



# Residents celebrate in style



# From the Chair

## SWAN HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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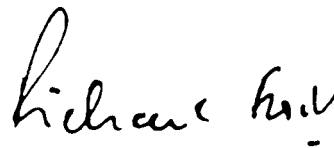
\* Chair

**Swan has continued to move forward at a time when many organisations have struggled to make progress. We remain focused on achieving our goals and our overall aim of creating homes and places that people want to live in.**

As house building stalled in many parts of the UK, Swan completed 394 new homes in East London and Essex. With more developments planned and commitments to major regeneration projects, we can be confident about the future.

Our progress has been noted by the regulators. In the past year our Essex Supported Housing service was given a triple A rating and the Audit Commission recognised the real improvements we had made when they carried out their inspection.

Our plans are ambitious but realistic. Next year we will build on this year's successes as we strive to develop homes and neighbourhoods that residents will respect and enjoy.



Richard Frost  
Chair



Cover photo:  
Boishaki Mela  
(Bengali New Year)  
on Exmouth Estate,  
Tower Hamlets

# Hello



**This year's annual report is packed with real life stories that show how we're delivering on our mission to provide homes people want to live in. It also shows what a diverse group of people live in the homes Swan manages and what a busy year it's been for all of us.**

We held another Residents Conference and opened a Foyer for Young People all of which you can read about inside.

Another highlight, the launch of the Swan Foundation at the House of Lords in October, showed that we are committed to creating new opportunities for residents and communities. The event was marked by an inspiring speech given by one of our young residents (see page 4).

Swan also celebrated 15 years since formation, and we were able to reflect with pride on what's been achieved over the years.

We were pleased that the Audit Commission recognised the progress we've made in repairs, gas safety and resident involvement in their Short Notice Inspection carried out January.

Swan continued to design and build high quality, affordable homes for people in East London and Essex. We plan to improve on the already high energy efficiency rating of our homes, making them affordable to run as well as rent and buy.

We look forward to another year of steady progress with residents at the heart of our mission to create homes and communities people want to live in.

John Synnuck  
Chief Executive

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## Factfile 2009/10



394 new homes completed



93% of repairs done on time



319 people in Swan



10,727 homes owned and managed

# Swan Foundation launched at the House of Lords

New experiences arrive with the launch of the Swan Foundation in October.

The Foundation is a charitable organisation, set up by Swan to create more opportunities for people in the communities we serve. It will work with our partners, from banks to repairs contractors, to open up new possibilities and improve people's lives.

A great example of what the Swan Foundation is trying to achieve was provided by one of the key speakers at the launch, resident Nazia Salma Sultana.

She addressed the assembled audience of MPs, business figures and local politicians with a mixture of excitement and surprise:

"This experience has really broadened my horizons. Sometimes you feel there's a limit to what you can do and it holds you back. But this has opened doors and made me think I can do so much more. I mean I never imagined I would be standing here, in the House of Lords, making a speech!"

Nazia grew up on the Exmouth Estate in Tower Hamlets and served on the Exmouth Estate Resident Board, before moving to Dagenham with her family.

Her speech continued:

"I'd like to see more opportunities like this, where people do things together and where young people can try out new experiences. That's what I hope Swan Foundation will be doing, creating exciting projects and opportunities for all kinds of different people."



**Lord Herman Ouseley and Baroness Sally Greengross, took time out from voting on major Government issues, to host our reception speeches.**

The Foundation has certainly made a good start and in the past year has:

- used new ideas, like food and cooking, to help hard-to-reach groups;
- supported local schools to teach pupils issues like racism and respect; and
- taught single parents living in our homeless foyers the basics of healthy eating and nutrition through specially put together lessons.

Before the launch, Nazia was a champion of the Swan Foundation's healthy eating campaign that was started by Jamie Oliver and involved several residents from East London. The campaign uses cooking to bring communities together.

Leading up to her speech, we arranged a coach for Nazia so she could be confident in such a grand setting.

But when she stepped up to the microphone, Nazia was natural, charming, funny and she made a great impression.



**Nazia Sultana**

# Doors open for young people

Swan opened a new young person's foyer and a new world of opportunity.



Swan House Foyer was officially opened by Mo Larkin, Chairman of Basildon District Council.



Miriam Ojera

Swan House Foyer in Vange, Essex was officially opened in June. It provides accommodation-based support for single young people, between the ages of 16-24, who faced homelessness.

One of the foyer's residents is gifted singer-songwriter Miriam Ojera. She said of her new home:

"I love it. I really like living here."

The new foyer is modern and well built, with 16 flats, a staff office, a meeting room plus communal facilities for the residents, including a laundry room, lounge area and an impressive computer suite.

The on-site Swan employees work closely with the residents to help them find education and work opportunities.

## Miriam makes waves

A short time after the opening Miriam was invited on-air by Gateway FM to be a special guest on their Basildon Radio show. Whilst on air she talked about how her life has changed for the better since living at the foyer.

She drew from personal experience to answer questions on being young and homeless, from a group of year seven school children who were doing a project on 'life on the streets'.

Miriam showed how she had grown as a person since living at Swan House Foyer. She sang live for the children, talked about being a performer and played a song from her current CD.

She was confident and relaxed in the recording studio and was able to promote herself as a performer. Miriam's talent definitely caught the ear and showed that she has a bright future ahead of her.

She was so good Gateway FM asked Miriam to return to the airwaves later in the year. Stay tuned.

## Swan aims

To reduce inequality and increase social inclusion

# Ben's script draws Hollywood stars to Rayleigh

In classic Hollywood films the lead characters often have to overcome great challenges before they triumph in the end. We certainly hope that's the way the story is going to play out for scriptwriter and resident, Ben Shilito.

Following the death of his dad, Ben had to live in bed and breakfast accommodation in Southend. He had been made homeless when the landlord didn't allow him to take over his dad's tenancy.

His first break came in 2005 when his Local Authority helped him move into an affordable Swan home. It gave him the security he needed to develop his writing skills and a career in the film industry.

Ben's big break came in early 2009, when film director Steve Lawson contacted him for help in developing a script called, 'Just for the Record'.

The film is a star-studded 'mockumentary', a fake documentary, about low budget filmmaking, and is due for release in 2010. It stars Rik Mayall (Bottom, Blackadder) and Danny Dyer (Football Factory, The Business).



Ben Shilito

## Swan's supporting role

Ben was Script Editor, Associate Producer and location provider. He made his flat available as a location for the filming in June 2009, after he'd secured permission from Swan of course.

Ben's next project was 'Dead Cert', a vampire film written by Ben and filmed in and around Essex and London, with a cast including Steven Berkoff (Beverly Hills Cop, Octopussy), Jason Flemyng (Lock Stock and Two Smoking Barrels, Snatch) and Dexter Fletcher (Layer Cake, Hotel Babylon).

In 2010, Ben will be working on the star-packed, 'Bulla - The Movie', starring the much-loved gangster character from Channel 4's '11 O'Clock Show' and developing several new projects.

Ben hopes to be supporting himself financially soon, and looking to move on to a new flat closer to the West London hub of the film industry.



“It's been a short journey from homeless in a bed and breakfast to living my dream and mixing with film industry types. Through hard work and a lot of luck; I'm on the road to where I want to be.”

## Swan aims

To deliver 5% annual growth in affordable homes

# View from the 23rd floor

People need homes they can afford and places they want to live in. We will keep building and refurbishing homes so people, like Mumtaz Ahmed and family, can find somewhere nice to live.

Mumtaz moved to a flat near the top of a regenerated tower block in Bow Cross, Tower Hamlets after her family outgrew their previous home. She said:

“I was on Tower Hamlets’ transfer list for a larger property for over 15 years! I was living in a flat with 3 sons and when they are smaller you don’t realise how much you need the space. When they became young men they filled the place, so I was sleeping on the couch for over 2 years!

“It was difficult to leave my community as I had been living there for over 20 years and knew everyone by name. The kids living on the street were like brothers to my boys and they grew up together. They are only one [train] stop away now, so it’s not too bad.

“Now we have the best of both worlds – a new home with space and our friends nearby. It feels like we’ve been living here for years. We are so comfortable.”

Commenting on the position of her home, Mumtaz said:

“We are on the 23rd floor of a tower block in Bow. To me [the flat] it’s huge and the view is fantastic – I love it!

“The staff are brilliant, they sort out any problems I have straight away. There’s lighting everywhere - it’s so reassuring, it’s so nice. Swan are trying to make this estate even better too. I’m so happy here.”

Her new home and neighbourhood has also given her the chance to think about the next stage of her life. She said:

“My fresh start has encouraged me to look to the future, into becoming a Teaching Assistant. I’m using the Consultation Shop on the estate, where they are helping me do job searches.”

Mumtaz Ahmed is just one of the people helped by the development work carried out by Swan across East London and Essex. As well as building 394 new homes in the year, we worked on major regeneration schemes at Bow Cross and Exmouth in Tower Hamlets, and Craylands and 5 Links in Basildon. Our programme promises to transform more people’s lives in the year ahead.



“The staff are brilliant, they sort out any problem I have straight away”

# A year in pictures



Residents enjoyed music, dancing, singing and story telling at the Boishaki fun day on the Exmouth Estate in June.



There was a good attendance at this year's Residents' Conference held at West Ham's football ground.



We ran a summer programme of activities for young residents, it included art, sports and visits to London landmarks.



We celebrated our fifteenth year since formation.



Our Environment Action Day in Basildon saw 4 skips of rubbish and 8 vehicles of garden waste removed.



Residents and Swan join forces to open Craylands Internet Café in February.



Our second International Day was held for residents of Fryerns and Craylands in May.



# Michelle starts charity to break the silence

Communities need individuals with courage and drive to make them work. We were happy to support Michelle Taylor last year to set up a charity to support families at a time of great distress.

Michelle Taylor lost her son as a stillbirth and set up a charity to help others who experience the devastating loss of a child. Michelle, who's son died in November 2007, said:

"You lose your baby, you lose everything and there is no support for this kind of thing."

Michelle's experience was made even worse because there was no bereavement counsellor on duty at the hospital as they work weekdays 9-5 and she lost her son 7pm on a Friday.

She was taken to a quiet room after the loss but it was opposite the maternity ward, a painful reminder of what she had been dreaming about and looking forward to.

On top of all that Michelle was made homeless, as the council didn't think she now needed the extra room. Michelle felt alone and 12 months later still had panic attacks that were so bad she couldn't go out.

At this point Michelle started getting Floating Support from Swan. It provided a real turning point for Michelle enabling her to contribute to the bigger society.

"They were fantastic and helped me build my confidence, visit the council and generally get through day-to-day activities".

## Whisperers start to get heard

In December 2009 Michelle had the idea to help others that had suffered like her.

"It's a taboo subject. We set up Whisperers to break the silence".

Since then, Whisperers have established a large following, have set up counselling groups and offer support to all members of the family for loss before (miscarriage), during (still-birth) and after birth (small children).

"We are about making people that have lost their babies, feel they are not alone and there are other people like them to talk to."

A small group of women are funding the charity themselves and through donations. Keeping the charity going is hard as phone calls, helping people and advertising the service all cost money. Also to get 'Whisperers' registered as an official Charity involves raising over £5,000!

Whisperers also pay for women who have lost their babies to get their own 'goodie bag' in hospital; with camera, candles and two teddies one for the baby and one for the mother.

The charity is focused on individuals but wants to see change in the whole of society. It is campaigning for change in how women are treated in hospitals nationwide and particularly wants women who have suffered the loss of a child to be moved away from the maternity ward into a separate building.

To add your voice to Whisperers or to support the campaign, visit the website <http://whisperers.webs.com>

## Swan aims

To involve our residents and build stronger communities.



Michelle Taylor



# New set of wheels, new lease of life

**Swan achieved a triple A rating for its Support services in the past year. Simon Coates was one resident who experienced a major improvement.**

Not that long ago Simon was, in his words, in a 'bad place'. He said he was 'dossing on people's floors' and using such a bad wheelchair he needed a skin graft where it was rubbing against him. On top of that, he got a serious ulcer on his foot, as he could only rest it, on the wheel bolt of his wheelchair.

With Swan's help, by May 2009 Simon's life had been completely turned round. In February 2008, Social Services moved him to Mid Meadows Residential Home in Frinton, Essex. It was only a temporary measure, but it brought him into contact with Gavin and Janet from Swan's Floating Support service.

'Honestly they've been brilliant from day one!' said Simon.

Swan called a meeting with the Care Home Manager, Social Worker and Doctor. Together they came to an agreement that would keep Simon in his new home.

Next we set out to get Simon a wheelchair that was comfortable to use. The old was so worn that there wasn't any rubber left on the tyres!

We helped Simon do a 6 mile 'sponsored push' to raise £2700 needed for a new chair. Gavin and Janet worked hard to get other charities to sponsor him and to get coverage in the local press. Swan donated the last £200 and Simon got his new wheelchair.

**"My posture is much better, which is good for my spine. There's no pressure sores, so I don't have to go to hospital and I can wear shoes again. It makes me feel better about myself and I have more confidence. Thank you to each and every person who has helped me, it's made a magnificent difference to my life!"**

## Swan aims

To be judged on improving landlord by our residents.



# Real life health

**Bringing up a child is tough and tiring, so much so that some young mothers don't find time to look after themselves. In the past year we supported young mums to keep fit and eat healthily.**

## Ready steady cook

Through the Swan Foundation we also helped young mums learn about healthy eating.

We worked with Chef and Nutritional Therapist, Gary Baverstock, to help young people learn skills and the benefit of eating healthy food.

Gary had been working with young residents in the kitchen at the new Swan House Foyer, and they were

joined for the new sessions by young mothers from our parent and child foyer, Dove Cott House.

He said:

"The aim is to teach young people about nutrition but also to give them the confidence to cook on their own."

The cooking sessions were a big success with the youngsters involved, some of whom had never peeled an onion before.

The idea was to make the sessions fun but also pass on useful tips about cooking, healthy eating and budgeting. Gary wanted to help people see that it is possible to use fresh, wholesome ingredients on a budget.



Bradley Hyde, 17, who is studying cooking at NVQ Level said:

"The course has been helpful for me because I want to become a Chef. I've learnt some new recipes on this course which I didn't know before. For example, I'd never heard of Mackerel Kedgerree before."

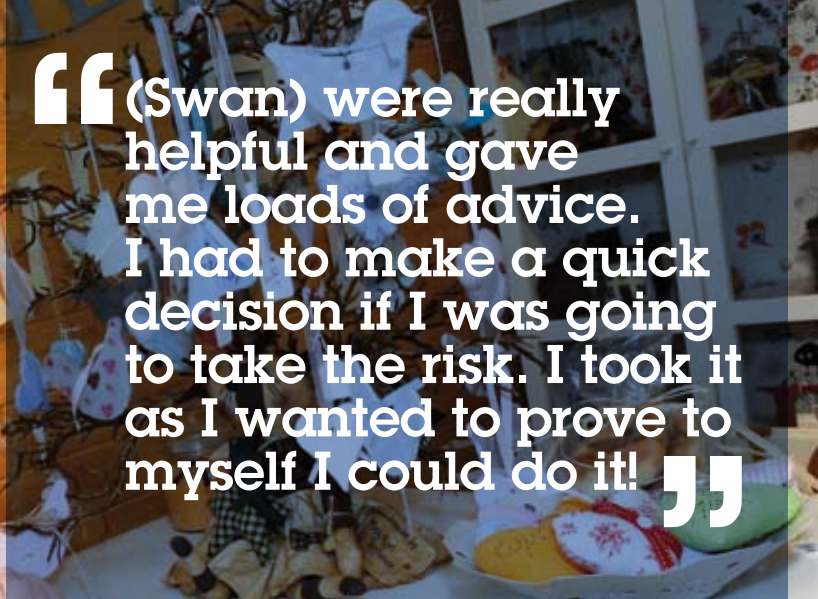
"The sessions with Gary are useful because the recipe ingredients are not expensive. I didn't think you could cook some of these meals on such a tight budget."



## Young mums go for it!

One training programme we ran, Go Girls!, went from strength-to-strength this year. It was held at Dove Cott House, our parent and child foyer in Basildon, and to begin with was run to help with self-esteem and emotional development. We developed the course by offering keep fit training in the gym.

Through Go Girls!, young mums get a free weekly session with a personal trainer while their children are in a free crèche. The NHS also donated two brand new baby car seats so that young parents are able to travel by taxi to attend.



“(Swan) were really helpful and gave me loads of advice. I had to make a quick decision if I was going to take the risk. I took it as I wanted to prove to myself I could do it!”



Talking of her shop, she said:

“I feel great about it. I'm glad I got advice from Swan before I took the risk though. It's early days but feel confident it's all going to work out.”

You can visit Molly Mae's Emporium at View Garden Centre, Rawreth, Essex or online at [www.mollymaesemporium.co.uk](http://www.mollymaesemporium.co.uk)

## From turn around to turnover

A secure home and the right support can open up new chances in life, as it did for Suzanne Scorey.

Suzanne from Laindon, Essex had been on the Housing list for over 2 years, with mental health problems forcing her to rely on welfare benefits. After she was re-housed by Swan she was able to start to turn things around.

Suzanne enjoyed making things as a hobby and loved being creative. She had always wanted to be able to sell her craft goods but worried about how she would pay her rent if she came off benefits. Like many residents she was able to ask us for benefits advice.

### Open for business

When a shop became available in a craft village, Suzanne took the plunge and now has somewhere to sell all the things she's made. She's also got a website and is well on her way to a building a successful business. Swan donated a shop sign and A-board to help get her started.

She said of the decision to take the shop and start a business:

“(Swan) were really helpful and gave me loads of advice. I had to make a quick decision if I was going to take the risk. I took it as I wanted to prove to myself I could do it!”

Suzanne specialises in handmade gifts and accessories like signs and décor and small pieces of furniture. Many of her products are one-of-a-kind and the rest are limited editions, making her items really special.

## Swan aims

To exceed Business Plan targets

## Average weekly rents

	Swan Housing Association Group £	Swan Essex Housing average rent £	Supported housing average rent £	Total average rent £
Bedsit	0	62.99	54.91	58.95
bedroom	85.15	70.75	97.70	84.53
2 bedroom	96.92	88.85	87.40	91.06
3 bedroom	106.56	101.34	77.13	95.01
4 bedroom	119.69	109.41	87.69	105.50
5 +	126.56	119.86	109.55	118.66

## Repairs performance

	On time %	Annual target %
Immediate	99.7	99
Emergency	99.59	99
Urgent	98.97	97
Routine	98.22	97
<b>Total</b>	<b>99.70</b>	<b>97</b>

## Our people

We employ a total of 319 people across the group:

	Number	%
White	263	82.50%
Black	33	10.3%
Asian	8	2.5%
Other	15	4.7%

## New homes

for April 2009- March 2010 are as follows:

General needs rent	314
Intermediate rent	43
Shared ownership	37
<b>Total</b>	<b>394</b>

## Overview

At 31 March 2010 the Group's housing stock comprised:

	Owned number of units		Managed number of units	
	2010	2009	2010	2009
<b>Social housing:</b>				
General needs	5,608	5,495	-	1
Shared ownership	529	489	-	-
Sheltered (elderly)	81	30	-	-
Other supported housing	441	509	7	13
NHS keyworker accommodation	1,361	1,420	12	12
Supported housing (floating support)	-	-	-	-
Temporary social housing	-	-	-	-
London Borough of Newham	-	-	1,348	1,348
<b>Total social housing</b>	<b>8,020</b>	<b>7,943</b>	<b>1,367</b>	<b>1,374</b>
<b>Non-social housing:</b>				
Market rented	33	55	-	-
Garages	427	427	198	198
Sold to leaseholder with retained freehold	682	680	-	-
<b>Total housing stock</b>	<b>9,162</b>	<b>9,105</b>	<b>1,565</b>	<b>1,572</b>

## Group income and expenditure account

	2010 £ '000	2009 £ '000
<b>Turnover</b>	66,259	53,816
<b>Operating costs</b>	(53,016)	(40,409)
<b>Operating surplus</b>	13,243	13,407
(Deficit)/Surplus on sale of properties	(22)	707
Interest receivable	82	167
Interest payable and similar charges	(13,735)	(14,660)
<b>Deficit on ordinary activities before taxation</b>	<b>(432)</b>	<b>(379)</b>
Tax on deficit on ordinary activities	-	-
<b>Deficit on ordinary activities after taxation</b>	<b>(432)</b>	<b>(379)</b>

The turnover and deficit for the current and prior year relate to continuing activities.



# swan

