

Annual Report and Accounts 2019-20

Ross Walk
Housing
Co-operative



About us

Ross Walk Housing Co-operative (RWHC) has been providing quality affordable homes for local people for over 40 years.

Founded in 1979 and based in the Belgrave area of Leicester, we rent properties to people from a range of cultures in this ethnically diverse community.

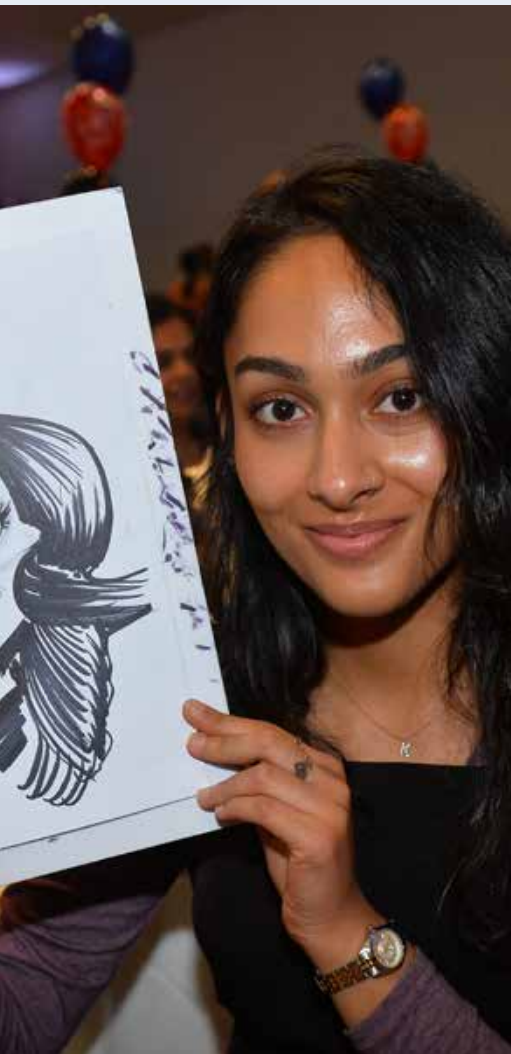
As a community-based housing co-op, our tenant members are at the heart of everything we do.

Run by and for our tenant members, we reinvest any profits into improving our homes and services or acquiring new properties. We have bought three new houses over the last year, bringing our housing stock up to a total of 119 homes.

PA Housing is our managing agent, delivering services including managing waiting lists, allocating homes, collecting rent and maintaining and repairing properties.

We are proud to work together with our tenant members, local residents, funders and other partners to create thriving, vibrant and sustainable communities where you can enjoy living.

“As a community-based housing co-op, our tenant members are at the heart of everything we do.”



Welcome



A message from Kishor Jadavji, Chair of Ross Walk Housing Co-operative

2019/20 has been another very successful year for Ross Walk co-op. We were delighted to grow our housing stock further, which will allow us to play an even greater role in providing much-needed affordable housing in Leicester.

We have also laid the foundations for improvements across our organisation. Our team has been working on various initiatives to upgrade our services and the way we run the co-op.

This includes proposed changes to our governing rules, reviewing our repairs and complaints procedures and looking at better ways to gather your feedback through tenant surveys.

Our ongoing work to maintain and improve your homes has continued with electrical upgrades being carried out to ensure installations are up to date.

Last year we enjoyed a well-attended Tenant Members' Conference and this year we ran

training courses to enhance the skills of our management committee members.

Unfortunately, of course, our usual calendar of social activities has been halted in recent months as the coronavirus pandemic has presented tough challenges for us all. We have had to make significant alterations to our services such as surgeries and repairs, and our committee meetings have been held online.

Your co-op is still working hard to keep vital services running and to look after you, our tenant members. This includes help with your Universal Credit claim or payments, so please get in touch with our Tenancy Sustainment Team if you need support.

I want to thank all of you – our tenant members, committee, managing agent and partners – for your contribution over the last year, as well as your dedication and patience in these past few difficult months.

By pulling together, we will get through this national crisis. I look forward to us resuming our varied social events and normal services as soon as we can.

“Our team has been working on various initiatives to upgrade our services and the way we run the co-op.”

Tenant conference success

Many of you joined us for our hugely successful Tenant Members' Conference in 2019.

We were pleased to see an excellent turnout of tenant members who gave lots of great feedback about this enjoyable and informative event.

Visitors got the chance to pick up invaluable fire safety advice, find out how to join our committee and learn more about our gas contractor and the



support available from our Tenancy Sustainment Team.

During the event, held at the Sapphire Suite last June, we also recruited people to join our new Scrutiny Panel. This tenant-led group has been set up to monitor how well we are doing and help us improve our services.

Day trip adventures

A group of 68 Ross Walk residents enjoyed our summer day trip to the Chessington World of Adventures theme park and zoo in July last year.



Lights and extractor fans to be installed

Electrical safety work

Electrical upgrades have been carried out on our homes to keep them up to a good and safe standard.

This programme of work, which is ongoing, includes installing new light fittings, sockets, USB points and extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms. The new LED lights are energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

We have been offering a free USB plug as an incentive to encourage our tenant members to allow us access to homes so we can conduct this essential work.

It follows inspections on Ross Walk homes by our electrical contractor Dodd Group, which highlighted where modernisation was needed.

Repairs contract update

Day-to-day repairs in your home are continuing to be carried out by PA Housing, after we extended our contract with them until March 2021.

Boosting our housing stock

We have expanded our housing stock by buying three new homes over the past year.

Once coronavirus restrictions allow, we will

refurbish the three-bedroom houses – in Marjorie Street, Burfield Street and Westbourne Street – ready for letting.

The properties were bought with the help of 30% funding from Leicester City Council.



Anniversary giveaway

To commemorate Ross Walk co-op's 40th anniversary last year, we offered free 'virtual assistants' to tenant members.

The Alexa Echo Dot Smart Speakers have been a resounding success, being used for a range of tasks from playing Gujarati songs to reporting repairs.



RWHC Chairman Kishor Jadavji and Agency Services Officer Nicola Parlby present the Alexas to tenant members Mr Bhundia and Mr Lathia

Around a third have been collected, but we will arrange delivery of the remaining Alexas after the coronavirus lockdown eases.

Moving with the times

Ross Walk housing co-op has, over the last year, looked at how we can improve the rules governing the way we are run.

Our current rules, drawn up in 1981, are out of date so we hope to replace them with new ones drafted by the Confederation of Co-operative Housing (housing co-ops' national representative body).

When the current national lockdown allows, we plan to hold a special general meeting for

our tenant members so we can formally agree to update our rules.

As well as being clearer and more detailed, the rule changes cover:

- electronic communication with committee and tenant members
- a commitment to diversity, equality and respect
- committee size, election and nominations
- disputes.

Developing skills



Ross Walk committee members benefited from a range of training earlier this year, to help them in their role managing the co-op.

Jan Wolloff, our surveyor, ran an informative session in February about asbestos and the findings of such surveys on your homes.

This was followed in March by a workshop run by Dawn Cooke, Independent Living Manager at PA Housing, about safeguarding and tackling different types of abuse.

All participating committee members rated the training 'excellent' or 'good'.

Comments included:

"Really found this useful. The tutor was very good and clear."

"Good course material and very easily understandable."

Welcome Jan

RWHC was delighted to welcome back a familiar face last year when we appointed our new full-time surveyor.



We recruited Jan Wolloff last autumn to expand our team and improve our maintenance service.

The father-of-two, from Wigston, previously worked for us between 2002 and 2017 in various roles including property services manager, surveyor and contact centre repairs coordinator.

Jan said: "I had a great time working with the co-ops in the past, so I'm relishing the opportunity to play my part in improving our services for tenant members."

Farewell Patrick



We recently said goodbye to a longstanding supporter of the co-operative movement who has been involved with RWHC for many years.

Patrick Taylor, Executive Director of Customer Services, left PA Housing this spring.

He began his career in 1993 with Family First, which became part of asra Housing Group and then PA Housing in 2017.

Patrick said: "I've enjoyed working at PA Housing. I do believe that the organisation is in a strong position and will continue to provide great services to customers."

Repairs and complaints review

Over the course of the last year we have reviewed the way we deal with repairs and complaints.

Independent auditors TIAA assessed our procedures and made various recommendations to improve these areas of our work.



Repairs

TIAA found that we regularly exceed our targets for attending emergency and routine repairs.

To improve further, their report recommended:

- reviewing our repairs policy to ensure it is up to date
- amending our repairs leaflet to clarify the target for routine repairs
- reporting post-inspection and tenant satisfaction survey results to the management committee.

Complaints

The auditors agreed that our new complaints system will help ensure cases are managed in an efficient manner.

They recommended:

- reviewing and amending our complaints policy where required
- ensuring we stick to our targets for acknowledging and responding to complaints
- including in reports to the management committee dates of significant actions relating to complaints.

Listening to tenants

We have spent considerable time over 2019/20 formulating a new way to gather your feedback on our homes, neighbourhoods and services.

Instead of the tenant members' survey usually carried out at our AGM, we have appointed independent specialist consultancy Acuity to help us collect your views.

The new surveys will ask many similar questions as before but also some new ones, in order to better understand how well we are performing.

There will be a postal survey of all our tenant members, possibly followed by a phone survey. The coronavirus lockdown has delayed roll-out of this new approach but we hope to agree a date soon.

Looking to the future

Subject to an easing of coronavirus restrictions, we have various plans for the coming year.

As outlined in this annual report, these include changes to our rules, tenant surveys and repairs and complaints procedures.

We also hope to complete a full stock condition survey and explore the possibility of acquiring more homes.

Your committee

Attendance

Committee member	Meetings attended April 2019-March 2020
Mr K Jadavji	7 out of a possible 8
Mr J Raval	8 out of a possible 8
Mrs Sachania	7 out of a possible 8
Mrs A Kotecha	7 out of a possible 8
Mr H Lathia	6 out of a possible 8
Mr Vinod Naik (co-optee)	5 out of a possible 8
Mrs Ayoob	2 out of a possible 8
Mr Joshi	2 out of a possible 8
Mr K Rajpara	0 out of a possible 8 (<i>resigned 27/7/20</i>)



From left to right - Top row:
Mr Jadavji, Mr Raval,
Mrs Sachania, Mrs Kotecha,
Mr Lathia

Bottom row: Mr Naik, Mrs Ayoob,
Mr Joshi, Mr Rajpara

Join us

We are always on the look-out for new committee members to help us manage Ross Walk Housing Co-operative.

Being a member of the committee means you can influence how the co-op is run and its future plans. You can have your say on the various

areas of our work, including home improvements and service performance.

Meetings generally last no more than a couple of hours and we offer full training, out-of-pocket expenses and even child care support if needed.

If you'd like to find out more, please contact Nicola Parlby on **0116 204 4135**.

How we are doing

Here is a summary of our performance from 1st April 2019 to 31st March 2020

Repairs

We aim to respond to



99%

of **emergency repairs** within 24 hours

34

out of **36** jobs (94.12%) responded to on time



95%

of **routine repairs** within 14 calendar days

311

out of **331** jobs (93.89%) responded to on time

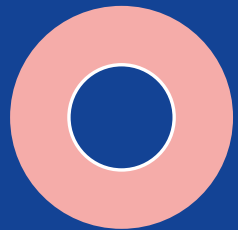
Rent collected

Target

100%

Achieved

99.66%



Lettings



We have re-let **7** homes in the last year

Empty properties



At March 2020, we had **3** empty properties

You said ...

Our customer satisfaction surveys for repairs (for November 2019-March 2010) showed:

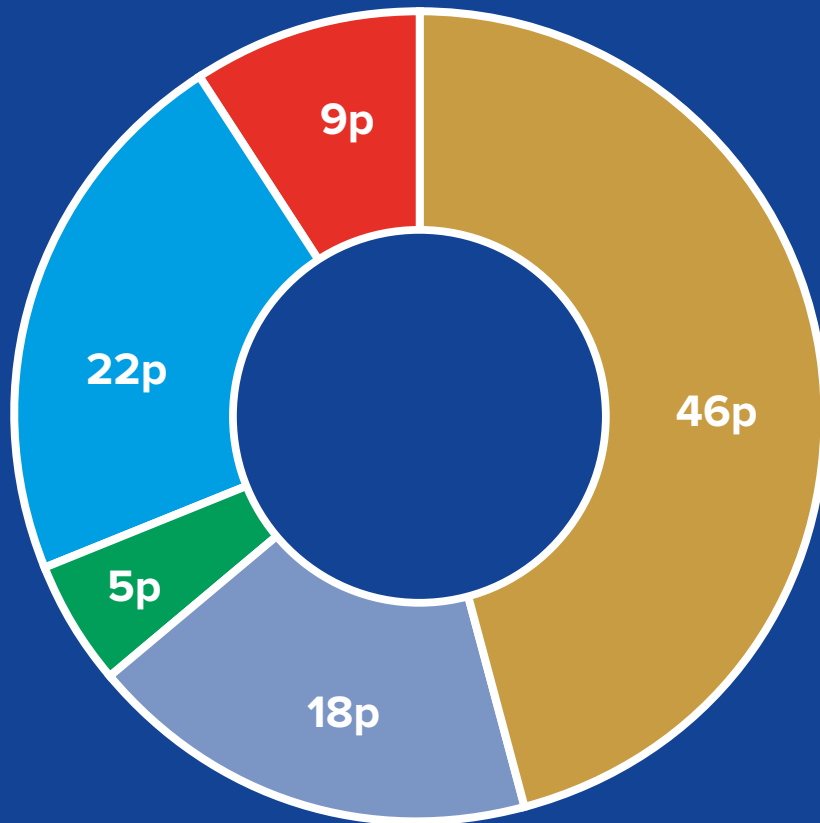
- ✓ the repairs contractor turned up on time – **100%**
- ✓ they were helpful and polite – **100%**
- ✓ the overall repairs service was good or excellent – **94%**

Money matters

Income and Expenditure			
INCOME	£'000	2020	£'000 2019
Rent Receivable		546	526
Social Housing Grant		44	42
Total Income		590	568
EXPENDITURE			
Management		198	158
Routine Maintenance		78	68
Bad debts		1	0
Major Repairs/Planned Maintenance		62	53
Depreciation		94	88
Total Expenditure		433	367
Operating surplus		157	201
Interest Receivable		4	2
Surplus for the year		161	203

Balance Sheet						
	£'000	2020	£'000	2019	£'000	2018
FIXED ASSETS		5,143		4,593		4,442
Current Assets		802		1,001		968
Creditors (<1 Year)		(183)		(135)		(169)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		619		866		799
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		5,762		5,459		5,241
CREDITORS (> 1 YEAR)		(2,631)		(2,489)		(2,474)
TOTAL NET ASSETS		3,131		2,970		2,767
SHARE CAPITAL AND RESERVES		3,131		2,970		2,767

How we spent each £1 of your money in 2019-20



- Management
- Routine maintenance
- Major repairs
- Depreciation
- Planned maintenance

Thank you

We would like to thank all our contractors, suppliers and partners who have worked with us over the last year for their ongoing support. These include:

- PA Housing (managing agents)
- The Sapphire Suite (venue)
- Milan's Dhosa Express (caterers)
- Confederation of Co-operative Housing (business planning support)
- Furry Dice Promotional Goodies (stationery suppliers)
- Rogers Spencer (auditor)
- Neil Plumb Photography (photographic services)
- Woods Coaches (travel provider)
- Word Association (communications).

**ROSS WALK
HOUSING CO-OPERATIVE**

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