

# FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

**Date:** Tuesday 29 October 2024  
**Time:** 6:00pm  
**Location:** Inverness Office / Teams

## Members Present

Lesley McInnes,  
Chair

Carl Patching  
Member (Teams)

Scott MacLeod,  
Member (Teams)

Ian Fosbrooke,  
Secretary (Teams)

Fiona Mustarde,  
Member (Teams)

Craig Levy  
Member (Teams)

Jackie Bugden,  
Member

Niall Owen,  
Member (Teams)

## In Attendance

Kirsty Morrison,  
Chief Executive Officer,  
(CEO)

Robert Buchanan,  
Director of ICT  
(DoICT)

Laura Morgan,  
Corporate Governance Manager  
(CGM) - minute

Maureen Knight,  
Executive Dir. of Operations  
(ExDO)

Jim Banks,  
Head of Group Customer Services  
(HGCS)

Elaine Lovegrove,  
Corporate Governance Assistant  
(CGA)

Andrew Martin,  
Executive Dir. of Group Services  
(ExDGS)

Caroline Madden,  
Head of Property Services  
(HPS)

## Observers

Stephen Lalley,  
Scottish Housing Regulator  
(Teams)

Joe Quinn,  
Scottish Housing Regulator  
(Teams)

Sylvia Ward,  
Scottish Housing Regulator  
(Teams)

**ACTION**

**1. APOLOGIES & WELCOMES**

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Clea Warner, Craig Russell, Lynne Holburn, and Laurie MacLeod.
- 1.2 It was noted that Fiona Mustarde and Scott MacLeod would be late to the meeting.
- 1.3 The Chair welcomed Stephen Lalley, Joe Quinn, and Sylvia Ward from the Scottish Housing Regulator, who were attending the meeting as observers.
- 1.4 Stephen Lalley gave a brief introduction and advised attendees that the SHR was in attendance as part of its requirement to observe one Albyn Board meeting each year. This is due to Albyn being a systemically important landlord.

**2. STANDING ITEM**

- 2.1 Board Remit
- 2.2 The Chair confirmed that the meeting met the quorum as set out within the Board Remit.

**3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- 3.1 The Chair noted that as tenant Board Members, Jackie Bugden, Ian Fosbrook, and Scott MacLeod, had an interest in item 6.3 Rent Consultation Options. As only options for consultation were to be agreed, the Chair did not envisage any conflict with these Members participating in this item.

**4. PRESENTATION**

- 4.1 Extended Leadership Team Day of Action
  - 4.1.1 The CEO delivered a presentation about the recent Extended Leadership Team (ELT) Day of Action that had taken place at several events in July 2024. The initiative involved members of ELT visiting tenants in their homes to find out about the challenges they faced, and the achievements of Albyn in supporting them. It provided back office staff with an invaluable insight into the contribution that they make to the tenants of Albyn and the work of their frontline colleagues.
  - 4.1.2 The Board welcomed the ELT Day of Action initiative and enquired if any publicity would be prepared to let stakeholders know about this good work. The CEO advised that some promotional material had been prepared for this end.
  - 4.1.3 The Board noted the presentation.

**5. PREVIOUS MEETING**

- 5.1 Minute of Board Meeting: 25 September 2024
  - 5.1.1 Fiona Mustarde joined the meeting at this point.
  - 5.1.2 The minute of the meeting was approved. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

## ACTION

### 5.2 Confidential Minute of Board Meeting: 25 September 2024

5.2.1 The confidential minute was approved. This was proposed by Niall Owen and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

### 5.3 Minute of Post AGM Board Meeting: 25 September 2024

5.3.1 The minute of the meeting was approved. This was proposed by Fiona Mustarde and seconded by Jackie Bugden.

### 5.4 Matters Arising

5.4.1 A written update on the action items had been provided and was reviewed. All actions were complete or in progress.

## 6. **DECISION PAPERS**

### 6.1 Annual Assurance Statement

6.1.1 The CEO spoke to her paper and sought approval of the recommendations made within it.

6.1.2 The Chair noted that the preparation of the annual assurance statement had been done in consultation with the Board appointed short life working group. The group had met on two occasions and thoroughly discussed the evidence that had been collected and the summary of self-assessment that had been prepared.

6.1.3 There was a discussion about the improvement focus placed upon equalities. The CEO advised that customer, staff, and Board Member equality data collection was currently underway and that a report on this, supported by an action plan, would be presented at the Board meeting in January 2025.

6.1.4 The Board approved the following recommendations:

- The proposed Annual Assurance Statement for submission to the SHR by 31 October 2024.
- The Assurance Action Plan which resulted from Compliance Self-Assessment exercise.

This was proposed by Jackie Bugden and seconded by Niall Owen.

### 6.2 Delivery Plan Mid-Year Update

6.2.1 The CEO spoke to her paper and sought approval of the recommendation made within it.

6.2.2 There was a discussion about the action to specify and procure new HR and Finance systems and if bespoke or off the shelf solutions would be used. The ExDGS advised that it was likely an off the shelf solution would be used as there was a good range on offer that had been developed for the housing sector. The Board advised that even if off the shelf, systems must be tailored to meet the needs of Albyn.

**ACTION**

6.2.3 The Board noted that this particular action should be updated from 'not started' to 'in progress' as work had begun to complete it. The ExDGS accepted this as an **action**. **Andrew Martin**

6.2.4 The Board approved the Delivery Plan Mid-Year Update. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Fiona Mustarde.

6.3 Rent Consultation Options

6.3.1 Scott MacLeod joined the meeting at this point.

6.3.2 The ExDGS spoke to his paper and sought Board approval of the recommendations made within it.

6.3.3 The Chair noted that this was a very helpful report that encapsulated the issues Board needed to consider in order to agree what options would be offered to tenants as part of the annual rent consultation.

6.3.4 The Board had a detailed discussion about the rent consultation options and there was agreement that it was not prudent to offer the option of CPI only and that this should not be included within the consultation. The Board advised that the rationale behind the consultation options and what each would mean for tenants in terms of service delivery should be made clear within the consultation, this should include transparency regarding the increase in the running costs of the organisation, e.g. the increase in insurance costs.

6.3.5 The Board approved the following rent increase consultation options to be put to tenants:

- CPI plus 1.0% - 2.7%
- CPI plus 1.5% - 3.2%
- CPI plus 2% - 3.7%

This was proposed by Jackie Bugden and seconded by Carl Patching

6.4 Health & Safety Update

6.4.1 The ExDGS spoke to his paper and presented the Health & Safety Update to the Board for its approval.

6.4.2 The Board noted that it was disappointing that eLearning could no longer be provided by Peoplesafe and if this might be reintroduced. The ExDGS advised that at present there was no indication that it would be.

6.4.3 The Board approved the Health & Safety Update. This was proposed by Niall Owen and seconded by Craig Levy.

**7. POLICY & STRATEGY**

7.1 Board Learning & Development Policy

7.1.1 The CGM presented the Board Learning & Development Policy, and Board Annual Learning Plan, for approval.

## ACTION

- 7.1.2 The Board advised that the U-Secure cyber training that Members had been undertaking should be included on the Board Annual Learning Plan. The CGM accepted this as an **action**. **Laura Morgan**
- 7.1.3 The Board approved the Board Learning & Development Policy, and Board Annual Learning Plan. This was proposed by Craig Levy and seconded by Carl Patching.

## 8. INFORMATION ITEMS

### 8.1 SHR National Landlord Report

8.1.1 The ExDO presented a report on the performance of Albyn in respect of the recent 'National Report on the Scottish Social Housing Charter 2023-2024' that had been issued by the SHR.

8.1.2 The Board welcomed the report and was supportive of it being used to inform the strategic planning of Albyn to ensure this was in line with sector best practice and tenant satisfaction. It noted its thanks to the Leadership Team and wider staff group for all their efforts which had been evidenced by the significant performance improvements made.

8.1.3 There was a detailed discussion about adaptations funding and the ExDO reported that the delayed 2024/25 funding allocation to Albyn had now been made by Scottish Government, with only £76K of the £341K that had been requested to meet tenant needs allocated. The ExDO set out the significant challenges that this posed for Albyn and how the reduced funding would compromise its ability to comply with the Equality Act requirement to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people. The Board noted its concern with the reduction in funding and the impact that this would have on vulnerable tenants. It was noted that the ExDO would be bringing a further update to Board specifically on adaptations.

## 9. APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR NOTING

9.1 None this cycle.

## 10. DATES OF FUTURE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

10.1 The dates of future meetings were noted.

## 11. AOB

11.1 The Chair noted that she had recently been made Chair of the Rural & Islands Housing Association Forum.

**12. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS**

12.1. Confidential Item

The meeting ended.