

# BUZZ



[www.wmhalted.org.uk](http://www.wmhalted.org.uk)



# Welcome from the Chief Executive

Hello and welcome to this latest edition of your Buzz newsletter.

This is a very special issue as we mark the 60th anniversary of Wirral Methodist Housing Association.

In April 1964, The Beatles' Can't Buy Me Love was number 1 in the charts and we had a small handful of homes in Birkenhead. We have grown a lot since we were originally established by members of the Methodist Church and we now provide around 70 homes every year to new tenants.

60 years is definitely something to celebrate. And you can find out more about how we marked it in our special article.

## Thank you

Thank you to each of you who shared your views on the services we offer and your home.

We're pleased to see that overall satisfaction remains high at 76% and we've been reaching out to anyone who had feedback to share on what they're not happy with.

We're gathering all the feedback and using this to plan how we will improve your home, your neighbourhood and the service you receive from our team.

Full details of the survey, known as the Tenants Satisfaction Measures, is included on page 7



As always, please share any feedback on this newsletter – we would love to hear from you.

**Paul Carhart**  
Chief Executive Officer



## A little bit of history

In April 1964 a collective of people from Wirral Methodist Churches got together with a shared goal; they wanted to improve living conditions for local families.

Under the leadership of William Frost, they founded the Birkenhead (Methodist) Housing Aid Society Limited, which some years later was renamed Wirral Methodist Housing Association.

## Paul Carhart welcomed invited guests to Epworth Grange for a morning of celebration and cake!

We had a wonderful celebration event on 16th April 2024 at Epworth Grange in Birkenhead to mark 60 years. It was a lovely reunion of friends and board members and a great opportunity to reflect on the achievements of the past six decades.



*Rev Noel Sharp and David Smith from the Methodist Church addressed the guests and spoke of their long association with Wirral Methodist Housing.*



**Wirral Methodist  
Housing Association**



# 60 years of memories

There are some tenants who have lived in our homes since day one. One of these is the lovely Mrs Joanne Carrington-Smith. She generously told us some of her life story:

"I was born in the front parlour of a house in Simpson Street in June 1957. I went to school in Cloughton Road however it is no longer there. They are building flats on the site.

"I was married in 1978 and moved to 18 Simpson Street. I was there for 42 years before I sold the house to Wirral Methodist and moved to 5 Simpson Street where I was until November last year when my husband and I moved to more suitable accommodation.

"My grandparents also moved in 1929 to Simpson Street and were there for 34 years. So, I suppose you could say there have been three generations living in Simpson Street for 95 years."

What a brilliant slice of history.



## Walkabouts say hello to the team

Do look out for our Housing Officers and colleagues throughout June and July. We are planning walkabouts across all communities and will be visiting properties to chat to you.

This will be a great opportunity to meet some of the faces behind Wirral Methodist Housing Association, find out what we are working on and let us know if you have any queries or concerns.

We're looking forward to meeting you. If you see us, please stop and say hello!

**We will be visiting:**

**Ellesmere Port on 5th June**

**Woodchurch and Prenton  
on 19th June**

**Seacombe 11th July**

**Central Birkenhead  
11th and 25th July**

**Market Street and Argyle Street  
17th July.**

All walkabouts will take place  
between 10am and 2pm.

We will aim to visit as many tenants as  
possible. Please watch out for a text  
message with further details.



**Wirral Methodist  
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# Your community notice board

## AGM date for your diary

Please save the date for our Annual General Meeting. The venue will be announced a bit closer to the time.

Friday  
**20<sup>th</sup>**  
September

## Do we have your up-to-date information?

We're updating our records to ensure we have accurate tenant contact details.

Your up-to-date information helps us schedule repairs, share important updates, and provide local news.

We may also occasionally reach out for feedback to improve our services.

Have you updated your contact details recently? If not, please contact us by phone - 0151 647 5471, email -info@wmhaltd.org.uk, or through MyHome at [www.wmhaltd.org.uk/MyHomeLogin](http://www.wmhaltd.org.uk/MyHomeLogin).

We do not share your contact information and only keep your information as long as necessary. For more details on how your data is stored, please view our privacy policy on our website.

## Protect your possessions with home contents insurance

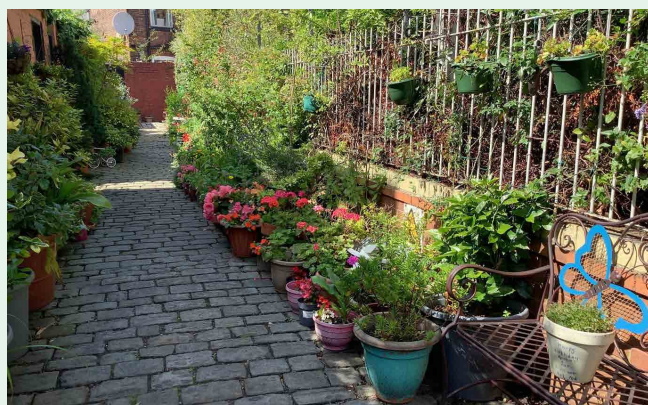
Do you have home contents insurance? A reminder that we do not automatically cover tenants' and leaseholders' household contents. We strongly advise taking out home contents insurance to protect against theft, fire, vandalism, or burst pipes.

While you can arrange your own insurance, we offer a low-cost policy through the National Housing Federation. This insurance covers:

- All electrical goods, for example televisions
- Freezer contents damaged due to electrical failure
- Lost or stolen keys
- Decoration inside your home
- Damage caused by your pets

You can pay premiums weekly, monthly, or yearly. For an application form, email us at [info@wmha.org.uk](mailto:info@wmha.org.uk) or call 0151 647 5471.

## Calling all green-fingered residents



Get ready, gardeners! The Annual Garden Competition is back, opening for entries on 3rd June and closing on 31st July. There are two categories: Best communal garden and Best individual/private garden. Winners will snag a coveted plaque and a £50 voucher!

Submit your entries by calling 0151 647 5471 or email [info@wmhaltd.org.uk](mailto:info@wmhaltd.org.uk) with pictures and a brief on your gardening passion and achievements. Judging takes place early August, with the winners revealed at our Annual General Meeting on 20th September. Best of luck!

# David Smith Complaints Champion

I became a Board Member after I retired with a view to keeping busy and putting something back into the community. I like to ensure that I have an involvement in areas which “makes me think” so that my brain (or what’s left of it) keeps active. I am a great believer in the phrase “use it or lose it “ and, after working for many years I did not just want to sit and vegetate.

As Complaints Champion my role is not to get involved in the everyday handling of a complaint but to have an overview so that there is a review not only of the number of complaints but of the way that the complaints are dealt with. This is to ensure that all complaints are dealt with in a timely, thorough and fair manner. This will, hopefully, prevent the complaint from escalating which is not good for the tenant who has made the complaint, nor to the association.

In all organisations there will be complaints. No organisation is 100% efficient and we are dealing with tenants with varying needs and expectations, so complaints will occur. The important thing with complaints is the learning that comes from a complaint. Without feedback from tenants we may feel that the service that we provide is totally acceptable and become complaisant with the way we operate and the service that we provide.



Learning from the feedback means that we should always be seeking ways and means to improve our standards and so improve the service that we provide to tenants.

I was surprised how complicated the provision of affordable housing was. I thought in my naivety that owning and letting houses would be straightforward but it is anything but!. So, my enjoyment has been partly learning about the complexities of the business but mainly I think my enjoyment has come from the people that I have come into contact with. Whilst I have worked with a number of Board Members and enjoyed that side, meeting and working with the employees of the association has been delightful. Lastly, but not least, meeting tenants at their doorstep and at the AGM's has opened up a new world for me, and I shall miss that.



## Have your voice heard

### Join the Tenants Advisory Group

Would you like to help shape what we do?  
Would you like more of a say?

Then you might be interested in joining our group of tenants who work in partnership with the Association to:

- Increase tenant involvement and help us make decisions
- Make recommendations for service improvement
- Review our performance, influence policy making and champion where we get it right



# Exciting staff changes at Wirral Methodist Housing Association

**We are delighted to welcome some talented new colleagues to our team.**

**Mark Lowe has been appointed as Director of Finance and Resources.**

Wirral-born Mark has extensive finance experience, sits on the Audit and Assurance Committee of a large North West social landlord and is a Chartered Certified Accountant (FCCA).

With over 20 years' experience working in a variety of interim and permanent senior finance and project management roles with several housing associations across England, Mark will be a key member of the Association's Executive Team.

Mark said: "I am looking forward to starting this exciting new role in May 2024 and to coming home to Wirral where I was born. I am delighted to be joining a small and dedicated team and contributing to the range of projects underway, as well as working with the board."



**Chris Page joins as Operations Director**

Chris has 35 years' housing experience ranging from establishing a housing co-operative to being part of the leadership group of a medium sized housing association.

Chris' varied senior experience covers housing for older people, students, and leaseholders on behalf of housing associations, co-operatives and universities as well as the private sector.

He is proud to have established three organisations from scratch (Sensible Housing Co-operative, Manchester Students Homes and Netlet Holdings Limited) as well as driving improvement and growth in established organisations.

Until last year he was also leading the drive for community led housing across Greater Manchester as the Chief Executive of Greater Manchester Community Led Homes.



## A note from Sarah Cavanagh

"I was so proud to join WMHA at the beginning of March this year. I have lived in the Wirral for many years and I'm so glad I can work for such a well-known housing association in the area.

"I'm responsible for parts of Birkenhead, Wallasey and Seacombe. The team have been very welcoming and supportive and I'm learning so much. I really enjoy getting to know the tenants and understanding how I can help to improve their tenancies and the communities we live in. I previously worked in

the Housing First team for three years as a Housing Practitioner, which is very different from this role and it's nice to be learning new things.

"Over the next six months I would like to provide outstanding customer service to my tenants, as well as helping to shape and improve the community that is the heart of WMHA. In addition to this I'm looking forward to working hard and being part of a team who are passionate about tenants, tenancies and housing.



# What you told us

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Earlier this year all tenants were invited to participate in a satisfaction survey that explored all the areas of the association's performance.

Thank you to 324 of you who took the time to respond. We very much appreciate your time and valuable feedback.

These surveys will be published nationally, and a 45 per cent response rate is high when compared to other associations.

The survey was partly undertaken because the government has introduced its "Tenant Satisfaction Measures" as a way of regulating social housing and being more transparent and accountable.

We were keen to do the survey because we care about your thoughts and experiences and appreciate the opportunity to improve in areas we need to.

The result overall was that 76% of you said that you were fairly or very satisfied with the service provided by the association.

We compared this with 23 similar associations where overall 23,287 tenants had replied to the survey. The average level of overall satisfaction was 67% so the association is well above the average.

11.7% of those who responded were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied however that still left 12.6% who were dissatisfied.

One area that had a low satisfaction rating was our approach to handling complaints where only 30% of people were satisfied.

We take this very seriously and were obviously concerned to read this. We urgently wanted to find out more so we analysed the results and found that only 26% of the people who responded to the survey answered this question.

There had been a total of 40 formal complaints in the last year so most of the

respondents may not have made a complaint in that timeframe.

It was important to us to find out what the issues were for people who were not satisfied so we have been working to contact everyone.

We have now completed this exercise and we have a much better picture of some of the problems you are facing with our services.

Some of you told us that a key area of concern was repair jobs being delayed and communication about progress. Another theme was the state of the communal areas and the quality of decorations and furniture.

Our next step is to take action and improve this ASAP.

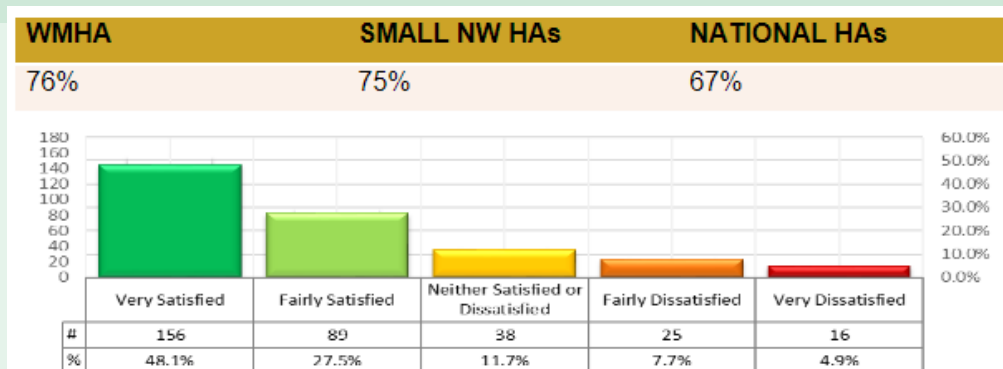
We are currently working on the changes we need to introduce to prevent some of the issues you have pointed out to us from occurring again.

A proposed action plan will be presented to the Tenants and Communication Committee in June for their consideration.

The final action plan will be presented to the Board in June to be agreed. We will publish the action plan on our website when agreed and update you on our progress in the Winter Newsletter.

In the meantime, please be assured that we are taking action on issues that have been raised with us through this process and working on other improvements.

Thanks again for taking part. This is now an annual exercise so you will get a chance to tell us what you think again next year. We can then measure the progress we have made too.



# Contacting us and Our Services

Our office is open on an appointment only basis, but there are still a number of ways of getting in touch with us.

Partnership Building 45 Hamilton St, Birkenhead CH41 5AA

Give us a call: **0151 647 5471**

Email us: [info@wmhaltd.org.uk](mailto:info@wmhaltd.org.uk)

Visit [www.wmhaltd.org.uk](http://www.wmhaltd.org.uk) and fill in our online contact form

## HOW TO REPORT A REPAIR

If you want to report a repair during office hours call **0151 647 5471** (Monday - Friday 9 - 5pm). If your repair is outside of these hours, please press 1 when you call and this will direct you to our out of hour's service.

You can use the MyHome portal to request a repair.

## How can I make a complaint?

- email us: [info@wmhaltd.org.uk](mailto:info@wmhaltd.org.uk)
- Using the website [www.wmhaltd.org.uk](http://www.wmhaltd.org.uk)
- Call us: **0151 647 5471**
- Speak to a member of staff, or Scheme Manager
- Write to us
- Request a visit by appointment.

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A not for profit organisation

Registered office: 42 Hamilton Street, Birkenhead CH41 5AE

Registered number: Regulator of Social Housing - L0848

Registered Society under the Co-operative & Community Benefit Act 2014 - 16740R



**Wirral Methodist  
Housing Association**