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The West of England Friends Housing Society
Minutes of the Board Meeting held Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 5pm at Avenue House

Present: *Board Members:* Tim Wye (Chairperson)
Gill Fraser, Andrew Lux (Zoom), Jerry Oliver (Zoom)
Steve O'Shea, Yasmin Pinks, Chris Szpojnarowicz
Avenue House: Rebecca Tailby, Karen Parkin (minutes)
Bishop Fleming: Claire Argrave

1. Moment of Silence

In accordance with our Quaker values, a moment of silence was taken prior to the meeting.

2. Apologies and welcome

Apologies received from Caroline Cooper.

3. Agreement of the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2024.

The minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 2024 were agreed as being a true account of the meeting and therefore signed by the Chair.

4. Board Membership

Actions arising from previous meetings:

- *Extension of Chair role* – it was agreed that Tim's position as Chair be extended by 1 year, with an appropriate uplift.
- Welcome to Gill Fraser, who has joined the Board.
- Karen to write to tenants with regards to the vacant Tenant Representative position.

Action: Karen

5. Board Structure and sub-committees.

Actions arising from previous meetings:

- *Reach out to residents with regards to developing and implementing Quaker values in Avenue House (Andrew / Tim)* – Some thoughts:
 - Redraft Quaker values summary – could we produce a leaflet summarising this?
 - Quaker Values training to be given to all new staff
 - Could the Sunday quaker service be slightly longer? To discuss logistics of signalling the start / end of meeting with Beckie / Caroline.
 - Could we link the Sunday Quaker Meeting via Zoom to the Redland Meeting?
Action: Yasmin / Andrew
- *Previous staff benefits / occupational sick pay proposals to be discussed (Tim / Caroline / Steve)* – To be progressed as a matter of priority. **Action: Tim / Caroline / Steve**
- Gill to sit with Caroline, Tim and Chris on the Housing Committee.

6. Financial Report by Bishop Fleming

Actions arising from previous meetings:

- Move an extra £50k into the current Redwood bond (Karen) – Cannot do until April 2025
 - Open a second Redwood bond with £50k (Karen) – COMPLETED
 - Open a 6 month and 12-month bond with Triodos – IN PROGRESS
 - Review requirement for Resident Deposits – it was agreed that we stop asking for deposits from Avenue House residents and offer to return those we already hold to residents. To communicate this with uplift letters. **Action: Karen**
 - Finalise electricity accounts (Karen / Caroline / Tim) – COMPLETED (2-year contract with British Gas)
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- We are currently 12 months into our 15-month accounting year, with a surplus of £100k over a budgeted £48k. This surplus has come mostly from Avenue House and is mainly due to a higher than budgeted occupancy.
 - There have been some additional agency costs this year but going forward this looks set to decrease.
 - Interest earned from our reserves has increased due to some new accounts and reserves reshuffling.
 - It was noted that Avenue House runs at a significant surplus, but Kirwin and Lansdowne Houses often run at a slight deficit. This is due to restrictions on setting rents as a Registered Social Landlord.
 - It was agreed that a long-term plan for maintenance should be drawn up.

7. Budget

The following was agreed:

- Budget based on an occupancy of 26 was set.
- Staff pay rises – a restructure of wages is proposed, which will mean slightly varying increases this year. The majority of staff will be given between a 3 and 4% rise.
- 5% uplift for Residents and Tenants.

8. Review of expenditure approval limits

Approval limits set in 2022 were reviewed as follows:

- Up to £5k – Manager
- Between £5k - £15k – Manager & Chair after 1 quote
- Between £15k - £25k – Manager & Chair after 3 quotes if possible
- Over £25k – full Board approval after 3 quotes if possible

9. Manager update including incident reporting.

Caroline is currently on annual leave, so the Assistant Manager Rebecca Tailby was in attendance to deliver her report:

Actions arising from previous meetings:

- Team Leader job description and salary to be devised (Caroline / Tim) – COMPLETED. This has been advertised both internally and externally. The successful candidate would be expected to share responsibilities with the Assistant Home Manager.
- To discuss complete restructuring of staff pay at Budget Meeting (Finance Sub-Committee) - COMPLETED

Avenue House

- We currently have 26 permanent residents, 1 of which is in hospital. In the past month:
 - 1 x death
 - 2 x new admissions
 - 1 x hospital admission
 - No accidents
- 1 further admission is due in the next week – this will be Danny Grant who has long been connected with Avenue House, both on the Board and as a shop volunteer.
- Staffing:
 - 3 new staff members have been recruited – 1 day care assistant and 2 night care assistants.
 - 2 vacancies remain – 1 x cook for alternate Saturdays and a weekend Cleaner.
- When Caroline returns from annual leave we will be focusing on becoming re-accredited with the Gold Standards Framework.
- A question about fitting an automatic door opener to the Avenue House front door was raised – Tim to liaise with Caroline. **Action: Tim / Caroline**

Kirwin House

- Flat inspections which took place in January showed that all occupied flats are in good condition.
- 1 vacancy

Lansdowne House

- Flat inspections which took place in January showed that all occupied flats are in good condition.
- 3 vacancies – all of which need extensive works.
- Work has started on flat 1 – this will cost approximately £20k which includes some work to increase the EPC rating.
- Work to start on flat 2 next week.
- Flat 8 has a damp issue – drone footage has been obtained and shows some tiles that need replacing. This will involve scaffolding.

- Complaint handling coding to be submitted for the Housing by March.

10. Housing Complaints Policy

Changes to the Housing Complaints Policy were agreed and signed off by the Board.

11. Update from Relative Representative.

Regular relative Zoom meetings have recommenced – most issues are raised and resolved there. No further issues to bring to the Board.

12. Community Services

Tim to write a job description for someone to organize and nurture this idea – to discuss further at the next meeting. **Action: Tim**

13. Housing Update

Actions arising from previous meetings:

- Arrange a full survey of work needed to achieve a C rating on the EPCs of all flats (Tim) – CARRY FORWARD
- Deregistering as an RSL isn't going to be as easy as first anticipated as in order to do so we need the following:
 - Proof that the Housing is financially viable
 - Audit of stock and maintenance plan
 - Plan for increasing the EPC ratings and other major plans
 Once this information is up together, we can approach the Regulator. Housing Committee to schedule a meeting. **Action: Housing Sub-Committee**

14. Business Risk Register

To be circulated. **Action: Caroline**

15. Update on business plan.

No changes.

16. Board Governance / update on Board Member visits.

Actions arising from previous meetings:

- Catch up outstanding visits and complete paperwork
- Tim's position to be added to Whistleblowing Policy - COMPLETED

Month	Name	Sections to assess
September 2024	Chris Szpojnarowicz	S2, S5
December 2024	Tim Wye	S6, E6
January 2025	Andrew Lux	S4, W3
February 2025	Chris Szpojnarowicz	R1, W4
March 2025	Jerry Oliver	R2, W5
April 2025	Gill Fraser & Tim Wye	E3, C1
May 2025	Yasmin Pinks	E2, C2
June 2025	Tim Wye	C3, R3
July 2025	Andrew Lux	S3, E4
August 2025	Chris Szpojnarowicz	E5, W1
September 2025	Jerry Oliver	S2, S5
October 2025	Gill Fraser	E7, W2
November 2025	Yasmin Pinks	S1, E1
December 2025	Tim Wye	S6, E6

17. A.O.B.

- The Garden House was discussed – ideas for potential uses to be invited at the Relatives Meeting. **Action: Tim / Steve**

18. Proposed dates for next meetings

Tuesday 20th May 2025 5pm
 AGM – Tuesday 2nd September 2025 2pm
 Tuesday 2nd September 2025 5pm
 Tuesday 18th November 2025 5pm

Meeting Closed 7.15pm**Summary of action points:**

Action	By whom	By when
Write to tenants re: vacant Tenant Representative role	Karen	ASAP
Redraft Quaker values summary – summary leaflet? To discuss logistics of signalling the start / end of Sunday Quaker meeting with Beckie / Caroline. Could we link the Sunday Quaker Meeting via Zoom to the Redland Meeting?	Yasmin / Andrew	Next meeting
Progress staff benefits / occupational sick pay	Tim / Steve / Caroline	ASAP
Offer deposit refunds to residents	Karen	With uplift letters
Follow up on automatic door opener	Tim / Caroline	ASAP
Devise job description for community services role	Tim	Next meeting
Arrange a full survey of work needed to achieve a C rating on the EPCs of all flats	Housing Committee	Next meeting
Schedule meeting to discuss deregistration as RSL	Housing Committee	Next meeting
Circulate Business Risk Register	Caroline	ASAP
Invite ideas for use of Garden House	Tim / Steve	Relative Zoom Meeting