

April 2017



# Inside Story

**Passionate About People**

## More Homes for Arawak Walton

Some of Manchester's most hard working families will benefit from a successful deal struck between Arawak Walton Housing Association and Adactus Housing Group.

The association has increased its homes in management by 19 properties purchased from Adactus Housing for £1.06 million.

The deal allows both associations to further their individual longer term plans, whilst maintaining current levels of social housing within the Manchester area.

The 19 homes are located in the inner city boroughs of Manchester where Arawak Walton operates. Arawak Walton will invest a further £380k in refurbishment of the properties before offering them to families. The new properties will sit alongside the association's existing stock in these areas, further enhancing the neighbourhoods in which we work.



For Adactus, this deal will free up capital for their association to invest in their new house building programme, a

long-term strategic aim for the association, which operates throughout the North West.

The new homes are expected to be ready for occupation by the end of June 2017, and will bring Arawak Walton's total homes in management in the Greater Manchester area to around 1,050 homes. When completed, they will be let at social housing rents, which are typically £30 - £50 a week cheaper than properties with private landlords which can often be of poor quality. This means that people with families working in low paid employment will be able to afford to rent good quality homes over a long term, providing peace of mind as well as comfort and security.

Said Cym D'Souza, Chief Executive, Arawak Walton: "We're very

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excited about this deal, which allows us to add a significant number of homes in our core operating areas at a competitive cost. This in turn enables us to invest in creating attractively refurbished properties which people can call home and to further our work in encouraging diverse communities to thrive and flourish across Manchester."



Added Hilary Roberts, Chief Executive, Adactus: "Adactus and Arawak Walton have had a close working relationship for more than 20 years, providing affordable housing to those most in need. As part of our longer term strategy Adactus want to invest in more new build properties and over the last three years we have been going through a stock rationalisation exercise. As a result, some of our stock has been available for sale which Arawak Walton has been able to purchase in a manageable way. Both associations realised there was an opportunity to fulfil our longer term aims by reaching an agreement that would satisfy the financial requirements of both sides and we are delighted that this has now been concluded."



Paul Beardmore, Director of Housing, Manchester City Council: "We are delighted to see the success of this negotiation between Arawak Walton and Adactus working in Manchester. This deal will see good quality housing at affordable rent levels being retained in the City for working families on lower incomes."

Manchester-based solicitors, Croftons LLP have supported Arawak Walton with the legal processes.



# January Board Meeting

At the January Board meeting members received a presentation from Chris Root on Equality and Diversity and issues post Brexit. During the course of the meeting, members considered reports on:

- Stock acquisition opportunities during 16/17 and feasibilities and ratified the current strategy.
- The annual management plan for 2017/18 Board meetings, which was approved and agreed the action plan.
- Conferences summaries held during 2016.
- Former tenants' arrears and approved the half yearly write-off for accounting purposes only
- The Merger Code - review and recommendations and agreed not to adopt the code at this time.

They approved:

- Shareholder Membership Policy
- Standing Orders Review
- Allocations and lettings policy review
- ICT Strategy Review

Members also received reports on Equality and Diversity monitoring for our staff and tenants, an update on securing additional loan facilities, a summary and action plan of the postal surveys 2016. The Operations Director updated members on the progress on developing a more challenging set of performance Indicators for 2017/18.

## New Website...

Our new website has been re-launched. It is now more modern with a fresh look and easier to navigate for our stakeholders and tenants. In the coming months there are plans to add additional features such as rent payment information and other tools to enable our tenants to access information at ease. Please take a look at the new website on

<http://www.arawakwalton.com/>

Any initial thoughts are welcome and should be emailed to Karen Arkwright on [KArkwright@arawakwalton.com](mailto:KArkwright@arawakwalton.com)



Go online for our latest news –  
[www.arawakwalton.com](http://www.arawakwalton.com)

## Cym Top 50

24Housing's Power Players top 50 list features some of the key figures in housing who play a vital role in raising the issues that face the sector.

We are proud to announce that Ms Cym D'Souza, Chief Executive of Arawak Walton is number 49 in the top 50 list.

We would all agree that Cym is in very distinguished company and her listing can only help raise the profile both of the BME housing sector and the role Arawak Walton plays in addressing the needs of its customers.

**Well done Cym!**



### 49. Cym D'Souza

NEW ENTRY

**BME National Chair and Chief Executive, Arawak Walton Housing Association**  
A leader in the world of diversity, she has been ensuring equality is never off the agenda, constantly raising the bar higher. Her role as chair of BME National is aiming to address the needs of those diverse communities. Her work doesn't stop there. She is also involved with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation looking at the correlation between poverty and housing costs. She also sits on a variety of boards such as Manchester, Trafford and Stockport's Strategic Housing Partnerships and the Greater Manchester Police Ethics Committee. She is a true leader in the local community.

## Staff Conference

The staff conference was held in November 2016. The day was very productive and was used to cover topics such as:

- Equality and Diversity updates and issues facing our customers since the Brexit vote.
- Discussions and group work around the challenges of growth and implications of the growth strategy review.
- VFM and new ways of working.
- Perceptions of the association.
- A presentation from the Finance Director on the HCA's in-depth assessment process and the external risks we take.
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Overall, it was a very productive day and great to see that staff were very positive about the future of Arawak Walton despite the challenges facing us. The day ended on a high with a round up of successes during the year delivered by Cym D'Souza, Chief Executive.



# Staff News



## **Kirsty Miller's new addition...**

We are pleased to announce that Kirsty Miller, Corporate Services Manager, has had a beautiful baby boy. Jacob Miller and Kirsty are both doing

well. Congratulations to Kirsty and her family.

## **Angela Maher, Corporate Services Manager (Maternity Cover)**

We welcome Angela Maher to the team. Angela will be covering Kirsty's role as Corporate

Services Manager while Kirsty is on her 12 month maternity leave. Angela joins us from Community Arts North West and brings with her a wealth of knowledge and experience over 20 years in the voluntary and community sector. "I have been made to feel very welcome at Arawak Walton and looking forward to championing the values of association" .



## **Jim DeSantis, Asset Manager**

We also welcome Jim DeSantis as our new Asset Manager. Jim brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience and has extensive knowledge of Arawak

Walton, as he has worked with us on various projects in the past. "During my 28 years as a self employed Architect,

I have worked with Arawak Walton on various projects since 1999. Many of you will know me from my previous involvement, especially on the sheltered schemes. I am just starting my 'new life' as part-time Asset Manager and am looking forward to getting to know the team and meeting more of the residents. It's certainly been hectic but enjoyable so far!"

## **Maria Passman**

We are sad but also delighted to report that Maria who had been with the association for 6 years left the association in January and has moved onto new pastures as Golden Lane Housing's new rents officer. We wish Maria good luck for the future and thank her for her dedication and great customer care over the years!



## **Gia Williams, Customer Service Advisor**

After a successful recruitment drive, we welcome Gia Williams to the team. Gia is our new Customer Service Advisor. Gia has

worked in customer service roles for over 7 years. Her previous role was in a Retail Management position. "Everyone at Arawak Walton has been very welcome making my first few weeks very enjoyable and I have received a great amount of support from others in my team".



# We Are Recruiting...

We have an exciting new opportunity to join our Senior Management Team. We are looking for expression of interest in the first instance.

## FINANCE DIRECTOR—Salary: c£58k pa

Based in Ardwick, our Board is looking for a dynamic **Finance Director** who's interested in more than just numbers and spreadsheets. We need someone who can really make a difference to the way we operate, understanding and rising to the challenges we face in providing excellent services within a value for money environment, as well as making sure that we're operating within the financial and regulatory constraints required of all housing associations.

**For more information please visit our website:**

<https://arawakwalton.com/currentvacancies/>

For an informal chat with our Chief Executive, Ms Cym D'Souza, please contact Bindu Pandya, PA on 0161-272-5248 who will arrange a mutually suitable time and date.



## How are we performing?

Arawak Walton Performance	Oct	Nov	Dec	Target
Voids % (number of empty properties)	0.4%	0%	0.1%	1.1%
Rent Arrears— the amount of unpaid rent (as % of weekly rent)	4.1%	4.3%	3.9%	4.8%
Number of days to re-let a Property	27.27	25.27	24.16	25.0
Overall Satisfaction with the repairs service	91%	91%	91%	98%
Repairs completion statistics	Oct	Nov	Dec	Target
Emergency – completed within 24 hours	100%	100%	100%	99%
Urgent – completed within 7 days	97%	97%	97%	99%
Routine – completed within 21 days	99%	99%	98%	99%