



**SCOTTISH VETERANS' RESIDENCES
GOVERNING BODY MEETING**

Record of Decisions

Held in the Boardroom and on Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 24 May 2023

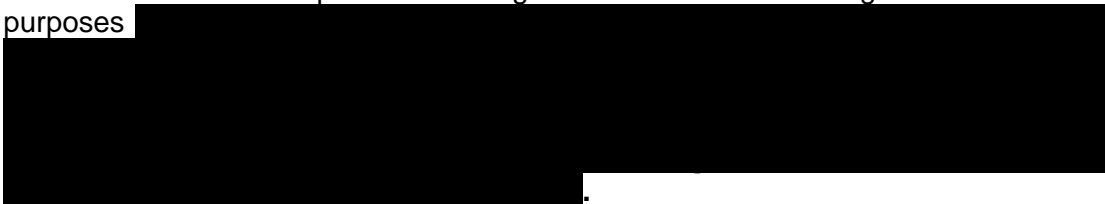
Present: George Lowder MBE, Chair, Present
 Sue Bomphray (SB), Online
 Capt Andrew Cassels (AC), Online
 Richard Edlmann (RE), Online
 Troy Johnson (TAJ), Online
 Clive Masson (CM), Present
 Sqn Ldr Derek Morrison RAF (DM), Online
 Isla Tabberer (IT), Online

In attendance: Jeremy Chittleburgh, Treasurer (JC), Present
 George Corbett, Depute Chief Executive (DCEO), Present
 Colin Leslie, Head of External Relations (HER), Present
 Martin Nadin OBE, Chief Executive (CEO), Present, Minutes

Apologies: Rev Neil Gardner (NG)
 Lt Ray Gidney RN (RG)
 Tony Jones KC (TJ)
 Maj Christian Taylor (CT)
 Sandy Telfer (ST)
 Gayle Templeton, HR Consultant, (GT)
 Jonathan Tweedie, Vice-Chairman (VC)

	Subject	Raised By	Additional Docs	Decision
1	Chair's Introduction	George Lowder		
1.1	The Chairman asked if attendees were able to proceed immediately with the Governing Body Meeting (GBM) following the AGM. All confirmed they were.			
1.2	By way of introduction, he noted the high volume of activity occurring in the Residences and that he has been particularly impressed with the communications output; be that articles in The Scotsman, or numerous 'posts' on social media platforms. He felt this was important as gave SVR useful coverage and raised awareness of the services provided, which was key in reducing voids across the organisation.			
1.3	He also thanked the Chief Exec and team for all the work they had completed.			
2	Apologies	Chief Exec		Noted
2.1	The Chief Exec confirmed that with all members remaining following the AGM, the GBM was quorate.			
3	Minutes	Chair	Draft Minutes 17 March 2023	Accepted
3.1	The minutes from the previous GBM held on 17 March 2021 were accepted.			

	Proposed: AC. Seconded: IT.
3.2	The Chief Exec noted that the minutes of the previous meeting ran to 11 pages and asked if the format and level of detail therein satisfied the Members of the Governing Body's requirements. Discussion followed regarding the format and content, which agrees they were appropriate and provided good accuracy and helpful detail, which explained the substance of the issue and discussion and accurately defined the outcome and action to be undertaken.
3.3	It was agreed that it would be helpful for the Chief Exec, releasing him to undertake more strategic activity, if another undertook the secretariat function. The Chief Exec confirmed he would seek to recruit to a Part Time appointment to satisfy the requirement.

4	Action Log	Chief Exec	SVR Action Log 24 May 2023	Noted
4.1	Ser 71 - TV Advertising – Chief Exec confirmed that 2 animations had been retained and were available for use for a TV campaign.			
4.2	Ser 76 – Rosendael 90th Anniversary Event – A telephone call with the Private Secretary had helped to set out the scope of the visit, which was described as a visit to SVR, to be hosted at Rosendael, in recognition of its 90 th anniversary as a Veterans' Residence. IT commented that the amount of time available to complete the planned refurbishment prior to the visit was decreasing and that it might be necessary to pause the refurbishment should it not be completed before the visit. The Chair commented that it would be inappropriate for the visit to be to a 'building site' and if necessary, work would have to be paused. DCEO confirmed that subject to the works being approved (serial 4.7), the indicative works timeline forecast completion 2 weeks prior to the visit if commenced NLT 12 June 23. Afternote: Refurbishment was completed prior to the visit.			
4.3	Ser 77 – Thank You Event for Governing Body & SMT – postponed until appropriate time.			
4.4	Ser 80 – Refresh of external SVR Website & production of Corporate Video – HER confirmed the importance of digital content for marketing and information purposes 			
4.5	Ser 81 – SVR Strapline – Covered at serial 12.			
4.6	Ser 82 – Business Case for Rosendael Refurbishment – estimates for the refurbishment work had been received at £63k excl VAT, The Governing Body noted the cost was within the delegation previously authorised and the works were to proceed.			
4.7	Ser 83 – SVR Tenure Documents – Chief Exec confirmed he was meeting with JB of TC Young to ensure that the proposed change to the occupancy agreement used at Bellrock Close would not result in any unintended consequences.			
4.8	The Chair requested that the development of Crisis Management and Business Continuity Plans were added to the Action Table. Afternote: Included at serial 86 of			

4.9	<p>Governing Body Action Table, and compliance with the Charities (Regulation & Administration) (Scotland) Bill, which was expected to receive Royal Assent in August 2023.</p> <p>He explained that OSCR’s powers were likely to be extended to bring them into line with the other UK Nations Regulatory Bodies and that the names of Trustees would have to be provided to OSCR for its Register. He did not expect that the proposed changes would have a significant impact on the Charity, and if anyone had concerns to contact him of the Chief Exec. Afternote: The Bill received Royal Assent on 9 Aug 23 and included at serial 87 of Governing Body Action Table.</p> <p>4.10 Bellrock Close Review Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ser 2 Drug Use. Chief Exec recommended closure of the serial as We Are With You was now established with a SLA at Bellrock Close; Policy had been developed; Education provided to Residents and Staff; access to Support and Counselling was available; and staff were aware of their responsibility to report any suspicion of drug dealing on the premises, to Police Scotland. The Chair sought the views of the Governing Body, and it was agreed to close the serial. ➤ Ser 6 Maintenance Costs & Ser 9 Benchmarking. Chief Exec explained that he had spoken with other Scottish Veterans Housing providers, and through the Cobseo Housing Cluster, English, and Welsh providers, all of which confirmed challenges in reporting meaningful metrics and comparisons and were keen to develop metrics that were applicable across the sector and share their data. ➤ Sers 7 & 8 Arrears and Voids Processes. Processes to be developed/adjusted once the Bellrock Close tenure is agreed. ➤ Ser 10 Employment Transition Chief Exec noted the success of the ERRF, that staff were exploiting it well to the benefit of Residents, and that because of this, SVR’s reliance on WWTW for employment support had reduced significantly. He recommended that the serial be closed. The Governing Body agreed this. The Chair acknowledged the success and value of the ERRF, which had been developed by the DCEO. Employment transition was now part of Business as Usual. ➤ Sers 12 and 13 Extended Support & Outcome Targets Carried forward due to higher priority tasks. 			
5	Sub-Committee Reports	Chief Exec, CM, and Chair	Verbal	Noted
5.1	<p>Audit and Risk – last meeting 12 May 23. In the absence of the ARC Chair (TJ), the Chief Exec confirmed the key activity from the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Took the External Auditor’s Report and recommended its adoption to the Governing Body; ➤ Reviewed progress against the findings and recommendations of internal audit reports; ➤ Confirmed the 2023 Internal Audit Programme, which would cover, Support Services, Budgetary Control, and Procurement and Purchasing. ➤ Reviewed the Strategic Risk Register and made its annual review of the Operational Register; ➤ Considered and approved the annual Duty of Candour Report (no instances where the duty was required to be applied); and ➤ Briefed on the SHR’s visits to landlords to assist in its understanding of Governing Bodies’ processes to produce their Annual Assurance Statements (AAS). <p>5.2 Consequently, the Chief Exec had undertaken to define SVR’s procedure for AAS</p>			

	development within a short document.
5.3	<p>Investment Remuneration and Finance – last meeting 16 May 23. The Chair gave an overview of the key issues covered at the last meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Policies. Review/revision of Treasury Management and Investment Policies to ensure coherence between the two documents. Following review and confirmation of coherence, SVR’s Investment Policy Statement was to be signed and forwarded to the Investment Manager (Rathbones). ➤ Salary bands and weighting had been considered. Following research, it had been agreed that provision of an Edinburgh weighting allowance was not appropriate for SVR employees. It had been agreed that Residence Managers had the authority to set salaries within the published role bands to attract and retain talent. Although potentially counter to a desire to standardise salaries across the Residences, it had been agreed this was necessary to recognise experience and qualification, and job market conditions. ➤ There had been a lengthy discussion regarding SVR’s accommodation portfolio and whether as currently configured, it was in balance with requirement and demand. Given its significance and potential costs, it was agreed that it was necessary to conduct a review and report back to the Governing Body. Afternote: serial 88 of Governing Body Action Table. ➤ Investments. The Chair reported that the investment portfolio was holding up well in an extremely volatile market. The portfolio’s diversity provided security and Rathbones were doing an excellent job. It was acknowledged that the Annual Accounts showed an unrealised loss. ➤ Conservation. The Chair acknowledged the potential costs of conservation, particularly at Whitefoord House. He confirmed that an application had been made to participate in a project which was examining the use of a self-healing lime render, which it was believed provided improved insulation.
5.4	<p>Quality – 5 May 23 meeting postponed. CM confirmed that the meeting planned for 5 May had had to be postponed because it would not have been quorate and that it was increasingly difficult for committee members to find free time to attend committee meetings. He suggested that one way to ensure meetings were quorate would be to recruit more members but that we had to define the type of individuals we needed and their competencies.</p>
5.5	<p>In response the Chairman noted that committee members were derived from the Governing Body, and he emphasised the quality of the current Governing Body, noting that it could be more diverse, but its quality and strength lay in the skills and competencies that the members possessed. He felt that busy individuals with the competencies SVR required were of far greater value than those with time but lacked skills. He wondered if it was necessary to refine the Quality Committee’s TORs to help shape and select the right individuals for the committee.</p>
5.6	<p>The Chief Exec noted that the next internal audit was for the Quality Assurance of Support Services and he recommended allowing the audit to take its course and observe any recommendations as they might be helpful in refining the TORs , and that competency in audit/quality might be the key selection criterion for the next member of the Governing Body.</p>
5.7	<p>The Chair sought agreement for the Chief Exec’s recommendation, which was agreed. IT confirmed that she thought she had identified a couple of appropriate individuals and that she would discuss them separately with the Chair. Afternote: Internal Audit report submitted on 6 Aug 23 and key findings included at serial 89 of Governing Body Action Table.</p>

6	Treasurer's Report – First Quarter Accounts and April Cashflow	Treasurer	Q1 Management Accounts, April Cashflow Report & 5-Year Financial Projection	Noted and approved
6.1	The Treasurer referred to the Quarter 1 Management Accounts, April Cashflow Report, and the 5-year Financial Projection, all of which had been circulated in the Board Pack.			
6.2	He noted that overall, the financial position was slightly better than forecast, although the challenge of high void levels at Whitefoord House remained. The other services and General Housing were within or behind budget. There had been some savings as energy costs had been less than forecast due to the negotiation of better-than-expected electricity contracts. Whilst catering remuneration was under budget, food costs continued to rise. A further area of challenge was rent arrears, which had seen a reversal with non-technical (resident and tenant rent and service charge) arrears for the first-time exceeding technical (housing benefit) arrears. He noted that the Chief Exec and Residence Managers were trying to ensure arrears plans were in place.			
6.3	He noted that cash remained strong being maintained at £600k - £700k each month. Rosendael's sizeable, restricted fund (c £225k) would begin to be drawn down following approval for the refurbishment works.			
6.4	He referred to the 5-year financial projection which had been distributed, the submission of which to the SHR was a regulatory requirement. It had been compiled by his staff, was accurate based on planning assumptions and he strongly recommended it for approval by the Governing Body. The Chair offered the opportunity for questions and sought agreement for submission of the 5-Year Financial Projection, which was agreed unanimously.			
7	Chief Exec's Report	Chief Exec		
7.1	Chief Exec. The Chief Exec informed the Governing Body that the Care Inspectorate had begun an unannounced inspection of Bellrock Close on 22 May, which had been completed. The Manager was due to receive a verbal report on findings that afternoon. Unless something untoward was reported, he expected that the report would be published and the processed through the Quality Committee in due course.			
7.2	He referred to his written report and highlighted a number of issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To provide visibility of the amount of work the staff were having to undertake, he had aligned current workstreams against SVR's Strategic Objectives. He thanked the staff for their significant effort in maintaining the required outputs. ➤ Although Whitefoord House remained the outlier regarding meeting void targets, its first Quarter results were better than the majority of 2022, and were encouraging. ➤ The impact that the cost-of-living crisis was having on staff, with reference to the recruitment and retention of support workers. The Chair referred to his previous comments regarding the latitude managers had been given to set salaries within the published role bands. Chief Exec replied that he would examine the cost implications of increasing support worker salary across SVR, and if affordable, would work with the Residence Managers to implement an uplift. 			
7.3	DCEO. The DCEO referred to his report in the meeting pack and the Executive Summary of the 2022 Return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter, which was due to submission to SHR by 31 May 23. He highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There had been a decrease in senior staff turnover; 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Staff sickness/absence was reducing; ➤ The number of lets that had been completed in 2022; ➤ SVR's revenue model included up to 10% voids built in, to mitigate the high turnover of Residents requiring supported accommodation at Whitefoord House, this was against an overall voids level of 13%. ➤ 6/7 of the questions posed to Tenants had seen an increase in positive responses, including value for money; ➤ Repair response times were returning to pre-Covid levels; and ➤ With mainstream rents frozen the overall rent uplift was 8.37%. 			
7.4	After seeking questions, he sought the Governing Body's authority to submit the Return to the SHR which was agreed.			
7.5	To conclude his brief, he reported that SVR had been approved for entry onto the City of Edinburgh Council's (CEC) Framework for Temporary Accommodation with Support. A mini tender had been published and subject to clarification of some aspects of the specification, it was expected that a tender would be submitted.			
7.6	<p>HER. The HER confirmed the following activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A legacy of £156k was due to be received. He had been unable to establish the reason SVR had been nominated as a beneficiary. ➤ The Dundee Courier was due to produce an article in its weekend supplement which would include 3 anonymised case-studies of Rosendael Residents. He confirmed that following an earlier experience he had re-written the media consent policy which now included an explanation to the individual about how and when any article would be used, and for Residents this would include a check with their nominated support worker. ➤ The Friends of The Scotsman scheme had ended, through which SVR had had 3 articles published. He felt this was characteristic of the challenges facing print journalism. ➤ Volunteering by corporate organisations had been going well with BlackRock, British Gas, Raytheon, and JP Morgan all contributing parties of volunteers at Residences. 			
7.7	TAJ commented that he had noticed the social media uplift and the positive media output from SVR.			
8	Surveys	Chief Exec	Resident & Employee Survey Reports	Noted
8.1	Chief Exec referred to the previous Governing Body meeting at which the surveys had been mentioned. The findings and comments of both had now been provided in the Board Pack.			
8.2	<p>Employees. The Chief Exec had identified 2 areas for further research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Managers' Expectations, which had been considered by some employees to be unrealistic to some extent; and ➤ A lack of resources to perform well, and to try and find out the areas employees thought were not appropriately resourced. 			
8.3	<p>Residents. Three areas had been identified for follow up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Residents wanted better visibility of how costs of service were apportioned. The Chief Exec would provide a simplified version of the cost model; 			

8.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Non-Veterans use of Accommodation. The Chief Exec would produce a narrative confirming how SVR's objects allowed it to provide accommodation to non-veterans, as well as confirming the moral obligation and the assistance and benefit it provided to Local Authorities. ➤ Whitefoord House catering. Which would be addressed through the Residents Association working with the Residence Manager and Catering Manager. <p>CM asked the HER if there was room and scope for positive feedback from Residents to be included in SVR's marketing. This was reinforced by the Chair's comments regarding use of the headline figures for positive responses. HER acknowledged the comments could be helpful and would consider how best to use the feedback. AC commented that he thought it would be appropriate to write back to the contributors and thank them for their comments, and confirm any areas identified for improvement and how it was intended to do so, thereby completing the feedback loop.</p>				
9	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Service Reports</th> <th style="width: 17%;">DM & AC</th> <th style="width: 17%;">Verbal</th> <th style="width: 33%;">Noted</th> </tr> </thead> </table>	Service Reports	DM & AC	Verbal	Noted
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9.1	<p>RAF. DM noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following discussion with Air Officer Scotland he confirmed that there was a recognition of the need to look after younger Veterans and to reach out to Veterans of more recent conflicts. ➤ Chief of the Air Staff had been nominated for appointment in June 2023, Air Marshall Sir Richard Knighton, on promotion to Air Chief Marshall, the first Ground Branch Officer to command the Service. <p>9.2 MN. AC noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MNWB was seeking nominations for exemplary service to MN Welfare Services, both employee and volunteer. ➤ Port Welfare Provision Survey was being undertaken, the results of which would be passed to the Dept of Transport. ➤ The vehicle replacement project which funded cars for Chaplains and minibuses to move mariners around ports had been funded up to £2m. Two donors had recently stopped donations and alternatives were being sought. ➤ The inappropriate use of transit visas for foreign fishermen to work on UK vessels was an issue with a potential link to modern slavery. ➤ The MNWB had previously disbursed £2.1m of UK Govt funding but would not receive any in 2023. He noted that the MNWB provided c £190k of its own funds in grants to its Constituent Members annually. 				
10	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 33%;">Residence Reports</th> <th style="width: 17%;">SB, Chief Exec, and IT</th> <th style="width: 17%;">Verbal</th> <th style="width: 33%;">Noted</th> </tr> </thead> </table>	Residence Reports	SB, Chief Exec, and IT	Verbal	Noted
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10.1	<p>Bellrock Close. SB noted that monthly Residents' meetings with the Manager were taking place and that she had been visiting quarterly. With the improving weather a bust programme of activity was being undertaken. Chief Exec commented that the GCU Occupational Therapy students were making a significant contribution in supporting external activities.</p>				
10.2	<p>SB acknowledged that in her new role she had significantly less time available and had discussed with the Chief Exec if another Governing Body Member could take on the lead responsibility for the Residence. Chief Exec confirmed he was in discussion with a member.</p>				
10.3	<p>Whitefoord House. Chief Exec briefed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There had been an increase in demand for accommodation and a decrease in voids, but more time was needed to be to confirm if this was a sustained demand. 				

10.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Additional contractors had been employed to reduce the time taken to ‘turn round’ rooms. ➤ Application for a 3-year HMO licence had been made to CEC. ➤ In keeping with the other Residences, a busy activity programme was underway. ➤ Monthly Residents’ meetings were being undertaken and the Residents’ Association was continuing to make good suggestions to improve services. <p>Rosendael. IT briefed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Manager was developing ideas for a ‘Neighbour Event’ to raise awareness or engaging with the National Open Doors scheme. ➤ Refurbishment – the Residents were being consulted to confirm which pieces of art and memorabilia would be retained in the front corridor. Consideration was also being given to displaying Residents’ artwork more prominently. ➤ She had noticed new faces at the Residents’ meeting which she felt was an indication of the positive effect the Manager was having and noted that Rosendael’s ‘Big Challenge’ was encouraging Residents to participate more in activities, the running of the Residence and attending meetings.
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11	Risk	Chief Exec	Strategic Risk Register
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11.1	<p>The Chief Exec reviewed actions to mitigate the risks on the register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Impact of Conservation at Whitefoord House on Reserves. He confirmed that an application had been made through EWHT to participate in a project to assess the efficiency of an experimental ‘self-healing’ lime render. If successful, 2 buildings at the rear of Whitefoord and Callender House would be used. Confirmation of acceptance was expected in September, and he would also ensure there would be no financial detriment to SVR. ➤ Inflation. Although decreasing, inflation continued to have an adverse impact, particularly food costs, where inflation was significantly higher than the overall rate, and was decreasing more slowly. ➤ Business Continuity. He and the SMT had held meetings with Inverroy, and site meetings had been scheduled. Once the Crisis Management and Business Continuity plans had been agreed and completed, a series of exercise would be undertaken to embed the plans within the organisation. ➤ Loss of CEC contract for AWS. Previously referred to by DCEO at serial 7.5. He noted that in accordance with the current risk likelihood and consequence criteria, the loss of 4-5% or c£116k to Whitefoord House’s revenue represented a ‘catastrophic’ loss and he had doubts as to this really would be the case. Following a brief discussion, it was agreed that he should review the criteria and compare them against others and make a recommendation for potential amendment to our criteria.
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12	SVR Strapline	Chief Exec	Notes from SMT
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12.1	<p>The Chief Exec reminded the Governing Body that the creation of a corporate strapline had been one of the recommendations of the independent review of accommodation for female veterans. It was not discussed at the previous meeting due to lack of time.</p>
12.2	<p>The initial proposal, ‘Supporting all Veterans to live as independently as they are able,’ had been shared with the SMT. There had been modest support for it, but no eye-catching alternative proposal. The Chair asked for the thoughts of the Governing Body. AC thought a strapline was important and necessary and that it should be short. DCEO highlighted the principal aim of SVR which was to accommodate homeless Veterans. After further brief discussion it was agreed that the strapline should be: “Scottish</p>

	Veterans' Residences – Supporting Homeless Veterans," abbreviated where necessary to Supporting Homeless Veterans.		
13	Any Other Business	Chair	
13.1	The Chair asked if anyone had any other business to raise. There was none. He thanked all for attending and for the work they undertook in support of SVR. He confirmed the date of the next meeting and closed the meeting.		
14	Date of Next Meeting	Chief Exec	
14.1	13 October 2023, at 12.00, at Whitefoord House.		