

## **PRESS RELEASE 18 August 2010**

A community of people with learning difficulties in St Andrews is set to benefit from a merger of two housing groups.

Rymonth Housing Society Limited is to transfer its assets to Edinburgh-based ARK Housing Association Limited, allowing ARK to continue the work which Rymonth has done in providing accommodation, care and support for up to 22 individuals within the town's Glebe Road facility, the two groups said in a joint statement. The formal transfer will take place in October.

The statement added that both organisations believed the transfer represented a positive development for Rymonth's employees, residents and residents' carers and families. It provided an opportunity for ARK to take forward the high quality support already provided to the St Andrews service's residents while providing them with increased security in challenging economic times.

Rymonth, opened by the Duchess of Kent in 1986, has three separate homes on one site with spacious gardens to the rear.

ARK, a not-for-profit organisation established in 1977, works with 13 local authorities in the East of Scotland from Buckie to Kelso, providing flexible care, housing and support to people with learning difficulties and others who require assistance to lead lives of their choice. It runs services in Fife in Glenrothes, Lochgelly, Cardenden and Dunfermline.

Keith Neilson, one of Rymonth's original founders, remains an active fundraiser and Trustee of the charity and is a carer for his daughter who uses its respite facility.

He commented: "I am very happy with the merger as ARK has the same ethos and quality of care which Rymonth has been providing and will continue the excellent work which Rymonth has carried out."

Jim Rigby, Chair of ARK, added: "We already have a particularly strong presence in Fife and are confident we can make a positive impact on the lives of Rymonth's residents and further develop activities in St Andrews. We look forward to welcoming two Rymonth Trustees to the ARK management board. I anticipate that further integration within our sector will gather pace as the economic squeeze tightens funding of services."

ARK will assume responsibility for the care of each resident and all Rymonth's employees will transfer to ARK. Residents will continue to live in their present homes, benefit from continuing support from the existing staff team and enjoy the same activities.

The St Andrews service will continue to be known as Rymonth in recognition of the goodwill within the local community towards its work and residents.

The Friends of Rymonth, an independent charity comprising people interested in residents' welfare, will continue to operate to help maintain important local connections through befriending and fundraising. ARK said it intended to build on the strong working relationship between the community and the Friends.