tell, there is no change since last month on this.

Welfare and Money advice Project

We are now providing this service from our office.

Universal Credit Roll Out

The increase in the number of people moving onto UC has slowed down. There have also been some recent changes to the way UC will be paid, which should help us manage the process, that said UC is still a major problem for our staff and has been responsible for a significant increase in rent arrears.

Community Projects

The Tenancy Sustainment Officer post is working out well.

We have now received the 39 ipads and sim cards, which are targeted at families with children. These are now being distributed.

The Digital Connector service is now up and running through our appointed contractor, we have written to all tenants and we will receive reports every fortnight regarding uptake.

Strategy meeting

I have been working on the content and technology for this meeting, and also sourcing a facilitator to facilitate part of the meeting. There is an issue with the proposed date due to a planned power outage that day, however we can work around this to some extent. It is now proposed that we run a 45 minute session on the 19th which will be to ensure we are all familiar with the technology, so it will be a fun session using breakout groups, whiteboards and other tools in Zoom, and then the actual day itself the following Friday. The plan as it stands is to have 3 sessions approx. 90 minutes each.

1. First will discuss the world post lockdown, it is clear that we will never go back to the way things were, so we will be discussing the changes to our business model, A focus on some of the ‘change’ that these ‘covid days’ has brought about to the ‘way we do things’ looking at things that have gone ‘well and less well’ from a

delivering effective service point of view – from a customer and staff point of view. Leading to a discussion as to how we can take some of the more positive changes to our working lives forward – in particular how staff might continue to embrace the concept of continuing to work from home, perhaps for some of their working week, as we move out of restrictions and into another ‘new normal’ world. Also to give thought to other changes around us, not least the fact that at least 3 staff will be retiring this year, which will bring about organisational change.

2. Session Two:

The main part of this second session will be a traditional SWOT / SCOT (with the W being replaced with a C for challenge) analysis, using the break out rooms, the results of which will be incorporated into the Business Plan.

3. We will look at our Objectives, short and long term

All of the above is up for discussion at the meeting

Note The following dates were agreed at the meeting. The introductory session will take place on 6th April at 6pm for 45 minutes ahead of the Committee Meeting, and the Strategy Day will take place on 16th April starting at 10.30

liP

Our liP assessment has taken place and the feedback was very positive with overall improvements since last year, in particular in terms of staff motivation and communication. The draft report is included in the papers.

Recruitment

We have now concluded the Recruitment of our Repairs Officer, with the new team member starting on 22nd March, which will allow just over a month of overlap.

Retirement Policy

In October 2019 the Committee approved the Retirement Policy, which was due to be reviewed in October last year and look back at how it had worked in practice. However nobody has retired since 2019, therefore we have no experience to look back on. That said, the policy was written pre Covid, and at that time we felt all staff making use of the winding down policy should use up all their annual leave prior to starting winding down, and that no leave would be paid for on leaving.

It is proposed that the policy is changed for a temporary period of up to 2 years to take account of the fact that staff currently have significant leave balances (up to 30 days) due to the carry forward allowed of 12 days, and also due to the lack of opportunities to go on holiday.

It is proposed that we allow staff to use the winding down policy but be paid for outstanding annual leave, TOIL and flexi time on leaving. If we don't then it means that staff will use all their leave during their 3 month notice period, and this may cause problems. For some staff this won't be an issue, but for others it will.

Proposed by Rhona Polak Seconded by Yvonne McDonald

6.1

Committee Member Attendance Record 2020-2021

The record was agreed as correct.

7.1	<p>Health and Safety</p> <p>Sandra advised that all Health and Safety checks were being carried out</p>
8.	<p><u>Property Services Report</u></p> <p>External Door Replacement The windows at 1 – 22 Walkingmill Road were replaced in 2013 however the doors were not. As such the current doors are now in need of replacement and Joe asked that Committee approve the expenditure which would be in the region of £20,000.</p> <p>Proposed by Rhona Polak Seconded by Ross Campbell Anderson</p> <p>Joe advised that due to the ongoing pandemic and the Scottish Government’s restrictions, much of the property services report remained unchanged from last month.</p> <p>Electrical Testing – out to tender and will go before April Committee meeting</p> <p>Landscape Maintenance – out to tender and will go before April Committee meeting</p> <p>Fire Safety Compliance – the installations of smoke/heat detection is due for completion in Feb 2022. 120 Installations are outstanding and tenants have been contacted and asked for a suitable date for this work to be carried out.</p> <p>Gutter Cleaning – 80% complete and work was expected to finish for the end of Feb 21.</p> <p>Medical Adaptations – 8 orders have been issued and 5 of these are now complete, with the 3 outstanding being due to Scottish Gov restrictions.</p>
9.	<p><u>Policies for Approval</u></p> <p>S32 Retirement Policy as discussed within the Director’s Report</p>
10.	<p><u>EVH Report</u></p> <p>The report was made available to Committee’</p>
11.	<p><u>AOB and Apologies for Future Meetings</u></p> <p>None</p>
12.	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>6th April 2021</p>