

ORKNEY HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED



# Annual Report

2021-2022



# CHAIR'S STATEMENT

The work of Orkney Housing Association is overseen by a small number of volunteers, each bringing with them various skills and ideas in order that the Association meets its legal and regulatory obligations.

In March of this year all the committee members and staff were shocked and saddened to hear that our friend and colleague Wendy Baikie had passed away suddenly. Wendy had been a founding member of Orkney Housing Association, and served both on the committee for all the years of the Association's existence, and for a time as chair. From the very beginning her concern was always what was best for the tenants. When there were difficult decisions to make she would always ensure that the needs of our tenants were uppermost in our thoughts. OHAL would not be what it is today without Wendy's influence and her ideas and experience will be greatly missed.

While the worst of the global pandemic seems to be behind us, 2021 – 22 also saw the continuation of many restrictions to which we had all become accustomed. The leadership team and all the staff rose to the many new challenges including working in teams, sometimes from home and sometimes in the office, doing whatever was necessary to ensure that any issue arising was dealt with swiftly and effectively. There were however, glimmers of hope, when we began seeing some relaxation of the rules providing opportunities for outside meetings and visits. I participated in an Estate Walkabout with Housing Staff and members of the Resident Panel which was a welcome change from looking at people on screens!

Staff, committee, and our customers were all encouraged to reach out and offer support and help to those around us. Many conversations were had on different ways we could assist our tenants and colleagues through these



*Fiona Lettice, Chair*

difficult times. The Tenancy Sustainment Fund was set up, following on from the initial support provided by the Scottish Government. This is something which we were very keen to continue.

The committee are resolute about doing all we can to keep our rents affordable and any increase to the minimum. Following our Rent Consultation at the start of the year, we introduced a below-inflation rent increase for the first time, representing a real term rent cut. It was agreed that the situation will be very closely monitored and we would consider the wider pressures on household finances.

In addition to supporting existing tenants, it was fantastic to be able to hand over keys for our new developments: 12 homes at The Crafty, Kirkwall and 8 homes at Kirk Park in Orphir. The demand for our homes is greater than ever so its hugely satisfying for us all to see the continuation of our development programme.

Thankfully, as the rules relaxed throughout the year we were able to carry out more of our planned maintenance programme by replacing kitchens and upgrading heating systems. All the Association staff are to be commended for their continued hard work to maintain the highest standards of service for our tenants and shared owners.

We continue to update our policies and procedures, changing according to the circumstances. In April we achieved Cyber Essentials Plus, keeping our systems safe and data secure, something we take very seriously particularly when staff are working remotely.

Here in Orkney, we are not immune to the wider, global issues. While the effects of the war in Ukraine and the challenges of Brexit increase the costs of materials, our contractors are also affected by long delays in the delivery of goods. We will continue to work with all our partners to find ways to keep developing high quality affordable homes and maintain our excellent standards of customer service.

Fiona Lettice, Chair



# HERE TO HELP

With the continuation of COVID restrictions during this year, we wanted to ensure that all our tenants, sharing owners and applicants were able to easily contact us and access any support, help or advice they needed. Part of this meant we carried out another round of welfare calls, as a reminder that we were still here to help with any of their housing needs and beyond. It was a good opportunity to reach out and speak with people that may have been feeling more isolated or lonely during the various periods of restrictions. We were pleased our Management Committee agreed to extend our Tenant Sustainment Fund which allowed us to help our tenants with one-off payment when they needed it most, providing a significant boost to some of the most vulnerable members of our community. It also enabled better communication and allowed us to improve our understanding of tenant needs and helped us to build better, more appropriate, services.

Our Housing and Customer Services Team have been engaging proactively with tenants to prevent and reduce rent arrears. With proactive contact and support we have helped to make sure they are claiming all the benefits they are entitled to. With this supportive approach it meant we were able to work with anyone facing difficulties, helping us to keep rent arrears to 3.58%, well below our annual target of 4.5%.

## Review of the Tenant Participation Strategy



During 2021, the Tenant Participation Strategy was reviewed, in light of the changing ways in which we were communicating. Tenants were invited to give us their views through an online survey. The responses indicated that generally, tenants were satisfied with the options and opportunities provided to have their voices heard and influence decisions. Respondents noted the variety of options and mostly agreed that newsletters, social media and phone calls were their preferred methods of engagement with the Association.

## Rent collected

For the year 2021-22 we collected 100.32% of all rent due compared to the rural peer group average of 99.79% and the Scottish Housing Network Average of 99.21%.

## Keeping Connected

In addition to housing needs, we were able to assist in wider communication needs and we were successful in receiving the Connecting Scotland award which enabled us to provide equipment to our tenants, encouraging them to become more connected and engaged. Some tenants received Ipad's and mobile wifi connections to get them online. This was particularly necessary during the pandemic when there were

restrictions on meeting in person.





# DEVELOPMENTS

Throughout the past 12 months we continued our planned active development programme. After the COVID disruption of 2020, by summer 2021 we had 3 separate projects on site, 2 of which were completed and handed over by March 2022.

The two sites which were handed over in February and March were, The Crafty, Kirkwall & Kirk Park, Orphir. These homes were allocated using a local lettings scheme which gave priority to existing tenants while at the same time freeing up the homes being vacated. By working in this way, we can improve the housing situation for both existing tenants and applicants, as the existing tenants moving into the 20 new build properties leave their previous homes to be re-let to another 20 households in Orkney.

An important part of our development plans involves working closely with local contractors. This helps boost our local economy and creates employment and apprenticeship opportunities. Three local firms – R Clouston Ltd, WRC Construction and Orkney Builders – were all successful in tendering for these developments.

Orkney Builders commenced work on the next phase of houses at Walliwall in Kirkwall, bringing a range of different sized homes to meet housing need. This project will deliver 20 rented properties and 8 low cost home ownership through New Supply Shared Equity sales.

Breakdown of new build house types

## Kirk Park

Rented

2 x 1 Bedroom

4 x 2 Bedroom

2 x 3 Bedroom

## The Crafty

Rented

12 x 2 Bedroom

## Walliwall Phase 6 & 7

Rented

8 x 1 bedroom

9 x 2 bedroom

3 x 4 bedroom

New Supply Shared Equity

6 x 1 bedroom

2 x 2 bedroom

## Planned Maintenance

In addition, our planned maintenance programme saw existing tenants benefit from upgrades to their home.

30 new kitchens installed

24 external doors replaced

8 properties had replacement windows

56 heating upgrades

External decoration at 10 estates





# Re-lets and Repairs

## Re-lets 2021-22

During the last 12 months, the number of lets have remained steady with Housing Officers maintaining safe and secure working practices. Viewings continued to be carried out virtually whilst ensuring staff were available and on hand to answer any queries relating to the lettings.

Total Re-lets: **65**

Our Trades Team do a tremendous job getting properties ready for their new occupants. This is reflected in the number of days from receiving the keys from the outgoing tenants until handing over the keys to the new tenants.

Total number of days to relet: **9.46**

## Total Number of Lets 2021-22

Source of Let	Number
Existing tenants	0
Waiting list	42
OIC Referrals	23
Total Re-lets	65
Total New Lets	20
Total Lets	85
Mutual Exchanges	6

A re-let is when an existing property becomes available and a new let refers to our new builds that are being let for the first time. The use of our local lettings initiative gives priority to current tenants



for new properties and creates vacancies in the remaining stock which has the potential to benefit a greater number of households.

## Reactive Repairs

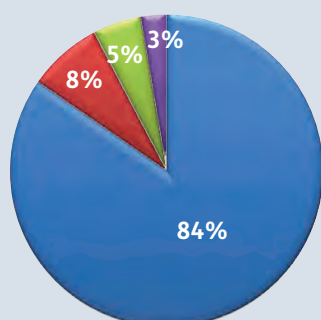
During the year we completed a total of **42** emergency repairs.

Average length of time to complete emergency repairs **2.17** hrs.

The number of non-emergency repairs totalled **1799**.

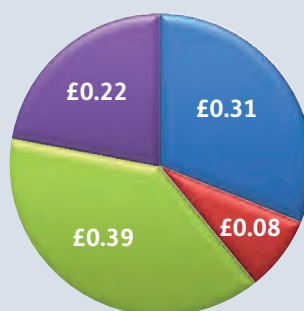
Average number of days to complete non-emergency repairs **13.01** days.

We record and monitor the number of reactive repairs that are completed right on the first visit which was **90**%.



### Where the money comes from:

- Rent
- Shared Ownership occupancy charge
- Services & factoring
- Other



### Where the money goes (per £1 of rent):

- Cost of running the organisation
- Services & factoring
- Repairing & improving homes
- Interest on our loans



# Staffing News

We are very fortunate to have a very experienced and dedicated staff team. This year saw two long service awards being presented: Sandy Dennison & Glynis Farquhar, both in the Finance Department, reached their 20 years' service at the Association.



Sadly, we also had to say goodbye to Glynis as she decided it was time to retire. Thankfully this was at a time when national guidelines allowed us to get together and give her a traditional OHAL send off. As Katherine Skea had missed out when she retired the previous year, it was unanimously agreed that this should be a joint occasion with plenty of cake.



As always at OHAL, we like to encourage local talent and the workforce, by sponsoring the Orkney College Carpentry & Joinery Apprentice of the Year Award. Gary Johnston was successful and is pictured below receiving his hand turned bowl.



It was great to see 2 of our former Business Admin Modern Apprentices continue to develop their skills and knowledge. We were extremely pleased that Leanne Omand (left) and Aimee Leask (below) completed their Chartered Institute of Housing Level 3 Housing in Practice Award.





# Wendy Baikie

## – Founding Committee Member

Quite simply, without Wendy Baikie, and the other founding members, there would be no Orkney Housing Association, they took the idea of providing secure and quality homes to people in Orkney from conception to fulfillment. Wendy had spent 35 years, from 1987 up until 2022, taking a lead role in the Association and served as our Chair twice. Her energy, hard work and courage saw OHAL's properties grow in number from the first 4 homes at Parkhead House in Finstown (of which she was always very proud), to over 1085.

It was with great sadness that we learned of her passing in March 2022. Wendy had dedicated so many years of her life to the Association, and her passion and desire to develop housing to meet the ever-increasing need never wavered. Above all else, she always had the interests of our tenants in her heart, they were continually at the forefront of her decision making.

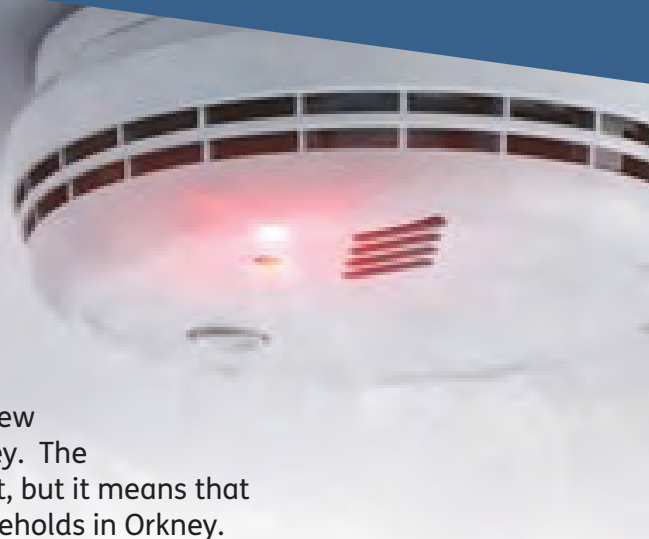
We were very privileged to have had such a loyal and committed individual to push our organisation forward and it was an honour for all of us to have worked with her.

Pictured are some of the highlights of her time with the Association.



## Orkney Care and Repair

The law in Scotland has changed and as of 1 February 2022 every home now needs to have interlinked fire alarms. Being interlinked means if one alarm goes off, they all go off. Orkney Care and Repair, as part of a national project managed by Care and Repair Scotland, managed to secure £18,000 from the Scottish Government, and a further £3,000 from Orkney Islands Council. Between the 2 grants they were able to install the new interlinked heat/smoke detectors in over 100 homes in Orkney. The criteria for accessing this was set by the Scottish Government, but it means that the funds went to support some of the most vulnerable households in Orkney.



## KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Data	Target	Actual	
<b>Governance</b>			
Staff absence	2.5% or less	4.5%	✗
Staff training and development	75% or more	75%	✓
Complaints response time	S1 - 5 days	4.3	✓
	S2 - 20 days	18.6	✓
<b>Housing</b>			
Rent arrears	4.5% or less	3.58%	✓
Re-let times (days)	12 days or less	9.46	✓
Satisfaction with re-let standards	90% or more	93%	✓
Anti-social behaviour resolved within target	90% or more	90%	✓
<b>Finance</b>			
Management and maintenance administration costs per unit	less than £1,500	£1,392	✓
Reactive maintenance costs per unit	less than £600	£537	✓
Interest cover	more than 110%	292%	✓
Debt to net worth	less than 40%	19%	✓
<b>Properties</b>			
Emergency repair response times	100%	100%	✓
Non-emergency repair response times	90% or more	83.77%	✗
Satisfaction with new homes	No properties		
Satisfaction with repairs service	95% or more	99.31%	✓
Compliance with Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH)	100%	96.97%	✗
<b>Community/Care &amp; Repair</b>			
Grant and client spend	£400,000 or more	£401,712	✓
Small Repairs Service - cases completed	1,000 or more	1064	✓

## SUMMARY FINANCES 2021/22

Income and Expenditure		
20/21		21/22
£'000		£'000
5,197	Income from lettings etc	5,014
356	Other income	390
63	Surplus on property sales	98
5	Investment income	9
(943)	Repairs and maintenance	(1,339)
(104)	Improvements & adaptations	(85)
(6)	Irrecoverable rents	0
(1,356)	Other operating costs	(1,320)
(605)	Mortgage interest etc	(605)
(1,029)	Property depreciation	(1,038)
1,578	Net surplus	1,124
(623)	Pension deficit adjustment	334
955	Surplus for year	1,458

Balance Sheet		
20/21		21/22
£'000		£'000
87,289	Housing properties etc	89,321
3,993	Net current assets	3,440
(61,214)	Capital grants	(62,571)
(19,346)	Long term loans	(18,485)
(516)	Pension deficit creditor	(41)
10,206	Net assets	11,664
10,206	Capital & reserves	11,664

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