

Chairman's Report 2002

Once again the Lord has Blessed the work at the Homesdale complex and we give praise to Him for a further year of considerable achievements. As I look back through the minutes of meetings and the various reports and papers I rejoice in all that has been done in the service of those who reside in Homesdale, Hunter and Mountier Courts.

However, this year has proved to be something of a period of change in terms of personnel. I have to record the sudden and unexpected death in September of Mrs Peggy Fox, an experienced committee member of some 20 years. Her homecall whilst away on her annual holiday has left an inevitable gap in our membership. Similarly, but fortunately less dramatically, David Dalton, who has been involved with the home over a period of 30 years, finally decided to retire to Swanage. David was the principle driving force behind both of the Sheltered Housing blocks and his architectural expertise has proved invaluable in an almost endless list of other projects during those years. We miss his friendship and experience on the Committee but wish he and his wife Margaret every happiness in their retirement. Meanwhile, Maureen Wilson who has worked at Homesdale for over 25 years also decided to retire. We said "Farewell" at an official retirement party in February but within days we called on her for support. Despite a nation wide advertising campaign we were unable to recruit anyone even approaching her calibre and so Maureen kindly volunteered to remain for a few months longer. We are indebted to her for her kindness in helping this way. After 10 years of service, our Housing Manager Keith Butcher moved to another local Association. It was decided to replace him with two part time colleagues and we were delighted to welcome Mina Sindhra as our Administrator and subsequently, Sarah Walsh as our Housing Officer. Both have proved to be outstanding appointments and we wish them a long and happy association with the complex. They are both supremely efficient and place the organisation in a strong position to tackle all of the legislative changes anticipated in the future.

Staff training has proved to be an important element in our continued development. We maintain one of the most highly trained workforces within the sector. Brenda Jones completed her NVQ level 4 and Jenny Brewster completed the National Certificate in Sheltered and Supported Housing. The final thesis for the certificate has provided thought provoking and challenging targets for the Committee to aspire to. It is encouraging to walk around the home and find laptop PC's in continual use as staff move on to the next stages in their studies. However, the staff achievements are much more than just certificates when you observe the atmosphere and activities within the complex. We are grateful to all of the staff not only for the more obvious parties and outings but much more for the daily love and care they provide to our residents.

Investment in the buildings continued during the year with the more routine items such as replacement carpets and decorating through to replacement kitchens and bathroom conversions. However, the major project was the lift conversion in Homesdale, which provided access to three further rooms on the second floor. The result of this work is an increase in our registration from 16 to 18 residents, which places the Home on a much firmer financial footing for the future.

The changes in legislation have naturally been dealt with as well. The Rent Policy and Rent Plan was accepted by Committee and the Supporting People arrangements and Rent Restructuring exercises implemented. The home was inspected under the new Care Standards Act 2000 legislation and did well although there are a number of challenges, which we will be confidently facing next year. Against a backdrop of similar organisations facing very real difficulties that threaten their very survival, Homesdale is well placed to move forward with confidence.

Finally I would as always record our thanks to the team of volunteers who support the work in a myriad of ways. We are indebted to them all and Praise God for their loyalty and commitment to this avenue of Christian Service.

Peter Townrow