

Meeting: Minutes of Board Meeting

Meeting Date: 19 April 2022

Time: 5.30pm

Location: Virtual (MS Teams)

Discussion

Meeting Opening

1. Welcome & Apologies

Present		Staff	
Liz McKenzie	Chair	Audrey Simpson	Chief Executive (CEO) Company Secretary (CS)
Mark Ingram	Vice-Chair	David Byfield	Depute CEO/ Director of Finance, Digital & Corporate Services (DFDCS)
Ann Marie Docherty	Board Member	Jacqui Mills	Corporate & Compliance Officer (CCO) (MS)
Alex Warren	Board Member	Michelle Hart	Finance & Corporate Manager (FCM)
Richard Mahon	Board Member	Jennifer McCann	Director of Customer Services (DCS)
Maureen Cope MBE	Board Member	Peter Kelly	Director of Asset Management (DAM)
Karen McDonagh	Board Member		
		In attendance	
		Geraldine Cotter	Money Matters CEO
Apologies		Leave of Absence	
Sharon Richford	Board Member	Frank Young	Board Member
John Duncan	Board Member		
Mary Eardley	Board Member		

The Chair welcomed members to this evening's meeting and suggested that each member introduce themselves to the two new Directors.

2. Declaration of Interest

None.

3. Declaration of Receipt and Understanding

Members present confirmed they read and understood the contents of the Board papers.

4. Minutes of Board Meetings for Approval

Minutes of Board Meeting 8 March 2022 full, confidential and redacted minutes

Approved by: Maureen Cope MBE

Seconded by: Richard Mahon

5. Matters Arising/ Action Sheet

No matters arising.

Items requiring a discussion/ approval

6. Welfare Rights Annual Report

Report noted.

Geraldine Cotter (GC), Money Matters CEO joined the meeting at 5.35pm to present the Welfare Rights Annual Report.

She took members through the full report and asked members to note an error with the report date range and that it should read as 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

In summary the Welfare Rights Service met with 200 clients in the year, 130 were female and 70 male. It was also highlighted that 70% of the 193 clients who disclosed a disability were suffering from a mental health illness. GC suggested that this may be an area that the Association wish to have a look at as it is quite a significant number.

GC reported that Money Matters assisted Ardenglen customers in financial gains of £543,090.79 for the year. She did note that this figure was an under estimate as not every customer confirms that they have been successful.

The debt managed for customers sits at £26,989.48 for the year.

GC welcomed questions from the Board.

The Board queried how many of the customers seen by Money Matters in the year were new or returning clients. GC advised that she is unable to give an exact figure but did advise that clients can be classed as new if they have not visited in over a year.

The Board queried whether Money Matters are intending to increase their staff resource to cope with a continuing demand for the service given the cost of living and rising energy costs crisis.

GC advised that the biggest focus for the team this year will be to help customers manage their money better. There will be an increased demand for the service but it has been difficult in the past to recruit for qualified advisors.

CEO advised that Ardenglen have an action to assess and review the Money Matters service and will ensure that it does meet demand and local need.

The Board also commented that Housing Associations must use their voice and communicate these stats to the Government. CEO advised that Housing Associations have worked

together to try and make their voice heard on this and advised it is a subject which could be explored further at the forthcoming strategy day.

DCS advised that she has a background in Welfare Rights and she has a meeting with Money Matters Advisors later in the week to review our service.

The Board noted the Welfare Rights Report.

GC left the meeting at 6.03pm.

7. CEO Report

Report noted.

CEO referred to her report and advised that most of her report is for information or noting. She highlighted the following:

- SHR Engagement Plan – Ardenglen is compliant
- Board Succession Planning is underway with a campaign in the newsletter. The Association is looking to recruit members who will strengthen the diversity of the Board. Members are encouraged to get in touch with CEO or CCO if they know someone who would be a good addition to the Board.
- HR Update – recruitment for CEO: closing date is next week and Aspen are pleased with the interest to date. Alex, Liz, Ann Marie and Mark will form the interview panel. Interview dates are set for 11 and 18 May.
- Our two new Directors are now in post
- EVH Pay Ballot – members voting on a 4.1% increase. The ballot closes tomorrow and CEO will notify Board of the final decision
- Covid Update – the office reopened to customers on 21 March. We are monitoring footfall to understand the needs of our face to face service.
- Board Meeting preference – CEO referred to Board survey which took place to gather members feedback on whether they would like meetings to continue on a virtual platform or if they are open to a hybrid of some virtual and some in person meetings.

The CEO paused the report to allow members to discuss and vote on whether they would like the next meeting to be in person. All Members voted for an in person meeting May to trial it.

The Board queried what technologies the Association is looking at to host a hybrid meeting of part virtual and part in person attendance. CEO advised that the Association is aware that this is a difficult thing to get right and will be liaising with others including AW on the best technology to facilitate this.

CEO briefly returned to her report to advise that to date there has been no response from our tenants to the sponsor a Ukrainian initiative. The Board raised a query on the city wide efforts to re-house Afghan and Syrian refugees. DCS advised that she had a meeting with Jack McPhail in her former job role and there had been an agreement to rehouse 3 families. It is on the agenda for DCS and she will be pursuing this for Ardenglen.

The Board noted the CEO Report.

<p>8.</p>	<p>Final Budget 2022-23</p> <p>Report noted.</p> <p>DFDC provided an overview of the final budget for 2022-23 highlighting the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised budget position informed by stock condition survey, five year plan and rent increase 3.9% • The budget shows an operating surplus for the year of £1,223k (21/22 - £1,049k). • £4,323,323 Rental Income anticipated for the year • £40,000 in grant funding for medical adaptations • £219,054 budget for Regeneration • Financial Covenants in healthy position to continue to be met in 2022-23 offering good standing to obtain lending should the opportunity to develop arise • Sensitivity Analysis demonstrate the good financial health and how we can maintain compliance should costs escalate. <p>DFDC welcomed questions from the Board. The Board queried what the biggest risk may be to the Association in the next year. DFDC advised that the day to day repairs and voids costs are a concern but that the Association are being proactive on this with the new leadership team and financial consultant.</p> <p>The Board approved the budget for 2022-23.</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Tenant Participation Strategy</p> <p>Report noted.</p> <p>DCS provided an overview of the new Tenant Participation Strategy which has been developed in consultation with our customers. She highlighted the aims of the strategy;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide tenants and service users with opportunities to influence the delivery of our services and scrutinise our performance in a way that suits our tenants. • To develop a menu of participation options that enables tenants to get involved with us in a variety of ways. <p>DCS advised that the strategy marks the beginning of the Association journey towards effective participation. There are key principles in the strategy; Communication and keeping customers and staff informed, consultation, service delivery, training and capacity building, scrutiny and performance management.</p> <p>DCS referred to the Tenant Participation action plan and highlighted the main actions for Q1 as, communication and use of social media. Somewhere down the line, we would look to develop a live chat function on the website to deal with consistent queries.</p> <p>DCS welcomed questions from the Board.</p> <p>The Board commented that it is important to capture the views of the neighbourhood and not just our tenants to tie into the locality plan. DCS advised that she is just new to the</p>

	<p>organisation and will certainly look into the locality plan and meet with the regeneration team to discuss the needs of the community.</p> <p>CEO advised that two years ago the Board had a strategic away day developing our own locality plan. The Community Plan and the needs highlighted within from 2019 is likely to have changed.</p> <p>The Board queried what is meant by the term 'service user' and whether the term could be rephrased. DCS advised that she would like to soften the language and if the Board are in agreement change this to customer.</p> <p>The Board queried how DCS intended to engage with customers who do not have internet. DCS advised that she would be ensuring that there is up to date information on how our customers want to be engaged with whether that be by letter, phone or email.</p> <p>The Board approved the Tenant Participation Strategy.</p>
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Items for Noting

10.	Notifiable Events CEO referred members to her CEO Report.
15.	Health & Safety None.
16.	Correspondence No.

Meeting Closure

17.	Use of Delegated Authority None.
18.	A.O.C.B The Board suggested that it would be good to hear from the two new directors about their previous experience. DCS and DAM both provided the board with a brief background of their experience.
19.	Summary of actions/ decisions at this meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board noted the Annual Welfare Rights Report • The Board noted the CEO Report • The Board approved Final Budget 2022/23 • The Board approved Tenant Participation Strategy
20.	Meeting Evaluation

	The Board held a closed session to evaluate the meeting and will report back to the CEO with any comments before the next Board meeting.
21.	Date and time of next meeting – 24 May 2022, 5.30pm
22.	Meeting Close The meeting closed at 7.20pm with a vote of thanks to the Chair.