

**EASTLIGHT COMMUNITY HOMES
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Held on Thursday 21 September 2023
at 5.30pm by CES JoinIn Portal & Microsoft Teams**



Present: 28 people attended the meeting which included Shareholders, Board members, Independent Committee members and members of staff.

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

- 1.1 The Chair, Hattie Llewelyn-Davies, opened the fourth Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Eastlight Community Homes and outlined the formal business to be dealt with.
- 1.2 The Chair reported this has been a year of great challenges and accomplishments and that, in addition to the formal business, there would be a review of the past year, next year's plans and an update from the Chair of the Customer Influence Committee Michelle Baker.
- 1.3 The Chair explained there was an online voting process and advised that 67 Proxy votes had been received in advance from shareholders who were unable to attend. The Chair advised that voting would close after agenda item nine. The Chair advised the results would be announced after the Question-and-Answer session and will be published on the Eastlight website.
- 1.4 The Chair advised that a number of questions had been submitted in advance of the AGM and these would be addressed during the Question-and-Answer session. She also confirmed that attendees could raise questions at any time using the online Q&A function facility. The Chair explained if a response to a question required further research or related to a personal issue, Eastlight would follow up with the shareholder in question following the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 2.1 Apologies were received from Mr W Behrens, Mr K Pallant, Mr K Archibald, Mr K Davies. The meeting was confirmed to be quorate.

3. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2022

- 3.1 The minutes of the AGM held on 22 September 2022 were approved as an accurate record. There were no matters arising from the minutes.

4. ADDRESS BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EMMA PALMER: REVIEW OF YEAR

- 4.1 Emma Palmer, Chief Executive, explained that the last financial year had not been an easy one for businesses from our sector and for society as a whole. Soaring inflation exacerbated the cost-of-living crisis, Eastlight focused on supporting residents living in the 12,450 homes they own and manage.
- 4.2 The Chief Executive explained that money and employment advice has been provided to over 1,000 residents and hundreds of thousands of pounds has been secured for people who needed guidance around claiming benefits.
- 4.3 In October 2022 a cost-of-living campaign was launched which included a 24/7 Tenant Support and Wellbeing Service.
- 4.4 It was noted that in June 2022 residents from Braintree, Colchester, Halstead and Witham dedicated a year of their lives to work on the trailblazing All-In Programme to create bold solutions to major social issues.
- 4.5 A short film titled 'Weather Report 2022/23' was played to explain the journey of how Eastlight embarked during the last financial year and the results achieved.
- 4.6 It was reported that 2022/23 had been the most successful year to date for the Development Team.
- 4.7 The Succeed at Eastlight programme was launched in January 2022 to welcome individuals of all ages, walks of life and stages in their career to learn new skills, and receive on the job training. This will lead to a permanent full-time position within Eastlight.
- 4.8 The Chief Executive reported that Eastlight's Annual Report and Financial Statements demonstrate a continued financially strong organisation with an ever-growing representation of residents on the Board and Committees.
- 4.9 The Chief Executive concluded it has been a further challenging year, and thanked everyone at Eastlight and those who work with the organisation for their continued support.

5. RESOLUTIONS 1, 2 and 3 – APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTORS OF THE ASSOCIATION

- 5.1 Steve Aleppo, Executive Director, Finance & Governance announced the three Resolutions for the appointment of Hattie Llewelyn-Davies, Dale Butcher and Simon Jones and gave a summary of the skills and experience each brings to the Eastlight Board. All three had undergone a robust recruitment process when they first joined Eastlight and they make a significant contribution to the work of the Board and Committees on which they serve.
- 5.2 Shareholders were reminded to cast their votes and that voting would remain open until the end of item 9 on the agenda.

6. RESOLUTION 4 – PRESENTATION AND ADOPTION OF THE DIRECTORS’ REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023 AND THE REPORT OF THE AUDITORS

6.1 The Executive Director, Finance & Governance presented a summary of the Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023. It was confirmed that the full audited financial statements had been published for the year, together with the Annual Report. These documents were available on the Eastlight website. The Financial Statements demonstrate a strong financial position for Eastlight.

7. RESOLUTION 5 & 6 – TO APPOINT BEEVER AND STRUTHERS AS EXTERNAL AUDITORS AND TO AUTHORISE THE BOARD TO AGREE THE AUDITORS’ FEES

7.1 The Executive Director, Finance & Governance reminded shareholders to vote on the online portal.

7.2 The Executive Director, Finance & Governance proposed the appointment of Beevers and Struthers as Eastlight’s auditors for the next year, to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting. Furthermore, it was proposed that the directors are authorised to set the remuneration for the auditors.

7.3 He advised that the formal business of the AGM had concluded and invited everyone to stay for an update about the Customer Influence Committee.

8. CUSTOMER INFLUENCE COMMITTEE (CIC) UPDATE

8.1 Michelle Baker, Chair of CIC and Board Member, provided an update of Eastlight’s Customer Influence Committee, their role and how the Committee was created.

8.2 It was noted that the first six months had been challenging. The role of the Committee and of job specifications were reviewed, which resulted in Committee members being fully aware of the required commitment and the importance of the Committee being fully integrated with Eastlight.

8.3 To support inclusivity, the application process was reviewed, and a simple accessible application process was implemented. Following a robust recruitment process, eight members had been appointed to the Committee. To maximise effectiveness, individual members were asked to focus on specific areas of the business, allowing them to better support Board decision-making.

8.4 The Committee works together to identify areas that require more oversight. Examples of these areas are is the commissioning of service reviews into empty homes, the home solutions service and service charges. In addition, the Committee oversees all customer-facing strategies.

8.5 The Chair of CIC explained the work undertaken to shape the Committee’s ways of working, including accessible documents, minimising acronyms and slide shows, and raising questions in advance of meetings.

- 8.6 It was further explained that two residents sit on the main Board, along with a Trainee Board Member. There was also a Resident on each of Eastlight's Committees. This helps ensure that the customer voice influences every decision Eastlight takes.
- 8.7 It was concluded by explaining that a recruitment campaign had recently taken place. Three additional CIC members had been appointed and the Committee had reached its full capacity.

9. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

- 9.1 James Calnan, Communications Manager – Community Empowerment, explained that some questions had been submitted in advance of the AGM and others had been received during the meeting. Any question relating to personal issues or those that require further research would be answered after the meeting.
- 9.2 The questions and answers are listed at the end of the minutes.

10. CLOSING REMARKS BY THE CHAIR

- 10.1 The Chair announced that all Resolutions had been passed with substantial majorities. The results were posted on the AGM portal and would also be uploaded onto the Eastlight website.
- 10.2 The Chair closed the meeting by thanking everyone for attending Eastlight's fourth AGM.

The meeting closed at 6.20pm.

ITEM 9 – QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

This section sets out, verbatim, the questions submitted by shareholders and the answers provided by the management team.

- Q1. In relation to the Sustainability Strategy, I really can't see any timescales on retrofitting existing homes? I wrote an email to Eastlight in 2021. I'd have thought a percentage of existing homes would have been retrofitted by now. As previously mentioned, I drive electric, my garden is environmentally friendly (it won a silver this year and a gold last year, for the 'Halstead in Bloom' garden competition). I use assistive technology to reduce my energy bills. My current monthly dual fuel bill is £55 per month. Residents can only do so much. I've also suggested more environmentally friendly planting areas within my locale. To date, nothing has happened. Perhaps we could have some timescales? My bungalow faces due south. It would be perfect for solar panels. I use very little energy,**

so the remainder could be sold back to the National Grid therefore providing revenue to Eastlight.

Thank you for this important question, which picks up an issue we know many of our residents care deeply about.

And congratulations on your 'Halstead in Bloom' awards. We've seen how high the standards are in that competition.

Eastlight's initial aim is to ensure all our homes have an energy performance rating of at least "C" by 2030. Nearly 70% already do, and our focus now is to ensure the remaining 30% also reach EPC C.

This involves ensuring the buildings are well insulated, retaining any heat that is generated within the home and ensuring the heating systems are as efficient as possible.

We received around £500k from the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to support this work. In addition, our Sustainability Team is integrating energy efficiency upgrades with existing major works programmes; for example, adding loft insulation to our existing roofing programme.

As you've pointed out, there is more we can do with the help of technology. This year, we are running a trial at two homes, with the aim of identifying the technology that can best help us meet the 2050 decarbonisation target.

Retrofitting our homes will involve a massive programme of work, and hundreds of millions of pounds of investment, so we're still planning the details – but we have earmarked investment between now and 2050.

Our first priority is to make sure that all homes reach EPC C by 2030, and it is going to be 2031 before we can retrofit on any significant scale. We would like this to be much earlier, so we are looking at funding opportunities and we're hoping that government funding will become available to help us to bring this work forward.

Thank you for suggesting that we keep residents informed about what works they can expect and when. We are open to ideas about eco-friendly solutions like environmental planting and solar panels and we'd like to facilitate ideas like this – again, working with you as residents.

However, we need to emphasise what a huge programme of work retrofitting our homes will be. It will need to be spread out across decades, and that inevitably means that some residents' homes will be retrofitted before others. We'll do our best to keep you as informed as we can as we plan and deliver this work.

Q2 Why is it that Eastlight Homes Ltd do not do estate inspections, if they did then things like untidy gardens would be noted and the respective tenant can be written to and the matter addressed.

Thank you very much for this question. Eastlight operates a programme of estate inspections at least once a quarter and we follow up where we identify we need to take action.

Our Housing Team also pay attention to overgrown individual gardens, graffiti, and other health and safety issues that could impact on our residents when they are carrying out home visits.

From your question, it sounds like you can't see this happening on your estate, so we'll come back to you directly to find out more and make sure your concerns are addressed. We would also be really happy for you to accompany us on an Estate inspection, if that is something you are interested in.

Q3 Could I please raise that if a tenant has a repair and works to be done on their home that they are given a full report and stages of repairs and a given time of expected completion.

Thank you for raising this. Right now, we're not in a position to give you a full written report. We currently ask our tradespeople to tell you verbally what they've completed and what still needs to be done, and when it will be complete.

But thank you for the suggestion – we know how important repairs are to you as residents and we want to communicate as well and give you as much clarity as we can.

We will look at ways that we can increase transparency in this area. If you use our online service – MyEastlight – we are currently reviewing what information residents can access about their home on there, including access to all repairs. When the service is available, we will communicate this more widely with all our residents.

Q4 How eastlight are tackling antisocial behaviour and there action plans?

Thanks for asking this. There's a lot going on in this area of our work.

We have a dedicated team to tackle all kinds of anti-social behaviour, from hate crimes to noise nuisances.

If you report an issue, we'll conduct a risk assessment to get the full picture and decide what to do about it –and we'll keep you in the loop about next steps.

If the anti-social behaviour persists, we've got the option to take legal steps, including eviction as a last resort. And it's not just us working on this— we partner with key agencies like the police, social services, and community groups to really get to the bottom of ongoing issues.

So, we've got a comprehensive approach to managing and resolving anti-social behaviour in our communities.

Q5 I would like some information on setting up a residential group and have regular meeting to raise issues and concerns within our community, (tenants committee)

It's wonderful to hear that you are interested in setting up a group, and it's something that we at Eastlight are very keen to support. We are always happy to

help residents who wish to establish local resident groups and we already support a number of successful ones.

We also run forums called 'Alliance' meetings, which take place four times a year and bring together local Eastlight residents and members of their wider communities. These currently take place in Braintree, Colchester, Halstead and Witham and are open to anyone who wants to make a difference to their community.

This year, we will also be revising the work of our 'Eastlight Resident Groups'. This will involve us seeking new members. It may be case that there is already an Eastlight Resident Group – or ERG as we call them – in your area.

We will ask one of our Community Empowerment Co-ordinators to make contact with you directly to give you more information on how we can help you take this forward.