

ANNUAL REPORT

MAY 2018

Introduction

This is a report to our property owners on the various aspects of our service. We will include information on how our service has changed and developed, together with any future plans we have.

Staffing Update

We now have the following members of estate staff providing your property management service:

Sally Morris, Housing & Finance Manager Louise Moore, Deputy Housing Manager
Kim Gick, Assistant Housing Manager Colin Hills, Assistant Housing Manager
Spencer Hopper, Housing & Finance Assistant
John Bodsworth, Shaun Lamb and Simon Packington Maintenance Technicians

We now have three company vehicles that we use for property management services.

Benefit Changes and Universal Credit

Universal Credit was introduced in the Arun District in 2016 and we have had a few of our single tenants moving from Job Seekers Allowance to Universal Credit. We have been able to support all our tenants in this process in order they can continue to receive their benefit payments without too much of a delay. We have also been able to receive direct 'managed payments' for the housing element of their claim.

The full roll out of Universal Credit in Arun will be on 4th July 2018. Sally and Kim were invited to attend a meeting, held by a member of staff from the Department of Works and Pensions, detailing exactly how the full roll out would be applied. From July any tenant who has a change in the circumstances will be moved from their existing benefit(s) to Universal Credit.

As a Registered Social Landlord LRHS Ltd will be given a 'landlord portal', which will enable us to easily communicate with Universal Credit advisors regarding tenants claims. If any of you would like more information regarding Universal Credit, please contact either Sally or Kim and we will do our best to explain this new benefit system.

Both the 'Benefit Cap' and 'Bedroom Tax' continue to be implemented where necessary meaning that some of our tenants do have to pay a 'top up' on their rent. As always we will continue to keep up to date with any changes and any impact they may have on our tenants.

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's)

As you are all aware the new legislation came into effect in April and we have been liaising with those of you who have either had to have a new EPC or had an EPC with a rating lower than Grade E. We record all the information on our property management software system, which will 'flag up' reminders when the EPC is due to expire. This enables us to make you aware in plenty of time to arrange for an assessor to visit your property and produce a new EPC.

How we have grown!

In October 2017 we began to manage some 'emergency accommodation' in Littlehampton. One of our property owners purchased a property which was then totally refurbished to be able to accommodate five single tenants in HMO accommodation with three separate ground floor rooms for emergency accommodation. This initiative is working very well and both the property owner and LRHS staff are delighted to be able to assist these vulnerable people in their urgent time of need.

LRHS now work closely with both Arun and Chichester District Councils with excellent working relationships now established. This considerably extends the scope of our service.

LRHS currently manage a total of 271 tenancies of which 183 are offsite. Between 2016 and 2018 we have had an increase of six HMO properties relating to 38 single tenancies.

Our Future Plans

LRHS are currently in the process of purchasing another property in Littlehampton – this will be used to accommodate both single tenants and emergency housing.

One of our owners is refurbishing a large property in Littlehampton, which is hoped will be commissioned in July or August 2018.

The plans for the development of new sheltered housing onsite at Oakhurst Gardens have been submitted to Arun District Council. It is hoped the works will commence later this year to provide two one-bedroom and four two-bedroom apartments.

Our continued success in the South & South East in Bloom Competition

We have now entered this very prestigious competition for eight consecutive years with the last two years both achieving the highest level. This is a reflection on how magnificent our sites here at Oakhurst Gardens and Rustington Hall look. This year's judging is on 26th June and so the preparation is well underway.

Satisfaction Survey

We have enclosed a satisfaction survey together with this report which we would be grateful if you could complete and return to us by 28th May 2018. We really value your comments and feedback as this will help us to continue to provide you with the service you require.

Finally thank you for your continued support with helping families who need well maintained and managed affordable homes.