

## YORKHILL HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

Addresses have been removed from these minutes to protect members' privacy.

### Minutes of Virtual Annual General Meeting and Special General Meeting held on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> September 2020 via Zoom at 7:00pm

#### Present:

G Mattu	A Black
A Daas	M Henry
P Marsden	N MacPherson
M Harris	Y Alexis
R Winning	W Docherty
M Green	C Armstrong
H Fitzgerald	K Whyte
A Dickson	

#### Present by Proxy:

A Manson	E Griffin
G Allison	J Skinner
M McNeill	W Reid

#### In Attendance:

M Menabney	Chief Executive, YHA
P Hollinsworth	Director of Property Services, YHA
G Watson	Finance Manager, YHA
S Pattison	Compliance Manager, YHA
A Brown	Governance Assistant, YHA
M Krupa	Housing Officer (Mins), YHA
A Ogston	Auditor, Scott Moncrieff

### **1. Welcome and Apologies**

The Association's Chairperson, Malcom Green opened the meeting and welcomed all present. The following apologies were noted:

S Akhtar	A Hendren
A MacLachlan	B MacLachlan
E Kilday	E Thomson
S Campbell	G Gifford
J McGhee	K Chung
R Toner	J Gordon

## **2. Minutes of AGM 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019**

Correction to the date of the previous AGM Minutes should read 2018 not 2017.

Minutes were proposed as correct by Y Alexis and W Docherty and approved unanimously.

## **3. Chairpersons Report**

(attached to Minutes as Appendix 1)

## **4. Auditors Report and Presentation of 2020 Annual Accounts**

A Ogston presented the 2019- 20 Annual Accounts.

A Ogston advised that this year due to the coronavirus restrictions the audit was carried out on a remote basis for the first time and she would like to thank Marion, Gary and all staff for their assistance with this.

Turnover has increased mainly due to the 2.1% rent increase which was applied in April 2019.

Overall a surplus of £94,000 is predicted at the end of the financial year.

Fixed assets have slightly decreased but this is to be expected due to depreciation.

No concerns regarding the debtors or creditors, both have increased this year but was to be expected due to delays in payments with the covid lockdown.

A Ogston confirmed the Association's finances continue to be in good shape and advised members that it was a clean audit opinion again this year, with no cause for concern.

M Green thanked A Ogston and the audit team.

## **5. Re-appointment of Auditors**

M Green proposed that Scott-Moncrieff be re-appointed as Auditors for 2020-21 and this was seconded by N McPherson.

Members approved the proposal and Scott-Moncrieff were therefore re-appointed as Yorkhill Housing Association's Auditors for 2020-21.

## 6. Election of Management Committee

M Menabney reminded members that as per the Associations rules, a third of elected Management Committee members were standing down.

C Armstrong, W Docherty, R Winning and N McPherson had retired from the committee, and were all seeking re-election.

This year there are eight vacancies on the Management Committee. No further nominations were received therefore all four retiring members are duly re-elected.

## 7. Prize Draw Winners

The prize draw took place and the winners were:

Y Alexis - 18 Hugh View Terrace

K Whyte – 16 Blantyre Street

Each wins a £40 voucher for the store of their choice.

This concluded the business of the 2020 Annual General Meeting.

1. The Special General Meeting was then opened by Malcolm Green who reminded members the meeting's sole purpose was to consider and if thought fit, approve the following Special Resolution:

*“That the Association adopts the rules in the form attached to this notice in substitution for the existing rules subject to any non-material amendments that may be required by the Financial Conduct Authority”*

2. Members noted the proposed rules (SFHA Charitable Model Rules (Scotland) 2020) had been established to take account of changes to the Scottish Housing Regulator's regulatory framework.
3. It was also noted that the Association's Management Committee had considered and approved the presentation of the resolution to the membership in accordance with the Regulator's requirements and expectations.
4. A member commented that more information on the differences between the existing and proposed models would have been useful for members that were unfamiliar with the contents would have been useful. This was accepted and taken on board for future reference.

5. Following discussion, it was accepted that the changes were of a minor nature to support management committee members in their governance obligations. A significant change was the facility to hold meetings virtually; although this change had originally stemmed from the pandemic circumstances, it was an option that could be considered in the future to enable more members to participate in general meetings.
  
6. The resolution was passed unanimously and the meeting closed at 7.45pm.

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## **Appendix to Minutes**

### 2020 Chairperson's Report

I began last year's Chair's Report by listing the changes to Staff and Committee, our record of property maintenance and the introduction of regulatory changes such as Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

The changes this year have been totally different, though no less dramatic. It's been a year like no other. Six months ago this week the lockdown closed our office, to staff as well as to visitors, and, though restrictions have eased, only a limited number of people are allowed in at any one time. Our staff have continued to work, though, from home for much of the time. Equipment has been purchased, new skills have been developed, no-one has been furloughed. What we expected to be a four-month stretch has now extended to six and no end is yet in sight. Virtual communication has become the norm and has probably changed permanently the balance between remote and face-to-face working.

This has meant that some things have not been done or been done more slowly than before. Letting of vacant flats, the installation of new kitchens and boilers, stonework, back-court inspections and the total window replacement at Overnewton Court have been curtailed or deferred. Emergency repairs, of course, have been undertaken as required: we cannot leave our tenants in danger or without heat or water. And our tenancy services assistant has arranged food deliveries and medical treatment for residents without family support.

We remain committed, though, to our programme of maintenance and renewal, which will be resumed as quickly as Government rules allow. All this will obviously have an effect on the annual rent review scheduled for December and serious consideration will be given to reflecting in whatever is decided the fact that we have been prevented for much of this year from providing the full range of services our tenants expect.

As with any other business, our overheads have had to be met and rents have had to be collected. It's a matter of considerable relief that the difficulties many tenants (particularly those in employment) will have experienced in being sure of their income have not proven to be as great or as widespread as was initially feared. Nonetheless, there has been a drop in our income, with which, for the time being, we can cope. What has concerned us more is to ensure that those who have suffered loss of employment or reduction of income through the pandemic receive welfare assistance and advice, which has continued despite the lockdown, and the assurance that their security of tenure is unaffected. Where appropriate, referrals can be made to obtain support for anyone struggling with mental health issues.

However - this AGM's business spans the whole of the past year and it's appropriate to mention a couple of activities that took place before lockdown. A major exercise was the Tenants' and Owners' Survey, undertaken by Knowledge Partnership, which gave us an unparalleled survey of our tenants' material situation and their opinion of the services we provide or ought to be providing. The Scottish Housing Regulator publishes for each Housing Association an annual Landlord Report, accessible on line, which enables statistical comparisons of rent levels, repair times and the like to be made between Associations. A survey such as was undertaken in the autumn of last year gives us an invaluable profile of our tenants and goes much further into what our customers actually feel about us. It's an exercise that can be undertaken only every five years and this one will therefore inform our monitoring and planning until 2025. I've read it through several times and I keep it handy for constant reference.

Internally, we engaged last year Quinn Internal Audit to undertake a three-year programme of internal scrutiny of every aspect of our procedures and processes to ensure full compliance with law and Regulation standards. Governance, Gas Safety, Payments & Payroll and Planned Maintenance have been completed; Housing Allocations, Void Management and Financial Reporting are due in 2020/2021. No serious problems have been uncovered and consequently we were able to report full compliance to the Regulator in October 2019.

Our 2020 Return, we are confident, will be the same. We remain in a strong position with healthy reserves and one of the lowest borrowing levels within the sector.

That confidence rests, above all, on the commitment of our staff to delivering the best service possible to our customers. Yorkhill's small size – with 456 homes and 16 FTE staff we are at the bottom end in size terms – gives us the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with those we serve, such as, at the other end of the spectrum, Glasgow Housing Association with 40,000 houses can never achieve. But this isn't guaranteed. Small businesses can fail. That Yorkhill has maintained through the years both financial viability and a close attention to the individual housing needs of its customers is a tribute to every member of our staff, from the Chief Executive to the newest Assistant. Our people don't leave Yorkhill for other jobs, even better-paid ones, elsewhere. That continuity bespeaks commitment and, as we continue to grapple with the uncertainties of Corona, on behalf of the Management Committee and at this AGM on behalf of every tenant and owner, I want to thank unreservedly every member of our staff for their willingness to adapt to the inconveniences of quite different ways of working and for their continued preparedness to go the extra mile. As a well-nigh unique example in our sector I want especially to draw attention to the fact that our Chief Executive and her Deputy each completed this year 40 years continuous service with Yorkhill. Not many of us are left who will remember the arrival in the ground floor office flat in Regent Moray Street of the 17-year old Pauline Hollinsworth and a few months later the young Marion O'Brien. Neither of them would have imagined that 40 years later they would be still here, managing not just a couple of closes but responsible, as landlord or as factor, for almost one thousand houses, a large chunk of the whole estate of Yorkhill. Though we can't shake their hand or give them a hug at present, we can and do offer them our heartfelt thanks for their singular contribution to the steady improvement of the living conditions of many hundreds of Yorkhill's residents. Pauline and Marion, your stamp is on Yorkhill and the difference for good which you've made will long endure. When circumstances permit, we shall seek an opportunity to mark your service in a more tangible way.

As the Association's Chair I want also to pay tribute to the members of the Management Committee, eleven of us plus Councillor Braat as a co-optee. Twenty meetings a year with substantial agendas and papers to read beforehand is a lot to ask of volunteers and I want to thank each and every one of you for the time and effort I know this involves. Grant McEwan resigned from the Committee recently to concentrate on his other voluntary work and Janette Sullivan is standing down at this AGM for family reasons. I should like to thank both of them for their service this past year, especially for their help with the Pensions Working Party. The rest of you will be continuing for the ensuing year and on your behalf I shall do my best to ensure that your contribution is both appreciated and makes a difference.

Finally, I want to thank our Association members, 120 of you. It may seem a small thing, paying £1 for a one-time, non-refundable share. But it's the Association's members who form the ultimate forum of accountability for the Management Committee, and without your willingness to follow the Association's business and endorse the Committee we should lack any basis for our position. So my sincere thanks go to those who are participating in the AGM, in person or by proxy, to those who have been unavoidably prevented from joining us, and to all who follow our work through our Newsletters, by returning our Satisfaction slips or by just a cheery wave to our staff as you see them on the street. Years ago when I used to produce the Community Council Newsletter I called Yorkhill a "Village". The chief characteristic of a village is that people know each other, respect each other and help each other out. Beyond the course of duty and beyond anything the Scottish Housing Regulator will ever think of measuring, this is the standard by which we, as Yorkhill's social landlord, will be judged. It's a standard that I'm confident we shall continue to reach.

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