



Annual Report
Garrion People's Housing Co-op
2007/08



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I am delighted to report to you as chairperson of Garrion People's Housing Co-op for 2007/08.

The year has been a busy time for the Co-op. Partnership working has been a key area of our operations and the Co-op has shown how committed we are to engaging with others.

I would like to make a special welcome to all new tenants and shareholders of the Co-op. The Co-op still has close links to Forgewood Housing Co-operative in Motherwell and staff between both offices are shared to carry out service delivery.

Gowkthrapple is an area where regeneration is in progress and the Co-op is working in partnership with other agencies and the local community. We have a new build housing development starting in 2008 and there are also proposals to look at the provision of a community facility in the area.

Within the year, the Co-op entered into a wider role project in conjunction with North Lanarkshire Leisure and Communities Scotland to provide a Soccer arena for the children in the area.

Our performance in recovering rent arrears and in allocating empty properties has improved greatly, and this is detailed within the report.

We have also been able to generate income through the year from service work carried out by Bridges Housing Association. Bridges is a subsidiary of both Garrion People's Housing Co-op and Forgewood Housing Co-op in Motherwell. The service work is mainly carried out by John Mulholland (Director) and Cathy Brien (Depute Director) from both Co-ops.

I would like to thank all members of the management committee for their efforts in the year. We have had a high turnout to our committee meetings and this is greatly appreciated. I would also like to thank the staff for the hard work done in the year once again. Without the management committee and staff team we have, it would not be the successful year that we once again have enjoyed. Please read on for more information on what has happened in the year 2007/08.



Edith Gilmour
Chairperson

RENT CONTROL PERFORMANCE

The Co-operative works hard to try and ensure rent arrears are at a minimum, and from time to time some tenants can fall into financial difficulties leading to an increase in rent arrears.

Due to our commitment in sustaining tenancies, we ensure that anyone who is experiencing financial hardship is offered appropriate advice and assistance to enable them to continue living in their home. We have an

excellent working relationship with various partners in the area such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Money Advice, Debt Counselling and Welfare Rights and make appointments whenever possible for our tenants with one of their experienced advisors. Sometimes it can be necessary to repossess a tenancy if a tenant does not comply with requests to pay rent arrears but we are pleased that this course of action was not required for the year 2007/08. At 31 March

2008, £10,275 was owed in actual rent arrears. This accounts for 1.81% of our annual rental income receivable and performance is within the target set out in our internal management plan (3%) and the figure also compares very favourably against that of our peer group landlords. Below is a summary of performance on rent arrears over the last 2 years.

	2006/07	2007/08
Annual rental income receivable	£536,886	£566,332
Total current arrears outstanding	£24,643	£19,846
Technical arrears due e.g., payments not banked or housing benefit due	£9,670	£9,571
Actual (non technical) arrears outstanding	£14,973	£10,275
Arrears as a % of the annual rental income	2.79%	1.81%



The Co-op has performed well on rent arrears management. Our figures are within those targets set in our internal management plan and that of our peers (landlords of similar size managing less than 500 properties). Rent arrears have reduced for the 4th year in a row.



VOID MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE

The Co-op allocated 45 properties during the year 2007/08.

Due to our stock type being broken down into improved flats, new build and sheltered housing, we report void management performance separately. Within the flats at Heathfield and Smith Avenue, it took the Co-op an average of 2.31 calendar days to allocate an empty property. Within the remainder of our stock (new build at Woodgreen Court and Law View sheltered housing) the average relet period was 10.5 calendar days. This performance is a great improvement on previous years and compares very well again to our peer group landlords.

	2006/07	2007/08
Rental loss on void properties	£5,901	£905.31
Number of relets	46	45
Average no. of calendar days empty	21	3
Less than 2 weeks empty	19	43
2-4 weeks empty	16	2
More than 4 weeks empty	11	0
No of properties let with no void rent loss	8	21

ALLOCATION/ HOUSING LIST

At 31 03 2008 there were 191 applicants seeking rehousing from the Co-op.

As our housing lists can change regularly, we try and give applicants as much information as possible regarding their prospects for rehousing with the Co-op. We have reviewed our points award letters and feedback has shown that applicants are satisfied with the information and advice provided.

COMMON HOUSING REGISTER

The Co-op has been working in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council and other housing associations in the area to develop and implement a common housing register (CHR).

This would enable an applicant to visit any office in North Lanarkshire and apply to as many different landlords as they wish, through one common form. It is anticipated that the CHR will be up and running during 2008/09.



The Common Housing Register will give more access and choice to housing applicants

Stock managed by the Co-op

Improved flats

2apt = 41 3apt = 108 4apt= 6 TOTAL 155

New build flats & houses (Woodgreen Court)

3apt= 22 4apt= 14 TOTAL 36

Sheltered housing stock

2apt= 22 3apt= 4 4apt= 2 Total 28

The Co-op also factors 8 flats and 8 new build homes in the area

INTERNAL MANAGEMENT PLAN INTERNAL AUDIT

All staff and committee of the Co-op are involved with the development of the internal management plan and a Saturday is set aside each year so that everyone involved can discuss the future aims and objectives of the organisation.

The away days prove to be very useful and outcomes from the day are incorporated into the internal management plan.

The Co-op shows that it performs well in its service delivery but continuous improvement is our aim.

That is why we arrange an internal audit from time to time. This year, an internal audit was carried out by Dorothy Robertson Associates, and this covered housing management and maintenance services. Good practice was identified in many areas, however any recommendations made by the auditor were implemented. The audit will continue into 2008/09 and will cover other areas of our business.



Monument erected in 2002 at Smith Avenue



Our flats in Smith Avenue



COMMITTEE NEWS AND MEMBERSHIP

Our management committee was made up of 13 members at 31 March 2008. These were:

Edith Gilmour, Chair
David Cooper, Vice Chair
William Caldwell, Secretary
Elizabeth Cooper, Treasurer
William Gilmour
James Deas
Fay Main
Marion Cathcart
Lynne McLean
Susan Reed
Frank Johnston
Joan Johnston
Elizabeth Baillie

We have been actively promoting membership of the Co-op in various ways, including information on our newsletters and website, as well as encouraging new tenants to consider applying for a share with the Co-operative. The share costs a one off £1 fee, and membership allows you to attend our management committee meetings as an observer, as well as standing for election at our Annual General Meeting in September. We had 122 members at 31 March 2008, and this has been an increase on the last few years.

REGENERATION OF THE AREA

The Co-op has been working in partnership with North Lanarkshire Council, Dawn Homes and the Scottish Government to build new homes off Castlehill Road, near Clyde Valley High School.

Work commences later in 2008 and the development will see 55 new houses built, 25 of which will be rented out by the Co-op. North Lanarkshire Council have demolished a number of properties at the lower end of Gowkthrapple and it is hoped a new build development will follow on from the one off Castlehill Road.

We are also in discussions with North Lanarkshire Council and various other partners as well as the local community with a view to the provision of a community facility in the area. It is hoped that if the project is successful, a new building which would accommodate the Co-op, North Lanarkshire Council, Community Cafe, Shop and other services to meet the needs of the community could be made available off Smith Avenue.

SOCCER ARENA

During the year, a moveable soccer arena was made available for the youngsters of the area.

This was funded through the Co-op, Communities Scotland and North Lanarkshire Leisure, who also put up the arena as well as providing coaching staff. Feedback from those kids who used the facility was fantastic and despite the fact that it was intended for use only during the school summer holiday period, the Co-op negotiated with its partners to secure the soccer arena on a longer term basis.



Our new build development site off Castlehill Road



Youngsters from the area enjoying the soccer arena facility

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE

Garrion People’s Housing Co-op has a good track record of carrying out repairs, and detailed below are statistics on our response times to different categories of repairs.

Category of repair	Target response time set	Number carried out in year	Number completed within response target time	Number completed as a percentage
Emergency	6 hours	175	175	100.00%
Urgent	2 days	470	467	99.36%
Routine	5 days	338	333	98.52%

KITCHEN AND CENTRAL HEATING REPLACEMENT

A planned maintenance programme to replace kitchens and central heating programmes within 80 flats in Heathfield started during the year. All tenants have been provided with a choice of new kitchen and feedback has shown a high level of satisfaction. The programme will roll on to the remaining flats in 2009.



One of the new fitted kitchens in the flats

RIGHT TO REPAIR

Our response times show good performance within maintenance, and we are also obliged by law to carry out certain repairs within a timescale as set out in within the Right to Repair legislation.

If the Co-op fails to comply with this rule, tenants can apply the Right to Repair as stated in the guidance. We are pleased to report that no tenant has exercised the right to repair with the Co-op to date.

MEDICAL ADAPTATIONS

Every year the Co-op is granted funding from the Scottish Government to carry out medical adaptations within a property to allow people to stay in their homes. During the year 2007/08 we carried out a total of 8 adaptations, seven of these were

removal of baths and installations of level entry showers, with another adaptation being controlled entry handsets being fitted in different areas within a home. All of our adaptations are carried out to the highest standards.



Level access showers have assisted people with staying in their homes

CHARITABLE EVENTS

The Co-op were involved in 2 fundraising events for charity during the year.

Sharon O'Rourke, Susan Kane and Kirsty McCourt from the Co-ops completed the moonwalk in Edinburgh, raising around £900

for breast cancer research. In November, the staff also took part in the strip for Scotland charity event, raising money for Cash for Kids. Well done to everyone who took part.



The Moonwalkers raised around £900 for breast cancer research



GARDEN COMPETITION

In 2007/08, it was difficult to separate the best kept gardens in the estate.

We usually give prizes to the best maintained within the flats, Woodgreen Court and Law View sheltered housing complex in Overtown. The competition was independently judged and 6 gardens throughout our stock were eventually chosen as best kept, with prizes awarded to all of those involved. Well done to everyone who showed such a high standard of garden maintenance in the year.



All winners of the garden competition for the year

LAW VIEW

Law View sheltered housing complex in Overtown has been managed by the Co-op since a stock transfer from Scottish Homes in 2001.

The complex comprises of 28 homes and the Co-op works closely with the residents at Law View to ensure good housing support and advice is provided at all times, as well as the day to day running of Law View. Law View has been subject to two Care Commission inspections since 2005, which were both successful. The Co-op also relies on Supporting People funding to cover the housing support service provided to Law View. We have received two reviews of the contract with North Lanarkshire Council, both of which were also successful.

Due to the client group at The Complex, it is vital that we get as many residents involved in things that go on in the community hall. Many events have been held in the year including: Computer classes, general knowledge quiz afternoons, prize bingo, reminiscence classes, mature movers classes, arts and crafts sessions and information sessions with the Police and Strathclyde Fire and Rescue.

Everyone living at Law View receives a housing support plan assessment by our warden at the complex. This is reviewed six monthly or more frequently if required. The plan ensures



that the Co-op is aware of each individual's specific needs, and that provision is made to provide additional care and support services when required.

Not only is Law View a very attractive complex because of the house types and general maintenance carried out by the Co-op, but it is evident that everyone makes a special effort to keep the gardens well maintained. The standard of garden upkeep is excellent and many thanks to everyone at Law View who make the complex look more attractive each year.

During the year 2007/08, the Law View Registered Tenant Organisation (RTO) made a decision to disband after consultation with its members and a tenants association was set up thereafter. The change means that the group are no longer registered through the Co-op but we are still committed to consulting with any tenants groups on changes that may affect them as service users. This has been the case since the tenants association was formed.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The Co-op was delighted to be reaccredited Investors in People status in March 2008.

The scheme aims to provide organisational performance through better planning, implementation and evaluation of learning and development programmes, across organisations of all sizes and sectors.

We were first given the accreditation of Investors in People in 2005.

Appraisals for staff are held every 6 months and training and development plans for staff are put into place following the appraisal.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

WORKING TOGETHER IN OUR COMMUNITY

Over the last few years, the number of tenants from the Polish community has increased within our stock.

We have a commitment to sustaining tenancies, and to show this worked in partnership with the Polish residents and Citizens Advice Bureau by holding evening information sessions. Feedback

from these events led to the Co-op securing funding from Communities Scotland to draft a migrant workers handbook (in conjunction with Citizens Advice Bureau) as well as translating other key documents such as the Scottish Secure Tenancy Agreement and Tenant Handbook into Polish.

STAFF

The Co-op operates a joint staffing agreement with Forgewood Housing Co-op (FHC) in Motherwell, and all staff share duties between both organisations.



John Mulholland
(Director)



Cathy Brien
(Depute Director)



Paul Lennon
(Housing Manager)



Susan Kane
(Housing Officer,
FHC)



Sharon O'Rourke
(Part Time Housing
officer)



Elaine Hyslop
(Housing Officer)



Kirsty McCourt
(Administration
officer)



Kevin Plunkett
(Administration Assistant)



Jim Blyth
(Maintenance
Officer/Clerk of
Works)



Billy Gibb
(Maintenance
Assistant)



Jim Murphy
(Maintenance
Assistant)



Garry King
(Warden, Law View
Sheltered Housing
Complex)



Ann Wilson
(Relief Warden, Law
View Sheltered
Housing Complex)

GARRION PEOPLE'S HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED

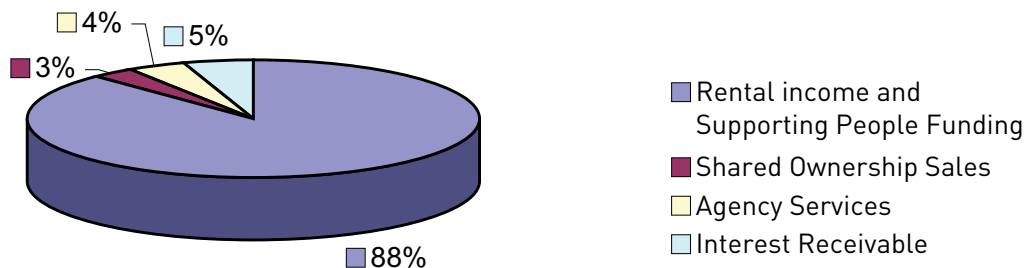
Analysis of Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31/3/08

Financial Auditors
 French Duncan
 Chartered Accountants
 375 West George Street
 Glasgow
 G2 4LH

INCOME

Rental Income and Supporting People Funding	£607,623
Shared Ownership Sales	£20,572
Agency Services	£29,500
Interest Receivable	£34,062

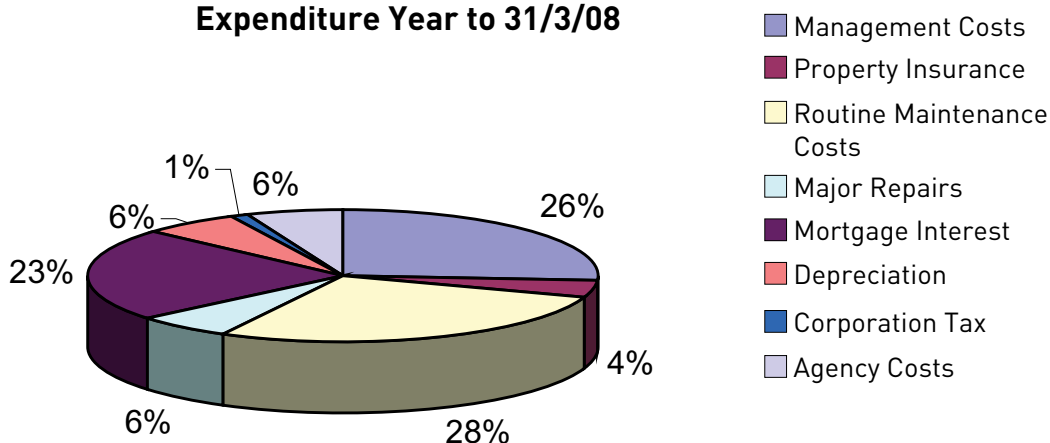
Income Year to 31/3/08



EXPENDITURE

Management Costs	£158,816
Property Insurance	£25,715
Routine Maintenance Costs	£167,283
Major Repairs	£36,641
Mortgage Interest	£139,757
Depreciation	£36,368
Corporation Tax	£8,159
Agency Costs	£36,474

Expenditure Year to 31/3/08







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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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