

Orkney Housing Association is governed by a voluntary Management Committee elected at our AGM. The Committee's role is to set strategy and monitor our performance.

Day to day operational management is carried out by the Leadership Team and services delivered by our excellent staff team.

Some of the Committee's main functions include: approving budgets, reviewing policies, diligent financial management, major decision making, and organisational direction and good governance to ensure statutory and regulatory requirements are met.

We send out an update like this after each formal Management Committee meeting (normally 6 per year).

## Members present 25 January 2023

### In person:

- Philip Cook
- Brian Kynoch
- Fiona Lettice
- Bruce Pilkington
- John White

### Via Zoom:

- John Rodwell
- Mervyn Sandison
- Bill Wallace
- Roella Wilson



## Our Management Committee

*Top: Fiona Lettice, Bill Wallace, John White, John Rodwell, Brian Kynoch and Philip Cook  
Bottom: Roella Wilson, Bruce Pilkington and Mervyn Sandison*

## Annual Rent Review 2023/24

Members received a detailed paper providing information to enable them to agree the consultation process and options for the Annual Rent Review. A number of scenarios had been modelled for consideration, with members mindful of ensuring financial well-being whilst maintaining affordable rents.

OHAL's previous rent consultation would have meant a rent increase of RPI inflation but, in the current climate, members felt this was not appropriate or affordable for tenants and a new consultation should be undertaken.

Lengthy discussion was held, after which, members agreed a consultation timetable and the three Options to be put forward to residents.

## Garden & Grounds Maintenance

Members were asked to consider options and a course of action for delivering the garden and grounds maintenance service, following OIC's decision to disqualify the garden maintenance portion of the Association's service charge as ineligible for housing benefit, and given the number of complaints received about the service during 2022. Feedback from the recent Customer Satisfaction Survey was also presented to members.

Following discussion, members agreed a way forward to address the housing benefit shortfall for 2022/23. They also agreed a course of action regarding the level of service to be provided for gardens and grounds maintenance. Tenants will be kept fully informed of all changes.

## GOVERNANCE MATTERS

### Self Assessment Update

This standing item at each meeting evidences how we are complying with the Scottish Housing Regulator's Framework. Members agreed that no material changes were required to be made to the Annual Assurance Statement, noted no Notifiable Events have been reported to the SHR and noted amendments to the list of Governance Related Policies and additions to the Evidence Bank in respect of Regulatory Requirements and Standards.

### Staffing Update

Members were updated on recent recruitment and training.

### Health & Safety Working Party Report

Members received a report which provided details of progress on actions following an audit report, policy work on the Landlord Safety Manual is complete, routine health & safety checks in the office and workshop had raised no concerns, staff training and Toolbox Talks continue to be provided, and one minor accident had occurred. Members noted that risk assessments are due to be reviewed in February.

### Policies

Members approved minor revisions to the Finance Policy and the Email, Internet & Acceptable Use Policy, and noted progress with outstanding policies due for review.

### Cost of Living Report

In light of the current cost of living pressures, members are to receive regular Cost of Living Reports, replacing the former Welfare Reform Updates, though relevant information on this will also be provided.

The report updated members on rent arrears and the work being done by the Housing & Customer Services Team to assist tenants requiring help. Members were pleased to note that a bid to the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund had been successful, with £123,600 received from the Scottish Government to assist tenants with their energy costs.

### Equalities

Members were asked to approve a plan regarding the collection of Equality Data as required by the Scottish Housing Regulator. The paper detailed background to the requirement, what OHAL has done to date, legal provisions, data collection and its use.

An Action Plan had been prepared to address the requirements of the Guidance to ensure compliance with the SHR Regulatory Framework. Members approved the Plan and noted that progress updates will be provided every 6 months.

### DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

- ⇒ **Walliwall Phases 6 and 7, Kirkwall:** works are progressing well on site with 3 phased handover dates for the 28 properties agreed.
- ⇒ **Yorston Drive, Stromness:** the 6 New Supply Shared Equity properties were handed over in December, with 3 currently going through the legal sales process.

### Fair Work First

As a recipient of Scottish Government funding, the Association is expected to promote **Fair Work First** through its business and provide a statement to demonstrate commitment to these principles. The Association already has policies & procedures that satisfy the requirements and members agreed the proposed statement which will be displayed on our website.