

# BOARD MINUTES



**Meeting Date:** 03 August 2023  
**Time:** 6pm  
**Venue:** Almond HA Office

## Board Members in Attendance

Adam Turner  
Neil Tulloch  
Julie Riley  
Tricia Hill  
Jeremy Hewer  
Anne Gault  
Vicky Bluck  
Martin Joyce  
Craig Morton

## Apologies

Darren Lewis  
Chris Boyle

## Staff in Attendance

John Davidson	Chief Executive
Sandy Young	Director of Housing Management
Iona Taylor	Director of Asset Management
Craig Porter	Director of Finance and Business Support
Tammy Allan	Business Improvement Officer (minutes)

## Others in Attendance

Linda Ewart for items 6899 to 6905

## STANDING ITEMS

6899	<b>Welcome</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
6900	<b>Apologies</b> A record was made of apologies from non-attendees.
6901	<b>Use of Seal</b> JD noted that the seal had been used once for a discharge of security on a property that had an onward sale.
6902	<b>AOCB Approval</b> IT advised that the Katherine Street tabled paper would be taken as AOCB.
6903	<b>Declaration of Interest on any Agenda Items</b>

	None
6904	<p><b>Minutes from Previous Meeting</b></p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the Minutes from the previous meeting without amendment.</p>
<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>	
6905	<p><b>Board Appraisal Feedback – Linda Ewart</b></p> <p>LE presented her report and began by informing Board that the majority of the appraisals were carried out virtually with some of them done in person. She advised that there is an appetite for meetings to be held in person but have the option available to also have them held virtually.</p> <p>The key themes from the report included that a high number of Board members are relatively new and have never gone through an appraisal process before. LE advised that, along with AT, they tried to capture the opinions of new Board members and after the AGM this year most will have served 4 or less years. This year’s reviews showed that the Board is growing in confidence. LE noted that Board members can take time to settle in and this is reflective in the current Board.</p> <p>LE noted that Board agreed that AHA are progressing, however maybe not as fast as some Board members would have liked. Tenant engagement has been an area for improvement for the Association for a long time and Board members now feel they have a better understanding of what is involved and agree that it is moving in the right direction.</p> <p>LE highlighted key areas where positive feedback was made during the appraisal process which included the successful recruitment, AHA’s response to the 2022 cost of living crisis and the potential establishment of an Asset Management working Group. There is also an appetite to rebalance the Boards attention to refocus on external challenges.</p> <p>In order to support the Board it is felt that it would be beneficial to strengthen evidence based reporting. Board members have also recognised that engaging with tenants will bring more importance.</p> <p>Board members have raised an issue with Virtual Boardroom and have suggested potential interim fixes around the use of excel, the format of the papers and timeliness of Board minutes.</p> <p>The Board requested SMT review the Board induction process, the requirement for a stock tour and the requirement for an Asset Management working group.</p>
6906	<p><b>Matters Arising/Update/Information Papers for Discussion</b></p> <p>None</p>
6907	<p><b>Board Members – Items for Future Meetings</b></p> <p>TH requested that a forward plan or revised Board annual agenda is considered.</p>
6908	<p><b>Board Training – Verbal</b></p> <p>AT has recently attended a 4-day ESG training course. He advised that it covered topics such as climate science, regulation and risk consequences. He noted that if he is able to, he will arrange for the slides to be circulated.</p> <p>JH recently attended the SFHA annual conference. He noted that SY held one of the breakout sessions on being trauma informed.</p>

6909	<p><b>Chief Executive’s Report</b></p> <p>JD presented the report and referred to the SFHA working group. He advised that they met for the first time and are looking to provide input to the Scottish Government regarding the work that RSL’s are doing to increase the number of homes that would be made available for those who are homeless. He also noted that there is £60m worth of funding available to acquire private rented properties, however SFHA requires clarification from the Scottish Government regarding how this will be allocated. He moved on to advise that there is ability from some RSL’s to provide more homes and if quotas were introduced there would be no concern for the Association as we already allocated over 50% of our lets towards to the homeless waiting list.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the 4-day working week and JD noted that instead of closing the office for 1 day per week, AHA are looking to consider a 9 day fortnight. This would mean that the office wouldn’t need to close, and customers wouldn’t notice any changes to the service that they receive.</p> <p>VB referred to the Operation Happy Christmas and advised that through her employer she may be able to match the funding that is available.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the content of the Chief Executive’s report.</p>
6910	<p><b>AGM Statement of Readiness</b></p> <p>JD noted that the statement of readiness details the plans for the upcoming AGM.</p>
<b>REPORTS FOR DECISION</b>	
6911	<p><b>Reports to be approved following Audit &amp; Finance Sub-Committee – Final Audit Findings Report incl. Letter of representation</b></p> <p>The report was presented to Board and they were informed that it provides AHA received a clean bill of health form the external auditors. The report also highlights that the Association continues to outperform its budgeted surplus. The Board reminded SMT that the achievement of budgeted surplus should be maintained by ensuring that spending on major works revenue contracts should be achieved. There were no audit issues raised by the external auditors.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the Audit Summary Report including the draft Representation Letter and are satisfied with points raised within the report and that the representations being requested as recommended by the Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee prior to the approval of the Financial Statements.</p>
6912	<p><b>Reports to be approved following Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee – Internal Financial Controls</b></p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the Internal Financial Control Statement included within the Financial Statements and is satisfied with the control mechanisms as recommended by the Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee.</p>
6913	<p><b>Reports to be approved following Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee – Financial Statements to 31 March 2023</b></p> <p>VB informed the Board that the Financial Statements received a clean audit report, and recommended the approval.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the Financial Statements for the year as recommend by the Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee. These financial statements will then be presented at the AGM in September.</p>

6914	<p><b>Reports to be approved following Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee – Risk Map</b></p> <p>VB advised that there were some minor changes to the risk map proposed. However, she also noted that Board would consider Risk at the strategy day in September and consider whether a comprehensive change to Risk management is required. It was suggested that perhaps the link in the Board papers should be to the Strategic risks rather than the granular recording of risk currently being recorded.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the scoring used with regards to the increased costs of works and also whether there was a possibility to collaborate with another RSL in terms of purchases.</p> <p>VB also agreed to undertake a risk management session at the strategy day.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the status of the Risk Map.</p>
6915	<p><b>Reports to be approved following Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee – Bad Debt Write-Off</b></p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the proposed bad debt write-off/write-off of credit balances as recommended by the Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee.</p>
6916	<p><b>Annual Assurance Statement</b></p> <p>CP informed the Board that he is seeking approval of the Annual Assurance Statement and thanked the working group for working with the Governance and Business Improvement Manager in helping produce the statement. CP also noted that consideration should be given around what approach is taken next year.</p> <p>The Board members who were involved in the working group advised what documents they looked through and what was in place. They noted that some policies needed to be reviewed but nothing was red flagged. They agreed that the review showed that there is good governance in place but also felt that more documents perhaps should have been presented.</p> <p>JD informed the Board that the Scottish Housing Regulator carried out a thematic approach and issued a report on their findings. He noted that there was nothing groundbreaking but there were some elements that may suggest that AHA should do some things slightly different.</p> <p>Following a discussion, the working group stated that they were happy with current process and satisfied with the action plan and timescales that had produced.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> AHA’s Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator and the evidence collated to support the Statement, and that the Board also discusses and agreed the self-assurance approach for next year.</p>
6917	<p><b>Proposed Meeting Schedule 2023-24</b></p> <p>CP informed the Board that the proposed meeting schedule had been prepared on the existing meeting schedule but following the feedback from Linda Ewart, it may be subject to change.</p> <p>AT noted that throughout the appraisal process, most Board members were looking to have an additional 2 meetings per year. This generated a discussion around hybrid meetings but how that could result in a drop in attendance.</p> <p>The current meeting schedule was agreed with the meetings being held in person but hybrid meetings should not be ruled out.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the list of dates proposed 2023/24 Board meetings, the proposed date for the AGM, the proposed dates for the Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee meeting, and the proposed dates for the Board Strategy Days.</p>

6918	<p><b>Board Election Information</b></p> <p>Board members were made aware of which Board members were due to retire/stand down this year.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the Board members who were due to retire in line with Rule 39 of the Associations rules at the AGM.</p>
6919	<p><b>Election of Office Bearers and Sub-committee membership</b></p> <p>It was agreed that there would be a short meeting after the AGM in September in order to elect office bearers.</p>
6920	<p><b>Scottish Housing Regulator Consultation</b></p> <p>CP presented the report and noted that Linda Ewart had already touched on the content. He also noted that the report included the Associations response to the SHR.</p> <p>The were no questions received from the Board.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the SHR consultation exercise on the proposed changes. The Association’s draft response is included within the papers and will be sent by 11 August deadline.</p>
6921	<p><b>Annual Report on Complaints</b></p> <p>CP informed the Board that the complaints annual report had been prepared and presented using a new format and will be published and issued out to tenants. He noted that the report ensures that AHA are remaining transparent in terms of logging complaints. We do receive a high number of complaints but this shouldn’t be seen as being an issue, as we take a very pro-active approach to ensuring that expressions of dissatisfaction are captured as complaints</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of this report.</p>
6922	<p><b>Annual Report on FOISA, EISR, SARs and Data incidents</b></p> <p>CP advised that this is a new report that is being brought to Board which had been picked up by the external auditors and was also a request that had been made by Board members.</p> <p>Board members noted that the Association receive a low number of requests.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of this report.</p>
<p><b>Asset Management</b></p>	
6923	<p><b>Katherine Street &amp; Jesperson Block Update</b></p> <p>IT presented the report and informed the Board that we have been installing fire alarms in the blocks similar to the one in Katherine Street. Whilst they have caused some issues for the frontline teams, it was hoped that things would settle down and from an insurers point of view, they are content with the work that has been done.</p> <p>IT moved on to advise that the tender has gone out for the upgrade work that is required. This has still been a lengthy process but AHA were utilising the Link HA framework which has made the process quicker. McTaggart’s had been the most competitive and whilst the costs were high, they are in line with market prices.</p> <p>There was a further discussion around the Jesperson blocks and the fire safety. [REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>

	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of this report and:</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>
6924	<p><b>Katherine Street tender – Tabled paper</b></p> <p>IT informed the Board that the costs have been received for the re-instatement works that are required and noted that there are going to be significant costs involved.</p> <p>IT also informed the Board that the proposal is subject to the insurers approving their liability.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the acceptance of tender from McTaggart Construction Limited following confirmation of liability by the insurers for the fire damage re-instatement works as detailed.</p>
6925	<p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b></p> <p>IT reminded the Board of the discussion that took place at the previous meeting regarding the increased focus on Health &amp; Safety by the Scottish Housing Regulator and now we will provide a Health &amp; Safety update within the planned maintenance report.</p> <p>IT advised that a table has been created which outlines policy/procedure measure, training that has been carried out and progress on each.</p> <p>Board members noted that they were happy with the level of detail that was included but asked that RIDDOR incidents be included in future reports.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of this report.</p>
<p><b>Housing Management</b></p>	
6926	<p><b>Tenant Satisfaction Survey</b></p> <p>SY presented the report and reminded Board of the issues that we had experienced with the recent tenant satisfaction survey that had been carried out and whilst the Contractor hadn't performed as hoped however, AHA can't disregard the results. Contact has been made with Research Resource and it has been agreed that the timeliness of the survey is important. Trigger surveys will also be carried out throughout the year in order to obtain feedback from our customers.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of the report.</p>
6927	<p><b>Almond's response to Domestic Abuse</b></p> <p>SY reminded Board that this report was created following a request made by them looking for an update on the work that AHA do.</p> <p>It was noted that AHA are considered to be a leader in this area and it was queried why others are not doing the same.</p>

	<p>Board members passed on their thanks to TL for the work that she has done around this topic.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of this report.</p>
6928	<p><b>Allocations Sub-committee update</b></p> <p>SY advised that this was an update paper. He also noted that he required volunteers to join the Allocations Sub-committee.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of this report.</p>
6929	<p><b>AHA Cost of Living Response</b></p> <p>SY informed the Board that at the end of the year we obtained grant funding for 2 different projects which AHA were also able to match. A follow up survey was then carried out on tenants who received the additional service and it was noted that it was very well received.</p> <p>He noted that the Housing Team try to do what is practical for the tenants, and whilst it is a lot of work, the benefits are worth it. However, if we were going to do it all again this year, we wouldn't want to leave it until the end of the financial year and could also utilise some of the unused bad debt budget to fund the support. Board agreed to this proposal.</p> <p>SY also made Board aware of the funding that is available for the energy advice support. This was a good service in the past and AHA are going to accept the funding which is available.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of this report which included an update on the acceptance of £42,845 of grant offer from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund.</p>
<b>CONSENT AGENDA</b>	
6930	<p><b>Consent Agenda</b></p> <p>IT referred to the development report and noted that the paper highlights that the costs involved for the Blackburn development are significantly more than what was originally anticipated. It is not unusual for this to happen, but we have gone to the Scottish Government to ask for a significant amount of grant funding.</p> <p>IT also noted that appended to the development report is the draft SHIP and the section 75's. She noted that it is disappointing as it is something that we have been looking to increase for a while.</p> <p>The Board noted that they were happy for AHA to submit the SHIP.</p> <p>The Board <b>agreed</b> to the recommendations within the consent agenda.</p>
6931	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>MJ noted that the Associations newsletters are being issued online, however we need to ensure that the good work we are doing is relayed to everyone, including those who do not have access to email.</p>
	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting:</b> 02 November 2023</p>

Please note that these minutes have been edited to remove any commercially sensitive or confidential discussions.

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