



**Minutes of Management Committee Meeting
Held on Tuesday 12th March 2024 at 6.30pm
at Knowes Housing Association's Office**

Present: Lynsey Chrystal
Hilary Edgar
Dean Vinter
Peter Fennessey
Richard McLean
Katie Devaney
Yvonne McDonald
Billy Stevenson
Cllr Lawrence O'Neill
Steve Rolfe
Leanne Keegan

In Attendance: Claire Beckley RGDP (For Agenda Item 1 only)
Erica Davidson CEO
Peter French Head of Property Services
Amy Sweeney Corporate Services / Compliance Officer

Please note that the Management Committee are provided with a copy of papers one week prior to the meeting.

Intro	The Chairperson advised that going forward any staffing matters will be discussed towards the end of the meeting.
1.	Presentation by Claire Beckley, Data Protection Officer RGDP Claire Beckley our Data Protection Officer from RGDP attended the Committee meeting to deliver a data protection update. Claire advised that a Data Protection & Freedom of Information Action Plan has been put together to ensure that the Association is compliant with data protection and this is regularly monitored.

1.1	<p><i>After Claire's training update the Committee thanked her for her time and she left the meeting at this point.</i></p> <p>Apologies:</p> <p>The following people submitted their apologies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heather Maitz
2.	<p>Declaration of Interests</p> <p>Lynsey Chrystal, Katie Devaney, Yvonne McDonald, Richard McLean and Dean Vinter declared an interest under agenda item 18 – Employers Ballot 2024 and did not take part in discussions on this item.</p>
3.	<p>Correspondence</p> <p>A donation request was received from Flourishing Faifley for their Easter Event. Erica confirmed that there is money available in the charitable donations budget.</p> <p>The Committee approved a donation of £250 to support Flourishing Faifley's community event. Proposed by Katie Devaney and seconded by Cllr Lawrence O'Neill.</p>
4.	<p>Minutes of Management Committee on 6th February 2024</p> <p>The minute of the Management Committee meeting held on 6th February 2024 was agreed as an accurate record and approved. Proposed by Billy Stevenson and seconded by Cllr Lawrence O'Neill.</p>
5.	<p>Minutes of Sub Committee Meetings</p> <p>The following minutes were provided to the Committee for their information;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Sub Committee Meeting – 28.02.24 <p>No sub committee meetings will be held in March, the next meeting will be held in April.</p>
6.	<p>CEO Report</p> <p>Erica presented her report to the Committee. The report included the following information:</p> <p><u>House Purchases through the ROTs Programme</u></p>

Four properties have been purchased through the ROTs programme to date. WDC has agreed that there will be a grant available for a further two purchases this financial year and for eight purchases in 2024/25. We have a further property purchase planned and this is currently with our legal team.

Charity and Community Funding Income and Expenditure for 2023/24

A breakdown of the budget for 2023/24 and spend to the end of February 2024 was included for information.

Staff Changes

We have successfully recruited a Maintenance Officer to fill the post of the current incumbent who is retiring at the end of March 2024. The new staff member will be starting at Knowes HA on Monday 18th March. Further information on this is included under agenda item 19.

The closing date for the Head of Finance post was Thursday 29th February 2024. We received 3 applications for this post. The interview panel made up of the management team and 3 Committee members met on 5th March to discuss the applications that we received and select candidates for interview. Interviews for the post will take place on 14th March 2024.

New Build Abbeylands Road

WDC have granted Knowes HA an occupancy licence and we have commissioned Continental Landscapes to clear the land of trees.

We are no further forward with buying the land yet and until this has gone through we are unable to organise the demolition of the pavilion building on the site and tender for the construction company to build the new properties.

Knowes has engaged Paul McNeil to review our financial model and organised the development loan for us. We have also engaged JLL to carry the valuation of our stock for loan purposes.

A discussion took place regarding the cuts to the Scottish Government's budgets and whether this would affect the funding available for Knowes over the next financial year including plans for the new build project. The Committee were advised that this was a possibility however we will not receive funding for the new builds until the other stages of the project have been approved.

7.	<p>New Share Members</p> <p>No new applications received.</p>
8.	<p>Corporate Services Report</p> <p>Amy presented her report on the ongoing activities that the Association is involved in within the community.</p> <p><u>Activities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service Excellence – We have been re-accredited with Customer Excellence with Compliance Plus. We received positive feedback from the assessor and we will be implementing their recommendations going forward. • Flourishing Faifley – Flourishing Faifley are taking on the lease of the Knowes Pavilion and will be changing it into a community hub. We will be supporting them with this new project alongside Morrison Construction, West Dunbartonshire Council, Community Links Scotland and Caledonia HA. <p>A discussion took place regarding how we plan to support them with this project. Amy advised that Flourishing Faifley invited her down to the site for a press release on Thursday 7th March. Flourishing Faifley have said that they really appreciate all the support that Knowes HA has provided them with over the years and they would like us to be mentioned in this project. We will support them by continuing to promote their events and news on our website, Facebook and in our newsletter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycling Scotland – We have received the grant funding and will begin the work for this project in the next few weeks. • Fuel Vouchers (Energy Redress Scheme) – Community Links have finished distributing the fuel vouchers to Knowes HA's tenants and this project is now complete.
9.	<p>Health, Safety and Wellbeing</p> <p>Amy presented her report on the health, safety and wellbeing updates within the Association.</p> <p><u>Updates</u></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire Alarm – Weekly fire alarm tests are continuing every Thursday. • Monthly Checks – Monthly housekeeping, legionella testing and ladder checks continue to be carried out with no issues. • PAT testing – PAT testing was carried out on office and homeworking equipment on 29th February 2024. The electrician will be carrying out testing on the remaining 40 appliances on 15th March 2024. • Staff Survey – We carried out a staff survey in February and 16 out of 19 staff members completed the survey. A separate report on the survey results will be brought to the meeting in April. <p>A question was raised about why 3 staff members never answered the survey. Amy explained that the survey was anonymous therefore we wouldn't be able to identify who didn't answer the survey.</p> <p><u>Training</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethan Hart completed the emergency first aider course on 29th February. • Amy attended the health and safety forum held by EVH on 12th March. • Ethan-Craig Adamson, Graham Burns and I will be attending fire warden training with ACS on 13th March.
10.	<p>Property Services Reports</p> <p>Peter presented his reports on repairs and maintenance updates for the Association.</p> <p><u>KPI Report</u></p> <p>KPI results from the period 01/04/2023 – 05/03/2024.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs – 8 days. • Average time taken to attend emergency repairs – 22mins. • Average time taken to complete emergency repairs – 1hr 41mins.

- Gas Service Report – 1044 out of 1045 properties with a valid gas safety certificate within 12 months (99.90%).

A question was raised on whether there had been any further contact from the tenant who had contacted the press about a leak in their property. Erica and Peter confirmed that no further contact had been made after the story was released but they are happy to provide further information if requested. Erica notified the SHR of the situation and they confirmed that it was not a notifiable event.

Capital Projects

- Bathrooms – This project is now complete.
- Boiler Replacement – This project is now complete.
- Windows – The installations for this project started in February 2024. Most of the project will be completed by end of March and any remaining work will be completed in April/May. This is due to us experiencing some access issues.
- Kitchens – We re-issued this tender and returns are due by 18th March 2024 however a contractor has requested a 1 week extension. We have issued 11 addresses outside of the contract to our main contractor to carry out. The 11 addresses include void properties and properties where the kitchens are in a very poor condition and need an upgrade.
- Tenemental Water Tank Removal – Removing water tanks will remove the need test for legionella. Large water tanks will be replaced with smaller tanks were necessary to decrease the risk of legionella.

Service Projects

- Gas Service Contract – The gas servicing contract with City Building expires in April 2024. As discussed at the meeting held in February, our recommendation is to directly award the gas contract to City Building through the Scotland Excel framework. The new contact will be for a period of 4 years.

We have contacted local housing associations to ask how much they pay for this service and we are confident that City Building are providing us with a high quality service at a competitive and fair price. City Building's contract includes a service charge for every property however they have attended more call outs and haven't charged us extra for this.

The Committee approved the recommendation to directly award the gas servicing contract to City Building. Proposed by Cllr Lawrence O'Neill and seconded by Leanne Keegan.

- Landscape Maintenance Contract – The landscape maintenance contract expires in April 2024, our recommendation is to extend the current contract with Continental Landscapes for one year as allowed for in the contract. The annual increase rate is determined by the current contract and is 6.46%.

The Committee approved the recommendation to extend the current contract with Continental Landscapes for one year. Proposed by Leanne Keegan and seconded by Steve Rolfe.

EICR

- We have roughly 20 EICRs that are due to be completed by the end of March. We have scheduled appointments to carry these out.

Health and Safety

- Fire Risk Assessment – The first batch of fire risk assessments of the common areas of Knowes HA's tenemental stock were completed last week by ACS and the final batch have just been completed. We are now waiting on the final report from ACS. Surveys of the stock are ongoing.
- Condition Survey of Trees – The trees on the estate affected by Ash Dieback have been removed and this work is now complete.

Medical Adaptations

- 22 adaptations have/are being delivered which will exhaust the £25k budget. Further requests will be held off until the next financial year. We have received 3 requests since the budget was exhausted, the requests will be held off until we receive the new grant award for 2024/25.

Update on Repairs and Maintenance Spend

The Committee were provided with the repairs and maintenance spend to date.

It was highlighted that there has been an underspend of £262,971 in the budget for major component replacements, but this will be used for the window contract and most of this budget will be spent by 31st March 2024.

Major Component Replacement Contract Report

	<p>A Committee member suggested that it would be worthwhile to include a short explanation when any of the budgets are going to be carried over to the next financial year and the reason for this to ensure that there is a clear audit trail.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Policies for Approval</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Succession Plan – This is a new policy. Suggestion made to include ‘Ltd’ after ‘Knowes Housing Association’ throughout the policy. <p>A discussion took place about how we could attract tenants to join the Committee. It was highlighted that it has been difficult to increase tenant participation especially within the Management Committee and Customer Working Group which is most likely due to the commitment that is required. Amy advised that we include information about joining the Management Committee and Customer Working Group in our newsletter, surveys and on our website.</p> <p>There were no other comments or suggestions and the policy was approved, proposed by Billy Stevenson and seconded by Lynsey Chrystal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electrical Safety Checks – Following a discussion, the Committee agreed that they would like more detail to be included in this policy. More information to be included about timescales, a clear procedure guide and how long we retain certificates. The policy will be brought back to the Committee meeting in April. <p>A question was raised regarding how recharges work. Peter advised that we only recharge the tenant if there was a charge to us for instance if we need to force a door to carry out gas servicing due to the tenant failing to arrange an appointment with us.</p> <p>Another question was raised about whether we would recharge a tenant for an emergency forced access as mentioned in page 2 of the policy. Peter advised that if there was a situation where a tenant wasn’t at home and emergency access was needed for instance due to a leak then we would not charge for this.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>EVH Report</p> <p>The EVH Report for February was provided to the Committee for their information.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>Internal Audit Three Year Plan</p>

	<p>Erica presented the internal audit three year plan to the Committee. She advised that the internal auditors (TIAA) have been appointed for the next 3 years and have put together a plan for this period following a risk assessment.</p> <p>Erica highlighted page 4 of the report to the Committee which set out the proposed plan with the areas to be reviewed and year that this will be carried out.</p> <p>Erica advised that the plan will start from 1st April 2024 and we have allocated between 15 -20 days per in annum in total to carry out the audit assignments. As mentioned in page 3 of the report, the annual plan will be subject to ongoing review and could change as the risks change for the organisation.</p> <p>Any outstanding actions from previous audits will go to the Audit Sub Committee meetings.</p> <p>The Committee were asked to approve the audit plan. The Committee approved, proposed by Leanne Keegan and seconded by Lynsey Chrystal.</p>
14.	<p>Debt Write Off for 2023-24</p> <p>The following amounts were recommended to be written off:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Former tenant arrears – £11,434.54 • Former tenant rechargeable repairs – £49,622.48 • Owner occupier arrears – £8.67 <p>The Committee approved the request to write off the debts, proposed by Billy Stevenson and seconded by Cllr Lawrence O’Neill.</p>
	<p><i>Peter French (Head of Property Services) left the meeting at this point so that the Committee could discuss the remaining agenda items.</i></p>
15.	<p>Notifiable Events</p> <p>No notifiable events.</p>
16.	<p>Management Committee Attendance Register</p> <p>The attendance register was provided to the Committee for their information.</p>
17.	<p>Committee Appraisals Report</p>

	<p>The Committee Appraisals were carried out in October by Lorna Ravell from EVH. She has prepared a report on the information that she collected during the appraisals process along with recommendations.</p> <p>Overall the findings from the Collective Committee Appraisal Survey were very positive.</p> <p>The following training needs were identified:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Employment • Development • Governance <p>It was agreed that at the next Committee meeting the schedule for sub committee meetings would be discussed and the membership of each sub committee would be confirmed. The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to hold the sub committee meetings on a quarterly basis instead of monthly.</p>
18.	<p>Employers Ballot 2024</p> <p>As per agenda item 3, Lynsey Chrystal, Katie Devaney, Yvonne McDonald, Richard McLean and Dean Vinter declared an interest under is agenda item and did not take part in discussions on this item.</p> <p>After wage negotiations EVH have proposed a wage increase of 6% on all salary points (bar points PA1 to PA6 which will be increased to the set rate for the Real Living Wage of £12.00 per hour). This increase will also be applied to all allowances, bar the standard HMRC fixed mileage allowance.</p> <p>As a full member of EVH, Knowes HA is required to vote on whether they would accept this proposal. The Committee agreed that they would accept an increase of 6%. Proposed by Billy Stevenson and seconded by Hilary Edgar.</p>
	<p><i>After agenda item 18 had been discussed and a decision had been made, Lynsey Chrystal, Katie Devaney, Yvonne McDonald, Richard McLean and Dean Vinter rejoined the meeting discussions.</i></p>
	<p><i>Amy Sweeney (Corporate Services/Compliance Officer) left the meeting at this point so that the Committee could discuss agenda</i></p>

	<i>items 19 and 20.</i>
19.	<p>Maintenance Officer Appointment Report</p> <p>Erica presented a report on the appointment of the Maintenance Officer.</p> <p>At the Committee meeting in November 2023 the Committee approved the request to fill the post of the retiring Maintenance Officer and increase the section's resources to have two full time Maintenance Officers (previously 1 full-time and 1 part-time officers were employed).</p> <p>The post was advertised in February 2024 and we received 5 applications, 4 of these applicants met the job specification and were invited to interview. The CEO, Head of Property Services and Head of Housing carried out the interviews.</p> <p>The successful candidate for the role was [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED] will start with Knowes HA on 18th March 2024 which is before the current Maintenance Officer retires therefore this will allow for a handover period.</p> <p>The Committee was asked to note the contents of the report and ratify the employment of [REDACTED] as Maintenance Officer at Knowes HA (permanent post, 35 hours, EVH Grade 7).</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>

	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Committee approved the change to the Recruitment Policy as proposed by the Chair and also ratified the appointment of the new Maintenance Officer. Proposed by Lawrence O'Neill and seconded by Dean Vinter.</p>
20.	<p>Proposal for Condensed 4.5 day Working Week</p> <p>Erica presented a report on the proposal for Knowes HA to introduce a condensed 4.5 day working week.</p> <p>It is proposed that a change is made to the current working week pattern of 9am – 5pm Monday to Friday to 8:30am – 5:30pm Monday to Thursday and 9am – 12pm on Friday.</p> <p>Two Scottish RSLs have already introduced a 4 day working week and the introduction of these hours would provide the following benefits:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more flexible approach for customers

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve staff morale and wellbeing and increase productivity • Improve staff retention and offer an additional benefit which would help with recruitment. <p>The office and phone lines would still be open to the public for 35 hours per week and emergency repairs would be covered on a Friday afternoon through to Monday morning.</p> <p>Staff would also still be able to work flexibly and on a hybrid basis around these times as long as there is adequate cover for each section.</p> <p>Some questions the Committee asked were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we close on a Friday afternoon – how will that impact our customers? • Will staff feel more stressed working longer hours Monday to Thursday? • Are staff still able to work flexibly if hours are compressed? How will this impact childcare, etc.? • If the purpose of the proposal is to improve staff wellbeing and promote staff retention – are there other ways to achieve this goal? • Will those staff who don't wish to change their 9-5/five day per week routine feel pressurised to conform to the majority vote? Or can the needs of all staff be accommodated within the change? <p>It was suggested that we use an external company to evaluate the current flexible and hybrid working conditions for staff and see how they can be improved without impacting customer services.</p> <p>Following a discussion, the Committee agreed that they would like a revised report to be brought to the next or a future Committee meeting with some more options given. It was also suggested that the Management Team appoint an external consultant to look at the proposal and also suggest alternative options.</p>
21.	<p>Any Other Business and Apologies for Future Meetings</p> <p>No other business was discussed.</p>
22.	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting will be held on Tuesday 16th April 2024.</p>