

**Knowes Housing Association**  
**Committee and Staff Strategy Away Day**  
**Friday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022, start 9.30am conclusion 3.30pm**

**NOTES OF MEETING**

**Present**

Katie Devaney Billy Stevenson Lynsey Chrystal Yvonne McDonald Steven McCabe Lawrence O'Neill Erica Davidson Martin Harvey	Kennedy Chilambe Sandra McPhee Karen Grainger Nicola Gerrard Natasha Robinson Maureen MacConnell Joe Mailley	Ann Gaggini Jodie Hart Graham Burns Allison Rae Kirsty Woods Joe Wilson Ethan Hart
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**Guest Speaker/Facilitator**

Heather Ballantine, Be the Bestest

<b>1.</b>	<p><b><u>Apologies</u></b></p> <p>Rhona Polak, Ross Campbell Anderson, Hilary Edgar, Nikki Quinn, Allan McGarrity, Elaine Lewty, Isabel Pringle</p>
<b>2.</b>	<p><b><u>Session 1</u></b></p> <p>Heather presented the agenda for the day which would focus on 3 themes – wellbeing, customer service and organisation culture.</p> <p>Heather started with an ‘ice breaker’ exercise to help staff and committee get to know each other – as some of the staff members were new and the staff and committee had not had a day together since before lock down. The exercise involved each attendee talking to at least 10 others and establishing three things they had in common with that person.</p> <p>Heather then went on to give a presentation on wellbeing and how to stay positive and resilient through the many challenges facing staff and committee at present. Heather presented the analogy of different boats in the one storm and gave the groups an exercise to do where they were asked to discuss what kind of boat they had been in over the last year and how they felt they were weathering the storm.</p>

The session ended with feedback from the groups.

## **Session 2**

Heather started off this session with talking about customer service and asking the group what they felt made good customer service. This focussed on how customers experience Knowes and how they felt they were treated. Heather explained that it was important to remember that customers were no different from staff in that they wanted the same things. The groups were asked to carry out an exercise to look at the three most important things which need to be in place to ensure that Knowes could provide the best customer service possible.

Some of the ideas that the teams fed back on were as follows:-

- Good infrastructure – IT systems in place and experienced staff
- Good governance
- Organisational core values
- Positive culture
- Reason for existing, that is, to provide homes and community engagement
- Good communication
- Clear expectations
- Staff training and development
- Setting high standards and targets/service level standards
- Continuous improvement
- Empathy and understanding
- Staff availability
- Obtaining feedback
- Listening to our customers' needs

Erica gave a short presentation on the results of our 2022 Customer satisfaction survey. At the end of the presentation she posed five questions to the groups as follows:-

1. How do we improve communication with our Customers?
2. How do we give Customers more opportunities to participate?
3. How do we improve the quality of Customer homes?
4. How do we improve our repairs service to our Customers?
5. How do we increase Customers satisfaction in the neighbourhood?

Each of the groups was asked to take one of the questions and discuss. The feedback from the teams was as follows:-

### **Question 1 – How do we improve communication with our customers?**

- Consider ways of improving our customer portal
- Posting more information on our website and Facebook page
- Improving our text messaging service

- Improve communication between staff and departments which will in turn impact on the information we provide to our customers

**Question 2 – How do we give Customers more opportunities to participate**

- Use of tenant portal
- Use newsletter to explain ways to participate
- Encourage tenants to return customer satisfaction surveys (more prizes?)
- Encourage tenants to participate in planned activities e.g. bus run, garden competition
- Encourage use of technology e.g. Zoom meetings with housing officers
- Explore ways of increasing use of social media

**Question 3 – How do we improve the quality of our Customers' homes?**

- Utilise the information gained in our stock condition survey to put in place programme of improvements
- Communicate with tenants over access issues as we need their help to allow us to help them
- Consider sustainable materials
- Offer choices in our modernisation programme for kitchens and bathrooms
- Making houses more energy efficient and eliminating draughts and improving insulation
- Hold open forums to consult tenants
- Remind tenants of their responsibilities for taking care of their homes

**Question 4 – How do we improve our repairs service to our Customers?**

- Provide updates to customers who are waiting on repairs through regular phone backs or text messaging
- Improve reporting tools – making repairs easier for our customers to report
- Select high quality contractors who can improve our customer service and quality of the work carried out
- Listen to our customers – ask what they want?
- Manage expectations – inform customers of what we are able to do and when.

**Question 5 – How do we increase Customer satisfaction in the neighbourhood?**

- More engagement/monitoring with landscape contractor
- Opportunity to adopt parcels of council land for improvement
- More publishing what is already going on and the work we do on Facebook and our website, taking advantage of photo opportunities to highlight good work

- Engagement with WDC – introducing more recycling points
- Community events such as litter picks
- Engagement with other partners e.g. Dogs Trust (reduce dog fouling)
- Community benefit clauses in contracts

**Session 3**

Heather introduce session 3 with a reminder of Knowes' mission and vision statements, our strategy and our core values as laid out in the Business plan.

Heather asked the groups to discuss and feedback on the annual SCOT analysis – looking at Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities and Threats facing the organisation of the next year.

The feedback from the groups was as follows:

**Strengths**

- Strong committee and staff
- Knowledgeable staff and committee
- High for properties
- Excellent performance
- Good customer service
- Good local present
- Staff training opportunities
- Hybrid working
- High morale/low staff turnover
- Strong financial position
- Developing new properties
- Community based
- Adaptable
- Stock value
- Forward thinking

**Challenges**

- Cost of living – impact on rental income
- Succession planning for staff and committee
- Staff turnover/loss of knowledge
- Hybrid working – getting the balance right
- Managing tenant expectations
- Communication
- Mental health issues
- Staff morale
- Staff retention/lack of opportunities for advancement
- IT
- Increased costs
- Type of property not meeting current tenant aspirations
- Modernising
- ESSH2
- Replacing services no longer provided by LA

**Opportunities**

- Developing/New build
- Options to change how we operate
- Wider action/funding available
- Grants for energy efficiency projects

**Threats**

- Cost of living
- National association on doorstep
- Changing client base (chaotic lifestyles, mental health issues)
- Reduced social services and support available
- Funding

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hybrid working/new ways of working/culture change</li> <li>• Future pandemic</li> <li>• Financial aid to tenants</li> <li>• Improve/upgrade properties</li> <li>• Joint campus/WDC development opportunities</li> <li>• Independence referendum</li> <li>• IT/Digital working and communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future pandemics</li> <li>• Fuel crisis</li> <li>• Mental health crisis</li> <li>• IT</li> <li>• Contractor shortages/prices/shortage of materials</li> <li>• Aging stock</li> <li>• Brexit</li> <li>• Independence referendum</li> <li>• Regulation</li> <li>• New legislation</li> <li>• Attracting new committee members</li> <li>• Economy – recession</li> <li>• Takeover bids</li> <li>• War</li> </ul>
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Erica then presented the draft set of Business objectives for 2022 – 23 and for 2023 – 2025 asking for comments and revisions based on the discussions the groups had had so far on improving customer service.

Erica took a note of suggestions and changes and the Business objectives were finalised for presentation to the Management Committee for approval on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022

**Session 4**

Heather presented the final session of the day on organisation culture and invited the committee and staff to talk in their groups about the stories that customers told about us and to us throughout the years. The groups then shared their positive experiences with Heather and each other. It was also discussed that when a colleague had passed away recently the staff and committee had been touched by all the lovely stories shared by our customers on our Facebook page about how helpful he had been to all of them over the years and how he had touched upon and improved their lives.

It was universally felt by all present that we don't broadcast these good news stories enough and that we should be more positive about what we do and our good performance. This should be shared with our customers through our newsletter, our website and Facebook.

Heather brought the sessions to a close on a very positive note and Erica thanked everyone for their participation in the event.