

Moments that made the year

Wherry Housing Association Residents' Review 2007/8



Looking back 2007 has been a year of transformation within Wherry. We set out to transform the quality of housing, our services and to be more customer focused. Through the surveys you told us that your three top priorities are:

- Repairs and service
- An anti-social behaviour service that sorts out the problem
- Improved accessibility with Wherry answering your enquiries on the first point of contact



We're acting on your priorities and we'll be sending you more information in 2008.

I have a clear vision for Wherry and this is to be a nationally recognised, excellent provider of affordable housing services. We aim to be key influencers of the national housing and wider community agenda, gaining our influence through our externally recognised successes, delivered through our own resources and our partnerships with a range of agencies.

Our services are designed in partnership with our residents to provide innovative solutions and together we will build outstanding communities where people actively want to live and work. Our reputation as creators of opportunity will make us the first choice employer in the sector and our ability to attract and retain outstanding talent will help us to innovate and excel in everything we do.

Our unfailing emphasis on improvement will ensure we continue to develop; delivering quality, unlocking potential and creating outstanding levels of customer satisfaction.

I'm looking forward to the next year and the staff at Wherry are fully committed to delivering our vision. Please just make sure you keep talking to us and let us know how we're doing.

I hope you enjoy having a quick look through this review.

Best wishes, Mark Jones
Managing Director

Resident's view



Home improvements in action

It's been a pretty good year and in fact, as far as resident participation is concerned, we've made great strides. We now have resident forums in Cambridge and Peterborough, as well as in Norwich, with one in the pipeline for Ipswich and a couple more too. We've moved away from the old Norwich focus and that is so much better. There's more to come, as the long term ambition is to have a resident involved in everything Wherry does.

A 2007 highlight for me has been the formation of the Norfolk RSL Alliance. For more details see page 13.

I'm a resident too and it does feel like things are improving. In my day-to-day conversations you're telling me that repairs and maintenance are more efficient and that Wherry's ability to handle telephone enquiries is getting better too. The team are doing their best to answer calls as fast as possible. It's not always humanly possible to answer every call immediately, but I've looked into it and I do know they're doing their best.

As a Board Member the last 12-18 months have been much more interesting. There's so much I'd like to get involved in but there are only so many hours in the day. More and more I'm hunting through my diary to fit in another meeting, which I think shows how things are changing. It's exciting times and I'm really looking forward to the coming year.

Terry Moralee
Resident Board Member

We've listened and now we're taking action

We've increased our resources and will continue to do so. Listed below are the actions we've taken after listening to what you've said.

Out and about

- Launched regular inspection for all estates, once every six weeks
- Surveyed the 150 estates in Wherry and identified work required to surrounding environments
- Launched new community warden scheme – two wardens employed, one more warden to be appointed
- Rolling out mobile IT for staff to bring the service into your homes
- Visited 1,000 residents in their homes through our tenancy audit.

Getting organised

The Neighbourhood Team was reorganised in 2007 and in 2008 we'll be reorganising the Property Services Team.

Keep safe

We have launched the 24-7 ASB and Domestic Violence hotline and made an agreement with Norfolk Victim Support to work together, and also with mediation services in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. In 2008/9 we're pushing for accreditation with Norfolk County Safety Scheme run by Norfolk Constabulary. This will allow our officers to issue fixed penalties. We'll also be able to receive information from the police on criminal activity.



Corinne Morley
Neighbourhood Officer

Managing money

We launched a financial inclusion service in Norfolk and this means you can get help in sorting out your finances. The service includes a money advisor Jim Chamberlin and a debt referral service, both set up in association with Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Jim will visit you at home and has:

- Helped 129 customers
 - Helped with £1.4 million debt
- This will be extended into Cambridgeshire and Suffolk next year.

Are you paying the right rent? To make sure you're getting value for money, we've started an evening service once a week for debt advice. Call 01603 703583 for information.

You can now pay your rent using your mobile. To find out more about this option, contact 0870 243 6040.

We plan in 2008/9 to support a Norfolk-wide credit union. This is a community bank to make sure you get access to fairly priced finance.



Jim Chamberlin
Money Advisor

We have successfully reduced arrears by 1.5% and supported residents with debt. This means we've got more funds to provide an enhanced service to all residents.

A big welcome

850 former Circle 33 properties have voted to join Wherry and this happened in August last year. We'll be in a position to give you a much more localised service from now on.

Bricks and mortar, tiles and taps 900 new homes over three years

Investing in your home...

We're increasing investment to refurbish your homes to a modern standard. We surveyed 70% of your homes and the budget has gone up to £11 million for 2008/9, almost double the previous budget.

...and your estates

£1.5 million is going to be spent over the next 3 years, starting with £460,000 in 2008.

100% safety first

Our big priority and achievement in 2007 has been servicing 100% of gas appliances. We have also made changes with our contractor to ensure an ongoing quality service.

Fixing our repairs service

We recognise that last year was challenging for the repairs service. Through our survey you told us that you are happy with the quality of repairs but less satisfied with the process, namely the arrangements and the timescales. We have now engaged Mears Group to

support our DLO, Anglian Maintenance Service, to make the required improvements.

The good news on repairs

We've appointed our new contractor Mears Group, which is one of the largest maintenance providers in the UK. They will provide the right combination of management, buying power and contracting expertise to help us provide an improved service.

A NICE £20,000

In fact it's the NICE Scheme (Neighbourhood Improvement for the Community and Environment) and it's proved to be very popular with residents who have already been involved.

There's a £20,000 pot and residents can bid for up to £2,000 for small projects to improve neighbourhoods. You're there everyday and you know best what will make a difference. If you've got an idea please contact Les Wood, the Community Engagement Manager on 01603 703535.

Value for money

Economy is important but it's not the only measure. So is quality, durability and sustainability. At last year's Residents' Conference you helped us identify plenty of ideas. Thank you!

**In 2007/8
we replaced:**
213 kitchens
153 bathrooms
156 boilers
(includes 10
complete systems)
413 windows
125 doors

**Investment
will improve:**
Lighting
Security systems
Landscaping
Secure door entry





A team enjoying one of the regular, free football training sessions

Residents are at the heart of Wherry

Achievements and plans

- Two new community wardens have increased community engagement and reduced ASB since October 2007
- New post of Community Engagement Manager to develop residents' ideas
- Supporting a 'Low Cost Loan Scheme' for residents in Cambourne with Cambridge Building Society
- An Open Day in March 2008 led to the formation of the 'Way Ahead with Wherry' steering group implementing a new resident involvement strategy
- A Passport scheme for family activities over the Easter holidays 2008
- Regular community clear-up days
- 'Herb Planting Day', promoting healthy living in May 2008
- A DIY, decorating and gardening scheme created in April 2008 providing practical experience in these skills for residents
- 'Plant a Tree for Life' started in October 2007, improving the environment and celebrating the arrival of a new baby
- Tool hire to help residents create better communal spaces from March 2008
- Funded a short film made by youngsters to be shown at King's Lynn Oscar film award night in October 2008
- Free football training sessions for 7-15 year olds since June 2008
- Community Spirit Awards are now an annual event to promote good citizenship and reward good neighbourhoods
- Residents' team building day at Capthorne Close in May 2008, building a shed and decking



Yasmin and her mother, in the new purpose built extension at her home and Mrs Britcher trying out her new ramp

Tackling ASB

In 2007, 88% of cases of anti-social behaviour that were reported to us were resolved permanently. We want to improve on this figure in 2008 too. In Taverham, we supported, with the local police and local businesses, the 'Friday Massive' youth group, with funding for new audio equipment and for redecoration. The hall is now a focus for young people and it's been hugely successful and reports of anti-social behaviour have been reduced to zero. A young group attendee, called Peter, said; "I just wanted to be part of something and not get shouted at, is that too much to ask for, or do I not matter? You gave me a chance when no-one else would."

Wherry vision for resident involvement

People and partnership are at the heart of everything we do. We aim to achieve this by involving residents in activities relating to your homes and communities with the view to improve your quality of life.

Time to celebrate

Our 18th birthday

Depending on when you read this, the Norfolk Showground will have been the setting for a great community event on 6 September, for every single resident of the Wherry Housing Association.

It's a celebration of 18 years as an East of England landlord. Residents will have come together and met staff, the Board and the members of the Wherry-wide Residents Group, celebrating our sense of place in the region. It was free and lots of fun for all ages.

The 3rd Community Spirit Awards

Last year you turned out in force for our third Awards in Norwich City Football Club and it was a great evening. It was hard to choose from all the deserving nominees but in the end the winners were:

Kirsty Human	Young Person Award
Linda Fox	Active Role in the Community
Robert Norton	Support to Family
Harry Butler	Support to Neighbour
Josie Howe	Inspiration to Others

Kirsty was nominated by her neighbour Marie Lake who has thanked Kirsty for her selflessness, "Kirsty is a single parent with a part time job as a care assistant; however she spends much of her spare time helping me or her mother."



Wherry residents at
Norwich City Football Club

You might like to know...

First in the country

Wherry is one of the founder members of the Norfolk RSL Alliance formed in 2007. Our first task was the production of a countywide homelessness prevention strategy and delivery plan. This innovative and creative document was the first of its kind produced in the country and has been cited as a model of best practice by the Housing Corporation. We're developing project services such as the Norfolk Credit Union and mediation, to help residents stay in their homes.

Thank you for your feedback

The Housing Corporation requires us to run a survey every three years. We did it in 2004/5 and again in 2007/8 and many thanks to all the residents who took the time to fill in the questionnaire.



Freya Catton making a card

Facts and figures

The figures below have been included in line with guidelines from the Housing Corporation and the National Housing Federation*.

Voids and lettings performance

Average re-let time in days	23.76
Number of units vacant and available to let	85
Dwellings vacant and available for let	1.6%
Number of units vacant but unavailable to let	15
Dwellings vacant and not available for let	0.3%

Rent collection

Rent collected	100.8%
Current tenant arrears at year end	4.2%

Resident satisfaction with repairs

Satisfaction with the last repair	85.2%
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Reactive repairs

Number of emergency repairs notified	2267
Number of urgent repairs notified	4422
Number of routine repairs notified	7729
Emergency repairs completed within target	88.4%
Urgent repairs completed within target	89.1%
Routine repairs completed within target	94.2%
Number of homes with a valid gas safety certificate	4498
Homes with a valid gas safety certificate	100%

Decent Homes Standard and SAP (energy efficiency) rating

Average SAP rating	67
Homes failing Decent Homes Standard	15.69%

Who we house – lettings in the last year

White British	91.5%
White Irish	0.3%
White other	3.4%
Mixed	1.3%
Asian	0.7%
Black	2.2%
Chinese or other	0.4%
Chose not to say	0.2%
Total	100%

Lettings to residents with a disability

Percentage of lettings	24.9%
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*The figures above are correct as at 31 March 2008.

How to contact us

Wherry, which was formed in 1990 following the transfer of more than 3,000 Broadland District Council properties, manages more than 6,906 properties across Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

We are a partner of Circle Anglia, which was originally formed by the merger of Circle 33 Housing Group and Anglia Housing Group on 1 July 2005.

By being part of a much larger organisation of 10 partners, we benefit from greater clout, efficiency and costs savings which means that more money can be spent on delivering services for all our residents. Even though we are part of a large group, we still retain our individuality and independence, running our services to suit your specific and individual needs.

The Board

Nicola Lucking (Chair)
Nigel Rule
Grizelda Tyler
Ruth Langslow
Terry Moralee (Resident)
Muriel Smith (Resident)
Mitra Hedman (Independent)
Cllr Andrew Proctor
(Local Authority Nominee)
Cllr Roger Foulger
(Local Authority Nominee)

Customer services

Tel 0845 600 1518
(Low-cost local number)
Fax 01603 700404
Minicom 01603 703599

General issues

Write to:
Wherry Housing Association
6 Central Avenue
St Andrews Business Park
Norwich NR7 0HR
Email wherry.info@circleanglia.org

Paying your rent

Tel 0870 243 6040
(Over the phone – 24-hour service)
To set up a direct debit or
talk about your rent account
Tel 01603 703583
Text 07797 805631
Email
wherryincometeam@circleanglia.org

Customer website

www.circleanalia.org/customers

Anti-social behaviour website

www.circleanaliarepect.org



On the front cover:

Charlotte Porter and Briony Porter

They're from Terrington St Clemence and helped to produce a community DVD.

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