

**Willowacre Trust Board**  
**Hybrid Meeting via Microsoft Teams and Camlachie Boardroom**  
**Minutes**  
**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025**

<p><b>Present (In Person):</b> Scott Aitken, Robert Campbell</p> <p><b>Present (Online):</b> Chris Milborrow (Chair), Lauren Grant, Angela Devine (from Item 4), Shayron Young</p> <p><b>In Attendance (In Person):</b> Simon Fitzpatrick (CEO), Valerie Wilson (Director of Finance), Susan Speirs (Senior Corporate Services Assistant), Michael Gillespie (Observer), Ralph Bennett-Richards (Observer)</p> <p><b>In Attendance (Online):</b> Jennifer Cairns (Director of Corporate Services); Linda Allan (Community Services Manager)</p> <p>Jennifer Cairns, as Company Secretary, advised that Angela Devine (Chair of WT Board) was going to be late attending the meeting and she would start the meeting until Chris Milborrow had been appointed as Vice-Chair and then he would Chair the meeting until Angela arrived.</p> <p>She advised that Chris Milborrow had agreed to be Vice-Chair of the WT Board and this needed to be approved by the Board. The Board approved the appointment of Chris as Vice-Chair.</p> <p>Michael Gillespie and Ralph Bennett-Richards were here to observe the meeting with a view to becoming members of the Board.</p> <p>Simon Fitzpatrick (CEO) introduced himself to the members of the Board and there were introductions from everyone else in the meeting.</p>	
<p><b>Apologies</b> There were no apologies.</p>	
<p><b>Disclosure of Interests</b> Robert Campbell declared an interest in West of Scotland Housing Association.</p>	
<p><b>1. Approval of Minutes</b> The minutes of the previous meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025 were approved as a true and accurate record. They were proposed by Chris Milborrow and seconded by Scott Aitken.</p>	<p><b>Approved</b></p>

<p><b>2. Matters Arising</b> The Board noted the matters arising.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p>
<p><b>3. HR Report</b> The Director of Corporate Services presented this report.</p> <p>She advised that this report gives the Board an update on all HR matters over the past year including turnover and absence.</p> <p>She informed the Board that turnover has been high this year and that seven permanent staff have left.</p> <p>Robert Campbell advised that a restructure of the Community Support Services had taken place and that this new structure is currently being implemented. There are currently four posts left to recruit and it is hoped that this will be finalised in the next few months. The risk of higher-than-average turnover is possible until the structure is fully implemented.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that EVH have recently carried out a review of their terms and conditions and have made some changes in line with recent changes to legislation. We have implemented these changes to the WSHA terms and conditions and are looking to make similar changes to the WT staff terms and conditions. WT are not on the EVH terms and conditions but we are looking to align these as much as possible with the WSHA staff contracts.</p> <p>The CEO asked the Director of Corporate Services to explain who EVH were and what work they do. The Director of Corporate Services advised that Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH) provide HR support to Housing Associations. Not all Associations are members of EVH.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report and also approved the proposed changes to the terms and conditions.</p>	<p><b>Noted &amp; Approved</b></p>
<p><b>4. Review of WT/WSHA Joint Agreement</b> The Director of Corporate Services presented this report.</p> <p>She advised that the joint service level agreement between WT and WSHA was last reviewed in 2021 and is now due for review.</p> <p>The proposed changes reflect current practice. The post of Support Services Officer will now be employed by WT and this will be changed in the agreement. Community Support Services has also been changed to Community Services.</p>	

<p>Robert Campbell advised that the agreement has also been changed to five yearly review.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that following approval for the changes from the WT Board this agreement will then go to the WSHA Board in June for approval. Once it has been approved by both Boards the agreement will be signed by the Chairs of the relevant Boards.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of the report and approved the proposed changes to the Joint Service Level Agreement.</p> <p>Angela Devine joined the meeting at this point.</p>	<p><b>Noted/Approved</b></p>
<p><b>5. Customer Engagement &amp; Communication Plan</b></p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented this report.</p> <p>She advised that the WSHA Communications Strategy had recently been reviewed and one of the actions from this was to develop a Customer Engagement and Communications plan for each of our subsidiaries.</p> <p>This plan will outline how we intend to engage and communicate with WT customers and how we will measure the success of the plan. This plan will be monitored on a six monthly basis and will be reported to the WT Board on an annual basis.</p> <p>Robert Campbell asked about the customer satisfaction surveys. The Director of Corporate Services advised that if Community Services provide questions then these can be included in the quarterly customer satisfaction surveys as soon as possible.</p> <p>Chis Milborrow asked what other methods we are looking at to communicate with groups.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that we currently get a lot of engagement with tenants on facebook at present but we will keep up to date with the different methods.</p> <p>Chris Milborrow asked if a survey was carried out on how we communicate with people.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that we do this for WSHA tenants and can incorporate into this plan.</p>	

<p>The Community Services Manager informed the Board that we have an engagement plan around each project and we report back to the funder on who uses the project.</p> <p>Lauren Grant commented that we need to make sure that we are not excluding anyone from engagement with us.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that we send out hard copies of newsletters to tenants who do not have emails and are currently in the process of gathering communication preferences from tenants.</p> <p>Robert Campbell also advised that we get a lot of information from the tenant satisfaction surveys and this information is included in the Business Plan.</p> <p>The Board discussed and approved the proposed Customer Engagement and Communication Plan with the additions included.</p>	<p><b>Approved</b></p>
<p><b>6. Management Accounts</b></p> <p>The Director of Finance presented the management accounts for the financial year to 31 March 2025.</p> <p>There was a profit of just under £5,000 compared to a budgeted surplus of £333. She advised that the annual financial accounts will be presented to the Board in August.</p> <p>The cash at the end of March was £423k which is up from £309k last year. She informed the Board that the Trust continues to have sufficient cash to carry out its intended activities but highlighted that £265k of the cash held relates to deferred grant income and is therefore earmarked to deliver specific projects.</p> <p>Scott Aitken asked if there is a minimum cash balance that is maintained.</p> <p>The Director of Finance advised that we don't have a designated balance for WT but this can be put in place when the Group Financial Regulations are reviewed in August. The WSHA minimum cash balance is £2 million.</p> <p>Chris Milborrow commented that it was quite reassuring to see how well the management accounts were performing.</p> <p>The Board noted the draft financial performance of WT for the year to 31 March 2025 and noted that a reconciliation to these</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p>

management accounts will be provided along with the audited financial statements.	
<p><b>7. WSHA Update Report</b></p> <p>The Director of Housing &amp; Community Services presented this report which provides the Board with an update on key WSHA activities.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>	<b>Noted</b>
<p><b>8. WT Business Plan Update</b></p> <p>The Director of Housing &amp; Community Services presented this report which provides an update on the progress of the actions within the Business Plan.</p> <p>Two thirds of the actions in the plan have been completed and most of the remaining items are due to be completed within the projected timescale.</p> <p>He also advised that some actions may not complete by the end of the Business Plan period e.g. Telecare – as there have challenges securing the appropriate technology.</p> <p>The Business Plan is due to be reviewed this year and this process will start in the next few months. We will look at the current plan and decide what goes into the new plan including a review of growth opportunities which has commenced with WSHA and will include WT. The Board will be involved in a review of growth as part of this process.</p> <p>The CEO commented that further market analysis is required to understand what is achievable in terms of a Growth Plan and that following advice provided to Board on this, can then be incorporated into the final Business Plan.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>	<b>Noted</b>
<p><b>9. Operational Report</b></p> <p>The Community Services Manager presented this report which provides an update on the work that has taken place in the period January – March 2025.</p> <p>Recruitment has taken place for a Community Hub Assistant, full time Community Worker, Community Worker – Cycling Development and the Community Hub Co-ordinator. Recruitment for the Wellbeing Advisor has been paused as this may be filled by an internal deployment.</p> <p>There has been an increase in the money advice service with 47 new referrals this quarter.</p>	

<p>There were 96 referrals for energy advice. 77 new referrals for the handyperson service were made with 69 of the jobs completed within the period.</p> <p>20 starter packs had been budgeted for the year but we have managed to achieve a total of 79 for the year. 10 referrals were made in the January to March period.</p> <p>64 new referrals were received for food parcels over this three month period. Single adult households make up the most of the referrals.</p> <p>The Community Services Manager advised that courses are still being held at the Charing Cross and Cowlairs community hubs.</p> <p>67 tenancy sustainment referrals were made in the three month period.</p> <p>Robert Campbell commented that the number of applicants and the calibre of applicants has been very high for this round of recruitment.</p> <p>Sharon Young commented that we appear to be engaging with all areas and this is spread over all age groups. The support is getting to people who need it.</p> <p>The Community Services Manager commented that they receive a lot of support from the Communications and PR officer in reaching out to tenants.</p> <p>Chris Milborrow commented that the statistics dashboard is very helpful.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>	<p><b>Noted</b></p>
<p><b>10. Development Report</b></p> <p>The Community Services Manager presented this report which provides an update on current and ongoing development work.</p> <p>She advised that a 10 week gardening course has started which is designed to teach gardening skills to new volunteers and participants. Our ground maintenance contractor will also provide some landscaping.</p> <p>The Cowlairs Community Flat opened on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2025.</p> <p>We received funding of just under £50,000 to deliver 150 PV solar panels which are being installed on the Barrowfield</p>	

Community Centre roof which will greatly reduce our energy costs.	
The Board noted the rest of this report.	<b>Noted</b>
<p><b>11. Risk Management Report</b></p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services presented this report which provides an update on the strategic risk register.</p> <p>With regard to “unable to manage our financial position” there is no change to this risk score. There is an improvement in the accounts from last year but the position is still tight in terms of our ongoing financial position.</p> <p>There is no change to the risk scores for “fail to build on, maintain the confidence, satisfaction and trust of our tenants and communities” and “fail to identify or maximise opportunities, partnership and collaboration”.</p> <p>With regard to “fail to have effective governance arrangements in place” two prospective applicants attended the Board meeting as observers. The risk score will be reviewed once the Board members are in place.</p> <p>With regard to “fail to embed the organisation’s culture, vision and values”, this score remains high due to the levels of absence and turnover.</p> <p>Chris Milborrow asked if this risk is more than the last meeting.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that things are improving but the risk is still high. This may reduce by the next meeting due to new staff members coming in.</p> <p>The Director of Corporate Services advised that there are no high level operational risks to report to the Board at this time.</p> <p>The Board noted the contents of this report.</p>	<b>Noted</b>
<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>There was no other business.</p>	
<p><b>Review of Meeting</b></p> <p>It was agreed that the meeting had gone well.</p> <p>The meeting ended at 17.45pm.</p>	

<b>Date of Next Meeting</b>	
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The date of the next meeting will be Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2025.