# Forgewood Housing Co-operative Limited

# Annual Report

2018-2019



# **Forgewood Housing Co-operative Limited**

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Working within the heart of our community - nurturing it to grow and thrive

# Looking Back on 2018/19 - Report from the Chair

I welcome you to the 2018/19 annual report for Forgewood Housing Co-operative (FHC). This was quite a year for us with many highlights to report in what was another successful but busy year for all connected with the Co-operative.

We remain focussed on our business planning for future years despite the changes at most senior level, with the departure of our previous director John Mulholland at the end of March 2018. During the year, we saw an option appraisal carried out that would determine how we should move forward as landlord to our tenants.

We worked with the Scottish Housing Regulator during the option appraisal and the outcome was as we had hoped, that it was in the best interests of FHC and our tenants to remain independent and keep a resilient workforce while sharing services with our partners at Garrion People's Housing Co-operative in Wishaw. Following a recruitment process Cathy Brien was appointed permanent Director of the Co-operative with Paul Lennon now Depute Director. More information on the staff set up is detailed within this annual report.

We are confident that we have the correct staff team who possess the ability, skills and knowledge at all levels to take us forward and work with our management committee on the future direction of Forgewood.

By the end of March 2019, 100% of our homes achieved the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) and 95% the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH). We are working towards a 100% target by 31 March 2020, the cut-off date for EESSH compliance.

Over the next five years we also plan to invest further in our homes and will keep tenants up to date with our quarterly newsletters. We also commissioned a stock condition survey towards the end of the reporting year and this will help us plan for future years investment.

The Co-operative is also working towards ensuring compliance with the robust smoke and fire provisions introduced in amended legislation, The Tolerable Standard for Satisfactory Fire and Carbon Monoxide Detection.

Although Universal Credit has had a clear impact at the Co-operative, performance in key areas of our business



including rent collection, re-let times and void rent loss remains strong. We remain focussed on high levels of performance through our strong business planning, tenancy sustainment focus and our commitment towards the best of customer service.

Our in house advice for tenants and residents (AFTAR) project has once again shown some significant financial gains for those who use this unique service. It has been running for around 9 years and we are disappointed and concerned to see funding coming to an end soon but the steering group of 5 partner landlords along with Motherwell and Wishaw Citizens Advice Bureau will work hard as usual to deliver a provision of some sort that will hopefully match the outcomes of the AFTAR service.

Turning to the community centre and our work in the wider area in general, it is safe to say that Forgewood has again demonstrated that we are working really well in the area with people of all backgrounds and age. We continue to ensure we help develop community-based opportunities that meet the specific needs of the people of Forgewood.

While it has been a challenging year it has also been rewarding for everyone connected to Forgewood Housing Co-operative. My sincere thanks go to my colleagues on the management committee for their continual support over the years in helping the Co-operative grow. I also thank the staff for our achievements as it would not be possible without their drive and commitment. I am confident that both can lead us in future years to ensure we deliver the best of customer service to our tenants and wider community.

Q Thomas

Alan Thomson, Chair



### Our Mission Statement . . .

We are committed to providing an excellent service to our tenants and service users. We will work in partnership with the local community to provide good quality homes and create a better Forgewood Housing Co-operative.

### Vision . . .

We will be the landlord of choice in our neighbourhood, working with our customers, communities and local stakeholders to create an area where people choose and are happy to live. Great service and value for money will be at our core and we will strive relentlessly to balance hoth.

### **Values**

The following values will shape how we do business to achieve our mission and the strategic objectives set out in this plan. They underpin all the work that we do.



We are committed to providing a quality, customer focused service that demonstrates value for money, delivered by experienced staff. We will publicise information on how we are performing, welcoming challenge and feedback to continuously improve the effectiveness and relevance of the service we provide.



Our Committee as the governing body and our leadership team will provide strong strategic leadership and oversight, ensuring tenants' interests are protected and at the forefront of all that we do. We will ensure that our actions are transparent.



We will work collaboratively with all sections of the local community. This includes working collectively and individually with our customers and continuing to share our services with Garrion People's Housing Co-operative and other housing associations and statutory voluntary sector partners working in Lanarkshire to improve the lives of our residents. We will continue to be a proactive member of the local community, seeking out new, innovative ways to address issues that impact our residents.

# Our Strategic Objectives . . .

Objective 1	We will conduct ourselves in an open and accountable manner, displaying high standards of corporate governance and financial control.	
Objective 2	We will perform to the best of our abilities as a landlord to deliver excellent services in consultation with tenants and stakeholders on how our performance can be continually improved.	
Objective 3	We will provide quality homes in an attractive environment.	
Objective 4	We will seek to improve our financial strength and deliver value for money through continuous staff sharing arrangements with Garrion People's Housing Co-operative.	
Objective 5	Develop our Leadership and Staff.	
Objective 6	Continue our role as a community anchor by providing services and improving our communities to grow and thrive.	



# Performance Highlights 2018/19

### **Scottish Social Housing Charter**

Forgewood Housing Co-operative is regulated by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR). The Scottish Social Housing Charter (introduced April 2012 and revised in April 2017) sets out the standards and outcomes that each Registered Social Landlord should aim to achieve when



performing their housing activities. This is in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive, the standard of their homes, and opportunities for communication and participation in the decisions that affect them.

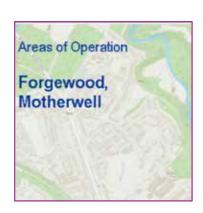
The SHR states clearly what tenants and other customers can expect from social landlords and provides the basis for them to assess and report on how well landlords are performing. This assessment enables the SHR, social landlords, tenants and other customers to identify areas of strong performance and areas needing improvement.

The Performance Information below shows how we have performed against the Scottish Average.

### **Home and Rents**











# Performance Highlights 2018/19

### **OUALITY AND MAINTENANCE OF HOMES**



#### MAINTAINING HOMES

95.7% of tenants satisfied with the quality of their home

SCOTTISH AVERAGE

88.12%

100% of new tenants (in the past year) satisfied with standard of home when moving in

SCOTTISH AVERAGE

90.79%



#### REPAIRING HOMES

92.7% of tenants satisfied with Repairs Service

SCOTTISH AVERAGE

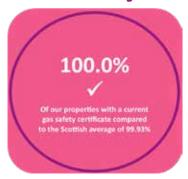
91.7%

97% of reactive repairs completed Right First Time

SCOTTISH AVERAGE

92.5%

#### **Gas Safety**



# Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESSH)



95% of our homes complied with EESSH

### **Quality of Our Homes**



### **Repairs and Maintenance Performance**

Average length of time to complete emergency repairs



3.6
HOURS
Scottish Average

Average length of time to nonemergency repairs





Medical Adaptations Indicators 22 & 23



Examples of Adaptations that we install are:

- ✓ Level Access Shower
- ✓ Wet Floor Shower Installation
- Over Bath Shower
- ✓ Lever Taps
- Handrails

We receive funding each year from the Scottish Government to undertake Medical Adaptations via a referral from an Occupational Therapist (OT). These are registered on our waiting list on a date and priority basis. Once funding is granted we carry out surveys to the properties and instruct our contractor to proceed with the works agreed with the tenant, their OT and the Cooperative.

We aim to carry out as many adaptations as possible, however this can vary annually as we rely on the amount of funding we receive.

During the year, we carried out 6 adaptations within our stock and we were fortunate to be granted additional funding from the Government to ensure our tenants were able to remain in their homes.



# Performance Highlights 2018/19

### **TENANT SATISFACTION**



#### TENANT SATISFACTION

97.1% of tenants were satisfied with our overall service

SCOTTISH AVERAGE

90.1%

**99.3**% of tenants feel we are good at keeping them informed about services and decisions.

SCOTTISH AVERAGE

91.6%



#### MANAGING TENANCIES

90% of tenants satisfied with our management of neighbourhood

SCOTTISH AVERAGE

87.77%

100% of new tenancies sustained for more than a year

SCOTTISH AVERAGE

88.82%

#### VALUE FOR MONEY



80% of tenants feel their rent offers value for money SCOTTISH AVERAGE 83.2%

5.9 days to re-let a property SCOTTISH AVERAGE 31.9 days 100.1% of total rent due collected SCOTTISH AVERAGE 99.1%

0.1% void rent loss SCOTTISH AVERAGE 0.9%

#### **COMPLAINTS HANDLING**



100% of complaints were responded to within timescales
SCOTTISH AVERAGE
86.9%

Stage 1 – Front Line Resolution
5 Working Days

5

Stage 2 – Investigation 20 Working Days

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We value complaints and aim to resolve them within target timescales in line with Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) guidelines. We aim to resolve Stage 1 complaints within five working days and where the complaints are more complex and require an investigation (Stage 2 complaints) we aim to respond within 20 working days.

We like to know if our tenants are dissatisfied with our services so we have the opportunity to put things right for them and learn how we can improve on our service delivery.

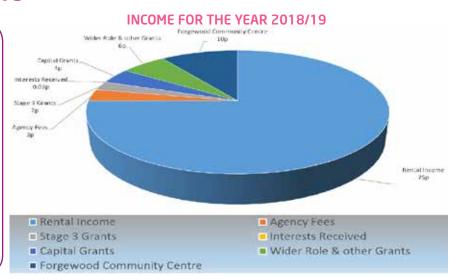


# Performance Highlights 2018/19 Financial Highlights 2018/19

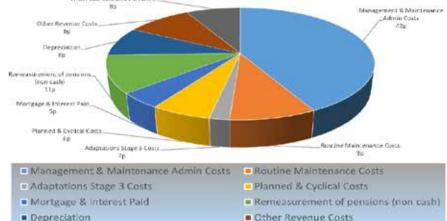
### Income

This year saw our rental income charges increase to £802,352 which was a 4% increase on the previous year. The level of work we carry out on behalf of other organisations decreased resulting in agency income being £4,907 lower on last year. We also received government grant in the amount of £25,425 which allowed us to complete medical adaptation works to 6 properties.

Other capital grants remained steady in comparison to the year before. The wider role grants and funding for the community centre reduced slightly in the year. However, due to the strong performance on community and partner lets we were able to increase the level of turnover by 9.5% on the previous year.







Other Revenue Costs

# **Expenditure**

Overall, expenditure like income was in line with expectations. This resulted in us having a comparably similar operating surplus to the year before. The Housing Co-operative made a surplus of £61,650 before adjustments for pension re-measurements.

Our Management and Maintenance costs remained consistent with last year's spend and accounted for 42% of our overall costs. The amount we spent on reactive maintenance remained the same as last year whereas cyclical maintenance costs rose by £13,282, this was in line with the budget. The increase in cyclical spend allowed us to complete the 5 year electrical inspections to our properties.

# **Financial Projections**

Looking forward to our future improvement works, we have recently carried out a stock condition survey of our housing stock. This allows us to plan the capital works needed for our properties for the long term. In the 2019/20 financial year we expect to complete gutter cleaning at all of our flats in Forgewood with a view to moving onto the new build thereafter. We also anticipate replacing bathrooms in all flats in the near future starting in phase one of the refurbished flats at the bottom of Fife Drive.

### Welfare Reform

Wider role and other services

Welfare Reform has had a significant impact upon our tenants and in particular the introduction of Universal Credit which was rolled out in North Lanarkshire in April 2018. As ever we have done what we can to help mitigate the impacts of Welfare Reforms with our in-house AFTAR project.



The number of tenants in receipt of Universal Credit steadily increased during the year as tenant's circumstances changed. In addition there is still a liability for those tenants under occupying our properties i.e. under occupying one bedroom 14% of eligible rent is applied and 25% for a two bedroom under-occupancy.

Scottish Government assisted those tenants affected by this by awarding a discretionary payment. However, should government policy change this payment could stop at any point and the responsibility would revert to the tenant. We have kept tenants advised of any benefit changes by way of personal contact, newsletters, ad hoc information, signposting and referral to other services in-house and outreach.







Our estate management walkabouts enables residents to come along and join staff in a walk around the estates.

Any areas of concern can be identified along with ways they could be addressed.

From these walkabouts we identify hot spot areas where we have sought volunteers to assist with improving them.

### **General Data Protection Regulation**



All tenants were issued with a Fair Processing Notice in May 2018 on the lead up to GDPR

coming live. This document outlined the type of information we collect, why we collect it, how we use it, who we may share it with and why and how we securely store it.

GDPR places a greater obligation upon organisations like ours to ensure your personal data is processed fairly and securely.

A Rent Review Focus Group meeting was held within the Co-operative's offices on 17 January 2019. All tenants were invited to have their say and the meeting was attended by Co-operative staff, members of our Management Committee along with some tenants.





The feedback from this meeting was considered when making the final decision at our Management Committee meeting in January which resulted in a rent increase of 3.1%.

# **Changes to Legislation - The Housing Scotland Act 2014**

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced important changes to the rights of all social housing tenants which came into effect in 2019.



We wrote to all our tenants in October 2018 about the changes to their tenancy advising it is important to let the Co-operative know if there are any changes to who lives in their homes as this could affect the rights contained within their Scottish Secure Tenancy. The changes would come into force from 1 May 2019 and 1 November 2019.

# **Tenant Safety**

Our newsletters throughout the year have focused heavily on tenant and home safety and we will continue to do this as we treat the safety of all of our residents with the highest of priority.

We have highlighted the importance of tenants keeping safe within their home from all safety aspects from gas safety, electrical safety and fire safety.

We also promote the fire safety visits made by the Fire Brigade and make referrals for these to be done. Information has been sent to tenants on smoke alarms, window catches, door safety (internal and external) and self-closing doors. Advice has been given that doors should never be wedged open, tampered, removed or any of the mechanism removed.



### **Periodic Electrical Testing**

During the year we carried out the five yearly periodic electrical testing inspections to a number of our properties and we thank all tenants who provided access. Electrical safety is very important to us and while we will continue to invest in our homes by carrying out planned renewals, safety comes first and will always set aside a part of our budget allocation to make sure our tenants are kept safe in their homes.



# **Outreach Services Operated from Forgewood Community Centre**

These services were well utilised by our tenants over the year

### **AFTAR (Advice for Tenants and Residents) Project**

The AFTAR project provides our tenants with assistance from 2 advisors all day on a Monday and Thursday each week. Tenants can either attend an appointment at the Community Centre or can request a home visit.





**ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)** 

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes are free and is operated by North Lanarkshire Council every Monday in Forgewood Community Centre.

If English is not their first language they can join the class.

### **AFTAR IT - DIGITAL INCLUSION**

This project is also funded via our AFTAR project and offers tenants access to basic and essential computer skills. Help with Universal Credit on-line applications/accounts, CV, job searching etc.





### **ENERGY ADVISOR - IAN SYMINGTON**

Provides advice on energy costs, cheap tariffs and energy saving tips. He can assist with grant applications, dealing with energy bill queries and helping the tenant to better understand energy usage in their home.

### **Routes To Work**

Provides a key worker stationed in the Community Centre a half day a week providing training and skills development, 1-to-1 guidance and support, and access to exclusive vacancies.



### Foodbank Donation 2018

The Co-operative staff along with our colleagues at Garrion People's Housing Co-operative collected items last Christmas to donate to the Basics Foodbank in Lanarkshire.

This was a kind gesture from all the staff and was greatly appreciated by the local charity and would go a long way to helping many people who require aid from this service.



The picture above shows Kevin and Josh from the Co-operative alongside volunteers from Basics Foodbank

### **Connected in the Community**

Forgewood Community Centre has been open for two and a half years and over this time has reached out to every member of the Forgewood community. The centre has continued to progress this year with the introduction of new services to benefit the local community. None of this would be possible without the support of the local residents in our consultation periods and volunteering their time to help the centre. For this Forgewood Housing Co-operative would like to extend a thanks to all the local community and our partners for making the Community Centre the success that it has become.



On a weekly basis the centre has over 400 visitors engaging in a variety of social and educational activities. The activities on offer cover youth activities, adult learning, physical fitness, advice services, employment services, older people activities and mental health support to mention a few.

Forgewood Community Centre has thrived since starting in June 2016 and has shaped into the centre that was initially planned. Forgewood Housing Co-operative are committed to continue and develop the support on offer to the residents of Forgewood in partnership with the residents to allow us to continue to move forward.





# **Developing the Young Workforce**

### 30th April - 4th May 2018

Forgewood Housing Co-operative worked in partnership with Braidhurst High School and Forgewood Holdings to successfully roll out a new initiative that ensured accredited workplace skills for Nat 4 pupils.

The week long 'Developing the Young Workforce' programme at Forgewood Community Centre provided 35 young students with training in First Aid and Food Hygiene. They were provided with valuable information that will help them make positive choices in their everyday lives.



Partners involved in providing workshops for the young people included Routes to Work, Landed, the British Army, the HUB, Ace Training, Lanarkshire Credit Union, Motherwell Football Club, and NLC Community Learning & Development.

# **Social Isolation Project**

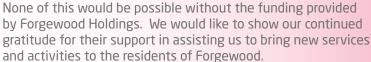
Forgewood Housing Co-operative are consistently striving to assist our communities in any way we can. Throughout 2018/19 we have continued to develop our Social Isolation project which has been in operation for around 2 years. The project comprises of three main parts which are a weekly fitness club, monthly tea dances and bi monthly trips.



Throughout 2018/19 we ran 46 fitness classes, 11 Tea Dances and 6 trips. We engaged with around 170 residents of Forgewood and surrounding areas delivering over 162 hours of activities throughout the year.



Our trips have become a highlight for many residents. Some attendees had not left their house in a number of years and others had experienced a trip for the first time due to financial or physical barriers. The trips throughout the year are designed to provide a wide range of experiences including going to the theatre twice, the botanical gardens, a tour of the BBC studios and a number of other trips.









# **Polish Heritage Day**



We hosted another Polish Heritage Day in Forgewood Community Centre on 6 May 2018 with over 200 participants. The event not only celebrates Polish culture and heritage but also provides the residents of Forgewood a unique chance to sample Polish food, discover Polish history and tradition, shop for Polish products and crafts, as well as joining in with some folk dance.

Forgewood Housing Co-operative actively supports this event to further encourage cultural cohesion within Forgewood. This event allows each culture to learn about other cultures residing in the area.



# **Holiday Club**

The holiday periods can be both challenging and costly for all families due to the additional expense of providing the extra food and activities to keep their children entertained over the school holiday period. Forgewood Housing Co-operative have always acknowledged this need and support this through delivering Club 365 on behalf of NLC to families in the area. This service was delivered as a holiday club over the spring break, summer break and then moved on to the February weekend in 2019.



The holiday clubs increased in popularity over the year. In spring it started off with around 20 young people attending increasing on average to 30 each day over the rest of the year. On the one day in February it was recorded that 45 young people attended.

Those young people who attended from the area enjoyed 2 hours of activities and a free meal.

# **Christmas Fayre**

#### 8th December 2018

On 8 December 2018 Forgewood Housing Co-operative hosted its annual Christmas Fayre to celebrate the festive season with all residents of Forgewood and the surrounding areas.

The day was an overwhelming success with 165 local people in attendance. A wide range of activities was provided which included gift stalls, bouncy castles, live DJ, free candy floss/popcorn and most importantly a special visit from Santa himself.



# **Big Toy Giveaway**

#### 9th December 2018



Over the past three years Forgewood Housing Co-operative have been key partners in The Big Toy Giveaway. In 2018 this was heavily supported by North Lanarkshire Council and has increased rapidly to more and more sites across North Lanarkshire.

The project aims to provide both used and new toys to families who may be suffering from financial hardship. This project ensures that all children wake up on Christmas Day to gifts under the tree from Santa. This helps these families to enjoy the magic of Christmas without building up debts to achieve this.

On 9 December 2018 once again Forgewood Housing Co-operative supported this project by opening up our doors and providing project management on the day of the event.

Over the course of the day 287 visitors benefited from the Giveaway and an amazing 20 volunteers assisted visitors on the day. We estimated the event to have benefited over 400 children with plenty of presents under the tree.

None of this would have been possible without Toy and Games Giveaway (TAGG) who operate the event overall.

# **Carers Week Event**

### 9th June 2018

In partnership with Carers Together and Partners in Play, Forgewood Housing Co-operative hosted an event to launch Carers week and raise awareness of who a carer is and the support they are able to access.

The event was a resounding success with around 70 families attending throughout the day to learn more about what support is on offer.

To ensure the event remained fun there were bouncy castles, music workshops, the fire service and face painting on offer for the children and massage or laughter yoga on offer for the adults.

The day not only successfully launched carers week 2018 but also provided some much needed information to families in the area.



# Halloween Party

#### 3rd November 2018

Forgewood Housing
Co-operative hosed a
spooky Halloween party
for the young people
in Forgewood on 3
November 2018. The day
was well attended with
over 80 participants all
dressed to impress. The
day had a live DJ, lots of
dancing and of course
plenty of sweets.



Prizes were available for the best dancers, scariest looking and best costume. All participants had a great day in Forgewood Community Centre.



### Our Management Committee

Alan Thomson	Chairperson
Charlie Millar	Vice Chair
Billy Muir	Secretary
Callum Boughey	Treasurer
John Burton	Committee Member
David Hemmings	Committee Member
Jamie Bell	Committee Member
James Barr	Committee Member
Sandra Murray	Committee Member
Marina Johnstone	Committee Member
Alex Tweedie	Committee Member
Edyta Salamonska	Committee Member
Lee Murray	Committee Member

**Tony McKay** resigned after a short spell due to personal reasons as a member of the Management Committee. He joined on 28 September 2018 and later resigned on 20 February 2019. Our best wishes and thanks go to Tony.

### **Our Staff Team**

Cathy Brien	Director
Paul Lennon	Depute Director
Elaine Hyslop	Interim Housing Manager
Sharon O'Rourke	Housing Officer (Garrion)
Susan Kane	Housing Officer
Jim Blyth	Maintenance Officer
Kieron Sheehan	Maintenance Assistant (Garrion)
Kevin Plunkett	Administration Assistant
Josh Collins	Clerical Assistant (Garrion)
Craig Allan	Senior Volunteer Assistant Co-ordinator
Kennedy Chilambe	Finance Officer
Yvonne Boyes	Receptionist
Billy Gibb	Maintenance Assistant
Shirley Beattie	Corporate Officer (Agency)

We operate a unique joint staffing arrangement with Garrion People's Housing Co-operative.

Jim Blyth left in April 2019 and held the position of Maintenance Officer/Clerk of Works for 12 years.



Forgewood Holdings are an independent community based charity operating in the Forgewood area of Motherwell offering a wide range of

financial support to residents in the area through new or established organisations.

Forgewood Housing Co-operative would like to thank Forgewood Holdings for their continued support of our activities. Without the funding provided by Forgewood Holdings much of the work we carry out would not be feasible. They have been key funders in our social isolation projects, developing the young workforce project and fun days, to name a few.

### **Another Big Thank You to...**

Forge Ahead Community Group (FACG) are an independent community group operating in the Forgewood area of Motherwell offering a wide range of social and recreational support to residents in the area through weekly, monthly and occasional activities and events.



Forgewood Housing Co-operative would like to thank the group for their continued support in bringing new activities into Forgewood Community Centre. Without the support of Forge Ahead Community group we would not be able to deliver as wide a range of services as we currently do.

# Looking forward to 2019/20

- Commence with new bathrooms in flats in our estate:
- Gutter cleaning to all our stock;
- Replace smoke alarms and fit interlinked heat detectors in kitchens to meet updated legislation due to come into effect in February 2021;
- Update and improve the information on our website:
- Continue to develop estate management walkabouts:
- Continue to keep tenants updated on tenant safety through newsletters etc;
- Commission an independent tenant satisfaction survey;
- Continue to support and develop new initiatives for the local community;
- Ensure compliance with new Freedom of Information Act;
- Submit our first Annual Assurance Statement to the Scottish Housing Regulator;
- Commission a stock condition survey to 30% of our properties;
- Update and continue to work with our Business Plan.











