



# Garrion Peoples Housing Co-operative

annual report 2008 – 2009

*working in partnership to  
build a stronger community*



## Chairperson's Report



As chairperson of Garrion People's Housing Co-op, I am delighted to introduce you to the 2008/09 annual report.

It has been an exceptionally busy time for the Co-op, with lots of exciting developments taking place in Gowkthrapple.

Our first new build development in nine years got under way just off Castlehill Road with the first phase of 25 homes for rent being handed over by Dawn Homes at the end of the financial year.

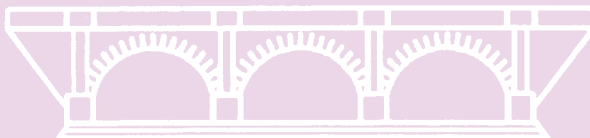
Exciting times are also ahead with the knowledge that a new community facility will be developed at Smith Avenue. An application was submitted to the Big Lottery for funding towards the building, and this proved to be successful with £835,000 being awarded towards building the new community hub, which will see staff from the Co-op and North Lanarkshire Council work together from the same base, as well as other partners using the space in the community facility. This project would not have been possible had it not been for the hard work by staff and committee at the Co-op, together with our partner agencies including North Lanarkshire Council and the Gowkthrapple Developing Projects Group.

While these developments are good for the organisation, it must be remembered that we strive for continuous improvement in our service delivery at the Co-op. Our statistics speak for themselves and it is worthwhile noting that our performance in managing empty properties, rent arrears, allocations and maintenance issues has been very good yet again. We were advised by the Scottish Housing Regulator (formerly Communities Scotland) during the year that they would enter into a low engagement relationship with the Co-op. This meant that they viewed the Co-op as being a low risk organisation and everyone connected with the Co-op is aware that continual good performance is essential.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members and the staff team for their continual commitment to the Co-op in making it another successful year. Please read on to see what else has been happening in the year with Garrion People's Housing Co-operative.

# GPHC

**David Cooper** Chairperson





*The official site start ceremony in October 2008. Children from Castlehill primary lend a helping hand to get the development under way.*

## New Build Development

The Co-op's first new build development project in nine years got under way during the year off Castlehill Road. When complete, the development will see 25 new build homes for rent, with the possibility of a further twelve being allocated for rent later in 2009. The remaining properties will consist of seven being marketed through the new Supply Shared Equity Scheme and

the remainder being sold directly by the developer, Dawn Homes.

In October 2008, an official site start ceremony took place, which was attended by partner agencies, elected representatives and children from the local primary school who officially laid the first brick.

*Hopefield Gardens takes shape with the first families moving into their new homes.*





## Maintenance News

### Kitchen and Storage Heater Renewal Contract

Phase 1 of our kitchen renewal contract was completed during the year, with 80 tenants in Heathfield receiving good quality newly fitted kitchens. Survey returns have shown a high level of satisfaction with the work carried out. After the kitchens were fitted, the Co-op arranged to upgrade heating systems within the flats.

### External Paintwork contract Woodgreen Court

Woodgreen Court tenants were provided with external paintwork to doors, windows and soffits during the year. The work done has certainly made a difference in the appearance of the estate.

### Insulation Programme

The Co-op worked in partnership with Powersave and gave all tenants the opportunity to have their homes insulated free of charge. A grant was provided by the Scottish Government during the year and was used by the Co-op, ensuring tenants

### Maintenance Performance

We are always striving to ensure repairs are carried out within response time targets set. The table below provides a breakdown on how many repairs we carried out, and the timescales involved.

Repair category	Target response time	Number carried out in year	Number completed within response time	Number completed on time as a percentage
Emergency	6 hours	163	163	100.00%
Urgent	2 days	469	467	99.57%
Routine	5 days	385	381	98.96%

who were in need of insulation received a visit. We managed to insulate 15 properties during the year, providing upgrading to loft insulation and draught proofing.

### Adaptations

During the course of 2008-09 the Co-op carried out four adaptations within homes of our tenants. The purpose of an adaptation is to allow someone with a medical condition to remain in their home for as long as possible. There is a referral process involved where a tenant or their family member's occupational therapist would send a request to the Co-op to make alterations. The cost of the adaptations is funded via the Scottish Government.





The community centre and Castlehill primary were packed all day as children enjoyed a wide range of activities. Events that were provided included football, dancing, soft play areas, inflatables and face painting. There was a more business like side to the event as well, as the views of the children in the areas were sought on what sort of developments they would like to see in future, within Gowkthrappe.

*Left: Christmas light switch on.  
Right: Gowkthrappe Information Day.*



## Events

### Christmas Light Switch On

The Co-op organised the Christmas light switch on for the first time, at Allershaw Tower, just off Castlehill Road. It turned out to be a successful event with local partner agencies and Councillors attending, as well as children from the three local schools who provided a carol service.

### Gowkthrappe Information Day

An information day was arranged by Garrion People's Housing Co-op to promote employability and financial inclusion for residents of Gowkthrappe. Many appropriate organisations that specialised in these fields were represented at the event, providing useful information to local residents.

### Gowkthrappe Fun Day

Hundreds of youngsters attended a Gowkthrappe community fun day held one Saturday in March 2009. The event was organised by the Co-op, North Lanarkshire Council and the Developing Projects group.

## Garden Competition

Once again, the standard of garden maintenance was very good throughout the year within our estates, making the garden competition a hard one to judge. Prizes were awarded to the best maintained garden areas within our flats, the new build properties at Woodgreen Court and Law View sheltered housing complex in Overtown.



*Top left: Residents at 158 – 172 Heathfield once again win the best kept garden award within the flats.*

*Bottom left: Mr and Mrs Crothers were winners of the best kept garden at Law View. Goliath has since been added to join Pandora in this lovely garden.*

*Bottom right: Mrs Moir at Woodgreen Court was judged to have the best kept garden within the new build properties.*



## Our Stock Profile

We have detailed the stock we managed at 31 March 2009 and have added in the 25 new build homes which Dawn Homes started to hand over to the Co-op at the end of the financial year.

Stock Breakdown	Units	%
Improved Flats	155	60%
New Build	61	23%
Sheltered Housing	28	11%
Factored	16	6%
Total	260	100%



## Housing Management News

Our performance in housing management has once again been very good this year, with rent arrears recovery and relet times being achieved within targets set out in our internal management plan and against our peer group landlords.

Actual current rent arrears totalled £11,757 for the year, representing only 1.98% of our annual rental income charged. This excellent figure has been achieved due to swift action being taken when arrears are identified. Realistic arrangements with tenants are also set up to reduce debt owed. One significant difference in the year which has contributed to our targets being met was the launch of a partnership project with the Co-op, five other local housing associations and Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), as detailed on page 8 of this report.

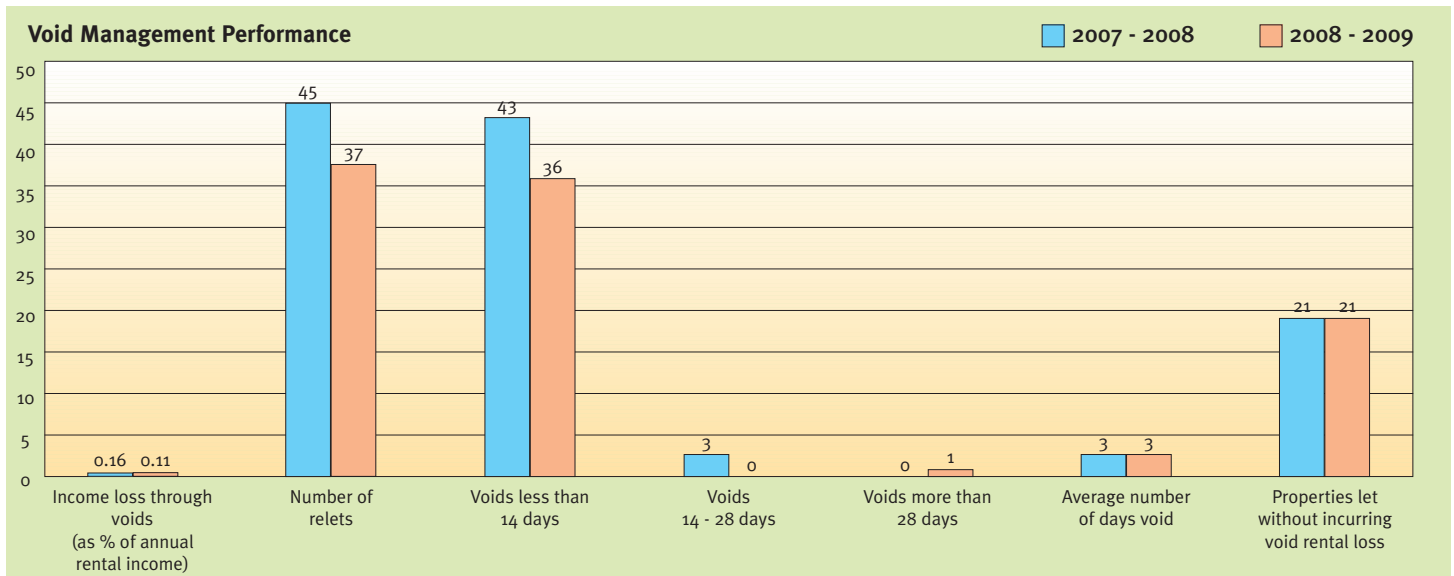
The table below details performance on rent arrears.

	2007/08	2008/09
<b>Total current arrears outstanding</b>	£19,846	£22,842
<b>Technical arrears</b>	£9,571	£11,086
<b>Actual (non technical) arrears</b>	£10,275	£11,757
<b>Arrears as a % of annual rental income</b>	1.81%	1.98%
<b>Former tenant arrears</b>	£7,919	£1,107

We are always proud of how we keep our estates in such a good condition and making the area a desirable place to stay. We do this by providing a daily caretaking service and this ensures that litter is uplifted at all times. Inspections are also regular throughout our stock and any issues identified are dealt with immediately.



The number of relets reduced rather significantly on the previous year, and our performance in allocating properties was once again very good, with voids remaining empty for an average of three days before being allocated to incoming tenants. The chart below provides a breakdown on how we performed during the year on void management.





## Citizens Advice Bureau Joint Partnership Project

In 2008, the Co-op started to work in partnership with Citizens Advice Bureau and other Registered Social Landlords within North Lanarkshire to look at the possibility of assisting our tenants with a new project, tackling fuel poverty. Surveys were carried out with tenants and the response showed that there was a requirement not only to look at fuel poverty, but the other financial difficulties people experience because of energy bills. The “Fuel User Empowerment Project” was therefore launched by all involved. The partnership co-funded two posts within Citizens Advice Bureau, which enabled advisors to visit tenants at home or at the Co-op’s office and provide them with sound advice on many financial, benefit and legal issues. While a Big Lottery application to fund the positions over a few years was unsuccessful, the partners involved are looking at other ways to continue this excellent service to our tenants.



## New Community Facility

There was great news for everyone in the area when the Co-op’s bid to the Big Lottery fund was granted, resulting in £835,000 being awarded towards the building of a new community building at Smith Avenue. This could not have been achieved without the work put in by all partners who worked with the Co-op, including North Lanarkshire Council, Collective Architecture and the Developing Projects group. The work on the site is due to commence late in 2009 and is another milestone in the regeneration of the area.



*Artist's impression of the new community building at Smith Avenue.*

## Law View Sheltered Housing Complex

Our sheltered housing complex in Law View, Overtown still proves to be extremely popular, with demand still high for any properties that become available within the 28 homes at the complex.

A warden service is provided seven days per week, with emergency cover through Hanover Telecare outwith office hours for all our residents.

The majority of residents at Law View tend to get involved in some sort of events, and there were plenty of those during the year such as: computer classes, prize bingo, quizzes, mature movers classes, entertainment nights and art classes. Residents also enjoyed trips to Moffat, Ayr and Blackpool as well as the annual Christmas lunch event.

Law View also linked up with Clyde Valley High school pupils during the year looking at “on days gone by”. This proved to be a resounding success.

Money was also raised by Law View residents for comic relief.

There is also a locally run tenants association who help co-ordinate some events within Law View

On a more serious note, it has to be remembered that as Law View is a sheltered housing complex, the Co-op must ensure it meets the requirements set out by the Care Commission and Supporting People so that the residents’ safety, privacy and dignity is respected, but also allowing for choice and for residents to realise their potential at Law View.



## Financial Highlights

### Analysis of Income & Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2009

#### INCOME

Rental Income		£643,422
Care Activities	£44,000	
Interest Receivable	£30,061	
Agency Services	£7,500	

#### EXPENDITURE

Management & Maintenance Admin		£242,118
Routine Maintenance	£143,675	
Mortgage Interest	£131,876	
Depreciation	£45,251	
Property Insurance	£25,819	
Major Repairs	£19,638	
Agency Services	£14,605	
Corporation Tax	£7,044	

### Paperless Office – the way forward

The Co-operative has made huge progress this year working towards the 'paperless office'. Since 2006 we have been researching the options available to us and the costs involved in transferring paper files to a digital format. We are now ready to go live with this project, with all paperwork that is being destroyed recycled which in turn will assist the Co-op to help the environment.

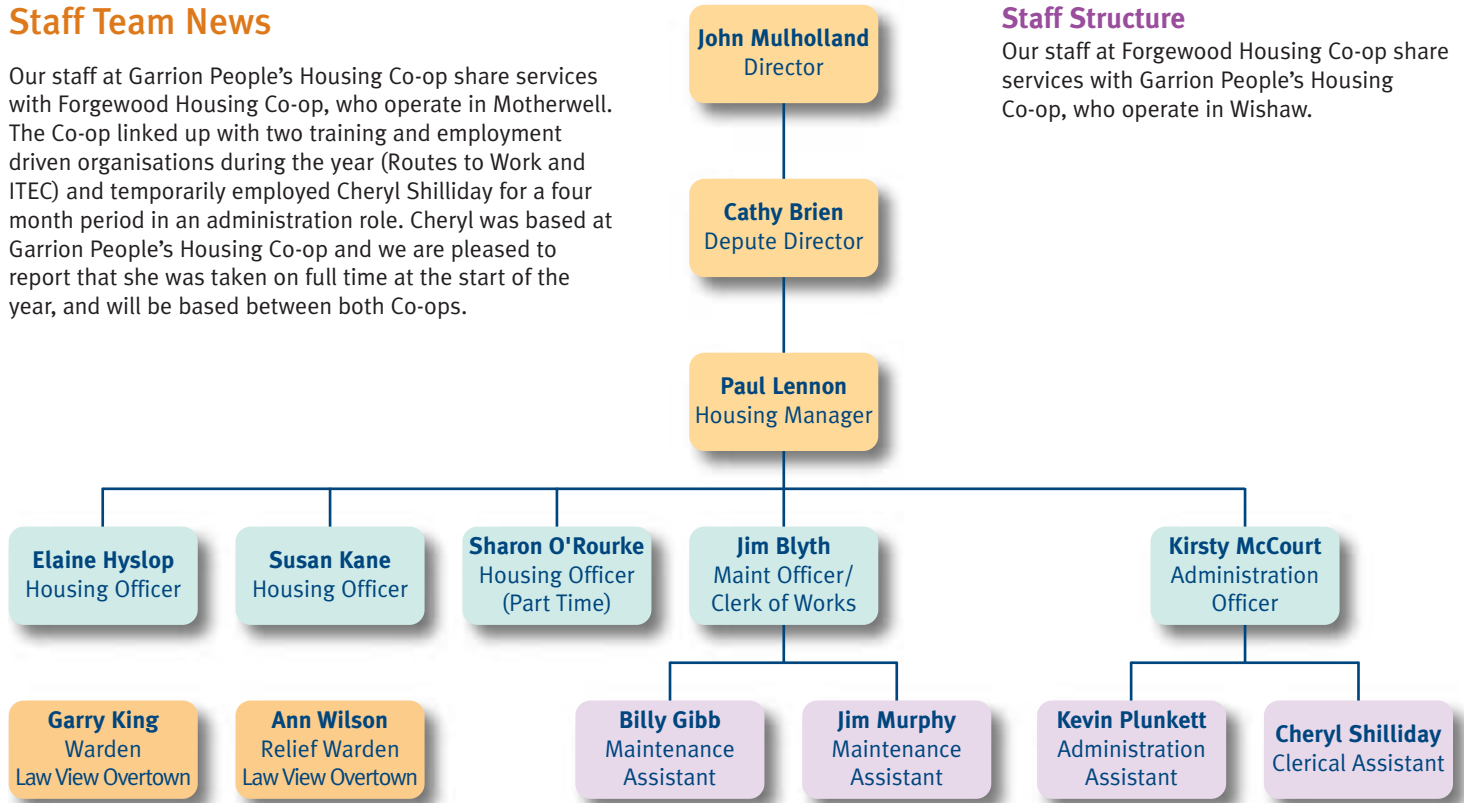


## Staff Team News

Our staff at Garrion People’s Housing Co-op share services with Forgewood Housing Co-op, who operate in Motherwell. The Co-op linked up with two training and employment driven organisations during the year (Routes to Work and ITEC) and temporarily employed Cheryl Shilliday for a four month period in an administration role. Cheryl was based at Garrion People’s Housing Co-op and we are pleased to report that she was taken on full time at the start of the year, and will be based between both Co-ops.

## Staff Structure

Our staff at Forgewood Housing Co-op share services with Garrion People’s Housing Co-op, who operate in Wishaw.



## Management Committee

Our management committee team still has a number of long serving members on board. The committee set up at 31 March 2009 is as follows:

David Cooper <i>Chair</i>	Marion Cathcart
Edith Gilmour <i>Vice Chair</i>	Jimmy Deas
Lynne McLean <i>Secretary</i>	Lucille Mullen
Elizabeth Cooper <i>Treasurer</i>	George Main
Bill Gilmour	Frank Johnston
Betty Baillie	

## Willie Caldwell 1936 – 2008

Willie Caldwell was one of the organisation’s longest serving committee members who dedicated a lot of his time as secretary to the Co-op. He was also a very popular member of the wider community, who provided the school patrol service to school children at Castlehill Road, Overtown. Willie sadly passed away in September 2008 and it is the Co-op’s intention to provide a fitting tribute to commemorate his work within the community.





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