

**Minutes of the 260th Meeting of the Board of Trustees
of the Cheshire Foundation in Ireland**

Wednesday 20 May 2009 at 12.30 – 14.30

Block 4, Bracken Business Park, Bracken Road, Sandyford Ind. Estate, Dublin 18

Present: Justice Ronan Keane, Chair
Diane Davison
Dr. Mark Delargy
Bill Durkan
Jerome Kennedy
Ed Merbis
Maeve Nolan
Dr. Patricia O'Brien
John O'Kane

Apologies: Owen Collumb
John Guinan
Rosaleen McDonagh
Michael O'Mahony
Eoin O'Morain

In Attendance: Mark Blake-Knox, Chief Executive
Maggie Thomas, Head of Development
Ian Quinn, Head of Finance

Minutes: Genevieve McNally

The Chairman welcomed Ian Quinn, Head of Finance, to the meeting today.

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the 259th Meeting of the Board of Trustees, held on 1 April 2009, were taken as read, agreed as a fair record, and signed by the Chairman.

2. Matters Arising

The Chairman read a letter he received from John Guinan, tendering his resignation from the Board. The Chairman has written to Mr. Guinan thanking him for his 11 years of service on the Board of Trustees and for his long-term involvement and commitment to the Barrett and Blackrock Cheshire Homes.

The CEO will write to John Guinan thanking him for his dedication to Cheshire on behalf of the Board. **Action: CEO**

The CEO said that the Not for Profit Group had received Counsel opinion on the HSE Service Level Agreements. The Group has requested further clarification on matters arising from the Opinion.

3. 2008 Draft Directors' Report and Financial Statements

The Chairman said that the 2008 Draft Directors' Report had been circulated to all members. The Chairman said that Ed Merbis had agreed to act as Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committee for the time being.

Ed Merbis reported from the earlier meeting of the Finance and Audit Committee which had taken place to review the draft Directors' Report and Financial Statements for 2008. Representatives of PricewaterhouseCoopers had attended the meeting. The auditors had generally been very positive about the audit process. A couple of issues had been highlighted in the Audit Clearance Report, including the potential impact of the Charities Act 2009 and a number of outstanding debtors, both of which management are aware. Ed Merbis said the Finance & Audit Committee recommended that the Board approve the accounts.

The Chairman proposed the Board to formally adopt the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2008. Maeve Nolan proposed and Patricia O'Brien seconded this proposal. The Board approved the Report.

It was suggested and agreed that PwC would test the quality of the new Financial IT System in 3 months time.

Ed Merbis referred to the draft Letter of Representation to PwC, which he had reviewed and which the Chief Executive had reviewed, and asked for the approval of two Directors to sign. Management had confirmed that the contents of the letter were accurate. Approval was given for the Chairman and Ed Merbis to sign the letter on behalf of the Board.

4. CEO's Report

2009 Budget

The CEO referred to the work being carried out to reduce costs throughout the organisation. The CEO reported on his recent meetings with Cheshire staff union representatives.

A discussion took place on how measures can be taken to reduce expenditure in the organisation without impacting on the service provided by Cheshire.

Service User Contribution

Maggie Thomas said that the Chief Executive had established a working group to look at Service User Contributions. She outlined some of the historic inequitable issues that had arisen due to each Cheshire Home in the past being able to deal with charges locally.

Maggie Thomas spoke about the work the group has undertaken with a view to making recommendations and drafting policies in relation to (a) Contributions from people living in older non Dept of Environment funded properties and (b) Rents from people living in Dept of Environment CAS funded properties, for approval by the Chief Executive. The income from the Contributions will go towards food, light, heating etc. in each centre. There will be a financial assessment process to determine the level of Contributions to be paid. The maximum Contribution would be €115.00 per week.

The income derived from the rent will be used to maintain the buildings and meet building overheads.

It was suggested and agreed that Service Users should be informed that they can seek out independent external financial advice.

The Working Group had recommended to the Chief Executive that rent payment should commence in 1 June and service user contributions should start on 1 August and this timeframe is being adhered to.

It was suggested and agreed that 'A Review of Service Contributions', would be an item on the Agenda at a Board meeting towards the end of this year. Ed Merbis asked that the policies be circulated to the Board.

Action: MT

Cara Cheshire House

The CEO said that he and others had met again with the Cara Family & Friends Group at the end of April. It was planned to hold monthly meetings with the Group in order to make progress on the development of the Cara.

HIQA Standards

The CEO said he had attended the launch of the HIQA Standards on 11 May. It had been made clear that these are being introduced on a non-statutory basis initially. A strategy for implementing the Standards within Cheshire is being drafted.

Coollattin Properties Ltd

The CEO gave the background of this company that was gifted to the Ardeen Cheshire Home by the Coollattin Estate. The CEO said that the company had been struck off in the mid-1990's. Actions are being taken to have the Company re-instated.

A meeting of the Directors of the Company is required over the coming months. Ed Merbis and the CEO were nominated to be Directors of the re-instated Company.

St. Laurence, Cork

The CEO said the 9 new bungalows in Cork are near completion. The CEO said that the new accommodation shows a contrast to the main building and extension which need significant upgrade. A short, medium and longer-term development plan for St. Laurence will be prepared. The CEO said there is some surplus money that could be used to improve facilities in the main house.

Emmanuel

The CEO said that An Bord Pleanála had granted planning permission to develop the site at Emmanuel. A meeting with the developers will take place next week.

Ashtown Park

A proposal to purchase four apartments at a development in Ashtown near the Navan Road was discussed. Some members of the Board and management have visited the apartments and thought they may meet the requirements of some Service Users.

Some further work needs to be completed before a final decision can be made.

The Board agreed in principle to use funds up to €1.5 million on this project, if the apartments meet the needs of the Service Users who may live in them. The final decision on this purchase will be with the Property and Finance & Audit Committees.

A discussion took place in regard to purchasing apartments or houses clustered together and the pros and cons were noted.

5 Other Issues

There were no other issues.

Signed: _____ **Dated:** _____

Date of next meeting: 17 June 2009