

**GOVANHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY 24th MAY 2023 AT 6.30PM
HYBRID MEETING – ELIM CHURCH AND ONLINE**

PRESENT: Cheryl Miller (Chair)
Keith Kintrea
Jen Cassells
Audrey Flannagan
Ghazala Hakeem
Barbara Robertson
Elizabeth Klein
Iain Doherty
Mujeeb Ur-Rehman

IN ATTENDANCE: John Quinn, Director
Alan McDonald, Head of Development & Property Services
David Robb, Head of Finance & IT (HFIT)
Stuart Niven, CAF Bank (online)
Claire McGraw, Head of Tenancy Services
Saqib Malik, Information officer
Liz Campbell, Minute Secretary (online)

1.Apologies

John McLardie, Wilma Logan, Barbara Robertson and Alison Kevan, Head of Corporate Services & HR.

2.Declarations of Interest

None

5. CAF Bank Deposit Platform

Stuart Niven explained that he is the Regional Director for CAF Bank and the Association has had an account with them since 2015.

HFIT reported that at the last Finance & General Purposes (F&GP) sub committee meeting had requested some additional information and a demonstration of the CAF Bank online deposit platform. This platform would give the association access to a wide range of deposit accounts and make it simpler for deposits to be spread among several different banking institutions. This would reduce the impact of one bank became insolvent. The Financial

Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) only covers up to £85,000 of funds. By spreading funds amongst various providers this helps protect a great amount of funds

Stuart gave a demonstration of the platform and explained that this platform meant the Association would only have to complete one application form and the platform would then allow access to a wide range of banks and building societies. The platform is managed by the Flagstone Group and the providers of accounts change often.

The interest rates offered in the platform can be more preferential than if that bank was approached directly. The accounts were shown in a graph grouped from lowest risk to highest risk and interest rates shown on the vertical axis of the graph.

Once accepted onto the platform accounts can be opened with the click of a button. There are no fees to open the account but there is a small management fee for using the platform. The fees are dependant on the amount invested but range from 0.25% to 0.15% of the invested amount. The fee is calculated annually but taken from the holding account on a monthly basis.

The following questions were asked:

If CAF is an introducer why can the Association not just contact Flagstone directly?

It was reported that Flagstone charge £500 to set up the account and the minimum deposit is £1m. This is a barrier to a lot of charities. CAF try to get the best deals for charities and by using CAF as an introducer there is no set up fee and the minimum deposit is £50,000.

What are the benefits to the banks using the platform?

The main benefits are that the bank doesn't need to do money laundering and know your customer checks as that is done by Flagstone when new accounts are opened.

Once money is in the account how is it moved around? Are two signatures required to make a transfer? How secure is the platform?

When the account is opened funds are deposited in a segregated trust account – details are not given to CAF or the bank used to deposit the funds. It goes in as an alpha numeric code and does not identify the details of the account holder. There is no credit exposure to Flagstone and the funds are protected – up to £85k in each account.

When the terms of the investment account have matured – 90 days notice, 12 months' notice etc the amount deposited can only be returned to the holding account. The holding account can be topped up from the associations main bank account.

If there is an account opened on the platform and a separate account held not via the platform does that mean 2 claims of £85k can be made if the bank becomes insolvent?

No, only 1 claim per bank can be made to FSCS.

Can the Association choose the holding account bank?

No, the only option for this is HSBC to maintain the holding account.

Some of the banks listed on the platform are not well-known names. How does the Association know that it has behaved ethically and is invested ethically?

The money is all cash deposits, not an investment fund, so there is no control over what it is invested in.

Flagstone control what banks are on the platform and not CAF. It would be up to the Association to do their own research on each bank.

There were no other questions and Stuart left the meeting at 7.10pm.

It was reported that F&GP had requested a 3rd party opinion on the platform. Peter Freer of Allia C & C have previously advised the Association and he stated that he was aware of the platform, and it would be a suitable place for the Association's money.

HFIT also proposed that the Treasury Management Policy be amended to remove named institutions and the criteria detailed in the paper be used to identify suitable recipients of the Association's deposits. **A paper on this will be brought to next F&GP meeting.**

Discussion took place and it was stated that the maximum investment in the platform could be £2.55m. This would mean that a lot of funds would still be exposed to risk. It was reported that there would not be enough banking licences to [REDACTED] just now and that a full time Treasury Manager would be required to manage that level of multiple accounts. The funds will not remain at that level due to planned works and possible new developments. It was also stated that the government would not allow numerous banks to all collapse and there needed to be faith in the banking system.

It was asked how many people would be required to move funds around. It was reported that authority would be delegated to HFIT. It was reported that there had been a review of the scheme of delegation and the rules of who can do what.

Approval was given for HFIT to begin the registration process for the CAF Bank deposit platform without funds being deposited into it.

3. Minutes of Management Committee Meeting held on 19th April 2023

The minutes were proposed by Ghazala Hakeem and seconded by Audrey Flannagan.

There were a couple of typing errors noted. Item 4 – page 3 “If a factored owner makes a claim for escape **OF** water....”

Page 4 – item 5.6 “..... has taken ownership of 430 flats and OF these 108 are”

Matters Arising

Reception – Work is continuing and the ventilation and lighting work has been carried out. Tests are being carried out on the ventilation system. The glazing work is due to take place on 7th June- and the paintwork has also been started. It was asked when was the expected completion date. It was reported that the works were like a jigsaw puzzle and it is hoped that it will all be completed sometime in June.

Item 8 – Page 6 - Link Site – As agreed at previous meeting solicitors are proceeding with the paperwork for the association to take ownership on a turnkey basis.

4. Information Report

The Information Officer was introduced to Committee who detailed the following points from the report:

Complaints - For the year 2022/23 there were 67 stage 1 complaints and 13 stage 2 complaints received.

- There has been a decrease in the number of complains that have escalated to stage 2 and this shows that they are being handled effectively at stage 1 of the process.
- 72.5% of the complaints received were upheld or partially upheld.
- Two stage 1 complaints received a late response, and this was due to the complex nature of the complaints.
- All stage 2 complaints were completed within the timescales set out by Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). One complaint took 39 days to complete as the association had to wait on a third-party gas fire company to provide a risk assessment for a gas fire installation.
- The average working days to respond to a complaint were:
 - Stage 1 – 3.92 days SPSO target is 5 days.
 - Stage 2 – 17.92 days SPSO target is 20 days.
- On page 4 of the report there is a breakdown of complaints by service area.
- There has been a decrease in complaints in factoring services but a rise in tenancy services.

Lessons Learned & Trends – the teams have made efforts to resolve issues at stage 1 and prevent further escalation to stage 2.

The spike in complaints in Maintenance Services are mainly attributed to a period of bad weather and were in relation to leaks and burst pipes.

Tenancy Services received the second highest number of complaints and most of these were in relation to close and backcourt cleaning. It is proposed to introduce a stair cleaning service in all properties. Work is taking place with partners to try and resolve the issue of fly tipping but GCC hasn't been able to help as much as we'd like due to budget constraints.

It was asked if GCC could be recharged and it was reported that GCC are not responsible for backcourts. The arrangement with John O'Conner needs to be formalised.

Factoring Services complaints were mainly in relation to timescales and invoicing format came up repeatedly. The current system cannot display the charges and payments the way customers would prefer. It is hoped that this issue will be helped when the customer portal is live and it will enable customers to view their charges and payments online. This will also be discussed with Factoring Manager and it is recognised that there is an issue with the reports from Capita.

Subject Access Requests – In the year there were 7 requests made. Five requests were from tenants and two from owners.

Freedom of Information Requests – there were 2 requests made in the year. One was from a 3rd party requesting information on the total number of violent incidents against staff. The other was from a tenant asking about information on an individual.

Environmental Information Regulations – For the year there were 8 requests received.

GDPR Breaches – there were 2 of these. In one case a letter was posted to the wrong person and in the other a request was received from an MP's Office and it wasn't checked if there was a mandate in place (no information was shared).

The Scottish Information Commissioner has not yet updated annual return figures so information of similar RSL's is not yet available.

A question was asked on what the Information Officer role involves. It was reported that he deals with complaints that are received. Stage 1 complaints go to heads of departments and the Information Officer deals with the investigations at stage 2 complaints. If the complainer is not satisfied after the stage 2 investigation is complete they can contact SPSO. The Information Officer has also been working on policies regarding how the Association handle information and store data.

In discussion it was stated the Information officer was based in the Corporate Services Team. HTS stated that a complaint is embraced and is an opportunity to learn and to make changes,

as well as fixing what has not gone well. A comment was made that anti-social behaviour had climbed up and it was good to see that being dealt with.

It was asked if a complaint goes to the Ombudsman how much does it cost. It was reported that a case to first tier tribunal was around [REDACTED], when staff costs are added that is around [REDACTED]. A comment was made that sometimes giving a small amount of compensation balances out the costs and it needs to be balanced and weighed out.

Information Officer left the meeting at 7.47pm

[REDACTED]. CONFIDENTIAL

[REDACTED]

These changes will be in place until the Chairperson is able to resume his duties or until the AGM in September, whichever comes first.

It was reported that work is taking place to try and increase membership.

7. ARC Submission report 2022 -2023

This is the final version of the annual return to be submitted to SHR.

The following points were highlighted:

3.3 – staff absences and some long-term sickness have resulted in an increase in the percentage of days lost through staff sickness

The previous two AGM's were held virtually and that resulted in low attendance at these meetings

3.4 – The average time to re-let properties – this is slightly higher than last year.

The percentage of lettable houses that became vacant in the last year is 6.35% - this shows that a good level of tenancies are being sustained.

The percentage of tenancy offers refused during the year has decreased dramatically.

3.5 Repair satisfaction levels dipped during the Covid pandemic but are rising again.

The time to complete emergency and non-emergency repairs has fallen.

3.10 Tenancy sustainment – there were 118 referrals received from GCC in relation to people who were classed as being homeless, 76 of these people were given tenancies by the Association.

3.7 – there has been a reduction in number of reported cases of anti-social behaviour. Staff had left some cases open for a longer period to monitor them but they will now be closed off but still be monitored.

There were 26 cases taken forward for court action and this resulted in 7 evictions notices being enforced.

There were 15 properties abandoned this year. The figure for last year was 10 properties.

The number of households that the landlord receives housing costs directly is 1745.

3.13 – EESSH -this is not recorded separately in the ARC but compliance is monitored. The compliance rate is 83.31% - last year was 85.2 %. The failures are due to the property type, recent substandard acquisitions for improvement and 46 tenants (1.64%) did not want improvements made in their home.

3.14 – There was a large number of properties that were difficult to get access to inspect so this has resulted in a variance this year.

The SWG acquisition programme has also had an impact on these numbers. There are many properties on site or have had pre-improvement works carried out and this has led to a temporary increase in SHQS fails as they currently have no kitchen, bathroom, heating systems and this will reverse to full compliance in next years ARC return for the properties concerned.

There were no gas safety check failures this year.

It was reported that 61% of the electrical safety checks required this year are already in progress or completed.

It was asked what the plans were to improve on the SHQS failure figures. It was reported that once structural strengthening works and the major repair contract works were completed this would improve the quality standards figures. It was stated that some things are simply timing issues due to planned works and the figures will improve over the next two years.

A comment was made the table at 3.3 shows that the membership of the Association had fallen again this year. The Association itself is growing and it would be good to see the membership increase too.

It was reported that Tenancy Services raise membership at new tenancy sign ups and that it is high compared to other Associations but low in comparison to membership of housing co-

ops. It was stated that a resident's scrutiny group had also been established. It was reported that the Tenant Participation Officer had organised a couple of in person events. A comment was made that a barrier could be that people didn't know who Committee Members were and it would maybe help if they attended the events.

The Director advised that some further review of ARC data would take place before submitting and sought approval if there were minor changes that delegated authority was given to staff to change then submit ARC.

Approval was given to make minor changes to the ARC as required by staff.

Approval was given for ARC to be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator by the Director.

A comment was made that a lot of work had gone into preparing the ARC return.

8.CONFIDENTIAL



9. Procurement Report

This was added to the agenda in error as it is still work in progress. Apologies were given for this error.

10. Contract Approval

There are two contract tenders for approval:

a) 30 Annette Street – these works were previously deferred from an eight close improvement contract. There is a shop unit that is also affected by this work.

This has been retendered and Morris & Spottiswood submitted a tender for the revised works. The usual scrutiny checks have been carried out and there was one minor change to the number of invoices.

Subject to majority vote being achieved in the close approval was given to proceed.

It was asked if there were only 6 contractors on the procurement framework. It was reported that there are different contractors on different parts of the framework. Some other work has been carried out using other Associations frameworks. It is hoped to expand the framework due to poor response rates. If the Association was to put in their own framework it could be costly.

b) Major Repairs Contract 5 – there has been a 5% increase in costs from the two contractors from their last contracts. They have been asked to sharpen their prices so the costs may change.



Subject to GCC approving grants for the works, approval was given to award the contract to Morris & Spottiswood

11. Minutes of Sub-Committees

Tenancy Services Meeting held on 1st February 2023

F&GP meeting held on 16th February 2023

GCDT meeting held on 1st March 2023

The contents of the minutes were noted.

12. Report Back from Other Organisations Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH)

Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum (GWSF)

Information is circulated as it becomes available.

SHARE

Information is circulated when available. SHARE and EVH have been in touch to ask after Chairperson.

13. Documents for Execution

None

14. Correspondence

None

15. A.O.C.B.

Mural – a lot of work has taken place to engage the community in this project. A lot of effort has gone into gathering as many views and thoughts as possible. It is recognised that art is subjective. There have been some tweaks and this is not the final version of the design.

If members are comfortable with the concept the final version will be sent by email for approval. This was agreed and it was noted that the final design would be required by 21st June 2023.

Rent to Mortgage Application – this scheme is managed by the Scottish Government to allow owners to remain in their property. Committee have previously approved up to two of these can proceed per year, subject to funds being available.

The Association wishes to take ownership of a ground floor flat from a four in a block property. The cost is £120k with £81,100 in grant being made available. This figure includes some of the identified repairs so the cost to the Association will be approximately £40K

Approval to proceed with the purchase was given.

Association Anniversary - Discussion took place about festival committee but it was reported they had run out of funding. It was suggested that the Association's contribution to the festival could be an event in the park to celebrate the Associations 15-year anniversary. It is hoped that there could also be something done at SHARE or EVH conferences too. There will be a programme of events throughout the year.

Return to Office Boardroom - It was asked when meetings could return to the Boardroom. It was reported that there had been a staff meeting and the CO2 detector readings spiked during that meeting. Further discussions will take place when HCSHR returns from annual leave.

16. Date of Next Meetings

21st June 2023 at 6.30pm

The meeting closed at 8.38pm