

Annual report

2020 / 2021



Everyone, regardless of circumstances, should have a fundamental right to a place of **shelter**, and help to **rebuild** their life



Staff & Volunteers

Management

Trevor Atkinson
Janet Boyle

Staff

John Branthwaite
Robert Conn
Lauren Cooper
Vicki Davies
Michelle Forster
Jenny Laverick
Stephen Lowther
Vicki Lyall
Gary Raisbeck
Graham Rodham
Wendy Simpson
Vicki Tarry
Rachel Wilkin
Heather Witham
Amie Wood
Gareth Wood

Management Committee

Madeleine Ashdown
Helen Burton
Patrick Conway
Mike Costello
Ruth Craige (Secretary)
Kate Curry
Gary Eaborn (Treasurer / Elected Chair Nov 20)
Victoria Halliday
William Manners
Marie-Therese Pinder (Resigned Nov 20)
Les Puntton (Chair / Resigned Nov 20)
Mark Reid (Elected Treasurer Nov 20)
Marie Roe
Peter Samuel
Michele Woods (Resigned Sept 20)

Volunteers

Alicia Bruce
Alyssa Kyrrou
Annalise Stockley
Bea Kingsley
Becca White
Catherine Priestley
Chloe Ellison

Georgina Rochford
Hareni Ayadurai
Isabella Harris
Izzy Gale
Jess Hill
Lauren Powdrell
Mark Tallentire
Meg Baker

Natasha-May Bowles
Olivia McCune
Osla Henniker-major
Peter Samuel
Rebecca Wray
Safena Yvanovich
Tamzin Williams
Theodora Hall



Chair's Report



Throughout the year, we have sustained our housing and support services at the same level as the previous year. We have been concentrating on our long-term strategy to explore and secure diverse funding streams and strengthen our financial stability, so that we may continue to improve and expand our services.

Collectively the staff, management team and board members have enabled DASH to continue to deliver a high-quality service to our residents throughout the year despite the pandemic.

During the year we have introduced a new brand – Kepier Homes which is our social housing arm. Our first scheme as Kepier Homes is to refurbish and extend Hudson House to provide four new flats which will be let as affordable homes. We will continue to look for development opportunities and seek additional and appropriate site locations and buildings to expand our housing provision into affordable general needs housing.

I would like to thank the board of trustees for their support this year. We were sad to lose three board members during the year; Michele Woods, Les Punton and Marie-Therese Pinder but we were pleased to welcome four new members Marie-Roe, William Manners, Mike Costello and Peter Samuel. Thanks must also go to Heather Witham, Finance Officer, and Mark Reid,

Treasurer, for their excellent financial management. I would also like to thank Ruth Craige who has done a great job as Secretary.

I would like to thank all staff for their hard work throughout the year. In particular I would like to thank Janet and Trevor for leading the organisation through a demanding year with the pandemic. Collectively, staff have enabled DASH to continue to deliver a high-quality service to our residents and are constantly developing new initiatives to add value to the experience we offer to our residents. Thanks also to Gary Raisbeck for his hard work in developing our new website as a pro-active business tool, which is succeeding in raising the profile of our work and boosting donations and encouraging volunteering help and other valuable support.

Many thanks to the various organisations who kindly donate either money or gifts in kind to our residents and also the team of volunteers who help us with a variety of tasks and projects remotely. Their support is very much appreciated.

DASH is in a good financial position, projects are in place to move DASH forward and the result of becoming a Registered Provider can only ensure the work the organisation does will continue to be vitally important in providing help for those most vulnerable in our community for many years to come.



Treasurer's Report

For the year ended 31st March, 2021

This was a year which began with a lot of uncertainty and disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A number of restrictions were in force nationally which led to a number of changes in the way we operated. There were concerns around the availability of various items including a need for PPE. Staff had the difficult task of supporting residents with the restrictions whilst their own lives were facing the same disruptions. Durham County Council were supportive and we were able to rely on receipt of Supporting People and Housing Benefit payments to ensure a continued cashflow.

There was a distinct change to usual patterns, with residents unable to move on early in the year followed by a glut of movements once restrictions eased. There were some difficulties in obtaining supplies firstly cleaning supplies, then replacements for flat renewals as shut downs of manufacturers and delivery delays created backlogs in the supply chain.

Despite all the disruption we were able to start work at Hudson House in November building four flats above the offices with funding from Durham County Council via Section 106 funding, and funding from the Affordable Rents programme with Homes England. These will become available to let during the next financial year and will form the first of our properties under the KEPHIR Homes brand.

The Statement of Financial Activities shows a surplus for the year of £93,938 which is a return to 2019 levels, as opposed to last year's £68,534. Following the decision last year to place properties on the market, the sales of two properties were completed during the year. The proceeds from these sales will be re-invested into future developments of properties.

There was a slight increase in total income for the year to £704,527 from £702,583 in 2020/21 which remains at a level consistent with recent years. Donations increased to £35,388 with large donations from Durham University through support from Fashion Shows, the Students Union fundraising, and CEO Sleepouts. We also continue to receive donations from organisations such as the Rotary Club of Chester le Street, Jolly Girls, and the Co-operative. We also received regular donations from St Brandon's Brancepeth PCC and a number of individuals providing a welcome addition to our income. The increase in donations was offset by an expected decrease in rental income from our Unsupported Shared Accommodation following the sale of two of the properties.

The expenditure for this year decreased to £610,589 from £634,049 in the previous year. Due to the national restrictions in the first half of the year we were unable to move residents on so there were fewer flat turnarounds; there were also office savings of reduced costs for heat and lighting. Fuel costs and staff travel were low as staff reduced visits to properties conducting more support via telephone instead and supporting residents to appointments at

services was either not required or severely restricted.

The Balance Sheet shows Fixed Assets of £1,055,350 an increase from last year's £938,471. This comprised of residential properties of £613,975, lower than previous years due to the sale of two of the properties, with an increase relating to the building work of £239,327. The sale of the properties is also reflected in the increase in the 'Cash at bank' along with the addition of the surplus for the year. The creditors falling due within one year is higher this year than last year due to a building works invoice raised at the end of March but not paid until April.

The Total Assets less Liabilities of the Charity are £1,925,874 compared to £1,630,513 at the end of the previous year, reflecting the changes to our asset base with our surplus for the year, tempered by the ongoing costs of the building work and grants towards this.

The Charity retains its surplus funds on deposit at its bank and spread across a number of savings accounts and short-term bonds. All savings accounts are covered by the FSCS.

There were 16 full time and 2 part time members of staff employed by the Charity; two members of staff forming the Finance Team with a further fourteen staff involved with financial matters.

Thanks to the Finance team and all staff involved in dealing with matters of a financial nature; and finally, thanks to all financial agencies for their support including Mitchell Gordon Accountants and FMP Payroll Services.

Copies of the full accounts are available from the Finance Officer.



Manager's Report

This year we have endeavoured to maintain the high quality of our services despite the restrictions of the pandemic and at the same time ensure the wellbeing of both residents and staff. It has been challenging but we have overcome barriers to sustain and manage the work of the charity to provide much needed accommodation and support. We would like to thank the staff who carry out this work without whom we could not function. In particular our front line staff have continued to work with residents throughout the pandemic and we are very grateful for their commitment and loyalty.

As a Registered Provider of Social Housing we have also been busy with our first project and have been looking ahead at future developments under the *Kepier Homes* brand.

Properties

During the year we have sold properties in Seaham and Stanley where voids have been high with a view to purchasing other more appropriate properties in other areas.

Development projects

Hudson House was developed to provide 4no. one bed flats which will be let at affordable rents. This is our first Kepier Homes project. Funding was secured from Homes England and Durham County Council's Commuted Sums budget along with a contribution from DASH development funds.

Volunteering

The volunteering programme has continued to operate this year with student volunteers and others helping out in various ways including contributions to the website, marketing & communications and fundraising. All of this activity has been carried out remotely and the use of Zoom and WhatsApp has enabled communications between DASH and our volunteers to continue.

The volunteer programme was reassessed against the County Durham Volunteering Kitemark and our status was renewed with some very positive comments about the way we recruit and manage volunteers.

Fundraising & Donations

In total we received £35,388 in donations compared with £18,350 during the previous year although this year we received one donation of £12,000 from the St Aiden's Fashion Show. Other significant donations came from St. Brandon's Church, Brancepeth, the CEO Sleep Out, the Wolsingham Jolly Girls, Durham University, Durham and Chester-le-Street Rotary Clubs, Durham City Freemen and many others. We



Volunteers decorating Hudson House basement



would like to thank all the organisations, groups, societies, businesses and individuals who have donated this year - many thanks for your valued support.

We have continued to receive online donations and we have introduced JustGiving and Text to Donate as options for donating and an account with Amazon Smile has also generated donations from sales on Amazon.

Marketing & Communications

Website usage has increased and online donations are increasing, and the number of repeat donations is also on the increase. A new website was introduced in the Autumn which is much cheaper to manage and gives us improved functionality. Social media use has increased and the circulation for the DASHtalk e-newsletter has increased to about 1,000 people.

New branding was developed for both DASH and Kepier Homes.

Funding

Funding was secured from Homes England and Durham County Council for the conversion and extension of Hudson House to provide 4 no. 1 bed flats at affordable rent.

Funding was secured from the Newcastle Building Society Community Fund via County Durham Community Foundation to continue our Residents Health & Wellbeing Programme.

Governance

There has been a lot of activity this year in connection with our status as a Registered Provider of Social Housing. We have registered with the Housing Ombudsman Service and in order to do this we updated our Complaints Policy and Procedure and developed a Compensation Policy.

A number of governance activities and reviews were conducted during the year including a review of the Risk Register and Business Continuity Plan and other governance reviews and improvements necessary to comply with the Homes England Standards.

Quality Management

Regular Management Reviews and Internal Audits of the ISO 9001 Quality Management System were carried out and an external assessment was carried out on 23rd September. We passed the assessment without any non-conformities.

Future Plans

Now that the Hudson House extension and refurbishment scheme has been

completed we will rent and manage tenancies there and turn our attention to the potential development of other properties and/or sites. A housing demand assessment was undertaken to identify areas of demand in County Durham and sites/properties will be identified as potential development opportunities as a part of plans to develop the Kepier Homes arm of the organisation.

Planning permission has been granted for 4 no. new build houses on a site at Gort Place, Gilesgate, close to our Hudson House base. We are now negotiating the purchase of the site with a view to assembling a funding package for the new build scheme.

We will continue to look for development opportunities and seek additional and appropriate site locations and buildings to expand our Kepier Homes housing provision into affordable general needs housing.

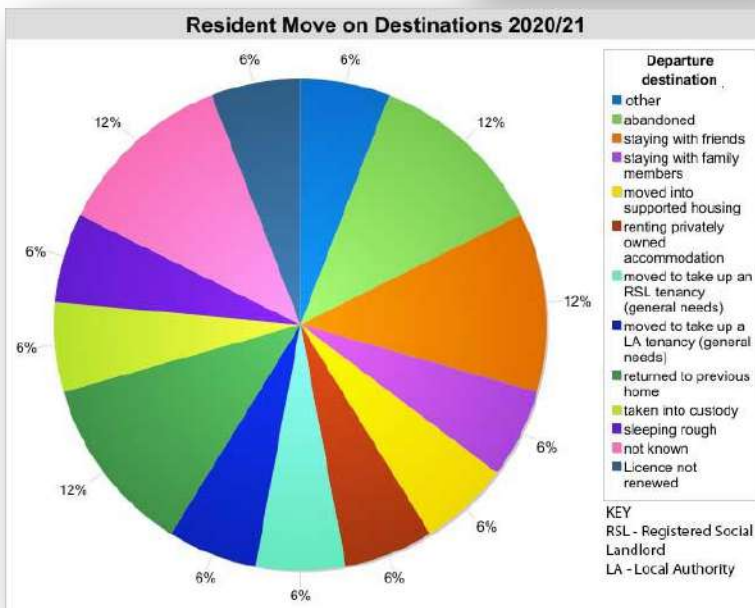
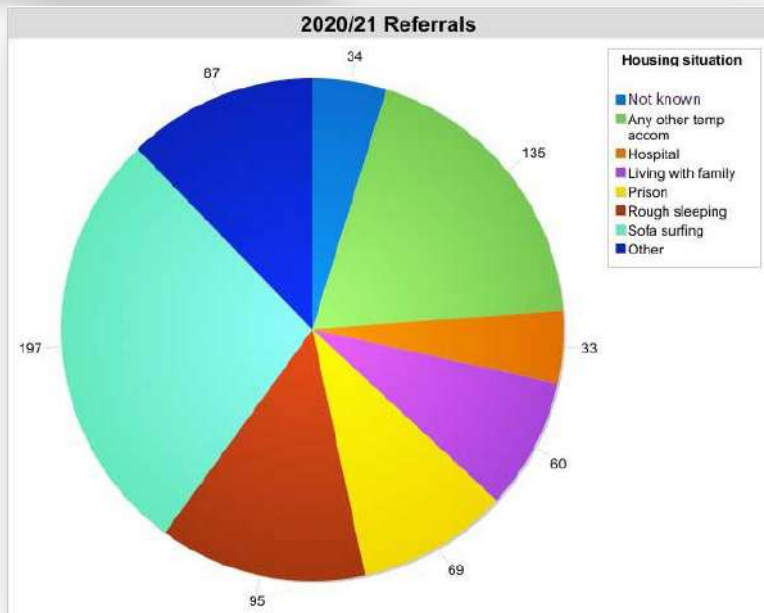
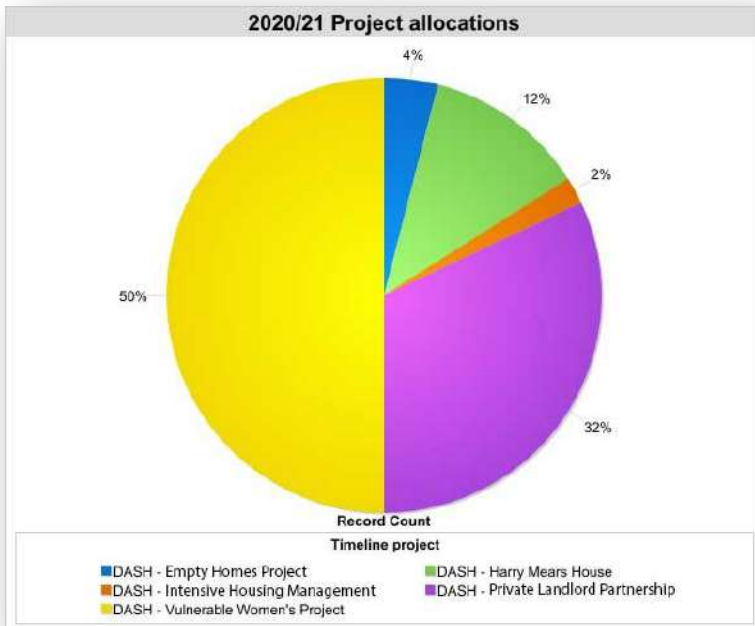
We will continue to expand the volunteering programme, increase the level of donations received and continue to promote an increasing level of fundraising opportunities. Volunteers are key to developing this secondary funding and raising the profile of the charity. The programme has grown to a point where an additional resource is needed to coordinate the recruitment and management of volunteers. Funds will be sought to engage this additional resource.

We plan to promote corporate volunteering and advertise CSR opportunities to local private and public sector organisations.

Marketing, communications and engagement through the website, social media and other channels enables us to highlight the work we do and encourage donations and volunteering. This will remain a priority focus next year.



Trevor Atkinson - Director





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