



Triathlon

Annual Report

2020 / 21

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome from Kath King, Managing Director



Welcome to our Annual Report 2020/21. I hope it gives you some understanding of our performance over the last year. It also provides an opportunity to consider our priorities for the year ahead.

The year was extraordinary. The global pandemic has had an impact on everyone. Our focus was always to keep residents and colleagues safe. I am particularly grateful to our Repairs Team, Lettings Team and Team East Village (EVML) who worked to ensure the service continued to run and kept East Village clean, tidy and safe.

The pandemic is not over, and, in any case, its effects will be felt for some time. Gladly there have been some positives and here at East Village people have remarked on the strong sense of community. Several individuals have been organising and volunteering to help their neighbours. Many people have made small but significant contributions for example by contributing to the food bank. While it is a sad reflection of our times that we need such a provision, it is heartening to see how the community

has responded to those in need. I'm sure I echo many of you in thanking those who have helped over the last year.

In part, we want to take our lead from the strength of the community in planning our goals for the year ahead. We know we need to do more to understand your experience of our service and of life at East Village. One of our current priorities is to review how we work and to consider the ways we can ensure better feedback from you.

We are a proud funder of the E20 Football Foundation which is such an asset for families, the community, and East Village's young footballers. Supporting our community is important for us and we want to continue to do so moving forward. Find out more about community initiatives on **page 6**.

For some leaseholders, the year has been dominated by the external wall safety issues. Even for leaseholders living in blocks that are okay, the wait for information was difficult. I'm aware that there are many leaseholders who have been trying to sell their homes for over two years. The fact that you remain unable to move because of the building safety issues is not acceptable. We're continuing to work with EVML to help resolve these issues. Find out more about building safety on **page 4**.

It has been two years since Southern Housing Group started to provide the repairs and housing management service on our behalf. It's an anniversary I'm proud to celebrate because the team have worked hard and made a big difference. Our repairs team receive great feedback about their service and the response times have significantly improved. You can also book repairs online now – visit **portal.shgroup.org.uk** to set up your account. There's still much to be done to continue to improve our service, but we've made a good start.

I hope you find our Annual Report interesting. We would love to hear from you so feel free to get in touch with your comments and views.

Kath King
Managing Director

BUILDING SAFETY

The biggest challenge we have faced over the last 12 months (and longer) has been the impact of the “cladding crisis”. After the Grenfell Tower tragedy in 2017, the government issued new fire safety advice for external walls and cladding systems. As a result, East Village Management Ltd (EVML), supported by Triathlon Homes, began a programme to inspect the external walls of every tall block at East Village. We are now working with EVML to address the findings.

Aluminium Composite Materials

EVML have panels made from Aluminium Composite Materials (ACM) from the external walls. Some of this work has been disruptive for the residents affected and we'd like to thank you for your patience and co-operation.

Some ACM has also been found on the balconies in plots 1, 3 and 4. We're taking this seriously and are waiting for further comments from EVML about options for removal.

Inspection findings

The inspections of the 66 buildings were completed in March. The investigations found several defects and have shown that combustible materials are present within Triathlon Homes blocks. This is not a problem if the materials are adequately covered or safely installed. We now know this is not the case in some blocks and we are working closely with EVML to find the best solutions. In some blocks serious defects were found and we are prioritising remedial work in these.

Keeping everyone safe

Our priority is your safety. We're working closely with EVML who are responsible for the external walls. They have a number of technical advisors working with them to ensure your safety. They are also in regular contact with the Fire Brigade and the on-site security team have a focus on fire safety.

We are also concerned about the impact on your wellbeing. For many, the uncertainty and anxiety

experienced while waiting for news about timelines and potential costs, is difficult. We don't yet have all the information we need, and we know how frustrating this is for residents. EVML are progressing the building safety issues and have put the appropriate resources in place. We'll pass on the information to residents as soon as it's available.

Government Funding

Government funding is available for some building safety work. We are working with EVML to ensure applications are made to the Building Safety Fund. The decisions will be based on the technical information EVML have supplied.

The government will be funding pay the ACM remediation in plots 2 and 7 from a specific fund. We are awaiting details of the amount that will be allocated to each home.

We know the cost of the work is a particular worry for leaseholders. We'll continue to look at every option to protect leaseholders from the cost of the work.

If you want more specific information about the issues in your block, please email: **buildingsafety@triathlonhomes.com**



COMING THROUGH LOCKDOWN

The COVID-19 pandemic has transformed our personal and professional lives. While such change has been difficult, it's also created opportunities. We've spent time helping our community to overcome the difficulties that COVID-19 presented by helping as much as we can. This has been through a hands-on approach to support residents and provide existing services in a new way to ensure the most vulnerable felt supported.

As we move forward, we are reviewing our service and continuing to adjust to new ways of working so that we can continue to meet our obligations and serve the community as best we can.

It's good to be back at East Village though!



Providing a service whilst working from home

- The team continued to provide a housing management service while working from home.
- **Repairs** – The challenge of taking on new or completing existing repairs throughout lockdown was difficult but we managed to overcome it through changing the way we work. During the first lockdown we were only allowed to do emergency repairs. This meant a backlog of non-urgent work built up. Since this time, we have continued to follow the Government guidelines and have made great progress resolving any outstanding repairs.
- **Online services** – You can now pay your rent and service charge, book repairs and update your household details using your online account. Sign up or login at portal.shgroup.org.uk. Introducing these online services has reduced the need for face to face contact, and helped us keep residents safe throughout the pandemic.
- **Emails to info@triathlonhomes.com inbox** – When the office was forced to close during lockdown we quickly adapted, moving to a work from home service. This saw a massive increase in the number of emails to our inbox and a change to how we worked. We're proud to have adapted and continued to provide a quick and courteous service to our residents.

Letting properties

We wanted to make sure prospective new residents were safe whenever they were in contact with us, so we moved our lettings service primarily online. We offered videos and images of properties to replace traditional viewings.



Community initiatives

During the first lockdown, we connected with East Village Management Ltd (EVMML) advising them of 80 vulnerable residents who required additional support during lockdown to collecting food, medication and other essential items. EVMML started a buddy system and saw an influx of volunteers willing to help. Volunteers were matched to residents who needed some support and food parcels were delivered across East Village throughout the lockdown. Many of those relationships have lasted and friendships have formed. Volunteers continue to pick up essential food items, collect prescriptions, take out bins or just call by to chat.

This initiative developed into a weekly food pantry in collaboration with 'The Hall' – Triathlon residents were not only recipients but also volunteers. We're grateful to all the volunteers and our partners EVMML and The Yard

Triathlon Homes works closely with EVMML and helps fund a range of community initiatives that help make East Village a great place to live. Some of the other initiatives that have had an impact over the past year include:

- A bike maintenance course for young people aged between 15 and 19
- Social enterprise café which taught basic business skills
- Beekeeper training for residents to help look after the East Village bees
- Mentoring intervention – EVMML teamed up with XLP to offer support to young people from Chobham Academy



Supporting people in financial difficulty

Throughout the year we worked with residents who had been hardest hit financially by the pandemic. We were able to provide support and advice to people support through our Southern 360 team.

The Coronavirus Act 2020 provided protection to tenants by helping keep people in financial difficulties in their homes. The provisions in the Act increased the required notice period landlords must provide tenants before any court action and this was extended through additional legislation.

We still have support available if you are struggling to pay your rent or need help claiming or understanding benefits. Please contact our team on **01403 220434** or email **Community.Investment@shgroup.org.uk**

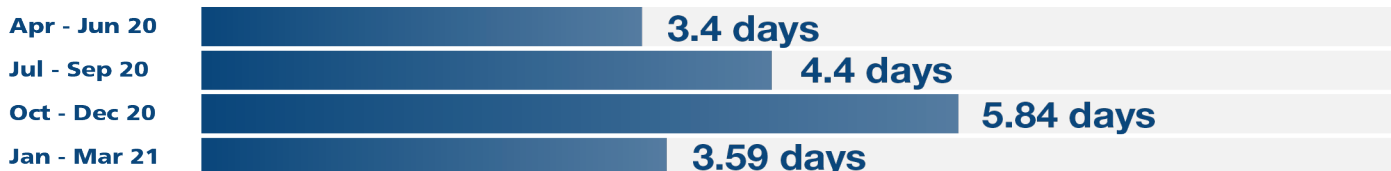


OUR PERFORMANCE

Rent and service charge collection – G15 average: 100%



Average number of days to complete repairs – G15 average: 7 days

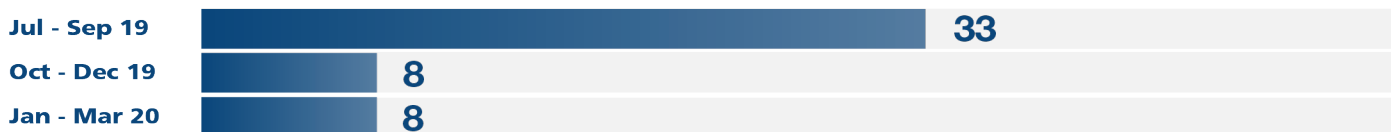


Average time to re-let empty property – G15 average: 24 days

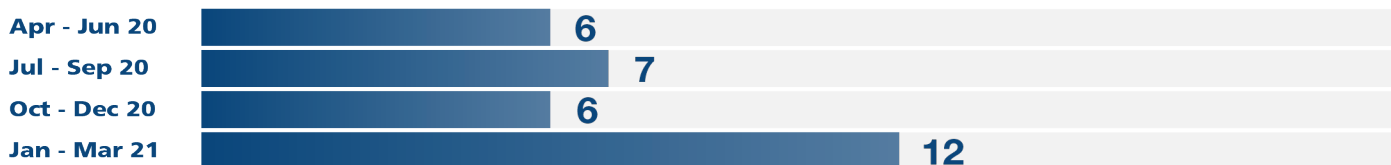


Total complaints received 2019/20 vs 2020/21

2019/2020



2020/2021



Monthly joint inspections with Team East Village on all blocks and communal areas



Due to public health restrictions we haven't been able to do our monthly scheduled visits, but we look forward to returning to doing these going forward.

Contact us

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