

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting | MINUTES

Date: Tuesday 27 January 2026
Time: 6.00pm
Location: Teams

Members Present

Lesley McInnes,
Chair

Clea Warner,
Vice Chair

Carl Patching
Member

Scott MacLeod,
Member
Ewan McGarrie,
Member

Annice Newlands.
Member

Niall Owen,
Member
Lynne Holburn,
Member

In Attendance

Maureen Knight,
Interim Chief Executive Officer
(ICEO)

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

Robert Buchanan,
Dir. of ICT & Business Services
(DIT&BS)

Laurie MacLeod,
Head of Human Resources
(HHR)

Jim Banks,
Head of Group Customer Services
HGCS)

Marcie Ballance,
Head of Development &
Sustainability (HD&S)

Chris Ellis,
Head of Performance & Reporting
(HP&R)

Andrew Whitehouse,
Assets & Compliance Manager
(A&CM)

Laura Morgan,
Corporate Governance Manager
(CGM) - minute

Observers

Patryk Stewart

1. APOLOGIES & WELCOMES

- 1.1 Apologies had been received from Terri Semple and Jackie Bugden.
- 1.2 The Chair advised the Board that Terri Semple had requested a leave of absence from the Board. The Board approved this.
- 1.3 It was noted that Niall Owen and Clea Warner would arrive slightly late to the meeting.
- 1.4 It was noted that Craig Levy was on a leave of absence.

2. STANDING ITEM

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

3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 3.1 None were noted.

4. PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4.1 Minute of Board meeting: 16 December 2025
 - 4.1.1 The minute of the meeting was approved. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Scott MacLeod.
- 4.2 Confidential Minute of Board meeting: 16 December 2025
 - 4.2.1 The confidential minute of the meeting was approved. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Annice Newlands.
- 4.3 Matters Arising
 - 4.3.1 A written update on the action items had been provided and was reviewed.

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

5. DECISION ITEMS

5.1 Rent Increase Proposal

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

5.1.2 The Board discussed the risk of rents not keeping pace with operational costs. The ExDGS advised that the level of service delivery that Albyn would be able to achieve for various levels of rent increase was set out to tenants within the consultation. The Board was assured that the long term planning assumption for Albyn was CPI+1, and so this was always used as the starting point for rent increase options. The ability of Albyn to meet its covenant requirements under this assumption was kept under review and would be adjusted if needed.

5.1.3 The Board suggested including details of the average income for each category of tenant (e.g. single, pensioner, couple, etc) in future. Also, to have a breakdown of the number of tenants Albyn had for each occupancy level. The ExDGS agreed an **action** to include this within future reports.

**Andrew
Martin**

5.1.4 The Board discussed the consultation feedback that had been received and advised that these should be used by Albyn to inform its wider approach to ensuring satisfaction levels were maintained and increased where possible. The ExDGS noted that future consultations would not be limited to digital delivery to ensure that Albyn was better able to understand the views of tenants for this area.

Clea Warner joined the meeting at this point.

5.1.5 The Board noted the importance of monitoring occupancies that were less affordable than others, notably single person occupancies, and considering how these are kept affordable for customers. The ICEO noted that next year, the rent increase report would include case studies to bring to life the impacts of affordability at different levels of occupancy.

Niall Owen joined the meeting at this point.

5.1.6 The Board approves the following recommendations:

- Increase the applicable rentals charged by 4.8%.
- Continue to increase the Management Fee (for Shared Ownership properties) by 4.8% (£363 to £380 pa); and
- Maintain garage rents at £13 per month.

This was proposed by Lynne Holborn and seconded by Carl Patching.

5.2 Q3 Performance Update

5.2.1 The HP&R presented the Q3 Performance Update to the Board for approval.

5.2.2 The Board requested more information on the benefits that the CX Asset Management module would bring. The HP&R advised that once launched, it would bring about

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting | MINUTES

efficiencies through the centralising of information which would result in improvements to ways of working for the Repairs & Maintenance team.

5.2.3 The Board queried if the CX Asset Management module would support the proposed changes to fire safety regulations that were due to be introduced from April 2026. The A&CM advised that Albyn was currently reviewing properties that would be impacted by these changes to ensure that any changes required were implemented. The ICEO accepted an **action** to bring an update on compliance with the new fire safety regulations to the March Board meeting. **Maureen Knight**

5.2.4 The Board queried if KPIs would be reviewed for 2026/27 to ensure that they were fit for purpose. This was with particular reference to the void days target and the preference of Board to focus on quality for this KPI. The HP&R confirmed that all KPIs would be reviewed for 2026/27.

The Board approved the Q3 Performance Update Report. This was proposed by Ewan McGarrie and seconded by Clea Warner.

5.3 Q3 Development Update

5.3.1 The HD&S presented the Q3 Development Update to the Board for approval.

5.3.2 The Board requested that when detailed within the report narrative, that developments included a reference to gross development value or size. The HD&S agreed an **action** to include this within future reports. **Marcie Balance**

5.3.3 At request of the Board, the HP&S provided further context about the Cromarty Townland Barns development. It was noted that a housing needs survey was being carried out with the Community Council for current residents, or people who might want to move back to the area, to get an idea of what housing mix might work in the village. The Board was assured that Albyn would consider survey results in combination with economic viability.

5.2.4 The Board approved the Q3 Development Update Report. This was proposed by Scott MacLeod and seconded by Carl Patching.

5.4 Q3 Management Accounts

5.4.1 The ExDGS presented the Q3 Management Accounts for approval.

5.4.2 The Board discussed the cost of void repairs. The ExDGS advised that the number of significantly high value void repairs had reduced and that the introduction of the CX Asset Management module would allow Albyn to more intelligently analyse void spend data. The ICEO added that an audit of void spend in 2025 was currently underway and the results of this would be brought back to Board when it was finalised.

5.4.3 The Board requested that income and expenditure within the report be presented within a stacked bar graph. The ExDGS agreed an **action** to implement this for future reports. **Andrew Martin**

5.4.4 The Board enquired if Albyn was considering freezing recruitment for any roles as capacity opens up in current roles through the use of AI. The ExDGS advised that Albyn

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting | MINUTES

was still in the process of updating its systems and getting these to work efficiently and so was not yet in a position to begin bringing in AI.

The Board approved the Q3 Management Accounts Update. This was proposed by Niall Owen and seconded by Clea Warner.

5.5 Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd Delivery, Performance, & Risk Update

5.5.1 The HGCS presented the Highland Residential (Inverness) Ltd (HRIL) Delivery, Performance, & Risk Update to the Board for approval.

5.5.2 The HGCS confirmed to the Board that the recent legislation to place a cap on ground rents would not impact HRIL.

The Board approved the HRIL, Delivery, Performance, & Risk Update. This was proposed by Scott MacLeod and seconded by Niall Owen.

5.6 Aviemore Biomass Update

5.6.1 The A&CM spoke to his paper and sought Board approval of the recommendations made within it.

5.6.2 It was noted that some queries had been received from Members in advance of the meeting regarding the costs and charges of biomass heating. A response to these queries was provided by the A&CM and would also be shared with Board by email after the meeting.

5.6.3 The Board was concerned that biomass customers were paying more for their heating than those who received heating via electricity.

5.6.4 The Board enquired if customers on biomass were being referred to Changeworks to receive support in this area. The A&CM confirmed that referrals were made to the Tenancy Sustainment Team and that there was active engagement from Changeworks with tenants using biomass.

5.6.5 The Board discussed various options by which customers on biomass fuel could be supported in the interim before the feasibility study was completed at the proposed time of Q2 2026/27. It noted the difficulty of the biomass system also being used by private owners for whom it would not be appropriate for Albyn to provide assistance to.

5.6.7 There was a discussion about the scope of the feasibility study being expanded to include consideration of options that might be available to support Albyn biomass customers, but there was not agreement on this. The ICEO accepted an **action** to prepare some options of how customers might be supported and bring these to a future Board meeting.

Maureen Knight

5.6.8 The Board noted the progress made to date, in particular the M&E condition work, customer engagement and system performance activities.

5.6.9 The Board endorsed the approach to the annual pricing review, including deferral until full evidencing of all supplier cost lines has been received and verified to the satisfaction of Albyn.

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

5.6.10 The Board notes that a detailed pricing review outcome and a decision paper setting out future options for the scheme will be presented to the Board in May 2026.

5.6.11 The Board approved for the continuation of the negotiated procurement approach to secure a consultant to deliver the feasibility study and options appraisal, with appointment targeted for Q4 2025-26. Options to support customers would be considered alongside this feasibility study. This was proposed by Carl Patching and seconded by Annice Newlands.

6. POLICY & STRATEGY

6.1 None

7. INFORMATION ITEMS

7.1 Interim CEO Update

7.1.1 The ICEO advised that she would be bringing a new regular update paper to Board to provide analysis of key risks and emerging issues, strategic opportunities, and external stakeholder engagement. The report would also be shared with staff to provide them with a consistent organisational update.

7.1.2 The ICEO welcomed feedback from the Board on what they would find useful to be included within the report.

7.1.3 The Board suggested that the report be drafted in such a way as to make clear what items were for information, discussion, or that required further action.

7.1.4 The Board noted this update.

8. APPROVED MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR NOTING

8.1 Chair of Audit & Risk Management Update

8.1.1 The Chair of the A&RM Committee provided a verbal update to the Board on the progress of the ICT Working Party.

8.1.2 It was noted that a key level 1 milestone had been completed with the replacement of the legacy servers.

8.1.3 It was noted that the next key deliverable was the gaining of Cyber Essentials certification. The DIT&BS advised that Albyn was in discussion with IT Foundations about securing the certification.

8.1.4 It was noted that in accordance with its Terms of Reference, the ICT Working Party would close in March. Following this, updates on the ICT improvements would be tracked via the Audit & Risk Committee on a quarterly basis for at least another year.

FINAL Albyn Housing Society Board Meeting |MINUTES

- 8.1.5 The Chair and DIT&BS noted their thanks to the ICT Working Party and added that there had been real benefits to this additional oversight.

9. DATES OF FUTURE BOARD COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- 9.1 The dates of future meetings were noted.
- 9.2 With regard to the in person Board events taking place at the end of March, the Chair reminded Members to please let the Executive Officer know of any travel or accommodation requirements.

10. AOB

- 10.1 None.

Chris Ellis, Marcie Balance, Jim Banks, Andrew Whitehouse, and Patryk Stewart left the meeting at this point.

11. CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

- 11.1 Confidential Item

- 11.2 Confidential Item

- 11.3 Confidential Item

- 11.4 Confidential Item

Maureen Knight, Robert Buchanan, and Andrew Martin left the meeting at this point.

- 11.5 Confidential Item

The meeting ended.