

**Knowes Housing Association**  
**Management Committee Meeting**  
**Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at 6.30pm**  
**Meeting conducted electronically**

**MINUTE OF MEETING**

**In Attendance**

Pierre De Fence, Director  
Joe Wilson, Property Services Manager  
Sandra Love, SCSO

Erica Davidson, Head of Finance  
Martin Harvey, Housing Manager

**Present**

Rhona Polak  
Lynsey Chrystal  
Yvonne McDonald  
Hilary Edgar  
Ross Campbell Anderson

Katie Devaney  
Steven McCabe  
Janet Cassidy  
Billy Stevenson  
Gary Clark

**Guest**

Heather Ballantine, Be the Bestest

<b>1.</b>	<p><b><u>Preview of Committee Strategy Day on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2021</u></b></p> <p>Heather provided some information and training on the features and benefits of using Zoom as a discussion platform. This was in advance of the planned Strategy Day of 16<sup>th</sup> April and would be the platform used by remote attendees.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b><u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p>No apologies were received</p>
<b>3.</b>	<p><b><u>Declaration of Interest</u></b></p> <p>None</p>
<b>4.</b>	<p><b><u>Correspondence</u></b></p> <p>Pierre advised that no correspondence had been received.</p>
<b>5.</b>	<p><b><u>Minutes of Previous Meeting of Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021</u></b></p> <p>The minute of the meeting was agreed and approved</p> <p>Proposed by Lynsey Chrystal, Seconded by Janet Cassidy</p>

<p>5.1</p>	<p><b><u>Minutes of Housing Sub, Audit Sub and Finance Sub</u></b></p> <p>The minutes were made available to Committee and Erica brought to the attention of Committee that we now have new Internal Auditors.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p><b><u>New Share Members</u></b></p> <p>Sandra advised there had been no new Share applications</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p><b><u>Directors Report</u></b></p> <p>Stock Control Year to Date as at 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021</p> <p>✓ <b>Mortgage to Rent / Buy Backs</b>  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><b>Covid 19 Measures</b></p> <p>Since our last meeting there has been an update from the Scottish Government. There are some easing of restrictions from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> April, however the changes mainly affect retail and hairdressers etc, but for us for now the status quo remains as below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Repairs and Maintenance</b>  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.</li> <li>• <b>Voids</b>  We are now processing all voids in line with our Covid procedure</li> </ul> <p><b>Staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We have 1 member of staff off sick, but due back shortly</li> <li>○ 1 member of staff is now on furlough, but will be brought back once we can carry out non-emergency repairs.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Communication with tenants</b>  The rent letter has been sent which includes an update on a variety of matters including the rent counter closure. We are working on the next newsletter and it will go out in April.</li> </ul> <p>Our facebook page, has regular updates.</p> <p>The tenant app has had further issues with Worldpay, and the processing payment side of the App is again unavailable. Elaine is working on this.</p>

- **Communication with Committee**

Our Strategy day is planned for 16<sup>th</sup> April using Zoom, and a pre session will be held at the start of this committee meeting, just to get everyone familiar with the various Zoom features such as break out groups and whiteboards etc. A copy of the agenda for the day is also included with the papers.

- **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**

This service from our office has been withdrawn by CIRC due to their concerns about Covid.

### **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 have now been 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 we 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

	<p>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 <b>embrace the concept of continuing to work from home</b>, perhaps for some of their working week, as we move out of restrictions and into another ‘new normal’ world.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>2. Session Two:</b>  <b>The main part of this second session will be a traditional SWOT / SCOT (with the W being replaced with a C for challenge) analysis</b>, using the break-out rooms, the results of which will be incorporated into the Business Plan.</p> <p>3. We will look at our Objectives, short and long term</p> <p><b>Recruitment</b></p> <p>One of our Housing Officers has handed in their notice to retire at the end of June, there is a report included in the papers. This would normally be presented to the Employment sub-committee, but as we just met recently to agree the recruitment of Sandra’s post, to save time it is being presented to the full committee.</p> <p><b>Recruitment of Senior Officer Policy</b></p> <p>Having had discussions with a number of Directors who have either retired, moved to other jobs or are new in post, it has become apparent that the Housing Regulator has an expectation that all RSLs have a separate recruitment policy for the recruitment of the Senior Officer. It does actually make sense, as the Regulator also has an expectation that the in post Director will have very little or nothing to do with the process of recruiting a replacement.</p> <p>I have drafted up a policy which is included with the papers, which will guide the Committee in the recruitment process.</p>
7.1	<p><b>Committee Member Attendance Record 2020-2021</b></p> <p>The record was agreed as correct.</p>
8.	<p><b>Health and Safety</b></p> <p>Sandra advised that all Health and Safety checks were being carried out</p>
9.	<p><b><u>Property Services Report</u></b></p> <p><b>Landscape Maintenance</b> – Joe advised that Continental had been awarded the contract for Knowes in conjunction with Dalmuir Park HA. This was the result of a joint procurement exercise which proved to be cost saving for both Knowes and Dalmuir Park. The bid by Continental of £344,000 over 3 years was approved by Committee</p> <p>Proposed by Gary Clark and Seconded by Rhona Polak.</p>

	<p><b>Budget Report</b> – Joe advised that the Scottish Government would be lifting restrictions on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2021 and as such entry into tenants houses to carry out non emergency repairs etc would be permitted. The lifting of restrictions also meant that City Building could resume carrying out kitchen surveys in tenant’s houses.</p> <p><b>Electrical Testing</b> – Tenders for this contract were still being received and the procurement process was ongoing.</p>
10.	<p><b><u>Policies for Approval</u></b></p> <p>S33 Recruitment of Senior Officer.</p> <p>Pierre advised the Policy was the result of previous discussions by Committee whereby there may come a time when the Senior Officer had to be replaced. The Committee had agreed that such a Policy should be in place to allow the best outcome for the organisation. Pierre outlined the information contained within the document and following a discussion Committee agreed to adopt the policy.</p> <p>Proposed by Yvonne McDonald and Seconded by Hilary Edgar</p>
10.1	<p><b><u>Procurement Strategy</u></b></p> <p>Joe advised that the Procurement Strategy is aimed at promoting effective procurement across Knowes and aims to strike a balance between setting out a high level framework for the delivery of excellent procurement whilst delivering a detailed plan which will address specific targets.</p> <p>Rhona requested that a table noting the key dates in the strategy be attached to future property services reports.</p> <p>Proposed by Billy Stevenson and Seconded by Gary Clark</p>
11.	<p><b><u>EVH Report</u></b></p> <p>The report was made available to Committee</p>
12.	<p><b><u>Recruitment of Housing Officer</u></b></p> <p>Pierre advised that one of our Housing Officers, Jackie Ferrie, had handed in her notice as she intended to retire. Following a discussion on the reports presented Committee agreed that the business would be best served by finding a replacement for the post by advertising via the usual mediums.</p> <p>Committee unanimously agreed that the post should be filled.</p>
13.	<p><b><u>Strategy Day Agenda</u></b></p> <p>The Agenda for the Strategy Day was available with the papers and Committee were happy with the content. A short discussion took place over the provision of lunch as this was the case previously when such meetings were held prior to the pandemic. It was decided that the best course of action would be for Erica to organise e vouchers from Marks and Spencer to be issued to Members as this would allow them to purchase lunch from there prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> April.</p>

14.	<p><b><u>Any Other Business and Apologies for Future Meetings</u></b></p> <p>The Repairs Satisfaction Survey was available in the Microsoft survey format. Sandra advised this was a work in progress as Elaine was working on the finer details and all surveys would be sent out electronically in future. Sandra will ensure a random number from the surveys is selected and the sender will be sent a voucher.</p>
15.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2021 Note the change to the regular time, to allow approval of the ARC.</b></p>