

CHISEL ANNUAL REPORT 2012-13

Accountable to Our Residents



I love my CHISEL HOME.....



by Grace, aged 7

Held to Account by Our Members



“We are committed to being accountable to our residents and being held to account by our members; this is at the very heart of CHISEL”

Wendy



Chair's Report

The theme of this year's annual report is “Accountable to our Residents and held to account by our Members”. The Board is committed to this vision for CHISEL and will be driving this forward over the next and future years to create a better CHISEL for all our residents. Being accountable to, and held to account by, residents is key to this and is what sets us apart from other housing associations.

Residents at recent neighbourhood meetings are feeding back that we are heading in the right direction to improve services and engage with all our residents more effectively. A vibrant membership is also critical to our vision so we are not only accounting to residents individually but the Board is also held to account each year by the Members of CHISEL at our AGM. This membership has an important role. It holds the power to elect a Board it trusts to steer CHISEL throughout the year. The membership must also approve any changes to CHISEL's status, like a merger for example. We wish to create a sense of belonging, of a CHISEL community where the Board, Members, residents and staff are working together to achieve a shared vision for the future.

All residents are eligible to apply for shareholding membership of CHISEL and vote at AGMs so if you are interested please contact the office.

The Board is responsible for steering CHISEL and taking difficult decisions in challenging times. We must recognise the challenges many of our residents will face with benefit changes and plan how best to support individuals in tough personal circumstances while also ensuring that CHISEL remains financially robust and able to meet our liabilities and promises to all residents. We need a Board with the right balance of skills and commitment to do this.

I would like to thank the whole Board for their energy and commitment over the year. This year we are losing one of our most valued Board members, John Clark, who has sat on the Board for over 8 years and I would like to thank him for his unswerving commitment, phenomenal skill set and questioning mind.

Wendy Newell

Managing Director's Report

This has been an exciting year for CHISEL where we have been focussed on improving services and increasing resident engagement. We are passionate about being accountable to our residents for what we do and how we do it; after all who better to tell us how we are doing and how we can improve!

We wish to engage with all our residents and listen to their views throughout the year to ensure we are providing services that meet our residents' needs and aspirations. This is at the heart of our new vision and values.

We have been consulting on our resident engagement strategy through the neighbourhood meetings and you have told us that we are on the right track so we have been slowly implementing a number of ways to listen to your views and get your feedback. This is just the start and we welcome your input and involvement at any level, and in any way, that suits you. If you would like to talk to us about how you can get involved please contact Mark Allan at the office.

Welfare Reform has been a big issue for us this year as we have tried to work with residents to minimise the immediate impact on both residents and CHISEL; we will continue to work on the longer term impact as we know there are challenging times ahead.

Karen Cooper



“At CHISEL we are passionate about working in partnership with our residents to improve services”

Karen

Vision and Values

Our Vision

CHISEL – driven by our residents, their needs and aspirations, to deliver sustainable homes, services and communities which make us all proud.

Our Values

Working together to create a CHISEL community.

Collaborative and Co-operative – we are passionate about working together in a positive way both with individuals and groups who share our values.

Honest, Open and Transparent – we believe in acting with integrity at all times, being transparent about our actions and being open and honest about what we can and cannot do.

Involvement and Inclusivity – we are committed to listening to, and acting on, feedback from all our residents; being accountable to our residents and held to account by our members

Sensitive, respectful and fair – we believe in treating everyone we work with as we would like to be treated, valuing people as individuals with different needs and aspirations.

Excellence in everything we do – we are committed to having a “can do” pro-active approach to delivering services, being the best we can be and making a difference every day.

Local – working with residents to understand local issues and build better neighbourhoods

..... Building Trust



Our Priorities for 2013-14

- Increasing resident engagement in CHISEL
- Supporting residents affected by the Welfare Reform changes
- Delivering a more proactive housing management service
- Improving performance
- Providing a more responsive repairs service
- Improving our communication
- Increasing resident satisfaction
- Providing Value for Money
- Remaining financially strong



**"I love my
CHISEL HOME
because it's
spacious.
It's home.
Maintenance is
done fast and
effectively and
the staff are
all very
approachable
and friendly."**

Cheryl Cerasoli



“I love my CHISEL home because it is filled with the love and laughter of my three babies. It is somewhere safe for them to grow up and they love to play in the garden”

Joanne Billis

Our Residents

One of CHISEL's highest priorities is to engage more with our residents. Staff have been going out and meeting residents in a series of neighbourhood meetings over the last year; these are now almost complete. So far about 15% of our tenants have come to these gatherings, and have given us some very valuable feedback about how to improve our services for all residents; this feedback will help us shape services going forward. We have already made a number of changes in response to residents comments so these meetings really can make a difference.

In these meetings we have also been consulting with residents about some key aspects of CHISEL:

- You have overwhelmingly confirmed that you are happy with our new Vision and Values (page 4)
- You have approved our Priorities for this year (see page 5) and
- You have said our Residents Engagement Strategy is both appropriate and positive

Your views really do matter!



YOU TOLD US:

- You want better communication from CHISEL and our contractors about repairs
- We should check more with residents about how repairs have been done
- Our cyclical maintenance works could be done better
- We need to improve our IT and communications systems so you can reach the right staff member more easily, especially part-time staff

SO WE HAVE:

- Introduced a Contractors Code which requires our contractors to give notice to residents and affected neighbours about works
- Done phone interviews with a sample of tenants about recent repairs
- Overhauled our cyclical maintenance tender process and brought in new suppliers
- Planned a major upgrade of our IT and phone systems for later in 2013

You Said...

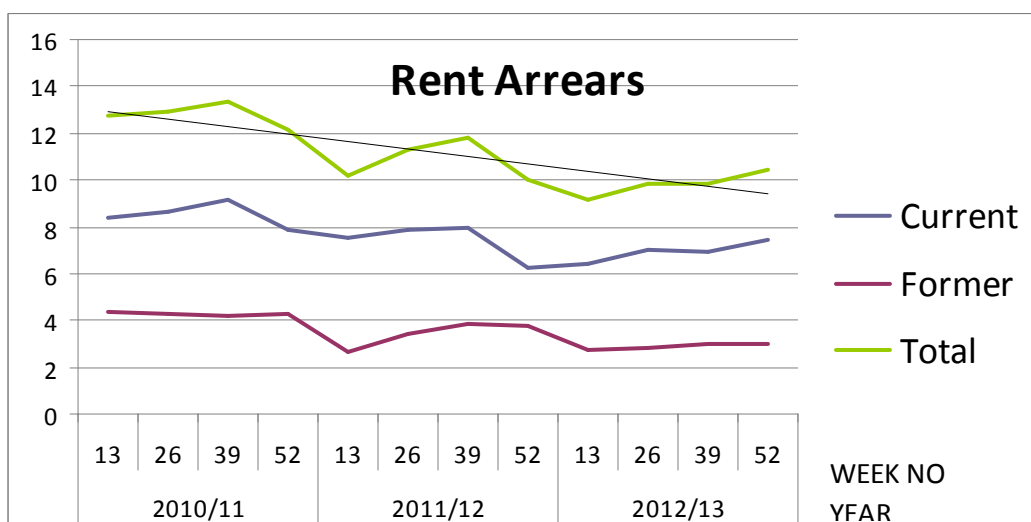
We Did...



Our Performance

During the year we have been working hard to improve performance and have introduced a number of new policies and other initiatives as a result. This is an on going process and we are currently looking at our IT and phone systems to help improve both communication and the services that we offer in future.

As a small association we have very limited resources and CHISEL relies on the income from rents to fund its activities and services such as carrying out repairs and improvements. It is therefore extremely important that we manage our arrears effectively, especially with the arrival of Universal Credit. Arrears have generally been on a downward trend over the last few years and have been stable during the year although there was blip at the end of the year due to the Easter bank holidays.



Lettings: We had 13 voids (empty homes) during the year; 7 of these were in shared housing and 6 were self contained homes. In addition 2 residents exchanged their homes with residents from another housing association. We have struggled to let some of the rooms in shared homes and this needs to be addressed during 2013/14 year.

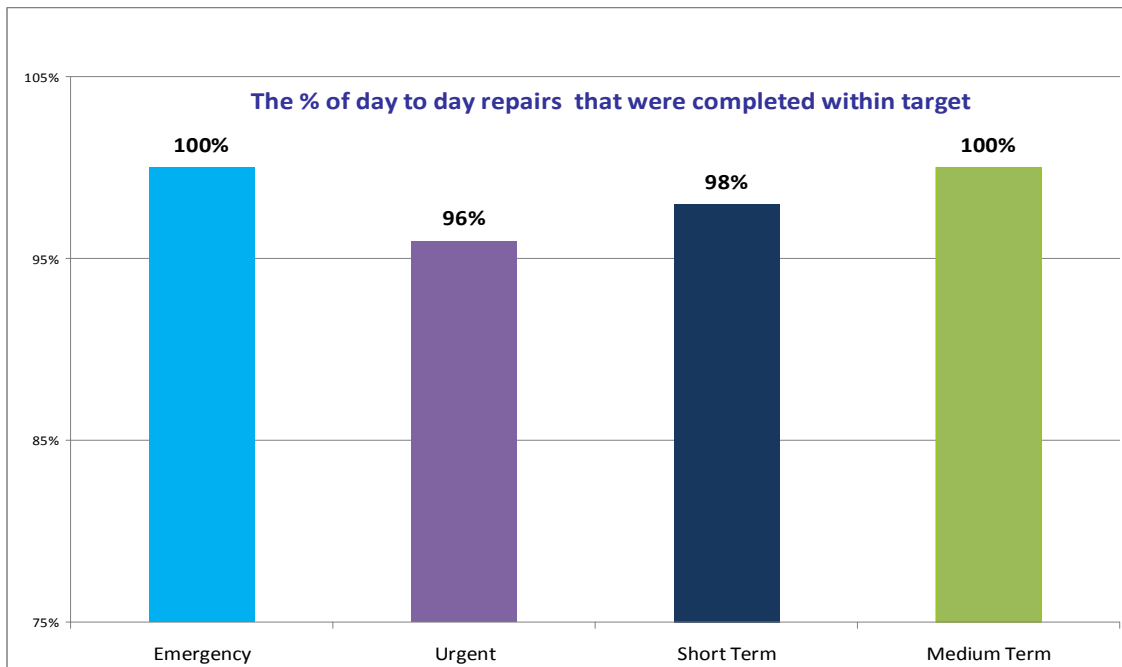
Our Repairs

During the year we replaced:

- 21 kitchens
- 16 boilers
- 3 bathrooms

Additionally we painted the outside of 36 homes during the year.

We are continually working to improve standards so we have introduced a Code of Conduct for all our contractors in response to your feedback and, through a tender process, this year we have engaged a new contractor to deliver our cyclical programme.



We received two complaints during the year, both of which were dealt with at Stage 1 and within target. One complaint was about repairs and one about customer service.



Our Money

For the financial year ended 31 March 2013, CHISEL generated a surplus of £200,752. From this, we have to repay our housing loans and these amounted to £159,536 in the year. We are able to make such healthy surpluses because we very carefully manage our budget. During the year there are always unexpected items of expenditure that we hadn't planned for and this year was no exception but we can cover the cost of these items by ensuring that we operate as efficiently as possible and by keeping our overhead costs as low as possible. Overheads are the cost of running the organisation and include the costs of staff wages and the costs of running the office but do not include costs incurred on our properties, such as maintenance. **Nearly 50% of your rent is spent on maintaining our homes.** CHISELs overheads for the year were £16,000 under budget and £5,000 less than last year. Interest rates have also remained very low throughout the year and this has also benefited CHISEL.

Our accumulated surpluses now amount to just under £1.25m. This level of surplus means that we can safely ride out any increases in interest rates or unexpected maintenance costs that may arise in future years. It also gives us the ability to take advantage of other opportunities such as purchasing property should they occur.

The balance sheet shows CHISELs assets and liabilities at the end of the financial year. The value of our properties is shown as £19.4m less the amounts that we have received in grants of £15m. CHISEL also owns approximately £5,000 of other fixed assets such as office equipment and furniture. Net current assets of £254,000 represents the amount of money owed to us, less the money that we owe in unpaid bills. The total of our assets less our liabilities is £4.656m. The bottom half of the balance sheet shows that this is made up of loans that we are due to repay in the future of £3.352m and reserves that we have built up over the years of £1.3m.



The Accounts

For every £10 rent we receive, we spend:

Summary Financial Statements

2012/13

Income and Expenditure Account

£'000

Turnover	<u>1,255</u>
Operating costs	<u>(932)</u>
Operating surplus	323
Interest receivable	2
Interest payable	<u>(125)</u>
Net surplus for the year	200
Revenue surplus at start of year	<u>1,047</u>
Revenue surplus at year end	<u>1,247</u>

Balance Sheet

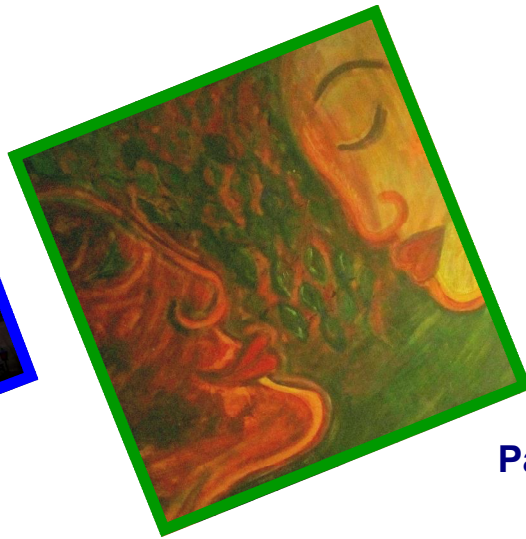
£'000

Cost of housing	19,374
Less grants	<u>(14,977)</u>
	4,397
Other fixed assets	5
Net current assets	254
Total assets	<u>4,656</u>
Housing loans	3,352
Designated reserves	56
Revenue surplus	<u>1,248</u>
	<u>4,656</u>



I LOVE MY CHISEL HOME BECAUSE... I have very nice neighbours and when I get home I can forget all my worries and cares. I love it that my home has a romantic look and feel - I live next door to a church so see lots of weddings, I have a spiral staircase and an open fire! It has been filled over the years I've lived here, with objects, paintings and photos that remind me of my family, friends, travel and work - all the things that are important to me about my **CHISEL Home**.

Jo van der Meer



Painting by Jo

CHISEL

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