Summer 2008 Edition

Tenants’ Talk

‘A newsletter written by tenants for tenants.’
Introducing the New Tenants’ Newsletter

Members of the Newsletter Group, made up of five tenants of Chorley Community Housing, would like to introduce the new Tenants Newsletter, ‘Tenants’ Talk!’ The newsletter is written by the Newsletter Group for all tenants and leaseholders. We would like to hear your views and ideas for future issues and invite any comments you would like to make. This is your newsletter and we would like more residents to get involved in the planning and writing of all articles in future issues. If you would like to contact the Newsletter Group, please turn to page 12 for details on how to do this.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Chrissy and her editorial team for all their hard work and dedication to the previous tenants’ newsletter ‘Tenants News and Views.’ We wish them all the best for the future.

Why We Got Involved!

Some members of the Newsletter Group explain why they got involved in influencing important decisions made by Chorley Community Housing and the services CCH provides for residents…
Christine Hodkinson

My husband and I became tenants after losing our home in 2002. I found the transition from homeowner to tenant very difficult. I heard that there was a group being set up to tackle issues that residents living in the area were facing and, although it was very daunting, I decided to attend the very first meeting of the Eaves Green Residents’ Group in 2005. I became a member of the Group and we began to tackle these issues with the help of Councillor Tony Gee and Adrienne Turner, the Tenant Participation Officer from Chorley Council. Thanks to them, our group is still going strong and without their support I am sure it would not be as successful as it is today.

Josie Snape

Hi, I’m Josie Snape and I am a member of the Newsletter Group. I first became interested in the resident involvement opportunities at Chorley Community Housing during the latter part of the transfer when I volunteered to take part in the promotion video. I am a member of my local Residents’ Group, The Ryes, which I joined when I moved into the area and decided that I would like to become more involved. Since becoming involved, I believe my confidence has grown through meeting other tenants and also the officers of Chorley Community Housing, and through being given the opportunity to help shape the services which we, as tenants, receive.

I went on to get involved with the transfer team during the transfer of the ownership of our homes from Chorley Council to Chorley Community Housing, which meant lots of training. This was most enjoyable. I have met, and am still meeting, lots of interesting people. I now attend most meetings such as the Access and Customer Care Service Improvement Group, the Tenants’ and Residents’ Panel and many more.

I have been involved with the tenants’ newsletter since the first issue. Now we have set up a Newsletter Group to produce ‘Tenants’ Talk.’ We would love you to air the news and views in your area and from your local groups. With some of us now having new kitchens and bathrooms fitted, we would also love to hear your views on the improvements. You can get involved too, with the help of our new Residents’ Resource Room and all the training and support that is on offer. We need your help so come and join us! I am still learning and very much enjoy my involvement with Chorley Community Housing.
Members of the Newsletter Group visited two tenants, who have recently had improvement work done to their homes by Bullocks in order to meet the Chorley Homes Standard, to find out about their experiences.

**Interviewee:** Mrs M Walton  
**Address:** Bannerman Terrace, Chorley  
**Time at address:** 2 years  
**Work that has been carried out:** New Kitchen, New Bathroom, New central heating system, Electrical rewire

How long did the work take to be completed?  
**They started on the 15th April and finished on the 15th May, so it took exactly one month.**

Did you get any help with packing?  
**No help was offered.**

Were you without water / electricity for a long length of time?  
**No longer than a day, the workmen made sure everything was on before they left for the day.**

Was there lots of dirt?  
**I covered everything up and the workmen put sheets down as well but there was still dust.**

How many workmen were in your home at one time?  
**The most was about six men doing electrics.**

How many sockets do you now have?  
**They re-wired all rooms and there are extra sockets all over the house, five sockets in total in living room, seven in kitchen and three double sockets in the master bedroom.**

Were the workmen helpful?  
**They were very helpful, very polite and courteous.**

Are you pleased about the end result?  
**Yes extremely pleased.**

Is it completed how you wanted it?  
**Yes I love it, it’s great.**
Interviewee:
Dorothy Pownell
Address:
Bannerman Terrace, Chorley
Time at address: 10 years
Work that has been carried out:
New kitchen
New central heating system
Electrical rewire

How long did the work take to be completed?
I decided to move out of the house for three weeks and go and stay with relatives. I left Bullocks with the keys to my house. I came back after three weeks and they were finishing off.

Were you confident leaving the keys with them?
Yes, very confident. I had no issues.

Did you get any help with packing?
I was offered boxes and help packing but I didn’t take it.

Is your bathroom not being done?
Yes, but I am having a walk in shower. Bullocks are still arranging this with social services.

Was there lots of dirt?
I came back after three weeks and the house was very dirty. I felt they had ripped too much wallpaper off the walls. The electricians made more damage than the plumbers to the decorating.

Are you pleased about the end result?
It was a very upsetting process, but well worth the effort.

Both tenants had the same overall summary:–

The work was very dirty and disruptive, however the workmen did their best to minimise the effects and the finished product is great. It was well worth all the upset in the end! They are both very satisfied with the finished product. Since these interviews have taken place both tenants have received their decoration cheques.

If any of you have had these improvements done to your home, please write in to the Resident Involvement Team and share your experiences.
The Service Improvement Groups give residents the opportunity to meet with managers of Chorley Community Housing on an ongoing basis to review performance information, feedback on policies, procedures and publications, give feedback about services and make suggestions to improve service provision. Examples of our current Service Improvement Groups include:

- Access and Customer Care
- Repairs and Maintenance
- Respect and Anti Social Behaviour
- Leaseholders
- Sheltered Tenants'
- Publications

Introducing the Respect and Anti Social Behaviour Service Improvement Group

There are currently eleven resident members of the Respect and Anti Social Behaviour Service Improvement Group. Members meet with the Senior Anti Social Behaviour Officer and a member of the Resident Involvement Team around four times a year to discuss issues relating to Anti Social Behaviour. The Group has held three meetings so far. In these meetings, members of the Group have:

- Received information on the Respect Agenda
- Been consulted on the Domestic Violence Policy
- Been consulted on the Harassment Policy

- Given their full support to CCH carrying out a Resident Perception Survey in relation to Anti Social Behaviour
- Received information and considered the use of Good Neighbour Agreements and Parenting Contracts by CCH

At the meetings, members also make suggestions to improve the service provided by CCH. For example, members of the Group asked for CCH to do regular inspections of estates in order to identify issues such as fly tipping. Neighbourhood Officers now carry out an estate walkabout every three months. Residents are encouraged to accompany officers on these walkabouts.

Be Involved

Why not share your issues, views and ideas with CCH? All residents are welcome to attend the Service Improvement Groups or any other resident involvement meetings or events. You do not need any previous experience and will be given the advice, training and support needed to become involved.

If you would like to find out further information about resident involvement, please contact the Resident Involvement Team using the contact details on page 12. CCH can provide reasonable out of pocket expenses to residents attending resident involvement activities, including travel and childcare expenses.
Dates of Next Service improvement Group Meetings

Here are the dates of the next meetings:

- **Access and Customer Care**
  - Wednesday 6th August 2008
- **Respect and Anti Social Behaviour**
  - Monday 21st July 2008
- **Sheltered Tenants’**
  - Tuesday 2nd September 2008
- **Repairs and Maintenance**
  - Friday 18th July 2008
- **Leaseholders**
  - Monday 22nd September 2008
- **Publications**
  - Monday 11th August 2008

Update from our Residents’ Groups

**Eaves Green Residents’ Group**

Eaves Green Residents’ Group is a well established, long running group that meets every month. Just over 12 months ago, we set up a bingo night, which has been a huge success. The money we make goes back into the community. The Group have just donated a sum of £410 to SWITCH, which has enabled them to take the local children on a trip during the summer break.

**The Ryes Residents’ Group**

The Ryes Residents’ Group was set up in November 2003 by residents of the Ryefield Sheltered Scheme in Heapey. One of the main aims of the Group is to provide social activities for members. These include concerts, meals and a yearly Christmas and summer party. The Group hold raffles and tombola events to raise funds to help subsidise some of these activities. Last autumn, they requested a donation of 500 spring bulbs from Chorley Council. The Group were successful in their request and enlisted the help of students from Myerscough College to plant the bulbs. This year, the green has been covered with daffodils.

**Devonport United Group**

The Devonport United Group was set up in April 2005. The Group covers approximately ninety properties in Devonport Way, Portsmouth Drive, Chatham Place and Colyton Road East. The Group recently requested ten intercom systems from Chorley Community Housing for single, elderly people living in flats in the area. The intercom systems have now been provided.

If you are interested in setting up your own residents group, the Resident Involvement Team at Chorley Community Housing can give you help, advice and support. Please turn to page 8 for more information...
How to set up a Residents’ Group

Why Set Up a Residents’ Group?

A Residents’ Group is a voluntary group of people that live in a defined area. Residents’ Groups can be set up for a number of reasons. The most common reasons are:

• To tackle issues of concern in an area
• To represent the views of residents on issues that affect them to their landlord
• To make campaigning more effective (a collective voice rather than an individual one)
• To keep residents informed
• To improve the sense of community in an area
• To improve the social life of those living in an area through events, activities and outings.

Step 1 Consultation

In order to set up a Residents’ Group, it is important to consult residents living in the area to find out how much interest there is in setting up a group. This can be done by:

• Door knocking
• Delivering a postal survey/questionnaire
• Visiting any community facilities in the area, for example community centres and schools.

As long as a reasonable number of people agree that it is a good idea to set up a Group and are willing to attend meetings, a Residents’ Group can be set up.

Step 2 Planning Meeting

Following consultation, an initial meeting should be held to plan how the Group will be formed. Items discussed at this meeting may include:

• The name of the Group
• The election of the committee (including the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer)
• The area the Group will cover (the boundary)
• The aims of the Group.
Step 3 Public Meeting

This meeting will launch the Residents’ Group publicly. It should be advertised and all residents living in the area should be given the opportunity to attend. Methods which can be used to advertise the meeting include:

- Leaflets
- Posters
- Word of mouth.

At the meeting, formal agreement should be gained on items discussed at the planning meeting, such as the name, the committee members, the boundary and the main aims of the Group. It will also give members the opportunity to make arrangements to set up a bank account.

Advice and Support

The Resident Involvement Team at Chorley Community Housing offer advice and support to residents wanting to set up a new Residents’ Group. As long as a Residents’ Group is formally recognised by CCH, the Resident Involvement Team will also provide:

- Training for members, for example ‘effective meetings’ or ‘minute taking’
- Help to produce and copy leaflets, posters and newsletters
- Help to find venues for meetings
- Translation services
- Advice about funding
- A start up grant and grant each year thereafter.

If you would like to receive a starter pack or any further information about setting up a Residents’ Group, please contact the Resident Involvement Team at CCH. Turn to page 12 for contact details.

The Chorley Moor Residents’ Group

A group of residents from the Chorley Moor area are currently working with the Resident Involvement Team at Chorley Community Housing to set up a new residents group. The residents hold their meetings at Community House on Liptrott Road and will be working with agencies such as CCH, Chorley Council and the Police to help improve the area. The residents have completed the first stages needed to set up a new residents’ group. The group will be holding their first Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 6th August 2008 at 7.00pm at Community House. For more information, please contact the Resident Involvement Team using the contact details on page 12.
If you find all 12 words and return the completed word search and entry form below to Chorley Community Housing (details on page 12) by Friday 29th August 2008, you will be entered into a prize draw to win a £25 shopping voucher! Please include your name, address and telephone number:

Name:  
Address:  
Tel.:  
Email:
‘Tiger’ Spot the Difference

Spot the 10 differences!

This competition is open to all children aged 16 years or under. If you find all 10 differences and return the completed pictures and entry form below to Chorley Community Housing (details on page 12) by Friday 29th August 2008, you will be entered into a prize draw to win two free day passes to Camelot Theme Park! Please include your name, address, telephone number and age:

Name: ____________________________
Address: ____________________________
Tel.: ____________________________ Age: ______
Email: ____________________________
Resident Training

Training courses that are currently available for residents include:

- **Equality and Diversity**
  ‘Considering ways to deliver better services to our diverse communities, including awareness-raising and learning how to be inclusive and avoid discrimination.’

- **How to Become a Resident Inspector/Mystery Shopper**
  ‘Learn how to ‘reality check’ our homes, offices and services and have a real input into improving the service received by all our customers and keeping standards high.’

The Resident Involvement Team is in the process of putting together a Training Programme for residents. If you would like any further information on the training courses that will be on offer for residents, please contact the Resident Involvement Team. Keep a look out for our Training Programme!

Get in Touch

If you would like to contact the Newsletter Group, please contact the Resident Involvement Team and they will be happy to pass on any messages. You can contact the Resident Involvement Team by telephone on **01257 414923** or by email on **resident.involvement@chorleych.co.uk**

This information can be made available to you in larger print or on audio tape. Please telephone **01257 414900** to access this service.