

List of Signatures

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Minutes_Finance & Corporate Services Sub-Committee_240821.pdf

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Ken Robertson	One-Time-Password	2021-11-30 15:26 GMT+01



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Finance & Corporate Services Sub-Committee

Tue 24 August 2021, 17:45 - 19:45

Attendees

Board members

Julianne Scarlett (Board Member), Heather Thomson (Vice Chair), Ken Robertson (Chair), Brian Corrigan (Board Member), Paul McVey (Director), Liz Bowden (Corporate Services Manager), Shonaid Musgrove (Corporate Services Officer (Minutes)), Kes Cameron (OTHA Finance Manager), Ewan Barr (ICT Manager)

Meeting minutes

1. Apologies and Declaration of Interest

Information

Apologies had been received from A Hutchison. No declarations of interest were noted.

Chair

2. Minutes of 27th May 2021


Decision

There were no amendments to make to the minutes.

Chair

Resolution:

The Minutes were proposed, approved and seconded as being a true record.

 02 Minutes - 27 May 2021.pdf

3. Matters Arising and Outstanding Actions

Information

- Review of capital spend will be dealt with later in the meeting.
- The CSM will start the "stop smoking campaign" for tenants in late September.
- Salary sacrifice will be dealt with later in the meeting.

Chair

Action:

The CSM to start the "Stop Smoking" campaign in September.

Resolution:

The report was noted.

 03 - Outstanding Actions and Matters Arising.pdf

4. ICT Strategy

Information

The ICT Manager took the meeting through the report. He drew the meeting's attention to the following points:-

ICT Manager

- 2 extra iPad's procured with enhanced security measures - not previously budgeted for. The CSM advised that the older ones will be donated to charity following a "clean" of the drives and suggested the Belville Community hub.
- 2-factor authentication now completed; increases security to our IT systems.
- Annual cyber security accreditation due in late August. The ICT Manager had contemplated going for the "platinum" award but this not cost effective.
- Reactive repairs integration now in place but has been an effort to get to this stage. Issues lay with the contractor's IT systems.
- More support tickets had been logged as staff returning to the office; mainly minor problems.

It was agreed to take item 6.2 next to allow the ICT Manager to attend an OTHA meeting.

Resolution:

The report was noted.

 04 ICT Update Report.pdf



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5. Management Accounts 2021/2022, Quarter 1

Decision
Finance Manager

The Finance Manager took the meeting through the Finance Director's presentation (who was not present at the meeting).


The Finance Manager shared her screen with the presentation and reported on the following items:-

- Only a 5% variance in the Statement of Comprehensive Income.
- Income is under budget but this relates to delays with Kings Glen (loss of rental income).
- Wellpark void losses were higher than budget due to the additional work being done while the properties are empty. The Q1 budget for grant amortisation was higher than the actual grant write-off re: the early replacement of components, was less than budget.
- Operational Expenditure - bad debt only £2k to-date. This due to timing issues within overheads.
- Covenants have all been met.
- Net worth increased by 2%

A Board member stated that it would appear that neither Brexit nor Covid appeared to have been hugely detrimental to the finances of Cloch. The Finance Manager replied that there still could be issues (eg increase in arrears/bad debt) but that it could take time to filter through the accounts. The Director advised that operationally there could be a big effect still to be felt (eg evictions, increased costs to repairs that were halted during the pandemic, workforce absences if catching Covid). Also, the Association had recently put out tenders and these are coming back significantly higher; which is quite alarming. It was acknowledged that many industries are facing economic difficulties as well as shortages in workforce numbers.

Resolution:

The Quarter 1 Management Accounts were proposed, approved and seconded by the Board.

 05.0 Report on Management Accounts 2021 2022 Q1.pdf

 05.1 Management Accs 2021 2022 Q1.pdf

6. Policies for approval

6.1. Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy

Decision
Finance Manager

The Finance Manager advised this policy was for review and advised the key changes were as follows:

- No longer a joint policy with Oak Tree.
- Includes a definition of what fraud actually is.
- A new Risk Register has been compiled.
- Expansion of the implications of cyber crime.


The changes to the policy had also been sent to the Association's auditors for comment.

Resolution:

The policy review was proposed, approved and seconded.

 06.1.0 Fraud, Bribery & Corruption Policy Review - Cover Paper.pdf

 06.1.1 CHA Fraud Bribery and Corruption - August 2021.pdf

 06.1.2 CHA Fraud Bribery and Corruption - Tracked Changes - August 2021.pdf

 06.1.3 Fraud Risk Assessment & Risk Register -16-8-21.pdf

6.2. ICT Password Policy

Decision
Finance Director

The ICT Manager advised that this was a review of an existing policy. The only changes made were:

1. The inclusion of the 2-factor authentication;
2. Removal of references to OTHA as this had been a joint policy.

Resolution:

The policy was proposed, approved and seconded.

The ICT Manager left the meeting at 6.15pm.

 06.2.0 ICT Password Policy Review 2021 Covering Report.pdf

 06.2.1 ICT Password Policy Review 2021.pdf



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6.3. Recruitment & Selection Policy

The Corporate Services Manager (CSM) apologised that the comments/amendments are showing in the policies.

The CSM advised that the changes were highlighted and commented on the following -

- Inverclyde Trust is no longer the main recruitment agency for modern apprentices.
- Candidates are now given interview questions 10 minutes prior to the start.
- The terminology around equalities has been amended to reflect good practice. The CSM stated that Equality Impact Assessments will be reintroduced where applicable.

A Board member enquired if appointing a Grade 8 person, was it mandatory for a Board member to form part of the interview panel. The CSM advised that it was optional as the Director would normally be present for a Grade 8 appointment. However, as a matter of courtesy the CSM would ask the Board, at the time of a Grade 8 appointment, if anyone wished to be part of the panel.

A Board member enquired if the section on equal opportunities monitoring (item 15) should be expanded. The CSM advised that this will be reviewed going forward. The CSM stated that our application forms are now completed online but there was an issue with the link to the equal opportunities form so unfortunately we were not able to collect the data on this. However this will be rectified.

A Board member wished to see a link to our existing Equalities & Diversity policy. The Director suggested adding "in accordance with the Equalities & Diversity policy" to this section, which was agreed.

A Board member asked if the Association had measures in place regarding the modern slavery legislation, particularly with some of the larger companies that the Association may be appointing to ensure they complied with the new legislation. The Director suggested including this within the procurement process similar to the current Living Wage one, however this will be checked.


Action:

- Add in the statement suggested by the Director at item 15.
- Include future procurements will tie into the Modern Slavery legislation, where relevant.

Resolution:

The policy was proposed, approved and seconded.

 06.3.0 Recruitment and Selection Policy Covering Report.pdf

 06.3.1 Recruitment and Selection Policy.pdf

6.4. Salary Sacrifice Policy

The CSM advised that this was a new policy and was based on the model one issued by Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH). The policy enforced the practices that currently exist.

The CSM advised that all staff are asked if they want to consider opting into the scheme and that it is completely voluntary.


Action:

Amend the small typing error of "fund" to "find".

Resolution:

The policy was proposed, approved and seconded.

 06.4.0 Salary Sacrifice Policy Covering Report.pdf

 06.4.1 Salary-Sacrifice Policy.pdf



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6.5. Remote & Hybrid Working Policy

The CSM advised this new policy replaced the old "Working from Home" policy and took account of the fact that all staff have the capability to remote work which was demonstrated during the pandemic. The CSM advised that there are different types of remote working:-

- occasional
- hybrid
- contractual (not yet for our staff but allows staff to ask under flexible working)

The CSM advised that some staff are hybrid working and the report gave examples of the percentages. They also advised that some teams have had the option removed and are in the office full time until the Association has got certain services back up and running.

A Board member enquired if the hybrid could work with 2 weeks at home and 3 weeks in the office. The CSM replied that this would not be conducive for Cloch's way of working or culture and did not fall into the spirit of the proposed hybrid working. The CSM stated that each team would review the situation and offer a reasonable, flexible approach. However, it might be that a staff member has to forego remote working to cover for absences of colleagues in key areas (eg reception). A key component will be communication with teams/ staff on this.

A Board member asked if all staff could return to the office safely; was there enough space for some social distancing. The CSM did not think this was imminent but that there was room to do so. Staff can use other areas of the office in order to maintain a 1m distancing. The Director stated this was why the hybrid model was being proposed to avoid all staff being in the office for the present moment in time. He also advised that although current guidance states you can go to work if you have a household member positive, but you are negative and have had both your vaccinations, Cloch's thinking is that you can remote work for the quarantine period rather than come into the office. This gives extra reassurance to staff working in the office.


A question was raised about the provision of IT equipment and furniture. The Director replied that all IT equipment and furniture used during the lockdowns had now been returned to the office. Pool laptops are available to those staff members to use who do not have a dedicated one. As the hybrid proposal is voluntary (not contractual or like the lockdown) then the Association does not have to provide items such as desks, chairs, etc, although this will be kept under review.

A Board member enquired if staff would be able to claim any expenses for using home internet provisions. The CSM replied they would not as the scheme is voluntary. They advised that staff are already making a saving by not travelling to work and there is also a tax benefit that staff can apply for and have been made aware of.

Resolution:

The policy was proposed, approved and seconded.

 06.5.0 Remote and Hybrid Working Policy Covering Report.pdf

 06.5.1 Remote and Hybrid Working Policy.pdf

7. Finance Director's Report

The Finance Manager drew the meeting's attention to the following key points:-


- Resources - 2 long term absence within the Finance team had impacted on Qtr 1 and Qtr 2.
- Shared service review - all went well and there is no areas of concern to report.
- The CSM and Finance Director looking at the recruitment of a Finance Apprentice (Graduate role) for a 5-year period. This will be a full time recruit with 1 day/week on day release.
- Review of planned maintenance has been undertaken which will increase costs. Discussions ongoing with RBS for an additional £1.5m loan funding.
- Treasury Management - cash reducing as using this for Kings Glen rather than higher costs for the draw down on loan funding.
- LIBOR - changes to this happening and a further paper will be brought to the Board.
- External Auditor - contract expires this year but has been extended for a further 2 years.


The meeting was pleased to note the impending recruitment of a graduate role within the Finance section.


Resolution:

The Finance Director's report was noted.

 07.0 Finance Director Report.pdf

 07.1 Appendix 1) Finance & IT activities Q1 Review - 28-7-21.pdf

 07.2 Appendix 2) Planned Maintenance update.pdf

 07.3 Appendix 3) TC Young Libor blog 29 June 2021.pdf

 07.4 Appendix 4) Audit Contract Letter.pdf



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8. Factoring Report

Information
Finance Manager

The Finance Manager advised the meeting that the debt continues to reduce and this July has been the lowest July debt historically. There continues to be a few problematic customers who refuse to pay and they tend to have the highest debt and are not engaging with the Association.

Resolution:

The Factoring report was noted.

 08 Factoring Recharge Report Quarter 1.pdf

9. Corporate Services Manager's Report

Information
Corporate Services Manager

The CSM reiterated that the office is now open to the public. They invited any Board members who had joined during the pandemic to come into the office should they wish to. The Director advised that it was hoped to reconvene meetings in the office/remotely using the hybrid system.

- The CSM advised that the Association will no longer accept cash payments. All current restrictions are working well.
- They advised that the Association has recently had 3 vacancies and recruitment to fill them has been ongoing. The posts of Property Services Officer and Housing Assistant have been filled and the new post holders are in place. The interviews for the Housing Officer post will take place soon.
- The KPI figures for absence are high due to the long term absences that have occurred; there's only 1 long term absentee presently.
- A Housing Assistant that solely worked on the ICHR has moved from the Housing section to become a Customer Connector.
- The Association recently undertook a review of its Customer Service status and feedback is excellent.

The Finance Manager left the meeting at 7.15pm.

Resolution:

The report was noted.

 09.0 Corporate Services Manager Report.pdf

10. Verbal Private & Confidential Staff Report

Information
Corporate Services Manager

The CSM informed the meeting of an ongoing staffing absence and provided an update on our actions to date to give the Sub Committee assurance that it was being managed effectively.

The Director advised that both the CSM and the CSO have coped extremely well under the circumstances, however we will be exploring temporary staffing to cover the workload given the length of time of the absence.

Resolution:

The meeting noted the verbal report.

11. Health & Safety Verbal Update

Information
Director

The Director advised that an incident had occurred with a member of staff working alone. The Manager carried out an investigation and took action to ensure there will be no recurrence.

The incident will be noted within our H&S records.

Resolution:

The meeting noted the contents of the verbal report.



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12. Reflection

A Board member enquired if meetings would resume in the office any time soon or would they continue to be on an online platform. The Director replied that it was likely that a hybrid option would be the preference to start off with. This would probably suit Board members that are not local and have their own work commitments too. It removes the time needed for long drives to/from the office. Another Board member commented that the online platform tends to make meetings more efficient with less chat time. Although it was also acknowledged that this is how relationships are formed with Board members.

The Director asked about the flow of the meeting and if any members had anything to say on the proceedings. One member said it was fine but that the Finance information tended to be harder to follow. However, they understood the requirement for all the facts and figures to be presented.

The Director advised that the compilations of the sub-committees was being addressed. One thought was to have an "operational" sub that would be Housing, Property and Corporate. This would leave Finance and Audit to be combined. A Board member thought that it could prove difficult to recruit members to sit on a Finance/Audit sub as the F&CS one gives that bit more variety of items for discussion.

The Director advised that this would be addressed after the AGM.

Resolutions:

The meeting noted the comments above.

13. AOCB

Chair

There being no other business the meeting closed at 7.40pm

14. Date of Next Meeting: to be agreed

This will be advised following the AGM.



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