

PRESS RELEASE

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Driving the message home



Photographs of Ged Cooney and Julie Hardman available

Two New Charter directors shared their experiences to a national housing conference at the weekend.

Ged Cooney and Julie Hardman each chair a company in the Group. The National Housing Federation invited them to present their experiences of customer involvement to the NHF Voluntary Board Members Conference in Birmingham last weekend.

Their topic was “Customers in the Driving Seat”, and reflected one of the key themes of **iN business for neighbourhoods**, the rebranding of Housing associations and companies nationwide.

Both Julie and Ged were able to draw on their experiences at New Charter to the audience of delegates from Boards across England. Customers make up one-third of the New



business for neighbourhoods

Charter Boards and so are firmly in the driving seat. They also told the audience how embracing customer involvement means access for all residents of neighbourhoods – tenants and owner-occupiers have far more in common than they have differences. And both Ged and Julie stressed the importance of listening – and changing things in response. Environmental maintenance and Business planning at New Charter were two examples they featured.

“I’m pleased with the response we got,” said Julie Hardman. “As a transfer organisation, customers were responsible for voting us into existence. We are trying to place them at the heart of all we do.

“Our annual tenants satisfaction surveys show we have got many things right and I hope that will be true as our next set of results come out later this month. But we are always keen to improve and listening to our customers is an important way of doing just that”.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage nearly 16,400 properties transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of £49million a year and a workforce of almost 800, New Charter is one of the twenty largest Registered Social Landlords (RSL’s), and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog.
2. The National Housing Federation Voluntary Board Members Conference was held at the International Convention Centre in Birmingham from 6th to 8th February 2004. The theme was **Being iN – boards leading change**.
3. Ged Cooney has been Chair of New Charter Housing Trust Limited since the company was incorporated in 1999. He is also a local Authority Councillor at Tameside MBC.



4. Julie Hardman is a tenant of New Charter, and the elected Chair of New Charter Housing (South) Limited. The company owns over 7,000 homes in Denton, Audenshaw, Hyde, Longdendale and Dukinfield.

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