



# St. Matthew's Housing Association Ltd.

A Non Profit-making Housing Association

Annual Report 2016



*On a journey to become a model of excellence for community  
based housing associations in Northern Ireland*



# **Annual Report of St Matthews Housing Association**

**2016**

**St Matthews Housing Association Ltd. 58 Harper Street Belfast BT5 4EN**

Registered under the Industrial and Provident Societies Act (Northern Ireland) 1969 (No.IP177).

Registered with the Department for Social Development (No.R18).

HMRC registered charitable status (XT28085). Registered with the Charity Commission for NI (NIC 10291)

<b>Board of Management</b>	<b>Number attended of 5 Board Meetings in 2015/16</b>
Mr P Devlin – Chairperson	5
Mr K Craig – Treasurer	2
Mr J O'Donnell	1
Mrs P Brennan	2
Mr P O'Ruanai	4
Mr C Devenny	4
Mrs M Flanagan	4
Ms L Fegan	5
Mr D Brennan	3

***The Board also held a strategic away day event separately during the year.  
Total expenses reimbursed to Board members in 2015/16 - £0.00***

***(3 Board members are tenants of the Association)***

**Staff**

Mr Jim Black – Chief Executive & Honorary Secretary

Mrs Sarah Jane Murray – Finance Officer

Mrs Sandra Wright – Housing Officer

Mr Kieran Donnelly – Maintenance Officer

Mrs Deirdre Conlon – P/T Caretaker/Cleaner

**Telephone No.:- 02890 451070 / Out of Hours Emergency No.:- 0800 731 3081**

## **A Word from our Chairperson**

Hearteningly it has been another successful year - we are performing well and managing our costs effectively, we are continuing to invest in our stock and have completed our second stock condition survey of all our property. We gained a couple of units but there is the prospect of more.

Development and Procurement – the APEX procurement group is ending and we declined an invitation to a group structure with APEX HA. We hope to continue to work with APEX HA and others in delivering new social housing for Short Strand which we will manage, starting with the Bryson development. We successfully procured new maintenance contract arrangements as part of the HA5 initiative. This procurement group of smaller housing associations represents an opportunity for us going forward of obtaining value for money and partnering generally. SMHA will work hard to bring new housing to Short Strand in the next few years.

DSD Inspection – SMHA officially maintained “Satisfactory Assurance” in 2015. Our internal auditors fairly have rated some of our processes and work “Substantial Assurance”. We are a continually improving small social enterprise.

Development – we added 2 additional units into our stock via the odd ESP or rehab unit as and are pursuing and interested in more when suitable opportunities arise. We hope our continued alliance with APEX HA will afford us some additional development opportunities in the future – notably the former Bryson Centre. 1-7 Mountpottinger Road also remains a possibility for development. Beyond this Sirocco and the Bus Depot site may come into play. Our priority remains the Short Strand area and we hope to deliver good quality affordable housing in the coming years.

We continue to invest in our housing stock – in total estimated at around £1.5m of total expenditure in the five years after our stock condition survey completed in 2009/10 (completing March 2016). In the last year we focussed on external redecoration of our stock and electrical servicing. Our stock condition survey confirms our homes meet Decent Homes Standard and with regular planned investment will continue to meet Decent Homes Standard.

Finally, we successfully concluded some defamation proceedings against Irish News earlier this year – obtaining a clarification to articles on allocations made by Association staff. It represents an important correction of the record in relation to our housing service – that it is fair to all. All our Board members give of their time freely and are a credit to this community. Our staff operate an excellent housing service and its important this is understood by all. Thank you my colleagues on the Board and our staff for all your time, help and effort and we all share the vision of a successful community housing association in the coming years.

**Patrick Devlin**

**SMHA Chairperson**

## **Residents Satisfaction Survey 2015**

The overall results of the Residents Satisfaction Survey carried out in the autumn of 2015 were positive but the response rate was slightly down on our last 2 surveys. Sound levels of satisfaction across all performance indicators are indicative of a quality housing service and a solid Housing Association that strives for constant improvement and excellence regarding service provision. There were no glaring concerns or major worries for our tenants and this is heartening for SMHA. We continue to record improvements in most areas of the survey compared to the data we received in 2011 & most recently in 2013.

Notable continuing improvements on survey response data since 2013 & 2011 in the following areas are:-

- Generally satisfied – up to **91%** from **90%** which was up from 88% in 2011.
- Overall quality of home – up to **92%** from **85%** which was up from 80% in 2011.
- Value for money of home – up to **89%** from **85%** which was up from 84% in 2011.
- How your enquiry was dealt with – up to **95%** from **90%** which was up from 87% in 2011.
- Generally satisfied with repairs/maintenance – up to **94%** from **90%** which was up from 86% in 2011.

In relation to sector averages (as compiled by Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations for all housing associations) performance remains good. NIFHA have published new data on comparisons and we performed very well in comparison to other Associations.

We can take heart from these returns and seek to continue to improve. Our housing service is good and we continue to both invest in our own housing stock and work to bring new housing to Short Strand.

We will continue to put our residents first in all that we do. We are a small community based social enterprise with strong community involvement and will seek to continue to improve our service in the coming years.

## **Financial Inclusion - Credit Union Matched Savings Plan & Tenants Home Insurance Policy**

When we talk about “financial inclusion” we mean access to financial services at affordable costs to lower income households, who make the majority of our tenant base. Where people cannot easily access these financial products many of the rest of us take for granted, this is known as financial exclusion which contributes to a wider social exclusion.

Around 80% of our tenants access housing benefit to help pay rents and rates. Recent UK wide statistics record that 47% of those that are “tenants” save money whilst this figure is 70% for “owner occupiers”. In these austere times with further threats of a squeeze on benefits likely, it is important our tenants are able to access financial advice and products wherever appropriate.

SMHA already help facilitate access to debt and budgeting advice and benefits advice. The vast majority of our tenants have bank accounts and we can help facilitate those who have not. However an important gap exists in encouraging saving and in access to lower cost alternatives to money lenders or payday loan lenders.

Local credit unions are an excellent potential source of access to savings and responsible borrowing. SMHA acknowledge many of our tenants will already be members of Credit Unions. However a significant minority may not be. SMHA offer an incentive “matched savings” scheme to encourage wider take up of CU membership. A tenant can join their local credit union (if not already a member) and SMHA would undertake to match savings the tenant is able to manage in the first 12 weeks up to a value of £50. We can also refund any joining fee/expense. If you are not currently a member of a local Credit Union and would like to learn more about this scheme, please contact staff at the office.

In addition to this scheme SMHA are hoping soon to introduce a limited **home contents insurance policy** for all our tenants. It is hoped cover will be offered on the basis of the major (but restricted) perils - generally Fire, Flood, Burst Pipes ... cover is not provided in respect of either Accidental Damage or Theft. The intention is not to provide cover for accidental damage to/ loss of expensive items which are easily damaged ...ipads etc. This insurance will be designed to offer our tenants some peace of mind for some reimbursement of possessions lost in the event of major catastrophes. However, we do also encourage tenants to have their own home contents insurance cover where at all possible.

## Key Performance Data in 2015/16

SMHA has performed well in the last several years following a period of significant change in the organisation with a new Chief Executive taking over in April 2010. We continue to strive to meet performance objectives set for us and also improving the housing service tangibly for all residents. We carried out a comprehensive resident satisfaction survey in 2011/12, 2013/14 and 2015/16 with excellent results. You will see on the next two pages a summary of some of the recorded key performance data over the last year, with a comparison to the 2 previous years.

Key Performance Areas	2013/14 Performance	2014/15 Performance	2015/16 Performance	Target
% of total rent receivable actually collected	97.75%**	99.16%	99.96%	>98%
% of rental income that comes from Housing Benefit	73.81%	74.61%	73%	-
Voids as a % of rent receivable	0.29%	0.22%	0.38%	<1%
No. Of new lettings	11	1	4	-
No. Of relettings	9	11	5	-
Total No. Of units of occupied accommodation	197	198	203	-
Average Relet Times (in days)	13	13	53	-
% of emergency repairs completed in 24 hours	94%	96%	94%	>85%
% of urgent repairs completed in 4 working days	89%	89%	93%	>80%
% of routine repairs completed in 20 working days	89%	93%	93%	>80%
No. of complaints received/resolved prior to referral to ombudsman	1/1	3/3	2/2	100%
No. of anti-social behaviour complaints received/resolved	2/2	3/3	2/2	100%
% of residents satisfied with SMHA housing service	90%	-	91%	>80%

\*\* figures skewed by additional housing benefit technical debt held for year 2013/14

## **SMHA Rents**

SMHA has recorded information of the rents charged for different homes in our management. The Association's rent setting policy is broken into two categories. The first is Controlled or Point based rents. Under this system of rent setting, each property is allocated a number of points depending upon the facilities that each property contains. Decontrolled rents are used for all mixed funded development property. They are based on four-factors: - sinking fund, loan element, management allowances and maintenance allowances.

Our overall weighted average weekly rent for a controlled property is **£69.35** and for new build **£76.99**. Our overall weighted average weekly rent for a decontrolled rehabilitated property is **£71.18** and for a new build **£78.91**.

Our Board balances the need fund our housing service adequately and maintain affordable rents. Typically, our rents compare well against other HA sector rents. The average rent rise applied in 2015-16 was 3.3%.

## **Community Support and Development**

Many Housing Associations are getting better at supporting communities where they operate. It is right for housing associations to look beyond simply the bricks and mortar of the housing they provide to do more in their communities. Often this is done by awarding small grants to local groups whose work benefits the community. SMHA is actively seeking to support the communities we serve – not just Short Strand but also in Clonard and Poleglass.

In consultation with the Short Strand Partnership we have commenced this work in this area and are actively grant aiding some small community initiatives which do great work in our community. We are interested in hearing from people or groups setting up or already running community events and schemes to benefit SMHA communities.

Where we can offer assistance to those making a difference in the community we will.

## **Mutual Exchanges**

There is tremendous demand for housing in Short Strand both from new applicants and those wishing to transfer or exchange their property. The Association is always willing to support exchanges of accommodation.

Are you a SMHA tenant that wants to exchange your property locally with someone in smaller property?

You may even be entitled to a **£500 payment** as part of our mutual exchange incentive scheme?

Ask SMHA housing staff for details. [Tel:- 90451070](tel:90451070)

## Accounts 2015/16 – using new accounting reporting standards

Approved at AGM 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016

### Statement of Income - Income and Expenditure Account

Year ended 31 March 2016

	2016	2015 restated
	£	£
<b>Turnover</b>	1,111,539	939,918
Operating costs	<u>(841,772)</u>	<u>(615,457)</u>
<b>Operating Surplus</b>	269,767	324,461
Interest receivable	5,555	7,203
Interest payable	(48,957)	(54,973)
FRS 17 past service cost gains	(7,000)	(2,000)
Other interest charge	<u>(6,000)</u>	<u>10,000</u>
<b>Surplus on Ordinary Activities (no taxation – due to charitable status)</b>	213,365	284,691
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	213,365	284,691
Actuarial gain (loss) on pension scheme	54,000	(129,000)
<b>Total recognised gains (losses) since last AR</b>	267,365	155,691

<b>Statement of Financial Position - Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015 restated</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Tangible Fixed Assets</b>		
Housing land and buildings:		
Cost	16,914,779	16,688,866
Less Depreciation	<u>(3,440,816)</u>	<u>(3,137,592)</u>
	13,473,963	13,551,274
Other Fixed Assets	<u>18,706</u>	<u>21,718</u>
	13,492,669	13,572,992
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	67,420	39,069
Cash & bank balances	<u>943,800</u>	<u>948,698</u>
	1,011,220	984,767
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Creditors	<u>(174,996)</u>	<u>(203,213)</u>
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	836,224	781,554
<b>Total Assets less Current Liabilities</b>	<b><u>14,328,893</u></b>	<b><u>14,354,546</u></b>
<b>Creditors: Amounts Falling Due After More Than 1 Year</b>		
Deferred Grant	9,550,324	9,685,775
Long-term liabilities	712,580	829,147
Pension fund liability	<u>162,000</u>	<u>203,000</u>
	10,424,094	10,717,922
<b>Financed By:</b>		
Share Capital	57	57
Capital Reserves	301	301
Revenue Reserves	<u>3,903,631</u>	<u>3,636,266</u>
	<u>3,903,989</u>	<u>3,636,624</u>
	<b>14,328,893</b>	<b>14,354,546</b>

**Are you a member of your local credit union?**

**If not, would you like to be?**

**You can take advantage of SMHA's matched savings scheme if you are a SMHA tenant and not currently a member of your local credit union.**

**Ask SMHA staff for details.**

**90451070**