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## **ALMOND ENTERPRISES LTD**

### **MINUTES**

**of the Board meeting held online at 6.00pm on Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

#### **BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Kevin Clark  
Tatyana Duffie  
Sheelagh Norris

#### **APOLOGIES:**

Ian Crawford

#### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Vicky Wilson	AEL Manager
John Davidson	Chief Executive, AHA
Iona Taylor	Director of Asset Management, AHA
Tammy Allan	AHA – Minutes

#### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

## STANDING ITEMS

757	<b>Welcome</b> TD welcomed everyone to the meeting.
758	<b>AOCB</b> [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED].  JD also noted that, due to work pressures, TD has made the decision to step down as Chair. However, she will be able to remain on the Board and is happy to carry on as Chair until a new Chair has been identified.  JD moved on to advise that an advert will go out in January to recruit new Board members and if any of the current Board members would be interested in standing as Chair, they should make contact with JD directly.
759	<b>Apologies</b> A record was made of apologies from non-attendees.
760	<b>Approval of Previous Minutes</b> The Board approved the minutes of the meeting held on 24 <sup>th</sup> August 2023.
761	<b>Declaration of Interest</b> None.
762	<b>Matters Arising</b> None.
763	<b>Manager's Report</b>  VW presented a summary of the report and informed the Board that the winter checks were completed earlier than scheduled, with 246 to carry out. All were completed except 8 where AEL could not gain access and 1 tenant who cancelled their appointment. With regards to the garden scheme, VW also requested that the Board approve the write-off of £58.02 with relates to non-payment from private paying tenants and noted that there is a further £117 that is currently sitting as outstanding, however AHA housing officers are assisting with obtaining this payment. The Board queried the write-off value and VW advised that the garden work has been a significant income for AEL recently following the changes that were made to AHA's garden scheme, whilst also noting that the majority of customers prefer to pay using the card reader when the work is being carried out. She also confirmed that she is currently reviewing the payment methods that can be used going forward and will bring an update on her findings to the next meeting.  With regards to staffing, VW advised that two sessional members of staff were employed, however one of them has had to hand in their notice due to personal circumstances which is putting additional pressures on the remaining members of the team. The Board queried the pressures that are placed on the team and queried when VW hopes to have additional support in place in order to support them. VW advised that she intends to recruit further in January and that she met with Business Gateway who have agreed to part fund both full and part-time positions for AEL in order to alleviate costly recruitment exercises.  In terms of recycling and waste reduction, VW advised that SEPA have made changes in relation to what can and cannot be taken to landfill. The sites that AEL use will need to comply with these changes and as a result of these changes the costs involved will increase. Levensat have advised that they would need to [REDACTED] increase which will impact on the budget, and she will therefore need to review what waste is disposed. VW moved on to advise that AEL only have 2 vehicles that are used for waste and as waste will need to be segregated, we may be required to store waste and she is currently reviewing how this can be done. A cost analysis will be brought to the next meeting.

	<p>VW concluded by advising that an internal audit on AEL governance recent took place, the final report will be taken to the AHA sub-committee before being brought to the AEL Board.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the write-off of £58.02.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the Manager's report.</p>
<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>	
	None
<b>PAPERS for APPROVAL</b>	
764	<p><b>Budget Re-forecast 2023/24</b></p> <p>VW presented the budget reforecast and noted that the majority of variances are with regards to waste permits which covers estate maintenance works and house clearances. VW advised that AEL are over budget with income &amp; expenditure and were also based on the calculations that were being used for Scotwaste, who were who AEL were using at the time the budgets were set, however, we are now using Levensat and we are therefore starting to see a reduction in costs.</p> <p>VW moved on to advise that changes were made to staff training and with regards to training on the IT that took longer than planned, which has generated significant spend which hadn't been anticipated.</p> <p>With regards to project costs, VW advised that the expense for waste was lower than expected and this will affect any potential projects in the future. It was also noted that the fencing and landscaping works will be new projects for AEL going forward and we will set aside costs that will be required for these works.</p> <p>The Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>noted</b> the Financial Reforecast and <b>agreed</b> to agree the gift aid amount at the February meeting.</li> </ul>
765	<p><b>Annual bonus &amp; Pay award 2024/25</b></p> <p>It was noted that the bonus requested in the report was to cover 2022/23 and not 2023/24 as stated in the report.</p> <p>VW moved on to remind Board that they approved for AEL to be a real living wage (RLW) provider and based on the announcement made in October, the RLW will increase by 10% from 1<sup>st</sup> April and will take it to £12/hour.</p> <p>The Board <b>agreed</b> to consider the annual pay award at February's Board meeting.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the payment of an annual bonus at a level of £300 each to permanent staff and £100 to sessional staff, to be paid as part of the December payroll.</p>
766	<p><b>Business Plan Objectives 2024/25</b></p> <p>VW detailed the breakdown of the proposed objectives for 2024/25 and noted that objectives 1, 2 &amp; 3 are all extensions on what AEL currently have and objectives 4 &amp; 5 are both in relation to staff training and growth. VW also advised that it is proposed that funding opportunities will be sourced externally to support the business.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the key objectives for 2024/25.</p>
767	<p><b>Contract value increase 2024/25</b></p> <p>VW informed the Board that the report details changes that are proposed to contracts that are due an annual increase and also one additional contract which had come to a natural conclusion, however they have agreed to proceed with a 3-year extension. VW also noted that she is proposing a [REDACTED].</p> <p>VW moved on to note that RPI is currently 9.1%, however the national living wage increase is 10% and queried whether we should progress with RPI and a full review of all contracts can take place next year.</p>

	<p>The Board <b>acknowledged</b> that an annual [REDACTED] has been applied to the anniversary of one current contract.</p> <p>The Board <b>acknowledged</b> that the contract ended in October has been reviewed and a new proposal has been accepted.</p> <p>Board <b>agreed</b> approval of [REDACTED] for all contracts for the new financial year 2024.</p>
768	<p><b>Policy Reviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>G/08 – Authorised Use of Vehicles</b></li> <li>• <b>P/01 – Recruitment &amp; Selection</b></li> <li>• <b>P/02 – Staff Induction, Training &amp; Development</b></li> </ul> <p>VW informed the Board that the Authorised use of Vehicles policy includes changes that were made in relation to working with the DVLA, and also in order to comply with legal requirements.</p> <p>With regards to the Recruitment and Selection policy, VW advised that changes have been made with reference to the Right to Work and Disclosure Scotland checks.</p> <p>VW also noted that there are no proposed changes to be made to the Staff Induction, Training &amp; Development policy.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the reviewed policies.</p> <p>The Board <b>agreed</b> that each policy be reviewed in a further 3 years, unless there is a need to review earlier.</p>
769	<p><b>Community Gift</b></p> <p>VW informed the Board that historically AEL would support community groups through various funding activities, however it has been brought to her attention that local communities are currently looking for donations that would support children in the area. She also noted that AEL staff also like to see donations being made to local groups.</p> <p>VW moved on to advise that a cheque would be made payable to the PTA who would utilise the money to purchase selection boxes for the children.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the gift of £300 to the schools within local community.</p>
<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	
770	<p><b>Finance Report including Management Accounts – 6 months to 30 September 2023</b></p> <p>VW presented the Finance Report and noted an overall positive variance of £13,979, with the largest variance being generated following the use of Levensat and the positive impact that it has had.</p> <p>There were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the financial position at 30 June 2023.</p>
771	<p><b>Business Plan 2023/24 – Action plan update</b></p> <p>VW presented the Action Plan update and there were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the Action Plan update</p>
772	<p><b>Performance Report</b></p> <p>VW presented the report and noted that it is not a legal requirement to report our emissions due to the volume and she noted that she intended to review other ways to develop AEL’s knowledge and understanding, including looking at possible training opportunities. However, time restraints have prevented this from happening.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the report.</p>

773	<p><b>Verbal update – Training project &amp; AEL review</b></p> <p>JD provided an update on the proposed training programme and AEL review and noted that primarily it was intended that AEL would look at a fencing scheme and also to fund work with HomeAid. However, following discussions it was agreed the plan was too ambitious for AEL as it stands. JD moved on to note that internal discussions have taken place around what other training schemes are available, and scale back the staffing plan but possibly look at projects that would be more manageable with the existing staff.</p> <p>JD also noted that he visited White Inch Housing Association in Glasgow, who have an impressive subsidiary. They have 1200 properties, and the subsidiary turns over £650,000 per year whilst they are still trying to expand into void work. This reinforces that AEL could do more with the right resources and it is proposed that we do more of a review of the set up to ensure that the right resources are in place to support the business.</p> <p>JD advised that the initial approach would be to do more garden work whilst ensuring that none of the previously identified pressures arise. At present AHA pay contractors [REDACTED]. A review would need to be undertaken around what AEL charge to ensure that they are charging enough. Staff terms &amp; conditions would be included within the review and if need be they would be improved in order to attract potential applicants to AEL.</p> <p>JD noted that an update on the review would be brought to the February meeting, but depending on how things progress he may suggest calling a separate meeting and he would hope to implement any potential changes from April, depending on the outcome of the review.</p> <p>The Chair agreed for JD to proceed with his proposal.</p>
774	<p><b>Board Meeting dates – to be aligned with AHA</b></p> <p>IT informed the Board that the Parent Board agreed a revised meeting schedule at the most recent meeting, which included an increased number of meetings. IT moved on to note that it has been found recently that AEL meetings have been taking place after the Parent meetings are happening and this is affecting how budgets can be approved.</p> <p>Going forward, IT proposes that AEL step away from having the meetings take place on the third Thursday, every three months but look at meetings taking place in March, May, September and December.</p> <p>IT will consider possibly dates and will circulate them amongst Board members. However, the meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February would still take place and the new cycle would take place from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.</p>
775	<p><b>Board Members – items for future meetings</b></p> <p>Nothing suggested.</p>
776	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>None.</p>
	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> February 2024 online 5pm</li> </ul>