

homingin

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing

Winter 2010/11



Christina Hadleigh, one of this year's City in Bloom winners, makes sure the gardens at Hampshire & Malthouse Courts look great all year round. Read more inside.

In this issue

First new council homes in 30 years

Helping you to keep warm this winter

Residents say a big thank you to Mears

Witness protection & victim support

Make life easier with the Daily Living Centre



Brighton & Hove
City Council

Ground breaking



First some words of re-assurance. Central government plans to give councils more flexibility in future so they can make best use of their housing. But they have made it clear that lifetime tenancies and succession rights of existing council tenants will not be affected. So your tenancy and rights will stay secure. I am so pleased to be able to announce some good news in these difficult times.

This new year promises to be ground breaking for council tenants, who will play a key role in the drive to build new council homes, refurbish existing ones and regenerate targeted areas in a bid to create 800 more homes by 2013.

A new Tenant Working Group, (drawn from the

Asset Management Panel and the Repairs & Maintenance Working Group), will play a key role throughout, starting with the redevelopment of Ainsworth House on Wellington Road to create a mix of 15 family homes and a range of easy access flats which will appeal to those who want to downsize, freeing up more homes.

The new homes will meet all our sustainable energy efficiency targets, keeping heating and lighting bills to a minimum. We will also be re-using as much hard core from the original building as we can, and of course, respecting the local wildlife and natural features on and around the site.

Members of the working party will be recording



Maria Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing, with members of the Tenant Working Group outside Ainsworth House

“Council tenants will play a key role in the drive to build new council homes, refurbish existing ones and regenerate targeted areas in a bid to create 800 more homes by 2013”

the project from start to finish, with photographic evidence of ‘before and after’ to be used as a guide for future tenant working parties.

Once planning permission has been applied for, we will begin consultation with all of you living near the scheme, or who have an interest in it. It is hoped that Ainsworth will become the pilot for how we proceed with a series of new developments in the coming years.

If you would like to know more about the Ainsworth redevelopment please contact Jo Holt on 01273 292551 or jo.holt@brighton-hove.gov.uk or Rosie Brewster on 01273 293158 or rosie.brewster@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Councillor Maria Caulfield



Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Maria Caulfield, with Salim Njonga and Roger Bowman from the Energy Saving Trust, pictured during Energy Saving Week this October.

Investing in home energy efficiency

A large part of our work to improve your homes includes ensuring thermal comfort, reducing fuel poverty and minimising CO2 emissions.

Historically, we have invested significantly in insulation and heating, and are one of the best performing councils for the energy efficiency of our housing.

We are investing £3.5million on installing high efficiency condensing boilers and replacing and upgrading heating systems.

We've also completed two insulated over-cladding projects to Wiltshire House and Somerset Point, and fitted a communal solar hot water system at Hazelholt sheltered scheme, funded 100% by utility company grant money.

We are now investigating how we can make the most of new opportunities to work with energy companies to improve the energy efficiency of your homes further, with an initial report going to the Housing Management Consultative Committee in early December 2010.

Residents are key to this work, and we will be working closely with the Cabinet Members Energy Efficiency Working Group to ensure tenants take a lead on identifying what they need and how all tenants can benefit.

How do you rate your estate?

A group of residents have now been trained as Resident Assessors, along with students from Brighton University who are part of the Active Volunteering project, which involves students with their local community.

You may come across them on an inspection if you live in Moulsecoomb, Bevendean or Coldean, where the project is being piloted. They will be scoring outside repairs and grounds maintenance needs, as well as cleaning standards and the appearance of communal areas.

Councillor Maria Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "This project is all about empowering our residents, generating a sense of ownership and pride, especially as our Estates Service always reports back after work has been carried out to ensure Resident Assessors are satisfied."

Dave Murtagh, Chair of East Moulsecoomb Tenants & Residents Association, said: "This is brilliant!

It's about time residents were given the chance to make our estates a better place to live."

On the council's website you can find details of the assessment areas, which are also inspected by our housing staff four times a year. It is hoped that this programme will be rolled out across the city later in 2011, when residents can also benefit from the opportunity to become trained as 'champions' to look at ways to improve energy efficiency and reduce anti-social behaviour.

These measures are part of the 'Turning the Tide' initiative to clean up neighbourhoods and provide work and learning opportunities throughout deprived areas. Turning the Tide also focuses on addressing anti-social behaviour. To hear about how it has been making a significant difference by reducing serious crime and improving life on our estates and blocks, see page 14.



Housing Officer Janet Dowdell with Dave Murtagh, Chair of East Moulsecoomb Tenants & Residents Association



The 'A' team! Ready to go out on inspection in Moulsecoomb



Bike inspection: Jules Bevis, volunteer from Brighton University (left), and Catherine Riseborough, Housing Advisor, make note of a dangerously secured bicycle



Showered with compliments!

Tenants were so happy with improvements carried out at Jasmine Court that they held a special 'thank you' party for the builders.

Janice Bradbury, Scheme Manager, said: "I can vouch for the residents when I say that we will all genuinely miss them, they did such a good job, and were so polite and helpful during their time on site. Residents approached me with the idea of throwing them a party to show their gratitude and to give them a 'send off' to remember!"

Rita Randall was so pleased that she wrote a special letter of thanks on the behalf of her brother, Gordon, who has lived at Jasmine for many years. She wrote: "What impressed me most was the care taken by the workmen who did their best to ensure that the residents were treated with dignity and respect. They were without exception thoughtful and friendly."

Nearly £2m a month is being spent on improvements this year in a bid to bring 74% of our council housing up to national Decent Homes standard by March 2011. Bathrooms and showers are currently being installed in Laburnum Grove allowing residents to enjoy fully self-contained dwellings for the first time.

New Year, new look!

Following the successful cladding of Somerset Point and Wiltshire House, Mears is happy to announce that the programme is set to continue across the city in the new year with Kingfisher Court in Whitehawk and 12 low rise blocks on the Bristol Estate.

Be an asset!

Would you like to be a part of the partnership working between the council and Mears? The Asset Management Panel is looking for three new members to join them in guiding the service. The only requirements are that you are able to attend one evening meeting every two months, and that you enjoy rolling your sleeves up and getting in on the debate. For more information on how to apply, contact Lee Woolford, Community Participation Officer, on 01273 293718, or email lee.woolford@brighton-hove.gov.uk



Residents of Jasmine Court give the thumbs up for Mears.



The Mears team enjoy a chat with residents at the party.

Better at Broadfields

Thanks to the dedication of Kath Davis, Chair of Broadfields Residents Association, in partnership with the council and Mears, brand new UPVC front doors and porches are being fitted at Broadfields sheltered housing scheme.

Kath said, "I am so pleased, it will make such a difference to the whole look of the building. It's good to feel that we are truly part of the process."

The council aims to see a massive

£76m spent on improving homes and neighbourhoods over the next three years, bringing all council homes up to the Decent Homes standard by 2013.

The council's Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Maria Caulfield, said: "We're committed to improving the overall quality of council homes and to giving our residents a say on our spending priorities. Ultimately this is about giving residents the best possible value for money."



Chris McNiven from Mears with Kath Davis, Scheme Manager Sally Savage and the council's Ken Warren

Good call!

In the last issue of Homing In we talked about how useful mystery shopping can be to help us test the quality of services we provide to our residents.

Resident volunteers recently used mystery shopping to test the Repairs Helpdesk. This has given us some great feedback on areas where we are doing well and some areas we need to improve.

We found out that, in general, telephone answering time has improved, with 93% of callers getting through the first time. Calls tended to take longer to answer over lunchtime, so we are now reviewing our lunchtime cover arrangements. Callers were able to hear clearly and the person who answered the phone was able to deal with the majority of calls, without referring to somebody else.

If you're interested in getting involved in future mystery shopping, please contact Annette Kochnari on 01273 293807.

Lightening the load

Angela Salter says a big thank you to the Mears team for clearing brambles and precarious trees from the front of Ronald McDonald House, which provides a 'home from home' for families visiting and caring for their sick children at the children's hospital across the road.

Angela said: "The team were so polite and willing to help. The clearance has made such a difference – there's much more light coming into our rooms and the frontage looks great!"

Angela has looked after thousands of families during her 23 years in Parent Liaison for the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital, the last 12 years being spent on secondment to the charitable organisation, Ronald McDonald House.



We are listening!

The repairs line is now open longer. Following your feedback, we have extended our opening hours locally from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm on Saturdays.

Freephone: 0800 052 6140. There is also a local number which is cheaper for mobile phones – 01273 294409 or you can text message non-urgent repairs to 07786 204352 – make sure your message starts with the word 'Repairs'.

Buddy up!

Buddy is a wonderful example of why we encourage owners to keep their pets and treat them well. Originally an RSPCA Rescue Dog, Buddy has lived happily with his owner, Muriel Briault, in her flat in Stonery Close in Portslade for over three years. Muriel makes sure to walk Buddy up to the Downs beyond Mile Oak Road every day, whatever the weather. It is quite obvious that they are the very best of friends!

Muriel, who is a qualified dog trainer, is also busy setting up the new North Portslade Residents Association. Read all about it on page 12.



Council wins RSPCA Footprint Award

The Housing Department has just been awarded the RSPCA Bronze Footprint, a scheme which rewards good practice in animal welfare by local authorities. Recognition was given for our positive pet policy, and our partnership work with local animal welfare societies like the Cats Protection League and the RSPCA to promote cat and dog neutering. Vouchers from the Cat Protection League are available from local housing offices.

Housing staff Anna Lee, Eve Hitchens and Karen Woolford (pictured above with Piglet and Max) are working to ensure that our regulations both protect domestic animals from harm while making it as easy as possible for you to keep a pet in your home. All three are passionate about animal welfare and are hoping to work in partnership with a variety of organisations to improve our

services further.

Karen said: "We are delighted to have come this far, but there is more work to do. We need to be more active in promoting responsible ownership by encouraging tenants not to breed their pets. We also need to persuade more people to adopt cats and dogs from rescue societies rather than purchase from commercial outlets. Another excellent, but little known, option, is dog or cat fostering, which is ideal for those who are unable to commit to permanent pet ownership, especially as this scheme can provide a perfect temporary home for pets of tenants in temporary emergency accommodation."

Anyone interested in fostering or adoption should contact the Raystede Centre for Animal Welfare on 01825 840252.



A dog is not just for Christmas

Our Animal Welfare Team gives advice and practical help for keeping pets and animals in the city. They investigate complaints about stray animals, dangerous dogs, dog fouling and cases of animal cruelty. You can get further information and advice on 01273 292929 or 292446. See page 36 of your tenant handbook for our pet policy.

Tell us what you think!

Thank you to all our residents who attended our recent events to have their say about the housing service they receive.

The events offered a chance to find out more about the services delivered by housing management and to tell us what further improvements you would like to see.

Residents took the opportunity to record their views in our video diary corner and to speak to different stall holders including Mears, the Credit Union and Climate Connections. Brighton and Hove Food Partnership put on a live cookery demonstration and handed out recipe cards so residents could have a go at cooking them at home.

Children took part in a colouring competition themed 'where you live'. The winners were Scott Crisp and Callum Constable and residents took part in a prize draw for suggestions to improve the services we provide.

These events were the first stage in seeking feedback for our new service pledges as promised in our annual report. This work will continue with follow up surveys before we work with our resident groups to draft our service pledges which will be launched in April 2011. If you would like to complete a survey please contact your housing office or go to our website at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing for more information.

Community homes company gets agreement

Brighton & Hove Seaside Community Homes is about to become an official company, raising £30m to be spent on your homes over the next five years. The agreement allows the company to seek funding to lease 499 homes from the council, releasing the sum.

Leader of the Council Mary Mears said: "This is a win-win for council tenants and local taxpayers. Our tenants want to keep the council as their landlord and improve their homes and this agreement will deliver both of those aspirations."



From left: Delia Hills from Mears, baby Jadon, Harley, age eight, Caroline Henderson of the Food Partnership and Callum, 11, enjoy a cook up at the Valley Social Centre, Whitehawk, one of four consultation events held throughout the city.



'Where I live' by five-year-old Scott Crisp, winner of the under-sevens section. Callum Constable (pictured) won the over-sevens section.

Knowing you, knowing me

The Hangleton & Knoll Project, through the 50+ Steering Group, has really made residents from nearby Churchill House feel part of their community. Scheme Manager Jill Isaacs said: "They carry out a great deal of good work for older people, organising all sorts of social activities to bring people together, giving our residents a chance to get out and mix with others who live locally."

Residents enjoyed a day out at the annual 50+ event held at St Richard's Church & Community Centre this October, where over 30 service providers, including the council's sheltered service and the Healthwalks workers, provided information and advice for older people.

Being part of a community works two ways. The project's Crafty Adults group meets at Churchill House twice a month, where local people are welcomed into the sheltered scheme for their craft sessions. There is still room for new members, so if you are interested contact Mary on mariafour@talktalk.net or Keith Mason on 01273 413103.

50+ Volunteer of the Year Pat Hunt, aged

63, returned to her home in Hangleton after 36 years in Australia. "I love being back," she said. "I'm just two streets away from the house I grew up in!" Keith Mason, Project Co-ordinator added: "Pat has dedicated her time selflessly to the local community, supporting a number of groups for older people, she never stops – she even took care of the catering today." Volunteers are always needed for the project, if you're interested in making a valuable contribution to your local community. Contact Keith Mason on keith-hove@dsl.pipex.com



Remembering golden days

Residents from Lavender House and Sloane Court got together for a colourful creative stroll down memory lane thanks to artist Jane Ling. Jane provided a range of vintage photographs from Brighton to spark the imagination, with input from the popular reminiscence group, Creating Timelines.

Scheme Manager Shenaz Faulkner said: "These events are so special for our residents. Many of them grew up in different parts of the city and are able to share wonderful memories together in a relaxed and caring atmosphere."



Front: Gaynor Welsh of Lavender House and Asad Gergis from Sloane Court get creative with Scheme Manager Shehnaz Faulkner

House of cards

Residents in sheltered housing all over the country are getting together for some very serious card playing. But just look a little harder and you will see that they are actually taking part in a national competition to celebrate the best examples of older people's housing.

The Elderly Accommodation Council (EAC) invented a card game as a fun alternative to questionnaires, using a set of statement cards to gauge opinions on where older people live, their homes, services and lifestyles. Residents at Somerset Point decided to play a round, and gave a unanimous top trumps for their sheltered scheme – all agreeing that the building makes them

proud.

Scheme Managers Karen Over and Rachel Cox said: "This is a great way to get people together, talking about what's important to them. If one of our sheltered housing schemes is nominated for an award that's great, but the main thing is that everyone is enjoying themselves and feeling heard."

Eric Reed, aged 89 (above) was in charge of the scoring. Treasurer of the Residents Association, he has lived at Somerset Point for four years and considers himself "so lucky" to have good friends around him.



Mary Craft, Community Pay Back Team supervisor

Coming up roses!

Residents of Rose Hill Court want to say a big thank you to the Community Pay Back Team. Scheme Manager, Linda Barratt, said: "Everyone was so delighted that they asked me if we could put something in Homing In. The team have transformed the garden, clearing all the overgrowth, repairing and re-painting all the garden furniture, and generally tidying and freshening everything up. They were polite, clean and tidy, and always took time to listen to what residents were saying, treating them with respect at all times. Special thanks also goes to Mary Craft, the team supervisor who ensured all work was completed on time and was a pleasure to have at Rose Hill Court." Linda added: "The beauty of this scheme is that it helps to break down barriers for ex-offenders and closes the age gap between old and young, many older residents are wary of young people these days and this has gone some way to regaining their confidence with the next generation. Thank you!"



Housing staff Anna Lee and Di Hughes talk to Maggie Smeech, Chair of Whitehawk Central Tenants & Residents Association, at the Valley Social Centre consultation event. Maggie said: "The council's sheltered housing schemes are brilliant. My mother had an extremely happy time at both Southease and Walter May, and we were given peace of mind that she was in a safe and friendly place – those scheme managers do a great job." If you are interested in moving to one of these schemes, please contact sheltered services on 01273 293255.

You can't beat it!

Christina Hadleigh knows that you don't have to have a big garden or a greenhouse to grow delicious vegetables or colourful flowers. Along with a band of resident volunteers from Hampshire Court, Kemp Town, she has scooped first place for 'Most Attractive Urban Area, Block of Flats' and highly commended for 'Best Front Garden' in this year's City in Bloom competition.

Most of us may start slowing down at 60, but not Christina.

Since retiring as a long distance lorry driver, she took on the role of Chairperson of the Hampshire & Malthouse Courts Residents Association and Vice Chairperson for Kemp Town in Bloom, which is all part of an enduring theme – she really cares about where she lives. "I love it here", she said. "It's just a wonderful place to live. It's all about community, and gardening in this way puts something back and brings people together – you can't beat it."



Christina Hadleigh in her garden – green tomatoes, great for chutney!

Recycle

Christmas Tree Recycling Sites

You can take your tree to any of these sites **between 4 and 31 January 2011**. Alternatively, you can take them to the green waste points at Brighton or Hove Household Waste Recycling Sites.



Brighton	Kemp Town
Bevendean	Upper Bedford Street
Upper/Lower Ave Shops	Saltdean
Coldean Lane	Saltdean Lido Car park
Opposite Park Road	Woodingdean
Dyke Road Avenue	Central Park
Hazeldene Meads	Happy Valley Car park
East Brighton Park	Hove
Wilson Avenue	Brunswick Square
Hollingbury Park	North entrance
Opp Woodbourne Ave	Hove Park
Mackie Avenue	Orchard Road
Playing field	Hove Museum
Ladies Mile Road	St Ann's Well Gardens
Mackie Avenue Junction	Off Nizells Avenue
Montpelier Crescent	Wish Park
Preston Park	Portslade
Preston Drove	Easthill Park
The Pepper Pot	Hangleton Park
Queens Park Road	Victoria Rec Car park
The Level, Union Road	

Christmas is often a time when we stock up with extra food. A bit of forward planning can help cut costs and the amount of food thrown away. For tips on buying and cooking the right amounts, and recipes for cooking with leftover Christmas dinner, go to www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/lovefoodhatewaste



Pat & Gerrard love their studio flats

The best things come in small packages

Patricia Jones was a devoted carer for many years, but when her companion died, she found herself homeless. After some months in temporary accommodation she was delighted to be offered her studio flat in Elizabeth Court, Hove. Patricia said: “I have only been here two months so I am still settling in, but I am overjoyed with my new home. It is lovely and quiet and I feel safe and secure. If I want to mix I can pop down to the lounge for the regular quiz game or Scrabble club on a Sunday. I love to read and there is plenty of room for all my books.”

Gerrard Allen, aged 65, moved into his studio flat in Hazelholt, Portslade this summer after two years in a local hostel. He was hoping to stay in the city centre, but decided to accept the offer through bidding with Homemove.

Within a few months he has changed his point of view. He said: “At first I was worried this might be too far out for me, but it’s fine – I can get into town very quickly and easily if I want to. The main bus route is on my doorstep – and now I like coming back to the peace and quiet. It’s a very nice area and I’m happier here.”

Since moving in Gerrard has been voted on to the Hazelholt residents committee and he is a regular at their coffee morning and social events.

Amit Arora, Scheme Manager for Hazelholt and Jasmine, said: “Gerrard has settled in very well, he enjoys the privacy of his own self-contained flat, but has also become part of the community. I think he has the best of both worlds now.”

Studio flats are bigger than you

might think. There is a separate entrance hallway which leads off to the bathroom and kitchen, and a spacious lounge with plenty of storage. They are light and airy and easy to keep clean. One of the great advantages of living in sheltered housing is that you have use of the communal lounge and gardens, and in some schemes there are reading rooms, libraries and meeting rooms too.

If you are interested in downsizing we can offer financial help and support to help with your move. To find out more about our Transfer Incentive Scheme contact Mark Richardson on 01273 293920 or email mark.richardson@brighton-hove.gov.uk, or contact the sheltered housing team on 01273 293255 or sheltered@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Keeping it real

Housing Managers went ‘back to the floor’ as part of National Customer Services week in October. Nick Hibberd, Head of Housing and Social Inclusion, spent a day with the Estates Service bulk refuse team clearing fly-tipping throughout the city’s estates.

He said: “Quite a few managers spent the day working with frontline staff. It’s important to remind ourselves of the valuable work carried out every day keeping blocks clean, visiting tenants, and dealing with complaints about anti-social behaviour. It’s all in day’s work, but getting out there keeps in touch with the real issues.”



Nick Hibberd (right) with Brian Bennett from the Bulk Refuse Team

Getting it together in North Portslade

Muriel Briault moved back here to be near family five years ago after 45 years in Essex, and she is taking North Portslade by storm! At 73 there is no stopping her. "There are some young and old people who are probably quite isolated in the neighbourhood," she said. "I wanted to find a way to bring them into the community, and Pat Miles, who we all miss deeply, came up with the idea of a new residents association." Muriel is already planning their first Christmas party and is hoping to arrange trips out to local beauty spots and garden centres with help from Community Transport, as well as socials including bingo, quiz nights and baby and toddler groups.

If you live locally and would like to become involved, Muriel would love to hear from you. Call her on 01273 270543 or 07758 678862, or email her on murielbriault@hotmail.co.uk

The North Portslade Residents Association covers areas around and including Stonery Close, Drove Crescent and Carden Court. Meetings are usually held at Hazelholt Sheltered Housing Scheme. The Christmas social is at Mile Oak Community Centre on 17 December at 7pm.

They welcome all local people interested in finding out more about the new tenant association.



Daily Living Centre product of the month – this lever and wheels device makes it easier to tuck in at the table

Making life easier

Kevin Banfield is quite happy to be thought of as Inspector Gadget! As an experienced Occupational Therapist, he has found his dream job at the Daily Living Centre. He said: "There are so many inventions here to make life easier for you. A lot of them are essentially labour saving devices that will appeal to everyone – take the plug puller, leg lifter, window opener, magnetic walking stick... you need to come and look for yourself."

Hundreds of helpful items are on show, such as specially adapted chairs, beds, desks and a range of walking frames. Everything is on loan or donated by the manufacturers and Kevin can take you through the range of equipment available. "Many people visit us with a specific need, maybe a type of mobility aid. We will go through their daily activities and find that they could benefit from a number of devices, many of which can be very simple and inexpensive.

"There's never any pressure for you to buy because we are not selling. We are here to give

free impartial advice to help you identify the best product to suit your needs, and we can direct you to agencies that may help with grants or financial plans, as well as guiding you towards reputable suppliers and manufacturers."

Many of the centre's devices were invented by relatives of people with a disability.

Daily Living Centre, Montague House, Montague Place, Kemp Town, BN2 1JE.

Opening times

Monday to Friday 10am – 4pm
Appointments can be made for Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Fridays. On Wednesdays, they are open for drop-ins.

Call us on 01273 296132/3 for advice or to make an appointment. Textphone: 01273 295746

Email: dlc@brighton-hove.gov.uk
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/dailylivingcentre
www.facebook.com/people/Daily-Living-Centre-Brighton

Spotlight on supported housing

There have been fun activities and serious debate in our housing schemes this month – it's all been part of South East Supported Housing Month which aims to raise awareness of the 2,700 crucial services that run

throughout the South East helping over

136,000 of the most vulnerable people in society. Research shows that every pound spent on these services saves £2.12 on providing other public services. Residents at Elwyn Jones Court enjoyed a relaxing stretch for the mind and body with Tai-Chi and a more lively option of line dancing was on offer at Somerset Point, in support of this special month.



Brenda and Ron live locally and really enjoyed coming along. Scheme Manager, Emily Ilieva said: "It's great that we are able to open our doors to local residents, giving them a chance to enjoy an activity at low cost and mix with new people."

Helping you to help yourself

A new housing adaptations contract worth £850,000 means more council homes will be adapted enabling more older and disabled people to live independently. Improvements will range from anything as small as a handrail to door widening, and installing ramps for wheelchair access and easy access baths and wet rooms.

Tenant Services Authority update

The government has reviewed how council and housing association landlords are now regulated. It has decided to abolish the Tenant Services Authority and develop local ways for tenants to hold their landlord to account and press for better services. We'll let you know how the proposals develop in future editions of Homing In.

Notice board!

Homing In would like to provide space for up and coming tenants and residents associations to promote special events, or if you have achieved something that you want to shout about. Please email us at homingin@brighton-hove.gov.uk, or call 01273 291496. You can find out about all meetings by keeping in touch with your local representatives, your Community Participation Officer and by looking at the list of meetings on www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing under 'resident involvement meeting diary'.

We like feedback!

Many thanks to all the residents who gave us feedback on our annual report to tenants and leaseholders 2010, sent out with the last issue of Homing In. Congratulations to Mrs Margaret Hothi, who won the £20 voucher from our prize draw.

We are pleased to report that most people who fed back said that they found the information in the report useful. We will be reporting on our progress in meeting the commitments in the annual report in the New Year.

Sending the right message

From now on, as part of Turning the Tide, witnesses and victims of anti-social behaviour will receive additional one-to-one support in a bid to reduce serious crime and improve life on our estates and blocks.

“Every witness or victim we help sends a positive message out to their community,” said Annabel Tate, our new Lead Anti-Social Behaviour Officer for witness and victim support. “By offering increased support, we are encouraging people to come forward and report anti-social behaviour. Some residents have been too frightened to speak up, and have lived with intolerable situations for far too long. We want to make your estates and your lives better.”

Annabel worked as a Housing Officer for ten years before taking on her new role. As well as her own active case load, she is surveying all previous, now resolved, cases to gauge customer satisfaction with the level of support that was available at the time, and checking if people need continued support.

She said: “Feedback has been excellent so far. For example, after numerous complaints from tenants in Conway Court, Hove, a 28-year-old ‘nightmare tenant’ was taken to court and had her flat ‘closed’ for three months as a result of drug use and associated persistent anti-social behaviour.

Tenants rated police and council action ten out of ten for dealing decisively with the perpetrator and keeping everyone informed throughout. One resident remarked simply ‘thank you for caring, which sums up the most redeeming part of this job.’

“Every witness or victim we help sends a positive message out to their community”

A risk assessment is carried out every time a new report of anti-social behaviour is made to the council, ensuring the most vulnerable receive priority help. “We work closely with the police who can ‘mark’ the property for automatic fast response, while we can fit extra locks and security devices. But it is the level of personal contact that really helps

the victim to feel safe.”

Tenants will now benefit from a personal victim and witness support plan with regular agreed contact with a named officer who is dedicated to that case.

As a council landlord, our focus is on the local community and, by building trust with our all our tenants, we can make a safer environment for everyone. The message is quite simple. We won’t tolerate anti-social behaviour, we will deal with it quickly and provide extra help for the most vulnerable. We also work to resolve a dispute or change the perpetrator’s bad behaviour before resorting to enforcement and court action.

If you are a victim of anti-social behaviour, contact your local housing office. As Annabel explained: “It is by working together that we can deal with anti-social behaviour.”

Annabel Tate at Bates Estate



Don't forget to pay your rent at Christmas!

If you think you may find it difficult to pay your rent over the Christmas period, please contact the Housing Income Management Team on 01273 293224 or housing.incomemanagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk



A chance to meet up and make progress. Tenants, residents and housing staff agreed the event was a great success.

It's good to talk

Our latest City Assembly, held on 20 November at Hove Town Hall, discussed a range of issues affecting housing policy across Brighton & Hove. The event attracted over 100 delegates – our greatest numbers yet.

Led and presented by tenants and leaseholders, the agenda covered the introduction of a new Resident Involvement Strategy, information on the Choice Based Lettings policy, space for the growing number of mobility scooters, progress of the Estate Development Budget, and news of tenant involvement in estate inspections.

Re-elected Tenant Chair, Chris Kift, said: “The assembly is a twice a year opportunity for all representatives to get together and chew the fat over issues that

concern all of us.” Cabinet Member for Housing Maria Caulfield said: “The leadership remains absolutely committed to extending and developing direct customer involvement in shaping and determining policies. I look forward to the next City Assembly in May next year.”

The event is organised by the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, made up of representatives elected at the quarterly Area Panels. If you have any suggestions about what you would like to see discussed, please send your suggestions to the Tenant Compact Monitoring Group, c/o John Austin Locke, Oxford Street Housing Office, Oxford Street, Brighton, BN1 4LA.



Useful contacts

Dial **01273** unless code is specified

Housing Offices

Central (Lavender Street) **293260**

Trevor Jones **294561**

Jane White **293265**

Brighton East

Whitehawk (Manor Place Office) **293200**

Moulsecoomb (Selsfield Drive) **293171**

Community Participation Officer

Peter Mustow **296639**

West

Victoria Road, Portslade **293377**

Community Participation Officer

Myfan Jordan **293374**

North & East

Oxford Street **293230**

Community Participation Officer

John Bain **292365**

Repairs Hotline **0800 052 6140**

Local number **01273 294409**

or text 'repairs' to **07786 204352**

There is a voicemail option for tenants calling out of hours

Carelink **673105**

Housing Benefit **292000**

Housing Income Management Team
293224

Noise Patrol **293541** (operates weekends
Fri/Sat & Sat/Sun between 10pm & 3am)

Noise Nuisance **292929** (or out of office
emergency **292229**)

Police **0845 6070999**

Community Safety Team **291099**

Rise (domestic abuse) **622822**

Victim Support **234009**

Community Resource Centre **606160**

Community Grants **296746**

Estates Service **293170**

Abandoned vehicles **292929**

Sheltered Services **293255**

Christmas opening times for your local housing offices

Friday 24 December (Christmas Eve) open as normal 9am – 5pm.

Closed from Christmas Day until Tuesday 28 December.

Open as normal from Wednesday 29 to Friday 31 December.

Open again from Monday 3 January 2011.

Council & Tenant Meetings

Housing Cabinet Member Meetings:

Wednesday 5 January & Wednesday 16 February at 4pm in the Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall.

Housing Management Consultative Committee

Monday 24 January & Monday 7 March at 3pm in the Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall.

HomingIn is produced by Brighton & Hove City Council's communications team and the Tenant Editorial Board.

If you have a story or an item to include in the next issue, please email homingin@brighton-hove.gov.uk, call 01273 291496 or write to Homing In, Communications Team, Room G10, King's House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN3 2LS.

Translations

Translation? Tick this box and take to any council office.

ترجمة؟ ضع علامة في الرقعة وخذها إلى مكتب البلدية. Arabic

অনুবাদ? বক্সে টিক চিহ্ন দিয়ে কাউন্সিল অফিসে নিয়ে যান। Bengali

需要翻译? 请在这方格内加划, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。Cantonese

ترجمة؟ لطفاً این مربع را علامتگذاری نموده و آن را به هر یک از دفاتر شهرداری ارائه نمایید. Farsi

Traduction? Veuillez cocher la case et apporter au council. French

需要翻译? 请在这方格内划勾, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。Mandarin

Tłumaczenie? Zaznacz to okienko i zwróć do któregośkolwiek biur samorządu lokalnego (council office). Polish

Tradução? Coloque um visto na quadrícula e leve a uma qualquer repartição de poder local (council office). Portuguese

Tercümesi için kareyi işaretleyiniz ve bir semt belediye bürosuna veriniz Turkish

other (please state)

This can also be made available in large print, Braille, or on CD or audio tape