

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF WEST HIGHLAND HOUSING ASSOCIATION, HELD ON 29 FEBRUARY 2008 AT 10.00 A.M. IN THE BOARD ROOM, CRANNOG LANE OBAN.

- 1.00 PRESENT** **ACTION**
Kenneth MacColl, Chair
Tony Cave
Stuart Moir
Murray Sim
Mary Morrison
Duncan MacKenzie
Barbara Milne
Councillor Gordon Chalmers
- IN ATTENDANCE**
Lesley McInnes, Chief Executive
May Tosh, Corporate Services Manager
Gregor Cameron, Project Director
- 2.00 APOLOGIES**
Councillor Robin Currie
Elaine Robertson
- 3.00 ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**
Stuart Moir wanted to raise an item under private and confidential items.
- 4.00 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.
- 5.00 CHIEF EXECUTIVE**
- 5.01 Charity**
The Chief Executive presented the report on the work done by the staff their preferred charity for the year. Over £1000 was raised by the staff for Home Start and it was hoped that the HA might agree to add to this amount. Staff were keen to adopt a charity for future years but felt that it would be appropriate for the charities to be small, local charities where small amounts of funding could make a substantial difference. Staff were also hopeful that a Committee Member would be part of future organising.
- The Committee congratulated all the staff on their efforts and it was noted that the Oban Charitable Trust had also recently made a donation to Home Start. The Committee moved the report, proposed by Duncan MacKenzie and seconded by Barbara Milne.
- 5.02 West Highland Rural Solutions**
The Chief Executive presented the report. She reminded Committee that this had been circulated at the Housing Management and Customer Services Committee in January. There had been time to carefully consider this with the main proposals of WHRS Business Plan being the following:

- To employ a consultant to take forward the Dunbeg proposal;
- To request a loan of £60,000 from WHHA to fund this work;
- That this loan would be repaid if the Dunbeg deal went ahead

The Chair explained that obviously this was a significant investment by the Association in WHRS but if the HA was doing Dunbeg then the investment and the risk would probably be similar.

The Committee asked in some detail about what would happen if the Dunbeg deal failed. In response the Chief Executive explained that the money could not then be repaid but to limit the risk then there was a number of phases so that “the plug could be pulled” earlier if it might not work. If the deal goes ahead then there is no reason given the explanation of both development allowances and basic assumptions that the money would not be repaid.

After further discussion in relation to the loan, process and risk the Committee agreed that this should go ahead.

LMcl

Acceptance of the Business Plan and approval of the loan was moved for approval by Ken MacColl and seconded by Barbara Milne.

5.03 Harassment Policy

This was to continue our work on Policies. The Chief Executive noted that to date the Association had not received any complaints regarding this type of incident but the policy was important in terms of joint work particularly with the Police. It was thought that there would be advantages in having a form that would list the actions taken and would help recording to be in a consistent form. The Chief Executive noted that Positive Action in Housing had completed some work on this and had good examples that the Association could use.

The policy was moved for approval by Murray Sim and seconded by Stuart Moir.

5.04 Risk Management Policy

The Chief Executive presented the report. There was discussion about how to assess risk and how to ensure it was part of the decision making process. The Chief Executive explained that this would be part of the Corporate Services Committee remit and they would look at the Association’s top 10 risks at the meeting in May. The importance of risk management was about being aware of the risk and taking steps to control the risk.

The policy was moved for approval by Duncan Mackenzie and seconded by Stuart Moir.

5.05 Committee Membership

The Chief Executive presented the report on Committee Membership. One tenant had written asking to be considered for co-option. After discussion it was agreed not to co-opt.

5.06 Programme of Meetings 2008/09

There was some discussion about the issue of evening meetings and Stuart Moir was surprised this had been tabled without discussion. The Chief Executive explained that her recollection was that this had been the subject of discussions previously but no decision had been taken. The matter was for the Committee to either approve or reject. A number of Committee Members suggested that day time meetings were not always suitable. Stuart Moir stated that evening meetings would cost money due to staff attendance. The Chief Executive explained that there would be a cost but most people in attendance would not be taking overtime but rather time of in lieu and it was about providing a service for Committee Members and it was their choice whether they wished meetings on an evening or during the day.

It was agreed that the first round of Sub Committee meetings would be in the evening and the following meeting would be arranged at this time.

6.00 CORPORATE SERVICES

6.01 Proposed Rent Increase

The Corporate Services Manager presented the report on the rent increase. Enclosed in the report were the people who had written to the Association on the rent increase. A number of other Associations were looking at larger increases in rents and it had been reported in the local press that Lochaber was also high. The Committee considered the report in some detail with people pointing out that that it was important that work started as quickly as possible on improvement works so that people could see the impact of the rent increase. Mary Morrison made the point that the Committee should not take any comfort that there had not been a substantial number of people complaining about the rent increase – many people did not comment as they had a view that it would not matter.

The Chief Executive explained that it was important that all the points were taken on board but particularly Committee Members needed “thinking time” at a strategy day to look at rents both in terms of private sector rents and also affordability issues.

The Committee approved the paper, proposed by Tony Cave and seconded by Murray Sim.

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6.02 Quarterly Management Accounts for period 1st Oct-31st Dec 2007

The Corporate Services Manager presented the accounts for the period. These had already been approved by the Corporate Services Sub Committee.

The Committee noted the accounts.

6.03 New Members

The Committee approved the membership, proposed by Barbara Milne seconded by Murray Sim.

7.00 HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

7.01 Car Parking

There was some discussion about the problems of car parking and the Chief Executive explained that people had been phoned recently about the car parking and the results had been mixed. For example, several people complained about a brown and white van which seemed to be parked a lot; another person mentioned that the site of the new sign was in the wrong place; one person said she never had a problem whilst others said that that the top bit was quite full. The situation with the brown van would be familiar to the Committee as this had been raised before at Committee with people acknowledging that the person was parking there but there was a view asserted at previous meetings that there were extenuating circumstances.

Stuart Moir suggested that the people that said there was not a problem were the people without a car. The Chief Executive said this was not the case.

This matter had been the subject of previously substantial discussion and it was the Chief Executive's view that there was an issue of governance in respect of a declaration of interest. There was also the issue of the solicitor's advice at the time he spoke with us last year and his comment in relation to the suggestion of using the suggested service. In respect of this Stuart Moir felt that the solicitor's view was flawed in terms of what service was being offered by the Company. The Chief Executive retained her view that there were issues of governance as well as consistency and also the Committee had to consider the wider issues particularly any legal advice received.

Both Stuart Moir and Mary Morrison felt that this matter was not being dealt with and there was a serious issue but the Chair, with the rest of the meeting, felt that it would be inappropriate to discuss this further given the issue of governance.

It was agreed to re-examine the matter.

8.00 HEALTH & SAFETY

8.01 Employment of Young Persons

The Committee noted the report as requested.

9.00 CORRESPONDENCE

9.01 Committee Training

Anyone interested in attending training sessions should contact Ruby Campbell and the sessions would be booked.

May Tosh reminded Committee Members about the completion of various housekeeping forms and also preferences for the training.

10.00 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

10.01 Management Committee meeting held on 20th December 2007

The Minutes were proposed for approval by Murray Sim and seconded by Barbara Milne.

10.02 Housing & Customer Services Sub-Committee meeting held on 25 January 2008

The Minutes were proposed for approval by Duncan MacKenzie and seconded by Murray Sim.

10.03 Corporate Services Sub-Committee meeting held of 7 February 2008

The Minutes were proposed for approval by Stuart Moir and seconded by Mary Morrison

10.04 Development & Community Regeneration Sub-Committee meeting held on 15 February 2008

The Minutes were proposed for approval by Stuart Moir and seconded by Mary Morrison,

At the end of the meeting Stuart Moir withdrew his item under Private and Confidential due to governance issues.

The Minutes were read and agreed as a true record of the meeting.

Signed:

Date: