

Summer 2008

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Chief Executive's Foreword

Welcome to the Summer 2008 edition of the Cotman News!

I am pleased to welcome you to this latest edition of the Cotman News. This issue focuses on the Association's performance in 2007, following the unveiling of our 2007 Annual Report at the AGM in May.

Pages 4 and 5 provide details of Cotman's effectiveness in relation to the management and maintenance of our homes in 2007, and Residents Forum Chairman and Board of Management Tenant Representative Paul Watkinson discusses the work of the Forum Panel on page 8. The annual Performance Review has once again provided positive results, particularly with regard to repairs, following a busy year for the Association.

Cotman Housing Association's Board of Management and staff were sad to learn of the death of Residents Forum Vice Chair and Board of Management Tenant Representative Tom Nall, who passed away in March. Tom had been a Cotman resident since 2004, first living at Ashwell Court, and then moving to Ashby Court in 2007, and was a valued member of the Association's Board of Management. Tom will be greatly missed by all that knew him.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Best wishes

Vivien Farrow

Chief Executive, Cotman Housing Association

Team Cotman rises to the Sport Relief Challenge!



From left to right: Ben Veal, Amanda Marsh, Declan Marsh, Natalie Peacock and Michelle Maher.

Staff from Cotman Housing Association braved the wet and windy conditions on Sunday, March 16th for an early morning run, all in aid of Sport Relief.

'Team Cotman' - comprising Senior Customer Services Officer Amanda Marsh, HR Officer Michelle Maher, Information & PR Officer Ben Veal and Customer Services Officer Natalie Peacock, and accompanied by Amanda's young nephew Declan - ran or walked 3 miles at 9am, raising over £200 for the charity.

Sport Relief is a charity set up by the BBC in 2004, and the cash raised by getting active for Sport Relief is spent by Comic Relief to change countless lives for the better - both in the UK and across the world's poorest countries.

Cotman Housing is on the move!



Cotman Housing Association will soon be moving to new offices!

The Association is moving into a modern two storey extension attached to Bowthorpe Hall on the outskirts of Norwich.

"Since moving to the current St Martins Lane office in 2000, the Association has continued to expand both in terms of properties managed and number of staff" said Chief Executive Vivien Farrow. "The new office will offer more space for the Association to continue to grow and develop in the future".

The move is scheduled to take place in August 2008, and residents will be provided with more information shortly.

BRAVE COTMAN RESIDENT AWARDED POLICE LIFESAVING HONOUR

A heroic resident who risked his own life to save a man trapped in a blazing car is to receive one of the country's top bravery honours.

21-year-old Jason Woods (pictured right), who lives at Beechcroft, New Costessey, was travelling by car one Sunday morning in September last year with his girlfriend Sam and three-month-old son Riley when they spotted a car crashed into a tree on Wood Lane, Pulham Market.

Jason quickly rushed to the vehicle, uncertain at this point whether there was actually anyone inside. "There was a lot of smoke, but when I got nearer, I could see that there was a man trapped inside" said Jason. "I tried opening the door but that was jammed, and I really had to yank it to get it open. When I did, a massive flame came at me. There was a lot of noise, as the tyres and windows were bursting, but I managed to grab him and pull him out of the car".

"He was on fire when I grabbed him, but I managed to put the flames out by rolling him on the ground. It wasn't long after we got away from the car that the bonnet flew up in the air and then there was a big explosion".

"A policeman driving nearby had seen the smoke from a distance, and when he realised what was happening, he immediately called for back up, with more police, an ambulance, the fire brigade, and even the Air Ambulance arriving shortly after".

It was this same policeman who nominated Jason for the bravery award – the Royal Humane Society Testimonial on Vellum – after being so impressed with his courage.

The man he saved, 45-year-old James Garrard, was rushed to Chelmsford Hospital and suffered severe burns during the incident.

"I have not heard from him, but I have heard that he is recovering so I am pleased about that. It's nice to be given this award, but I really didn't want a fuss made – I just did what I had to do at the time".

"It's amazing what you can do in a situation like this, but I never saw it as putting myself at risk. I couldn't have lived with myself if I hadn't tried to save him".

If you have a story to tell, please contact Cotman's Information & PR Officer Ben Veal on 01603 612927.



Pictured: Jason Woods

NEW OFFICES FOR COTMAN SCHEMES

New offices have recently been created at several of the Association's schemes, to allow our Estate Superintendents, Scheme Managers and Housing Officers to provide an even more effective service to residents.

Costessey, Murrells Court/Parmentergate Court and Lowestoft all now have estate offices, in addition to existing offices at Ashby Court, Ashwell Court and Chestnut Court. Residents at these schemes have already been contacted regarding the new offices, but if you would like any further information, please call the Customer Services team on 01603 612927.



From left to right: Julia Mason, Pam London, Sue Tuckwood, Gary Plumstead and Kevin Bond at the Costessey office (not pictured - Groundskeeper Kevin Pope).



Performance Review 2007

Cotman Housing Association aims to provide affordable homes of the highest quality. In order to ensure that we continue to work effectively and efficiently, it is important that we monitor our performance annually.

This Performance Review covers the period from 1st January to 31st December 2007. Where appropriate comparative figures are given for 2006.

PROPERTIES IN MANAGEMENT AT END OF YEAR	2007	2006
General needs rented	1077	1046
Sheltered rented	101	101
Supported rented	38	26
Shared ownership	36	36
Leasehold for the elderly	62	62
Managed on behalf of others	46	41
TOTAL IN MANAGEMENT	1360	1312

TENANTED ACCOMODATION (General Needs & Supported)	2007	2006
RENTS		
Average weekly rent	£62.08	£59.88
Average increase in rent	3.68%	3.55%
Rent lost to vacant dwellings	0.76%	0.64%

LETTINGS		
Lettings	165	137
Re-let time (weeks)	3.3	3.5
Tenancy turnover (excluding move on accommodation)	9.2%	9.3%
Letting to BME households	6.2%	4.5%

MANAGEMENT COSTS		
Management costs per property	£637	£606
Maintenance cost per property	£301	£265

STOCK CONDITION & REPAIRS	2007	2006
Repairs notified	3139	3653
Emergency repairs completed within target	100%	100%
Urgent repairs completed within target	99%	96%

3,139
Total Repairs Undertaken



100%
Emergency Repairs completed within target

97%
"Repair work was completed to my satisfaction"

**GENERAL NEEDS HOUSING
AVERAGE WEEKLY GROSS RENT COMPARISON**

	2007	2006
Broadland Housing Association	£67.31	£64.13
Colne Housing Society	£78.98	£77.80
Cotman Housing Association	£65.68	£63.31
Orwell Housing Association	£64.90	£62.52
Peddars Way Housing Association	£62.79	£60.23
Saffron Housing Trust	£58.39	£55.21
Suffolk Housing Society	£61.93	£58.73
Victory Housing Trust	£53.59	£49.96
Wherry Housing Association	£68.16	£64.54

RENTED STOCK BY LOCAL AUTHORITY

	No. 2007	No. 2006	% 2007	% 2006
Breckland DC	92	90	7.3	7.4
Broadland DC	78	78	6.2	6.4
Great Yarmouth BC	23	11	1.8	0.9
Kings Lynn & West Norfolk BC	22	22	1.7	1.8
North Norfolk DC	54	54	4.3	4.5
Norwich City Council	573	540	45.5	44.5
Portsmouth BC	1	1	0.1	0.1
South Norfolk DC	310	310	24.6	25.6
Waveney DC	107	107	8.5	9.3

Executive Team



Chief Executive
Vivien Farrow
MBA MSc ACIAT



Finance Director
Quinto Gavita
FMAAT



Housing Services Director
Wayne Tatlow
BA (Hons) DipH MCIH



- Breckland DC : 7.3%
- Broadland DC : 6.2%
- Great Yarmouth BC : 1.8%
- Kings Lynn and West Norfolk BC : 1.7%
- North Norfolk DC : 4.3%
- Norwich City Council : 45.5%
- Portsmouth BC : 0.1%
- South Norfolk DC : 24.6%
- Waveney DC : 8.5%

2007 SAW THE COMPLETION OF OVER £6 MILLION WORTH OF NEW DEVELOPMENT FOR COTMAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION, WITH THE COMPLETION OF 12 FLATS IN A SUPPORTED HOUSING SCHEME IN GREAT YARMOUTH IN JULY AND THE OPENING OF 27 AFFORDABLE HOMES IN NORWICH IN OCTOBER.



GENDER EQUALITY

ACTION PLAN

The Association has developed a Gender Equality Action Plan which is intended to ensure that the Association's homes and services are accessible to all and to develop a greater understanding about those factors and the barriers that affect women, men and transgender people.

We wish to eliminate discrimination and to promote equality and good relations regardless of gender, gender reassignment status, being married or a civil partner, pregnancy or maternity/paternity/parental leave.

We have undertaken an initial review of all areas of the Association's work that may be open to gender discrimination, and identified the following areas (but not limited to):

- Lettings, tenancy terminations and property sales
- Access to information and advice
- Payment methods
- Resident involvement
- Resident satisfaction
- Complaints
- Dealing with incidents of domestic violence
- Procurement and supply diversity
- Governance
- Staffing and employment
- Development and regeneration
- Reporting and monitoring

We will be consulting with residents and staff to assess their satisfaction with the way the Association currently addresses gender equality matters and to identify all policies and procedures to which gender awareness and discrimination might potentially relate. These will then be reviewed in order to amend or eliminate any aspects that may, directly or indirectly, cause persons to be disadvantaged or discriminated against as a result of their gender, and new policies and procedures will be developed where a need is identified to do so.

If you would like to be take part in working with staff to develop the Association's Gender Equality Action Plan, please register your interest to the Housing Services Director, Wayne Tatlow, by providing your name, address and preferred method of being contacted (post, telephone, telephone via Type Talk, e-mail or fax) by:

Telephoning: 01603 612927

Faxing: 01603 766963

Emailing: survey@cotman-housing.org.uk

The Importance of Sheltered Housing



Congratulations to Sheila Moore, Scheme Manager for Ashby Court (pictured left), who recently achieved her National Certificate in Supported Housing following the completion of a one-year course. The gaining of this qualification goes to demonstrate Mrs Moore's dedication to sheltered housing, which is one of the key services provided by the Association.

Cotman Housing has 3 rented sheltered schemes providing over 140 homes, located in Bowthorpe, New Costessey and close to Norwich city centre. These homes are for people who are aged over 60 or disabled who want to live independently but who like to know that there is someone around if they need them. Residents live in self contained flats or bungalows and are independent, however support is provided by a Scheme Manager if required from Monday to Friday. All of the Associations' sheltered housing schemes have a 24 hour emergency alarm system for added security and peace of mind. The Association also manages an almshouse sheltered housing scheme at Brewster Court, Blofield on behalf of the Josiah and Mary Brewster Trust.

"At Cotman, we aim to help residents of sheltered housing retain their independence through offering high quality and well designed homes, a safe and peaceful environment, and opportunities to meet with other residents and the local community" says Operations Manager Jane Warnes. "All of our sheltered schemes have communal facilities - a shared lounge, kitchen, guest room and laundry room - and offer a range of social activities".

For more information on sheltered housing, please contact Housing Officer Julia Mason on 01603 612927.

Ask the Association

Please can you tell me how I can be involved in shaping and influencing the services I receive and decisions taken about my home and community?

When residents receive a service from the Association, such as a repair or adaptation to their home, annual service of gas appliances, external redecoration or planned maintenance works (such as new kitchen, heating system or replacement doors and windows), they will be sent a short survey to enable them to comment on their satisfaction with various aspects of the service they have received. Tenants who have just started a tenancy or in the process of ending their tenancy are sent a survey for them to provide feedback and comments. Officers review all responses and, where necessary, will follow up the survey to seek to address any issues that have been identified. The results of the various surveys are collected and reported to the Association's Board of Management and to the Residents Forum Panel for their consideration. Additionally, the results are publicised in the Cotman News.

In the previous edition, the results of the STATUS satisfaction survey, which all tenants should have received at the end of 2007, were featured. During 2008 the Association will be working with residents to develop surveys to assess residents satisfaction with their estate services (such as gardening) and with the way the Association deals with reports of anti-social behaviour.

Cotman's formal resident involvement group is the Residents Forum, which is made up of Cotman residents who want to comment on and influence the services they receive and decisions taken about their homes and communities, but do not necessarily wish to attend meetings or be committed to times and dates. They can feedback to the Association in a number of ways, by commenting on consultations, reports, reviews, future plans and proposed policy changes.

This means that their involvement can fit around work, families or other commitments and they can choose what they get involved in, as well as when and how they choose to be involved. No member is under an obligation to join every debate, or attend any meetings that may take place. Information can be sent to residents via post, fax, email or someone can phone them - whichever suits them best. If you are interested in joining the Residents Forum, please contact the Association's Customer Services team to receive a leaflet that explains the role and work of the Residents Forum.

Some groups of our residents (young people, black and ethnic-minority residents, residents with disabilities) are, for lots of different reasons, less likely to get involved. We would like all residents to be represented, which means covering all issues and getting input from all.

Remember, the best way to be heard is to say something!

We want to hear from you!

Do you have a question that you would like to put to us?

Please write to the address on the right or email us at

office@cotman-housing.org.uk, and we will answer as many of your queries as possible in future issues of *Cotman News*.

Ask the Association
Cotman Housing Association
Cotman House
53-57 St Martins Lane
Norwich, NR3 3SA



Testing Your SMOKE DETECTOR

It is recommended that you test your smoke detector each week, to ensure it is working properly.

The way you test your detector depends on the type of detector you have:

Newer properties will have smoke detectors **fixed to the ceiling**. They can be tested by pushing and then releasing the small test button on the detector, which, if it is working properly, should cause the alarm to sound for a short time.

Some properties have **Fire Angel** detectors, which are **fitted to a light fitting**, usually in the lounge, hall and/or upstairs landing. These can be tested by switching the light off then back on quickly which, if working properly, should cause the alarm to sound for a short time.

Should you ever notice that your smoke detector occasionally makes a "**beeping**" or "**chirping**" sound, this is normally a warning that the backup battery which is built into it is getting low and needs replacing. If this should occur, **please contact the Association immediately** to arrange for it to be checked and, if necessary, replaced.

In a few properties, where a FireAngel could not be fitted, a **battery operated smoke detector** will be in place and can be tested by pushing and then releasing the small test button on the detector which, if it is working properly, should cause the alarm to sound for a short time. You should also replace the battery at least annually.

As well as testing your smoke detector regularly, it should also be lightly **vacuumed at least annually** to remove any dust that may have accumulated.

If you need assistance testing your smoke detector at any time, **please contact the Association** and we will be happy to arrange a time with you for a member of staff or one of our contractors to check it.

If, when you have tested it, you do not believe your smoke detector is working properly, please contact the Association immediately to arrange for it to be checked and, if necessary, replaced.

Should you have any concerns, please contact the Property Services team on 01603 612927 to discuss them.



Residents Forum News

By Paul Watkinson, Chairman of the Residents Forum and Board of Management Tenant Representative

“With this issue focusing on the Association’s performance in 2007, I thought I would take the opportunity to not only reflect on last year but also look ahead to the future. The Residents Forum continued to play a key role in 2007, providing a crucial link between Cotman residents and officers. Last year, a number of local consultations took place on subjects including: communal gardening and cleaning arrangements, parking and pets policy reviews, improved communal lighting, possible introduction of a door entry system, introduction of communal waste bins, day centre and luncheon club satisfaction and the development of the Leaseholder Handbook.

The Residents Forum Panel met quarterly in 2007, and I would encourage any members of the Residents Forum that wish to play a more active role to express an interest in joining the Forum Panel. The Panel acts as the steering group for the wider Forum, representing residents’ viewpoints and feeding back information. Two members of the Panel are elected to be members of the Association’s Board of Management, which has overall responsibility for overseeing the work of the Association.

All Cotman residents are encouraged to comment on and influence the services they receive and decisions taken about their homes and communities in the ways that best suit them.

Enjoy the summer months and fingers crossed for better weather than in 2007!”

If you would like more information about the Residents Forum, please contact Housing Services Director Wayne Tatlow on 01603 612927.

Coffee Morning Held For Residents At



Cotman Housing Association held a successful coffee morning on Friday March 7th at the Witard Road Baptist Church in Heartsease for new residents to the area.

Thornfield Way, a new development of 27 affordable homes in Heartsease, was officially opened by Cotman in October 2007. Now that all of the homes are occupied, the Association held the coffee morning to allow residents to get to know their neighbours a little better.

Norwich City Councillor Alan Waters attended the coffee morning, meeting with residents of both Thornfield Way and the nearby Paine Road to discuss any issues or concerns surrounding the area.

Lyndsey Burgess, Cotman’s Housing Officer for Thornfield Way who organised the event, said that resident interaction is very important to the Association. “We were very pleased to see so many residents attend this morning, and everyone here today seems happy in their new home. This was an important exercise in building bridges within the community, and we will aim to make this a regular event following the success of today”.



New Learning, New You!

A Learning Fair at The Mall, Castle Meadow, Norwich

Monday 1st September 10am - 4pm



The September Learning Fair offers you:

- Advice and guidance on Adult Education, City College and WEA courses
- Help with application forms
- Taster sessions of some of the many courses available
- Relaxed, friendly atmosphere
- Prize draw

It’s never been easier to find out about:

- Learning for fun near you
- Courses for leisure or career needs
- Further Education in Norwich and Norfolk

Come and talk to us and make the autumn time for a new you

For further information call Amanda Marsh on 01603 612927

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