



### Minutes

<b>In Attendance:</b>	Natalie Warner	(Chair)	(NW)
	Fran Bevan	Representative	(FB)
	Marlene Burns	Representative	(MB)
	Joan Marshall	Representative	(JM)
	Nigel Phillips-Gunter	Representative	(NPG)
	Alex Bartlett	Representative	(AB)
	Tracey Powell	Representative	(TP)
	Olga Thomas	Representative	(OT)
	Mark Davies	Representative	(MD)
	Kris Cole	Representative	(KC)
	Julie McCarthy	Representative	(JMc)
	Annette Longbottom	Representative	(AL)
	Ceri Price	Representative	(CPr)
	Jeremy Davies	Representative	(JD)
	Allison Soroko	Company Secretary	(AS)
	Claire Payne	Governance Officer	(CP)
Aled Hughes	Membership Officer	(AH)	
Lorraine Oates (part)	Director of Finance and Resources	(LO)	
<b>Apologies:</b>	Kirstie Beattie		
	Gaynor Bradley		
	Paul Franklin		
	Stephen Puddy		
	Steve Peters		
<b>Absent:</b>	Vivian Evans		
	Paula Hamer		
<b>Observer:</b>			

### Sharing Training Updates

NW and NPG met with the members of Democratic Body to share good practice examples and tips they gained from their Chairing Skills Training Session with CHC.

It was stressed to Democratic Body Members that they must read all papers in advance of attending the meeting and come prepared with any questions or requests for clarification.

**254/19**                      **Welcome and apologies for absence**                      **Chair**

NW welcomed Jeremy Davies to Democratic Body and Jeremy introduced himself to the Group.

Apologies as above

**255/19**                      **Declarations of Interest**                      **Chair**

None.

256/19	Minutes of Previous Meeting and Matters Arising – (22.11.18)	Chair
Ref: 243/18	Tai Pawb QED Report – a draft report and action plan have been received and a steering group meeting will be held soon. The report was very positive and it was said that the mutual has a positive impact and demonstrates openness to challenge. <b>Action: There will be a further update in February.</b>	
AOB	A Representative queried the progression of the working groups people have signed up for. The Chair asked for a list of working groups and the representatives on each one to be circulated. Another Representative said when nominations are sought for working groups, those who are not in attendance at meetings should be offered the opportunity before the final working group is decided. <b>Action: The list is to be circulated and maintained on VBR.</b>	
248/18	Representatives on the Recruitment of Senior Appointments Working Group should have received a calendar invite for a session on 31 January 2019. <b>Action: Invite to be checked as one Representative has not received the calendar request.</b>	
240/18	Michelle Reid’s start date will be circulated once it has been confirmed.	
The minutes were accepted as a true and accurate record.		
257/19	Regulatory Judgement	A Soroko
AS gave the background on our Regulatory Judgement which was circulate to Democratic Body in December 2018.		
We received standard rating for Finance and Governance which is the highest rating.		
A Representative mentioned the Welsh Government document on lessons learnt which gives an insight into governance failings and what caused them. This was requested to be circulated.		
FB and Mike Owen were invited to speak to the Regulatory Board about our tenant engagement and we received very positive feedback.		
Some representatives felt they would benefit from understanding more about regulation.		
<b>Action: AS &amp; CP to provide a session before the next meeting.</b> A Representative asked if Helen White could be invited to attend a future meeting.		
258/19	Rent Setting	L Oates
LO joined the meeting.		
The Welsh Government Rent Settlement came through just before Christmas. MVH had not been involved in the discussions which is quite unusual. LO explained what the settlement meant and the impact it has on the Living Rent Policy adopted by MVH. The rent settlement would result in a reduction of income of £340,000 for 2019/20. This not only affects next year but also affects the whole of the business plan which would be weakened. LO gave Representatives options and asked their views. A Representative asked if cutting rents for those paying above target rents result in more cuts. LO said that we would lose about £5,000. A Representative asked about the rent for new tenants and asked what would be the effect if those were set at lower levels. LO explained benchmark rents and how it isn’t a static amount.		
The changes poses a reputational risk because only last year we told our tenants about our new policy and now we won’t be able to do what we said we would. A Representative said we need to raise awareness.		
A Representative asked if we can go back to Welsh Government for an exemption, another		

asked how likely it would be that it would be considered. LO said it is always worth asking. A Representative asked if changing to a weekly rent has made it easier for tenants to pay, LO said it has had a positive effect.

Option 3 would increase income and go some way to filling the gap. A Representative asked what section of the business would the cuts affect. LO said we have not set our budgets yet and we don't know what the Welsh Government policy will be going forward.

AS asked if we were the only association in this predicament. LO said that others are also affected.

A Representative proposed that we appeal to Welsh Government to allow us to proceed with our policy not just select an option. The Democratic Body supported this proposal.

LO proposed that Democratic Body respond to Welsh Government with their views as this will be a stronger approach.

**259/19 VfM Update L Oates**

Board approved the golden rules.

Social Value training has been rolled out to staff.

The Value for Money Statement is due to come out in a few months.

**260/19 Star Chamber L Oates**

The budget setting sessions will look at large growth items and capital programme. The sessions will be held in early February.

NPG, AL, FB, TP, AB, NW, CP and JM nominated themselves to join the sessions.

In April HPS are having a restructure and that may impact financially so Democratic Body asked that Victoria Slade be asked to provide a presentation.

LO left the meeting.

**261/19 Proposed Rule Changes A Soroko**

AS provided the background relating to the report and thanked CP for her work in developing this piece of work. AS ran through the proposed changes and explained that the Governance Working Group had undertaken an exercise to develop the changes and had received advice from Mike Gaskell at Trowers and Hamlin LLP. The Democratic Body felt the changes were appropriate. **Action: The proposed changes are recommended to the Board of Management.**

The SGM will be held in March and will incorporate the Rule changes, MVH's 10year anniversary and the retirement of Mike Owen. The SGM will be held at Ty Brychan.

**262/19 Appraisals A Soroko/Chair**

AS provided an overview of the approach and that it follows a collective appraisal in 2017. The appraisals will be individual and collective but will be informal and completed by the end of March 2019.

**263/19 Board Member Recruitment A Soroko**

John Chown stood down in September 2018 leaving us with a vacancy to fill. Marc Fury has also indicated his intention to stand down. The Board have undertaken a skills review and looked at key board skills, the lowest scoring were finance and treasury management. A Representative asked if we have a financial skilled person on the Board, AS said that Elizabeth Lendering is a Finance Director but the funders previously wanted 2 Board Members with financial skills, the Board feel this is still important. The other area of weakness is asset management, we have advertised for this skill set previously but failed to attract applications with this skill set. **Action: The Democratic Body agreed that the advertisements seek**

**applicants with these 2 key skill sets.**

The other consideration we have to be mindful of is other RSLs have made the decision to pay Board Members.

A further skills review will be undertaken for future vacancies as Stephanie Howarth is approaching the end of her 9 year term.

Cpr left the meeting.

**264/19 Membership Recruitment A Hughes**

AH provided a list of the top 8 priority areas and the approach that will be taken in each area. There will also be new development focus when appropriate as discussed at a previous meeting.

A Representative said there is cross departmental working but there are still opportunities to improve.

A Representative asked if we also look at membership benefits, AH said we are currently doing this piece of work, another Representative asked if we have records of how often members have used the benefits, AH explained that unfortunately the local businesses were not keen to take on this responsibility but feedback received during the current review is that more staff than tenants are accessing the benefits.

A Representative suggested using quotes from members on how their membership has benefitted them could be used as a promotional tool.

**265/19 Communication A Soroko**

We are looking to develop a Communication Strategy for MVH and AS asked what key messages Democratic Body would like to include.

A Representative said it should encourage people to come and be a part of it as it's your organisation.

Short video clips for website and social media.

AH suggested advertising what Democratic Body and Board will be discussing before meetings to encourage involvement before decisions are made.

A Representative said some might fear the commitments of attendance and don't realise what membership really is.

A Representative suggested combining all aspects, for example involved in making a decision but also put money into the local economy and saved through shopping at one of the membership benefit businesses.

A Representative said some of our Communication material is not easy to follow.

A Representative raised that some reports mention developments that Democratic Body are aware of and information needs to be provided, the example given was Canonbie Crescent, CP explained that all OI Board Reports are available on VBR and provide details of such schemes.

**266/19 Star Survey Chair**

NW provided feedback on the star survey questions and the Democratic Body agreed the final questions were suitable.

**267/19 Any Other Business Chair**

Members' Charity

The Members' Charity will soon be open for nominations and there will be a memory walk at the end of March.

**Close**

The Chair closed the meeting at 12:50.

**Time and Date of Next Meeting**

**Next Meeting Thursday 21 February 2019, 10.30am, Ty Brychan**

Signed by: .....

Natalie Warner (Chair)

DRAFT