



Annual report 2022

Contents

Chair's Report	P 3
From our CEO	P 4
Going above and beyond - Our Social Value	P 6
Our Board	P 11
Scrutiny - Listening to our customers	P 19
Empowering our customers and communities	P 22
Improving our services	P 23
You said, We did	P 24
Safety in our customers' homes	P 25
Investing in and maintaining our customers' homes	P 26
Care and Support	P 28
Development	P 29
An excellent customer experience	P 30
Our landlord services	P 31
Our estate services	P 32
Communicating with our customers	P 33
Providing value for money	P 34
Group Financial Results	P 35

Chair's report for the year ended 31 December 2022

From our Chair Kim Newman

We are now approaching the 60th Anniversary of the creation of Orwell Housing Association, and I am delighted to say that the business has had a good year despite the many and varied challenges being felt within the sector.

With the Social Housing Bill on the horizon, we have continued to improve our engagement with our customers through our Customer and Communities Team. This has been supported by the implementation of the recommendations from our external Governance Review and the co-creation and scrutiny work with the Orwell Residents Group. As a result, we have reviewed our committee structure and established a new Customer Insight Committee to help us analyse our performance, shape our services and keep the customer at the heart of everything we do.

We are also very conscious of the pressures our

customers face, with big increases in the cost of living; and although 2022 has seen implementation of a rental increase, we will continue to do all we can to help customers in need through the work of our Tenancy Sustainment Team and by utilising our 'Make a Difference' fund where appropriate.

I would like to thank all of 'Team Orwell' for their good work over the past year – and for their support and goodwill in a time of significant change. I will be standing down as Chair in March 2023 after 8 years on the Board; it has been a pleasure working with everyone at Orwell – a lot has been achieved in the last 8 years but there is always more to do and I am sure that my successor as Chair, Helen Driver, together with the Board and Executive will do a great job in taking Orwell forward, and I wish all involved every success.



A close-up portrait of Wendy Evans-Hendrick, the CEO, smiling. She has blonde hair and is wearing a dark top. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

From our CEO

Wendy Evans-Hendrick

2022 has been a challenging year for our customers, communities, and ourselves, as we have all navigated the cost-of-living crisis. Team Orwell has worked hard through 2022 to find innovative ways to support customers who have been struggling. The work that our Tenancy Sustainment team, housing officers and care and support teams do to put customers at our heart has never been more important. This has showed that, as we enter our 60th year in 2023, Orwell has evolved into so much more than just a landlord; we are an organisation which cares about the people and communities in which we work and delivers on our mission of “Together we make a Difference.”

Despite the challenging environment, we remain strong and whilst costs have increased in the year, in particular in the care and support and repairs division, other areas of the business have performed well and have helped to keep costs under control and somewhat mitigate the impact of inflation and agency staff costs. We remain focused on improving value for money across the business and continuing to develop new services to help meet the ever-increasing demand for our affordable homes and our care and support services.

In 2022, we launched our Staying Close project in Ipswich in partnership with Suffolk County Council. This project enables children leaving care

to be provided with their first home, supported by our service at Christchurch House. We have also taken on the lease of 130 extra care flats, 70 in Harwich and a further 60 in Walton-on-the-Naze. These projects saw us take on the care and support contract, as well as the employment of 70 new colleagues, working in partnership with the building owners, Funding Affordable Homes, and Essex County Council to put these schemes on a long-term sustainable footing. A further 36 new build homes were developed in the year for social and affordable rent and shared ownership, and we have a further 51 homes currently under construction that will hand over in 2023.

A huge thank you to all my colleagues in Team Orwell, our hardworking and supportive Board, and to all our engaged customers, whether on formal structures such as the Orwell Residents Group or Think Tanks or just those who regularly communicate with us. Your feedback, involvement and dedication help to ensure that we continue to improve our services.

We have a new Strategic Plan in place for 2023 outlining our ambitions for the next five years and so whilst external pressures will continue to be a challenge I feel positive about the future and our ability to continue to improve services for our customers, hear and listen to their voice and make positive steps towards our vision; that everyone should have a safe place to call home with the care and support they need to live their best life.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Wendy Evans-Hendrick', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Wendy Evans-Hendrick, CEO

Going above and beyond - Our Social Value

We know that homelessness and living in poor quality housing can have a negative impact on our health and wellbeing, yet for many people in East Anglia, having a safe, decent, affordable home is far from the reality.

Orwell Housing Association provides homes for over 7,500 customers by managing approximately 4,500 properties throughout Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridge and Essex. We provide care, support, housing management, property development and estate services and we believe everyone should be able to live in a good quality home that they can afford.

We are a not-for-profit organisation, which means any surplus we make is re-invested in the work that we do, improving our existing services and the lives of our local communities.

Through our customer engagement activities, we are empowering our customers, ensuring we listen to their views and we embed their needs and wishes into our services.

Our Housing Team makes a difference to the lives of our customers, through services such as tenancy sustainment and signposting our customers to welfare benefits, advice and other support services which may be helpful to them.

Our care and support schemes help our customers gain and retain independence and take control, so they can live their best life.

Our Development Team built 36 affordable homes to rent and buy for local families in 2022, with more planned in the coming year.

We have developed partnerships with other local housing associations to extend the reach of our work, having a positive impact on more local people.

As a large local employer, we are also dedicated to developing our people through training, apprenticeships and wellbeing activities.

Finally, we are working to meet government carbon net zero targets and to improve the energy efficiency of our homes, which will help to reduce costs for our customers. Talking to our customers will be a key part of this work so that we can consider their views and needs as we embark on these vital programmes.

We have chosen not to measure and express our social value purely in financial terms, because the things which are meaningful to us and our customers are not always measurable in financial terms. Instead, our social value report is based on the core themes of Orwell's work and the stories that bring this work to life.

£5,182



raised through the Make
A Difference fund provided tenants with
essential items when they were most
needed.

25

general needs homes
let to people who were
previously homeless.

Our rents are, on average, **56.3%**
of private rent levels and **68.2%** of
local housing allowance rates, making
them more affordable for our customers.



Life changing support



M was referred to our Orwell Supported Housing team in July 2020, following an eviction which had left M sofa surfing for five months.

Due to former tenancy arrears of over £10k plus court and repair costs, the local council had assessed that M would need to pay their arrears off for 12 months before being considered eligible to rejoin the Housing Register. They managed to do this with help from family members and by setting aside £20 per month.

M moved into our accommodation and was able to move into a more independent flat in December 2020, as they had demonstrated the ability to maintain their home and work with support staff and specialist agencies. M also supported new customers moving in and became a real asset to Orwell.

M engaged fully with the support and opportunities available to them from Orwell and within the community, including addressing previous trauma and completing a recovery programme for alcohol and drug misuse.

M has also accepted support for their mental health, learning about themselves and how to recognise their triggers. They are able to talk to friends, family or support staff/services if they need to. They have developed excellent coping strategies, preventing them from reaching

crisis point.

Due to support from Orwell and others, M has also managed to combat significant debt problems and is in the final stages of completing the debt relief process.

Despite historic debts, M has developed excellent budgeting skills and has managed to pay their rent, service charges and other costs on time to maintain a home.

With a safe and affordable home, M was able to start a career as a carer and, despite having no previous employment history, is now working full-time. M has thrived in the workplace and is progressing quickly to senior carer positions, finding the role rewarding.

In 2022, Orwell was made aware that M was moving on into a home of their own through the Housing Register, which was unthinkable when they were referred to Orwell less than two years ago.



unaccompanied asylum-seeking children housed in an Orwell home dedicated for this purpose.

Homelessness prevention

One of our Housing Officers had been trying to contact a customer for some time without success but they continued to door knock whenever they were on the estate and, eventually, they made contact with the customer, B, and were able to visit them in their home.

The Housing Officer discovered that B had not had any heating or hot water for some time but had not reported this to Orwell. They were also concerned the customer wasn't coping well in their home which needed a clearance. The Housing Officer immediately referred B to our in-house Tenancy Sustainment Team and together they arranged a joint visit.

B explained they had lost their best friend a few years ago and had just given up; they were currently off sick from work and didn't really leave their home. They explained they really wanted to make things better but didn't know where to start. They also made it very clear they wanted to be involved in the process of sorting out their home and making a positive change.

B's Tenancy Sustainment Officer applied for some external funding which was approved and, together with money from Orwell's Tenancy Sustainment Fund, they secured external support from various agencies to help clear the flat.

In addition, the heating and hot water were reinstated, and B let us know that they were able to have their first bath in a long time. *"It was heaven!"*

A couple of weeks later, B's Housing Officer and Tenancy Sustainment Officer went back to visit. Their home was unrecognisable, their health had improved to the extent that they were back at work again, and they had their home and their life back.



families helped by our Tenancy Sustainment Team to manage their tenancies, reducing the chances of tenancy failure and homelessness.

 **£2,400**

allocated to customers to purchase essential items for their homes and ease financial pressure.



24 colleagues across the organisation are Mental Health First Aiders, 21 of these trained by Orwell.

They increase awareness, reduce stigma and offer support to colleagues, helping them remain in, or return to work.



£36,903

in external funding obtained by our Tenancy Sustainment team, on behalf of customers, for goods, services and support for customers experiencing financial hardship.



44

customers attended Your Own Place workshops funded by Orwell, increasing life skills and boosting confidence.

£5,858



from the tenancy sustainment fund used to support Orwell customers facing financial hardship.



5 procurement exercises

carried out involving our customers.

940



volunteer hours donated, enabling local people to gain valuable work experience and build confidence.

14



customers living in our sheltered schemes up-skilled through 'ease the squeeze' financial and digital skills workshops.



2 apprentices recruited, enabling local people to gain hands-on work experience, alongside an accredited qualification, whilst earning a wage.

10



local students supported through work experience placements, giving them a greater understanding of future career opportunities and choices.



12

colleagues supported to gain additional skills through apprenticeships in either care or leadership.

Our Board

	OHA Board	Audit & Risk	Governance	Customer Insight	Remuneration and Nominations	OHL Board	Remuneration
Kim Newman	Chair		x	x	x		£11,000
Cynthia Alers	x	Chair	x			x	£6,620
Barbara Thorndick	x	x	x	Chair			£6,620
Helen Driver	x			x	Chair	Chair	£6,620
Jeanette Alfano	x	x	Chair	x			£6,620
Dayle Bayliss	x	x	x			x	£7,262
Ian Pinches	x	x			x		£7,262
Brett Rennolds	x	x			x		£7,262
Lauren Bayliss-Fuller	x			x	x		£7,262
Stuart Appleby	x		x	x		x	£6,620
Alastair Thomas (retired March 22)	x						£4,500
Daniel Gaul (retired March 22)	x						£4,500
Stephen White (co-opted September 22)	x	x					£4,500

Ms Kim Newman, BSc (Hons), FCIPS, MBIFM, FCMI,
MInstLM, MIAM, MIOD



Chair

Length of Service

Joined March 2015

Kim joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in March 2015. Having grown up living in social housing and experienced first-hand the security, community, and life chances that this provided to her family, Kim was clear that her purpose was to give back to the social housing sector through both her business and work and as a Board Member.

Kim is now Chair of the Board, a member of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee and a member of the Customer Insight Committee from mid-2022. Kim is also a member of the Support and Care Working and Tender Group and was a member of the Governance Committee until it was closed.

With a background as a surveyor, Kim's career progressed into procurement, commercial management, change, business strategy and partnership working mainly within the Social Housing, public sector, and commercial property sector.

Kim is now the founder and Managing Director of PML, a specialist Business Change and Property Services Consultancy and is also a Director of two residential management companies for the Fellowes Plain Development in Norwich. Prior to setting up PML in 1995, Kim spent a number of years at national consultancy practices Capita and Turner & Townsend in various leadership roles and was seconded to a variety of public sector clients to develop and implement their business strategies.

Helen Driver

Vice Chair

Length of Service

Joined March 2019



Helen joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in March 2019. Having grown up in Suffolk, Helen is proud of her involvement with Orwell and of its achievements within the community.

Helen is now Vice Chair of the Board, Chair of Orwell Homes Limited, Chair of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee and a member of the Customer Insight Committee from mid-2022. Helen is also a member of the Support and Care Working and Tender Group and is the Money Laundering Principal for the group.

With a background in investment analysis and managing UK equity pension funds and portfolios with organisation such as, Aviva Investors and Standard Life Investments, Helen was responsible for financial communications with shareholders and the investment community.

Helen has since diversified to working in collaboration with a national financial education charity.

Jeanette Alfano, MBA BTech (Hons)

Board Member & Chair of Governance Committee (until mid 2022)

Length of Service

Joined March 2015



Jeanette joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in March 2015. With a passion for the use of technology as an enabler for corporate success, Jeanette brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to her role as a Board Member.

Jeanette was Chair of the Governance Committee until it was closed down part way through 2022. Jeanette is a member of Audit Committee and a member of the Customer Insight Committee from mid-2022.

Jeanette is now retired from her full-time role but started her career in computing in 1978 and has a background implementing technology enabled change in both the private and public sector. Her career led to work for a Housing Association where she was responsible for the integration of all the core systems and the transformation of the organisation into a Digital Enterprise.

Barbara Thorndick, OBE

FCIH BA (Hons) **Board Member & Chair of Remuneration & Nomination and Customer Insight Committee (from mid 2022)**



Barbara joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in March 2016. Whilst a student, she experienced a short period of 'sofa surfing' homelessness, which ignited a passion in her for the right everyone has to a safe, secure home.

Barbara has spent her career in social housing and is the former Chief Executive of West Kent Housing Association. Under her leadership the association became the first in the country to be awarded top marks by government inspectors for delivering excellent services to residents. In 2007/8 Barbara set up the PlaceShapers Group of housing associations to help represent the interests of community-based associations that further their work through locally based partnerships, and in 2008 she was awarded an OBE for services to social housing. In 2011 she left West Kent and set up her own company, WKT Associates, which provided consultancy and coaching services to a wide range of people and organisations. In 2011 she created a consortium of housing associations, now a not-for-profit company called Communities that Work (CtW), dedicated to supporting unemployed residents into work. In a bid to move towards retirement in 2022 she closed her company but is still providing coaching services to a few special clients.

Barbara is the Chair of the Customer Insight Committee and is also a member of the Audit Committee. She was also a member of the Governance Committee until it was closed.

Ian Pinches

Board Member

Length of Service

Joined March 2020



Ian joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in March 2020. With a long background in senior roles within social housing, Ian is passionate about the added value that locality-based housing organisations can bring to a sector that is so often (perhaps misleadingly) defined as being dominated by large organisations operating at a national level.

Ian is now Vice-Chair of Audit Committee, a member of Remuneration and Nominations Committee and a member of the Support and Care Working and Tender Group

Ian is a qualified accountant (FCCA) with experience in both senior management and Executive Director roles within the Social Housing and Care sector. Ian also brings over a decade of Non-Executive and Committee Chair experience gained across a variety of organisations in Housing, the NHS, and the Emergency Services.

Although now semi-retired, Ian also has a background in establishing and running a multi award-winning business operating in the Hospitality sector.

Ian has been a Fellow of The Royal Society of Arts for over a decade.

Lauren Bayliss-Fuller

Board Member

Length of Service

Joined March 2021



Lauren joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in March 2021 and is a tenant of the Association. She is Vice Chair of the Customer Insight Committee from mid-2022, a member of Remuneration and Nominations Committee and is a Tenant Engagement representative for Board.

Having worked previously as a Careers Advisor, Lauren is now Head of Community and Alumni Relations at a local school. She is passionate about motivating and empowering individuals and has delivered both one to one and group support to many vulnerable individuals.

Lauren has experience as a Governor for a local Primary School and as a member of the Personnel and Communications committee, with particular responsibility for marketing and working with the school councils.

She is known within her team and networks as a kind and compassionate individual, who is happy to advocate for others and, despite its challenges, will always do the right thing.

Stuart Appleby

Board Member

Length of Service

Joined March 2021



Stuart joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in March 2021 and is a former tenant of the Association and is now a shared owner of an Orwell property. Stuart is a passionate advocate for social housing and a firm believer in the socio-economic benefits that it provides to individuals and the wider community.

Stuart is a board member of the Orwell Homes Limited, a member of the Customer Insight Committee from mid-2022 and is a Tenant Engagement representative for Board. He was also a member of the Governance Committee until it was closed.

For the past ten years, Stuart has been involved in Orwell Housing's Resident Steering Group, giving him a critical lens through which to view the inner workings of Orwell as it has developed and evolved.

Stuart is the Director of HE Operations within the department of University Studies at West Suffolk College and has previously held the positions of Head of Health & Human Sciences and lecturer in Humanities and Business Management.

Cynthia Alers, MBA MA

MISSoc

Board Member & Chair of Audit Committee

Length of Service

Joined March 2017



Cynthia joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in March 2017. She chairs the Audit Committee and is a Board member for Orwell Homes Limited. Cynthia was also a member of the Governance Committee until it was closed and was previously Chair of the Audit Committee at the Port of Dover.

As a European national, Cynthia brings knowledge of alternative models of integrated social care and housing to Orwell. She is passionate about Orwell's mission to "make a difference" for all our stakeholders by investing in our diverse communities to improve lives and to transform.

With a background in finance for most of her career, Cynthia has held senior positions in investor relations, corporate strategy and corporate communications for companies including JP Morgan, Sage Group PLC, Laird plc and Cambridge Silicon Radio (CSR), where she worked on a wide range of strategic reviews, capital-raising, IPOs, corporate transformations, and acquisitions.

Cynthia specialises in stakeholder engagement, regulated companies, debt, and capital markets intelligence, ESG and corporate governance.

Brett Rennolds

Board Member

Length of Service

Joined March 2020



Brett joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in 2020. Having begun his career as an outreach worker in the community Brett is clear that affordable housing is directly linked to positive life chances and is committed to equalising those opportunities for all.

Brett is Vice Chair of the Remunerations and Nominations Committee, a member of the Audit Committee and a member of the Support and Care Working and Tender Group.

With a background in the voluntary and public sector Brett has a wealth of experience in Business Development, Care & Support.

As a business consultant, Brett works with organisations, groups and individuals to enable development, change and growth, enjoying the challenges associated with change management, co-production and stakeholder engagement, identifying solutions to challenges collaboratively, inclusively and transparently. Primarily it's the 'winning of hearts and minds' that drives him.

Dayle Bayliss

Board Member

Length of Service

Joined March 2020



Dayle joined the Board of Orwell Housing Association in 2020. Dayle has worked in construction and skills for a number of years and understands first-hand the importance of how skills for life, supporting communities and the homes we live in contribute to our wellbeing, social mobility and thriving communities. Being part of the board enables Dayle to play a part of the Orwell family and having a small part to play in the work Orwell do and the lives they impact.

Dayle is Vice-Chair of Orwell Homes Limited, a member of the Audit Committee and is the board nominee for Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. She was also a member of the Governance Committee until it was closed.

With a background as a Chartered Surveyor, Dayle has already won national and local business awards, including East Anglian Daily Times Young Business Person of the Year 2012, Project '@TheRec' Winner of the 2015 East of England RICS Regeneration Award and highly commended accolades for her work.

Dayle's desire to deliver construction services from a different perspective led her to found Dayle Bayliss Ltd, a Surveying, Design and Project Management Consultancy. This gave Dayle the freedom to exercise her collaborative approach to construction projects, as well as tackle the challenges of skills and diversity in construction.

Alastair Thomas

**Board Member & Chair of
Orwell Homes**

Length of Service

Joined March 2012



Alastair Thomas (retired March 2022)

Alastair Thomas joined the Board of Orwell Homes Limited in March 2013 and later serving as Chair for 6 years. In 2022 when his 9-year term as a Board member of Orwell Housing Association came to an end, he stepped down as Chair of Orwell Homes Limited. He remains a Board member for Orwell Homes Limited. Alastair was also a member of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee and the Support and Care Working and Tender Group.

Alastair is a Chartered Surveyor and In 1990 he founded the Equity Estates Group that undertakes commercial and residential property development, investment and asset management, principally in East Anglia and the Southeast. Uniquely the Group has undertaken the delivery of park and ride schemes and to date has designed, planned and delivered over 3,000 spaces for both Essex and Suffolk County Councils, including Ipswich's first park and ride at Copdock and the highly successful first park and ride for Chelmsford at Sandon on the A12.

Dan Gaul

Board Member

Length of Service

Joined March 2015



Daniel Gaul (retired March 2022)

Dan was previously Head of Service for Suffolk County Council and was responsible for the council's 16 residential care homes for older people. He was lead manager for the department's capital programme and coordinating the development of specialist housing services with district and borough councils. He has also had management roles within procurement and corporate services.

Dan is the lead board member for Supported Housing & Care, Tenant Engagement and Equalities.

Before Dan retired as a board member, he was a member of the Governance Committee, Resident Steering Group and Support and Care Working and Tender Group.

Stephen White

Board Member

Length of Service

Joined September 2022



Steve spent the early part of his career working across a variety of sectors including RBS/Nat West, T Mobile and the Financial Ombudsman Service before joining Hyde, a large London/ SE based provider, initially as their interim COO and shortly thereafter their CEO for a thoroughly enjoyable 4 and half years. Steve's time at Hyde demonstrated the positive impact that housing associations can have on individuals, communities and wider society, contrasting starkly with his own experience as a child living in poor quality inner city local authority housing.

Having now become an advocate of the sector, Steve has remained active in the social housing sector having previously been the Chair of Origin and now, in addition to his role at Orwell, Chair of Moat.

Steve was attracted to Orwell because of the quite brilliant work the organisation does across the community, which is now Steve's home. Steve a member of the Audit Committee.

Steve is also an above-knee amputee having injured his leg during military service, and besides his sector roles, Steve is also the Vice Chair of the military charity BLESMA, which focuses on supporting individuals who have lost limb(s) through military service.

Seeking appointment to the board in 2023



Pamhi Mulambo, Internal Audit Director-Technology at a major bank



Tom Brown, Chief Executive Officer of The Green Light Trust

Board attendance percentages:

9 February 2022 –83%

30 March 2022 – 100%

8 June 2022 – 100%

27 July 2022 – 90%

28 September 2022 –91%

2 November 2022 – 82%

14 December 2022 – 91%

More information about our Board can be found by following the link/QR code below.

<https://www.orwell-housing.co.uk/about-us/our-board/>

Scrutiny - Listening to our customers

The Orwell Residents Group is a performance review group, scrutinising service areas and acting as a critical friend to influence Orwell's future direction. We value their views and feedback, and have continued to engage their services throughout 2022.

At the end of 2021, we asked the group what topics they felt were top of people's agendas and they chose to review our Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) policy, our Unacceptable Behaviour and Unreasonable Demands Policy & Procedure and our repairs service. In order to undertake the larger scrutiny exercises, the group received comprehensive guidance and training TPAS, an organisation specialising in customer engagement. This ensured the group had the skills and knowledge to undertake these scrutinies to the highest standard. Their recommendations and feedback were instrumental in the rewriting of the ASB policy and associated information on our website. The repairs scrutiny was undertaken towards the end of 2022 and Orwell is currently working through the recommendations falling out of it to shape the service for 2023 and beyond. Key areas for consideration include the way we communicate with our customers, our estates and gardening services and our development services.

We want to hear from more of our customers

During 2023 we will be seeking to engage with as many customers as possible on various topics through a range of customer engagement initiatives. These will be undertaken via a variety of communication channels including online surveys, text surveys and face to face events. If this is of interest to you, please do let us know. Contact us at CustomerVoice@orwell-housing.co.uk or call our customer services team on 0345 60 100 30.



Meet Maggi

Hello, I'm Maggi and I live in a bungalow in Castle Hill and I've been an Orwell tenant for almost 14 years. I love animals and have a cat and dog called Storm and Tilli-Mae. I'm a retired publican and once owned a pub in the town centre which was hard work but I thoroughly loved it. Being in a wheelchair it can sometimes be difficult to get out so when the chance arose to join the Orwell Residents Group I was delighted. It's a great group and they have made me feel very welcome. It's always awkward being the "newbie" but I felt instantly comfortable with the other members.

The ORG is a brilliant opportunity to learn about Housing and Housing Regulations, Laws and Restrictions. It also gives the tenants a voice in the running of Orwell.

You'd be surprised at what goes on behind the scenes. I've only been a member for a short time but I'm looking forward to becoming more and more involved with the ORG as 2023 progresses.



Meet Val

I joined Orwell Residents Group in 2021 when I moved to Kessingland following my retirement from 12 years of managing a home for homeless men. I have always been interested in helping others to find suitable homes, and was very grateful when my application to Gateway to Homechoice gave me a lovely flat. Many people complain in conversation about their landlords, and I thought it would be a good idea to discover more about how Orwell is run, and to be able to see things from both sides.

I have found it really interesting that our views as tenants are listened to, and because we actually scrutinise the policies and procedures we can contribute and achieve change for the better. I feel that as part of a team I can help to make a difference to the outcome of people's difficulties by better understanding and the ability to be a voice that is heard by our landlord.

I would definitely encourage other tenants to join this friendly group.

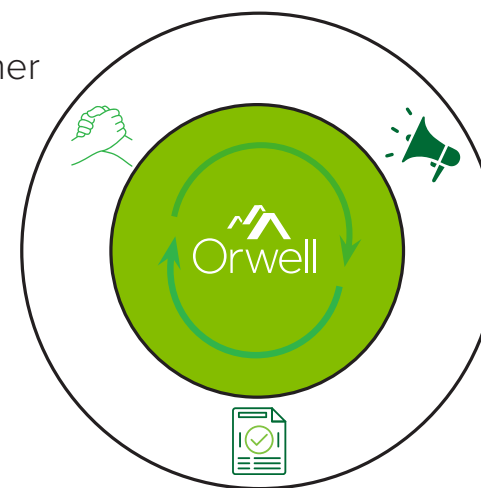


Empowering our customers and communities

The Customer Insight and Engagement Team have undertaken some fantastic initiatives with our customers this year.

- We have mapped some of the key customer journeys through our services and will continue to do so to make sure it is as easy as possible for all our customers to interact with us.
- We have analysed customer feedback and used this to help us improve our services.
- We have facilitated numerous customer engagement opportunities including workshops on affordable warm and the cost of living crisis.
- We worked together with our partners in Independent East, an informal alliance of five community-focused housing associations in the East of England – Broadland Housing, Freebridge Community Housing, Havebury Housing Partnership, Saffron Housing Trust and Orwell Housing Association, to fund tenancy training workshops delivered by an organisation called Your Own Place. Customers who attended the workshops, which were either digital or face to face depending on customer choice, gave us great feedback about how useful they were in helping them to develop new skills and increase their confidence.
- We have worked very closely with our Communications Team to develop our customer E-News, our website content and social media content to deliver useful information and receive and act on customer feedback. We are going to continue to look for more creative ways to ensure the customer voice is heard through 2023 and beyond.

Working together



Customer Voice

Turning feedback into action

49



engaged customers accessed training empowering them to share their views and have a say in the services we provide.

Improving our services

Orwell is committed to listening to our customers' feedback and, wherever possible, improving our services as a result. We ensure complaints are handled quickly and efficiently and act in accordance with the Housing Ombudsman's revised Complaint Handling Code. Complaint information is regularly reviewed by our customers through our Complaint Handling Assessment Team (CHAT) and by the Customer Insight Committee to ensure that we treat our customers with fairness, dignity and respect and that we learn from our mistakes.



Complaint response times

4 days

The average response time for stage 1 complaints
(Service Standard 10 calendar days)

8 days

The average response time for stage 2 complaints
(Service Standard 20 calendar days)

96%

of complaints responded to within the timescale set out in our Complaints, Compliments and Compensation Policy

Of the 93 complaints

74 (80%)

resolved at stage 1

Stage 1 

17 (18%)

resolved at stage 2








Stage 2 

2 (2%)

Escalated to the Housing Ombudsman, of which 1 was not upheld and the other remains outstanding.

You said, We did

Lessons learned from our compliments and complaints in 2022 led us to take the following actions:

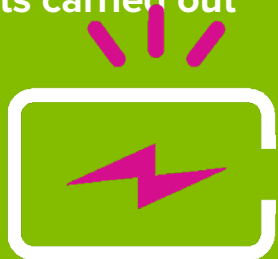
-  Improving our emergency alarm call procedure with Babergh and Mid Suffolk Council
-  Improving handover procedures amongst Orwell care and support staff
-  Changing our post inspection procedure for planned works to include contacting customers to identify any issues before signing the work off as complete
-  Introducing action plans to our complaint letters where remedial action is still needed
-  Reviewing our invoice procedures in our extra care schemes to reduce the risk of errors being made
-  Reducing the number of email addresses the Customer Services Team use to receive repair requests and updates from customers and contractors. Now only one email address is used and all emails are responded to within one working day
-  Creating additional ways for our customers to contact us during the Christmas shut-down period if they had out of hours emergencies

Safety in our customers' homes

The safety of our customers in their homes is of the utmost importance to us. We make sure that we comply with all relevant legislation relating to building safety and carry out all the checks we need to in our homes. Building safety regulations continue, rightly, to be significantly influenced by the terrible tragedy at Grenfell Tower in 2017. Whilst none of our homes are in tall blocks over 18 metres high, we will pay close attention to the requirements of building and fire safety legislation, including the Building Safety Act and the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, and the scope of the homes to which they apply. We will adhere to any of the regulations which apply to our homes and seek to adopt best practice, even where legislation does not apply, where this is reasonably practicable.

Electrical safety tests carried out

514



Fire risk assessments completed

90



Emergency equipment tests



386

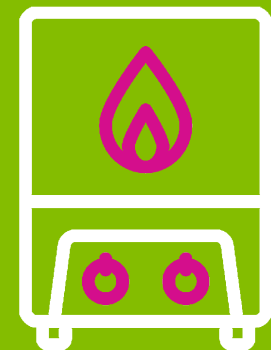
Asbestos tests undertaken

334



ASBESTOS

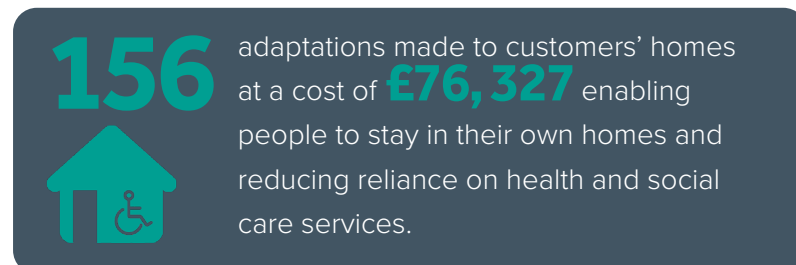
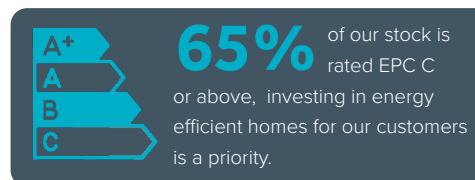
Gas, air, oil heating services



2137

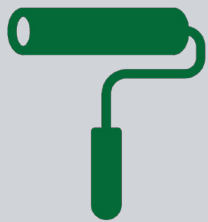
Investing in and maintaining our customers' homes

Our priority is for our repairs and property improvement service to be people-focused and efficient. We remain committed to in-sourcing our services and to keep their effectiveness under review to ensure they are responsive to our customers' needs, high quality and deliver best value for money. Energy efficiency is also really important to us, helping us to meet the Government's net carbon zero commitments. We will work with our customers on scrutiny and engagement projects to ensure their voice drives service improvement and continue to invest in our homes, ensuring they meet all regulatory standards, keep our customers safe, and maintaining consistently high levels of customers satisfaction.



Investing in and maintaining our customers' homes

Cyclical decoration projects



128

Satisfaction with the overall condition of the home



97%

Upgraded windows and doors



Satisfaction with property improvements



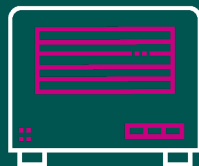
97%

New boilers installed



97

Storage heaters installed



128

Amount invested in our homes



£2.8 Million

Replacement kitchens and bathrooms



54



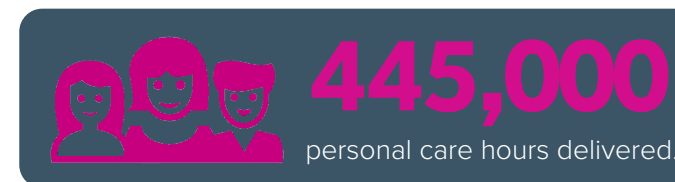
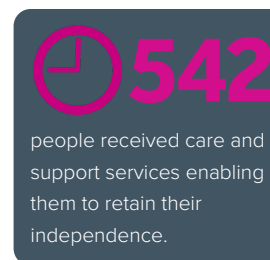
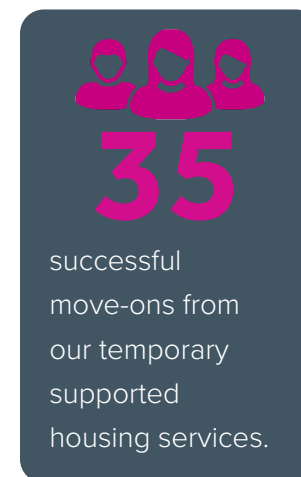
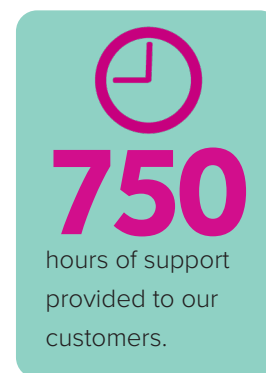
Care and support

Orwell being a care and support provider, to both our own customers and also partner organisations is an important part of us ensuring that we deliver our strategic vision of making a positive difference to the quality of life and future opportunities to our customers, employees and the communities in which we work. We work hard to create positive pathways for customers to be able to move on from supported settings into their own home when they are ready.

Extra care provision - Orwell has 14 schemes. We believe extra care housing can be the alternative to residential care and is designed to support the needs of frail older people, whilst giving them a great opportunity to foster their independence in a supportive environment with 24-hour care staff and an emergency response.

Learning disabilities provision - Our teams are skilled in providing specialist support for people with more complex health or behavioural needs alongside people with less complex needs. We work in partnership with other agencies to provide the right person-centered support.

Temporary supported housing provision - Our services support people with a range of needs, with a key factor being they are at risk of homelessness, or at risk of harm or further harm. The people we support may also present with complex or additional needs such as drug and alcohol misuse, poor mental health and wellbeing, unhealthy and abusive relationships and low self-esteem and we work closely with other organisations to offer holistic support.



Development



In 2022, Orwell completed the refurbishment of the former police station in Leiston, transforming a redundant yet prominent building in a residential area into six flats, and enabling the provision of a further seven new homes in the grounds.

Our development company Orwell Homes Ltd supports the work of the Association by building homes for the private market to generate profit. This is then used by the Association to help us provide more affordable homes and services to our customers. Orwell Homes also supports the Association by developing our affordable homes programme and increasing our access to building land by developing mixed tenure sites that have both private and affordable homes.

Our aspiration to continue to grow our portfolio is a major strand of our business plans going forward. We have an excellent local reputation as an affordable housing landlord and developer and have strong relationships with local authorities, stakeholders, and the local construction industry. We are also a valued provider with our funders and regulators and with a programme capable of making a significant contribution to housing need locally. At the heart of our approach is to provide quality, genuinely affordable homes for our residents to enjoy. We will ensure our developments will integrate with the community and

make a positive contribution to people's lives. We will deliver this through working in partnership and collaboration with all. Our development programme will continue to be directed around where our stock is based in Suffolk, Southern Norfolk and North Essex. The programme will be directed to where we are able to provide a responsive and efficient housing management and maintenance service with the view to improve our customer services standards.



new homes built, 7 of which were shared ownership. Investing in more affordable homes for local people is one of our priorities.



new homes planned for 2023

An excellent customer experience

We are dedicated to providing high quality front-line services to customers, ensuring that customers remain at the front and centre of all of our activities. With a renewed emphasis on customer engagement and empowerment, our aim is that everyone living in an Orwell home has a voice. If you want to contact us for any reason, your first port of call is our customer call centre, our portal and our app is on its way in 2023.

Average time to
answer phone calls
(seconds)



13.5

Percentage of calls answered

97%



Number of calls
received

37,790

Contact Us

Did you know you can contact us
via phone, email, our website, postal
address or social media accounts?

0345 60 100 30

info@orwell-housing.co.uk

orwell-housing.co.uk/

Orwell Housing Association Limited
Crane Hill Lodge, 325 London Road,
Ipswich, Suffolk, IP2 0BE



Our landlord service

Our homes are spread across a broad geographical area, spanning from north Essex to Norfolk and from East Suffolk to Cambridge. The area in which we work is diverse, encompassing city living and urban areas, deprived coastal towns, affluent market towns with high proportions of second homes and small villages set within large rural areas. As such, our customers have a broad range of needs and aspirations and face differing challenges. We deliver services to families, young people, older people, women fleeing domestic abuse, people experiencing mental ill health, learning disability and homelessness. Our mission is that **'together we make a difference'** by providing housing, care and support services with the customers at our heart.' We recognise that the needs of our customers are changing, and believe that social landlords can, and should, provide added value to the communities in which they work.

Rent collected



97%



134

at risk tenancies
sustained



263

New Universal Credit
claimants contacted



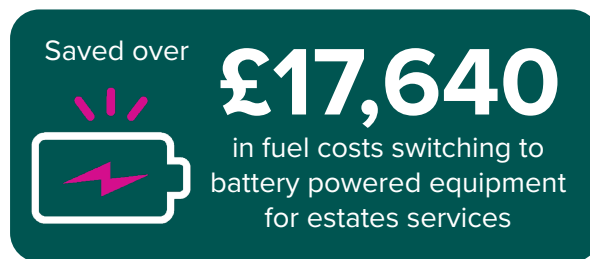
Former
Customer
Payments
collected

£48,726

Estate services

Our Estate Services Team work hard all year round to help maintain Orwell's estates and communal areas. They ensure all designated communal grassed areas, shrub and flower beds are maintained, trees, hedges and bushes are pruned and communal areas are kept clean and tidy. They organise the clearance of bulk refuse, and monitor rubbish and recycling collections. They also undertake cleaning of communal areas and windows.

Here are some 2022 highlights from the Team:



Communicating with our customers

Celebrated Suffolk PRIDE!



Check out our video by scanning the QR code!

YouTube engagement increased



+42%

Delivered our #Flourish campaign with our IE partners



Twitter engagement increased

+4%

Facebook engagement increased



+11%



Improved our website so it's more accessible and easier to navigate

LinkedIn engagement increased



+54%

Created

60+



videos to share our stories and successes with others



Instagram engagement increased

+2220%



+191%

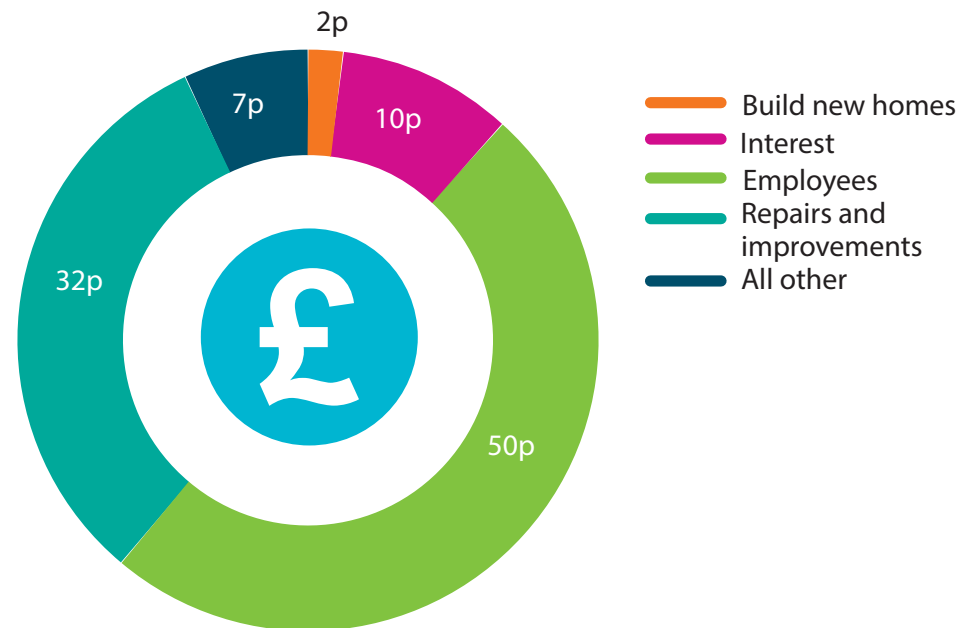
Workplace engagement increased

Providing Value for Money

Orwell is formed for the benefit of the community and as such Orwell's activities are focussed and planned to achieve its charitable objects, in accordance with Orwell's rules.

The pie chart below shows how we spend each £1 we receive in rent. This includes repairing and improving our existing homes and also building new ones.

Every single penny is reinvested in our homes, communities and the organisation to help achieve our vision that everyone has a safe place to call home with the care and support they need to live their best life.



A close-up photograph of a hand dropping a coin into a pink piggy bank. The background is a soft, out-of-focus bokeh of green and yellow light.

Group Financial results for the year ended 31 December 2022

2022 has been a challenging year and Orwell has not been immune to the financial uncertainty and inflationary impacts we have seen across the UK. During the year, the two biggest areas of challenge have been managing the increasing property repair costs due to inflation in material costs, and a shortage of skilled labour in both the repairs team and in the care and support division. Despite these, Orwell has worked hard to ensure that our service continues to be customer focused and we remain committed to putting customers and employees at the heart of Orwell, thereby ensuring that the decisions and investments made deliver the mission of 'together we make a difference'.

At the Surplus level, the 2022 performance reflects the difficult operating conditions described above and is at a reduced level of £2,441,000, compared to the previous year of £2,808,000.

A further 36 units of housing in management have been added during 2022 and ongoing investment in existing housing stock continues with £4,578,000 spent during the year.

At the end of the year, cash plus undrawn borrowing facilities totalled £25m, which is sufficient funding to cover requirements into 2025.

This resilient performance, together with the strength of the Statement of Financial Position, enables the Group to move forward with confidence into the coming years.

Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
Turnover (excluding development)	43,055	38,373
Costs (excluding development)	(37,584)	(32,542)
Development – net income/(cost)	29	25
Surplus on sale of houses	426	111
Operating Surplus	5,926	5,967
Net interest payable	(3,485)	(3,159)
Surplus	2,441	2,808
Actuarial gain/(loss) in respect of pension scheme	2,183	1,698
Retained Surplus	4,624	4,506

Statement of Financial Position

	2022	2021
	£'000	£'000
Properties at cost less depreciation	246,240	240,810
Other fixed assets	2,646	2,965
Investments	11,379	691
Total fixed assets	260,265	244,466
Other net current liabilities	(1,394)	(1,830)
Net current assets	2,865	11,303
Borrowings	(107,887)	(104,798)
Pension and other provisions	(2,251)	(4,469)
Total net assets	75,194	70,570
Reserves	75,194	70,570

Orwell Housing Association Annual Report 2022

If you would like this leaflet in another
language or format please email
comms@orwell-housing.co.uk
or call **0345 60 100 30**

Version March 2023