



CHISEL 2009/10 ANNUAL REPORT

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**and
DON'T MISS THE PULL-OUT
TENANTS REPORT**

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Wendy Newell

CHAIR'S REVIEW OF THE YEAR

I said at our last AGM that CHISEL is making real progress and becoming an organisation that it is a pleasure to be involved with. This year our progress has continued.

We have completed another series of joint staff and Board visits to all of our conventionally built homes with communal areas and shared facilities. These visits have become extremely important opportunities for Board members as well as staff to meet individual tenants, to talk and get a sense of your issues and to see for ourselves how well CHISEL is maintaining your homes. I'd like to thank the tenants who found the time in busy lives to be at home to meet us and the Board members who managed to juggle things to attend at least one visit.

We have addressed some big topics this year including considering how we match up to the new regulatory standards set for us by the TSA (Tenants Services Authority). The crucial issue here is to be sure that we are spending our time and money delivering the sort of services our tenants want and with your involvement. We need to make demands on your time to do this.

We commissioned our first full, externally validated, survey of tenant

satisfaction this summer. The results, together with the views of our CHISEL Tenant Sounding Board, will guide how we develop from here. Returning completed surveys is one way you can help us, attending our sounding board meetings or the AGM is another. My thanks to all of you who did either.

We also need tenants to come forward to join as Board members. This year we need to replace 3 tenant members. Louise Owen, John Morgan Evans and Keith Roberts have all decided to step down, having put significant energy into CHISEL in the past. We thank them, wish them well and hope that maybe they can find time for us again at some point in the future.

We need other tenants to step forward to take their places. You could be completely new to boards, to us and to housing associations in general, or maybe you are an ex-board member with some time to spare who is willing to come back for another stint.

One issue that the Board is currently considering is whether we can offer our self-builders the opportunity to buy the home they built and currently live in. There are some very strongly held views both for and against us doing this and we need to move forward responsibly. This may be an issue that you want to get involved in.

We have prepared a briefing about what our board is, how it works now and what we expect from our board members. Please consider joining us.

Wendy Newell
Chair

Left: Tenant and Flamenco Co-op member Marcus Bensasson (right) outside his home at Waller Road with Maintenance Officer Chris Hatcher (second from right) and Board Member John Clark (left) at one of this summer's scheme visits.



CHISEL is a small, charitable housing association with a commitment to tenant empowerment. We have 225 permanent homes of which 161 are directly managed by CHISEL and 64 are managed by managing agents.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

"There are many things we need to do to further improve our services but I feel we can look forward with confidence — our financial position is sound and we have a committed staff and board team. Having said this, I would like to see a few more tenants willing to give a little of their time to work with us to make things better for themselves and all our tenants."

2009/10 turned out to be the year when a number of longstanding projects came good. We completed the purchase of three new homes using the remaining recycled capital grant still available to us (see page 3). More critically, we finally completed the purchase of 66 properties from AmicusHorizon Group. These were all homes that had been originally developed for CHISEL by South London Family HA (as AmicusHorizon was then) but up until now were only managed by CHISEL or our agents, Three Boroughs HA and LFSA.

Readers of previous annual reports will know that this purchase process seemed to be dogged by an endless string of difficulties, so thanks are due to the patience and persistence of the many people involved including staff at Unity Trust Bank, our Financial Consultant, Phil Morris, our solicitors Housing Property & Law, and the Finance Director and other staff involved at AmicusHorizon.

During the year we also continued to work with tenants to develop and improve our services. We have continued to invest heavily in our properties; we are close to completing the programme of installing new kitchens in all our homes, and have carried out £30,000 of improvements to the communal areas of our self build homes with a further £17,000 committed this year. We have also continued our programme of staff and board visits to properties started last year (see Chairs' Review page 1) and have held several CHISEL Tenant Sounding Board meetings to discuss issues of importance to tenants.

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WORKING WITH OUR TENANTS AND THE NEW REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

This year the new housing association regulator the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) has redefined how housing associations are regulated. The TSA has described their new approach as "co-regulation" which means that they expect robust self regulation by the boards of associations in conjunction with effective tenant involvement and scrutiny subject only to a "backbone" of regulation by the TSA.

Seeking to involve tenants in everything the association does may be new to some associations but is, of course, nothing new for CHISEL. We have always encouraged tenants to exercise the maximum influence possible over the way their homes are managed; this is a core element in our continuing support of tenant co-ops. It is also why we aim to have a Board membership that includes at least one third who are tenants.

With this year's annual report we have included a two page pull-out Report for Tenants. Under the TSA's new regulatory framework all housing associations are required to produce an annual report to tenants that sets out:-

⇒ how well the association is meeting 6 new TSA standards

- ⇒ how the association involves tenants in setting local standards called "local offers" and scrutinising performance
- ⇒ how well the association is meeting these local offers.

Our Report to Tenants gives details of what the TSA standards cover and highlights:-

- ⇒ how the CHISEL Board have examined a "gap analysis" of how well we currently meet the TSA's standards
- ⇒ how we are seeking the views of all tenants' on the services we provide through the tenant survey being carried out this summer
- ⇒ how we are using the CHISEL Tenant Sounding Board as a forum for gathering tenant views and deciding priorities
- ⇒ how we have started the process of setting local offers by talking with tenants about setting a new set of CHISEL service standards
- ⇒ details of our current performance relating to lettings, voids, rents, arrears and maintenance
- ⇒ how we have joined a benchmarking club so that we can compare our performance with other associations.



We successfully utilised all the recycled capital grant (RCGF) that we had had available since the sale 4 years ago of some CHISEL properties that no longer met our needs.

We purchased three family homes in Thamesmead. These consisted of two 2 bedroom flats and one 3 bedroom house. Two properties were let to council nominees from Bromley and Greenwich and one to an urgent transfer from another housing association.

Left: Trident House, location of one of CHISEL's new homes in Thamesmead.

Chisel Ltd		Summary Financial Statements 2009/10	
Income and Expenditure Account	£'000	Balance Sheet	£'000
Turnover	1,043	Cost of housing	19,391
Operating costs	(733)	Less: grants	(14,978)
Operating surplus	310		4,413
Interest receivable	-	Other fixed assets	3
Interest payable	(100)	Net current assets	85
		Total assets	4,501
Revenue surplus for the year	210		
Prior year property depreciation adjustment	70	Housing loans	3,827
Revenue surplus at start of year	394	Revenue surplus	674
Revenue surplus at year end	<u>674</u>	Total	<u>4,501</u>

The surplus for the year to 31 March 2010 was £210,227 compared with a surplus of just £70 in 2009. The main decreases in expenditure since 2009 were lease charges and mortgage interest which taken together decreased by £85,570 and routine, planned and major repairs expenditure taken together also decreased by £65,552. With net rental income up by £63,387 these changes are the main reasons for the increased surplus in 2010.

CHISEL BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

CHISEL's Board of Management has overall responsibility for all aspects of the association's work. Membership during the past year has been as follows:

Wendy Newell (Chair)	Independent
John Morgan-Evans (Vice-Chair)	Tenant (until April 2010)
Per von Scheibner (Treasurer)	LFSA representative
John Clark	Independent
Louise Owen	Tenant (until June 2010)
Keith Roberts	Tenant (until June 2010)
John Taylor	Independent
Andrew Watson	Independent
Kathryn Bull	Independent
Lisa Austen	Tenant
Peter Coker	Tenant (from September 2009)
Gloria Biggs	Independent (from June 2010)

Any shareholder of the association can stand for the Board and potential new members are invited to meet with the Chair and Director and to attend a Board meeting as an observer prior to appointment. Applications for a share are agreed by the Board and CHISEL tenants will automatically be accepted, other than in exceptional circumstances. A share costs £1 and is non-profit making and non-returnable.

CHISEL STAFF

CHISEL currently employs 7 part-time staff, making up the equivalent of 3.8 full-time staff. Over the last year we said a fond good bye to our finance officer, Vathani Ariyam, who has been replaced since June 2009 by Shuk-Ling Hou. Current staff and the days they work are listed below.



Above: Clare Canning at work

Left: clock wise from left: Shuk-Ling Hou, Linda McMahon, Jane Brennan, John Smith, Chris Hatcher, Flos Marriott.

Director:	John Smith (4 days pw: Monday to Thursday)	director@chisel.org.uk
Housing Manager	Clare Canning (4 days pw: Monday to Thursday)	housing@chisel.org.uk
Rents Officer	Flos Marriott (2 days pw: Tuesday & Thursday)	rents@chisel.org.uk
Maintenance Officer	Christopher Hatcher (4 days pw: Monday to Thursday)	maintenance@chisel.org.uk
Co-ops and Tenants Officer	Linda McMahon (2 days pw: Tuesday & Thursday)	cto@chisel.org.uk
Finance Manager	Jane Brennan (1 day pw : Thursday)	mgrfin@chisel.org.uk
Finance Officer	Shuk-Ling Hou (2 days pw: Wednesday & Thursday)	finance@chisel.org.uk