WHiTMORE VALE
PROMOTING COMMUNITY LIVING

A Year of Expression

Annual report 2024 - 2025



This report provides me with the opportunity to reflect on the journey our community is making together. The highlight for me of this last year is the remarkable positive impact we have had on people's lives. Family members have taken the time to chat with me to ensure we know the difference we have made to both their and their relatives' lives. People are happier, know they are heard by us, as we adapt our services to them, recognising their individual needs and what makes them happy.

This is the true test of any of the services we provide and could not have happened without the dedicated care professionals in each team, which are making a real difference.

As part of creating a strong community it is important we continue to develop our shareholder membership, these people volunteer to join us, holding me, the Board members, and managers to account, for the way we run our services. Increasing membership will strengthen the governance of Whitmore Vale and ensure that the vision and aims of our community are resilient and remain at the core of everything we do, both now and in the future.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board Members, and all the staff for their work and dedication, as without them we would not be able to improve families' experiences and enable them to express how they feel.



Deborah Robinson
Chair of The Board/ Committee



2024/25 has been a year of Expression, and it has been a joy to see the development of our inclusive music group Expressive Elements, Healthy Eating group and the Tenants Committee.

We have had the pleasure of employing the first, of hopefully many, People We Support into our training team as Oliver McGowan trainers. We have developed our Quality Assurance Monitoring to include lived experience inspectors who will be providing a much-needed additional perspective to our work.

2024/25 has shown our first financial surplus for several years, albeit a small one. This is a significant achievement given the increases in costs not being matched by an increase in funding. In last year's Annual Report, I noted the key reasons for previous years deficits being staff vacancies and vacancies in our care homes. I am delighted to report that we are now fully staffed, have only one vacancy in our care homes and hold a waiting list. We have yet to make inroads into our historic fee levels.

We have published our Five-year co-produced strategy, and this is available on our website, giving us clarity of focus and direction until 2029. We have digitised our care and staffing records and have made significant investment in training and our buildings. Next year we will refresh and co-produce our policies and procedures.

It has been a privilege to work alongside the People who live and work here, family and friends and a skilled and enthusiastic Board in co-creating our future and refreshing this wonderful organisation to make a real difference in people's lives.



Sonja

Sonja Jones
CEO and Association Secretary

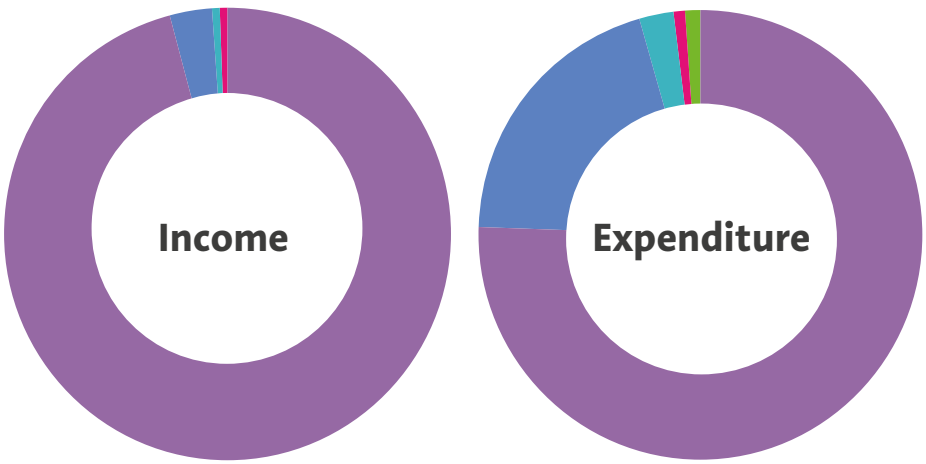
Effective Budgeting for Positive Change

In 2024, a stable Finance team was built on the strong foundations of 2023.

Working closely with the Board and Managers, the Finance team support all areas of the Whitmore Vale Housing Association to enable The People We Support to maximise their day-to-day experiences, while keeping a tight control of the finances, to ensure best value for money. A small surplus was made during the year mainly due to full employment and significantly reduced empty rooms. As a not-for-profit charity, there are no shareholders which means the surplus is re-invested in capital projects, improving the facilities for our residents.

Our income is primarily from Local Authorities, which are under continued pressure to balance their income and outgoings during difficult times where the demand for social care is increasing. The surplus made in 2024 is putting us in a good position to absorb the Employer National Insurance increase and provide our Support Workers with a living wage that they deserve.

In 2025 the focus for finance will be working with the Operations team to evaluate historical fees with Local Authorities to ensure they are sufficient to cover the ever-increasing cost of care.



Income

- Fees and rents
- Consultancy and Sundry
- Charitable Donations
- Interest

Expenditure

- Salaries and Pensions
- Operating Costs
- Depreciation
- Mortgage Interest
- Surplus



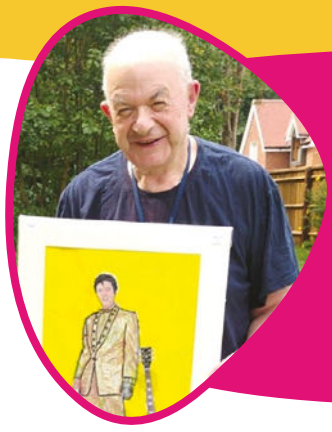
Person Centered Care and Support

“Mary Ann had lived at a care home for over 30 years and had built up family relationships with the other residents. It was meant to be her end-of-life home.

She had bad health issues a few years ago which caused her problems. These were to be expected with the illness she had gone through. The care home she was in basically said they could not cope, and she went downhill rapidly, and became a person we did not recognise or know anymore. We thought we had lost her, to be honest. Mary Ann had to leave her home after 30 odd years, and it broke my family’s heart to see this happen to her.

Fortunately, Mary Ann moved to Wishing Well Cottage which turned out to be Godsend. The people and carers are brilliant, ‘1st class’, and within only a couple of months or so of being there we had our old Mary Ann back. To be honest, it is absolutely incredible to see and so heart-warming; I cannot praise the staff and carers of Wishing Well Cottage enough for their wonderful care, stimulation and change in my beautiful sister Mary Ann. They are all so wonderful; Whitmore Vale and everyone involved have restored my faith in Humanity and God, THANK YOU ALL from the bottom of my heart.”

John PFC Westwood



“I like doing it, it helps me to feel better.

I like making things like statues, anything I can paint. I also like music and I have written many songs and will write more. I love Robert Johnson and all of the blues singers”. - Terry



Recruitment Champion

Sally, our resident from Haven House took on a new role as Recruitment Champion. She now assists on staff interviews to make sure they are fair and that we recruit the right candidate. Her first interviewee was Gary Aldridge, our new Practice Lead.

Person Centred planning

In line with the strategic plan, and to coincide with the new co-produced policy, Person-Centred Planning training was developed and successfully rolled out to all levels of staff of the organisation. The aim was to embed a deeper practical understanding of the approaches, behaviours and skills required to support all individuals to create inspirational person-centred plans that look far beyond their practical needs.

Level 3 Diploma

This year we began an ambitious program of 24 staff completing their level 3 with training workshops delivered by us and partnering with an examination centre-Level 3 Diploma Award.



"Just to highlight again how so happy that the Pines are looking after our dearest J following all the issues she has had. The leadership and team are meeting all her needs now so well and this is down to new management ensuring the staffing is consistent and supported in all aspects of J's care"

MJ, Mother



Empowering Change with our Tenants Committe

Together this year we have improved our policies and put building blocks in place for a stronger and more inclusive community.

Our Tenants Committee have gone from strength to strength, working tirelessly to create policies that have transformed how we communicate, making them clear, accessible and tenant friendly. Working hard to make co-production real.

A number of staff have recently completed the Photo Symbols Course, and alongside our Tenants have started producing our easy read policies. Tenant committee members have been attending Tenant's meetings and training on these polices.

This year also saw the creation of our first ever Health & Safety Committee. Cementing the Health, Safety and Wellbeing of our staff has been the pinnacle of the year. The Committee represents the spectrum of the workforce with a firm eye on developing policies and being the voice of their teams. We look forward to seeing the development over the coming years.





Celebrating our Colleagues

Our colleagues across the organisation work hard to provide a safe and supportive living and working environment. Here we celebrate just a few of the many people who work and volunteer in our community.



Board Member

When I was first introduced to Whitmore Vale Housing Association, I had passion to contribute to an organisation with goals and objectives to help individuals with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism lead better quality lives.

There have been many improvements in the care of the People We Support, in management, governance and financial management in the time I have been a Board Member and it is pleasure to see these improvements.

Finally, I am keen to support the organisation to be the market leader in its field of expertise supported by strong management, governance and financials.

- Asad Ansari



Deputy Manager

I started out as a support worker, taking every chance to learn and build my skills. Over time, I grew more confident and began developing my management abilities, which led me to my current role as Deputy Manager at Haven House. I really enjoy working with the team to create a positive, supportive environment where the people we serve can thrive. What I'm most proud of is helping individuals grow in confidence and independence. The organisation's 'Can' and 'Do' values really resonate with me and keep me motivated to keep learning and giving my best every day.

- Wuraola



Volunteer

I volunteer at Whitmore Vale because I am very passionate about supporting people with learning difficulties, who learn new skills and achieve things they never thought possible. I feel good because I know I'm helping people interact socially and I'm proud to be in a position where I can really contribute.

- Amanda



Estate planning & management

The team have enjoyed a succesful year, we have seen the integration of Housing within the Estates team and welcomed Jacqui Davison as our first ever Housing Manager. Jacqui has worked tirelessly ensuring that suitable systems are in place to ensure the enablement of our tenants. This wouldn't have been achieved however without our wonderful interim tenants committee who have co-produced all of our housing policies.

We have seen the completion of Wishing Well Cottage's refurbishment to a dementia friendly environment, involving our residents at each step of the way from choosing their door colours, to colour schemes for the décor and a wonderful trip to RHS Wisley to understand how we interact with our gardens. This wouldn't have been achieved without our Estates Team, RBS Solent Region who gave up their time to plant our gardens, or ICM Building who completed the kitchen replacement.

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