



SENIOR LIVING

# ROCKDALE

at the heart of Sevenoaks



## Residents' Annual Report

For the 15 months ended 31 March 2022

# Contents

*This report sets out Rockdale's performance between January 2020 and March 2022.*

Our History and Mission	3
Message from the Chairman - a summary of the year's performance	4 - 5
Value for Money	8
Services	10 -12
Community	13
Properties in Management	15





WE REFURBISHED THE  
CARE HOME GARDEN



# History & Mission

Rockdale is a registered social landlord and has been supporting older people in Sevenoaks since 1953. Today it is home to over 200 residents in a range of sheltered accommodation and residential care. Whether you opt to rent or purchase your property, or move to our residential home, you will be part of a welcoming community nestled in the centre of Sevenoaks Town. For many of our residents the knowledge that our staff are on site 24-hours a day brings peace of mind so that they can enjoy their retirement.

We are a not-for-profit charitable organisation which enables us to keep Rockdale affordable for all and any profits are invested back into the Association and not to shareholders. We are governed by a Board of Trustees which ensures that Rockdale adheres to its values and principles of providing the best, affordable housing to older people in Sevenoaks.

Rockdale's mission is to provide affordable housing, care, and other help to improve quality of life for older people.

We will:

- Provide good quality homes and support services for older people which meet their changing needs. This means we will:
- Provide well managed housing cost-effectively and to high standards
- Consult with residents, tenants and leaseholders on the services provided
- Regularly monitor, evaluate and strive to improve services
- Provide efficient and responsive repair services, and make adequate provision for planned maintenance
- Make the best use of our assets to maintain a sustainable community
- Offer appropriate advice to services and welfare benefits
- Offer high quality residential care:
- Aim to establish Rockdale House as a model of excellence in residential care
- Recognise that the quality of residential care is dependent on the quality of the staff providing it, and thus place a high priority on the recruitment, training and retention of staff

# Message from the Chairman

I am delighted to present Rockdale's annual report and accounts, and to have the opportunity to provide an update on the recent challenges and how the Association rose to meet them. During 2021 the Board made a decision to change the financial year end for the Association to the 31 March and so this Annual Report and Accounts is for the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Like everyone the Covid-19 pandemic continued to impact on everyone involved in Rockdale. We had to be quick to adapt to new ways of working as we sought to support our residents effectively whilst keeping our staff safe too.

I am immensely proud of our staff who worked incredibly hard to support our residents and keep essential services running. Their professionalism, dedication and reliance enabled them to rapidly adapt to emerging and changing situations. This has had a profound impact on our business, with non-essential staff working remotely for the last 15 months creating additional challenges and hurdles to overcome. Despite these difficulties we have continued to provide an effective service to all our residents, ensuring 24-hour on-site support service continued, adapted meal provision, maintained an emergency repair service and conducted key health and safety checks.

Given these challenges I am pleased to report that the period ended 31 March 2022 shows an acceptable financial period overall for the Association. The financial statements show an operating deficit of £447,056 and a deficit before other comprehensive income of £492,769.

Due to the challenges of the pandemic some of our maintenance and refurbishment projects were placed on hold. But we did commence two key major projects: the upgrading and replacement of fire doors across our accommodation and the construction of a new lift at Beatrice Wilson House. Both of these projects will be completed in the next financial year.

We continued to carry out major works across the site in line with our 25-year planned maintenance programme. During 2022/23 we are forecasting to spend £391,000 on planned maintenance projects, which equates to 10.4% of our budgeted income from lettings. In addition, we are also forecasting to spend an additional £149,185 on capital projects, £51,248 of which is for the second lift in Beatrice Wilson House.

We strive to achieve value for money across all departments and undertake regular reviews in areas of high value costs such as those associated with repair work,

maintenance contracts and utility costs. We work hard to negotiate cost effective contracts and have reviewed our supplier list in 2022 to deliver this key objective.

The period to 31 March 2022 saw major changes in the senior leadership of Rockdale. We said goodbye to our Chief Executive, Anita Cleugh; Head of Finance, Sue Baxter and Racheal O'Neill, Head of Maintenance. Claire Billis our Head of Housing took over as interim Chief Executive and Robert Kirton joined us as interim Head of Finance. I want to thank them for holding the fort so ably. In January 2022 Christopher Munday joined as our new Chief Executive; Christopher Charles-Webb as our new Head of Finance & Resources and Trupti Khristi became our new Home Manager, Ros Ward stood down as interim Home Manager in March 2022. Claire Billis's role was redefined to be Head of Housing and Maintenance. I am pleased to report that the new leadership team are settling in well and we are already seeing them delivering value for Rockdale.

As a result of Covid and its impact on elderly residents, voids in the care home worsened considerably in the period. Staffing and agency costs remained high, incurred due to ongoing difficulties with recruitment and covering Covid related absence as a result of staff needing to shield or self-isolate. The focus going forward will be filling empty rooms, recruitment of key management roles, and reducing costs associated with the management of our care home.

In 2021/22, 33 rented apartments became available for re-let. 1 unit was offered to a transferring resident and 32 to residents from the waiting list. This continues to be higher than average and consequently the Association has seen increased refurbishment and void loss costs. We have also seen 9 leasehold apartments change hands. Due to the Covid pandemic we encountered significant challenges with our lettings process due to lockdown and social distancing restrictions and to overcome these interim Assessment and Viewing Procedures were devised.

As we emerge from the pandemic our priority remains supporting Rockdale's residents and looking after the mental and physical wellbeing of our staff. Our operating environment has changed significantly and we are reviewing how we do things in the future. Like many housing organisations the longer-term focus will be on liquidity and the challenges around funding our charitable aims.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity thank the Board, Care & Assessment Committee members, the Executive Team, and all Rockdale employees who have worked so incredibly hard this year in supporting our residents through very challenging times.

**Ian Grattidge**  
Chair of the  
Board of Trustees  
5 December 2022





OUR GARDENERS OFTEN LEAVE  
HOME GROWN PRODUCE FOR  
RESIDENTS TO HELP THEMSELVES





THE MAYOR OF SEVENOAKS CAME  
TO VISIT, CLLR MERILYN CANET





# Value for Money

The Association demonstrates Value for Money by: -

- Ensuring Value for Money is embedded through all decision-making processes
- Setting clear strategic objectives
- Having a framework of strategies, policies & processes in place to ensure optimal benefits are achieved from both assets and resources
- Ensuring services are cost-effective, efficient and customer-driven.
- Recruiting and retaining the best staff to deliver our services

We strive to achieve value for money across all departments and undertake regular reviews in areas of high-value costs such as those associated with repair work, maintenance contracts and utility costs. We work hard to negotiate cost-effective contracts and have reviewed our supplier list in 2022 to deliver this key objective, for example:

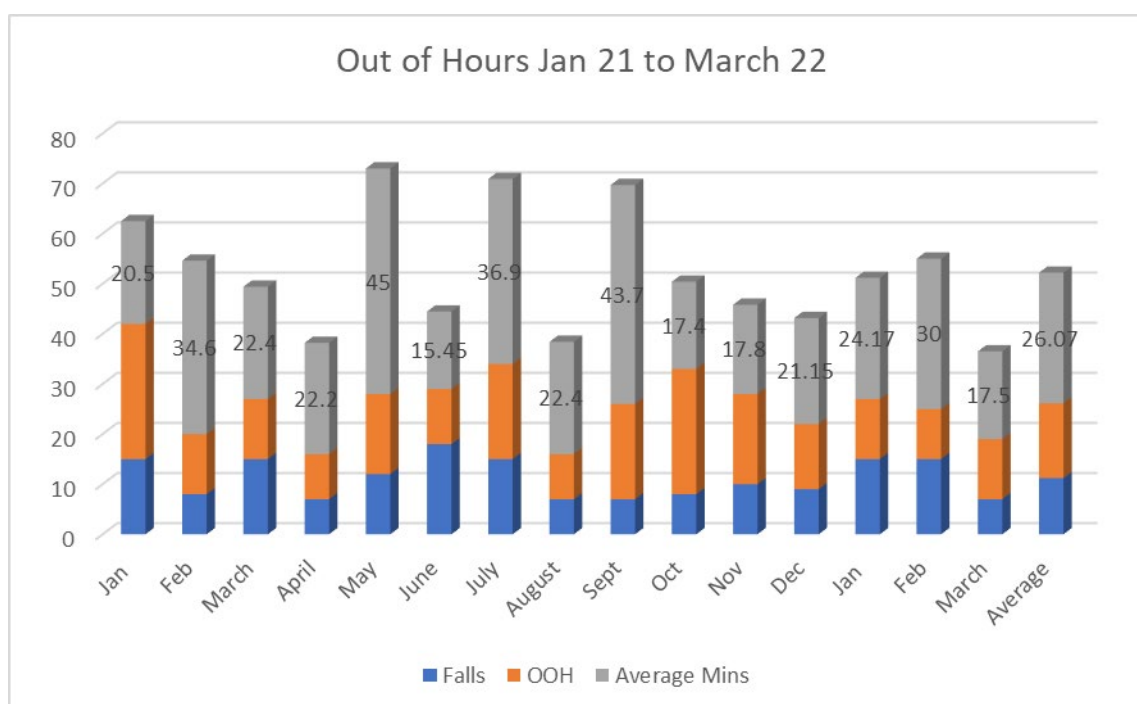
- We achieved an extension to our Gas contract on the same favourable terms, so ensuring stability and VFM until 2025.
- We reviewed the photocopier contract and obtained improved functionality and reliability for no increase in cost



ROCKDALE ENTERED THE SOUTH  
EAST IN BLOOM COMPETITION IN  
2021 AS PART OF THE SEVENOAKS  
TOWN ENTRY AND WON GOLD!  
THIS ILLUSTRATION WAS CREATED  
BY A ROCKDALE RESIDENT.

# SERVICES

- Residents are called either daily or every three days. During the pandemic additional calls were made to those residents who are deemed more vulnerable and were shielding due to their vulnerability.
- In May 2021, when Covid-19 restrictions were eased the support team started to carry out monthly visits as part of the core service. Contact remained at 100%.
- Completion of annual Support Plans commenced in August 2021, delayed due to Covid restrictions. 100% completed by January 22.
- Several key staff undertook 'First Aid at work' training.
- KCCs Empowercare project is a European funded project that looks to help improve digital skills and reduce social isolation for people over 65. The project funds a number of Digital Ambassadors and they visited our residents, providing advice and guidance on how to access specific digital devices, with 1-2-1 support.
- We have also started to see some of the resident's activities increasing. The Social Club set up their table tennis, darts and pool sessions, card playing, bingo and quiz evenings arranged. Our outside visitors were also keen to return, and activities are now being scheduled, all providing residents an opportunity to engage and participate following long periods of isolation.



*Out of Hours call outs – shows number of falls, out of hours calls and the average length of the call.*



- In March 22 residents' meetings took place in Akehurst Lane and Beatrice Wilson, the first since the pandemic in 2020. Both meetings were well attended, this gave residents an opportunity to meet the new Chief Executive and be brought up to date on current and future planned maintenance projects. Residents are generally very happy with the current service and highly praised staff for their ongoing support.

## Maintenance

Lockdown restrictions had a significant impact on the planned projects scheduled for 2020/21 with very little progress being made at the early part of the year. Following the easing of restrictions in April 21, discussions with our appointed Consultant, started to take place and key projects were initiated:

- Beatrice Wilson 2<sup>nd</sup> lift installation – Significant progress has been since the commencement of the project in late 21. First fix electrical installation have been completed and Pickering's are on now on site to install and commission the lift. The work carried out by BW May has been to a high standard and weekly progress meetings have been held.
- Fire Door replacement project – commenced early 22 and has now been completed.
- Stock Condition Survey - with the first survey being carried out in August 21. We have now received completed surveys; these will inform a minor works/maintenance programme to be undertaken in the near future and then a more extensive capital replacement programme of major elements such as the roofs.
- Refurbishment of Guest Flat in Rockdale Gardens.

Each scheme has been graded in relation to its condition, priority of works (in years), reason and user effect. The grading for each scheme is outlined below:

A = Good B = Satisfactory C = Poor D = Bad

Scheme	Overall Condition Grade
Constant Meadow	B
Webbs Meadow	B
1 – 11 Laurie House	A
12 – 19 Laurie House	A
Summerbank	B
Beatrice Wilson	B
Rockdale Gardens	B
The Pleasaunce	B
Stable Court	B
The Lodge	B
Rockdale House	B

- Our in-house maintenance staff carried out in total 975 maintenance jobs in 2021/22, 893 requests were undertaken in the Sevenoaks apartments and 82 in the Care Home. There was a slight reduction in the number of job requests in the early part of 2021, as they were only responding to emergency calls due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions. From August onwards we saw a slight increase but November being reported as the busiest month, where 102 jobs were raised. All jobs have been completed within target time.
- Contractor's attendance was initially restricted, responding to only urgent requests and emergencies throughout the early to mid-2021. Emergency & urgent target times remained at 100%. A slight drop in performance for routine due to issues with the access restrictions and availability of materials.
- Winning gold – SE in Bloom 2021.

## **Lettings**

- As we entered a new year, we continued to see a high volume of vacancies which has been challenging for the Lettings Administrator to manage. Properties continue to be advertised to applicants on the waiting list, but we have had concerns around the lack of bids being placed. As a result, we have advertised several properties via Kent Homechoice in order to increase interest.
- To improve the bidding process for applicants we set up an on-line bidding page which provides details of vacant properties and an opportunity for applicants to express an interest via a digital format. We have received some positive feedback and it has assisted in streamlining the process for the Lettings Administrator. We have also aimed to increase Rockdale's profile by advertising via Facebook.
- On August 14<sup>th</sup> we held an 'Open Day' which was well attended, approximately 40 visitors arrived at Rockdale and had an opportunity to view a number of our rented and leasehold apartments. We have received some very positive feedback, especially around the wonderful grounds and how well they have been maintained.

# Community



We were delighted to receive a 'seasonal package' from Tonbridge Grammar School. The 'seasonal joy package' includes many letters and cards to our residents, from students, which we were extremely grateful for.

We are enjoying volunteers joining us again. Students from local schools have been attending, offering activities, gardening help and music.







MANY ACTIVITIES ARE ON OFFER AT  
ROCKDALE HOUSE CARE HOME FOR  
RESIDENTS TO ENJOY.

# Properties in Management

Rockdale House, Sevenoaks Registered Residential Care Home	48 rooms 2 short stay rooms
Rockdale Road, Sevenoaks	123 sheltered apartments for rent
Webbs Meadow, Sevenoaks	17 sheltered leasehold apartments 1 sheltered apartment for rent
Constant Meadow, Sevenoaks	10 sheltered leasehold apartments
Summerbank, Rockdale Road, Sevenoaks	10 sheltered leasehold apartments
Laurie House 1-19, Sevenoaks	19 sheltered leasehold apartments

## Rents

		Rent	Services	Support	Total monthly charge	
		2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22	2020
Rockdale Road	Studio	£397.69	£249.17	£103.26	£750.12	£739.95
Rockdale Road	1 bedroom	£466.63	£274.07	£103.26	£843.96	£832.60
Stable Court	1 bedroom	£466.63	£240.08	£103.26	£809.97	£798.08
Rockdale House	Residential care home	£4,143.01	-	-	£3931.46	£3744.25

\* Heating & hot water not included in services

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[www.rockdale.org.uk](http://www.rockdale.org.uk)

[www.facebook.com/RHASEvenoaks](https://www.facebook.com/RHASEvenoaks)

Rockdale Housing Association Limited is registered with the Regulator of Social Housing No. LH0869 and is a charitable Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 no. 13507R

