

Chairman's Report MEMO business year 2011/12

The MEMO business year 2011/12 was eventful for board and staff, laden with work, challenging but in the end reward-full situations. The 12 board members, consisting of tenants and leaseholders, had to balance continuously risks on our strategy in difficult negotiations of the new management agreement and to win our long-standing case on underfunding by CityWest Homes and to increase our management allowance to a level where we are able to actually fulfil our management agreement signed with Westminster City Council without short-selling Millbank residents. The new contract has over 300 pages and a string of policies attached that were all reworked by board members. We also conducted our first independent leadership and social value creation audit. In the resulting report Action Planning attested that MEMO has an exceptionally active board and overall the organisation is in a good place. Recommendations were given to improve some aspects of its leadership, look at workflow and related staffing structure and evaluate risks that are attached to changing economic and policy environment. An outcome of the audit was that we parted with our longest standing estate director of over 3 years. However, our staff team was able to deliver cleaning and maintenance under the supervision of our Housing officer and leading in to the new business year a recruitment process was started for a new estate director to cover major works and take on overall responsibility for day-to-day running of MEMO.

The board did work hard to support the situation. During the business year we have developed new and strengthened existing relationships with important stakeholder organisations. The relationship with the Council and specifically with local Ward Councillors is very good. There are regular meetings and talks with CWH as the Council's ALMO and whilst some of the talks and negotiations were tense there was all the time an underlying intention to work together improve Millbank Estate.

The board has met regularly without failing, and a number of keen residents regularly attending as observers. Our Ward Councillors are showing a great interest in our estate and support what we are doing. Board members have attended training weekends, workshops and conferences to update their understanding on estate management specific to our organisation. Also many meetings with CWH, the Council and related organisations were attended to negotiate on projects, funding, convey our residents' views and expectations and link our estate with projects that enhance the whole area.

Looking to the future, the outlook for MEMO has never been better, whether it is finances, resident participation or looking at our team of staff and board membership. We employed 2 new back to job scheme reception and housing staff that proved to be a real asset and are now fully employed by us. Knowing that there is still much to improve, there is the clear will, enthusiasm and commitment of staff and residents to succeed, all now documented in the way we managed to achieve what we set out to do 5 years ago, when we started a complete reorganisation. And I hope that the upcoming 5 years TMO continuation ballot will reflect that in its outcome and give us the chance to move further.

The board has plans to improve services, get a modern office infrastructure in place so that staff can work under needed improved workplace conditions and residents have access to better and more welcoming facilities. Within the mandate you gave us at last year's AGM, we are exploring programmes that will bring better repair services, access to cutting edge digital networks, and settings that may give residents an even greater say on Millbank. Enhancing long neglected issues such as fast internet and reliable TV access, entry door and electrical system renewal are finally progressing and further information with project proposals are soon available. However, overall it must be all the time about delivering a good and where possible constantly improving estate services first and we managed to do that, with, regrettably, a few exceptions.

I would like to thank our staff team for their hard work. I'd like to mention specially Sharon Cadogan, who is increasingly and across our own boundaries making a name for herself as an excellent

Housing Officer and reliable MEMO office manager. There is also Scott Steel, our finance officer who joined us last October, and has worked very hard to bring about the positive finance report contained in this annual return documentation. On behalf of our residents we like to thank both of you and hope you keep up the good work for MEMO and our residents. On a professional advice level I'd like to thank our auditors Sayer Vincent and our allowance solicitor Graham French. Liz Michael has provided the board too with excellent advice on our MMA revision and is now also overseeing the 5 years continuation ballot due during 2012.

Volunteering for our board takes commitment, a willingness to learn and to get on with 12 colleges that have an extremely varied professional and cultural background. I'm pleased to say that this board was all the time and remains united in its determination to make Millbank Estate a great place to live. I'd like to thank my fellow board officers Neil Cocking and Pat Johnstone, who in their legal position as company directors and signatories to bank accounts have carried an extra responsibility. However, it gives me great satisfaction that almost all other board members have shown a further increased engagement too and throughout the year. A thank you goes to Obi Nwuso, Louise Etherson and Barbara Charalambous who all left the board during term, each of them for different reasons to do with personal circumstances.

Last but not least, I want to say thank you to all our tenants and leaseholders, who increasingly seem to be happy about services delivered by MEMO and take the time to write to us or pass by the office delivering compliments and also good suggestions for improvements or new ideas. We thank resident shareholders, who year on year give 12 residents the mandate and trust to lead and support a small community that many say is somewhat the prove that the idea of Big Society is not just an idea but as far as Millbank is concerned a living reality.

Wilfried Rimensberger

Chairman

MEMO