

Chairperson's report

Throughout my time as a Committee Member and Chair these last few months have been the most challenging. The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted on everything we do and will continue to change how we do things in the future.

Safety to our tenants, staff and contractors are at the forefront of the Boards thoughts when considering what appropriate actions should be taken. I would like to pay tribute to the staff that have continued to provide an amazing service to our tenants during the pandemic and to our contractors that continued to provide emergency and urgent repairs cover.

The Board has had to adapt and learn new ways to Govern with virtual meetings being the 'new norm'. Feedback from the committee members has been positive about these new arrangements but when the time is right, I hope we can all meet in person.

However, if running Forth was always easy it would probably be no fun and it is important at this time to recognise the valuable time and consideration that my fellow committee members give to their committee business. The monthly thump of our papers getting delivered by the post heralds several hours of reading and consideration and the quality of debate that I chair is testament to how seriously people take their preparation and their role.

Our 2019 results feel like a world away, but I would like to comment on them nonetheless, as they show a very encouraging set of annual accounts. Our Tenant Satisfaction Survey showed that 94% were happy with the overall service from Forth. It isn't always easy to achieve these results but as a committee we remain confident that we have the correct skills and knowledge to continue achieving excellence, and I must also highlight, the invaluable input of our staff, consultants and contractors.

As we approached this AGM one of our founder members has decided to stand down after another 12 years of service. Patrick Heneghan has contributed a great deal to our business and debate over the years and I wish him well on his next venture.

Personnel changes were not restricted to our Committee. Last year saw the retirement of our Development Coordinator Anne Matthew. During her 25 years with Forth, Anne oversaw our Housing Development programme which has increased our stock from 26 single person flats to over 850 properties today. Anne was replaced by Niall Patterson who joined us from Stirling Council.

Our aim as an organisation can be summed up as “providing quality homes and services” and activity on the house building front continued during the year. We were delighted to complete 29 new homes at our developments at Cultenhove before the Contractor unexpectedly went into administration. We anticipate the remaining 6 homes will be completed very soon and will provide a further 6 units of good quality social housing.

Our development programme, along with that of many other organisations, has been delayed due to the pandemic but I’m sure we will start to see the completion of new homes at the end of 2021. Forth in partnership with Stirling Council hope to deliver around 250 homes over the next five years. Funding has been secured from the Nationwide facility to assist with our new build goals.

What we can be sure of is that in the coming year we will continue to strive to make sure that tenants in Stirling continue to have access to good quality homes and services. At the same time, we recognise the importance of Forth adapting the way we provide our services to our tenants, so that we are always looking forward. On behalf of my fellow Committee Members and Staff we will continue to work hard to ensure this happens.

In normal circumstances I would ask for a round of applause for the staff and committee but this year I recognise the applause should be reserved for NHS staff and the Essential workers at this time. I hope to see you in person next year. Thank you.