



**Minute of Board meeting Thursday 17 January 2019 at Hawthorn HC**

***Note:** This meeting was moved, at the last minute, after a burst water main outside Govanhill HA. The Board was very grateful to Colin and Hawthorn for offering to house the Board meeting at very short notice.*

**Present:** Helen Moore (Chair), Claire Taylor, Colin Turnbull, Bob Winning, Jim Whiston, Louise Smith, Annie Macfarlane, Graham Piggott, Linda Sichi

**In attendance:** David Bookbinder, Colleen Rowan

**1 Apologies**

John Sweeney, Susan McKeown

**2 Notes of interest**

None were declared.

**3 GWSF Board matters**

- (a) Completion of election of office bearers – treasurer

Louise Smith agreed to consider acting as treasurer: David would liaise with her over the remit of the role, including a role description.

- (b) Resignation of Hugh Cameron and resulting vacancy

With Hugh leaving Bridgewater to move to Argyll, GWSF had lost a long serving Board member, and Hugh's commitment to GWSF was noted, and members signed a card thanking Hugh and wishing him well in his new life.

Forum members would be invited to put in expressions of interest in the committee member vacancy, and David would follow up an indication he had received last year that a particular individual might be interested in being on the Board. It would be necessary to co-opt in the first instance.

**4 Approval of the minutes of the meeting 18 October 2018**

4.1 The minutes were approved with no amendments

## **5 Matters arising from the minutes**

### *Annual Conference 23/11/18*

Colleen summarised the feedback from the Conference and highlighted the following points:

- There had been a real buzz to the event, with no hotel-related issues
- Feedback had been good on the plenary sessions, most notably Guy Standing and the session on regulation/independence, and on the workshops
- There had been around 150 paying delegates (around the expected number)
- The exhibition of memorabilia from members had been very successful but had been resource-intensive to set up: staff felt it did not need to be an annual feature, with one suggestion being to do it every second year
- The Board was invited to let staff know if they had any good ideas for speakers for the 2019 event, which would be at the Radisson on 15/11/19
- The Board congratulated staff and the Chair for a successful event.

### *GWSF concerns over loss of independence of CCHAs*

Member feedback on the draft action plan on this issue had been reflected in the response to SHR's discussion paper and would also be raised in separate meetings with SHR, although GWSF had long been keen to emphasise that the loss of independence of CCHAs was generally not of SHR's doing.

### *SHR consultation on revised regulatory framework*

GWSF's submission had been finalised in mid-December, with publication of SHR's finalised framework and guidance expected on or around 28 February 2019.

The Board had a brief discussion on associations which find themselves facing serious regulatory intervention. It was felt that much seemed to depend on SHR's judgement as to whether an association had the capacity to sort the problems. There was a sense that SHR adopted a lighter touch approach for bigger associations. The Board felt it would be important for GWSF to continue to be able to facilitate a 'mutual self-help' approach so that staff or committee members facing difficult situations could be put in touch with someone suitable for informal advice.

### *Scottish Government discussion paper – Housing Beyond 2021*

Our response to HB 2021 had been submitted in mid-December, following a session on 4 December at which GWSF Board representatives and lead members discussed a range of issues with two Scottish Government officials. A full consultation exercise was expected in 2019.

## **6 GWSF meeting with the Housing Minister 22 November 2018**

6.1 The Board considered the paper summarising the discussions at the 22/11/18 meeting with Housing Minister Kevin Stewart. It was noted in particular that the Minister had seemed especially keen to move away from discussing the post-2021 new build programme to discuss tenements, albeit there was no indication of any kind of new or radical approach to the tenements issue.

6.2 It was noted that the Minister had suggested that (a) from now on we meet with him on a quarterly basis and (b) that the next meeting should be with both him and Aileen Campbell, Cabinet Secretary for Local Government and Communities, as this would enable a fuller discussion on the role of CCHAs in the context of the community empowerment and Democracy Matters agendas.

## **7 Working towards a Memorandum of Understanding with SFHA**

7.1 The Board considered a paper on some initial, exploratory discussions the Director had had with Sally Thomas at SFHA about potentially developing a Memorandum of Understanding covering what the two bodies can work on together and what their key differences are.

7.2 The main aim of a MoU would be to emphasise to those associations which were members of both bodies that duplication was avoided wherever possible and that membership of each body brought different benefits.

7.3 Overall, whilst the Board felt that it was useful to set out what work we do and can undertake jointly, there was a desire for a better understanding of the aims and purpose of a MoU. The Board certainly felt that if this was progressed, GWSF should trumpet its strengths – such as being able to support CCHAs in trouble – in a MoU document.

7.4 The Board felt it would be useful for GWSF to have an up to date summary of what the Forum's members collectively provided (e.g. in terms of units, staff, volunteers etc.): we had produced such material in the past but this could do with being updated now.

7.5 It was agreed that consideration of the value of a MoU would be kept under review during 2019, with a further paper likely to come before the Board at a later date.

## **8 GWSF draft strategic priorities for 2019/20**

8.1 The Board considered the draft priorities for the coming year, which included a modest number of changes from those adopted for 2018/19.

8.2 On top of the suggested changes, the Board felt that (a) homelessness should be a priority area, given its national profile after the HARSAG Group's recommendations in 2018, and (b) the collective voice of CCHAs and provision of mutual support should be emphasised more.

8.3 With these further changes it was agreed to consult GWSF members in the coming weeks.

## **9 Proposed increase in GWSF membership affiliation fees 2019/20**

9.1 The Board considered a paper recommending a 3% increase in GWSF affiliation fees for 2019/20.

9.2 This figure fell between the latest CPI and RPI levels. Whilst it might be slightly higher than was ideal, GWSF was still feeling the impact of the departure of four Easterhouse members in April 2018, and so an increase which would bring in sufficient income without seeming unreasonable was felt to be appropriate.

9.3 In terms of the Forum's fee structure, it was suggested we should review the fact that for associations outside Glasgow there were only two size bands. It was suggested that we should explore the potential for having a single fee structure but with a 'Glasgow premium' for members in Glasgow. Staff undertook to explore this.

9.4 Staff drew attention to the need to review whether the summer Regeneration Conference would continue to be free. The Board were relaxed about a modest fee being introduced, as long as there was a differential member/non-member fee, so that we could still demonstrate that there was still a 'member benefit' element to the event. It was agreed staff would decide the exact fee levels in due course.

## **10 Update on GWSF's pilot mentoring project**

10.1 Colleen spoke to her paper, which underlined the early success of the mentoring project. The Board was very happy with progress and congratulated Colleen on her work in setting up the initiative, and approved the plans for its further development, noting that the survey of participants was to be put back to the end of March.

10.2 Mentors included some HA committee/board members keen to pass on their experience, although at this stage no committee members had come forward to be mentored.

10.3 The service had been keen to make clear the distinction between the internal 'buddying' support an association might offer and the external, independent support which mentoring offered.

10.4 Other issues future publicity would seek to address was the perception some people might have that receiving mentoring was somehow a sign of weakness: this needed to be debunked.

## **11 Campaign Group update**

11.1 It was noted that although hosting a visit to Castlemilk by Living Rent had been planned by the Campaign Group, this had not in the end been arranged as there were anxieties about Living Rent's attitude to housing associations following the showing of a video about associations at their AGM in autumn 2018: GWSF had asked to see the video but no response had been received.

11.2 More broadly, it was noted that the Forum's general approach to policy and campaigning work would be likely to benefit significantly from the input (around two days per month) from media/communications advised Craig Watson.

## **12 AOCB**

12.1 A Board member noted that GWSF did not appear to be members of the Cross Party Group on Housing in the Parliament. Staff advised this would be rectified, and followed a period in which the CPG had been serviced by the Scottish Association of Landlords and had focused primarily on private rented sector issues.

**13 Date of next meetings** – 4.30pm Thursday 21 March, 16 May, 15 August.