# Board Meeting Summary – July 17, 2025

**Attendance:**

**Board:** Sean McLaughlin (Chair), Micah Gold, Janice Walsh, Kenny Johnson, Ben Kelly, Annabel Gray, Liz Curran, Matthew Smith, Richard Hill

**Staff:** Susan French (CEO), Cheryl Whittle (Operations Director), Lynsey van Aswegen (Finance Director)

## 1. Rent Arrears: A Key Concern

The Board spent a lot of time looking at rent arrears. BHA’s arrears are much higher than similar housing associations. Most residents are behind on rent each month, and once people get into debt, it’s hard to recover. The Board reviewed the top 10 arrears cases, garage arrears, and the time and money spent chasing rent.

This loss of income directly affects what we can offer – like new kitchens, bathrooms, and other home improvements. The Board has asked the team to take a tougher stance, including:
- Not letting garages and sheds to residents who owe money
- Running a rent awareness campaign later this year to stress how important it is to pay rent

## 2. Changes to the Board: Welcome Richard, Thank You Sean

We were pleased to welcome Richard Hill to his first meeting. Richard will be taking over as Chair of the Board in September.

This was also Sean McLaughlin’s last meeting after six years as Chair. Sean thanked the Board and staff and said how proud he was to have been part of such a special organisation.

## 3. Listening to Residents: Improving the Customer Voice

The Board saw a new-style Customer Voice report designed to give a fuller picture of what services are like and how residents experience them. Future reports will include:
- Short videos of residents sharing their stories
- Before and after photos of home improvements like kitchens and bathrooms

## 4. Annual Accounts: A Clean Audit

The Board approved BHA’s annual accounts. The external audit had no issues – everything was properly recorded and accounted for. This excellent result is thanks to the hard work of Lynsey (Finance Director) and her team.

## 5. Board Effectiveness: A Strong Foundation

A review of the Board’s effectiveness (done every three years) found that BHA’s Board is working well and sets a good example for other small housing associations. Our approach to involving residents was praised, and the review encouraged us to build on this strong base and do even more, building on our founding aim of providing affordable housing in Islington.

## 6. Reviewing Key Documents

The Board signed off on several important documents that are reviewed annually, including:
- Compliance with Regulator of Social Housing standards
- Our Code of Governance
- The Housing Ombudsman’s Complaints Handling Code
- Updated Financial Regulations (how we manage BHA’s money)

## 7. Next Board Meeting

The next meeting of the Board will be held on October 3, 2025.