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COLIN FRASER ON **Redacted Information**



WGHC

Our tenants are paramount in everything we do

Committee of Management

Minutes of Meeting – 20th December 2023

Present:

Colin Fraser	(Chair)
Wendy Riordan	(Vice Chair)
Jim Hemphill	(Vice Chair)
George Thomson	
Lynn Jameson	
Mary Fergus	
Liz Stewart	
Alan Lamont	
Cameron Durance	
James Matthews	
Liz Robertson	
Amanda Aitchison	
Morag Orr	

In attendance:

Larke Adger	(CEO)
David Mills	(COO)

1. APOLOGIES

NIL (100% full attendance)

2. MINUTES OF MEETING 15th November 2023

The Minutes of the meeting held 15th November 2023 were **approved** by Committee.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were NIL matters arising from the last set of Minutes.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were NIL declarations of Interest.

5. GUESTS, VISITORS, OBSERVERS

There were NIL visitors, guests or observers

5A. ROLLING ACTION ITEM LIST

- ❖ The CEO gave Committee an update regarding the status of the high hedges application relevant to the Leylandii trees on the border of the WGHC estate.
- ❖ The COO gave Committee an update regarding the mapping and cataloguing of trees around and within the WGHC estate.
 - A Committee member asked what the situation was regarding trees that had been planted by tenants over the years. The COO confirmed that as tenants come and go, WGHC take over responsibility for the trees and their management.
 - A Committee member asked about tree stumps as trip hazards. The COO confirmed there may be an element of liability on WGHC in this event so communication and raising awareness with those tenants affected is important.
 - A Committee member asked about trees outwith our estate that grow through or damage our fences? – The COO indicated that WGHC had no liability in this regard and the private landowners would need to be approached in this event.
- ❖ The CEO closed the rolling action item list regarding Damp, Mould and Condensation as this is now being reported on a quarterly basis.
- ❖ THE CEO informed Committee that a schedule of planned maintenance works would be published on the WGHC website in the new budgeting year.
- ❖ The CEO informed Committee that the CIH Dementia framework was available and would be implemented in slow time over the next year and plans to pass this over to the Housing Manager to take the lead in this work.

The Chair requested that this item be incorporated within the body of future Committee reports.

- **Committee noted the report**

6. CASH IN BANK (INFLATION & INTEREST RATES)

All cash balances across the 5 x WGHC bank accounts were presented by the CEO and a summary total provided, which stood at £1.102million. There was an increase in the sum of £4k from the figure reported to Committee in November reported at £1.098million.

Inflation decreased and was reported at 4.6% (6.7% in the previous month) whilst interest rates were maintained at 5.25%. As requested by Committee, the CEO presented information on interest paid and balances of the 5 loans WGHC has with the Nationwide Building Society.

- **Committee noted the report**

7. RENT INCREASE CONSULTATION 2024-25

The CEO presented a report indicating the rate of CPI (Consumer Price Index) and how this is a poor representation of the cost of goods and services procured by WGHC. RPI (Retail Price Index) was discussed as being a more realistic measure, but unlikely to be adopted by the sector as the UK Government formally replaced RPI with CPI back in 2003.

A robust and informative discussion took place between Committee members putting forward various thoughts and opinions regarding the rate of rent increase % that should be put to the tenant members for consultation. The agreed options were either **6.5%** or **7.0%** based on affordability and planned budget spend and investment. A majority vote 10/2 confirmed this.

- **Committee noted the report**
- **Committee instructed that the % of either 6.5% or 7.0% be put to WGHC tenant members for consultation in early January 2024.**

8. NOTIFICATION OF COMMITTEE CASUAL VACANCY RESIGNATION

The COO informed Committee that a tenant member seeking a casual vacancy position on the Committee (approved at the November meeting) had, subsequently resigned for personal reasons without attendance at any Committee meetings. The SHR portal had been updated by the COO along with the WGHC website.

- **Committee noted the report**

9. THE ROLE OF SECRETARY & TRAINING FROM CO-OPS UK

The CEO informed Committee about the role of Secretary and to advise that Co-ops UK will hold a training session with Committee on Governance, their Roles and Responsibilities under the Companies Act 2006 & the Co-operative & Communities Benefit Societies Act 2014. The “Essential Co-op Director” training would be implemented in March or April 2024, TBC.

A tabulated version of the WGHC Rules were provided to each Committee member for future and ongoing use.

- **Committee noted the report**

10. CO-OPS UK & CROSS PARTY GROUP (SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT)

It was declared to the Committee of Management that both the CEO and COO had joined the Cross Party Group for Co-operatives in Scotland following their attendance at the Scottish Parliament and the CEO giving a speech on Co-operatives and actions being sought from the Government in support of the Co-operative movement.

- **Committee noted the report**

11. COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE TRAINING

For the past 2 years, Committee have received governance training from dedicated governance consultants, May Murray LLP. Committee were previously advised that May Murray LLP were being dissolved. However, one of the partners, Jennifer Queripel, has indicated she is prepared to continue providing governance training to Committee in selected elements. A discussion with the CEO resulted in an agreed list of training and support to be provided. As such, Committee approved adding Jennifer Queripel as a consultant in lieu of May Murray LLP. Other elements of specialist governance training is to be provided by Co-Ops UK.

- **Committee noted the report**
- **Committee approved the addition of Jennifer Queripel as a consultant**

12. STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The CEO indicated to Committee the actions being taking to raise the profile of WGHC and the co-operative model and to secure support at a national level on some of the challenges the model faces within the social housing sector.

- University College London's volunteer consultancy programme are to undertake a Social Value Measurement and Communication Strategy research project of WGHC, with the objective of measuring the social value WGHC has on its tenants and local community. The outcomes are to be presented in a report to target the audience of the Scottish social housing sector, the Regulator, and the Scottish Government about the unique benefits and impact that housing coops bring to tenants and the community.

Committee were asked to consider an amount for a financial contribution towards this work. They were advised there was still a £15k budget remaining and asked to consider the cost of this work should it have been procured privately and the length of the research term which is 2-3 months.

- The SHFA have requested WGHC host an event that showcases our previous and ongoing support of Midnight & Beyond (formerly FaceNorth). The Scottish Housing Minister and various interested parties, including the local press, will attend and this will be followed by the digital publication of the case study on the SFHA website. The date is still to be agreed with the Minister but it is estimated to be mid-late January 2024.

- **Committee noted the report**
- **Committee approved a donation of £3k to University College London**

13. TIS REPORT AND 'NEXT STEPS' UPDATE

The Tenant Information Service (TIS) have been independently reviewing WGHC's approach to customer service values, principles and standards. A focus group took place on Friday 24th November with 8 tenants attending and participating.

As a result, TIS have produced a report indicating recommendations and 'next step' actions. TIS will be producing a Customer Service Charter on behalf of WGHC. Further reports will be provided to Committee as the exercise evolves.

- **Committee noted the report**

14. INTERNAL AUDIT NOTICE

The CEO informed Committee that Wylie + Bisset would be continuing with their audit plan as of January 2024 with the areas of:

- Budgetary Controls
- Reactive Maintenance

- **Committee noted the report**

15. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH UPDATE

The COO reminded Committee that under the AOCB section of the November meeting, a request was made to initiate and manage a neighbourhood watch scheme for the whole WGHC estate, i.e. the 17 streets/areas.

Cameron Durance (Committee Member) requested this and volunteered to act as the local scheme co-ordinator. WGHC could not be seen to endorse or manage the scheme but advised practical, administrative support had been given to assist Cameron with the setting up of the scheme. Cameron advised this had now been set up and had been named the *West Grantown Neighbourhood Watch Scheme*. Cameron further advised that the local Police and other Neighbourhood Watch groups had contacted him to discuss future joint working initiatives. WGHC circulated flyers about the new scheme to all tenants, along with the Winter Newsletter.

- **Committee noted the report**
- **Committee passed their thanks to Cameron for his efforts**

16. ESG STANDARDS

The CEO presented information on the ESG standards (Environmental, Social and Governance Sustainability) The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing criteria is divided up into 12 “ESG” themes. Housing providers should report using a “comply” or “explain” approach against each of the criteria.

Whilst this is not a legal requirement just now, it is expected that within the next 24 months, the UK Government will put this in to law. This means that even WGHC, as a small business enterprise, will be required to report on the standards.

- **Committee noted the report**

17. CEO ANNUAL REVIEW

The Chair met with the CEO Larke Adger on 22nd November 2023 to carry out her annual review. The Chair stated: “The two Vice Chairs also attended and I’d like to thank them for their support to me and their important contribution to the meeting. On behalf of Committee we reviewed Larke’s performance over the last 12 months and acknowledged her hard work and many achievements. We were pleased to note that Larke has successfully completed the objectives for the year and we have agreed with her a number of objectives, focussed on the key priorities of WGHC, for the coming year.”

- **Committee noted the report**

18. STAFFING UPDATE

The COO updated Committee regarding the recruitment campaign for the new Asset Compliance & Maintenance Officer position via the new “e-cruit” online platform giving comparison of responses against the traditional method of using EVH.

The rest of this area has been redacted due to confidentiality, sensitivity and data protection

- **Committee noted the report**

19. PRO-CAST SOLAR PANELS

The COO informed Committee of an update regarding a draft proposal of costs from Pro-Cast if WGHC were to upgrade 274 WGHC houses with PV panels, inverter, battery storage and a dedicated EVCP. Costs are estimated at £4.1 million equating to approx. £15k per property. However, it is anticipated that grant funding of £6k per property could be achieved, giving an overall grant of approx. £1.64 million. This would leave a balance of £2.46 million for WGHC to self-fund. This was an advisory article and WGHC have not yet proposed any further plans to proceed until the budgets and financial scenario planning have been completed. Due to the spend, it was acknowledged that any such procurement would likely be called-off one of the SPA Frameworks.

- **Committee noted the report**

20. GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE REPORT

The COO presented his governance and compliance report to Committee. He briefly described current and pipeline workload. He confirmed to Committee that both statutory and regulatory returns have been submitted within required deadlines. As has become standard practice, the COO also reported:

- ❖ FOISA / EIR Requests since last meeting = NIL
- ❖ Subject Access Requests since last meeting = NIL
- ❖ Information Data Breaches since last meeting = NIL
- ❖ Open Notifiable Events with SHR = NIL

- **Committee noted the report**

21. HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

The COO was pleased to inform Committee that there had been no health & safety issues to report since the last meeting. The COO confirmed that during the next quarterly Health and Safety Committee meeting the plan regarding the trees would be further discussed. Thereafter, a further update would be provided to Committee.

- **Committee noted the report**

22. MEMBERSHIP & USE OF THE COMPANY SEAL

The COO reported that since the last meeting, there have been:

- ❖ One **change** in membership.
 - ❖ Membership number: **194** – 20th November 2024 – Sole to Joint

 - ❖ One **cessation** of membership.
 - ❖ Membership number: **9** – 13th December 2023 – Deceased
- **Committee noted the report**

23. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- ❖ Committee confirmed that 10 x Committee members were available to attend the planned residential training workshop scheduled for either March or April 2024. Notification of advance attendance was required to enable the CEO to secure a good hotel rate.
- ❖ There was a further discussion regarding the WG Neighbourhood Watch Scheme being co-ordinated by Cameron Durance. There may be future opportunities for residents within the scheme to acquire CCTV or CCTV enabled doorbells from the Police. This will be future advised.

24. DATE OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

It was proposed the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 21st February at 6.15pm. Doors will open at 6.00pm for Committee to chat / network and have refreshments prior to the formal meeting start.

- **Committee approved the next Committee Meeting to be held on Wednesday 21st February @ 6.15pm**

Signed **Redacted Information**

Date: 21st February 2024

Chairperson

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