

## **FYNE HOMES LTD**

### **Minute of Management Committee Meeting held by Scopia Video Conferencing on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2020 at 2.30pm**

#### **Present:-**

D Herriot	S MacLeod
T Harrison	J McMillan (Chair)
R Henshelwood	P Wallace
M Lang	D Wilkinson
T McKay	

#### **In Attendance**

S Cole, Business Service Director  
L Haemmerle, Human Resources Director  
J McAlister, Technical Services Director  
C Renfrew, Chief Executive Officer  
T Robertson, Housing Services Director  
M Thomson, Corporate Manager (Minute Taker)

#### **Apologies:**

K Findlay, H Kirk, P Lingard and L Scoullar

The Chair welcomed everyone to our first Committee meeting to be held by video conferencing and highlighted some housekeeping matters for the meeting. He also welcomed T McKay back from his leave of absence.

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were intimated as above.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made.

#### **3. AOCB pre-notifications**

The following items were intimated and accepted for discussion

- (i) Stage 3 Adaptions
- (ii) Queries in relation to Coronavirus by P Lingard in his absence

#### **4. Coronavirus**

##### *(a) Responses Update*

A detailed report was previously circulated which provided Committee with an update of the actions taken by the Association with regard to office closure to the public, notifying the SHR, preparations for staff home working including provision of equipment and redirecting of phone lines, advising contractors only emergency repairs would be instructed, development site closures, restricting access to the office for staff only with SMT approval and daily SMT meetings by vc. The daily meetings also included the TS Manager, Corporate Manager and the IT Manager.

This has involved a considerable amount of work with the key aims of ensuring the safety of staff and safe systems of work along with the provision of a service to tenants if on a somewhat reduced basis.

The H R Director offered her thanks to the team for their work on pulling this together.

On behalf of Committee the Chair also offered sincere thanks to the team and all staff members for their efforts in enabling continued service provision.

**Action**

**The Chair and HR Director to liaise on the content of an email to thank all staff.**

*(b) Government Job Retention Scheme*

The SMT met on 9<sup>th</sup> April to discuss the aspect of the scheme in relation to making money available to pay 80% of wages for businesses that required furloughing their staff and whether this was something that Fyne Homes wanted to consider.

The report outlined the various aspects that had been considered:

- Good financial situation with budget in place, 30 years projections and Fyne Energy income
- Prior to the pandemic no consideration was being given to redundancies
- Majority of staff able to work from home which meant only a very small number of staff would be considered for furlough which didn't sit comfortably with the team and would send out the wrong message to staff and have an impact on morale and our wider reputation
- Scheme put in place for businesses whose income streams had dried up overnight
- We still have rental income with around 50% of tenancies on benefit and figures at end of March indicate most still paying either full rent or entering into arrangements for payment of rent
- Rental income being monitored on a monthly basis
- Savings on interest payments on loans due to reduction in base rate
- Only emergency repair works being carried at moment

The SMT reached a decision to make a recommendation to Staffing Committee that the association should not make an application to the scheme or furlough any staff. This would normally have been presented to the Staffing Committee meeting scheduled for the end of the month however it was decided to present to this meeting and cancel the scheduled Staffing Committee Meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> April.

The Chief Executive also commented that the SFHA has responded to the Government that the RSL movement is in favour of moves put in place to help businesses but also alerted them to the view that if RSL rental income dips significantly across the board they would be campaigning strongly for support for all RSLs.

**Resolution**

- (i) *Committee agreed to the recommendation that Fyne Homes should not make application to the Government Job Retention Scheme or furlough any staff.*

- (ii) *Committee also agreed to the recommendation to cancel the Staffing Committee Meeting scheduled for 30<sup>th</sup> April.*

**5. Minute of Management Committee Meeting of 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

With regard to Page 3 Home Argyll Allocations Policy, P Wallace commented that the statement in the minute “Evidence of access, for example: birth certificate, letter from child’s other parent or lawyer” and that the word “lawyer” had been replaced by “professional”.

With that amended on a proposal by T Harrison, seconded by M Lang, the minute was unanimously accepted as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

**(a) *Matters Arising***

There were no matters arising.

**(b) *Rolling Action Points***

The updated list of rolling action points from previous meetings was circulated for information.

Action Nos 23 and 24 have been put on hold at the moment although costs for carpeting have been obtained. Action no’s 26, 28 and 29 were completed and closed and Action No 27 in relation to comparison write off figures was deferred to the next meeting.

**6. Technical Services Reports**

**(a) *Development Report***

The content of the report was noted and some points were highlighted by the Technical Services Director as follows:

*Tighnabruaich*

Due to the Covid19 Pandemic, works have been suspended and the site secured and made safe. Arrangements have been made with a local contractor to check the properties and the site on a daily basis. Handover was anticipated for the end of May and a revised programme will be obtained from the contractor once works can recommence.

With regard to the Stage 2 Adaptation funding for two properties to be made wheelchair accessible, the revised offer of grant has been received and signed off and funding of just under £20k is expected imminently.

*Cairndow*

As above, works have been suspended and the site secured and made safe. The site will be checked regularly by the contractor during the site shut down.

**(b) *Capital Investment Report 2019-2020***

All works in all areas have been completed with the exception of the shop/flat amalgamation on Bute and the kitchen, rewire and central heating contract at Johnstone Terrace in Dunoon, which have been suspended during this pandemic.

All contractors have been advised that only emergency or essential repairs will be instructed and have been provided with letters to carry indicating that they are undertaking essential works for Fyne Homes.

The Technical Services Director also reported that 3 gardeners went back to work on Monday following risk assessments having been undertaken, method statements being put in place and PPE provided.

## **7. Housing Management Report**

A detailed report by the Housing Services Director was previously circulated to bring Committee up to date with progress in various areas. Some points were highlighted as follows and the remainder of the report duly noted:

### ***Home Argyll***

#### ***Allocations Policy***

A reduced amount of applications are currently being received and work continues on existing applications in terms of validation or change in circumstances. Emergency allocations are being progressed for domestic abuse and homeless and two have been allocated during this lockdown period which have been supported by the homeless department.

In line with Government guidance, although no evictions can be made during this period, we can still continue to serve notice in circumstances not related to Covid-19 e.g. abandonments, historic arrears or ongoing actions.

#### ***Old Courthouse***

No 19 is due to conclude on 30<sup>th</sup> April which will leave two properties remaining for sale at no 14 and 16.

Tranche-ups which were in progress prior to lockdown continue.

#### ***Welfare Reform***

The Tenancy Support Officer continues to process welfare calls and the remainder of the team are supporting people with UC claims and referring them to the options available to them as appropriate.

#### ***Rent Arrears***

Feedback indicates tenants are still paying their rent and do want to pay. Some are being referred to packages available to them and some furloughed workers are paying 80% and some are falling behind. Cancelled Direct Debits are being worked through and some are due to either going onto benefit, making manual payments or payment arrangements. The situation is being regularly monitored.

#### ***Tenant Participation***

The TP Officer has been co-ordinating a programme of calls for older/ vulnerable tenants as well as mainstream to check on their welfare and offer support or refer them to other services as required.

Arrangements have also been put in place for some who have requested a regular check from the association.

At this point R Henshelwood commented that he had received a call which was well received and that people will appreciate someone is thinking about them.

T McKay commented that the improvement in our contact with tenants and tenant participation is outstanding and that thanks should be offered to the TP Officer for his efforts in this area.

*Fyne View*

It was noted that the property is now tenanted by a client group with advanced dementia. The client group was changed at short notice without any amendment needed to the HMO application and has freed up a ward at the local hospital.

The Technical Services Director acknowledge the efforts of MacLeods, APE Solutions and the Mid Argyll Technical Services Officer and Maintenance Operative so close to the lockdown coming into place and was a good example of partnership working.

**8. Business Services Report**

A report by the Business Services Director was previously circulated for Committee's information and duly noted.

The Business Services Director acknowledged the concentrated efforts of the IT Manager and the IT Assistant during this period of crisis in ensuring the office phone lines were redirected to be handled by staff from home and for the provision and configuration of equipment to enable staff to work from home where they were able to. Without their support we would not be in the position we are in and it is very much appreciated.

Finance staff with the approval the SMT have pre-arranged access to office when required to ensure that the processing and payment of contractors and suppliers continues and also to enable continued work on management and year end accounts.

D Wilkinson also commended the SMT and all staff for the work they have put in at short notice and the vital work done before lockdown to ensure we can continue to provide a service as well as the ability to carry out this meeting by video conference.

**9. Human Resources Report**

A report prepared by the HR Director was previously circulated for Committee's information and duly noted. Some points were highlighted as follows:

It was noted that much of the work on the standard report has been suspended while the focus has been on crisis management. Recruitment in Campbeltown has been suspended and the timescales for PDRs have been relaxed although some have held them by phone or VC.

The review of the workforce plan has been suspended as it is anticipated that that there may be changes to the way people view their work and overall plans.

**10. Policy Reviews**

A report by the Corporate Manager provided detail on the various policies for approval/deferral or amendment.

With regard to the proposal to increase the funding available for donations from £1000 to £2000 although there was no objection to the increase, a query was raised as to procedures in place for making applications to ensure consistency and transparency. The Corporate Manager explained that although we do not have a specific application form, the Donations Policy details the criteria for consideration and how requests should be prioritised. The CEO has authority to approve request up to £100 and anything over must be presented to Committee for consideration and approval. Requests from non-charitable organisations are capped at £50.

***Resolution:***

*(a) Committee approved the undernoted policy:  
HR09 Stress Management Policy*

*(b) Committee agreed to the recommendation to increase the level of funding available for donations from £1000 to £2000*

**11. Minute of Management Team Meeting 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2020**

**12. Minute of Fyne Futures Adhoc Meeting 12th March 2020**

The above minutes were circulated for information purposes and duly noted.

A query was raised with regard to Fyne Futures on any update following the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> March when the Council were to be notified that although the contract value was acceptable, the contract length was not and that if there could be no movement on this TUPE would apply and the contract would end on 31<sup>st</sup> March.

The CEO advised that ABC responded that there would be no movement on the contract length and initially indicated that they did not agree TUPE would apply, however they then came back to say that it did.

Required information was supplied to ABC for the TUPE transfer of relevant staff and consultation was undertaken with the staff, FF General Manager, ABC Receiving Manager and their HR along with our HR Director. This was all concluded in a very short period of time and the staff transferred to ABC on 1<sup>st</sup> April. No major measures were declared by the Council at this time with regard to redundancies.

The Council also requested if the assets would be transferred and were advised that this would not be the case however in the current circumstances they have been loaned to the Council at no charge and this will be reviewed when the current lockdown ends.

The Chair thanked everyone for their handling of a difficult situation in a short timescale.

It was also noted from the minute that the purchase of the Ashfield site is progressing.

13. AOCB

(i) *Stage 3 Adaptations*

The Technical Service Director reported that the funding bid has to be submitted to the Scottish Government by 11<sup>th</sup> May. The waiting list will be reviewed and a bid submitted for the full amount. It was also highlighted that during the current circumstances it may be difficult to spend the funding e.g. level access showers would not be classed as an essential repair and it may be that the Scottish Government view on this will need to be sought.

(ii) *Queries raised from CV Pandemic*

In his absence P Lingard had submitted some queries for consideration which were addressed as follows:

- *Will budget need modified taking account of potential reduction in rental income from tenants and scheme delays for new units coming off site*

The Business Services Director commented that it is difficult to tell at the moment with regard to rental income. Management Accounts to end of March have been completed and look healthy. We have a budget and 30 year projection in place. There are also potential savings with regard to travel expenses, reduction in base rate meaning less interest paid on our loans and the fact that the major repair programme for this year may slide into next year. The situation is monitored quarterly via the accounts and arrears will be monitored on a monthly basis and if felt any change to the budget is required this will be reported to Committee.

- *Impact on Bank Covenants*

The Business Services Director commented that they have all been met for the year 2019/20. Going forward will depend on rental income and major repairs carried out and if we had to revise the budget the covenants would be met for 2020/21 and as previously mentioned the situation is being closely monitored. Most of the lenders have informally indicated that under the current circumstances they would take a flexible approach e.g. if returns are late.

- *What's happening with DLO staff*

The Technical Services Director commented that as reported earlier in the meeting 3 DLO staff on Bute commenced garden service work on Monday with two still at home one being unable to drive and the other being our apprentice.

The Maintenance Operative in Dunoon is unable to work at this time due to personal family circumstances.

The operatives in Mid Argyll and Kintyre are available for emergency work as required.

- *What is the position with regards to holiday – have to be taken or carried forward*

The HR Director commented that there are short medium and long term aspects to this due to the timing of when the situation started when we were coming to the end of the leave year.

33.5 days were carried forward for all staff, some were related to sickness at the end of March and are due to get their holidays back, and this accounted for 16 days. Eight days

were cancelled and 5 had previously been approved for a member of staff to carry forward. This left on 4.5 days carried forward as a result of CV-19 and some have already been taken by staff.

Government advice is that the 28 days statutory leave (which includes public holidays) has to be taken in the leave year however this has been relaxed and can be carried over the next two years and the HR Director would be proposing that we follow this advice with our leave entitlement which is 40 days with 15 being fixed. It is not expected to be an issue as staff are working from home and will still need and want a break, although the situation will be monitored. The situation will also be helped by the fact that staff will only be working contracted hours when working from home and there will be no accrual of flexi /or toil unless it is a business critical situation previously agreed with the SMT.

It is anticipated that along with the reports presented to the meeting and the above comments, the queries should be addressed and an extract minute will be provided to P Lingard.

**Action**

**Extract minute of responses to queries raised to be provided to P Lingard.**

At this point T Harrison commented that as this is the first time a meeting has been conducted in this manner and that he felt it went well, however, that feedback should be sought from members on what went well, what didn't and any suggestions for improvements which may make the experience better in the future.

**Action**

**Corporate Manager to circulate survey to members on the VC meeting experience.**

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 3.55pm.

**19. Date of Next Meeting**

The next Management Committee meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020.**

Chair.....  
(Chair)

Date.....