

# Chairman's report 2009.

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This year has been an exceptionally busy and challenging one but despite this, the organisation has seen a raft of tremendously positive outcomes.

We were delighted to learn in June that our Registration for a Domiciliary Care Agency (known internally as the DCU) was successfully granted. Consequently, Jackie Baker and her team were immediately able to start providing the support and care within Sheltered Housing that Jenny Brewster and Brenda Jones had identified and been calling for since January 2007. Jackie has made a tremendously positive start and under her inspired leadership we expect this arm of the organisation to go from strength to strength allowing people to remain in Sheltered Housing for as long as they themselves choose.

Meanwhile Sarah Walsh has masterminded a series of major replacement and upgrades to all of our buildings. These have been planned and saved for over many years and included during this year and the last: a new kitchen in Residential Care (£70k); fire safety improvements (£149k); replacement lifts in sheltered housing (£82k); electrical safety upgrades (£65k); replacement boilers (£118k); and a further range of more minor but important items from a digital TV aerial system to extra Tunstall call points (£14k). I am delighted to report that despite all the necessary upheaval, our residents have displayed their typical "Dunkirk Spirit" and that all of the installations have occurred with the minimum of disruption practically possible.

In addition, a stock condition survey was completed by an external team of professionals who were able to produce a positive report and direct us as to the likely spending patterns over the next ten years. Whilst the costs of all the work completed this year were considerable, we were pleased to be able to recover a significant sum in excess of £35,000 from payments made unnecessarily in earlier years, such as pension and VAT payments. The savings generated from this work also continue month by month as we move in to 2010. Similarly, we were able to restructure our savings portfolio and at least generate a little more interest than we would otherwise have done during these times of extremely low interest rates.

Lisa has continued to lead the work in the Care Home with an enthusiasm and commitment that continues to be nothing short of inspirational. The recent AQA assessment was exceedingly positive and congratulations are due to her, Tonia, Joyce, Shelia and all of the staff for the amazing work they do week in and week out as they care for the residents. Similarly, Jenny has worked relentlessly in Sheltered Housing ensuring the tenants receive the best service possible. Planning has occurred during the year to allow for an adjustment to her role to be made in the coming year. As a direct consequence of this we will be in a strategic position to retain our unique ethos irrespective of the outcome of the Supporting People tender process.

Meanwhile, in the wider environment, the demise of our two primary regulators The Housing Corporation and the Commission for Social Care and Inspection (CSCI), which are morphing in to two new organisations – The Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and Care Quality Commission (CQC) has involved senior staff and Committee in much planning and deliberation. We remain positive and committed to these changes and have been pleased to have been able to contribute to the relevant consultation phases and feel that our voice of both criticism and encouragement has been heard by those in authority.

At Committee level we have sadly said farewell to Nevil Osborne who has provided twenty two years of service. His wisdom, wise counsel and good humour will be sorely missed at our meetings. However, we look forward to welcoming Beverley Browne and Luis Fuentes as new members and we trust they find the work satisfying and enjoyable in the weeks and months ahead as they serve the community in their respective new roles. Beverley's legal expertise and Luis's commercial experience will be especially valuable as we move in to the newly regulated environments.

Finally, I would thank all those who so willingly lead and manage the range of services that take place within the complex each week. They contribute a vital element to the spiritual life of the complex and they ensure that the unique ethos referred to earlier is maintained. I record my formal thanks to them all, along with every member of staff, for their remarkable individual and corporate contributions to the life and work of this organisation.

Keith Hawkins.  
Chair.