



2023 Annual Report



Contents

Introduction and Background	Page 3
Performance Report:	Page 5
- Repairs	Page 5
- Vacant Properties	Page 6
- Lettings	Page 6
- Tenancy Monitoring	Page 7
- Anti-Social Behaviour	Page 8
- New Tenant Surveys	Page 10
- Annual Satisfaction Survey	Page 14
Staff & Board Members	Page 16
New PCH Chief Executive	Page 17
Wellbeing Wednesday Group	Page 17
Community Defibrillator	Page 19
Grounds Maintenance	Page 20
Coronation Celebrations	Page 24
Young People	Page 27
Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre	Page 29
Pembroke Community Rooms	Page 30
Drainage Works	Page 32
Looking Ahead to 2024	Page 32
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Introduction

This report provides an overview of the activities during the year including key performance data and a summary of other notable work.

Background

Pembroke EMB (PEMB) is a small resident led not for profit company, established in 1994 following a volunteer led campaign by a committed group of local residents to achieve major change and investment in their neighbourhood. Years of decline in the 1980's had led to the council ward being classed as the most deprived neighbourhood in England, with multiple problems of crime, unemployment and poorly maintained housing.

PEMB was established after many years of decline when Devonport became beset with social problems and crime and the housing stock fell into disrepair. A small group of long-term residents joined forces to work for a better future and went on to secure regeneration funding which enabled the redesign the layout of the Pembroke Street estate and refurbish the properties to modern standards. The project was ground breaking in its approach and attracted national attention from politicians and regeneration professionals who were keen to try to replicate the success elsewhere in the country.

PEMB is a 'Tenant Management Organisation' (TMO). The National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations defines a TMO as:

"A TMO is a means by which council or housing association tenants and leaseholders can collectively take on responsibility for managing the homes they live in. Those resident members of the TMO create an independent legal body and usually elect a tenant led management committee to run the organisation. The TMO can then enter into a legal management agreement (contract) with the landlord. The TMO is paid annual management and maintenance allowances in order to carry out the management duties that are delegated to them.

TMOs can take different forms and sizes. Many are tenant management co-operatives using co-op rules. Others may take the form of not-for-profit companies. Some TMOs manage just a handful of homes while others manage large estates of two or three thousand properties. The small TMOs may rely mainly on voluntary effort but most employ staff such as housing managers, caretakers and repair workers.

The services managed by the TMO vary with local circumstances but may include day-to-day repairs, allocations and lettings, tenancy management, cleaning and caretaking, and rent collection."

Pembroke EMB (PEMB) manages and maintains the Pembroke Street estate. This includes:

- day to day tenancy issues
- planned and response repairs
- general maintenance and cleaning
- investigating and resolving anti-social behaviour
- managing empty properties and preparing them for re-let
- working with PCH in the allocation of flats to new tenants

PEMB resident board members are tenants and leaseholders who live on Pembroke Street. They form the majority number of directors and have some autonomy and control to decide how budgets should be spent. On the Pembroke Street estate, the Landlord has been Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) since 2009 when there was a large-scale stock transfer of approximately 15,000 properties previously managed by Plymouth City Council. A management agreement sets out the relationship and respective responsibilities of PEMB and PCH.



There is a small team of staff employed by PEMB including a full time Manager, a part time Administrator, a part time Support Worker and two part time repair and maintenance staff. PEMB also employs a part time youth worker to run neighbourhood wide youth activities.

PEMB has always been involved in working with the wider community to address needs that go beyond the contracted housing management service. Over the years, this has included ambitious training and employment programmes, arts projects and area wide youth work programmes which have benefitted hundreds of local families.

The work to regenerate the Pembroke estate in the 1990's led to further regeneration across Devonport. The area today looks and feels radically different.

Despite the noticeable investment in the infrastructure and new housing in particular, Devonport is still classed as the second most deprived neighbourhood in the city with significant pockets of deprivation.

Performance Report

PEMB monitors a number of key performance indicators (KPI). The KPI's have been drawn from the Landlord's own performance targets and in some cases are more ambitious than the Landlord's own target. For example, PEMB is committed to completing a routine repair within 10 working days, where the Landlord's target is 20 working days.

Throughout the year, PEMB reports on progress and performance internally at board meetings and to the Landlord, Plymouth Community Homes. Residents are also kept up to date with regular newsletters and via other forms of communication such as social media and website updates.

Repairs

All repairs are carried out by PEMB, with the exception of boilers, intercoms and showers. In most cases, PEMB carry out repairs 'in house' but also rely on a small number of local contractors to carry out more complex work including any work which requires specific accreditation, such as electrical installations.

A large, 3D-rendered number '95%' in a vibrant red color. The numbers are thick and blocky, with a slight shadow underneath, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

**of standard repairs completed on time
(404 repairs in total)**

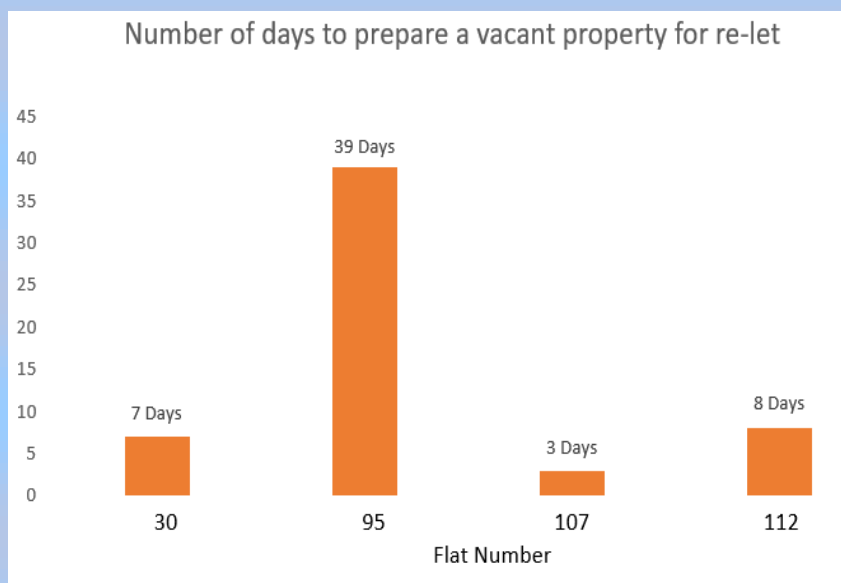
A large, 3D-rendered number '96%' in a vibrant blue color. The numbers are thick and blocky, with a slight shadow underneath, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

**of emergency repairs completed on time
(25 repairs in total)**

PEMB have to complete repairs 50% faster than PCH. Perhaps inevitably some repairs take a little longer than target times. Some of the reasons for this including difficulty identifying the cause of a defect or waiting on parts or materials to arrive.

Vacant Properties

PEMB is responsible for preparing vacant properties for re-let. This work encompasses safety checks, servicing, repairs and cleaning and may also include clearance of furniture and redecoration of the property depending on the condition it is handed back in. During the reporting period we had four vacant properties as set out below.

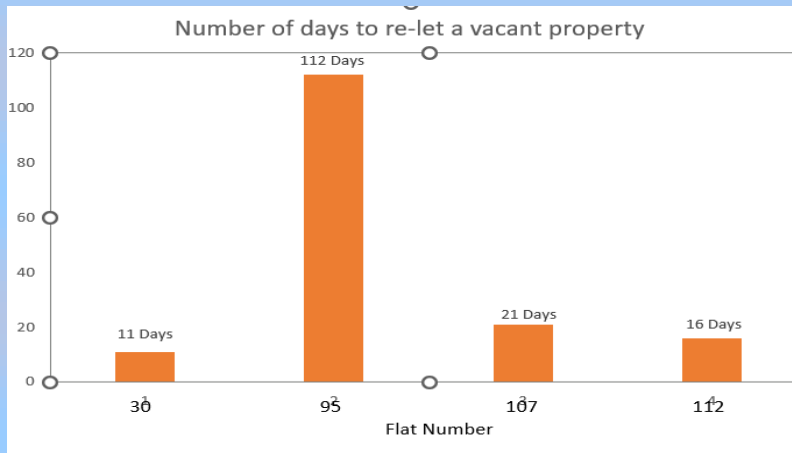


Flat 95 took a lot longer to prepare for re-let as there was a problem with a defective boiler flue which had to be referred to PCH for repair and required the installation of scaffolding.

Lettings

PEMB also manages the re-let process. All properties are advertised on Devon Home Choice and eligible applicants 'bid' for properties. PCH send the shortlisted candidates to PEMB. Applicants who accept a property have to pass a pre tenancy assessment which is completed by PEMB with a final decision made by PCH.

Delays can occur when applicants do not meet the criteria for the property or fail the pre tenancy assessment. One-bedroom properties tend to present more of a challenge to re-let due to the complexity of applicant's circumstances.



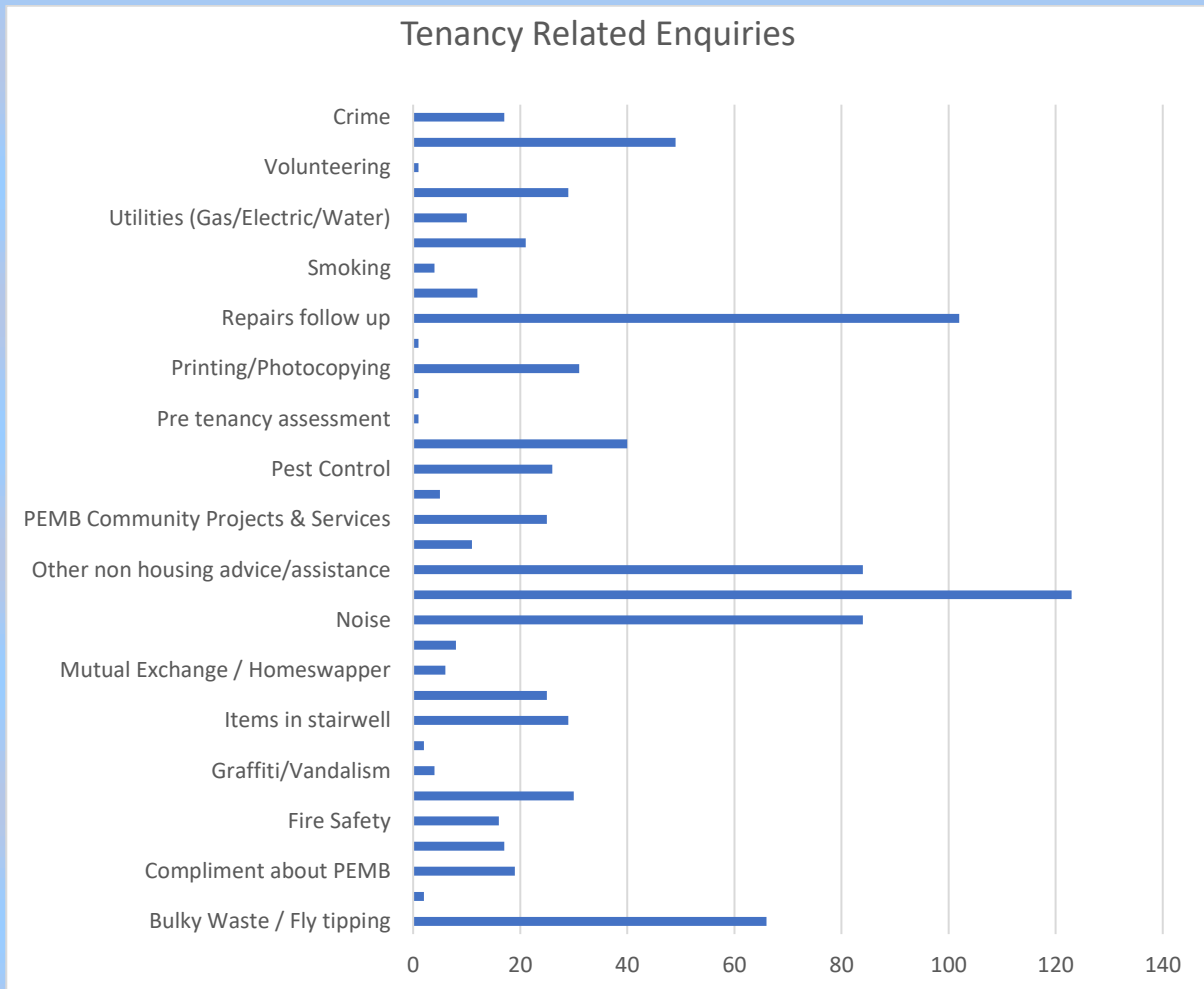
Tenancy Monitoring

Tenants and leaseholders can get in touch with PEMB in a number of different ways including walking in to the estate-based office, phoning, emailing or via social media.

Quarterly printed newsletters are produced and distributed to all residents, as pictured below. Digital versions are also made available, but we find that posting printed copies helps to ensure all residents have access to relevant updates, even when they don't use the internet.



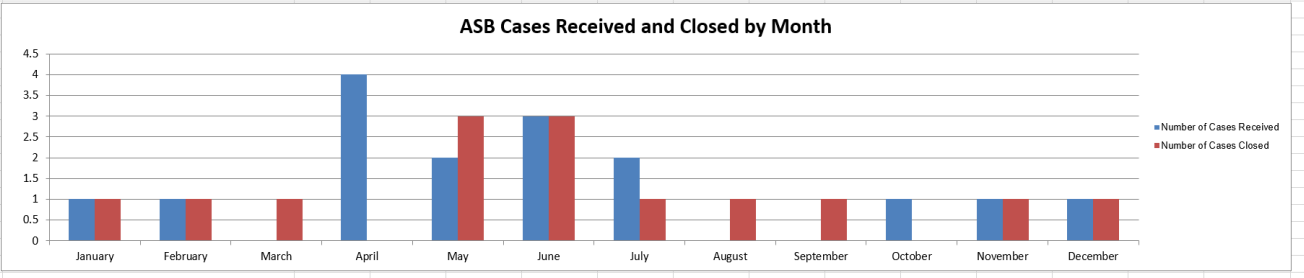
We aim to log as many enquires to the office as we can and to assign them a category. This year we logged 901 enquiries. The breakdown of enquires is recorded over the page. In some cases, there will be a number of enquiries relating to the same topic e.g. where we log an ongoing noise complaint over a period of weeks.



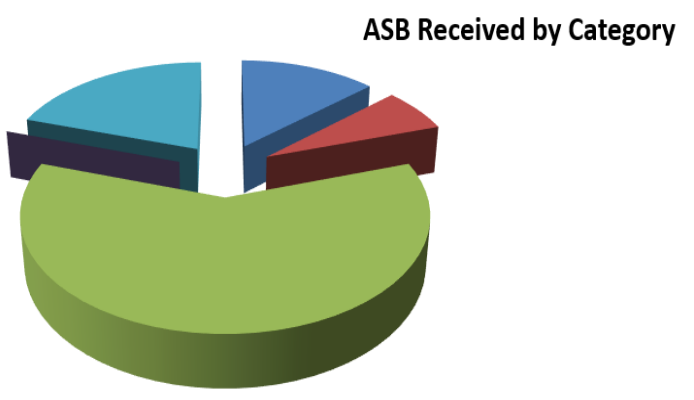
Anti-Social Behaviour

A partnership approach is taken to dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB). This means that low level ASB is dealt with by PEMB, whilst more serious or long-term issues require a joint approach with PCH, especially where cases might require a legal intervention. Below is a summary of cases formally logged on the 'REACT' system during the year. This is a case management system which PCH subscribes to. PEMB have access to the system for a shared approach to managing and dealing with ASB.

Pembroke Street ASB Cases													
01/01/2023 - 31/12/2023													
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Number of Cases Received	1	1	0	4	2	3	2	0	0	1	1	1	16
Number of Cases Closed	1	1	1	0	3	3	1	1	1	0	1	1	14



ASB Category	Cases Received by Category												
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	Total
Alcohol Related	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Drugs / Substance Misuse / Drug Dealing	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Noise	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	1	9
Hate Related Incidents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Verbal / Harassment / Intimidation / Threatening	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Domestic Abuse	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1



- Alcohol related
- Drugs/Substance Misuse/Drug Dealing
- Noise
- Verbal Harassment / Intimidation/ Threatening

As part of reporting on our performance to the Landlord, Plymouth Community Homes, we arranged to obtain some case studies from tenants across the estate, trying to reflect both new and long-term tenants to present a range of views. The case studies along with our key performance report and annual report were presented to the PCH customer focus committee, where we received praise for the work and our continued high levels of resident engagement.

New Tenant Surveys

In the past twelve months nine new tenants have moved onto the Pembroke Street estate in Devonport. Each new tenant was asked the questions below. 8 of the 9 tenants responded.

Case Study 1 is a lone parent with two young children who moved into their three-bedroom flat in early 2023, due to eviction from their previous home and needing a 3-bedroom property.

"The area is lovely and my kids love how friendly the neighbours are, even though my kids can be hard sometimes. The staff in the office are always helpful and the youth club for the kids is close by."

Do you think the Pembroke Street estate is well managed and maintained? Yes, I do. Its lovely to see the block tidy after the cleaners have been in.

Do you have any feedback on what it's like living on the estate

It's been good so far; I hope the neighbours feel we are approachable if they need to talk to us.

How does living on Pembroke Street compare to where you lived previously?

Much better, more areas for the kids to play.

Is there anything about Pembroke Street that you have noticed is different (good or bad)?

There is always someone you can talk to if you have a problem.

Have you needed to contact the EMB for any assistance and do you have any feedback on the support you received including the outcome

Only when there has been a complaint and they have always listened.

Case Study 2 is a lone parent with one child who was homeless and moved into their two-bedroom flat in late 2022.

"I do like the calm atmosphere and strong sense of community Pembroke Street brings. I only dislike that at times the neighbourhood can become rather loud, however this is only minor."

Do you think the Pembroke Street estate is well managed and maintained?

I believe so, things are handled effectively and swiftly.

Do you have any feedback on what it's like living on the estate.

No.

How does living on Pembroke Street compare to where you lived previously?

Its rather much the same. Quiet atmosphere, a sense of community and some lovely flora around.

Is there anything about Pembroke Street that you have noticed is different (good or bad)?

Not really.

Have you needed to contact the EMB for any assistance and do you have any feedback on the support you received including the outcome?

I do not believe so.

Case study 3 is a lone male who moved into their one-bedroom flat in late 2022 due to smoke problems in their previous flat and had specified that he wished to move to Mt. Wise.

"Nice, well-maintained estate with a sense of community"

Do you think the Pembroke Street estate is well managed and maintained?

Fairly well.

Do you have any feedback on what it's like living on the estate.

Very good in lots of ways. Friendly and I know lots of people and a well-maintained environment. Recurrent noise/dog ASB in the months that I have lived here, seagulls on the roof and noise from top floor flat.

How does living on Pembroke Street compare to where you lived previously?

Previously lived in Mt. Wise for 17 years and prefer it here, especially as back and involved with children and youth work. Otherwise experience much the same.

Is there anything about Pembroke Street that you have noticed is different (good or bad)?

I know about the EMB due to being active in Devonport for 27 years, but my observation since living here is the Board has little profile. Apart from the fairly low-key mentions in the newsletter and on arrival (welcome docs), you could easily not know that it was there, what it does and how you can get involved.

Have you needed to contact the EMB for any assistance and do you have any feedback on the support you received including the outcome?

Repairs etc – just a couple of times and had an excellent response. Ref ASB – ongoing, and the situation (EMB/PCH) seem to me as a tenant pretty stuck, with no to little result and little evidence of change, and with a number of tenants affected.

Case study 4 is a lone parent with two young children who moved into their two bedroomed flat in early 2023 to be closer to their family, and had always liked the estate when passing through.

"I like how clean the area is kept and managed".

Do you think the Pembroke Street estate is well managed and maintained?

Yes.

Do you have any feedback on what it's like living on the estate.

It can be very noisy at times. Other than that, I think it's good. I also see and hear the bins get damaged and messed around a lot.

How does living on Pembroke Street compare to where you lived previously?

A lot better managed and taken care of, there is a lot of pretty art work which I love about Pembroke Street.

Is there anything about Pembroke Street that you have noticed is different (good or bad)?

I have noticed the medical equipment (defib) that has been installed by the office.

Have you needed to contact the EMB for any assistance and do you have any feedback on the support you received including the outcome?

Yes, and I do feel that they were quick on coming to fix the problem.

Case Study 5 Is a lone parent with two children who moved into a two bedroomed flat in late 2022 due to a fire in their previous flat.

Are there any particular things you like or dislike about living on Pembroke Street?

Issues with tenant who does not live on the estate but visits the block.

Do you think the Pembroke Street estate is well managed and maintained?

Yes.

Do you have any feedback on what it's like living on the estate.

It's fine. It's quiet. People seem to keep themselves to themselves unless they have family on the estate.

How does living on Pembroke Street compare to where you lived previously?

Not much difference. I may need to be a little quieter on a night time when coming home from work.

Is there anything about Pembroke Street that you have noticed is different (good or bad)?

Not really.

Have you needed to contact the EMB for any assistance and do you have any feedback on the support you received including the outcome?

Not had to speak to the office yet.

Case Study 6 Is a lone male who moved into a one bedroomed flat in early 2023 due to being homeless.

Are there any particular things you like or dislike about living on Pembroke Street?

I think the staff in the office are brilliant, polite and friendly.

Do you think the Pembroke Street estate is well managed and maintained?

Yes.

Do you have any feedback on what it's like living on the estate.

No.

How does living on Pembroke Street compare to where you lived previously?

It's a little louder.

Is there anything about Pembroke Street that you have noticed is different (good or bad)?

Have you needed to contact the EMB for any assistance and do you have any feedback on the support you received including the outcome?

Yes – been very accommodating and helpful

Case Study 7 Is a lone parent with three children who moved into a three bedrooomed flat as was declared homeless.

Are there any particular things you like or dislike about living on Pembroke Street?

It's near great parts like Mutton Cove, but the fences between the gardens are useless and lack any privacy.

Do you think the Pembroke Street estate is well managed and maintained?

Yes.

Do you have any feedback on what it's like living on the estate.

It's a friendly community.

How does living on Pembroke Street compare to where you lived previously?

It's a lot more neighbourly.

Is there anything about Pembroke Street that you have noticed is different (good or bad)?

Well maintained and good communication, but again the fences that separate the gardens are useless.

Have you needed to contact the EMB for any assistance and do you have any feedback on the support you received including the outcome?

No

Case Study 8 is a lone parent with one child who was declared homeless.

"I think that Pembroke Street has a great community feel and has great support"

Do you think the Pembroke Street estate is well managed and maintained?

Yes.

Do you have any feedback on what it's like living on the estate.

It's a lovely place to live especially with a child.

How does living on Pembroke Street compare to where you lived previously?

That's a hard comparison to make due to circumstances, but I am happier at Pembroke Street.

Is there anything about Pembroke Street that you have noticed is different (good or bad)?

No.

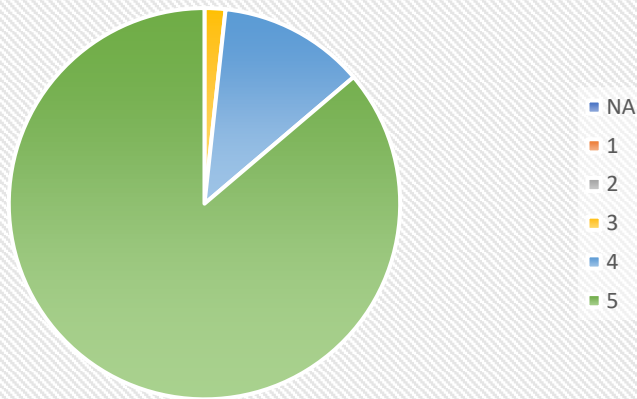
Have you needed to contact the EMB for any assistance and do you have any feedback on the support you received including the outcome?

I haven't needed to.

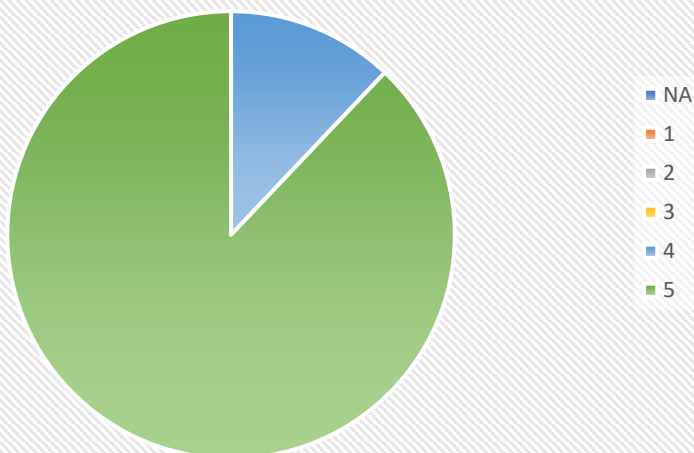
Annual Satisfaction Survey

Residents were asked to complete a survey that contained 5 questions. Each question was scored 1 – 5 with 5 being excellent and 1 being poor. Based on 159 flats and 59 completed surveys the response rate was 38%.

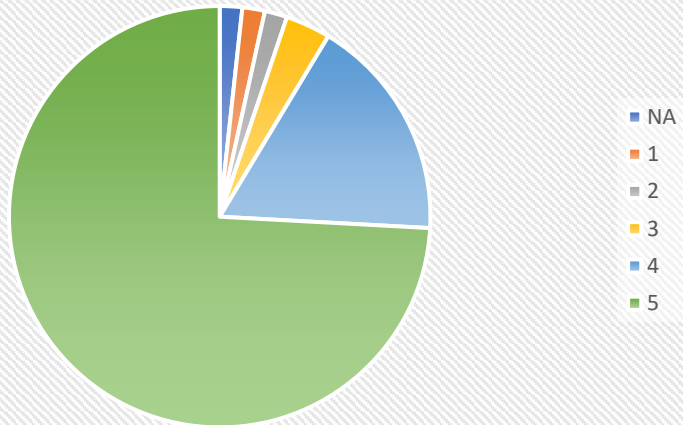
Q1. Cleanliness across the estate including the stairwell cleaning



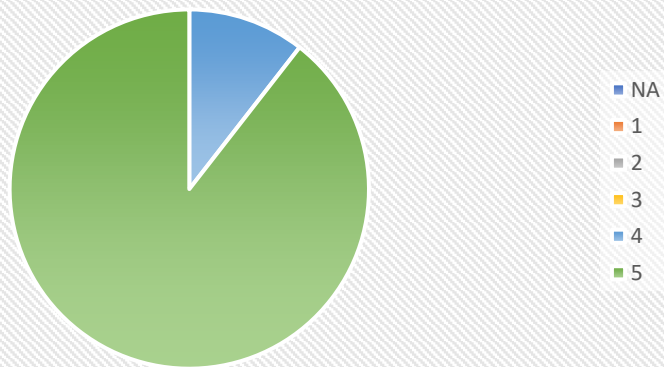
Q2. Ground maintenance and planted areas



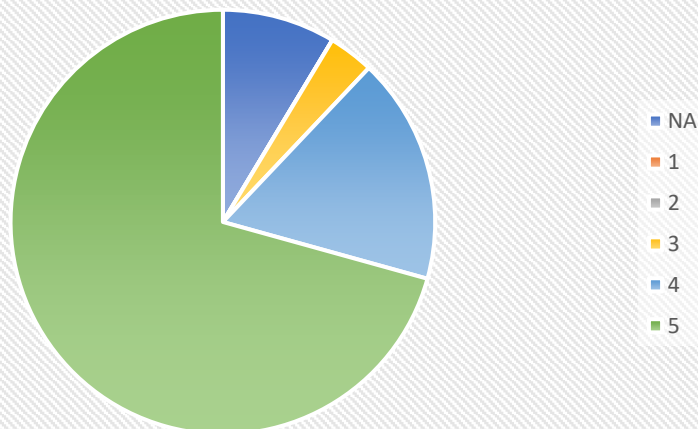
Q3. Repairs Service



Q4. Estate office including newsletters and printed information



Q5. Non housing services such as community events, youth clubs, daytrips



Staff and Board Members

In January we bid farewell to Melanie Nodder and welcomed Jo Shaw as the new EMB Administrator. Jo has now been with the EMB for nearly a year and is enjoying the variety of work and the daily interaction with residents.

We've also been pleased to have had John Melville working with us. John is a Pembroke Street resident and he has been assisting with a range of additional maintenance tasks including repainting the shed doors and railings around the estate and installing fencing. He has also provided cover during periods of staff sickness.

Also new to the EMB was Alex Cole-Irving who joined as a resident board member. Later in the year we also welcomed David Wales from City College Plymouth as a co-opted stakeholder board member.

We were all saddened to hear of the passing of Christine Down who had been one of the founding directors of the EMB back in the 1994. Christine was also part of the original residents campaigning group from 1987. In 2017, her name was added to the commemorative mosaic outside the EMB office celebrating the anniversary of the formation of the resident's association which led to the regeneration of Pembroke Street.

Following the conclusion of the Board Review in 2022, Zebra Collective held a Board members training session – pictured below - for new and existing board members to run through the new handbook and associated topics.



Board members training session

New PCH Chief Executive

Board members were pleased to meet Jonathan Cowie who took over as PCH Chief Executive following the retirement of John Clarke. With a renewed focus on resident engagement at national level, we feel this is an opportunity to look at what works and trial new ways of working together.



Board members welcome Jonathan Cowie, pictured far right.

Wellbeing Wednesday Group

In January, we learned that the grant application to the National Lottery 'Awards for All' programme had been successful. The grant award of £9436 was used to expand and develop the 'Wellbeing Wednesday' group and contributed towards subsidised daytrips, workshops, refreshments, staffing and core costs such as centre hire and insurance.



Open to all local residents and meeting weekly at the Neighbourhood Centre, the group was started by a Pembroke EMB board member in 2022 and has been gaining new members ever since. During the course of the year the group have taken part in a wide range of activities including mocktail making, a gonk workshop, a floristry session, Christmas wreath making and trips to National Trust properties and the cinema. In December the group visited Devonport Playhouse to see the production of 'Elf' the musical.



Members have found the group really beneficial in introducing them to new activities and experiences and helping to make new friends and contributing towards feeling more positive. With more and more services seeing funding cuts, the group provides an important opportunity to connect with others in an increasingly online, virtual world.



The group are planning further activities in the Spring. Anyone who is interested in joining the group can either pop along to the Neighbourhood Centre between 1pm and 3pm on Wednesday afternoons or get in touch with the EMB to find out more.



Community Defibrillator

A new community defibrillator was installed outside the estate office. Funded by the EMB, the unit is available all year round for the whole community to use. Anyone who calls 999 for emergency assistance will be issued with the access code if the ambulance service thinks the unit may be needed. It's another small way that the EMB is helping to support the community. In Devonport, incidents of heart attacks are still higher than in many other neighbourhoods across the city. We hope that if the worst ever happens, the unit could help save a life. The unit has been issued by the emergency services in connection with several medical emergencies over the course of the year.



Grounds Maintenance

The EMB is responsible for cleaning and grounds maintenance across the estate. This includes a large number of grass and planted areas. In addition to maintaining these areas, new shrubs and flowers are added each year, alongside a planned programme of cyclical maintenance including repainting and enhancements such as new fencing, pictured below.



In April, we were delighted to receive 12 new timber planters from City College Plymouth. The planters were made by Carpentry students at the College with supervision from Sean Stupples who is pictured with Will and Marc from the EMB.



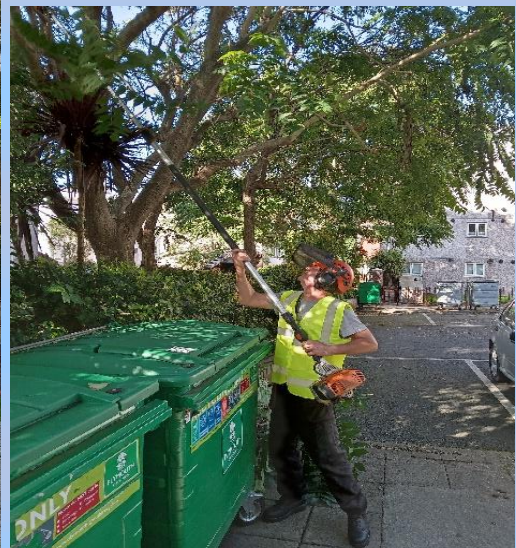
The planters have been distributed around the estate and filled with shrubs and flowers, forming part of the diverse array of planting around the estate.



The majority of the planters have been introduced on Clowance lane, where the previous grass areas had often been used for dog fouling. Plymouth Community Homes paid for some of these areas to be replaced with a permeable resin bound gravel surface, which was completed in July, having been delayed for a few months due to the persistent rain we experienced. Pictured over the page is the work in progress. In addition to their improved appearance, the areas are also much easier to maintain.



Also pictured is the work undertaken to manage tree growth. With many different species of tree on the estate, they need active management to prevent them causing an obstruction. Some of the trees planted 30 years ago have now reached the same height as the roofs.



A quote from a resident on the estate provides a good insight into how many people regard the canopy of trees on the central path:

“Central path should get recognition not just for flowers, but we also have the best trees planted in regeneration. You also saved ‘Maddies’ tree and look at what they did to the trees in the city centre. As well as the courtyards which allow kids safe play and also adults a play space with neighbours. I’m so glad my grandson has the same safe place to play that my daughter did.”



In July, we received an award of 'Thriving' from the RHS 'It's Your Neighbourhood' scheme. Judges commented:

RHS 2023 It's Your Neighbourhood Assessment Form

Name & Area: Pembroke Estate Management Board Ltd

Judge: Bob Ollier & Lynette Talbot

Date: 26th July 2023

LEVEL ACHIEVED	THRIVING
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Feedback

Areas of Achievement

It was a pleasure to meet Frank Carlyle who manages the gardens at the Pembroke Estate. There are no dedicated garden areas which are shared by 160 flat occupants. The Company with a Board of 16, started in 1984 and is in its 29th year of residency.

- 12 volunteers and 12 voluntary youth workers help maintain the site.
- Plymouth City College made the timber raised beds.
- A community planting event is held in Spring and includes school children.
- The estate is well maintained with no litter, detritus and few weeds.
- The newly landscaped areas outside the estate along the road will encourage locals to take pride in the area.
- The avenue of trees and shrubs were in good health. The trees help block the view of the high-rise buildings. They provide shade and help with pollution.
- The newly painted gateways, originally designed by children are a delight, improving the landscaped areas.
- There were several well planted and maintained private courtyards.
- The mosaics and artwork on the walls are well cared for.
- The 'CR111's' sailboat planted up by the community was suitable for the Plymouth area's celebration of the Coronation.
- There is a neat information board and new defibrillator

Areas for Development

- Encouraging all the tenants to take pride in their courtyards.
- Some of the planters were not finished being planted up. The judges did see the good quality plants to be used.
- Meeting some of the tenants of the estate would have added value to the visit. Meeting people who could speak about their gardening e.g. the gentleman with the pond and baskets, would have added to the tour.
- Keep improving some of the beds around the lawn areas using a greater variety of herbaceous plants besides shrubs.
- The judges would have like to meet some of the volunteer or residents who help on the estate.



Coronation Celebrations

The focus in May turned to the Coronation Street party with various activities leading up to a Street Party held on the estate. Wellbeing group members Rachel and Kay led on creating a large commemorative banner, which was hand stitched and later took pride of place amongst the flags and other decorations which were on display across the estate.



King Charles Coronation
 Organised and part funded by Pembroke Estate Management Board

**Community Street Party
 Pembroke Street Estate
 Sunday 7th May
 from Midday until 2pm
 £2 per child
 Party Food, Music, Party Games
 + free commemorative medal for every child**

Adults have the option to pre-order a unique pin badge (pictured) for just £1

Everyone is invited. You don't have to be a Pembroke Street resident
 Call into the Pembroke Street office to book your place. Phone 607277 for more details.
**Don't forget to wear red, white and blue
 or why not dress up as a British Icon?**

The street party was attended by 100 children, along with their families and the wider community. With food, music, games and a bouncy castle amongst the entertainment on offer, it was a great opportunity to bring the community together to celebrate an event of

international significance. And it also coincided with Plymouth Argyle gaining promotion which only added to the party atmosphere!

Thanks also to Babcock for funding the purchase of gazebos and chair hire. And in time honoured tradition, BBC Spotlight came down to film the party preparations which was featured as part of the buildup to the Coronation weekend.





Young People

In addition to the ongoing weekly youth club sessions, we were delighted to receive further 'fit and fed' funding from Plymouth City Council which enabled us to run action packed activities during the Easter and Summer holidays. Pictured below are photos taken from some of the off-site activities including trips to Mount Batten Water sports centre, Prime Skate Park, River Dart, the 'Otters and Butterflies' centre and lots of centre-based sessions such as a science day, cookery activities and a visit from 'The Bug Man'.



The EMB also offered a subsidised daytrip to Paignton Zoo for local families. The trip which took place in August was attended by 40 families.



Daytrip to Paignton Zoo
on Friday 11th August

Coach departs 9.30am & returns 6pm

£15 for adults
£12 for children aged up to 15 yrs
Under 3's are free

With funding subsidy from Pembroke EMB

- Children aged 12 and under or under 135 cm in height will need to bring a car seat or booster seat.
- The trip is available to all Devonport residents. You don't need to have children in your group to book places.
- To reserve your place, call into the EMB office.
- You have the option of paying in two instalments with a 50% deposit to secure the booking and the remaining 50% payable at least one week before the trip.
- Please note that this is NOT a youth club trip. All children must be accompanied by an adult.



The youth work team was further strengthened with new volunteers after Hannah, Stacey, Danielle and Olivia joined the team. As local parents and former youth club members themselves, we're delighted that they have joined the team and are continuing the tradition of local youth work led by the EMB which started in the 1980's and has continued ever since.



We were also pleased to welcome Camilla, who is on a year long placement with Devonport Community Baptist Church, having relocated to the UK from Brazil.



In terms of other youth and community activities, we welcomed Ryan who joined the youth team on an internship from the University of Plymouth. The internship programme was a new project for the University, with a specific intention of connecting with grass roots community and voluntary sector providers.



The placement was very successful and we recently learned that Ryan has since been offered paid employment as a Youth Worker with partner organisation, Zebra Collective. Ryan completed part of his placement with Zebra who began running a new weekly youth work session towards the end of 2022. Pembroke EMB had been working with Zebra to support the new session by contributing ideas towards a funding bid and providing subsidised access to Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre.

We also worked with Cllr Bill Stevens to distribute free National Marine Aquarium tickets to local families.

Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre

Having learned at the end of 2022 that we'd been unsuccessful in our bid to secure funding to refurbish the Neighbourhood Centre, attention turned to alternative ways of being able to continue to deliver youth and community work. The bid to the Government's 'Community Ownership' Fund coincided with the announcement that Plymouth Argyle Community Trust had been successful in securing a large grant from the same fund as they worked on developing their plans to take on the nearby Brickfields sport centre and make it a focus for community wellbeing activities.

Working with Greg Parry as our technical advisor, we turned our attention towards what other options might be available to continue to enable us to continue to offer a community meeting space for existing and new neighbourhood services. We focussed our efforts on a new plan to relocate the maintenance workshop and stores into the timber cabin behind the office and to redevelop the stores into community meeting rooms.

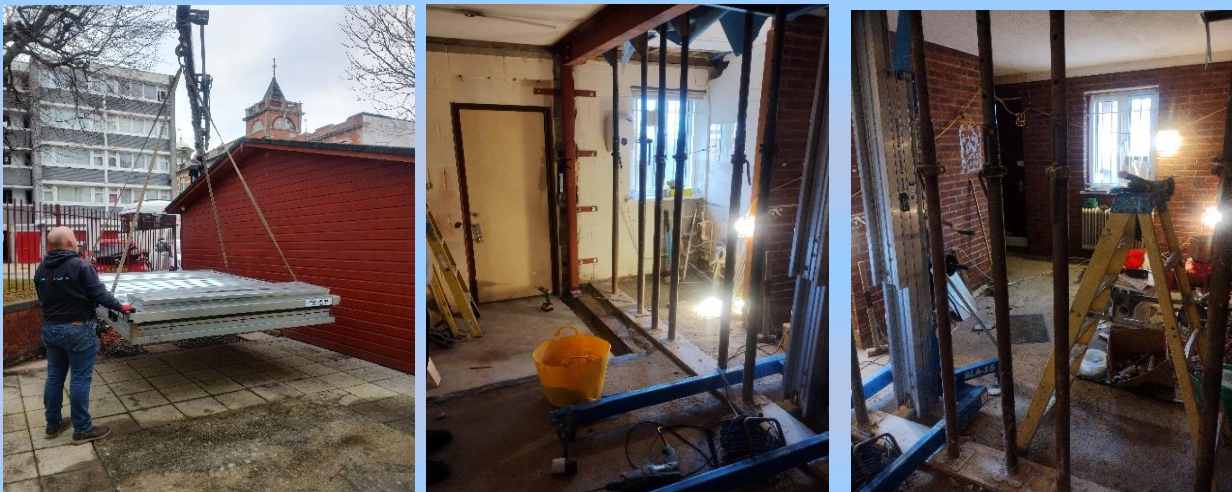
Pembroke Community Rooms

Plans were devised and outline costings obtained which led to an application to the Youth Investment Fund (YIF) who we had been talking to in 2022, as a potential funder for the Neighbourhood Centre scheme. Responding to the needs of many smaller organisations, YIF introduced a less onerous 'refurbishment' funding stream, and there was now a good fit with our revised plans. In October we were delighted to learn that the funding bid was successful with an award of £111,518 which was subject to a few conditions including formalising a lease with Plymouth Community Homes.



In the intervening period, the lease has been agreed and registered and a plan and associated costs for the scheme has been drawn up and approved. The demolition and strip out of the buildings began in December and work is expected to take 8-10 weeks to complete.

The EMB is contributing match funding to the scheme with the associated cost of the relocating the maintenance team in the adjacent timber cabin.





Alongside the construction work, discussion has been ongoing with existing user groups of the centre, most of whom are happy to move across to the new facility.

At the end of the year, in anticipation of being able to use the new buildings, we began consulting over the potential ways the buildings can be used. We were pleased to welcome Shirley on a short-term internship from the University of Plymouth. Shirley will be mapping existing services across the area and helping to identify where the gaps are and conducting surveys with residents to find out what they'd like to see offered.

Drainage Works

Towards the end of the year, Exjet commenced work to repair and renew the underground drainage network across the estate. This is a major project – commissioned by PCH - which is due to take several months. It marks the start of the estate refurbishment works, with works to the building fabric and communal areas expected to begin in 2024.

Looking ahead to 2024

2024 looks to be just as busy as 2023 with the following objectives over and above our core work:

- The completion of the new community rooms.
- Celebrating the 30th anniversary of the EMB.
- The 5-year continuation ballot is due to be held.
- Expected commencement of the delayed estate refurbishment programme.
- Converting the EMB to a CIC company form.
- Completion of the Management Agreement update with PCH.

As ever, a huge thank you goes to the volunteer and staff team that makes the EMB what it is.



