

ORE VALLEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

**Minute of the Annual General Meeting
held at
Ore Valley Business Centre, Lochgelly
on
Tuesday 18th August 2015 at 6.00pm**

Present:

Thomas Allan, Peter Graham, Harold Webster, Patricia Webster, Joan Reid, Susan McDonald, Rosalind Eals, Sandra Brown, Gavin Smith, William Robertson, Kathleen Brown, Tom Dougan and Alan Davidson.

In Attendance:

Nick Clark (Business Development Manager), Andrew Saunders (Chief Executive Officer), Kerry McLeod (Corporate Support Manager), Joanne Cargill (Executive Support Officer), Colin McInnes (Housing Manager), Moira Muir, Margaret Byers, Robert Byers and Dave Roberts (Chiene & Tait).

1. WELCOME

Susan McDonald (Vice Chair) welcomed those present and conveyed her appreciation to the number of members that have come along to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Rory Gaffney and Mark McLintock.

3. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE AGM HELD ON 13/09/2014

The minutes of the AGM held on 13th September 2014 were approved by Tom Allan, seconded by Peter Graham and adopted as a true record of the meeting.

4. MATTERS ARISING

Item 9 – Directors Report

PG questioned the kitchen replacement programme over 10 years.

AS explained that we cannot replace all of the kitchens at the same time. Some of the newer properties are not as old as 10 years. The kitchen replacements will be carried out on a rolling programme with the older kitchens being replaced first.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Susan McDonald (Vice Chair) introduced herself and gave the Chair's report in Keith Pattenden's absence. Keith has been Chair of Ore Valley Housing Association for a year which has coincided with the 20th anniversary of the first stock transfer from Scottish Homes to Auchterderran Housing Association, which was the original organisation before its transformation into

Ore Valley Housing Association five years later. This was a particularly important time for Keith.

The Association's history has involved repeated challenges and the past year has been no different. Many of the issues we face are outwith our direct control and linked to global and national economic difficulties, which amongst other things are limiting opportunities for good local training and employment.

The Association exists to serve local people and we have taken steps during the year to extend and improve the services we provide to our tenants and others who are seeking good quality affordable housing. The work carried out during the year on developing our new vision, mission and values at Ore Valley are intended to underpin our commitment to our tenants and the broader community.

The challenge presented by the on-going implementation of the UK Government welfare reform legislation continues to be a major risk and a concern for us and for many of our tenants. We have taken steps this year to put in place support and information to assist our tenants to understand the issues and to engage in initiatives where appropriate, to improve their employment prospects.

During the year we received information on our performance against the 'Tenants Charter' and we sent this information to all of our tenants in our annual report on the charter. We were pleased to learn that we performed well when compared to the Scottish Average.

We are not complacent about the service we provide and are constantly trying to achieve higher standards.

We carried out further survey work on the value for money of our services and are using the information obtained to influence how we move forward.

We have recognised the crucial importance of communication with our tenants in a broad range of formats and we are taking steps to improve our website and other widely used social media such as Facebook and Twitter that Andrew mentioned earlier.

The completion of the programme to overclad our properties with solid wall construction with insulated render, as well as providing more energy efficient homes has transformed the appearance of some streets. As well as the benefits to our own tenants, we were delighted to be able to facilitate a project that allowed 97 owner occupiers to benefit from the same level of improvement.

As well as insulation, we continued to deliver our rolling programme of kitchen replacement and electrical upgrades.

We are pleased to have been able to continue to provide support to a wide range of community activities and organisations, which really adds to the quality of life of so many people.

Our governance and risk management arrangements are designed to ensure that decisions are taken on the basis of high quality up to date information. Our arrangements were strengthened during the year through outsourcing elements of our finance function to an accountancy firm with substantial expertise in the Housing Association sector.

It has been a busy and wide ranging year and I would like to thank my fellow Board members who give their time voluntarily, for their exceptional input and also the staff team for their hard work during the course of the year. Susan McDonald seconded these sentiments.

6. FINANCIAL REPORT

Dave Roberts explained that the Consolidated Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2015 are 26 pages long but there is a summary of the highlights on page 8 of the Annual Report. The accounts have been audited by Bird Simpson, our external auditors and approved by the Board.

Dave Roberts talked through some of the highlights for the year:-

- 24p in the pound was spent on Interest payable.
- 27p in the pound was spent on Management and Maintenance admin costs.
- 17p in the pound was spent on repairing and improving tenant's homes.
- 3p in the pound was the surplus.
- The Income and Expenditure account is showing a surplus of £84,748.
- £500,000 was spent on Cyclical and Planned Maintenance.
- £200,000 was spent on new kitchens and boilers.
- The Balance Sheet shows a net worth of £505,236.

A full copy of the accounts can be e mailed or sent out on request.

The Chairman thanked Dave Roberts for the financial report.

7. APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

We are required to appoint auditors at each Annual General Meeting. Bird Simpson carried out the audit this year and the proposal is for Bird Simpson to be appointed for another year.

8. ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The Chief Executive Officer explained that in accordance with the current rules, a third of Board members are obliged to stand down and may then stand for re-election. This applied to Keith Pattenden, Susan McDonald and

Alan Davidson this year. Susan and Alan both indicated their willingness to be re-elected. Keith however has indicated his intention to stand down and not seek re-election. Keith has been involved in the Association for over 20 years, giving a valuable service on a voluntary basis and has been active in driving housing improvement. Gavin Smith has been filling a casual vacancy on the Board. There were no other nominations received, therefore, all 3 members were uncontested and elected on to the Board. We are actively seeking new members for the Board and if anyone is interested in filling a casual vacancy then please contact us.

9. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Andrew Saunders gave his report on the future.

The main issues Andrew talked about were new housing projects, asset management and how we fund that. He also talked about people, involving tenants, decision making and the competition for grant funding. There is no new housing on site at present, although there is a proposal for 15 new units to be built in Lochgelly next year.

Since the stock transfer from Scottish Homes in 1995 when we had 411 properties, then due to Right to Buy sales our stock dropped to 365. We now have 659 properties.

The existing properties are maintained and have increased energy efficiency which are the expectations of modern living. We carry out asset management to meet the aspiration and needs of tenants of our growing elderly population and the young people.

As the Cardenden Heat and Power project has faced a number of technical and economic challenges we are now looking at other options in addressing replacement central heating for more modern systems.

People are important, as is our housing and neighbourhood. We want to secure a sustainable place for tenants. Welfare Reform and Universal Credit will impact on people. Not everyone has a bank account and some people have problems with budgeting and managing money. Danielle is working with many of our tenants to help them sustain their tenancies.

A key priority this year is arranging tenant events, inviting tenants to participate in reviewing and shaping our services. We are also on Facebook and Twitter.

10. Open Forum

- Peter Graham asked why the time of the AGM has been changed this year and there is no tenant conference.

AS advised that there are 13 members attending the AGM this year, whereas there was only 10 attended last year. Historically the AGM is not well attended. The responses from the tenant conference last year were evaluated and the Board agreed to promote a series of tenant events in the course of the coming year. We are trying to encourage more attendance at events by using our website and Facebook to contact tenants.

- Peter Graham asked about the increase in salaries and the increase in staff numbers. He also asked about staff contracts and if any member of staff is on a zero contract.

AS explained that there are less full time staff this year than there was last year. We now share the office with Fife Council which means there are more people in the office. We have no staff who are working below the minimum wage and we will not be reducing the terms and conditions of employment.

- Robert Byers asked if we put the rents up when we want.

AS advised that the tenant's newsletter has just been posted out to all tenants which includes a questionnaire regarding the review of the rental structure. We are looking at the rent of all housing stock.

William Robertson said that Ore Valley had the highest rents.

AS advised that we have carried out a benchmarking exercise to compare rents against other Fife Housing Associations. Our rents may be higher than Fife Council's rents due to subsidies that were received.

- Harold Webster thought the Housing Officers should be visiting houses to find out what maintenance is required.

AS advised that a stock condition survey was carried out by F3 Building Surveyors. The planned maintenance is determined from the stock condition survey. Kitchens are inspected before any work is carried out.

- Harold Webster raised his concerns about the area around Berry Street and the cigarette ends at the back door of Ore Valley Business Centre.

AS advised that there is a programme of estate management where Housing Officers work with tenants and inspect gardens on a monthly basis. The tenancy agreement states that

tenants should maintain their garden to a reasonable standard. To go through a legal process to end a tenancy is challenging and costly.

- Kathleen Brown directed her comments to Andrew Saunders. Kathleen said that Andrew was contradicting himself when he was talking about people as she is not happy in her property.

AS advised that he knew about some of the issues raised by Kathleen. However, Ore Valley Housing Association is here to provide housing with affordable rent and to maintain these properties. We are not able to dictate the level of maturity that tenants show towards each other. We can offer mediation and strive to help all tenants.

- Peter Graham suggested putting up CCTV in some areas.

SMcD advised that the Housing Association will look at solutions.

11.A.O.C.B

There was no other competent business.

This AGM was drawn to a close at 18.50pm.