



**MINUTES OF MEETING NUMBER 14 OF THE BOARD OF  
HEREFORDSHIRE HOUSING**

**27<sup>th</sup> JULY, 2004**

**HEAD OFFICE, LEGION WAY, HEREFORD**

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**Present:**

Mike Blomer, Independent Board Member and Chairman  
Wendy Jones, Tenant Board Member and Vice-Chairman  
John Newman, Council Board Member  
Ursula Attfield, Council Board Member  
Paul Rosewell, Independent Board Member  
John Gundy, Tenant Board Member  
Bob Widdowson, Independent Board Member  
Terry Gurney, Tenant Board Member  
Dick James, Tenant Board Member  
Beris Williams, Council Board Member  
Graham Cosway, Independent Board Member

**In attendance:**

Tony Jaques, Chief Executive  
Lorna McCarthy, PA to the Director of Operations

**14.1 Apologies**

14.1.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Harry Bramer, Council Board Member, Anna Toon, Council Board Member, Dave Williams, Tenant Board Member, Mark Robinson, Independent Board Member.

**14.2 Declarations of Interest**

14.2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

**14.3 Minutes of the Last Meeting**

14.3.1 13.3.1 – Board Members declaring an interest should be named and the outcome of any request noted.

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14.3.2 13.3.1 – The Chair agreed that the alterations to the attendance list should have been listed.

14.3.3 13.11.6 – The Chair agreed to alter the following minute from:

‘A Tenant Board Member, also the Chairman of the Herefordshire Tenants’ Federation, was opposed to this decision .....

To read:

‘Wendy Jones was opposed to this decision.....’.

#### **Matters Arising:**

14.3.4 13.5.1 – It was clarified that Board Members had voting rights on decisions taken at their own committees, but not if they had been invited to attend other committees.

14.3.5 13.11.4 – Members were reminded that it had been agreed at a previous Board Meeting that the colour choice had been removed from bathrooms and that this was also the case if a complete bathroom suite was necessary. Tenants will be informed of this change in the next Tenants Newsletter. Ursula Attfield and Bob Widdowson asked for it to be noted that they had not agreed with this decision at the previous Board Meeting.

14.3.6 13.12.1 – The Chairman and Chief Executive will be present at the forthcoming Board Member Appraisals. Graham Cosway requested that the Chief Executive was not present at his appraisal.

14.3.7 Subject to the above changes, the Board agreed the minutes as a true and accurate reflection of the meeting.

#### **14.4 Draft Committee Minutes**

14.4.1 Present - John Gundy was in attendance at the Personnel Committee on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

14.4.2 7.8 – The Director of Operations and Personnel Manager are currently in consultation with staff regarding the revisions to the staff structure in Property and Housing.

14.4.3 The Board noted the minutes.

**14.5 Board Review**

14.5.1 The Chief Executive distributed the summary of the Board Audit, together with the results of the recent Board Review. Board Members had been asked to complete these questionnaires, but only 7 had been returned to the Chief Executive prior to the Board Meeting. Generally a positive feedback had been received from 5 Board Members, however 2 further Board Members gave more critical feedback.

14.5.2 The Chief Executive asked Board Members to go through the results of the board review checklist, take time to discuss the feedback and identify any future action points required. The following points were highlighted:

- It was agreed that the Mission Statement should remain the same, having been the subject of recent considerable discussion.
- It was not necessary to clarify the county of Herefordshire within the Mission Statement and it was recognised at some stage we may want to expand our boundaries.
- Although the Board had a good mix of independent, tenant and Council Members, it was not entirely representative of the communities it sought to serve, particularly in the Ross on Wye area.
- The percentage of ethnic minorities within the community is low compared to the national average, although this should not prevent representatives joining the organisation from this area of the community. A target was set to encourage this sector of the community to join the Board.
- We needed to encourage more diversity of Board Members in terms of more women applicants, a wider age range of members, and to encourage those with disabilities to apply.
- It was discussed whether the aims and objectives of the business should be reviewed on a more regular basis. The Compliance Statement and Business Plan will be reviewed annually to ensure that the organisation has proper monitoring of all processes.
- It was agreed that job descriptions were not required for Board Members, as their roles and responsibilities are set out in their appointment letters and accompanying literature.
- The difference between the 'liability of Board Members' and 'liability of Members' was questioned. It was agreed that Simon Randall, Lawrence Graham Solicitors, would be asked to clarify this question at a later date.
- A debate was held on the appropriate style of minute taking of Board and committee meetings. It was questioned whether only essential items and

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decisions be noted and that first names be used when appropriate. Members were reminded that it had been agreed at the previous Board Members Awayday and a subsequent Board meeting, that individual names would not be noted. It was agreed that the Chairman would consider this issue further and agree a new format of minute taking.

- It was felt that communication was lacking at ground level of the organisation. It was clarified that the relationships between Officers and Board Members would not alter under Charitable Status of the organisation. The only real and noticeable change would be that the organisation would stop paying corporation tax. It was felt that the Charity Commission would expect the Housing Corporation to regulate the organisation, and it was unlikely that any conflict between the two bodies would occur.
- The work of Board Members had compared favourably against the performance of other Housing Associations, following an assessment from the Housing Corporation.

#### **Board Audit:**

14.5.2 The responses to the Board Audit were then discussed and the following points highlighted:

- Only 1 Board Member strongly agreed that their roles and responsibilities were clear and appropriate.
- 1 Board Member disagreed that the size of the Board was appropriate, being too large. However it was felt generally that there was a good mix of skills and abilities on the Board at present.
- Although the recommendation is that Board Members receive committee papers 4 days prior to the meeting, it was felt that receiving them 7 days in advance would be preferable.
- The Housing Corporation had advised the organisation that it felt discussions held at committee meetings were open, however 2 Board Members felt this was not the case.

14.5.3 The Chairman concluded that some Board Members felt that improvements were required to the performance of the Board and that future discussions can be held at individual Board Member Appraisal and future meetings.

14.5.3 Appraisals for Board Members will be arranged prior to the next Annual General Meeting on the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2004.

**14.6 Any Other Business**

Board Member Training Weekend – 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> December 04

- 14.6.1 It was agreed that the dates set would be kept, but that 1 item of discussion would be future training events and how these can be made more inclusive.
- 14.6.2 The venue was discussed and the Pengethley Hotel appeared to be the most appropriate choice.

Responsibility of Tenant Board Members

- 14.6.2 Tenant Board Members requested clarification whether they were responsible to the tenants in the first instance, or to Herefordshire Housing Ltd. This matter was referred to a future Board Meeting.

The meeting closed at 3.51pm.

*For further information on these minutes please contact  
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