Blakeney Neighbourhood Housing Society Chairman's report for the year to May 2021

Last year I wrote my report just after we had entered the first lockdown and everything we took for granted as a normal way of life was booted out of the window. I am writing this when we are approaching the next significant date (17th May) on the government’s roadmap out of the third lockdown. The news in this country is good but in other places in Europe and the world the situation is very worrying, especially so in India.

Consequently, it has been a very quiet year for the Society on planned work. We did manage boiler servicing and chimney sweeping plus a few other planned items which took place during the periods between the lockdowns. Our contractors have been unable to do any work indoors until recently and have only attended to emergency call outs where necessary. Progress on 109 High Street and 131 High Street (windows and brick/flint work on both) was seriously delayed due to problems getting listed building consent. On the plus side, the NNDC are beginning to accept double glazed windows on listed buildings which is good news. Hopefully we can expect to see a speedier service from the NNDC as we emerge from lockdown. Work has been sporadic on the refurbishment on 103 High Street due to the lockdown but where possible small numbers of workmen have been able to carry on and we are looking at completion in June this year. We have a backlog on Electrical Certification and EPC surveys. These are restarting and the first appointments have been made. Strangely, during the lockdown contractors have been unable to work inside properties but no extensions were given to the deadline dates.

During the year several tenants were furloughed and others lost their jobs altogether. Our treasurer worked closely and sensitively with the tenants providing assistance where possible with the result that at the yearend there was only a modest income shortfall compared to the original budget projections. Don has reported in his treasurer’s report the Society agreed not to increase rents for 2021 for which many tenants expressed their thanks.

Last year I said the Housing Society was in good form and that is still the case. The committee works well. The Officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Housing Officer) are in regular contact between meetings dealing with day to day matters as they arise. We meet as a Management Committee every two months currently via zoom! Unfortunately, Don Glaister has decided not to continue as Treasurer but will stay in post until we find a successor. We are very grateful to him for the work he has done for the Society including the opening of several new bank accounts to take advantage of government guarantees.

**Development**

Mainly due to the difficulties surrounding covid the project to build new houses in partnership with Broadland Housing has stalled for the time being. The initial site which was identified has several issues which will need to be resolved before any progress can be made. It may be another site altogether will be necessary. However, we remain hopeful something will emerge

from the delays to provide the community with much needed extra affordable housing.

**Tenants**

This year there have been no movements of tenants. Jessica Wilkinson has applied and been accepted for the tenancy of the newly refurbished 103 High Street and will be moving in soon. This will create a vacancy at 100 High Street but, so far, a new tenancy hasn’t been agreed. There are several suitable candidates on our waiting list.

**Finances**

Financially the Society is well placed. Our reserves are sound and we have funds available for the developments as and when they happen.

The covid pandemic has forced us to delay the Society’s 75th Anniversary celebrations. We had planned a number of events throughout the year. Not surprisingly we were unable to carry out any of our plans. We were hoping we would be able to do so as the lockdown lifts but it is likely to be next year now.

We currently have 79 Shareholders.

As always it is a privilege to be able to work with and for the BNHS.

John Seymour BNHS Chair May 2021