



BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR JOB APPLICANTS

Midsummer's Key Corporate Goals:

We will:

- *Help 5,000 more households find a decent home to live in.*
- *Judge the quality of our services by what our customers say about them.*
- *Give our customers a wide range of opportunities to influence what we do.*
- *Be a well-respected employer committed to the training and development of our staff.*
- *Continue to be a viable business contributing to the success of the Guinness Trust Group.*

Midsummer Housing Group

Midsummer is located in the heart of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area, and is a member of the Guinness Trust Group structure. With a sound financial footing and a track record for delivering award winning and innovative housing schemes Midsummer is well placed to benefit from the expansion planned within our area of operation.

There are two companies within the Midsummer Group. The first of these, Midsummer Housing Association, owns all our home ownership properties and provides HomeBuy homes - of which we are one of the largest providers in the country.

The second part of the Group is Midsummer Homes Housing Association, which owns and develops all our rental properties, which includes a sheltered housing scheme for the elderly, a Foyer and two care in the community schemes. We also run a Private Sector Leasing scheme, in partnership with Milton Keynes Council, through this company.

All staff are employed by Midsummer Housing Association, which provides a full range of services for Midsummer Homes through a service agreement.

Both companies are registered under the Industrial & Provident Societies Act 1965, with the Housing Corporation and are affiliated to the National Housing Federation. Midsummer Homes is also an exempt charity.

Established in 1985 with just three staff and 300 homes, we now manage over 4,300 homes and develop a further 350 new homes every year.

With four green lights on our Housing Corporation Assessment and a positive inspection report we are very much looking forward to building on our success to

date. Working in partnership, Midsummer and the Guinness Trust have been selected as one of a limited number of development partners by the Housing Corporation.

Developing New Homes

One of Midsummer's goals is to increase our homes in management to help another 5,000 households find a decent home to live in by 2011. A financially strong association, we are operating in an area of rapid growth supported, unlike so many other areas, by a realistic land supply. Excellent relationships with English Partnerships and local authority partners have helped us to increase our development programme to 350 starts on site per annum.

Midsummer – A brief history

- 1985** ♦ The Association is established as Milton Keynes Housing Association by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation (MKDC).
 - ♦ Shared ownership housing is the Association's priority, taking over the Corporation's role in this area.
 - ♦ Private finance is secured through the Halifax Building Society. Subsidy is received from the Department of the Environment through MKDC.

- 1986** ♦ The Association accepts handover of its first shared ownership homes.

- 1988** ♦ The Association starts to develop its first rental homes with support from MKDC and Milton Keynes Borough Council.
 - ♦ The Association becomes independent from MKDC, employs its own staff and becomes a registered housing association with the Housing Corporation.

- 1989** ♦ The Association completes the purchase of its first 'acquired' (ready built from developers) homes for rent with funding from Milton Keynes Borough Council.
 - ♦ In October, the Association takes on the management of 3,000 rented and 3,000 shared ownership homes on behalf of MKDC.

- 1990** ♦ More than 500 new homes are completed, bringing the total to over 900 in this fifth anniversary year.
 - ♦ 66 homes for rent are built on the Association's first fully rental scheme.
 - ♦ The new sheltered scheme for the elderly, Cavendish House in Loughton, is officially opened by HRH the Duchess of Gloucester in November.

- 1991** ♦ The Ballot of MKDC's housing stock dominates the year. The Association canvasses the 6,000 shared owners and tenants - and achieves 600 votes from shared Owners and 400 from tenants.
 - ♦ An agreement is made with the Milton Keynes Polytechnic (now De

Montfort University) to provide 168 bed spaces for students.

- ◆ Housing Minister Tim Yeo visits to present keys to the 1,000th shared owner.
- 1992** ◆ Transfer of ownership of the 1,000 homes from MKDC takes place on 31 March. The Association now has a total of 2,500 homes in management.
 - ◆ The Association purchases its own office building in Central Milton Keynes.
 - ◆ The Association bids for and receives its first allocation of Housing Association Grant.
- 1993** ◆ The Association opens its first Care in the Community Scheme in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council.
- 1994** ◆ The Association's stock reaches the 3,000 mark.
 - ◆ Broadening its activities geographically, the Association secures Housing Association Grant allocations in other regions for the first time, including Norwich.
 - ◆ The Association plays a leading part in FutureWorld, a major public exhibition of innovative home design and construction, with a HAG-funded scheme called Midsummer Cottages.
 - ◆ Work at Tattenhoe, Milton Keynes begins, the Association's biggest ever development which provides 367 homes.
- 1995** ◆ The Association changes its name to MIDSUMMER HOUSING ASSOCIATION and a major event is held to celebrate this and our tenth birthday.
 - ◆ The first homes in other areas are developed, beginning in Northampton.
 - ◆ The Association raises a further £10.6m of development and long term funding with the Bank of Scotland.
 - ◆ The Association wins the Marley Environmental Award for its homes at FutureWorld.
 - ◆ The Association, in partnership with Milton Keynes Council, starts a Private Sector Leasing scheme to assist the homeless.
- 1996** ◆ New projects, including the Association's first rehab schemes start in Milton Keynes, Northampton, Norwich, Buckingham, Towcester and Leighton Buzzard.
 - ◆ The Swallows Care Village starts on site providing shared equity bungalows in partnership with a residential home developer.
- 1997** ◆ Midsummer's first Norwich shared ownership homes are completed and a shared ownership scheme in Wymondham begins.
 - ◆ The Swallows is runner up in the prestigious National Housing Awards

Housing and Health Category.

- ◆ Midsummer's first rental scheme in Towcester is completed and officially opens in June.
 - ◆ Work starts at Monkston, Milton Keynes, where the Association build 260 rental and shared ownership homes.
- 1998**
- ◆ Midsummer Housing Association is restructured. A new charitable Association is set up, known as Midsummer Homes Housing Association.
 - ◆ The new group refinances and borrows £55m from Nationwide Building Society and the Bank of Scotland.
 - ◆ The Association starts work on its first Foyer development in Wolverton.
- 1999**
- ◆ The 5% target of shared ownership new and second hand property sales to black and minority ethnic purchasers was achieved.
- 2000**
- ◆ The Association launched the Atlas Project, our first partnering agreement, and gains demonstration project status from the Housing Forum for 150 new homes at Tattenhoe in Milton Keynes.
 - ◆ The first staff forum is held at Winterhill Conference Centre, Milton Keynes.
 - ◆ The Midsummer website is launched.
- 2001**
- ◆ The Association successfully bid to become major provider of housing under Starter Home Initiative.
 - ◆ The Association's shared ownership team receives large instruction from another housing association to sell new shared ownership properties on their behalf.
 - ◆ In September, the Association joins the William Sutton Housing Alliance, expanding wide range of expertise and services the Association can offer to its customers.
- 2002**
- ◆ Midsummer receives its largest grant funding from the Housing Corporation of £2.7m which will contribute towards the development of 77 shared ownership and 36 rental homes.
 - ◆ Midsummer launches a new repairs service for rental tenants through a strategic partnering agreement with Connaught Property Services.
 - ◆ Midsummer wins a prestigious award for an innovative housing scheme built in Milton Keynes by the Atlas Project.
- 2003**
- ◆ Midsummer successfully obtains an SHG allocation in excess of £10m - its highest ever funding from the Housing Corporation through the Challenge Fund and Annual Development Programme.
 - ◆ Client Charter Status is achieved and demonstrates Midsummer's

commitment to Egan's principles of continuous improvement.

- ◆ The inspection report by the Audit Commission shows that our services are good and we are continuing to raise standards.
- ◆ A review by the Housing Corporation shows we have in place a strong action plan to address equality and diversity.
- ◆ Midsummer expands its portfolio of temporary housing to assist Milton Keynes Council in meeting its targets to reduce the use of bed & breakfast.
- ◆ Midsummer puts in place a new £110m funding package to fund future developments.

- 2004**
- ◆ Midsummer becomes the Government's Zone Agent for Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and the Chilterns area meaning that we will provide a One Stop Shop for potential keyworkers looking for affordable housing in these areas.
 - ◆ Midsummer achieves Housing Corporation Project Partnering Status (PPA) for grant funded developments in 2004/5 and 2005/6 - one of only 71 RSLs in England to do so.
 - ◆ The Midsummer Group is awarded £23.6m Housing Corporation grant for 2004/2006 under the partnering agreement which will provide over 700 units – 135 rented homes, 348 shared ownership, 18 New Build HomeBuy and 126 key worker market purchase HomeBuy.
 - ◆ An additional allocation of £3.3 is received for aids and adaptations to existing stock and the purchase of street properties to provide permanent homes for the homeless families temporarily housed in the former De Montfort University residences at Kents Hill.

- 2005**
- ◆ Midsummer celebrates its 20th anniversary.
 - ◆ A second successful Residents' Day is held in July at the National Badminton Centre in Loughton, Milton Keynes.
 - ◆ The Medbourne 5 scheme, built in conjunction with Jarvis Contracting Ltd as part of the Atlas Project, receives a Commendation in The Mail on Sunday National HomeBuilder Design Awards 2005.

- 2006**
- ◆ Maggie Sherlock is promoted to Midsummer's Chief Executive with Dave Willis stepping up to Deputy Chief Executive.
 - ◆ In April, Midsummer joined the Guinness Trust Group structure, giving us national influence, whilst enabling us to retain our strong local identity.
 - ◆ Our Medbourne development receives a Special Commendation in the Evening Standard New Homes Awards 2006.
 - ◆ Midsummer receives a Best Companies One Star Accreditation, recognising the Association as being a good company to work for.

The attraction of Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes was ranked the second best location for employment in the UK in a 1997 survey of office workers. It has a thriving, fast growing economy that is attracting leading national and international companies. Over 3,300 new companies have invested in Milton Keynes over the past ten years.

Getting to and from Midsummer, which is located in the City Centre is easy with none of the traffic jams experienced in other areas with similar populations.

Set in the countryside, there are excellent connections with Britain's main communications networks. The M1 motorway provides a fast road link to both north and south; the main A5 trunk road and a major east/west road link runs through the area. Rail travel gives direct routes to London, Birmingham and Glasgow and frequent coach services connect to all areas of the UK.

Housing: There are homes in both modern and traditional settings to suit all ages and tastes.

Education: Local schools, colleges and universities provide the widest possible choice of lifelong learning opportunities. Primary and secondary facilities are excellent, ranging from small village schools to large multi-functional campuses. A high proportion of students continue their education post 16. The area has also become a centre of excellence for corporate training and has specialist schools covering the arts and technology. It also is home for an international Japanese school. In recognition of its importance, businesses and educators have joined forces to establish a unique Lifelong Learning Partnership. There are nursery places for all four year olds and a highly regarded Adult Continuing Education Service.

Leisure: There is an enormous range of comprehensive and modern arts, entertainment, sports, leisure and shopping facilities, all within easy reach. A 1997 survey said that Milton Keynes had the UK's top regional shopping centre. A major £30 million theatre and gallery complex in the city is now open. The Xscape complex houses a snowslope, climbing wall, bowling alley, health club and bars, restaurants and shops. The area has the national centres for hockey and badminton, and the Silverstone Grand Prix track on its borders. Woburn Abbey is close by.

Environment: Milton Keynes has large areas of parkland (some 4,000 acres), lakes and other open spaces. It also offers easy access to the surrounding countryside. There are opportunities for walking, horse riding, sailing and fishing, and the area has the UK's most extensive cycle path system.