

# BOARD MINUTES



**Meeting Date:** 07 May 2026  
**Time:** 6pm  
**Venue:** Almond HA Office

## Board Members in Attendance

Vicky Bluck  
Adam Turner  
Gary Hay  
Jack Rillie  
Julie Riley  
Simon Davies  
Natalie Cryans  
Chris Boyle

## Apologies

None

## Staff in Attendance

John Davidson	CEO
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

John Bruce - Observer

## PRESENTATIONS

None

## STANDING ITEMS

7257	<b>Welcome</b> The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, including new board member John Bruce.
7258	<b>Use of Seal</b> JD advised that there have been 2 uses of the seal for the new Board members, Conor Watts and John Bruce.
7259	<b>Board Training</b>

	The training information which had been distributed by TA was noted.
7260	<b>Declaration of Interest on any Agenda Items</b> None
7261	<b>Gifts and hospitality</b> None
7262	<b>Decisions and Actions</b> The action plan was noted & it was agreed that the plan should focus on strategic actions only
7263	<b>Approval of the minutes from the previous meeting</b> The Board <b>approved</b> the Minutes of the previous meeting.
7264	<p><b>Chief Executive’s Report</b></p> <p>Discussion took place on the development &amp; regeneration plans including which approach to take regarding the additional senior level resource. VB asked whether we had considered enough options and JRill enquired whether the appointment of the resource was one which was delegated to SMT under the scheme of delegation.</p> <p>JD noted that he had spoken to two recognised consultants regarding our plans and in identifying them had taken advice from a number other CEO’s in identifying who may be best placed to provide the support we require.</p> <p>Regarding delegation JD advised that the approach adopted was dependent on whether we appointed the resource on a consultancy basis (in which case SMT would appoint in line with our procurement policy) or whether we appointed as a staff member. In the latter case, the role would be recruited via the staffing subcommittee and would include board member representation on the appointment panel.</p> <p>It was agreed that Emma Garry would be invited to attend the June board meeting, (as proposed in the CEO report) to discuss her proposal in more detail and to provide an overview to the board on the risks and opportunities with regard to taking forward our development and regeneration plans.</p> <p>It was also agreed that a role profile would be created for the role. This would help inform the skills and experience required for the resource and would help inform the decision as to whether to engage with a consultant or to consider recruitment of a resource to the Senior Management Team.</p> <p>GH advised that he had a contact who we may wish to consider (Justin Lamb) and noted that he would provide details to JD</p> <p>VB requested that future strategic goals updates are provided in a separate report from the general CEO update.</p> <p>JD also noted that SMT would further consider the approach to strategic goal updates following more detailed consideration of the key projects, ensuring that focus is maintained on those projects which are more strategic / most critical for 2026/27.</p> <p>The board approved the appointment of Lori Smith to the AEL Board. CB declared that Lori was a colleague of his &amp; therefore abstained from this item.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of this report.</p>

7265	<p><b>Job Evaluation Project</b></p> <p>JR detailed the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The establishment of a banding framework consisting of 6 levels (as outlined within APPENDIX 1) - <b>Approved</b></li> <li>2. Use of median as a market anchor, using Central Belt Scotland benchmarking data - <b>Approved</b></li> <li>3. All roles at managers and above move to individual market spots, based on point 4 of the pay framework - Approved</li> <li>4. All roles at officers and below move to a market average around point 5 on the pay framework - <b>Approved</b></li> <li>5. A 'one-off' salary adjustment to posts at level 5 and level 6 (12.5 FTE) of the banding framework (senior assistant and assistant posts) to ensure that they remain comparable with the wider market. The overall financial impact of this is approximately £12k (average of approx. £1,000 per annum for each affected post). The application of the above will ensure that all posts remain competitive against the wider market across the organisation in terms of attraction and retention and will be a 'one-off' implementation adjustment. – <b>Approved</b></li> <li>6. The application of a 6 month 'probationary' pay point (5% below applicable salary) for all new starters which would ensure that new appointments would move to the full salary following a successful probationary period. This is a common approach adopted by many organisations to recognise the time required to learn about the business and become fully competent. – <b>Rejected the 5% below applicable salary and SMT to details robust probation period and include an extension element for those who require it and this will be presented to the staffing sub-committee.</b></li> <li>7. To apply the new pay framework and Cost of Living increase from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026. Almond have traditionally applied Cost of Living increases in July and it is proposed that this practice continues (with recommendations being provided by Turning Point) Whilst we had originally intended to consider a backdate of the new salary framework from 1<sup>st</sup> April, the staffing subcommittee recommend application of the framework from 1<sup>st</sup> July, with no backdate. This approach would mitigate some of the above budgeted cost incurred as a result of applying the recommended framework at points 4 and 5 which positions Almond well against comparators. Further information is outlined in the financial implications section. A significant amount of processing and calculation work would also be avoided – <b>Approved.</b></li> </ol> <p>It was also noted that the benchmarking would be carried out every 5 years.</p>
7266	<p><b>Cost of Living Pay Award</b></p> <p>JRillie presented the report as presented to the Staffing Sub-committee noting that the 3.5% increase would be with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> July and a robust performance management framework is required with the correct KPIs in place.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the recommendation to award an increase of 3.5% to be applied effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July.</p>
7267	<p><b>AEL update</b></p> <p>IT noted that there have been a few changes within AEL including the successful recruitment of a new manager who is currently busy visiting customers, other social enterprises and networking. She moved on to refer to the year 1 budget that has been approved by the AEL Board and is now being presented to the AHA Board for final approval. The work on year 2 and 3 was delayed whilst the recruitment of a new manager was underway.</p>

	<p>JRillie noted the risk and concern around governance within AEL and both CP and IT acknowledged the challenges that AEL has faced with having a low number of Board members and also the work that CP has been doing with both Companies House and Virgin Money in order to resolve the issues, however the Virgin Money matter remains ongoing. The intention is to get the AEL Board to nominate another signatory which will enable access into the account and from there the money can be moved to another provider.</p> <p>In terms of governance JD noted that the AEL Chair is looking to take a leave of absence, however there is another board member due to be appointed and he also has another interview scheduled.</p> <p>The board acknowledged that the banking issue is matter is out with our control, however the board need to comfortable with the mitigation that is in place whilst also acknowledging that many of the Board members will be newly appointed.</p> <p>It was agreed that a status update will be brought to the June board meeting.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the AEL budget for financial year 2026/27.</p>
7268	<p><b>Annual Return on the Charter</b></p> <p>CP presented the draft ARC data noting that SHN were still due to carry out an external validation of the Associations data. He also noted that this year has been challenging as we were required to obtain data using 2 different housing management systems and the likelihood is that we will not achieve a clean validation.</p> <p>There were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the content and <b>approved</b> the draft return for submission to the Scottish Housing Regulator.</p>
<p><b>Asset Management</b></p>	
7269	<p><b>Landscaping Tender</b></p> <p>IT presented the tender report acknowledging that the proposed sum is significantly less than had been budgeted. AHA have worked with the proposed contractor in the past and whilst there were labour issues, the matter was resolved and significant improvement was made.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The proposed award of the Contract for Landscape Maintenance to Krinkles UK Limited for the sum of £198,387.79 exclusive of VAT for a period of 3 years from 5<sup>th</sup> May 2026 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2029, with a potential 2-year extension based upon the contractor’s performance and at the discretion of Almond HA. This award will be made at the end of the 10-day standstill period.</li> <li>2. That the tendered sum of £198,387.79 was within the budget figure of £230,000.00 (ex VAT).</li> </ol>
7270	<p><b>RAAC update</b></p> <p>IT informed the Board that RAAC works are progressing well despite the initial teething issues. A slick process is now in place, however the initial targeted completion date of October is likely to be pushed back to November.</p> <p>One of the HO’s is now assisting as the TLO which is helping with the challenging tenants who were previously not allowing access into their properties.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of the report.</p>

Housing Management	
7271	<p><b>Customer Voice Report</b></p> <p>SY presented the report referring to the strong results over the period and noting that there was no cause for concern.</p> <p>There were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of the customer voice report.</p>
7272	<p><b>Rent Points Correction</b></p> <p>SY presented the report informing the Board that there are 2 potential outcomes with one being that rent points are applied when the properties are returned to AHA as void to be re-let and the other being the rent points are applied across the board, however this is not recommended given the recent rent increase.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> that the Association applies any missing rent points (for all items identified not just dining rooms) to voids as soon as they are returned to us for letting at the correct points to the new tenant.</p>
7273	<p><b>Rent Increase Letters</b></p> <p>SY presented the report and there were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the contents of the report.</p>
7274	<p><b>Full Tenant Survey Tender</b></p> <p>SY noted that one bid was received for the service despite numerous bids being received last time around. He also noted that AHA have a positive working relationship with Research Resource.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the appointment of Research Resource for the sum of £28,267 exclusive of VAT for a period of 4 years from 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026 to December 2029, to carry out our full tenant surveys.</p>
7275	<p><b>Welfare Benefit Advice Tender</b></p> <p>SY presented the report informing that members of staff had reached out to several organisations who expressed an interest in submitting a bid for the welfare benefits advice contract, however only one bid was received.</p> <p>SY noted that it is a well-used service. It has not been brought in-house as we would require an FCA licence in order to provide money advice to tenants.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the award of the welfare benefit advice service to The Action Group (TAG) for £43,708 per year plus VAT from 2026-2029 with option to extend a further year. TAG have stated an increase of 2% for inflation each year on this price.</p>
Finance and Business Support	
7276	<p><b>Reports to be approved following the Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee – Risk Map</b></p> <p>AT referred to the amendments made to both the strategic and operational risk map and noted that there was no cause for concern.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the status of the risk map.</p>
7277	<p><b>Reports to be approved following the Audit &amp; Finance Sub-committee – Pension update</b></p>

	<p>AT presented the report including the analysis provided by ISIO which detailed that in 12-24 months AHA would be required to pay a lump sum to exit the defined benefit scheme. AT detailed that this is something that needs to be progressed and the next steps would be to consider the timings and whether AHA should reasonably settle its obligations to the defined benefit scheme and consider the defined contributions scheme.</p> <p>CP noted at this point that he has obtained financial information from TPT which included details around whether AHA should progress with the defined contribution scheme if AHA were to withdraw from the defined benefit scheme.</p> <p>The Board <b>noted</b> the SHAPs Review report produced by ISIO of 26 February.</p> <p>The Board <b>reviewed</b> and considered whether a S75 event should be progressed to mitigate against future pension deficit payments by exercising a cessation event of a SHAPs pension via Buy-out.</p>
7278	<p><b>Revised board report template</b></p> <p>Following recommendations to that were made during the recent appraisal process to shorten the length of the Associations board reports, the format of the reports was reviewed and taking into account governance elements a proposed format was presented to Board.</p> <p>Board agreed that they liked the inclusion of a summary table but requested that it should include a section that details the reason the report is being brought to Board and also whether the report is policy related along with a reason than having the purpose &amp; context.</p> <p>The Board <b>agreed</b> the draft Board Report format.</p>
7279	<p><b>Annual Assurance Statement working group</b></p> <p>CP informed the Board the volunteers were required to form a short-life working group who will review the evidence bank that will support the annual assurance statement. He also noted that a different approach will be taken going forward where the working group will focus on reviewing 2 standards each year and on the 3<sup>rd</sup> year a full review will take place.</p> <p>AT, NC and SD volunteered.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the recommendation to form a short-life working group to review the evidence for the Annual Assurance Statement.</p>
7280	<p><b>Share Cancellations</b></p> <p>CP presented the report informing the Board that ahead of this year's AGM, the Associations Memberships and Shares are reviewed to ensure that they are accurate.</p> <p>There were no queries or questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board <b>approved</b> the cancellation of the noted Share certificates.</p>
<b>CONSENT AGENDA</b>	
7281	<p><b>Consent Agenda</b></p> <p>IT referred to the quarterly development report, noting the purchase of a property in Juniper Grove. The purchase of this property will result in AHA owning the entire block and will therefore allow for repair work to be carried out.</p> <p>IT also referred to the quarterly planned maintenance report and the gas safety check that was potentially going to become overdue, however, we thankfully were able to gain access on the final day.</p> <p>The Board <b>agreed</b> to the recommendations within the consent agenda.</p>

7282	<b>AOCB</b> None
	<b>Date of Next Meeting:</b> 04 June 2026