

Minute of the 43rd Annual General Meeting of Langstane Housing Association Limited held virtually on Wednesday 22 September 2021 at 12.30pm

Present:
J Knowles
J Fraser
J Greener
A Habib
I Jamieson
J Marshall
M Martin
A Stevenson
G Urquhart
C Lynch
P Barratt
S Macdonald
S Ritchie

In Attendance:
H Gauld, Chief Executive
M Ballance, Director of Asset Management
L Macfarlan, Director of Finance and Corporate Services
J Sutherland, Director of Housing
S Niven, Audit Manager, RSM UK LLP
Professor S Pedersen, Robert Gordon University
A Bruce, PA to the Chief Executive

Apologies:
J Drummond
M Keith
L Cargill
K Hutchens
C Napoli
B Crockett

1. Present

The members noted above were present at the meeting.

2. Apologies

The apologies noted above were intimated to the meeting.

3. Draft Minute of the 42nd Annual General Meeting held on 21 September 2020

The Minute of the previous Annual General Meeting (AGM) was, on the motion of J Fraser, seconded by I Jamieson, approved as an accurate record.

C Lynch joined the meeting during this item.

4. Chairperson's Report

The Chairperson, J Knowles, spoke to the report, a full version of which is attached as Appendix 1 to this Minute.

5. Audited Accounts to 31 March 2021

At the invitation of the Chair, S Niven, Audit Manager RSM UK LLP, provided members with a summary of the key elements of the Annual Report and Financial Statements. Drawing members' attention in particular to the auditor's opinion they provided a true and fair view of the state of the Association's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and complied with all statutory requirements. As such the auditor was able to provide a clean and unmodified audit opinion.

S Niven left the meeting

6. Appointment of External Auditor

Members noting the recommendation, made by Director of Finance & Corporate Services, L Macfarlan, approved the re-appointment of RSM UK LLP as the Association's auditors.

7. Election of Members to the Board of Management

The Chairperson handed the meeting over to L Macfarlan, Company Secretary, who reported the following:

- J Marshall had intimated he would be standing down from the Board with effect from the AGM.
- Three new members, A Habib, M Keith and G Urquhart had been appointed since the last AGM and could stand for election without being nominated.
- In line with the Association's Rules, Rule 39.1 (one third ruling) at the end of every annual general meeting one third of members must retire and can be re-elected without nomination. The retiring members were those who have served the longest since the date of their last election, namely J Knowles, J Fraser, I Jamieson and J Greener. All members intimated their willingness to be re-elected and their re-election was approved.

8. Members Questions

The Chair reported members' questions submitted in advance of the meeting had been responded to. Opening the floor to questions, C Lynch sought and was provided with information on the alternative heating source options the Association would be considering to meet the legal requirements of the Scottish Government's vision of zero emission homes set out in its paper, Housing to 2040.

**9. Presentation by Sarah Pedersen, Robert Gordon University:
Social Media – challenges and opportunities**

Professor Pedersen's presentation on social media was followed by a robust question and answer session. On behalf of members, the Chair thanked her for her interesting and informative presentation.

The Chair on behalf of the Board of Management conveyed thanks and appreciation to J Marshall who would be standing down from the Board. His knowledge, experience and commitment to the Association over the past few years had been invaluable and he would be greatly missed. All wished him well in his future endeavours.

Annual General Meeting – Chairman’s Report

22 September 2021

Good afternoon everyone and I would like to formally welcome everyone to Langstane Housing Association’s 43rd Annual General Meeting and thank you for attending our second virtual Annual General Meeting.

My report covers the period from 1 April 2020 until 31 March 2021 – a year that has, I can quite honestly say, been unlike no other.

I do not think there will be an Annual General Meeting across the land that will not mention the global pandemic we have all faced and how that has impacted on our businesses. This pandemic has made a significant impact on how we live our lives – personally and professionally.

We have faced two national, in addition to localised, lockdowns which has restricted our ability to deliver the level of services our tenants understandably want. However, it is a credit to everyone involved in Langstane from the Board to all members of staff that we managed to continue to do business. We moved to home working within days and successfully operated our business remotely – communication mainly through email, phone, Zoom and Microsoft teams. We’ve all learned new skills these past 18 months and learned that we can change the way we do business very quickly when we have to.

A small number of our staff were furloughed whilst lockdowns were in place but we kept the majority of our services going.

In the early days and throughout 2020 we made direct contact with over 1,000 vulnerable tenants to ensure they had sufficient food, heating and support to help them cope with the changes they faced. You will be aware we have a large number of vulnerable tenants within our homes.

We accessed funding to ensure some of our more vulnerable tenants could stay in contact with loved ones, could top up their meters when they needed to, and for those who couldn’t get out and about, we delivered food parcels like many other organisations in the local area.

We also accessed additional funding to partially fund an in-house housing support service to enhance the services provided. Largely our resources were switched to providing as much remote and door-step support as we could, whilst we couldn’t visit our tenants in their homes.

That said, and within the confines of the national restrictions in place, we ensured our emergency repairs were completed and our health and safety commitments were met, particularly with regards to gas safety checks and fitting additional smoke detectors to homes ahead of the February 2022 deadline. For the areas of our

business we had to put on hold, plans are in place to catch up with the various works that need to be actioned.

As a Board, we received regular reports on how things were progressing and this allowed us to track the impact Covid-19 was having on our business, our tenants and our staff.

Behind the scenes we looked at how we can modernise and provide best value. A whole new environment exists whereby people are working from home. We introduced a detailed IT Road Map that documents the changes we want to make, including allowing our tenants to access information and services whilst our offices are closed. This will include being able to check rent account balances in the early stages and will be expanded to allow our tenants to check the progress of their repairs, etc. all important issues.

We have also considered how we provide services and having listened to our tenants, the Board approved the implementation of a new Customer Service Team. This team will deal with most front line routine matters, ensuring tenants and other callers only need to deal with one person, this is a step forward. This will allow our housing and property staff to be out and about on our schemes and be more visible. Langstane has always had a proud history of supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our society. One of our next challenges is to capture how we impact financially on our local communities by analysing the social value we add when operating locally. This is being piloted by our housing support team at the moment and next year I hope to have the results to share with you. I understand this will be positive and be of benefit.

We constantly look at how we can provide services that deliver value for money. Everything has to be analysed on a value for money basis. Our in-house repairs team are currently being analysed to ensure they are as efficient as they can be, and to look at whether or not they can be expanded.

As we look forward there are challenges we must face, and questions we must ask, about the level and type of services Langstane provides. It is for us all to ensure we deliver the type of services that are expected of all social landlords whilst keeping rents affordable.

For example the Scottish Government has introduced a new strategic vision for 'Housing to 2040'. This is a recent document that has come out.

Very briefly, 'Housing to 2040' has a 20-year route map that considers:

- More homes at the heart of great places – this covers affordable home supply; attracting investment; building stronger and more vibrant places; communities at the heart; rural and island communities and taxation
- Affordability and choice – this covers the right to an adequate home and delivering equality; ending homelessness; the rented sector, and the housing market and home ownership
- Affordable warmth and zero emissions homes – this covers zero emissions new homes; zero emissions existing homes and housing's contribution to the green recovery

- Improving the quality of all homes – this covers a new Housing Standard and independent living.

'Housing to 2040' aims to deliver 100,000 affordable homes, with new buildings using zero direct emissions heating systems from 2024.

I am involved in other organisations and we cannot underestimate the challenges ahead.

However, I am confident that together with our tenants, our staff and our Board, this will be achieved as we continue make Langstane 'the best it can be'. In the past year we've driven forward services and although we've had challenges to deal with, we've taken steps forward.

It's been an interesting year but one I'm proud of.

James Knowles
Chairman