

Chairman's Report 2016.

I am writing this report with a very mixed sense of emotions as my period in the Chair of Homesdale (Woodford Baptist Homes) ends. The years have been exciting and challenging in equal measures, as we have steered our way through a range of new Government and Regulatory initiatives. However, at the core of our thinking we have always sought the Lord's guidance as we have discussed how to best serve the needs of the people who live within the Homesdale complex. I would very much wish to thank all of the Committee members for their dedicated and unfailing support.

We were pleased to welcome Helen Beech and Fr. Neil Walsh as new Board Members during the latter part of the year. I am confident they will, as we all do, find their involvement fulfilling and rewarding over the coming months and years. We completed a Governance review and a Strategic Planning review in addition to our regular Board Skills audit during this year and their appointment will address the needs identified during that process.

The organisation faces a number of financial challenges ranging from the implementation of the National Living Wage and Staff Pensions auto enrolment process, through to a cumulative - 1% reduction in Sheltered Housing rental income. We have undertaken detailed financial planning and are confident in our independent long-term future although we have cautiously explored, as suggested by the HCA, the possibility of a merger with a larger Association. Part of the challenge has been maintaining the dwindling investment income from our savings accounts. This income is needed to support our activities and so an alternative low risk investment strategy was carefully explored and implemented during the year. To date, the results have been very encouraging although it is recognised this is a longer term process.

With financial uncertainty on the horizon, the difficult decision was taken to put the new lounge project "on hold". The permissions obtained thus far, mean the project can be resurrected at relatively short notice and it is our combined wish that finances permitting, this should occur in due course.

During the year the regular maintenance tasks have taken place along with some non routine items such as the installation of energy saving automatic corridor lighting, refurbishment of the massive water tanks in each Sheltered Housing block and the front door automation to assist residents who use mobility aids or who simply arrive home with their arms full of shopping. We also commissioned a legal firm to update our staff contracts of employment and this has been completed smoothly with no discernible controversy.

Naturally, the success of this organisation is due in no small measure to the outstanding staff team who together work tirelessly to achieve the very best outcomes for all our residents. Lisa, is supported by Joyce, Sheila and Tonia in the Residential Care home while Lisa is supported by Amanda in the DCU. Meanwhile, Julie is supported by Sandy and Debbie in Sheltered Housing. Together, they all provide an outstanding continuity of care throughout the complex which visiting organisations openly view with envy! These colleagues are all supported by Sarah in her role as Housing Officer and Mina in her role as Finance Officer. I thank all those listed above and of course every other member of staff, whatever their particular role, for their loyalty and commitment in supporting and developing the work of Homesdale.

Finally, I am delighted to confirm that Peter Townrow has succeeded me as Chair on the 1st

January 2017. Peter has a wide experience of the sector and I am confident he will lead the Board with confidence and flair as it faces among other things, the financial challenges described earlier. I am pleased to be leaving the post in such a "safe pair of hands"!

Our "strap line" at the Golden Jubilee held 20 years ago holds as true today as it ever has done and I am sure will be just as celebrated at the Homesdale Centenary in 30 years time - "To God be the glory, great things He has done"

Keith Hawkins.
January 2017