

Chairman's Report 2008

Over 60 years of Christian Care

I am pleased to be able to report on a further highly successful year in the life of Homesdale (Woodford Baptist Homes) Ltd. The reputation of the high standards of care and support available in both Residential Care and Sheltered Housing ensures that our waiting lists are substantial and that the support from the local community is tangible. We recognise this is due to our core aim of serving the elderly within the Homesdale Complex in a caring and loving Christian environment.

The last Chairman's report mentioned the steps that were being taken to secure the services of a Chief Executive to manage and lead the organisation whilst removing some of the more routine burdens on the unpaid members of the Committee of Management. Sadly, despite extensive advertising there were no suitable applicants to even consider. In view of this and with the explicit support of a Special Determination from the Housing Corporation, it was agreed that as from the 1st May Peter Townrow would after 32 years of voluntary service, stand down as Chairman and Honorary Secretary and then be appointed on a 2 year paid contract as the Chief Executive. Peter has thrown himself in to the work with a tireless commitment and has already achieved many of the tasks we only expected to see completed at the end of the 2 year period. I agreed to take over as Chairman while Ken Webb kindly agreed to become the Honorary Secretary. In the meantime, we welcomed Peter Drew as a new member along with Paul and Christine Watkins who between them all have greatly strengthened and increased the capacity of the Committee. We trust the Lord will richly bless us all as we seek to serve Him in these new roles. Regrettably in November, Stan Utting felt the time was right for him to stand down after 30 years service to Homesdale. It is difficult, if not impossible to adequately record our debt of gratitude to Stan for his remarkable services over all those years – we already miss him a great deal.

I would also pay tribute to all of the staff who work so hard and with such unity of purpose. Lisa is wonderfully supported by Joyce and Tonia along with the entire Homesdale staff. Meanwhile, Jenny and Daphne along with Sarah, ensure that the Sheltered Housing operation runs smoothly whilst showing their practical love and concern for every resident on a day to day basis. Similarly, Mina ensures that the finance and administration aspects of the business run smoothly and efficiently. They are all an inspiration and we recognise just how fortunate the organisation is to have such a dedicated and professional staff team.

A particular highlight this year was the CSCI application to provide a Domiciliary Care Service for Sheltered Housing. The entire strategic policy was discussed in detail with residents during several summer meetings and they provided 100% support for this crucial development. We currently await formal approval to commence operations but were delighted to welcome Jackie Baker as the manager of the Domiciliary Care Unit. Jackie has been warmly welcomed by all the residents who are looking forward to seeing this new service develop.

As usual the work on the buildings has continued unabated as we seek to ensure that the changing standards and legislation are all adhered to. In particular all the Sheltered Housing flats electrical systems were upgraded, work on Fire Safety upgrades was completed throughout the complex and a new fire alarm system installed. Extra warden-call points were added in the individual flats in Hunter Court along with the usual on going programme of decoration and major flat refurbishment work. In addition, the planning for a new Homesdale kitchen along with the replacement of three lifts was completed. The successful contractors who won the various tenders will be commencing their work in 2009. Meanwhile a major stock condition survey was initiated, pensions out-sourced and 10 and 15 year spending plans devised and analysed. Once again, another busy year for the staff and residents who have to live through all this building work which despite being something of an irritation to them at times, is always greeted with a calm and positive outlook.

Finally, I would once again thank the stalwart band of volunteers who ensure the Spiritual work of the home is maintained. As always, I conclude by giving Praise and thanks to our Lord who continues to Bless His work and His people at the complex.

Keith Hawkins