



ANNUAL REVIEW

2018

PROVIDING GOOD QUALITY AFFORDABLE LIVING

WELCOME



Andrew Robertson
Chair

☉ **WE** set high targets and standards at LAR and I am delighted to report that at the end of our second full financial year we have lived up to these high expectations.

It has been a particularly busy year of acquisition and development and you will read more detail of our various activities elsewhere in this review. However, I should like to highlight the fact we have recorded a number of 'firsts' during the last 12 months, most notably our:

- First design and build project
- First conversion of a commercial building into residential use
- First subsidiary, allowing us to purchase the building in which our head office is located. This will afford us a base from which we can grow and better serve our tenants.
- First Modern Apprentice appointment and our first Trainee Property Manager as we build for the future.

I pay tribute to our growing staff for their professionalism, commitment and energy. LAR remains under the excellent stewardship of Chief Executive Ann Leslie, as we continue to address the issue of a shortage of quality mid-market rental homes across Scotland.

Our endeavours are greatly enhanced by the excellent working relationships we have developed with the Scottish Government and our funders Bank of Scotland and Scottish Widows. We continue to receive tremendous support from Housing Minister Kevin Stewart, who has taken a keen interest in our work and visited some of our developments.

Finally, I thank LAR's Trustees for their wise counsel and support during the last year. In particular, thank you to Barry White who has left us to pursue new career opportunities south of the border and a warm welcome to his replacement Andrew Bruce, representing Scottish Futures Trust Investments.



Ann Leslie
Chief Executive

☉ **IT** can be very instructive reflecting on 12 months of work and achievement, especially if you can refer back to the previous year in numbers. At this time in 2017, I highlighted a year of success noting that we had 14 sites across Scotland. A year on, and I am able to report that we now have 24 sites and 600 homes either occupied, under construction or in planning.

It is a source of great pride for all connected with LAR that this equates to buying a new home every other day since we launched. We are ahead of schedule and making an impact on the housing sector in Scotland. As such, we have now laid the groundwork to expand beyond our original business case, while keeping mid-market rent at the very core of our activities.

None of this would have been possible without a huge team effort and you will read elsewhere in this review about our growth as an organisation. Our staff complement now stands at 10 and we have brought all services in-house allowing us to better serve our tenants.

With all homes now under internal management, the team is seeing an increasing number of inter-development transfers, with tenants wishing to remain with LAR when their housing needs change. This is a very positive sign and is something that the team will build on in the future.

Finally, I should particularly like to praise the staff team for their commitment to taking on tasks, no matter how big or small, that fall outside of their recognised remit. Getting a site ready for a grand opening requires all hands on deck – perhaps a fitting analogy for our newest development at The Boatyard in Cockenzie (see pages 8 and 9).

 @LARHousingTrust  LARhousingtrust  info@larhousingtrust.co.uk  01383 630190  larhousingtrust.co.uk

F3 Buchan House, Carnegie Campus, Enterprise Way, Dunfermline KY11 8PL.
LAR Housing Trust is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Scottish Charity number SC044825)

A TALE OF TWO CITIES

Setting records as we sign significant deals in Edinburgh and Glasgow

📍 **WE** have signed our first two deals for developments in Edinburgh, including our first conversion of a commercial building into residential use.

Work is ongoing at Westwood House on the city's Gorgie Road to convert the former office block into 47 flats. We were delighted to have secured this building to add Edinburgh to our portfolio of homes in East Lothian and Midlothian.

This was a significant move for us and was at the time the biggest deal we had completed both in terms of the number of properties on one site and in purely financial terms.

The development will consist of 18 one bedroom, 27 two-bedroom and two three-bedroom flats and the aim is to complete the project and welcome the first tenants by summer 2019.

Hard on the heels of our first Edinburgh project came the second. A deal was concluded with Manchester based MCR Property Group to buy 40 units at Chesser House, just next door to Westwood House. This will consist of a range of one, two and three-bedroom homes in a superb location and is a



Above: The exterior of Westwood House and below, two interior images of the communal areas



most welcome addition to our portfolio.

A huge thank you to the City of Edinburgh Council for working with us on this project. Chesser (or Elfin House, as it is soon to be known) together with

Westwood House gives LAR a noticeable presence in a very popular area of the city.

Again, we expect our first tenants to move in during the summer of 2019.

RECORD DEAL IN GLASGOW

📍 **NO** sooner had we concluded our biggest deal for Westwood House in Edinburgh, than an even bigger project and opportunity arose.

We were delighted to agree to purchase 64 homes at a site being developed by Cruden Estates Limited on Helenvale Street, just a short walk from the Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome in the east end of Glasgow.

This is just our second site in Scotland's largest city. Local housing associations and Glasgow City Council have been very welcoming to

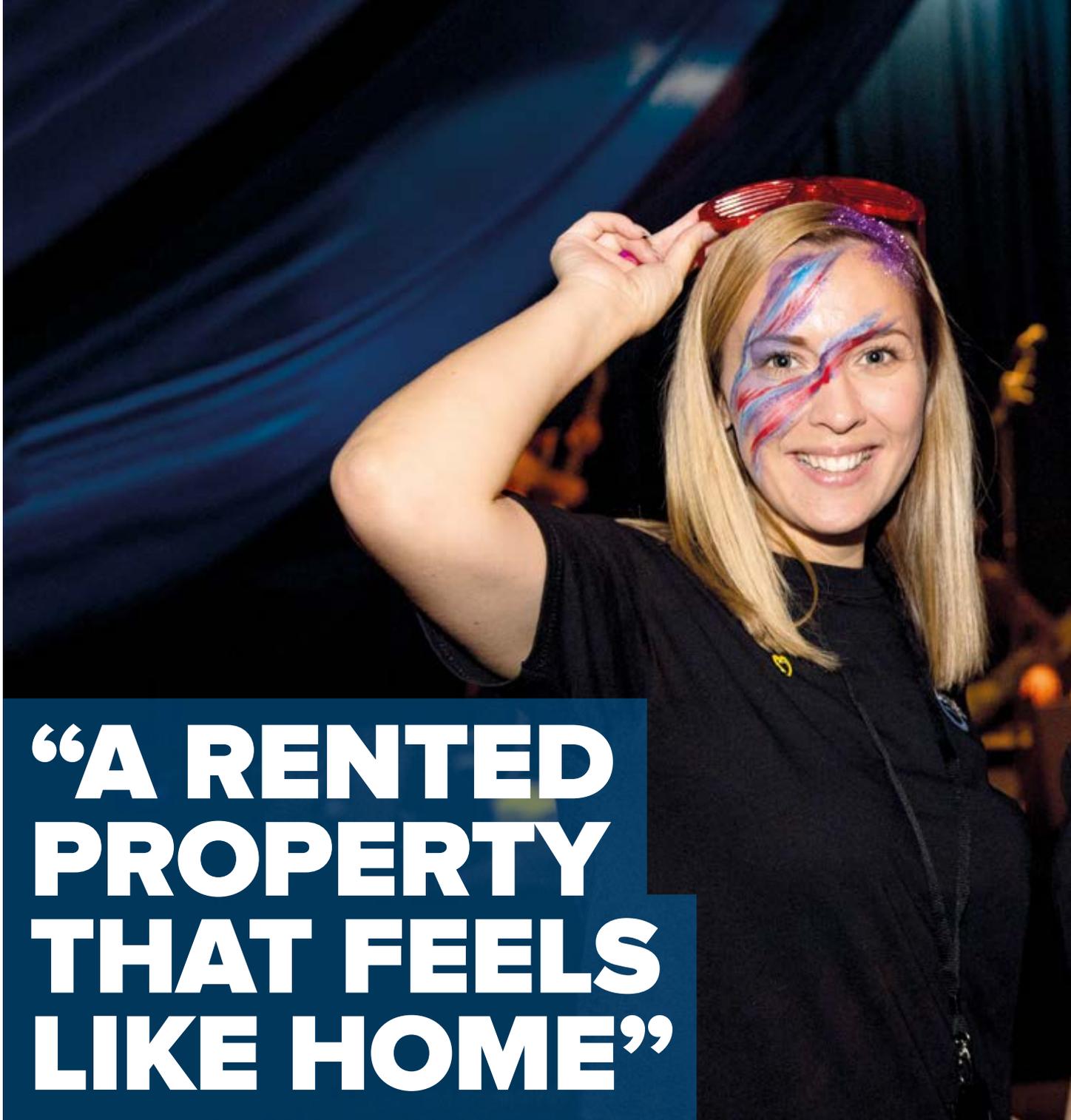
us and we continue to be on the lookout for other sites in the city!

The 64 homes are all two-bedroom flats of varying sizes and construction work is now well under way. The work will be completed in phases and we expect our first tenants to move in by summer 2019. The last phase will be ready for occupation by late autumn 2019.

Our other Glasgow development is also in the east end, at the site of the former Belvidere Hospital and is proving to be in very high demand.



Construction at Helenvale Street, Glasgow



“A RENTED PROPERTY THAT FEELS LIKE HOME”

Two residents of LAR’s Ocean Apartments in Aberdeen – now neighbours, colleagues and friends – give their new homes a huge thumbs up

LISA AND KIRSTY’S STORY

☉ **“THIS** is my flat and for the first time I have a rented property that feels like home.” The words of 33-year-old Lisa Mathieson who moved into LAR’s Ocean Apartments in Aberdeen’s Park Road a year ago with her partner Stuart.

Her experience is very much mirrored by 25-year-old Kirsty Robertson: “I was in an awful house share and had to move

quickly. Within a week I’d moved into LAR’s Ocean Apartments and instantly felt like I could treat it as my own home.”

Kirsty and Lisa have a lot in common and not just their address. Not only do they have a shared love of the arts, they work for the same organisation, their families live three miles apart in the central belt and they both struggled to find suitable accommodation when they first moved to Aberdeen.

The pair work for Aberdeen Performing Arts, Kirsty running music education classes for children and outreach projects in areas of deprivation, and Lisa in the theatre learning team as a Creative Learning Manager. Both agree moving to a new city without family and friends was a challenge. However, a shared heritage in growing up near each other in Bothwell and Motherwell, and a love of the arts meant they struck up an instant friendship.



Lisa Mathieson (left) and Kirsty Robertson
 © Richard Frew Aberdeen Performing Arts

Kirsty's hasty retreat from her previous flat meant that she moved into her LAR home without any furniture. She said: "I lived a minimalist Japanese lifestyle at first and had to order stuff quickly. But the fact I could move in within a week was a godsend and the people at LAR were very easy to deal with."

The pair both admit not having family in the area was difficult at first, but now have each other as back up and in case of emergencies. Given the nature of the work they do, they are often late home and say having company on the walk home or sharing a taxi is ideal. Lisa said: "It's not just having Kirsty there but I do feel there is a sense of a proper community at Ocean Apartments. We're also just a 10 or 15-minute walk to the city centre yet we're in a very quiet neighbourhood. The whole process with LAR was a different experience to anything I'd had before."

Final verdict from them both? Ten out of 10!

THE FINDLAY'S STORY

☉ "AS soon as I saw the view it was game over." Linda Findlay had lived her whole life in Berwick-upon-Tweed, but she and husband Donald were looking to relocate to East Lothian to be near their two daughters.

Linda wasn't 100 per cent sure about the move, but as soon as she saw the Cockenzie flat at LAR's Boatyard development she was sold on the idea. "How could you refuse this?" she enthused as she gazed out her sitting room window to a sea view.

And for Donald, born and brought up in Prestonpans, it was a homecoming after years away and a chance to be near his wider family, most of whom are still in the area.

LAR has become a feature in the lives of the Findlay family as one of their daughters, Justine, has also moved into the Cockenzie development and Donald's sister lives in the organisation's first completed site at Pinkie Mains.

He said: "It was Justine's idea for us all to move into the same development and it has worked out brilliantly for us. I'm retired, but seem to have taken on a new role as chauffeur to our four grandchildren."

Linda added: "We have obviously spent a lot of time with family in this area over the years and we enjoyed watching as the development progressed during construction. We always wandered round the site for a good nose when we were here."

Donald was also well aware of the Cockenzie site's past as a working boatyard run by the Weatherhead family. A former welder he had worked at shipyards in Berwick and Eyemouth, both of which had, at some point, been owned by the Weatherheads. He said: "It's an added connection to the development and the mural depicting the site's past is right outside our window. I like that." Both are delighted with the move and described the LAR staff as "incredibly helpful and obliging". And the proximity to their family, particularly their grandchildren, has made this a hugely successful move. "We love it here," concluded Linda.



Donald and Linda Findlay

A GROUNDBREAKING YEAR



CHESSER



HELENSVALE



FORDEL

KEY

 FULLY BUILT AND LET

 UNDER CONSTRUCTION

HELENSVALE
Glasgow  

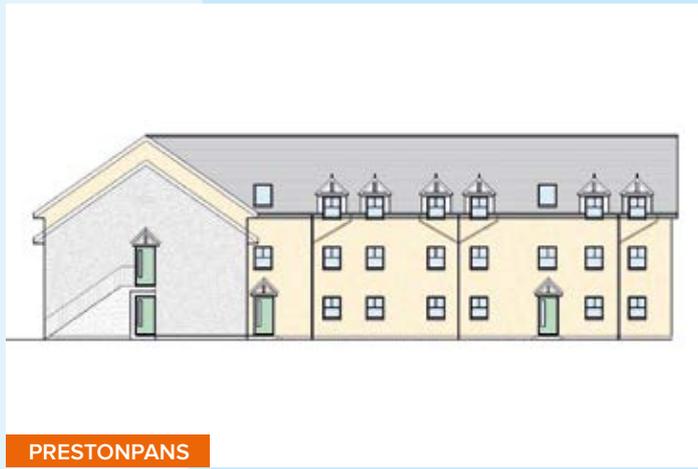
BELVIDERE



COCKENZIE

MAKING YEAR

⊕ **WE** have been breaking new ground – literally – this year with a series of firsts and notable achievements. We've completed our first design-and-build project, we entered the Edinburgh city market for the first time and we started work on our biggest single development at a site in the east end of Glasgow. All of that on top of a series of other deals across Scotland as we do our part to address the shortage of good quality mid-market rental homes.



PRESTONPANS



BONNYRIGG



COCKENZIE



VIEW FROM WESTWOOD HOUSE

ROOMS WITH A VIEW IN EAST LoTHIAN

🕒 LAR'S development at Cockenzie, completed in September 2018, was a game changer for the organisation. At the official opening our Chair, Andrew Robertson, hailed the development as a flagship project, as it was LAR's first design-and-build development and the first to be called off its £5 million building framework.

It was officially opened by Scotland's Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart MSP, who had visited the site earlier in the year at the first stages of construction.

LAR had previously only been involved in turnkey projects and at sites already under construction. In this case, the team was actively involved in remediating the site, designing the homes and seeking planning permission, prior to appointing a builder.

The 26 new mid-market rental homes, built by Hart Builders, are on the site of a former boatyard and boast enviable harbour views. We were particularly delighted to welcome descendants of the original boatyard owners to the opening of this development and the positive feedback which we have received from them, the local community and residents has been marvellous to hear.

A huge thank you for the care, professionalism and hard work shown by the team at Hart and especially John Brotherton which has ensured that these homes are exceptional. LAR (Local, Affordable, Rent) was established to provide homes *within* communities and these are truly local homes for local people, with the vast majority of residents coming from the local area.

This latest project marks continued growth in East Lothian for LAR and is the organisation's third development to open in the area. LAR's growing presence in the area has been welcomed by East Lothian Council. Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Jim Goodfellow, described the Cockenzie site as, "a welcome addition to our affordable housing programme".

We look forward to working with East Lothian Council to continue to provide affordable homes in the area in the future.

Residents have their say on their new homes: Turn to pages 4&5





A MARK OF RECOGNITION

☉ LAR's Cockenzie development is at the site of a former boatyard originally run by the Weatherhead family for 70 years, but sadly closed down in 1969.

On hearing that the site was to be developed for housing, LAR was approached by a local Councillor and local heritage group, Boatie Blest, on behalf of the Weatherhead family, asking if some kind of recognition of the site's past could be incorporated into the development. In particular, the family was keen to see something to mark their history at the site.

Their hope was for a piece of work by local stonemason, Gardner Molloy, to be included somewhere in the development and the idea was floated for a mural to be incorporated into one of the buildings.

LAR then instructed Gardner Molloy and their beautiful carving is an excellent example of local community involvement in LAR's development plans. This is building for the future with a nod to the past.



Above: Chair Andrew Robertson (left) and Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning
 Clockwise from far left: Cockenzie before work commenced; interior shot of one of the new properties; a coastal view; Cockenzie as viewed from the courtyard



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

🕒 We have continued to acquire homes and sites across Scotland with further new developments under way or planned in Aberdeen, Perth, Blairgowrie, East Lothian and Midlothian.

We have just completed our seventh development in Aberdeen at Balgownie, Bridge of Don, which brings the total number of LAR homes in the area to 142.

LAR has taken nine properties at the development in Balgownie, consisting of six two-bed and three one-bed flats. This is LAR's second collaboration with Cala in the city having completed a deal for 15 flats at Shaw Road in the city's west end last year.

We are still looking for more good quality homes in Aberdeen – particularly larger three-bedroom homes which our current tenants can move into as their housing needs change. As such, we would be interested in speaking to developers and construction companies who might have suitable properties for us.

It has been a busy time in Midlothian with developments at different stages at Petendrea Court in Bonnyrigg, Fordel in Dalkeith and Wester Cowden. We already have two completed blocks of flats at Petendrea Court and phase three, consisting of six two-bed flats, is now well under way and we hope to have tenants moved in by spring 2019.

In East Lothian we have another design-and-build project at Prestonpans where, subject to planning, we hope to be developing 26 homes in a very similar fashion to our successful development in

Cockenzie (see pages 8 and 9). Such was the demand for homes at our Cockenzie development we were very sorry to be turning away so many applicants, simply because we did not have enough homes. Hopefully this development will go some way to addressing a pressing local need for modern, good-quality, affordable homes.

Our final developments in East Lothian consist of 23 homes in Dunbar, 12 homes in Dolphinstone and 12 cottage flats in Old Craighall. We are delighted to be working with East Lothian Council again to provide homes on these sites for which there has already been significant interest. Both of these developments should be complete by late 2019.





24

LAR SITES AROUND SCOTLAND

600



HOMES IN TOTAL

249



HOMES OCCUPIED BY TENANTS

£1,270

AVERAGE RENT SAVING PER ANNUM



1351

HOMES UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR IN PLANNING



127



NEW HOUSEHOLDS TAKING UP TENANCIES IN THE LAST YEAR

LAR IN NUMBERS

LAR is about people, but we also have some interesting facts and figures to shout about



£120M

DEVELOPMENT FUNDS



YEARS IN BUSINESS



1 NEW HEAD OFFICE

10



MEMBERS OF STAFF

1

NEW SUBSIDIARY SET UP



4

NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF THIS YEAR

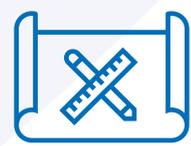
190



JOBS SUPPORTED IN THE SCOTTISH ECONOMY BY LAR'S DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

3

STAFF BABIES!



15

DEVELOPERS LAR HAS WORKED WITH

PERSONAL PERSPECTIVES FROM THE STAFF TEAM

LEWIS YULE – MODERN APPRENTICE

⊕ SINCE starting my Modern Apprenticeship at LAR in April, I have been given the opportunity to experience a lot of the work LAR does across different teams, which has been an exciting new challenge for me. Working with the Property Managers, I have been able to learn firsthand what it is like to work with, and help, tenants and the different aspects of day-to-day property management.



become experienced in the hard work and effort it takes to make LAR a successful business and to make sure it keeps growing to meet its objectives.

My colleagues at LAR have been very kind and welcoming and have been an incredible help as I continue with my apprenticeship.

The Modern Apprenticeship Program is run by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), on behalf of the Scottish Government and aims to create a skilled workforce for the future tackling skills gaps across business sectors. I look forward to completing my modern apprenticeship with the hopes of having a bright future at LAR Housing Trust.

for a new challenge and it was quite a transition from dental nursing to property management. When my son and I were looking at apprenticeships for him, I noticed that LAR was advertising for an Administration Apprentice with potential to train as a Property Manager. As a landlord myself, I already had an interest in property and decided that my future lay in bricks and mortar not teeth and gums.



A couple of interviews later, I was taken on as a trainee property manager and am loving the challenge that this change of career brings. Early on, I spent most of my time getting to grips with the various processes and procedures that were completely new to me and, although a bit daunting, I have embraced the challenge and have now been promoted to Property Manager.

Working at LAR is a continuous process of learning with the added benefit of meeting people from all walks of life.

JILL HAMILTON – PROPERTY MANAGER

⊕ I STARTED working with LAR in April

STAFF UPDATE

⊕ WE are proud to have increased our portfolio of homes around the country. And that growth has also meant an increased headcount in the office.

We are delighted to have welcomed four new members of the team in the last 12 months as we continue to provide support and assistance to our tenants in our developments across Scotland.

Mikko Ramstedt was appointed to the role of Director of Finance and Corporate Services.

A native of Finland, he was educated at Aberdeen University where he studied economic science and management studies, which included a year at Whitworth University in Washington State. He has also studied at Oxford University's Saïd Business School.

Jacky Macdonald joined the property management team at the beginning of the year from Stirling Council, where she worked in a variety of housing management roles for 34 years.

We were also delighted to welcome our first trainee property manager, Jill Hamilton and our first modern apprentice, Lewis Yule. You can read their reflections above as we train our next generation of property professionals.

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN RENTING FROM LAR?

If so, please contact us lettings@larhousingtrust.co.uk

WHAT NEXT FOR LAR? WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Do you have properties you would be interested in selling to LAR? If so:



What is their location?



What size of properties would be available?



How many would be available?



When might they be ready for tenants?