

BOARD OF MANAGEMENT REPORT TO SHAREHOLDERS



1st January 2009 – 31st March 2010

Cotman Housing Association exists to give people with housing needs the best possible choices.

We strive to provide our residents with appropriate homes, all designed, built and maintained to the highest possible standard.

And we aim to ensure that customers who need specialist housing care and support receive it effectively.



Chairman's Foreword

2009 was a milestone year for Cotman Housing Association, in which the Association gave up its status as an independent association and entered the Places for People Group structure, one of the largest and most innovative housing groups in the Country.

Since joining the Group in April 2009 it has been a year of hard work and challenge for staff as we migrated to Group systems whilst managing a 40% increase in stock across a wider geographic area.

This effort has been well rewarded with a significant improvement in service delivery performance across all areas of management for the Places for People customers.

The merger plays to the strengths of both organisations, combining the large scale regeneration and development expertise of Places for People with Cotman's strong experience and reputation in housing management and high-quality customer services. We are confident that membership of the Group will secure our position as a major provider of high quality social housing in our area of operation in years to come.

My thanks go to Managing Director Vivien Farrow, her officers and staff, for their hard work and unfaltering commitment during this demanding and very satisfying period, and to my fellow Board Members for their positive support and active involvement throughout 2009/10.

I shall retire as Chairman of the Board at the 2010 Annual General Meeting, and am confident that my successor will have the privilege to lead a sound and respected organisation that continues to make a significant contribution to addressing housing need in the region.

Sarah Dixon
Chairman

Governance

The Association has adopted the National Housing Federation's code of practice on governance "Excellence in Governance – code for members (2009)" and aims to comply with it fully.

Further details of any information that the Association is required by the code to disclose that is not given fully in this report can be obtained on written application to the Managing Director.

Board Membership Policy

Within the boundaries and scope of its Independence and Responsibilities Agreement with Places for People Group, the affairs of Cotman Housing Association are directed by the Board of Management.

The agreement of the Places for People Group is required to the appointment of Board members. Board member recruitment is primarily through advertising campaigns, specifically targeted towards recruiting particular person profiles identified by the Board's review.

There are up to twelve seats on the Board and ten seats currently filled. One seat is reserved for a representative of the Places for People Group Executive (currently filled by the Group Director Finance and IT) and one for the Association's Managing Director both of whom serve as executive members. Residents of the Association may comprise no more than 1/3rd of the Board membership and there is currently one resident member.

All Board members with the exception of executive members receive a small payment in recognition of the contribution they make to the work of the Association.

There are limits both on the length of time any individual may serve as Chairman of the Board, and the period they may remain on the Board of Management without re-election.

Board Review

The Board conducts an annual review of its own strengths and weaknesses, to identify any areas of expertise that are under-represented, and appraises its overall effectiveness and the added value it brings to the Association.

Individual Board members participate in a review exercise with the Board Chair, with individual development and training targets set.

Shareholding Policy

National Shareholding membership of the Association is open only to the Places for People Group.

Community shareholding membership of the Association is at the discretion of the Board and is open to anyone with relevant knowledge, experience, skills or expertise which are complementary to the aims of the Association.

Expressions of interest in community shareholding membership should be made by written submission to the Managing Director.

Board of Management as at 31st March 2010

	Occupation	Joined Board
Chairman		
Mrs S Dixon MRICS	Chartered Surveyor	2001
Vice-Chairman		
Mr D Hunt Bsc (Hons) Dip Arch MBA	Architect	2005
Cotman Customer Liaison Panel Chairman		
Mr P Watkinson MIME	Tenant Representative	2002
Mrs E Barrett MSc BA (Hons) RGN RHV DNCert Cert Ed	Retired Health Researcher	2004
Ms D Henry SEN	Chief Executive, Young Person's Charity	2000
Mr S Morton BA DSA DASS CQSW	Retired Senior Manager, Social Services	2007
Mr P Shields ACIB	Retired Investment Banker	2004
Mrs J Tait Dip Ed	Residential Landlord	1996
Mr N White FCA	Chartered Accountant	2006

Executive Board Members

Mr S Binks BSc FCCA ACIS MIoD	Places for People Group Director, Finance and IT	2009
Mrs V Farrow MSc MBA ACIAT	Managing Director Cotman Housing Association	2007
Company Secretary		
Mr C P Martin, Solicitor BA (Hons)	Places for People Legal Services Director and Company Secretary	Appointed April 2009

Executive Team as at 31st March 2010

Managing Director
Vivien Farrow MBA MSc ACIAT

Finance Director
Quinto Gavita FMAAT

Housing Services Director
Wayne Tatlow BA (Hons) Dip Housing FCIH

Review 1st January 2009 - 31st March 2010

Entry into the Places for People Group

The Tenant Services Authority confirmed its approval to the business case for our entry into the Places for People Group on 6th March 2009 and a Special General Meeting was held the same day, at which shareholders voted unanimously in support of the proposal.



The Association formally entered the Group as a subsidiary on 1st April 2009, following which the Association took on the management of Places for People's housing stock of 766 properties in Norfolk and Suffolk.



Group Chairman Zenna Atkins was guest of honour at a celebratory event in May, welcoming Cotman as a member of the Group and paying tribute to the Association's reputation for excellent performance and customer service.

Zenna Atkins,
Places for
People Group
Chairman



Steve Binks, Places for People Group Director, Finance and IT, was welcomed to the Board as an executive member following the Association's entry into the Group, and Chris Martin, Group Legal Services Director and Company Secretary was appointed Company Secretary.

Staff and Systems Integration

Places for People's Norwich-based staff moved into Cotman's office in May 2009, and have integrated into Cotman's housing services team. Working space is also provided for members of the Group's sales and marketing team within the Cotman office.

Cotman took responsibility for the management of Group housing stock from April 2009, with computer links giving full access to the Group systems being installed in December.

Cotman housing stock was transferred onto Group systems at the end of January 2010, allowing performance reports for the management of Cotman stock to be produced in the same format as those for Group owned stock.

Group provides central support services in a number of key areas, including treasury management and management accounting, income posting and payroll, in addition to acting as HCA lead development partner. Arrangements have been made to utilise the services of the Group's Customer Contact Centre from August 2010.

Customer Representation and Involvement

Following a series of meetings between the Association's Residents Forum Panel and Places for People's Area Customer Liaison Panel, the two groups combined into a new Group, named the Cotman Customer Liaison Panel (CCLP).



The Cotman Customer Liaison Panel

The Chair of the CCLP serves on the Association's Board of Management, and a member represents Cotman at national level on the Group's Customer Involvement Panels.

The Association is keen to maximise opportunities for customer participation, and is currently exploring ways in which to encourage involvement by offering a variety of ways in which to participate.

Housing and Property Management

The total number of properties in management by the Association at 31st March 2010 was 2,174. This included 766 homes owned by other members of the Places for People Group and 46 properties managed on behalf of other agencies.

Shared ownership and Leasehold Scheme for the Elderly stock numbers remained static during the year, at 36 and 62 respectively, with sheltered and supported housing units increasing to 155.

The Association continued its ongoing programme of planned maintenance and property maintenance work to its own stock, maintaining 100% ongoing compliance with the Decent Homes Standard. We also commenced Decent Homes work on the Group owned stock in our management, with the objective of achieving 100% compliance by the end of December 2010.

In our first 12 months of management of Group owned stock we improved performance in all

housing and property management key performance indicator areas, at the same time maintaining our historic high performance for Cotman owned properties.

The 2009 Tenant Services Authority *Key Performance Indicators* show Cotman to be in the top ten percent of associations nationally for meeting the Decent Homes Standard, re-let times and minimising the number of properties vacant. Resident satisfaction with the way the Association deals with repairs and maintenance was also in the top quartile nationally, all evidence of the Association's commitment to delivering efficient housing management and maintenance services.

Community Involvement

The Association is keen to interact with the communities it serves, and has taken an active part in many activities to promote community involvement during the year.

With our 'Changing Lives, Strengthening Communities' initiative, we are proud to have formed a strong partnership which actively seeks to improve our customers lives by taking the lead on issues such as education, employment and financial well-being.

We have worked with a variety of local partners to host a number of events in the heart of our communities with the aim of tackling unemployment and raising awareness of learning opportunities. These included Employment and Learning Fairs in Bowthorpe, Mile Cross and Central Norwich, and a Learning Circus in Mile Cross to launch Adult Learners' Week, which incorporated fun activities for all the family with presentations to encourage adults back into training, education and formal/ informal learning.

Mile Cross Learning Circus



We have engaged with almost 1000 individuals through these events, including nearly 200 Cotman customers. We know that 12 people have found employment directly as a result of attending one of our events, 164 have signed up for a learning programme and 8 have started new businesses.

Community Support

We recognise that there are many older people living in the community that would benefit from the support, advice, facilities and social opportunities sheltered housing offers, but do not want to leave their home and give up what they perceive as their independence.

With this increasingly large part of the population in mind, Cotman is running a pilot outreach service from its sheltered housing scheme at Ashby Court, funded by Norfolk Supporting People. The project offers people living in the proximity of the sheltered scheme access to the same services as those received by the residents, but available to them while remaining in their own home.



Outreach Service at Ashby Court

The scheme manager provides company by home visits, but more importantly encourages people to overcome loneliness by engaging in activities at the sheltered housing scheme. These are as diverse as resident- led luncheon clubs, a regular Age UK art class, snooker and other games nights, outings to places of interest and a drama and dance group which performs twice yearly productions to a packed house. Residents have been hugely supportive of the initiative and have even developed a 'car club' to ensure Outreach clients without transport can safely join in social events taking place in the evening.

Development

Work completed on a rural housing scheme of 8 houses and bungalows at Burston, and a 12 unit Domestic Violence Refuge in Norwich which is being managed in partnership with Leeway, a specialist domestic abuse charity supporting adults, children and young people across Norfolk and Suffolk.



Properties under construction at Audley Close, Burston



Domestic Violence Refuge, Norwich

Both schemes were partially funded with the aid of grant from the Homes and Communities Agency.

Sixteen flats at Northumberland Street, Norwich, were also acquired from a local developer through the Section 106 element of a larger scheme.

We were successful in competition with other local associations to work with Norfolk Social Services to acquire and convert a bungalow in Hemsby, Great Yarmouth as accommodation for three adults with learning difficulties and their support workers. Social Services part funded the project, which is due to be handed over in the summer of 2010.

HCA grant funding was received for 5 assisted living flats in Norwich for people with learning difficulties, and it is anticipated work will commence in the summer of 2010.

Company Details

Head Office and Correspondence Address

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Web: www.cotman-housing.org.uk

Registered Office

305 Gray's Inn Road
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WC1X 8QR

Bankers

Barclays Bank plc
Norfolk & Waveney Business Centre
PO Box 614
1st Floor, St Cuthbert's House
7 Upper King Street
Norwich
NR3 1WX

Co-Op Bank
147 Church Street
Preston
PR1 3UD

Solicitors

Mills & Reeve, Norwich

The Association, as a member of Places for People Group, also has access to the Group solicitors set out below:

Devonshires, London
Trowers and Hamlin, London

Registered Auditors

KPMG LLP
St James' Square
Manchester
M2 6DS

Registration of the Association

The Association is incorporated under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act 1965 (Registered number IP19473R) and is registered under the Housing Act (Registered number L0284). It is also affiliated to the National Housing Federation and has charitable status.

