



# Changing the Orkney Landscape



**ANNUAL REPORT 2015-2016**





John Rodwell - Chair

## Chair's Report

This has been a landmark year for Orkney Housing Association. As we marked our 30th anniversary and reflected on what we have achieved, we concluded our 3-year business plan and embarked on changes which will ensure a strong Association continues long into the future.

A major event of the last year was the retiral of our long-serving and dedicated Chief Executive, Sally Inkster. Sally has made a significant contribution to affordable housing over 27 years and her knowledge and commitment has been a great asset to the Association. We wish her the very best in her retirement.

I am pleased to report that we appointed a very able replacement for Sally in a way that enabled a good handover period. Craig Spence has already made a very positive impact on the Association and I am sure that

he will continue to build on the legacy left by his predecessors.

We were pleased to welcome Bill Wallace to the Management Committee. Bill brings an interesting mix of skills to a very well balanced Committee. Winifred Dunnet stepped down after 16 years on Committee over two terms and leaves her own legacy, having been our first tenant member chair and made valuable contributions over those years. We also wished Bob Mackenzie well as he retired from our Committee after 6 years.

After a quieter period in recent years, our development programme is very much alive with 59 units started in 2015/16. The 2015 UK General Election returned a majority Conservative government, and coupled with the 2016 Holyrood election and EU referendum results we live in interesting and uncertain times. Through the uncertainty, one thing remains sure – that Orkney Housing Association stands in good stead for the future.



Sally Inkster (right) & Wendy Baikie, Committee Member with 30 year celebration cake



Craig Spence - Chief Executive

## Chief Executive's Report

It was a great honour to be appointed as Chief Executive in October 2015 and to lead what I regard as the most talented and dedicated staff team that I have had the pleasure to work with.

This has been a transitional year, with a significant amount of time invested in ensuring a staff structure is in place to set up the Association for the future. I strongly believe in developing our existing workforce and creating opportunities that ensure the next generation of leaders are well supported. I was very pleased that we have benefitted from two graduate interns over the past year, and delighted that our first two Modern Apprentices – Emma and Leanne – have made such a successful contribution to the Association. We will continue our commitment to this programme with a new Modern Apprentice joining us in September.

Orkney Housing Association has delivered some great quality new homes over this last year, and we are coming ever closer to our 1000th build. This is testament to the vision and hard work of those who have led the Association over the last three decades.

Our Residents Panel continues to grow and develop and is a great model for how people can come together, enable real and positive change and still have fun in doing so. They are making a real difference to how we deliver services and I very much appreciate their, and other customers' feedback.

In 2015, we delivered a joint strategic housing seminar with Orkney Islands Council for both our Committee Members and Elected Members.

We have a strong and committed Management Committee who provide the right balance of support, scrutiny, challenge and strategic leadership to senior staff. I look forward to the years ahead and working with them and our excellent staff team to continue delivering positive outcomes for our customers.



John Rodwell - Chair with Councillor Harvey Johnston

## Long Service Awards

At our AGM in September, Long Service Awards were presented to six members of staff and one Management Committee member:-

- Christine Flett, 20 years
- Brian Clouston, 21 years (Care & Repair)
- Liz Melvin, 22 years
- Moira Irvine, 25 years
- Mike Cooper, 26 years (Care & Repair)
- Sally Inkster, 27 years
- Wendy Baikie, 30 years (Committee)



(Missing from photo Moira Irvine)



## Modern Apprenticeship Scheme

We were delighted to appoint two Business Admin Modern Apprentices in September.

Emma Barton and Leanne Omand successfully completed their SVQ Level 2 and Modern Apprenticeship in Business and Administration. They were the first students to complete this new course at Orkney College UHI. They are pictured here receiving their certificates from Mhairi Hughes, OHAL and Susan Mackay, Orkney College.

## OHAL Graduate Post

Our subsidiary, OHAL Enterprises (OHALE), appointed a dedicated staff member for one year. MSc graduate, Janet Mackenzie (*pictured*), worked on OHALE's plans. Her post was part of the ScotGrad Graduate Placement Programme and part funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise and the European Regional Development Fund.



## Retirement

October saw Sally Inkster, our former Chief Executive, retire after 27 years' service to the Association.

We wish Sally a long and happy retirement and, of course, there was a cake!



## Staff Achievements

Emma McConnachie, Senior Housing Officer, successfully achieved a Level 4 Diploma in Housing Practice from the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Saffron Macivor and Rachel Peace, Housing & Customer Services Assistants, completed Shelter Scotland's "Housing Law, Information & Advice" training programme.

They are pictured receiving their certificates from Liz Melvin, Head of Housing & Customer Services.

## Digital Intern

We secured funding to enable us to appoint a Digital Intern for 12 weeks over the summer months. Murray Crichton (*pictured*) launched OHAL's Facebook page and designed a much more attractive, easy to maintain and purposeful website with which we are delighted.



# New Homes, Sales

## Dunnet's Close Open Day

Staff were on hand to show people round the new flats at Dunnet's Close in Kirkwall. Developed by Kirkjuvagr Ltd and constructed by main contractor, Casey Construction Ltd, the 3 x 2 bedroom flats were sold via the shared ownership scheme.



## The Fidges, Stenness

Pupils and staff from Stenness Community Primary School came to look round the new houses on completion in February 2016. The first phase of this development has 4 rented and 4 shared ownership properties and are the first social housing in the parish since 1994. The community and school were involved in the project with the children visiting the site before construction began and returning to see the homes once finished. There were competitions for the children with P1-4 colouring in a picture of a house and P5-7 designing a home, the results of which included some very interesting ideas!

## 16 New Homes



## Choice Based Lettings Review

The Choice Based Lettings system was introduced in June 2014 and was reviewed in January 2016 to see if it is working for applicants. 79% of respondents were aware of the new system, and approximately 45% had actually applied for a property, with other

responders citing no suitable properties or not wishing to move at the moment as reasons for not applying. Overall, the response was very encouraging that applicants are aware of the changes and know how to register an interest in a vacant property.

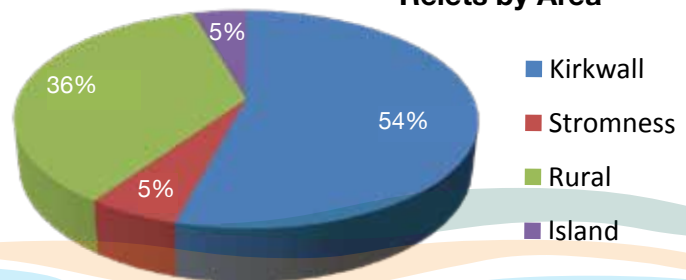
## Lettings & Sales

We had 111 re-lets and 6 new lets during 2015/16. These lets were made throughout Orkney as shown in the pie chart.

In addition to this, we assisted 33 households into home ownership as follows:-

- Shared Ownership – 7
- New Supply Shared Equity – 3
- Open Market Shared Equity – 10
- Help to Buy – 13

Relets by Area



# & Lettings



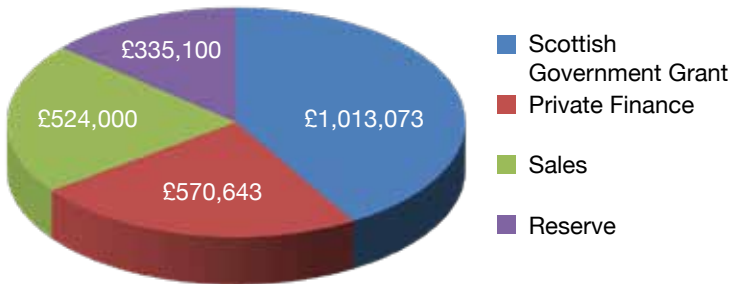
## £2m funding received

We are one of the first housing associations to access a new type of funding via Scottish Government. This will support the development of 30 new affordable homes in Orkney over the next year as part of a £5m investment in the local economy.

The bonds, issued by social investment charity Allia, provide a new source of finance for housing associations.

Pictured left is Sandy Dennison, Finance Manager with Alex Neil MSP at the Launch in Dunfermline.

## How housing is funded



## Tradesmen

We often receive positive messages about our Tradesmen service; here are a few from the past year:

Thanks again for co-ordinating all the repairs stuff, and a huge thanks to your handyman, he has done a terrific job, 10/10, and all very much appreciated indeed.

Thank you for arranging the door repair done by a very helpful handyman.

Today we had your handyman come to do repairs again. You should be proud to have him as an employee, a credit to you.

Thanking Handymen for the new handrail he has from his front door to the shed he has his scooter in as he couldn't get there without the rail. ~ Excellent job!

Thank you very much for dealing with this so quickly. It's much appreciated.

Handyman was polite & tidy and knew exactly what was needed to rectify the problem.



## Adaptations

We received an adaptation grant allocation of £33,000 from the Scottish Government. This funding enabled us to help tenants maximise their independence and quality of life by, where possible, adapting their homes to meet their particular needs. Adaptations were carried out in 19 homes and ranged from installing level access showers to the widening of doors and installing a hoist to assist with mobility difficulties. We are grateful to Scottish Government for continuing to fund these much needed and appreciated adaptations.

# Resident Engagement

**2015/16 has been a particularly busy year for the Residents Panel who have been involved in a number of events, some of which are highlighted below.**

## Tenant Day 2015

We had a wonderful selection of speakers who provided us with information ranging from Universal Credit to making savings by going online. We had an up-cycling demonstration - turning old CD cases into photo frames courtesy of the Wick Interested Tenants Group, who were special guests on the day. There was also a cookery demonstration with 'Love Food Hate Waste' showing how to feed a family of four for a fiver. Feedback from those attending was very positive, they enjoyed the workshops and demonstrations.

## Tenant Participation Strategy

The final document was launched at the Tenant Day and was well received by those present. The booklet was then mailed out to all our tenants and sharing owners along with the Action Plan for 2015-17. We are working our way through these actions to ensure we meet the objectives agreed with the Residents Panel.

## Rent Setting

Following consultation with tenants and sharing owners, the way in which we set our rents was reviewed. The Resident Panel and Management Committee both participated in this review and provided valuable feedback to staff on the priorities which should be agreed for the different characteristics of a property. The result of this was the introduction of a new Rent Setting Policy which provides details of the points system now being used.

## Summer Engagement Tour

The purpose of the summer engagement tour was to provide an opportunity for tenants to meet with the Residents Panel, Committee Members and staff. In July 2015 the tour involved a visit to our estates in the East Mainland and South Ronaldsay. They stopped off at a privately owned property which had received significant adaptations through Orkney Care & Repair. The group also enjoyed a wonderful afternoon tea courtesy of the volunteers at the Marengo Centre and met with some of the local residents.

## Repairs Service Review

During the winter months the Residents Panel have participated in training sessions on Tenant Scrutiny and, in particular, undertaking a review of our Repairs Service. Resident Panel members will be contacting other tenants during the summer months to establish their views on the existing service and how improvements may be made.

## Community Observers

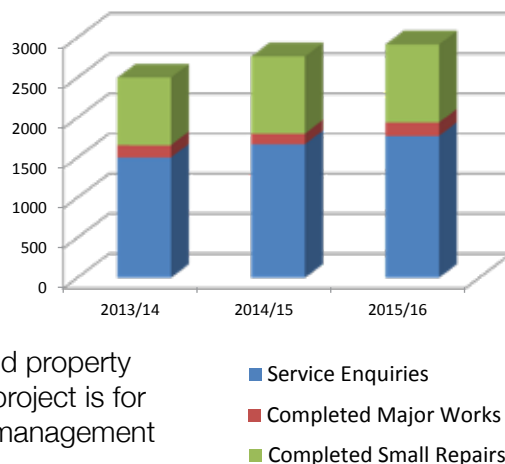
The "Community Observer, Look Local" initiative continued during 2015/16 with 11 volunteers in regular contact with us to provide valuable feedback on their local area. We very much appreciate their input.



## Care & Repair

We are in the fifth and final year of the current Care & Repair contract and intend to tender again to retain management of the service. During 2015/16 the Care & Repair team responded to 1,773 service enquires, completed 167 major works and 975 small repairs to assist households throughout the Orkney Mainland and Isles.

Tackling Household Affordable Warmth (THAW) Orkney secured funding of just under £400,000 with £175,000 allocated for installation costs of energy saving measures and property and heating repairs from the British Gas Energy Trust. The project is for one year and Orkney Care & Repair are providing a project management service for remedial / installation works being carried out.



## OHAL residents respond well to heat pump survey

With the backing of the Scottish Federation of Housing Association's Energy Ideas Fund, we have worked closely with our residents and heat pump manufacturers NIBE to come up with new step-by-step guides, which were issued to all 281 residents residing in properties with NIBE heat pumps.

## Energy Advice Sessions

We offered energy advice sessions to residents struggling to meet their energy costs. They were offered half-hour, one to one slots in February and March with Energy Officer, Robert Leslie. Advice was provided on reducing energy usage and switching energy tariffs.

## Complaints & Compliments

By monitoring complaints and subsequent outcomes we have greatly increased our understanding of the issues that concern our customers and where we need to improve services. During 2015/16 we dealt with 67 complaints of which 66% were upheld. The service areas receiving most complaints were:

	2015/16		2014/15
	Number	Upheld	Number
<b>Grounds Maintenance</b>	19	14	14
<b>Repairs &amp; Maintenance</b>	18	13	29

We will be taking action to improve these areas during 2016/17.

On a positive note, we received 47 unsolicited compliments and expressions of appreciation for our services. Of these, 10 were for the Grounds Maintenance service and 8 for the Repairs & Maintenance service. Care & Repair received 10, General Services 10, the Tradesmen Service 5, Allocations 2 and Tenant Participation 2.



**Congratulations** to Ewan Whyte, who was awarded the Carpentry & Joinery Apprenticeship Award at the Orkney College Awards Ceremony. Philip Cook, Committee Member, presented the award on behalf of the Association.

Key Performance Indicators		Target	Actual	Target Met?
<b>Governance</b>	Staff absence	≤ 2.5%	3%	✗
	Committee member attendance	≥ 75%	80%	✓
	Management Committee vacancies	≤ 34%	33%	✓
	Committee member training records	≥ 90%	256%	✓
	Committee training plan	≥ 80%	45%	✗
	Staff training plan	≥ 75%	59%	✗
<b>Housing</b>	Rent Arrears	≤ 2.5%	2.9%	✗
	Re-let times (days)	≤ 13	11.4	✓
	Anti-social behaviour response times	≥ 95%	96.7%	✓
	Satisfaction with re-let standards	≥ 90%	88.4%	✗
<b>Finance</b>	Management and maintenance administration costs	≤ £1,500	£1,370	✓
	Direct reactive maintenance costs per unit	≤ £490	£439	✓
	Operating cost as % of turnover	≤ 96%	75.1%	✓
	Operating cost budgetary variance	≤ 10%	-9.2%	✓
<b>Loan Covenants</b>	Interest Cover	≥ 110%	214.2%	✓
	Debt to net worth	≤ 40%	23.4%	✓
<b>Properties</b>	Emergency repair response times	≥ 100%	100%	✓
	Non-emergency response times	≥ 90%	86.8%	✗
	Development project cost variance	≤ 102%	107%	✗
	Units completed on time	≥ 95%	100%	✓
	Average defects per unit	≤ 5	1.7	✓
	Satisfaction with new house designs	≥ 95%	100%	✓
	Satisfaction with repairs service	≥ 95%	97.8%	✓
	Energy Efficiency & Advice interventions	≥ 100	123	✓

## Finances 2015/16

Income and Expenditure		
14/15 re-stated £'000		15/16 £'000
3,381	Income from lettings etc	3,494
152	Surplus on property sales	38
20	Investment income	18
(933)	Repairs and maintenance	(958)
(66)	Property Improvements & Adaptations	(145)
(10)	Irrecoverable rents	(14)
(1,250)	Other operating costs	(1,172)
(564)	Mortgage interest etc	(519)
(2)	Development administration	(3)
(157)	Property depreciation	(173)
571	Surplus for year	566

Balance Sheet		
14/15 re-stated £'000		15/16 £'000
75,068	Housing properties etc	79,570
1,745	Net current assets	3,741
(55,837)	Capital grants	(59,348)
(14,279)	Long term loans	(16,777)
(1,147)	Pension deficit creditor	(1,070)
5,550	Net assets	6,116
5,550	Capital & reserves	6,116

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