

Cloch Housing Association

Kelly Ferns

Kelly Ferns (Aug 7, 2023 20:07 GMT+1)

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Minutes of Board meeting
held on Tuesday 13 June 2023 at 6.00pm
(presentation of ARC Statistics started at 5.40pm)
held via MS Teams

Board Present: Kelly Ferns (Chair), Heather Thomson (Vice Chair), Victoria Weir, Hristina Tarpanova (co-optee), David Brown, Nicola McLachlan, Ken Robertson, Eleanor Robertson

Staff Present: Alana Durnin (CEO), Paul McColgan (Head of Property Services)
Shonaid Musgrove (Corporate Services Officer – Minutes)

1.	<p>Presentation of the ARC Statistics</p> <p>The presentation of the ARC had been made at the Housing & Property Services Sub-Committee on 16 May 2023 to which all Board members had been invited. This presentation was for those members who could not attend that meeting and to advise of some slight amendments that were made prior to the submission being sent on 31 May 2023.</p> <p>The HofPS took the meeting through the presentation and highlighted the areas where 8 indicator changes had been made.</p> <p>RESOLUTION</p> <p>The Board noted the changes that had been made to the ARC prior to submission.</p>
2.	<p>Apologies & Declarations of Interest</p> <p>The CSO intimated that apologies had been received from David McIndoe and Eileen Tamburrini. Jackie Smith would be joining the meeting as soon as possible but had been in contact to say they would be delayed.</p>
3.	<p>Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 April 2023</p> <p>The Board were taken through the minutes from the meeting.</p> <p>ACTION</p> <p>The Chair asked for “Casual Vacancy” after V Weir’s name to be removed from the minute.</p> <p>RESOLUTION</p> <p>There were no other amendments, and the Minutes were proposed, seconded and approved.</p>
4.	<p>Matters Arising & Outstanding Actions</p> <p>The CEO took the meeting through the Outstanding Actions and commented as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• With the online meetings the Board could be missing out on the social aspect of meetings. It was agreed that a social event be arranged for the Board during the summer.• A trial of the appendix booklet will be piloted.

	<p>ACTION A summer social event to be arranged for the Board.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board noted the report.</p>
ITEMS FOR APPROVAL	
<p>5.1</p>	<p>Governance Appraisal</p> <p>The Board was advised that only 2 quotations had been submitted by companies and that the timetable detailed at Section 7 would be delayed by about a month, based on current timelines.</p> <p>A Board member was concerned that the work Board members would require to undertake seemed on a parallel with the previous consultant and could not see where the process was being streamlined. The CEO advised that a meeting with the proposed consultant would take place ahead of the appraisal process with herself and the Chair and feedback from the Board would be discussed to help improve the process. Another Board member commented that they did not think that the last appraisal process was too onerous but did agree that the survey was a bit repetitive.</p> <p>The Chair described last year's appraisal process to the newer Board members to put them at ease and asked all Board Members to provide feedback for the pre-start meeting.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The appointment of SHARE to carry out the Board appraisals was proposed, seconded and approved.</p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p>Key Performance Indicator Targets</p> <p>The Board had been issued with a report on the proposed Key Performance Indicators, (KPIs) for 2023/24. The CEO advised a further report will be brought to the July 2023 Board meeting confirming Q1 performance against the KPIs.</p> <p>The report looked at the performance statistics and trends for the past 3 years. The CEO took the meeting through the report advising where the Association's performance had improved or reduced from the previous years. This led on to why targets for 2023/24 had been suggested. In some cases (e.g., voids, relet times) the KPI needed to be more realistic and were phased over quarters to show improvements once the new contractors had bedded in.</p> <p>The Board noted the good performance in arrears collection and why the target had not been altered dramatically. It was noted that the performance in repairs was directly linked to the contract issues that have been on-going. Sickness absence continues to be low and the new target reflected this.</p> <p>The Chair commented that it was important to keep monitoring the KPI's and that targets can be increased as they are met.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board agreed that the KPI's were ambitious, but achievable. They were proposed, seconded and approved.</p>

6.	<p>Kitchen & Bathroom Tender</p> <p>The HoPS gave a summary of events to-date. In 2021/22 the contractor, [REDACTED] went into administration whilst we had customers on the programme where works had not been carried out. In 2022 Cloch carried out a procurement exercise to complete the works, but costs were excessive. We have now re-tendered for the remaining properties but have made amendments to the planned works. For example, replacing lights and switches rather than doing a full rewire (following an inspection of the condition of the electrical system). The tender was made via the I-FLAIR framework.</p> <p>A Board member enquired if the specification had been reduced. The HofPS advised that all contractors on the I-Flair Framework have previously provided component specifications. The HofPS also advised that reports from other housing associations using the proposed contractor are positive.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The proposal to appoint [REDACTED] for the kitchen and bathroom renewal was approved.</p>
7.	<p>New Policies/Policy Reviews</p> <p>The next 3 Property Services policies were covered by the one covering report.</p>
7.1	<p><u>Contractor Selection</u></p> <p>The HofPS advised that the Property Services policies were new ones and fell within the remit of the Landlords Health & Safety Manual that PS are responsible for. The policies will be reviewed at the 3-yearly mark, or sooner if legislative/good practice changes occur.</p> <p>A Board member enquired if our contractors have current insurance provision in place. The HofPS replied that they did and advised that our existing housing software flags up whenever insurance is due to expire. The HofPS further advised that all the necessary RAMS (Risk Assessment and Method Statements) are up to date as well. A Board member asked for item 3.3 to be amended. The word “may” should be replaced with “is”.</p> <p>ACTION Change the wording on section 3.3 to read “other information that is required”.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The new policy was proposed, seconded and approved.</p>
7.2	<p><u>Energy Performance Certificate</u></p> <p>The HofPS stated this policy was just to formalise what an EPC was, how long it was valid for and why the Association needed them.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board proposed, seconded and approved the new policy.</p>
7.3	<p><u>Play Parks</u></p> <p>The HofPS advised that the purpose of this policy was to ensure that all of Cloch’s playparks will be maintained to ensure they are safe and in good condition to use.</p>

	<p>The Chair asked about item 6.2 and if the Association expected staff to deal with hazardous or faulty play equipment/areas. The HofPS advised that all repairs/made safe items will be carried out by a relevant contractor, but that Cloch staff can highlight issues as part of their routine estate management visits. The Association does not expect Cloch staff to deal with items e.g., animal fouling personally.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The policy was proposed, seconded and approved.</p>
7.4	<p><u>Donations & Sponsorship</u></p> <p>The CSO advised that the main change was at item 1.2 where the new objectives of the Association have been amended plus there was an additional item added in at 1.4.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The policy review was proposed, seconded and approved.</p>
8.	<p>Application for Membership</p> <p>The CSO advised that this membership had come from a tenancy “sign-up”. The Board should note that although the form has 2 names on it the membership application can only be for 1 person, so the first name is being used. The CSO advised that when the Share Certificate is issued communications will state that the 2nd person may make a separate application for membership if they wish to do so.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The application for membership was proposed, seconded and approved.</p>
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/NOTING	
9.	<p>Reactive & Void Repair Contracts</p> <p>The HofPS advised that the report was bringing the Board up to date on progress with the current contractor and the new service/contractors using the Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS). The HofPS stated that the existing contract is being closely managed until the DPS procurement has been completed.</p> <p>The “Out of Hours” emergency repair service is out to tender and will be awarded to a single contractor. They will triage the calls and instruct the works (with the exception of any gas works – these are dealt with by a separate contractor).</p> <p>The HofPS intimated that work for the reactive repairs (joiners, plumbers, electricians) will be carried out across the stock areas. We have tendered for 3 of each trade who will be awarded work on a weekly rota, however if there are periods of additional demands for work this can be allocated to the other contractors per trade.</p> <p>The HofPS stated that the Association has no option but to go down this route but is confident that it will work. However, the admin side is going to be a labour-intensive project that will be managed in-house. It is hoped to go live on 24 July 2023. The HofPS advised that interest on this type of project is gathering momentum and another housing association is enquiring about the framework. The HofPS also advised that improvement in targets would not be immediate, but this would be expected within the next few quarters.</p>

A Board member asked if the Association was asking for testimonials. The HofPS advised that not for the Voids contract as qualitative questions were being asked and scored. A question was asked about the quality of products. The HofPS stated that in some cases a pre-inspection would be carried out before a repair was issued and within the repair report very specific requirements would be detailed of what was needed to make the repair right. The HofPS advised that contractors will have discretion in variations of repair work up to the value of £50; this should hopefully reduce the need for further visits to complete the repair. A Board member enquired if Cloch asked for tenant feedback on repairs. The HofPS replied that a text questionnaire was issued after every repair to get feedback on it.

A Board member asked if tenants will be advised of when the new contractors starts. The HofPS replied they would and information will be sent out via text/email and on our social media platforms.

The Board acknowledged how frustrating this has been for the PS team and were pleased that all the work was coming to fruition.

RESOLUTION

The Board noted the contents of the report and the discussions.

The HofPS left the meeting at this point; the time was 6.55pm.

10.

CEO's Report

The CEO stated that the report linked into the refreshed Business Plan strategic objectives and priorities. The key points from the presentation were:-

- £1m of funding was procured for buying off the shelf properties and so far this year we have purchased 9 Gray Street and 3 more properties are currently being appraised. Gray Street feature picture on the presentation.
- Flooding at Kilmacolm Road – the repair works to the flooded properties are going well and the date for being completed has been brought forward to Jul/Aug from Oct/Nov.
- Slight increase to adaptations budget (now £113k) which is good news.
- Higher voids; in part due to impact of newbuild at Ravenscraig, in addition to the impact of demographics, (aging population).
- Planning to engage early with [REDACTED] to review our tenement properties for impending ESSH2 regulations. They've offered to look at Elliott Court as a project for net zero funding (free of charge).
- Aldi vouchers been very successful, but some tenants thought text was a hoax. Having learned from this, we need to ensure the right kind of communication is sent out in the future.
- Financial Fitness now come in and use Cloch's offices to offer customers appointments; this has really made them visible for our customers and the housing team and the service has brought in £277k of savings for 163 tenants (mainly pension and universal credit).
- Cloch+ Project funding in and next step will be to recruit a 4-day/wk role. Looking to utilise the Care & Repair service managed by [REDACTED] for the 1 day/wk handyman role.
- 4 school placements were provided to students, but we need to liaise with the schools going forward to focus on those interest in business. The school is also being contacted to get feedback from the students on their experience.
- Customer Engagement Team are working to get our customers more engaged with us. Looking at bitesize surveys when tenants phone or call into the office. Also

looking at hosting events e.g. cinema days / soft play. CC Team Leader going to revisit the Scrutiny Panel and see if this can be resurrected.

- Looking to see if other housing associations interested in more joint working (e.g. securing wider action funding, partnership procurement).
- Investigations into new management information systems. From the recent demonstrations, two stood out. The exercise highlighted the existing contract is no longer value for money and with staff turnover support services performance has dipped.
- Operational Planning day was well received and plan to do this annually.
- Wellbeing survey created by CSO and hope to issue to staff soon; need to support staff and hope to have a Wellbeing Plan in place following this.
- Staff appraisals being moved from June to August, to link with operational plans.
- Sickness absence levels are good compared to last year. In 2022/23 the main reason for sickness absence was viruses. This is where the use of laptops has been very successful. Staff may not wish to pass on bugs but can work from home.
- Following the departure of our HofCS the CEO met with staff to advise on what the interim plans were. This included HR and system support from consultants as and when required.
- Substantial Assurance accreditation from our internal audit.
- ARC benchmarking results will be brought to a future meeting.
- Pension working group will meet soon.
- Approach to mould and dampness will be brought to the next H&PS Sub-Committee or Board meeting. Document from a Board member has been uploaded onto the Board Portal.

The CEO asked the meeting if they had any questions on the report.

A Board member asked with the purchase of Gray Street does the Association now own the whole block. The CEO replied that there is still 1 unit that is in private ownership but that the Association is now the majority owner which helps with things such as repairs to common areas. The Board member then asked what the criteria for purchase is. The CEO replied that the HofHS looks at areas where demand is highest / the property would fulfil a particular need, then the HofPS ascertains what work is needed to bring the property up to standard and finally goes to the FD for a financial appraisal, (looking for a 25 year payback period). The CEO advised that some properties had not been taken forward to purchase due to not being suitable, e.g., taking account of energy efficiency measures. Going forward properties will need to meet EESSH2 standards, which are currently under review.

A Board member advised that £25m of funding from the Scottish Government has just been released for social housing or mid-market rent to bring in key workers to regions. The CEO replied that £300k of Scottish Government funding has been applied for and acquisitions were now a focus in Inverclyde Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP). One of the criteria is that associations can buy a factored property and the occupier then becomes a tenant (but hardship rules apply).

The CEO asked for feedback re: the new style of report and presentation in terms of linking this to the Business Plan objectives. The Board responses were positive. A member commented that the feedback from the operational away day was particularly good and informative and agreed this should become an annual event. The CEO intimated that the consultant commented on how good the staff team at Cloch were in terms of their engagement in the event.

ACTIONS

- Get feedback from the school students about their work experience with Cloch.
- Have an annual operational away day.

	<p>RESOLUTION The Board noted the report and the actions.</p>
<p>11.</p>	<p>Staff Structure Refresh / Succession Planning</p> <p>The CEO took the meeting through the report and accompanying presentation. The main points were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first phase of the project will utilise the services of the consultant that has been helping the Housing Services team and who facilitated the Operational Away Day. • The consultant will undertake 1-2-1's with staff (e.g. near retirement age / those that are ambitious); no one will be held accountable if their life plans change. The CEO and CSO will assist the consultant (e.g. information and note taking). • EVH and the union (Unite) will be involved as part of the formal consultation process. • No compulsory redundancies but could be an option if a staff member decides they do not want to accept changes to their job description (would have to be substantial changes to job description & no suitable role alternatives). • Will be carried out within the existing staff budget. • Exercise will not be rushed. Start with information gathering in June/July and work will continue into November / December. <p>The Chair advised that approval for this had already been given but asked the members if anyone had any questions. A Board member commented that having the staff involved from the outset was the correct way to proceed. The CEO intimated that staff involvement was key, was passionate about it, wanted Cloch to continue to invest in its staff, look to succession planning and develop skills where there are gaps that may exist.</p> <p>A Board member enquired if the Association would consider a “retire and return” scheme similar to what happens in the NHS (e.g., use retirees in a mentorship role). The CEO replied this could be investigated. Another member suggested caution should be used in case anyone was ambitious but that their capability was not up to the role. Expectations need to be managed. The CEO replied this would be important and would be a key consideration when succession planning.</p> <p>The CEO advised that the Board will be kept up to date on progress at future meetings.</p> <p>ACTION Investigate if a “retire and return” scheme is plausible.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board noted the report.</p>
<p>12.</p>	<p>Wider Action</p> <p>The CEO advised the Board of the plan to establish a Wider Action Strategy rather than focus on ad-hoc projects, as funding became available, that has been the norm.</p> <p>£73k of external funding had been secured for 2022/23 for wider action activities. For the new strategy, the Association will look at the differing needs of our various communities to ascertain the best use of the funds.</p>

	<p>The CEO confirmed as part of this project Staff and Board members with local knowledge will be involved in the initial workshop to gather information about particular community areas, (based on the Housing Team patches). This will then be followed up with a session that prioritises actions, (also involving Staff and Board members). The Association’s IT Assistant, who is passionate about the local community, is going to lead on this project being the link between Community Links and Cloch.</p> <p>The Chair commented that it was satisfying to have a definitive strategy for Wider Action activities going forward.</p> <p>RESOLUTION The Board noted the contents of the report.</p>
<p>13.</p>	<p>AOCB & Reflections</p> <p>A discussion took place about sharing information with other housing associations. The CEO advised that Cloch has a data sharing agreement with Inverclyde Council and the local Housing Associations, however the sector as a whole is good at sharing best practice. This led onto a query from a Board member about the Kings Glen development, with confirmation that the retention is now due to be paid to the contractor. The CEO advised that the CSO is in talks with ██████████ about utilising the funding by the contractor for a Social Value project. This would make use of a piece of land at the development that may link into an existing bee corridor project.</p> <p>The Chair commented that HACT and Shelter have shared publications on social value for customers; how it impacts our customers/communities. It is usually monitored at start, then at 6 months, and finally at 1-year to get customers views. The CEO will look into this and report back at a later date.</p> <p>It was noted that the April Board meeting agenda had been very lengthy but had kept within the Standing Orders. The minutes had been taken by the CSA and the Board wanted to pass on their compliments for a thorough minute.</p> <p>The Board commented that they liked how reports and presentations were now linked to the objectives within the Business Plan and to see the progress being made.</p> <p>A brief discussion took place about arranging a social event for the Board. A request was made for it to be on a Saturday and out with the school holiday calendar. The CEO advised that transport could be arranged for the event. A neutral venue to be provided for as many of the Board as possible to be able to attend.</p> <p>ACTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To investigate the existing Social Value information from HACT/Shelter. • To arrange a Board social event for the end of the summer.
<p>14.</p>	<p>Next meeting – 25 July 2023</p> <p>The CEO advised this meeting would look at our KPI’s and the final Annual Accounts. A separate email about changing the date of the August meeting would be sent, (swapping the dates of the Board meeting on the 29th with the Finance & Corporate Services Sub on the 22nd of August).</p>

	
	The meeting closed at 7.55pm