



Sutton Housing Society Annual Report 2014/15

Providing homes locally for **50** years

Putting you in the picture



Celebrating 50 years

In 2014 the Society celebrated it's first 50 years of service to the people of Sutton.

Sutton Housing Society (SHS) was set up in 1964 with the aim of providing supported housing to local people in need. In the early years of the Society's existence committee members gave their time and expertise without charge, helping to develop and manage it's first homes. This voluntary ethos still drives our committee (Board) members today as they continue to give freely of their time and professional expertise.

To help mark this momentous achievement the Society organised events involving residents, stakeholders and staff.

Events included the burial of a time capsule at Trickett House, a celebration afternoon tea, commemorative gifts for all residents, a Christmas pantomime and the launch of 'One man's dream' a book on the history of SHS written by Barbara Bransgrove, the daughter of Frank Griffiths one of the founder members of the Society. The book charts the history of the Society from the development of it's first sheltered housing scheme (20 bedsits at Trickett House) to the present time. The book was a timely reminder of the huge personal commitment the founding committee members made to the Society.



The Society's President, The Worshipful the Mayor of the London Borough of Sutton, Councillor Arthur Hookway officially opened the new offices at Pat Shaw House.



Just over a hundred residents, staff and Board members attended the book launch and Christmas panto at the Secombe Theatre.





A time capsule was buried at Trickett House, it was filled with a poppy and a copy of 'In Flanders Fields' to mark the 100th anniversary of WWI, a mobile phone to give an indication of modern day technology and a recent copy of The Sutton Guardian. Residents were also invited to take part in a competition to suggest other items to be placed in the time capsule. The winning suggestions were articles written by residents; 'The History of Sutton Housing Society' by Dot Allen, 'A Day in the Life of a Pensioner' by Suzanna Hill and 'Information about Cloverdale Court and what the scheme offers to people at the moment' by Jeff Martin. Chief Executive Chris Turton placed the capsule into the ground, alongside Scheme Manager Noel Rowland.

Proudly providing homes for 50 years



All residents received commemorative gifts to celebrate our 50 years.



Students from Overton Grange School showed residents how to use the computers in our new IT suite.



A drinks reception after the Society's AGM rounded up our celebrations for the day.





'I had a great surprise walking in the room, it was so pretty and beautiful and SHS had gone to a lot of thought to make it a day to remember' SHS resident.



Residents, stakeholders and staff enjoyed a vintage afternoon tea in our new offices and had fun 'capturing the event' dressing up in the photo booth.

Our homes

We accepted a transfer of engagements from Beddington & Wallington Housing Society in July 2014. We have been reviewing options for redeveloping The Cedars, the property we acquired as a result of the transfer. We also completed the conversion of our former office premises at Trickett House into three sheltered housing units.

Demolition work has started on the derelict factory site in Hackbridge we purchased last year. The project is due for completion in spring 2016 and

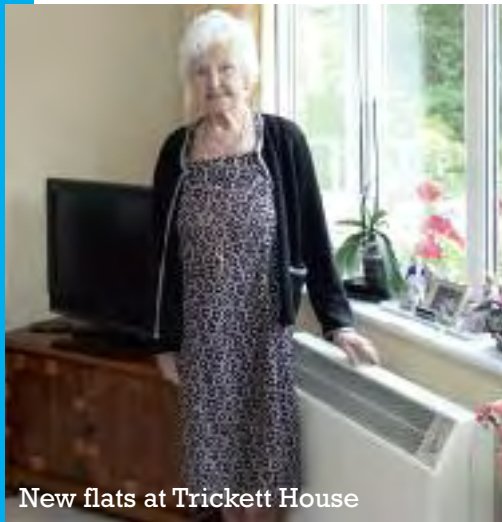


The Cedars, Wallington

will provide 12 modern flats over 3 storeys for older persons.

All our homes meet the Decent Homes Standard. We use our 'stock reinvestment' plan for planned cyclical and improvement works to properties. Energy efficiency is a high priority with communal boilers at Dorothy Pettingell House, Margaret House and Trickett House, and individual boilers at Bridges Court and Robertson House being replaced. At Cloverdale Court our housing with care scheme, new communal bathrooms and carpets have been installed to communal areas. Communal hallways, carpets and signage are colour co-ordinated to help residents with identification and direction. Internal redecorations have been completed at Margaret House,

Nairn Court and Old Brewery House and external redecorations at Trickett House. Works have also started on the roof upgrade at Thomas House and replacement of bathrooms at Nairn Court.



New flats at Trickett House



New site at Hackbridge

What else have we been doing this year?

How are we doing?

Repairs and Maintenance

Repairs and maintenance is the key service that drives tenants' opinions of our overall service. We will continue to focus on how we can improve this service. In 2014/15 we spent £321,841 on routine repairs and planned maintenance compared to £349,313 in 2013/14.

Of the repairs & maintenance expenditure 35% was spent on planned maintenance and 65% on routine maintenance. In 2014/15 we spent an average of £463 per home on routine repairs compared to £554 in 2013/14.

	Repairs issued	Target days	Completed within target
Emergencies	53	1	100%
Urgent	318	5	93%
Routine	903	28	97%

96% of all repairs were completed within target times, compared to SHAPE median* (2014/15) 97.8%.

Performance in routine and urgent repairs dropped in 2014/15. Processes have been put in place to improve performance and keep it at the high level our residents expect. In 2015/16 following the review of our sheltered housing and housing with care services, our in-house repairs and maintenance team will be strengthened by the appointment of a new Repairs and Asset Manager and a Property Services Officer.

We monitor satisfaction on our repairs service via questionnaires and telephone surveys. We actively encourage responses and returned questionnaires are entered into a quarterly prize draw.

Of the repair satisfaction questionnaires returned, residents expressing a positive view of repairs service* was 99%, compared with 95% Independent Satisfaction Survey (2012) on last completed repair.

* SHAPE (smaller housing associations pursuing excellence) median – middle value of a set of data
Average score of survey questions on repairs satisfaction questionnaire

Rents

We send rent statements to all tenants four times a year. Rent statements are also available on request. We inform tenants of changes in their rent and service charges annually.

Current tenant arrears as a % of annual rent debit:	SHS	SHAPE median*
All stock	2%	
General Needs	4%	2.83%
Housing for Older People	1.32%	1.31%

1.2% of our annual rent debit was lost due to empty properties (SHAPE median* 2014/15 0.8%).

Average weekly net rents:

General needs	
Studio flats	£92.48
1 bed flat	£96.65
1 bed flat for older people	£89.99
2 bed flat/house	£119.55
3 bed house	£135.73
4 bed house	£143.71

Supported housing and/or housing for older people only

Studio flat	£82.38
1 bed flat	£95.86
2 bed flat	£105.52

Your home **QUALITY OF ACCOMMODATION**

This year we spent £460,457 on major works to existing properties, the projects with spend over £10,000 were:

	£'000s
Completion of new communal boiler at Margaret House	16
New communal boiler at Dorothy Pettingell House	82
New communal boiler at Trickett House (ongoing)	59
New bathrooms at Nairn Court (ongoing)	70
New individual boilers at Robertson House	13
New roof at Thomas House (ongoing)	11
New communal bathrooms at Cloverdale Court	32
New carpets to communal areas at Cloverdale Court	19
New communal lighting at Nairn Court	11
New lift at Thomas House	64

Housing services

Towards the end of 2014, we commissioned an independent consultant to undertake a strategic review of the sheltered housing and housing with care services which we provide. The review took into account the views of residents, staff and stakeholders, such as the London Borough of Sutton and compared our services with other housing providers and industry good practice. After considering the detail of the review, the Society's Board approved a modernisation of the service in February. The three main features of the new service include:

- > A move from a 'one size fits all' to a needs led support service
- > A new focus on community engagement and wellbeing activities at schemes
- > An improved repairs and maintenance service by strengthening the resource and skills of our in-house team

A steering group, with members from each sheltered scheme, has been set up to oversee the introduction of the new service. Their remit includes everything from helping us review our policies and procedures to being involved in the recruitment and selection for some of our new staff.

We are planning to begin a pilot of the new service model in October 2015. We will be monitoring carefully how this works and checking back with our residents and staff to make sure we are addressing any weaknesses that are highlighted during the pilot phase. We will then evaluate the service by February and all being well, seek to introduce the new service model, including new service charges from April 2016.

The Housing Operations Committee (HOC) made up of tenant members, Board members and staff, met three times this year to review policies, scrutinise performance and influence service delivery. In June, the members reviewed two detailed plans on Disability and on Gender Equality, ensuring the Society's staff were meeting targets and the needs of our customers.

In December the Resident Involvement Strategy was reviewed.

At Trickett House, one resident took on the challenge of getting residents involved in a vegetable patch. Residents joined together as a group to maintain the patch which was funded through our community development budget. Residents shared their own home grown produce with residents from other schemes at organised Sunday lunches.



What types of homes do we own and manage?

Homes we own	2014/15	2013/14
General Needs		
General/family	73	73
Older people	33	24
Single person including move-on	30	30
Supported Housing for Older People		
Housing for older people (some special design features)	144	141
Designated supported housing for older people	153	153
Designated Supported Housing		
People with learning difficulties	4	4
People with mental health problems	7	7
Young people leaving care	6	6
Offenders/people at risk of offending	6	6
Total homes in management	456	444

Who did we let our homes to?

Internal Transfer	6
Direct Application	12
Nominated by Local Authority	39
Mutual Exchange	2
Total	59

In 2014/15 we had 59 lettings compared to 41 in 2013/14.

In 2014/15 it took on average 28 days to let a property compared to 21 days in 2013/14. (SHAPE median* 2014/15 21.5 days).

* SHAPE (smaller housing associations pursuing excellence).
median – middle value of a set of data



We have continued to work with local schools. Students have assisted residents with gardening at sheltered schemes and provided regular support to residents at our computer suite at Pat Shaw House.

In March 2015 the HOC reviewed the Rent Arrears Policy and Procedure and a lively debate around Ground 8, the mandatory possession, took place before approving the revised Policy.

The Events Planning Committee run by residents from a mixture of sheltered schemes and supported by the Society's staff organised a number of successful inter-scheme events.

During the year a number of upgrades and remodelling projects have taken place across our properties. In our housing with care scheme, to meet residents' diverse needs, we have remodelled each of our three ground floor communal bathrooms, making it more practical for those with limited mobility to take a shower assisted by a carer or independently.

Our Disability Champion (tenant Board Member) reviewed an empty Disabled Persons Unit (DPU) and made recommendations for improving use by wheelchair users. This information also helped ensure we got the correct nominee from the Borough when the property was ready to let.

Customer service is important to us and we seek feedback in a number of ways regarding service delivery. The survey feedback from the tenants who moved into the three sheltered flats remodelled from our old offices at Trickett House was extremely positive and useful. We are working on improving our communication methods with tenants by checking with them when they contact us, their preferred method of contact.

Complaints are important to the Society as they provide a measurement of customer dissatisfaction within the services we provide. We aim to get things right first time but recognise mistakes can happen. This year we had 13 formal complaints, which is a decrease from last year. All of those complaints followed the Complaints Procedure with only one not being responded to in full within target time. The



complaints were varied with some being upheld and others not. Where the Society could make service improvements those were implemented, such as sending out the Complaint Feedback Form at point of closure instead of three months later. The Complaints Policy and Procedure was reviewed by the Complaints Panel who meet annually and is made up of tenants, staff and Board Members. We continue to raise the profile of the complaints process in order to demonstrate 'you said, we did'.

Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) is a serious matter and the Society will respond promptly and fairly to resolve any incidents that occur. We had seven cases of ASB this year. This is a slight increase from last year. Four of these have been resolved and closed successfully and three are ongoing. We are working closely with our partners such as the Police, the local authority and other agencies to reduce ASB. The ASB Policy will be reviewed next year by staff and the HOC.

Neighbourhood Management - this year we have increased the number of tenants taking part in scheme and estate inspections. We work closely with our grounds and maintenance contractors and tenants to keep the neighbourhoods and communal areas associated with the properties we own safe, secure and clean. Each sheltered scheme had an allocated budget to spend on improving its garden space.

Allocations - The HOC is responsible for the audit of the Society's own Waiting List. We hold 50% of the nomination rights to our sheltered stock and staff report quarterly to Members how many tenancies were granted in that period. The Committee Chairman chooses two properties for staff to report in depth on. All audits were approved for 2014-15. The Society had no complaints or appeals regarding lettings and will continue to monitor and report on this area. Staff have worked in partnership with the local authority to reduce our empty property turnaround time in our general needs stock.



Value for money

Value for money is very important to us. We are committed to providing good quality homes and delivering excellent services to our tenants which are also efficient, effective and provide value for money.

Our aim is to embed a culture within the Society where value for money is taken into account in every day decisions and service delivery. To help us to do this we have set up a focus group, made up of staff and a Board member.

The group meet on a quarterly basis to discuss, review and determine methods of achieving value for money, whilst also identifying areas which provide a wider benefit to the community (social value). We consider how performance, customer experience and quality of service can be improved using tenants' feedback and satisfaction surveys.

Monitoring costs. Our costs are monitored against set budgets and are reported quarterly to the Board of Management. Residents are represented on the Board, Housing Operations Committee (HOC) and steering groups. They are able to express their views on what represents value for money and they are involved in negotiations on service contracts.

We are members of Procurement for Housing, a purchasing consortium which generates savings using the collective purchasing power of social landlords. We continue to issue tenders and get quotes for procurement in accordance with our policies, negotiating discounts and ensuring quality service level agreements.

Checking our performance. We are members of SHAPE (smaller housing associations pursuing excellence), a benchmarking group of small social landlords. We measure our performance in key service areas, against other, similar

organisations and continuously seek to improve upon these. These performance indicators are reported to the Board and HOC. Staff members also attend the annual SHAPE conference, which gives the opportunity to network, participate in workshops focussing on operational topics and share good practice.

Where possible, the Society seeks to contract with local firms who provide comfort to our residents and increase their satisfaction whilst improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of our community. Annual review meetings are held with approved contractors to ensure they have provided acceptable performance in a number of areas including quality of work, liaison with tenants and tenant satisfaction, and jobs completed within target times.

Our objective is to achieve maximum resident satisfaction. Surveys on our repairs service and scheme improvements, feedback from residents, and STAR (survey of tenants and residents) provide us with evidence to demonstrate how well we are performing and where we need to improve.

In 2014/15 the Society achieved value for money and added social value by:

- > Using the Society's assets to support the development of new affordable homes; the development of Suffolk House (12 units for older persons let at social rents).
- > Accepting the transfer of assets (The Cedars) from Beddington & Wallington (B&W); the Society was chosen by B&W due to their concentrated Sutton Borough commitment. The re-development of The Cedars will benefit the local community by providing up to 26 modern homes for older people at social rents and improving the local environment.

- > Installing new communal boilers at several sheltered schemes and individual boilers at Robertson House and Bridges Court has increased energy efficiency with a reduction in tenants' fuel bills.
- > Installing aids and adaptations in various properties which support the NHS/preventative agenda, providing savings in care and support.
- > Funding from the Department of Health provided dementia friendly improvements such as colour coded floors, sensory room, sensory garden and 'way-finders' at our Housing with Care Scheme. The local economy benefited from this project as lighting, decorating, carpets and memory photo frames were sourced from local suppliers and fitted using local contractors. Students from a local college assisted residents to make 'way-finders'.
- > Delivering training programmes for all staff on Equality & Diversity and Data Protection in-house resulted in considerable cost savings when compared to external training and was highly praised by staff.
- > Successfully recruiting two local staff through an advertisement for one post, and establishing an apprentice post, benefitted the local community and delivered costs savings.
- > Working with student volunteers from Overton Grange School to deliver a training program for residents at our new IT suite.
- > Securing a price freeze on the cost of our annual report for the past 3 years.

Next year we plan to consult with residents more on value for money initiatives.

Summary financial statement

Year ended 31st March 2015

Where our money came from		Where our money went	
	£'000		£'000
Rents	2,293	Management	299
Supporting People charges	120	Supporting People services	158
Service charges	472	Services	513
Interest receivable	4	Routine maintenance	210
Other income	26	Planned maintenance	112
Transfer of engagements	78	Adaptations & improvements	72
		Rent losses from bad debts	5
		Depreciation of properties	322
		Interest payable	81
		Other expenses	58
Total income	£2,993	Total expenditure	£1,830
		Surplus for the year	£1,163

We use our surplus to fund adaptations and improvements to our existing properties and when opportunities arise, to acquire or build more housing for rent. We also use some of our surplus to invest in resident involvement and services.

Income & Expenditure (summary)

	2015	2014
	£'000	£'000
Turnover	2911	2,811
Operating costs	(1,749)	(1,715)
Operating surplus	1,162	1,096
Transfer of engagements	78	-
Interest receivable	4	1
Interest payable	(81)	(75)
Surplus for the year	1,163	1,022

Balance Sheet (summary)

Housing properties net of grant	10,904	10,838
Other fixed assets	733	753
Cash and investments	1,216	744
Net current liabilities	(994)	(400)
Total Assets less Current Liabilities	11,859	11,935
Loans	350	1,502
Recycled capital grant fund	-	86
Share capital and reserves	11,509	10,347
Total Capital & Reserves	11,859	11,935

President

The Worshipful The Mayor of the London Borough of Sutton

Auditors

Beever and Struthers

Private Funders

The Housing Finance Corporation
Royal Bank of Scotland

Bankers

National Westminster Bank plc

Governance

Sutton Housing Society aims to follow the highest standards of governance, accountability and probity. The Society's Board of Management have adopted all of the principles contained in the original National Housing Federation (NHF) code 'Excellence in Governance' (published in 2010).

For a copy of NHF code and a detailed statement of how this is applied to the operation and management of the Society please contact the Chief Executive.

Our mission statement

Sutton Housing Society will provide affordable housing to meet the needs of local people.

The Society will work independently or in partnership with others to achieve its objectives.

We will consult and involve our residents or service users at all levels of our work.

Sutton Housing Society will aim to provide housing services and support where necessary of the highest possible quality. We will continually improve on our achievements.

We will strive to be responsive to the needs of individuals and the community. We will embrace diversity, promote equality and encourage independence for all of our residents.

Our staff

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

Chris Turton BA MBA FCIH
Chief Executive and Secretary

Zoë Macgregor-Williams
BA Hons

Housing Services Manager

Marcie Regelous

Finance & Resources Manager

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Andrew Jepp FCII - *Chair*

Steve Kent - *Vice Chair*

Salem Ahmed LLB - *Retired*

Matthew Corbett

Pamela Norton

Adam Phippen

Len Ross - *Tenant Board Member*

Lorraine Shaile

Adrian Simpson

Graham Waters FCIH

The Board of Management is supported by the Housing Operations Committee (HOC).

TENANT HOC MEMBERS

Dot Allen

Val Rollason

Len Ross

Christopher Simpson

Geoffrey Martin



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No. 16614R

The external body responsible for the regulation of social landlords is the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). They set out guidelines as to what standards our services should reach, how these are scrutinised and reported.

Detailed reviews of our performance are undertaken by the Society's Board of Management and its Housing Operations Committee (HOC). The majority of HOC members are tenants.

This annual report summarises our performance, our work and the financial position of the Society.

It is aimed at all of our stakeholders and underpins our commitment to accountability.

If you would like to find out more about anything in this report or about the Society's work in general please get in touch with us at our head office, Pat Shaw House.

www.suttonhousingsociety.org.uk