

ABBEYFIELD SCOTLAND LIMITED

Note of Board meeting conducted via Zoom at 11.00 am on Wednesday 12 May 2021.

Board members present (all by Zoom): Nance Smith (NS), Moira Bayne (MB), Tom Dodd (TD), Geoff Hepburn (GH), Neil McKay (NMckK), Margaret Nethery (MN), Jim Pollock (JP), Ken Robertson (KR), Elizabeth Roscoe (ER), Andy Shaw (AS), Calum Wilson (CW).

Also present (all by Zoom): Karen Barr (KB), Chief Executive (Group), Jennifer Malherbe (JM), note taker, Dave Roberts (DR).

Apologies: David Belfall (DB), Sandy Burnett (SB).

CW, NMckK and JP declared their interest as Crandeen Board members.

1.
 - (i) NS welcomed everyone to the meeting and reported she had attended the ASiS meeting on 21 March and SFHA's Block 3 Revision of Code of Conduct for Governing Body Members, Code of Conduct for Staff and Entitlements Payments and Benefits Policy. Code of Conduct for ASL Governing Board Members will be brought to the Board in June for approval. ASL's EPB Policy is due for review in 2021 as part of 3 year rolling programme of policy revision. Main difference in the Code of Conduct for Staff is the specific inclusion of volunteers which could impact on the ability to attract. All GBMs and Staff will be required to sign revised Codes of Conduct annually. SHR has agreed that virtual signatures are acceptable.
 - (ii) NS wished to personally, and on behalf of the Board, thank KB and the team for the achieving "Compliant" in SHR Landlord Performance.

Chief Executive's update

2.
 - (i) KB reported the master KPI was almost ready for operations. There was a full year of data 2020-21 which would be shared for information only as well as presenting the flavour and intentions of the monitor. The system was built around a house by house system to give the clearest of data for any particular house and there was a strong focus on void performance data. The first new operational KPI will be presented to the Finance Committee on 12 June, and at the Board meeting on 30 June.
 - (ii) With the roll out of the new model of services, the focus was now on Turriff with efforts to engage with the HSC Partnership improving. Opportunities were maximised at all houses when they occurred. Recruitment of the Companion for Giffnock and Esplanade was underway.
 - (iii) Regarding the restructure of Head Office and the Area Team, Jean Milne (HO) had left. The reduction in Companions would conclude shortly as a result of the interrogation of the roles, operations in Aberdeen and Shire and the leadership requirements under the roll-out of companions. The Area Team restructure had picked up speed due to the Service Manager's request for voluntary redundancy. This had resulted in the new role of Operations Manager making the Service Manager role redundant. The Board were asked to consider the Job Outline for approval. The financial impact of the new role along with the evaluation of the Area Supervisors' job role was currently under review to endeavour to meet the intended Area Team savings. It was likely the Operations Manager role would be filled on a temporary basis either by Nicola Thom Consultancy or Recruitment Agency (part time), pending the outcome of seeking an RSL partner. A full Area Team structure to be presented to the Board at the August meeting.
 - (iv) In respect of a prospective partnership, KB planned to develop a presentation for the Board for the June meeting to inform new members and bring others up to date. An outline plan would be available providing a timescale for progression and the process required. It was hoped a Joint Business Case would be available by the August meeting allowing further, in-depth scrutiny by both Boards. It was suggested this meeting should take place in an 'Away Day' setting.
 - (v) The actions from the governance section of the Business Plan Implementation and Delivery Plan highlighted a requirement (in order to continue to meet regulatory standards), consideration of nominating a Vice Chair, review of appraisals, development of a training and development plan for Board members

and a Succession Plan. This was all under development, to be presented to the Board at the June meeting.

(v) The external auditor plan for 2021 was agreed with field site taking place week commencing 28 June. All requirements of the Audit met the calendar appointments of Board and relevant Committees.

The internal auditing process was progressing well. A full set of actions were in place following the Governance & Risk Assessment and the Financial Management Reports, and would be managed by the management team and monitored by the Audit Committee, with any relevant parts brought to the Board where required. The 2021-2022 plan was agreed with initial focus on Policies and Health & Safety.

Board approved Operations Manager job description.

Minutes of 27 January 2021 & Matters Arising

3.
The Minutes of the meeting of 17 March 2021 were approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting. Proposed by KR and seconded by TD.

Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

Write-off Report

4.
(i) KB explained that, as an organisation, ASL had a low level of arrears and she was satisfied there was a justifiable reason to write off the balances.

Board approved write-off of arrears.

Annual Return of the Charter

5.
(i) There was a statutory requirement for the statistical return. The HomeMaster system had been installed as one of the reasons that it promised to make the ARC simpler. KB confirmed this was the case and feedback from NT who had been leading on this was that it was relatively simple to use and worked well. KB to submit ARC to the Regulator by 31 May.

Board approved submission of ARC.

Finance Committee Meeting - Update

6..
(i) AS presented the Finance Committee's draft minutes. The management accounts had been discussed at the FC meeting and essentially the operational deficit was close to budget. Key things discussed had included voids, the Haddington works, sickness levels, Indigo House's costs and benefits, the draft KPI dashboard and support for KB and the team on any projects. AS thought the KPI was a fantastic tool which would prove useful in the analysis of the voids.
(ii) CW raised the point under AOB of the minutes regarding DB's comment about seeking out an influential professional in Aberdeenshire for the ASL Board. KB said this was for the Board to consider. KB to investigate.

Risk Register

- 7.
- (i) KB reported that the update of the risk register had been discussed at the Audit Committee meeting with further review required and more clarity around inherent risks. KB and TD had been tasked to look at this in more detail. TD explained they had tried to make the risk register more accessible and to give clarity in terms of scoring risks and the effect of a possible outcome. The update would be discussed with the Audit Committee for their approval in August and brought back to the Board meeting after the September meeting for consideration. GH said it was a good, clear piece of work.

Marketing Strategy

- 8.
- (i) KB said that Laura Brodie (LB) had done a good job regarding the marketing strategy and that it was in tune with the Business Plan. LB had sought residents' views and met with the team regularly. GH commented that it had been a colossal piece of work and commended LB. KB thanked GH for his support to LB.
- (ii) KB said the document could be used as a toolkit for looking at budgets, ownership and actions that could be broken down to house level. CW congratulated LB on her work and thought that having this marketing plan for ASL was a huge step forward and stood us in very good stead. However, he had reservations that the marketing plan seemed to show it would take a long time to achieve a small gain. KB had raised this point with LB and thought it was not what she had meant but rather that she had been looking at increasing brand awareness overall and had measured her milestones against the BP. KB agreed that this would have to be put into context and in layman's terms. NS added it was an excellent piece of work.
- (iii) GH thought the website could be made more user friendly in terms of searching for accommodation. JP was still in favour of night staff at all houses. KB would look at this option for each house and investigate registration and cost implications. KB to revert to the Board and requested suggestions to be made to her by Friday 21 May.

Health & Safety Report

- 9.
- (i) The external EVH Health and Safety audit was completed on 2 February. The report had been received and was under review to agree the action plan for the current financial year. There were no overly taxing recommendations.
- (ii) The ongoing case concerning the Nairn house had been passed to Gas Safe Register from Health and Safety Executive and was awaiting further instruction.

Covid-19 Update

- 10.
- (i) KB reported that all residents had now had both vaccinations and staff had had at least their first vaccination. KB's impression was that an annual vaccination could be implemented. She was watching guidance on recruitment and GH added if his company received legal advice, he would pass it on to her. NMCK said their staff would be easing back to the office from 5 July in three separate phases and he would share guidance on what we could do regarding our return to the office, or he could critique what we were planning to do.

Any Other Business

11.

(i) MN had sent KB an update report regarding volunteers. MN had approached all Area Supervisors and agreed they would work together to try and establish groups and support the existing ones. They had arranged to meet up once Covid restrictions had been lifted. MN would also arrange to meet the various existing groups when she met with the Area Supervisors. Following the meetings with the existing groups, MN would look at starting new groups. She said it would be helpful to have a list of requirements to give to the volunteers. NS stressed that all volunteers, formal and informal, would have to sign the Code of Conduct.

(ii) In terms of visiting the houses once restrictions were eased, NS said advice would be given to Board Members in due course and all visits would be arranged via KB or a delegated staff member.

(iii) KB said that once MN's work concluded, a discussion would be required regarding volunteers and how we would move forward with that.

The meeting concluded at 12.41 pm.

Date of next meeting

Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 11.00 am.