

Lincs RURAL

ANNUAL REPORT

2009-2010



Chairman of Lincs Rural



Wendy Done

Each year we say that it has been successful, productive and exciting, which means we are getting most things right! 2009/2010 has been no exception, but in a different way for example the eighteen energy efficient environmentally friendly homes completed at Grimoldby and Long Sutton. These properties really pushed the boundaries of design, as well as heralding the future of zero carbon housing. This has not happened overnight. We have been working to this end for the last 10 years, becoming market leaders in the East Midlands. We are proud of our achievements, for our tenants and the environment.

The Board did not forget tenants living in our existing properties and two years ago set aside a budget to improve the energy efficiency of their homes. Loft insulation installed by our own workforce has been a resounding success, considerably reducing tenants heating costs. We are committed to continue this and other energy improvements within available resources.

Sometimes gauging customer aspirations when spread over such a wide geographical area is challenging. As illustrated in this report however we consider our market place to be demographic and not geographic. The decision to undertake the majority of maintenance work using our own workforce has really paid off. Most tenants now know and trust our men, and confidence in reliability continues to grow. Regular, familiar faces visiting to undertake repairs has created a much improved line of communication to inform *the way we are, or should, and will be doing things!*

Our new regulator has carried out extensive consultation with tenants across the country and we welcome the new proposals. Although a new format of regulation starts from 1 April 2010, we have been working hard in preparation.

We are pleased to have appointed three new Board Members - Be McCarroll, Stephen Priestly and Steven Williamson, who bring new skills, ideas and challenges to our governance and management. Their input has already been valuable and we look forward to working with them over the coming years. They will join our continuing programme of Board member annual appraisals. Appraisals identify and enable training to further develop member's skills and aspirations, which in turn strengthens the Board. We thank also Margaret Powley and Michael Byrd who have retired. Now Honorary Shareholders, we look forward to seeing them at future events.

Board visits to a number of our property locations has been very useful and it has been a pleasure meeting and talking with tenants. At Christmas and in the Spring, time capsules were buried on our developments at Varsity Rise and Unity Gardens. Children from local schools and other members of the communities collected memorabilia to record rural life today for when the capsules are opened in 30-years. We were also very pleased to welcome the Arch Bishop of Canterbury on a visit to Unity Gardens, accompanied by our President the Bishop of Grantham, the Right Reverend Dr Tim W Ellis. It was a very memorable day and we thank Bishop Tim for his continued support and work with us.

I am proud of the Association and the hard work by the Board and staff. I believe everyone should have the opportunity to live in a good home and to aid quality of life. We will continue to deliver our motto of 'Quality Rural Living'.

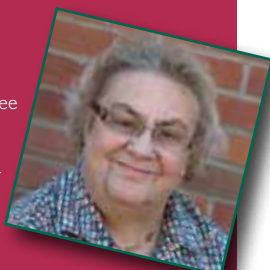
Wendy Done
Chairman

Lincs Rural Board of Management at 31 March 2010

The Association is governed by eleven non executive and one executive member of the Board who provide the essential and desirable qualifications and experience. Non executive Board members volunteer their time, commitment and dedication without remuneration. In accordance with regulation the Association uses the National Housing Federation's 'Excellence in Governance Code for Members'. The Board has complied with an amended version of the Code.

MRS W. DONE Chairman

Wendy donates significant time to the voluntary sector and works with many local community organisations. She is an Accredited Clerk for three Parish Councils, Church Warden and attends every governance meeting at Lincs Rural, in addition to working with staff and tenants. Over the years Wendy has met most of the Association's tenants.



MR J. D. HOWES FRICS

Chief Executive and Company Secretary
As a qualified Chartered Surveyor, John has worked in the social housing sector for over 30 years in development and maintenance. His career progressed into senior management, broadening his skills and experience in many business disciplines. His drive and enthusiasm has made Lincs Rural a leading organisation in energy efficiency and environmentally responsible development.



MR R. WHETTON Deputy Chairman

Bob scrutinises Lincs Rural's financial management and is particularly keen on value for money. This is second nature following his local authority role as Finance Director for 17 years, gaining government, housing and development experience. Bob has taken a joint leading role in producing Lincolnshire's housing strategy, working with representatives in the County.



MRS M. MUGGLETON

Mary has been a tenant of the Association in the north of the County for 16 years. Having previously worked as a Civil Servant, Administrator, Dispenser in the medical profession and Parish Councillor she has a wide range of skills and experience. Mary's local knowledge enables her to provide advice and challenge from a customer perspective. Mary is Deputy Chairman of the Audit Panel.



MISS B. MCCARROLL

Be has a professional career as a Consultant working across the broad spectrum of housing management. Her work involves research and dissemination of new and evolving issues and legislation in the housing sector which assists the Association's progression in a changing and challenging operating environment.



MR S. PRIESTLEY

Stephen's early career as a Rural Housing Enabler involved investigating and assisting housing development in the smaller rural communities. Having progressed to Housing Strategy Manager for a Lincolnshire Local Authority he works with key partners in the enabling and delivery roles of affordable housing. Stephen provides knowledge from the Local Authority and national strategic housing perspective.



MR C. COLLINSON

Craig provides business training for public, commercial, voluntary and private companies. His skills as a Training Consultancy Director have been extended over many disciplines i.e. as a certified practitioner of neuro-linguistic programming and hypnotherapy. Craig has provided training to Board members and staff and brings commercial and business experience to the Board.



MISS H. SYKES

Heather is Chairman of the Regulatory Panel, usefully informed by her profession as a specialist Solicitor in housing litigation. Her experience includes homelessness and housing benefit appeals, disrepair, anti-social behaviour, public sector possession cases, mortgage possessions, customer credit unions, judicial reviews, Rent Act successions and landlord and tenant disputes.



MR J. FISHER

Justin has worked in the housing sector for many years and used his skills and experience to become a Housing Consultant for a computer management system used extensively in the social housing sector. Previously a Maintenance Service Manager for a large housing association he now works with many other similar organisations. Justin provides advice / benchmark information on operational areas and is the Operations Panel Chairman.



MR S WILLIAMSON

Steven is a Planning Consultant and was previously a Local Authority Director of Planning. As a developing Association he provides the skills, experience and qualification required. Steven is also experienced in building development / control, land acquisition and business management. He is able to challenge previous practice and provide alternative proposals for consideration.



MR. A. HAYWARD

Alan's career in the education sector brings management, health & safety, personnel, insurance and energy conservation experience to Lincs Rural. He is a school Teacher Governor for students with emotional and behavioural difficulties and has served as President and Treasurer of the Lincolnshire National Union of Teachers he has attained finance and other experience. Alan is Deputy Chairman of the Operations Panel.



MRS B. WAITE

Barbara has been a tenant for 12 years at Burgh Le Marsh and is Deputy Chairman of the Regulatory Panel. As a Town Councillor and School Governor she has valuable experience in many aspects associated with the management and governance of voluntary organisations. Barbara's personal experience and general interest in social housing assists with ensuring tenant facing services.





People Matter

A safe and secure home is one of life's essential requirements and affects the health and well being of individuals and families. Lincs Rural is an independent, not for profit organisation, providing affordable homes, helping and supporting people with their housing needs. The services provided by Lincs Rural aim for high standards and the Association's motto for many years has been 'Quality Rural Living' - *'a vision achieved and an aspiration to be continued'*.

Small rural communities are the niche market place of the Association. It is important to build and maintain strong communities and work involves dealing with nuisance and

anti social behaviour to enable people to live in quiet and peaceful enjoyment of their homes. Fortunately serious incidents have been rare and we continue to work with local government and other community organisations to make the small hamlets and village's wonderful places to live.

Lincs Rural is a member of the National Housing Federation which represents 1,200 not-for-profit housing associations in England and campaigns for better housing and neighbourhoods. The Federation's iN business for neighbourhood's campaign illustrates housing association's work.

Promise neighbourhoods to:

- Put them at the heart of everything we do;
- Work to create a place for everyone;
- Be great partners in meeting local needs; and
- Tell people about the work, time and money invested.



Promise customers to:

- Make them our driving force;
- Listen, respond and engage with them in our work;
- Offer them respect, choice and support; and
- Do all we can to tackle poor behaviour and bad neighbours.



Promise excellence to:

- Always strive to improve;
- Change to meet the challenge of being iN business for neighbourhoods;
- Be landlords, employers and partners of choice.



Investors in People



Investment in the Association

High standards of service are reliant on the right people with the willingness to deliver business objectives and priorities. The Association has a dedicated management team who strive to make a difference.

Whilst always the objective this was formally recognised in 2006 by the 'Investors in People' standard. The management team continue to train, developing skills for delivery of quality services expected by tenants



John D Howes FRICS • **Chief Executive & Secretary** is responsible for high standards and continuous improvement in the management and governance. Appointed August 2001



Suzanne Phillips • **Head of Finance** manages the financial controls for a viable business providing efficient services. Appointed January 1992



Michelle Turner • **Housing Accounts Officer** manages the accountancy and financial systems. Appointed July 2008



Elaine Lowe • **Customer Care Officer** provides daily contact with tenants and manages all issues relating to customer care and is also PA to the Chief Executive. Appointed October 1997



Zoe Wilkinson • **Lettings Officer** works part time on tenancy issues, changes, documentation, records, data protection and shared ownership sales. Appointed June 2003



Andy Haime • **Property Officer** is responsible for the planned / cyclical maintenance and improvement of the housing stock, assists with new development and manages the communication and computer systems. Appointed September 2007



Georgina Seidel • **Maintenance Contract Officer** manages the daily operation of responsive maintenance with the Property Maintenance Team's multi skilled tradesmen. Appointed January 2001



Lee Hynes • **Administrative Assistant** works part time providing general office administration and temporary cover for the Officers duties. Appointed May 2008



Bob Hunt & Mick Berry • **Multi Skilled craftsmen** repairs, maintains and improves the Association's properties



David Long • **Handyman / Gardener** maintains the open and amenity gardens and carries out minor repairs and improvements

The Way Forward

Mission Statement

“ To provide quality, energy efficient affordable homes and high standards of services for people in rural housing need, within available resources ”

Lincolnshire Rural Housing Association's Strategic Objectives are:

A **customer focused affordable housing provider**, enabling choice and involvement, equality, diversity, providing easy access to support and services based on tenants needs. Every tenant matters. (Tenant involvement and empowerment standard);

A **provider of cost effective well maintained homes** responding to consumer choice and needs of tenants (Home standard);

A **fair, transparent and efficient landlord** taking account of rural housing need and tenant aspirations. Charging rents in accordance with statutory direction for the most secure form of tenure, making best use of the housing stock to contribute to local authority strategic housing functions (Tenancy standard);

A **cooperative, proactive partner** in promoting the social, economic and environmental well being of people's lives, present and future, in the areas of where housing stock is located (Neighbourhood and community standard);

A **well managed business** with a comprehensive approach to managing resources to provide cost-effective, efficient, quality services and homes to meet tenants and potential tenants rural needs. Standards of service will be agreed with tenants that are relevant to them locally. (Value for money standard);

A **well governed organisation** delivering for tenants the Association's mission, aims, objectives and intended outcomes in an effective, transparent and accountable manner. Maintaining financial viability by efficiently prioritising available resources. (Governance and financial viability standard); and

A **quality employer**, recognising equal opportunities, providing a good environment for motivated skilled staff (Investors in People Commitment).



We believe that housing has a huge impact on an individual's quality of life and that being adequately housed, and living in a pleasant environment, is fundamental to well being.

In the turbulent economic and political environment the Board of Management has scanned the horizon to assess business risk and opportunity to carefully modify and adjust the Association's business strategy. Regular induction, training and appraisal have enabled Board members to remain up to date with issues affecting the organisation.

Rural Affordable Housing

Lincs Rural operates in small rural communities which have common similarities despite different geographical locations. The Association's determination of 'Local' is related to demographic rather than geographic issues. Each rural location has common issues and similarities such as access to/sustainability of services/facilities, remoteness, a deeper knowledge and understanding of local people, community spirit, ability to retain youth for future growth etc. The Association manages properties in the following locations:

(At 31 March 2010)	Total No.	% Of Total	2 Bed No.	3 Bed No.	4 Bed No.
East Lindsey District Council	123	32%	69	53	1
South Kesteven District Council	44	11%	11	32	1
South Holland District Council	51	13%	31	20	0
North Lincolnshire Council	38	10%	24	14	0
North Kesteven District Council	38	10%	27	11	0
Boston Borough Council	36	10%	24	12	0
Rutland District Council	14	4%	7	6	1
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk B.C.	8	2%	8	0	0
West Lindsey District Council	11	2%	7	4	0
Shared Ownership - BBC	8	2%	4	4	0
Shared Ownership - ELDC	9	2%	4	5	0
Shared Ownership - NKDC	4	1%	2	2	0
Shared Ownership - WLDC	3	1%	2	1	0
Totals	387	100%	220	164	3

OUR RENT

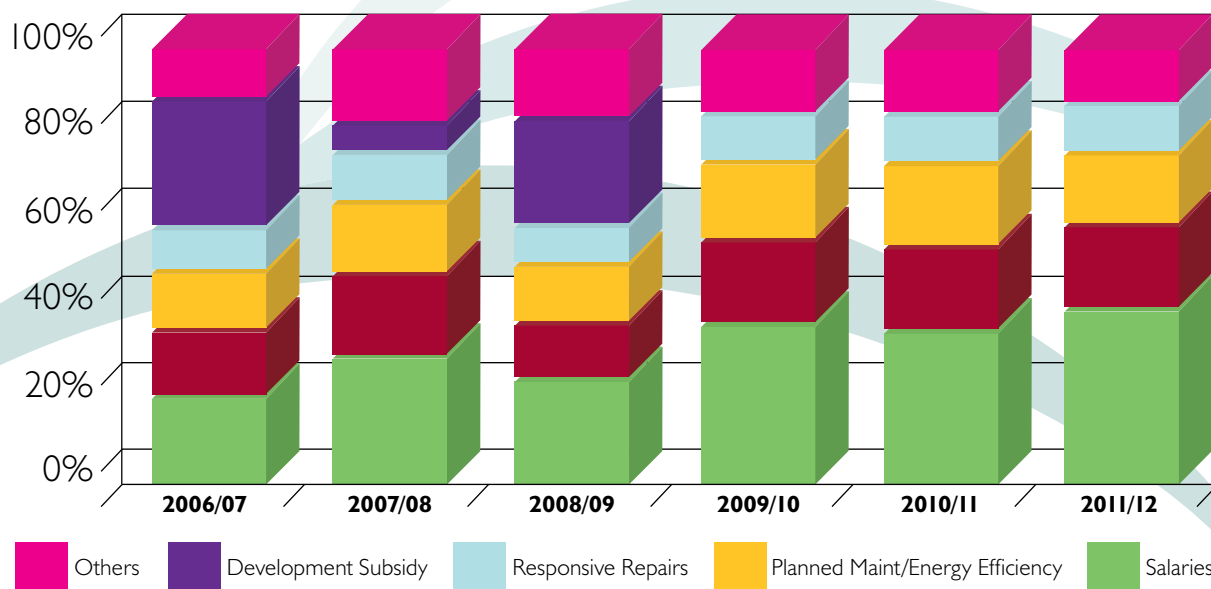
AVERAGE - The average weekly net rent for the year ending 31 March 2010 increased from £71.06 to £75.17.

ARREARS - At 31 March 2010 current tenants' arrears were £15,127 or 1.05% (total arrears

£37,416 or 2.59% including shared ownership units) of the total rental income for the year.

RENT LOST - There were 33 properties vacated and re-let during the year. £1,057 in rent was lost due to voids.

HOW WE SPEND OUR RENT





Repairs and Maintenance

HOW TO REPORT A REPAIR

GAS ESCAPES ONLY - By telephone to National Grid on **0800 111 999**.

REPAIRS - During Working Hours

By telephone between 8.30 a.m. & 5.00 p.m.
Monday to Friday on **01790 754219**.

By fax on **01790 754508**.

By email to **repairs@lrha.co.uk** or on
the Lincs Rural website at **www.lrha.co.uk**

EMERGENCY REPAIRS - Outside of Working Hours

By telephone to the 'Emergency Service' on
01790 755755.

Calls are taken by Boston Mayflower's
Call Centre who will liaise with various
contractors to attend within 24 hrs

Repair Performance During the financial year ending 31 March 2010 over 1,100 responsive repairs were completed costing £93,900.






Repair Performance April 2009 to 31 March 2010 Responsive repair work is the most front line service provided by Lincs Rural and directly affects tenant satisfaction levels. Performance of the three categories of repairs works detailed below illustrates an overall improvement:

		% of Work Completed within Target		
Repair Category	Response Time	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010
Emergency	24 Hours	98.25	91.0	97
Urgent	7 Days	92.06	84.7	95
Routine	28 Days	89.17	90.0	98

Performance Comparison

The Association's commitment to continuous improvement and value for money has been tested during the year by an in-depth audit of nine specific areas of the organisation. Results have been encouraging and have generated

new ideas such as the zoning of maintenance, with early indications of success. Performance in comparison with other social landlords will continue year on year to ensure the Association is providing the highest possible quality of services.

	Local Mean Average*	National Mean Average*	Lincs Rural Performance year ending March 2009	Lincs Rural Performance 09/10	
Rent Arrears as a % of rental income	2.2%	4.6%	2.49%	2.47%	
Tenant Satisfaction Overall	87%	80%	92%	92%	
Tenant Satisfaction with Repairs & Maintenance	72%	76%	90%	90%	
Vacant Dwellings	1.6%	2.5%	0.3%	0%	
Re-let Time	28.2 days	39.5 days	0 days	2 days	

*Last published for financial year ending March 09

Income and Expenditure Account

For the year ending 31 March 2010

Each year we produce a set of accounts detailing how we are doing financially. These are audited to make sure they have been prepared properly. The following is a summary of our accounts from 1 April 2009 to 31 March 2010.

		£ 2009	£ 2010
Note 1	Turnover	1,785,284	1,454,225
Note 2	Operating Costs	(1,432,690)	(926,526)
	Operating Surplus	352,594	527,699
Note 3	Surplus on sale of properties	75,542	5,938
	Interest Received	4,651	305
Note 4	Interest Paid	(355,111)	(408,982)
Note 5	Surplus on ordinary activities	77,676	124,960
Note 6	Turnover excluding SO sales	1,341,566	1,454,225
Note 7	Operating Costs ex. SO expenses	(978,217)	925,337

Note 1 The income we receive as rent and other income on the properties we manage plus first tranche shared ownership sales.

Note 2 The money we spent on managing and repairing properties, running our office and paying our staff plus costs associated with first tranche shared ownership sales.

Note 3 This is the surplus we have made on the sale of existing properties.

Note 4 The total interest we are charged on loans, loan fees and overdraft charges.

Note 5 We have made a surplus again this year which is reinvested into the business.

Note 6 Turnover excluding first tranche shared ownership (SO) sales.

Note 7 Operating costs excluding first tranche shared ownership (SO) expenses.

Balance Sheet

As at 31 March 2010

		£ 2009	£ 2010
ASSETS			
	Properties	20,985,551	22,004,236
	Less Social Housing Grant	(12,266,951)	(12,878,951)
Note 1	Other Fixed Assets	205,078	171,035
Note 2	Cash and Debtors (Net Current Assets)	330,774	(64,563)
	Total	9,254,452	9,231,757
FUNDED BY:			
	Creditors	6,041,034	5,893,381
	Reserves	3,213,377	3,338,337
	Share capital	41	39
	Total	9,254,452	9,231,757

Note 1 Computer equipment, vehicles and office furniture etc.

Note 2 Difference between bank balances, prepayments and money due and money owed falling due within one year. The above is an extract from the full accounts in the Operating and Financial Review, audited by Beever & Struthers. An unqualified report has been received.



Every Tenant Matters

Housing Associations are regulated by the Tenants Services Authority. On 16 March 2010 a new regulatory approach with the motto of 'Every Tenant Matters' was issued and from 1 April 2010 all social housing tenants will benefit from a common set of Standards.

Throughout the Standards design period tenants have been kept informed. The Association has commenced consultation to produce a **'Local Offer'** using the **6 new Standards**, which broadly are:

The **TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT STANDARD** – all social housing providers should offer a quality customer service where tenants are treated with respect and have an appropriate degree of choice and protection. An objective is to ensure that tenants have the opportunity to be involved.

The **HOME STANDARD** - sets quality of accommodation and service, particularly repairs and maintenance and the maintenance of the local environment. The Association aims to get it 'right first time'.

The **TENANCY STANDARD** - ensures tenants have an appropriate degree of choice and protection in relation to security of tenure.

The **NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY STANDARD** – provides tenants with choice and protection relating to the environmental, social and the economic well being of the areas in which our housing is situated. The importance of 'PLACE' and community cohesion requires everyone to work together to make neighbourhoods safe.

The **VALUE FOR MONEY STANDARD** - continued efficient, effective and economical performance of the Association is important to deliver the best possible value for quality services and home to meet tenant's needs.

The **GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL VIABILITY STANDARD** - effective arrangements for governance and financial viability are essential to delivering good quality services on a sustainable and well-organised basis.



Stand up and be counted

All social housing providers shall by 1 October each year publish a report for their tenants on how they are meeting Tenant Services Authority (TSA) standards.

This report provides information expected in the first annual report in respect of the plans for developing locally tailored offers for service delivery to be in place by 1 April 2011. Subsequent reports each October will:

- *Assess how the Standards are being met and compliance measured;*
- *Illustrate where and how performance is to be improved; and*
- *Reference assurance regarding outcomes i.e. tenant scrutiny, external validation, peer review and benchmarking.*

All tenants have been kept informed throughout the national conversation with the final six Standards provided to each tenant shortly following release on 16 March 2010.

The Association has already commenced consultation on various aspects of service delivery. Tenants have been consulted and have agreed to the zoning of maintenance work and property condition and lettings standards. Early indications for service improvement and increased tenant satisfaction are encouraging.

A Board member led 'Tenant Engagement and Involvement Focus Group' has taken control of planning and progress work for compliance against the Standards and development of the Local Offer. The Focus Group will formulate a strategy for production of the annual report that is creatively designed, clear and accessible to all.

A detailed profile of tenants will enable meaningful consultation with representative groups. Board of Management reporting and review frameworks will ensure regular progress is being made to produce the Local Offer in consultation with tenants by 1 April 2011.

Service provision by Lincs Rural has been predominantly in the upper quartile of national and local housing associations. The TSA has stated that it will adopt a proportionate approach to reporting requirements for those providers owning fewer than 1000 properties. Whilst the Association has less than this level of properties the Board of Management have determined that management arrangements will be provided to fully comply with the Standards to ensure high quality services continue.

The Association's aim is for the annual report production by 1 October 2011 to be driven and informed by tenants.

To ensure that the Association is offering an excellent customer service within available resources it will consult with tenants to reach a consensus agreement prior to 1 April 2011. The summarised Draft Offer in this report is a proposal for tenants to consider in line with a 'you said we did' approach by: putting tenant satisfaction first; understanding needs; delivering excellent homes and services; setting high targets and performance levels; and providing staff and contractors with training to make sure they put tenants first. A full copy of the Draft Offer will be provided with opportunities, (between September 2010 and March 2011) for tenants to put forward opinion and proposals.



'The Draft Local Service Delivery Offer'

TENANT INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT - We will support tenants wishing to become involved by training to develop skills, reimburse expenses and work actively to identify the best way to influence services provided.

CUSTOMER SERVICE - We will listen, be resident driven, involve communities and provide relevant information in various formats.

CHOICE - We will provide choice in how and what services are provided.

COMPLAINTS - We will try to resolve problems first tell, inform how to make a complaint, acknowledge within 3 working days, respond within 10 working days when not resolved at first contact, learn from problems, report subsequent service changes and improve services.

INVOLVEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT - We will provide clear information, a range of opportunities to get involved, recognise and value involvement, consult on scope of services and publish performance against Standards and the Local Offer by 1 October each year.

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF TENANTS - We will treat everyone with respect, offer a friendly and polite service, arrange an interpreter or other facilities for communication, obtain / provide information in other languages / formats and ensure equality associated with disability, gender, age, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

HOME AND QUALITY OF ACCOMMODATION - We will provide and maintain homes to the tenant agreed 'Property Condition and Lettings Standard'.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE - We will aim to complete maintenance work in one visit 'right first

time', generally on regular visits to the four area zones, complete emergency repairs within 24 hours and planned/ cyclical maintenance / improvement work in accordance with the 'Rural Gold Star Service'.

ADAPTATIONS - We will provide a contact, practical help / advice before, during and after the work.

TENANCIES - We will provide assured tenancies and assist tenants to meet terms of tenancy.

ALLOCATIONS - We will allocate properties fairly, transparently and efficiently in accordance with the 'End of Tenancy / Lettings Procedures' and 'Nominations Agreement'.

RENTS - We will provide assistance and advice to manage accounts in accordance with the 'Rent / Arrears Policies', consult about changes and offer a range of payment methods.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT - We will regularly visit and monitor neighbourhoods, provide tenants with opportunities to be involved with the management of areas under the Association's control and promptly remove rubbish and graffiti.

LOCAL AREA CO-OPERATION - We will keep tenants informed of work with local authorities and parish councils and assist with communication on issues affecting housing related services.

ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) - We will have staff available to deal with ASB during office hours, offer clear advice / support, investigate ASB complaints, respond to harassment / domestic violence within one working day, agree an action plan within two weeks, review every month and undertake measures to prevent / reduce ASB using appropriate legal and non legal solutions.

Chief Executive's Message



John D Howes FRICS

Conducting business and accessing goods and services using the internet is now part of our daily routine and fast technological way of life. What happened to the days when buying something was normally face to face across a counter, or at least involved a telephone conversation? Fortunately as a small organisation the majority of our tenants and staff know each other and the old methods of communication usually take place, although all other options are available. There are however no annoying options on our telephone system and all calls to Lincs Rural are answered within a few rings by a member of staff, trained to deal with most issues *'at first point of contact'* without that equally annoying phase *'please hold while I transfer you....'*. At Lincs Rural customer care matters; tenant's matter and people matter, hence the theme of the Annual Report.

The largest ever tenant consultation exercise in England took place during the year by the social housing sectors regulator producing big changes ahead. Thankfully this will put the focus back onto the customer with more responsibility for tenant involvement and scrutiny, which we are happy to accept and take forward. For the first time every tenant in social housing will benefit from the same standards irrespective of whether they are a tenant of a housing association, local authority or other provider.

The completion of our most ambitious development programme has attracted much attention from the housing sector and the media. Whilst recognised by a number of awards, the primary objective of our work is to research and inform house building for the future. The importance of energy efficiency and the environmental impact of building new homes are widely accepted and monitoring and research of the projects at Varsity Rise and Unity Gardens will continue for the next couple of years. We hope that this knowledge will benefit tenants and other housing providers in the future.

Good governance and management is a necessity for the success of any business and every year the Board reviews its own performance in addition to that of staff. I am pleased to report that this performance continues to be at a very high standard. During the year three new members have joined the Board and a staff structure review was started. The Association's commitment to continuous improvement and value for money was progressed with an in-depth audit of nine specific areas of the organisation. Results were encouraging and generated new ideas such as the zoning of maintenance, with early indications of success. Performance in comparison with other social landlords and plans for meeting the new regulatory standards are illustrated within this Annual Report.

Significant achievements have been made during the year against the aims and objectives set by the Board in continuing difficult economic times. Risk and opportunities are regularly considered to ensure homes and services for tenants are provided at the highest quality. Our work requires commitment and dedication by many people including the Board, staff and our partners in local authorities and other organisations. I thank them for their assistance during the year and continued support in the future.

John D Howes FRICS

Chief Executive & Secretary