

**Resident
Checked** ✓



How has the last year



Managing Director **Mark Jones** and **Peter McLaughlan** from Felthorpe, Norwich discuss the highs and lows of the year gone by.

Interviewer: It's been a year since Wherry made their promises to residents. How do you think the year has gone - what's gone well? What hasn't gone so well?

Mark Jones (MJ): It's been a great year overall. Our performance levels have been the best ever, with overall customer satisfaction increasing from 76% to 85%. One of our biggest highlights has been around our financial inclusion work - giving people advice about debt. We have also reduced the amount of time homes are empty.

Peter McLaughlan (PM): There has been a great amount of resident involvement. We are asked more questions and now feel we are being listened to – something which hasn't always been the case! The Way Ahead With Wherry (WAWW) group has been asked to do significantly more including meetings with local MPs to share residents concerns.

So with that in mind what's the best example of where residents have helped shape services.

(PM): Definitely the grounds maintenance contract. Residents were unhappy with the service they received and were asked to get involved with a review. Following this there has been a change in the company that looks after grounds maintenance in our neighbourhoods and this has actually saved £100,000.

(MJ): Yes residents were actually involved in putting together the requirements. The cleaning specification actually came from a resident in Fishergate, Norwich. Wherry is doing more than others locally when it comes to Resident Involvement, and the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) has just confirmed that to us*.

* at the time of this conversation Wherry had just been awarded TPAS landlord accreditation

gone at Wherry?

Just going back to the last year, are there any areas Wherry could have done better in?

(PM): I'm not sure there is anything in particular Wherry hasn't done well but there is always going to be fine tuning. Some residents are feeling nervous about changes but that's because of Government changes. Some residents, particularly within WAWW, are concerned they are being asked to do too much. But that's a personal view and something which is the same across other housing associations.

I think as long as we are listened to then it's going to work. Wherry need to make it clear to residents when they are doing things because of changes in government.

...and so what about the year ahead, what plans are there for improvements?

(MJ): I think the focus will be on our repairs service – a big challenge for us. We've gone out and asked 30% of our residents what they think of our repairs service. They want appointments at a time that suits them, they want us to get it right first time and want to be kept informed. So we've raised expectations now and in the year ahead we will be working to deliver what residents have asked for.

(PM): Yes, Mark's hit on the big one there and apart from that I think it's just tweaks. Obviously there will always be changes needed and it's how Wherry responds to those changes that matters.




Getting you involved

Performance 2010 - 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Wherry Housing Association	Broadland Housing Association	Freebridge Community Housing	Flagship Peddars Way	Victory Housing Trust
Satisfaction with views taken into account	83.2%	53.1%	74.4%	72%	67.2%
Satisfaction with landlord services	87.7%	80.8%	88.2%	87%	88.3%
Complaints resolved at first stage	94.8%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable

My say



Rob Duhig from Wherry Independent Scrutiny Panel said, “as a result of the Resident Scrutiny Panel getting involved, ASB surveys are now conducted by another organisation and not Wherry. We hope that this will mean that the results given are more realistic.”

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- held 13 Fun Days which over 850 residents have attended. These were used to promote last year's Local Offers as well as talk to residents about our Repairs Services
- 'Way Ahead with Wherry' (WAWW) our resident group has had a really successful year. In September they held their AGM, at which over 100 residents were able to give their input into next years activity
- launched our new Resident Involvement Strategy. This ensures that there is ongoing commitment from us to put residents at the heart of everything we do
- our resident training programme had 134 delegates
- more residents getting involved including completing estate inspections, inspections of empty properties and mystery shopping our services

GIVING YOU what you asked for...

We now have more than 350 fans on facebook and have more than 20 ways for residents to get involved

We have had 19 residents signed up and trained to become Estate Inspectors

We now have 12 residents who help to inspect our empty properties. Last year they carried out 31 inspections

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- look at more ways of involving residents, including investigating opportunities using online facilities
- pilot a Community Credits Scheme to get more residents to get involved in their community
- produce a Resident Involvement Agreement, setting out our service standards for involving residents
- aim to achieve Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) Resident Involvement Quality Standard
- support residents to hold Fun Days across our housing estates



Looking after your homes

Performance 2010 - 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Wherry Housing Association	Broadland Housing Association	Freebridge Community Housing	Flagship Peddars Way	Victory Housing Trust
Repairs completed on time	98.8%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Satisfaction with repairs	95.2%	76.9%	87.3%	86%	85.5%
Homes meeting Decent standard	100%	100%	79.7%	100%	100%
Homes with valid gas safety certificate	100%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable



My say

Mr Crouch from Sprowston has recently had a new kitchen which was fitted by Fosters. Fosters worked closely with Mr Crouch's occupational therapist to design a kitchen to meet his needs. Mr Crouch told us his new adapted kitchen has changed his life. He can now reach the plug sockets and switches which he wasn't able to before and he now does not need to rely on help from others.

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o completed our repairs service review
- o completed our Decent Homes programme
- o installed 279 brand new kitchens
- o installed 230 lovely new bathrooms
- o installed 30 purpose built level access shower rooms for residents with a disability
- o installed 721 new boilers and heating systems
- o put more loft and wall insulation into 289 homes

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o bring our responsive maintenance service in house to improve efficiency and offer residents better value for money
- o invest £11 million repairing and improving your homes
- o develop and improve our repair service to deliver what you have told us is important
- o recruit more resident inspectors and resident energy champions

Giving you what you asked for...

509 kitchen and bathrooms have been installed to the 'Wherry Standard' which is above the Governments Decent Homes standard

We have carried out 184 major adaptations and 130 minor adaptations for those with a disability as part of our Wherry Care service



Providing homes

Performance 2010 - 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Wherry Housing Association	Broadland Housing Association	Freebridge Community Housing	Flagship Peddars Way	Victory Housing Trust
Average re-let turnaround times (days)	15.6	15.1	33.6	20	28
Homes vacant (% of total homes)	0.4%	1%	1.1%	0.8%	0.6%

My say



Last winter Mrs Osbourne was one of five residents who unfortunately suffered a burst pipe during the extreme cold.

Her property was completely flooded and we had to provide her with temporary accommodation (in a local guest house) whilst we sorted the situation.

During this time Mrs Osbourne told us she would be interested in a permanent transfer to sheltered accommodation. With a bit of work with our supported housing colleagues and liaison with the council, we were able to rapidly get her registered and assessed for sheltered housing.

A suitable place in sheltered accommodation came up before she would have been required to return to her bungalow. Mrs Osbourne accepted and said “it was the best move I’ve made”.

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o collected over 100% of the rent due to us during the year, therefore reducing the amount of overdue rent
- o a specialist Voids and Lettings team that can assist with any questions or concerns you may have about your need to move home
- o launched our Room to Move scheme – an incentive scheme that helps and rewards people moving to a smaller home, so we can give their previous property to a household in need of bigger accommodation
- o set up joint waiting lists with other landlords and councils to make it easier for you to access affordable housing
- o published our Moving Home guide
- o helped residents claim over £50,000 worth of benefits that they didn't know they were entitled to

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o publish a new Lettings Policy in 2011/12
- o pilot a tenancy awareness course for young housing applicants

Giving you what you asked

Over 80 Wherry residents exchanged their homes using our mutual exchange website www.houseexchange.org.uk

We have given 825 starter tenancies. These help us to build strong communities

Have had 829 residents use our online benefits calculator and carried out 338 benefits assessments



Building communities

We have a duty to maintain and safeguard neighbourhoods and communities, working with partner organisations and agencies where necessary.

My say



Sue Garwood is the Wherry Family Intervention Worker who helped 31 families this year.

“My children feel safe in their home and (Wherry) helps all of us, including the kids, not just me as a parent – (they) even co-ordinate between other people like the school too.”

“I’ve had advice on drugs and alcohol but I never feel judged.”

“my neighbour complaining about me was the start of getting help from Wherry.”

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o a dedicated named officer for you and your home who can assist with any questions or concerns you may have
- o a Family Intervention service – that helps families facing difficulties
- o trained 19 residents to be estate inspectors
- o produced an anti-social behaviour (ASB) guide
- o responded to all reports of serious ASB, domestic abuse and hate crime within 24 hours
- o investigated all reports of ASB and contacted complainants every 15 days to see how they are doing and keep them informed about the progress with their case
- o developed a Community Warden Service, which now holds the Warden Charter

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o review our ASB service to make sure it meets the government's revised Respect Standard
- o ensure our Warden Services meets the Warden Quality Standard
- o call all complainants before we close their ASB case to make sure they are happy for us to do so
- o produce a Witness Charter

Giving you what you asked for....

622 residents have used our 24/7 ASB and domestic abuse hotline for residents (0800 013 2328) and 57 have reported online www.wherryhousing.org/ASB

83% residents are satisfied with the handling of their ASB case

26 residents have used our free mediation service available to residents in dispute to help them resolve their differences

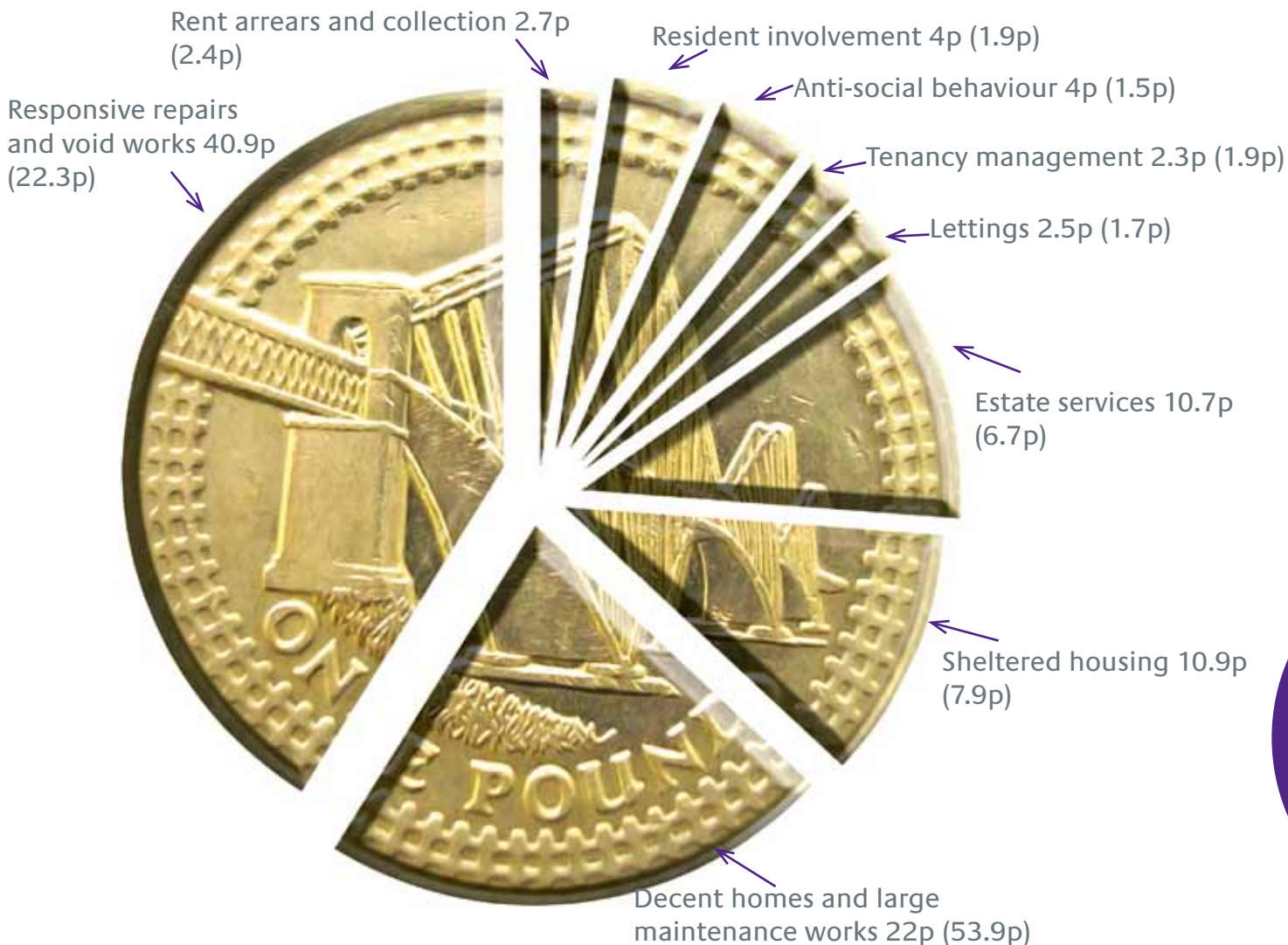
We have carried out 528 nine month visits to ensure residents have settled into their homes

We have worked with other agencies to remove 96 bulky items and fly tipping within five working days (unless a Health & Safety issue) and offensive graffiti within 24 hours



Offering value for money

Every pound of your rent money goes into the services we provide. Here is how we spend it. The figures in brackets are from 2009/10.



There has been a reduction in the money put into your homes following the achievement of the Decent Homes standard

We have more than doubled the amount of money we put into resident involvement

We have put more money into tackling anti-social behaviour and improving estates

Highlights from 10/11

We have:

- o saved £400,000 by jointly purchasing new kitchens and bathrooms with other housing associations operating in East Anglia.
- o saved over £100,000 per year by getting new costs for our grounds maintenance, tree and cleaning contracts. These savings will be passed onto residents through reduced service charges in the future
- o saved £235,000 in reduced rent loss by reducing the average time it takes to re-let an empty property from 17 days in 09/10 to 15½ days last year
- o saved £15,000 per ASB case in management costs through our Family Intervention Service
- o reduced the need to employ temporary staff and therefore pay costly agency fees by offering three apprenticeships to young people through our partnership with Great Yarmouth College and 11 people paid work experience through the future jobs fund.

Plans for 11/12

We will:

- o reduce the cost of our repair service by at least £400,000
- o keep operative vans stocked with materials at competitive, market rates
- o continue to reduce the average time it takes to re-let empty properties and minimise the number of empty homes
- o use the successfully secured external funding of £28,000 to employ an energy advisor, who will provide expert advice such as switching supplier or changing tariffs, to keep your energy costs as low as possible
- o continue to offer bespoke money and benefit advice and act on your behalf to reduce debt and money owed to us and other creditors
- o Represent ourselves at court when seeking enforcement action against perpetrators of ASB to reduce legal fees

Performance 2010 - 2011

Our performance has been compared with four other local housing providers so you can see how we are doing.

	Wherry Housing Association	Broadland Housing Association	Freebridge Community Housing	Flagship Peddars Way	Victory Housing Trust
Rent collected as % of rent due	100%	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable	Data unavailable
Current resident arrears as % of rent due	3.1%	4.8%	3.8%	3.5%	3.7%



Making decisions

Wherry's Board is made up of 12 members – 7 independents, 2 Broadland District Councillors and 3 Residents. It's their job to ensure Wherry is well managed, financially viable and performs to a high standard. To make sure that the Board is effective, last year each Board member was assessed on their performance and the Board as a whole was reviewed by an independent expert. The Wherry Board was given a clean bill of health and both assessments showed it was performing well.

The Board are keen to make you aware of what happens at each of its meetings, so last year we developed a newsletter "News from the Board", which is posted four times a year on our website, letting you know what happens at Board meetings. Board members also want to make sure that residents have a loud voice at their meetings. So, the Board arranged a special, extra joint meeting with Way Ahead with Wherry, for residents to challenge the Board on its performance and hold Wherry to account. This challenge meeting was so successful that it will be held again next year.

About you

There are 5929 households, 2060 families and 975 lone parent families

Age:
28% of you are under 18.
As a result we have provided 11 young people with a 6 month work placement, 3 apprenticeships and 11 work experience opportunities

Gender and ethnicity:
54% of residents are female and nearly 86% are white British.

Disability:
26% of you have said you have a disability. With the most common being limited mobility, closely followed by mental health.

We carried out 184 major and 130 minor adaptations to help those with limited mobility.

How have residents have been involved in this document?

A copy of last year's residents' review was sent to every resident. Within it we included a survey asking for feedback and offering the chance to join our Circle Group wide residents group - Communications Connectors.

Based on what you told us we have made several changes this year. This includes simplifying the text to be more resident friendly, not using technical jargon and reducing the corporate feel of the document.

Feedback from this group means that this year we will not send this document to every resident. This decision was agreed by WAWW. Instead a summary version will be included within the Autumn 2011 edition of our resident newspaper Home Matters. You can find a full copy on our website www.wherryhousing.org.uk or call 0800 694 0165 to request one.

Our Communications Connectors group now has nearly 300 residents signed up and we asked them what format they would like this document to take this year and what information should be included.

By not sending copies to every resident we will save paper wastage and money that can be spent on the services you want to see improved.

Pete McLaughlan - a member of WAWW took part in an interview for the introduction to this document. This was to give an honest and transparent view on how the last year has gone.

WAWW were asked what information they would like to see published and what improvements could be made. One of the main points was around the fact that the TSA standards and jargon around them did not mean anything to residents so we have reduced this.

A final version of the document was approved for print by WAWW members and sent to the readers panel for checking.

The text was given to WAWW for comments and then the first designed version also sent to open meeting for discussion and feedback.



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Part of the Circle Housing Group

We're one of 12 partners within Circle. Being part of a larger group means we have more financial security and more influence to achieve better deals with suppliers to deliver value for money for you.

We are first and foremost a Registered Provider and charity. We retain our individual and independent approach and run our services to meet your needs.

You can view our policies, publications and your tenant handbook on our website www.wherryhousing.org.uk

If you would like this document in large print, Braille, audio, an alternative format or in a different language contact us.

