If you would like to discuss these minutes or any other Committee related matter, please contact your chairperson,

COLIN FRASER ON REDACTED INFORMATION

Our tenants are paramount in everything we do

Committee of Management

Minutes of Meeting – 19th February 2025

Present:	Colin Fraser	(Chair)
	Wendy Riordan	(Vice Chair)
	Jim Hemphill	(Vice Chair)
	George Thomson	
	Morag Orr	
	Liz Robertson	
	Amanda Aitchison	
	Lynn Jameson	
	Cameron Durance	
	Alan Lamont	
	Elizabeth Stewart	
In attendance:	Larke Adger	(CEO)
	David Mills	(COO)

1. APOLOGIES

Stephanie Wilson
Jon Douglas
Scott Cavers (Resignation 18/02/24)

2. MOTION TO APPROVE MINUTES, 22nd January 2025

The Minutes of the meetings held on 22nd January 2025 were **approved** by Committee.

- **MO Proposed / LR Seconded / Committee approved the minutes**

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were NIL matters arising from the minutes.

4. DECLARATIONS or NOTES OF INTEREST

Alan Lamont declared an interest in item No. 15 and was excused from the meeting for that item.

5. GUESTS, VISITORS, OBSERVERS

- **Erin Mullen**, Finance Officer, Prospect Community Housing (acting as WGHC financial agent)
- **Siobhan Archibald**, Internal Auditor, WBG (presenting findings from internal audit 2025)

6. CASH IN BANK, INFLATION & INTEREST RATES

All cash balances across the 5 x WGHC bank accounts were presented by the CEO and a summary total provided, which stood at £717,317. This was an increase of £40k from the figure reported at the January meeting.

Inflation was reported at 2.5% (2.5% in the previous month) and interest rates were reduced to 4.5% (4.75% in the previous month). As requested by Committee, the CEO presented information on interest paid and balances of the 5 loans WGHC has with the Nationwide Building Society.

- **Committee noted the report.**

7. MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS PRESENTATION

Erin Mullen (Prospect Community Housing) joined via MS Teams, at 18.22hrs

Appendix 1 was presented to Committee by Erin. Q3 cumulative figures were presented

- Cumulative income and surplus were discussed and declared
- Gross Rent Arrears and Void Loss were discussed and declared
- Cash and Deposits were declared along with loan covenants
- The statement of comprehensive income was discussed and declared
- The statement of financial position was discussed and declared
- The statement of cash flow was discussed and declared

- **Committee noted the report.**
- **Erin was thanked for her presentation by the Chair**

Erin Mullen left the meeting at 18.31hrs

8a. PRESENTATION OF INTERNAL AUDIT FINDINGS 2025

Siobhan Archibald (Internal Auditor, WBG) joined via MS Teams, at 18.32hrs

The findings of the WBG Internal Audit were presented, in detail, to Committee. The findings were declared thus:

- **Damp, Mould & Condensation Audit**, Overall conclusion = **Strong Assurance**
  This audit element identified 4 low level recommendations

AL asked why WBG suggested a 6 month review to DMC visits, as opposed to 6 weeks?
SA answered that was a recommended timeframe to ensure no re-occurrence of DMC.

- **Risk Management Audit**, Overall conclusion = **Substantial Assurance**
  This audit element identified 3 medium and 1 low level recommendations

WR asked whether risk management training should be an annual or 'as required' item for consideration?
SA answered that annual was not usually required. It should be used 'as required' or identified

CEO asked will 1 hour for Senior Officer be sufficient?
SA answered, yes, it should be sufficient and an additional session at Strategy Day to include Risk Appetite

AL asked whether Risk Appetite should be considered Quarterly or Annually
SA answered that in the RSL sector, Annually would usually be considered adequate, however, it could be assessed at other times if a situation changed

- **Follow up recommendations previous audit**, Overall conclusion = **Strong Assurance**
  This audit element identified 2 medium and 3 low level recommendations, all of which had been fully implemented by WGHC.

  - **Committee noted the report and approved the Senior Officers responses.**
  - **Siobhan was thanked for her presentation by the Chair**

Siobhan Archibald left the meeting at 18.48hrs

8b. PROPOSED EXTENSION TO WBG CONTRACT

A proposal to extend the WBG contract for the period through to 2028 was submitted to Committee by the CEO, including the relevant fees applicable. This would be a final extension to the contract. Upon renewal, WGHC would go to open tender to procure an Internal Auditor function

- **Committee unanimously approved the re-appointment of WBG as WGHC internal auditors for a period of 3 years to 2028**

9. RENT INCREASE 2025-2026

The CEO presented the findings of the tenant consultation regarding a proposed rent increase for the year 2025-26. Two options were available to tenants having previously been discussed and proposed by Committee:

6.75% - 42 tenants (45%) responded to the consultation in favour of this option
7.50% - 52 tenants (55%) responded to the consultation in favour of this option

The CEO discussed various comments received because of the consultation which received the highest return in the co-op's history, even surpassing that of last year.

Due consideration was given in accordance with Section 25(4) of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Inflation history and patterns, Affordability by tenants (using the SFHA affordability calculator). Given the cost of living crisis affecting tenants, Committee discussed and proposed implementing the lower of the rent increases suggested, even though the consultation had been in favour of the higher increase.

- **Committee voted to approve a 6.75% rent increase for the period 2025-2026**

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10. FINANCIAL AUDIT 2025 (Interim & Final)

The CEO presented to Committee details regarding our external (financial) audit scheduled to be undertaken by CT.

- The audit planning meeting took place on 05th February 2025
- The interim audit will commence mid-March 2025
- The full and final financial audit will commence early June 2025
- Draft audited accounts will be presented to Committee 16 July 2025

The committee were reminded of the audit process, business risks, audit risks, audit team, materiality, audit timetable and an indication of the statutory and regulatory bodies who also receive copies of our audited financial statements.

- **Committee unanimously approved the audit planning document for the year ending 31st March 2025.**

11. ZURICH INSURANCE ANNUAL RENEWAL 2025-2026

The CEO presented the proposal for the annual renewal of insurance for 2025-2026. Even though insurers have been made aware of the EWS/Cladding situation, the premium has increased by only 4.4% from the previous year of £54.6k to £56.8k – this was less than anticipated, i.e. 15%

- **Committee unanimously approved the Zurich Insurance Renewal for 2025-2026 and noted it was year 2 of a planned 3 year deal**

12. 3rd QUARTERLY (CUMULATIVE) PERFORMANCE REPORT

Appendix 2 was presented to Committee by the COO. The COO presented quarterly and cumulative performance information within the report.

The Committee were guided through the 27 sections comprising both benchmark achievements and statutory / regulatory information giving assurance regarding tenant safety and protection of WGHC assets. The performance report will be published on the WGHC website.

WR asked who ‘Harbour’ were given our spend with them over the cumulative period? **The COO** answered informing Committee they were the organisation previously known as Port of Leith and Quay who undertaken the generic stair cleaning within WGHC’s 13 x communal stairs and also weekly litter picks of the 2 x playparks

AL asked why relets were taking 22 days (average) as opposed to benchmark of 14? **The COO and CEO** confirmed this was due, unfortunately, to tenant deaths and NOK not clearing / releasing the property back to WGHC in good time. The average was also affected by some redecoration void works that were required to achieve the WGHC lettable standard

- **Committee noted the report**

13. EXTERNAL WALL SYSTEMS / FQ CLADDING

The COO gave an updated report to Committee regarding the potential for External Wall System (EWS) Cladding to certain elevations and aspects of the 45 flats housed within 10 and 8 Colonsay Close and 65 Waterfront Park. This identified the urgent need for Fire Risk Assessments and a Single Building Assessment to identify risk and formulate a remediation action plan.

The COO confirmed to Committee that a notifiable event, 31183, had been logged with the Scottish Housing Regulator on this matter.

Updates were provided with regard to communications with Scottish Government officials, MSPs, MPs, SFHA, SHR, WGHC Lenders etc.

AL asked what is the difference between the Astute Group and Diamond & Co. and do WGHC have a preference as to who to use?
The COO confirmed that Diamond & Co. have played a big part in legislation in Scotland and were on the approved panel – our relationship was better with them than Astute.

WR asked why is Scottish Government making provision to help owner/occupiers at the apparent detriment to social rented tenants – the people who would most likely benefit?
The CEO answered that this was the way the current legislation was formulated but that we would striving to obtain funding from Scottish Government.

CD asked what action WGHC tenants could take if they felt unhappy or unsafe in their tenancies as a result of EWS / Cladding
The CEO confirmed that they could seek to transfer, mutual exchange or terminate their tenancy.

JH asked if letters had been sent to all tenants within the affected flats and if Wheatley had sent letters to their tenants
The COO confirmed that WGHC tenants had received letters, but it was unclear as to whether Wheatley had written to their tenants.

LJ commented that she believed it was a good thing that this issue was becoming political and gaining attention.

- **Committee noted the report**

14. DRAFT FIRE SAFETY POLICY

The COO presented a draft fire safety policy for Committee approval. There was a brief discussion as to the merit and need for the policy as it forms part of the overall health & safety control manual.

- **Committee unanimously approved the fire safety policy.**

15. DONATION REQUEST

Alan Lamont declared an interest and temporarily left the meeting at 20.10hrs

A sponsorship request from 'Blast Boxing CIC' was discussed by Committee. The overall request was for £4500. This was debated and an alternative motion proposed in the sum of £1500.

- **CF Proposed / AA Seconded, Committee approved £1500 donation.**

Alan Lamont was re-admitted to the meeting at 20.18hrs

16. GOVERNANCE, RISK, COMPLIANCE, HEALTH & SAFETY REPORT

The COO presented his governance, compliance, health and safety report to Committee.

As accepted practice and to give Committee assurance, the COO also reported:

- FOISA / EIR Requests since last meeting = **NIL**
- Subject Access Requests since last meeting = NIL
- Information Data Breaches since last meeting = NIL
- Open Notifiable Events with SHR = **One** (**31183**)

The COO confirmed to Committee that Risk will be reported within this section of the reports as a standing item and on a quarterly basis, bringing and seeking update to the risk register if appropriate or relevant.

The COO was pleased to inform Committee that there had been no health & safety issues to report since the last meeting.

- **Committee noted the report**

17. GOVERNING BODY CODE OF CONDUCT

The Regulatory Standards of Governance and Financial Management require all Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) to adopt and comply with an "appropriate" Code of Conduct and the SFHA's Model has been approved by the Scottish Housing Regulator as fully complying with its regulatory requirements. An updated COC was provided and a request that Committee adopt this revised code with effect from February 2025.

- **Committee unanimously approved adopting and accepting the new Governing Body Code of Conduct with effect of 19th February 2025**

18. MEMBERSHIP & USE OF THE COMPANY SEAL

The COO reported that since the last meeting, there has been:

- One new membership:

Membership Number	**804**
Date of commencement:	03rd February 2025
Reason:	Relet

- NIL cessations of membership:

- **Committee noted the report**

19. ROLLING ACTIONS ITEM LIST

The Rolling Actions Items were discussed with many having now been completed. Completed items will now be removed.

JH asked if/when there might be scope to continue with the Dementia Framework at WGHC?
The CEO confirmed this was likely to proceed but possibly 'postponed' for 6/12 months due to EWS / Cladding issues and some staff issues.

WR asked about the Willow Trees visible from the main road that are touching or rubbing against WGHC properties, causing some form of damage.
The COO confirmed these will be looked at and an update provided in the next Committee meeting.
LR pointed out some trees appeared to have been lopped in the small communal garden at the end of GMA.
The COO indicated this would be investigated and reported back to Committee.

20. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

Kerax (formerly Menco) have been providing grounds maintenance services to WGHC for 16 years. A formal tendering exercise was undertaken between WGHC/SPA via Public Contracts Scotland. The winning bidder was Glendale Managed Services. Tenderers were asked to provide alternative bids to accommodate either 12 or 16 grass cuts per season. The tender response was discussed by Committee.

WR asked if the criteria for qualification for the garden aid element of the contract be re-assessed by Committee / Senior Officers next year prior to renewal.
The CEO confirmed it would be diarised to be brought before Committee later in the year (October / November 2025)

AA pointed out that grass cuts every 2 weeks – on many occasions, not enough length to remove, proposing changing to cuts every 3 weeks
AL concurred with AA

JH / CD both pointed out that grass length was dependent upon weather and conditions.

- **Committee unanimously approved the reduction in grass cuts from 16 per cutting season to 12 per cutting season**
- **Committee unanimously approved the appointment of Glendale Managed Services as the preferred contractor for the grounds maintenance contract for a period of 3 years (01.04.25 – 31.03.28)**
- **Committee members unanimously approved the appointment of a contractor to undertake the cutting of the service strips on an 'as needed' basis**

21. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Both the CEO and COO declared an interest and left the meeting at 20.32hrs

Committee members discussed the EVH employers ballot for proposed staff wage increases over a 3 year 'deal' (April 2025, April 2026 and April 2027).

- **The Committee unanimously approved the employee ballot and instructed the CEO to submit their ballot response to EVH**

Both the CEO and COO were re-admitted to the meeting at 20.38hrs

Committee members were asked to approve the date for the WGHC 2025 AGM. The proposed date was Saturday 06th September 2025

- **Committee approved the 06th September 2025 for the WGHC AGM**

The CEO presented information to Committee regarding the making of a video by Co-ops UK that wished to feature elements of WGHC as 2025 in the International Year of Co-operatives.

CD had volunteered to be interviewed as part of the video, but other Committee members were asked to attend for general shots around the estate and within the WGHC boardroom

- **Committee noted the report and indicated their availability for filming of the video**

The CEO informed Committee that both the CEO and COO have been asked to join the Scottish Policy Platform Working Group with the first meeting taking place on 28th February 2025.

- **Committee noted the report**

The CEO informed Committee that a meeting was being held with Richard McCready from the Cross Party Group for Co-operatives – re: possible amendments to the housing bill

The CEO informed Committee that she will be speaking at the SFHA conference – re: Tenants being governing body members and the creation of the Tenants Service Charter

The CEO informed Committee that she was interviewed for a podcast on Womens Voices in the Co-operative Movement

- **Committee noted the report**

Committee were reminded of the training weekend booked for Friday 25th and Saturday 26 April 2025 at the Radisson Blu in Edinburgh

- **Committee noted the report and some members updated the CEO as to their preferences for staying / evening meal etc.**

22. DATE OF NEXT COMMITTEE MEETING

It was proposed the next meeting be held on Wednesday 19th March 2025 at 6.15pm. Doors will open at 6.00pm for Committee to chat / network and have refreshments prior to the formal meeting start.

- **Committee approved the next Committee Meeting to be held on Wednesday 19th March 2025 @ 6.15pm**

Signed **REDACTED INFORMATION** **Chairperson** Date: **19th March 2025**

NB: Committee Board Papers available upon request, contact our office. Although extreme care and effort are taken with the production of papers and minutes, there may be some grammatical and/or spelling errors. Apologies are extended in these rare circumstances.