



Injection  
of youth:  
Ellen Emms in  
call to the young



Poster point:  
our rent arrears  
message



Summer's  
here:  
see our guide to  
action-packed fun

the magazine for Whitefriars tenants and leaseholders  
issue 7

# home



*Flying  
the flag:  
Coventry's Union  
Jack Jubilee*



## Young people urged to air their views

**Home takes its second look at people who work to help, support and improve the communities in which they live. In this issue we talk to Ellen Emms, chairperson of Stoke Aldermoor Residents' Association and a Whitefriars tenant Board member.**

Ellen Emms has been closely involved in community matters for longer than she cares to remember – at least since the 1960s – but is concerned that too few young people are coming forward to make their voices heard.

"We are fighting for their future," said Ellen, "and we'd like to see young people, including teenagers, getting involved with community groups and letting us have their views."

For Ellen it was a matter of starting to attend residents' association meetings through knowing people who were involved in it and getting more deeply involved as the years went on, eventually becoming secretary and then chairperson, a position she's held for six months.

But what got her so involved? "It was interest in the estate where I lived, in people and in wanting to improve the estate and the homes on it.

"It's more difficult now, though, to get people involved in what's going on. We have a hardcore of around 20 who work for better housing conditions, for repairs to be done and who help new tenants who are moving into the area."

Ellen says the association has helped see homes better maintained, prompted the introduction of traffic calming measures that have cut the number of accidents on

the estate, and had paths laid that enable residents to walk by the river and use picnic benches at The Lindfield.

"People can now use this area for recreation, and we've also had goalposts put up so that children can play football there," said Ellen.

"We have a 'skip drop' every month – something we've been doing for four years – which lets everyone clear out their homes and get rid of everything from old bikes to garden rubbish. It's one of the things that has helped engender a real community spirit in Stoke Aldermoor."

It's Ellen's two other roles – as Whitefriars tenant Board and Police Consultative Committee member – that make her most aware of young people and what they want and need. She admits, though, that she doesn't know how best to encourage them to play a part.

"But to really understand their needs we need them to tell us. But I don't know how we're going to promote that. Maybe we should go into the schools and encourage Year 11 pupils to come to our meetings and see what they're like.

"And I know that there are some proactive teenagers out there. One group wanted an area where they could use their skateboards, so they made a video and used it as part of a really professional presentation to the Police Consultative Committee.

"It's no use youngsters grumbling and moaning to me in the street. They must come and air their views in front of the right people in order to get those views heard. Some have quite brilliant brains; they just need them channelling in the right direction."

## Prize draw winners

A recent survey of tenants across the city who have had kitchen and bathroom improvements done gave them the opportunity to be included in a £50 prize draw. The winner was Mr D Brain, of Vauxhall Close, Hillfields.

Two other surveys on customer care and service to new tenants also offered a £50 prize draw. The winners were Mr J van Toren, of Selina Dix House, Hillfields and Mr D Spice, The Lindfield, Stoke Aldermoor

# Mediation can resolve conflict between neighbours



**Whitefriars mediation manager Gail Cooper said problems between neighbours are often minor – noise, pets, children, boundaries – but can escalate, leading to the involvement of the police and courts.**

Gail said: "Whatever the outcome, those involved usually suffer some form of stress or anxiety, and the root cause of the problem is not explored or resolved.

"Usually, the real problem is a communication breakdown. If people cannot talk to one another they cannot begin to solve their problems"

Whitefriars Mediation Service has six years experience of helping neighbours resolve their differences. Mediators open channels of communication between parties involved in disputes so they can reach agreement through discussion, giving them a better understanding of each other's position.

## What happens in mediation?

A visit is arranged by mediators to see each party separately, and they are given the opportunity to 'offload' to mediators so concerns and issues can be identified. Anything discussed in mediation is confidential.

Mediators help the parties decide if indirect or round-table mediation is more appropriate. (Mediation does not always mean people coming face to face).

If indirect mediation is chosen, mediators visit each party separately, shuttling between them until agreement is reached.

In round-table mediation, mediators arrange a controlled meeting at a neutral venue where disputants communicate directly, following a set of ground rules, until agreement is reached.

With both methods, mediator's type-up what is agreed, and when both parties are happy with the agreement they sign it. Agreements are not legally binding,

but are agreements of goodwill. But by signing, both parties show their commitment to resolving their problems and to the mediation process.

## So, does mediation work?

Here are comments from people who've been through the mediation process:

"If it wasn't for mediation we would never have been able to sort out our problems. We had fighting in the street and the police were called regularly, but no one seemed able to get to the bottom of what was going on. That was until mediation, since which everything has been great, and believe it or not, we are all on speaking terms."

"I was scared to approach my neighbour because I thought I'd get a mouthful of abuse. At our meeting you made me feel safe and able to get my point over. I think we both saw each other in a different light after that meeting. Mediation worked for us."

**Contact Gail Cooper on 02476 440634.**

## Our first 18 months: **the facts**

We are spending £1 million-a-week – around £30,000 every hour – on homes.

There have been problems along the way – we expected that – but it cannot be disputed that thousands of people now live in have better homes and better surroundings.

Work has been done to thousands of homes across the city, including:

Bathrooms and kitchens	1,803
Windows	5,704
Heating	906
Roofing	990
Rewiring	486
Environmental	227

## Training and jobs

More than 540 trades staff are employed by our contractors to do this work, but they need a ready supply of trained labour to ensure they can do the work. However, there is a skills shortage in the construction industry.

We recognised that all improvements and other work we had planned would not happen unless we made a significant contribution to developing a skilled workforce.

So we set up our own Housing Plus Agency, which has been putting people into work.

This is what has been achieved:

- More than 140 local interviews arranged

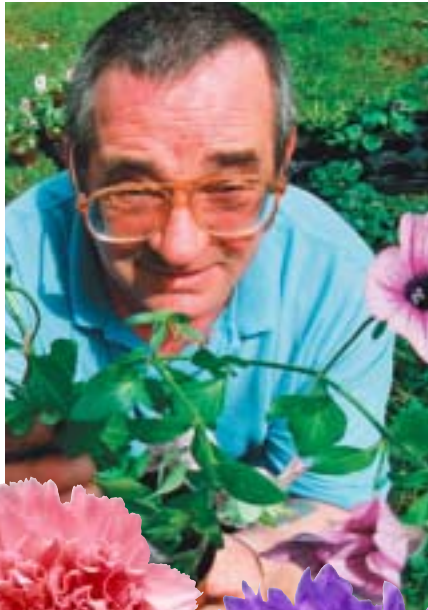
*It is more than 18-months since we took over more than 19,000 former council homes.*



- More than 40 local adults employed as carpenters, tilers, building workers, administrators, resident liaison officers, drivers, community outreach workers, construction trainers, and employment and training co-ordinators

- 10 local teenagers employed as apprentice joiners and glaziers

For more details on training opportunities contact Corinne Cappell on 02476 767023.



# Gardens in the Sky

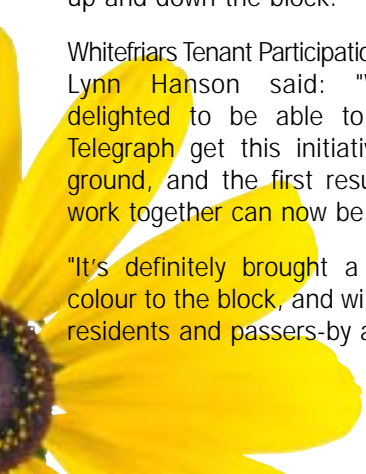


Whitefriars has teamed-up with the Coventry Evening Telegraph, Groundworks and young people from Barr's Hill School to develop a Gardens in the Sky initiative, which aims to make some of the city's tower blocks more colourful.

We've been liaising with tenants at William Batchelor House and Meadow House, and the result was a planting day that saw dozens of plants and flowers go into window boxes, which will be displayed at flats up and down the block.

Whitefriars Tenant Participation Manager Lynn Hanson said: "We were delighted to be able to help the Telegraph get this initiative off the ground, and the first results of our work together can now be seen.

"It's definitely brought a splash of colour to the block, and will give both residents and passers-by a real lift."



# Not paying rent could leave you homeless

**It's here. The rent arrears campaign we told you we were planning is now happening.**

Posters have gone up across the city and thousands of you will have received leaflets urging you to pay your rent or to call us if you're having trouble doing so.

Before the campaign began we invited more than 60 people to attend a seminar about how we were going to approach this campaign.

The seminar was attended by representatives of Coventry City Council, the Benefits Agency, Coventry Law Centre, Citizens Advice Bureau and tenants' representatives, who listened to presentations on rent collection, debt recovery and housing benefit.

Whitefriars Homes North executive director Alison Hadden said: "Rent arrears is a serious issue. As a not-for-profit social landlord we reinvest all income in our housing

stock, and because rent arrears is lost income we have less money to improve tenants' homes and the environment.

"We want to make people more aware of the help that is available to them from a wide range of organisations should they have difficulty keeping up their rent payments. They must come to us if there is a problem, otherwise it'll simply get worse.

"And in tackling rent arrears, we're also acknowledging our responsibility to those tenants who pay their rent on time. They mustn't lose out because of others' failure to pay."

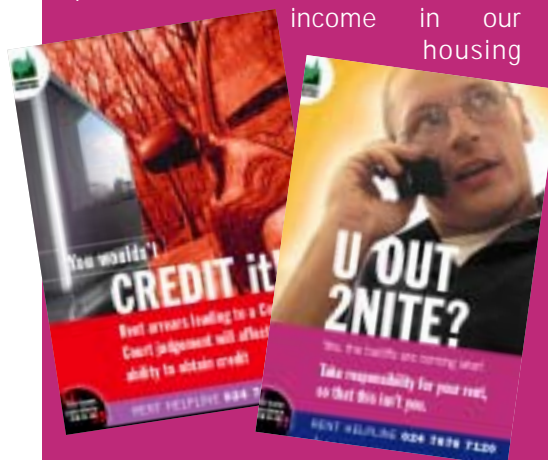
We've evicted 144 households in the past 12 months.

Non-payers must make rent their top priority, and tenants must seek help paying rent before they get into real difficulties.

Alison Hadden added: "It's time to get tough on those who repeatedly fail to pay their rent. We won't tolerate it any longer.

"And those who don't pay – for whatever reason – risk losing their homes.

"The help is there for tenants who have problems with their rent, and we want them to call us. But there are some who either don't seek help or who ignore the advice they receive."





## Whitefriars pays tribute to Derek Wells

Whitefriars Housing Group chairman Peter Lacy has paid tribute to former Whitefriars Board member Derek Wells, who died recently, calling him, '...the epitome of the community activist'.

Councillor Lacy said: "Derek used his spare time to help others. He was a gentleman in the real sense, and showed a generosity of spirit in giving his time and skills willingly.

"His counsel was always sought by his colleagues, whether they were tenants, councillors or independent Board members, and we're all going to miss being able to do that.

"When transfer of council homes to Whitefriars was first mooted, Derek didn't leap to hasty conclusions, but used his keen business sense to consider very carefully the pros and cons, and realised it was something that would benefit tenants. He was among those who helped transfer happen."

Before being elected a tenant Board member, Derek was a member of the shadow Board, and a member of the Tenants' Association Liaison Committee.

He was also secretary of Willenhall & Willenhall Wood Tenants and Residents Association. He was seconded to Willenhall Community Forum Ltd, where he was both director and treasurer, and where his responsibilities included running Willenhall Education, Employment & Training Centre.

*We offer our sincere sympathy to Derek's wife, Sylvia, and his family.*

# Jubilee fun is part of busy summer schedule

**Almost 130 residents at Whitefriars' William Batchelor House celebrated the Queen's golden jubilee in fine style.**

They were joined by family and friends for a barbecue, raffle, games, music and entertainment during the special jubilee holiday.

The afternoon's activity was organised by Eileen Hooper, the warden at the Spon End block of flats.

And it was just the beginning of a packed summer programme for tenants, who are never short of things to do.

Indeed, by the time you read this, 49 of them will have been on a long weekend trip to Bournemouth.

Staying at The Midland Hotel, they took advantage of the games room, played bingo, had free time, enjoyed special meals and took a trip to Poole.

Eileen said: "There's always plenty going on here. There's something happening every day of the week and each month we'll have a bigger event or a trip like the one to Bournemouth, which are very popular and get booked up very quickly.

"Every Monday a hairdresser visits us and we have a games night, while on Tuesday afternoon it's time for bingo. Wednesday sees us have a breakfast morning, with more bingo at night, and on Thursday and Friday residents do their own thing, including seeing friends and family.

"On Sunday some of the tenants will have lunch at Stoke Aldermoor Community Centre, while the rest stay here and I cook Sunday lunch for them."

Amidst all this going on, residents still find time to raise money for charity. Last year they donated almost £400 to Macmillan Nurses, and have raised nearly £64 so far this year for Coventry's Myton Hospice appeal.



# Diary

## WILLENHALL SUMMER PROGRAMME

### FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Organisers: Lee Rogerson (YMCA) & Clyde McIntosh (Coventry Sports & Cultural Development)  
Dates: 30th July -22nd August  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Venue: Binley Rec.  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details and to register a team contact: Jo Ford Tel: (024) 7651 1228

### FUNKY AEROBICS

Organiser: Mel P (YMCA)  
Dates: 12th August-15th August  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Venue: The Haggard Centre  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details contact:  
Jo Ford Tel: (024) 7651 1228

### BASKETBALL

Organiser: Coventry Crusaders  
Dates: 30th July-20th August (Tuesdays only)  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Venue: Madderlyde  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details contact:  
Barbara Mann (024) 76811751

### PLAY SCHEMES

Organisers: Meriel Barnes / Linda Palmer (Children & family Ed Service)  
Dates: 5th August -15th August (closed Fridays)  
Age: 4-11years old  
Venue: Madderlyde Community Centre  
For further details and to register a team contact: Jo Ford Tel: (024) 7651 1228

### TRIPS

Ice Skating Party (End of Summer Programme)  
Venue: Skydome, Coventry  
Date: Thursday 22nd August  
Time: 4.30-6.30pm  
To register and for further details contact Sean Coleman: Tel: (024) 76 257312

### YOUTH SERVICE ACTIVITIES/TRIPS

For further details contact:  
Jo Ford Tel: (024) 7651 1228

## STOKE ALDERMOOR SUMMER PROGRAMME

### FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Organisers: Lee Rogerson (YMCA) & Clyde McIntosh (Coventry Sports & Cultural Development)  
Dates: 30th July -22nd August  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Venue: Binley Rec.  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details and to register a team contact: Pat Lovegrove (Lindfield Committee)

### FUNKY AEROBICS

Organiser: Mel P (YMCA)  
Dates: Mon 29th July-2nd August  
Venue: Community Centre  
Dates: 19th August-23rd August  
Venue: St Catherine's Church  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details contact:  
Jo Ford Tel: (024) 7651 1228

### BASKETBALL

Organiser: Coventry Crusaders  
Dates: Wed 31st July & Wed 7th August  
Venue: Lindfield  
Dates: 14th August-21st August  
Venue: Roundhouse Rec.  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details and to register contact:  
Barbara Mann (024) 76811751

### PLAY SCHEMES

Organisers: Meriel Barnes / Linda Palmer (Children & family Ed Service)  
Dates: 5th August -15th August (closed Fridays)  
Venue: Community Centre  
Time: Mornings  
Venue: St Catherine's Church  
Time: Afternoons  
Age: 4-11 years old  
For further details and to register contact:  
Meriel Barnes Tel: (024) 7660 2590

### TRIPS

Ice Skating Party (End of Summer Programme)  
Venue: Skydome, Coventry  
Date: Thursday 22nd August  
Time: 4.30-6.30pm  
To register and for further details contact Sean Coleman: Tel: (024) 76 257312

### YOUTH SERVICE ACTIVITIES/ TRIPS

For further details contact:  
Jo Ford Tel: (024) 7651 1228

## STOKE HEATH SUMMER PROGRAMME

### FIVE-A-SIDE FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT

Organisers: Lee Rogerson (YMCA) & Clyde McIntosh (Coventry Sports & Cultural Development)  
Dates: 30th July -22nd August  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Venue: Binley Rec.  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details and to register a team contact: Hamida Khalifa Tel: (024) 7645 0215

### FUNKY AEROBICS

Organiser: Mel P (YMCA)  
Dates: Mon 5th August-9th August  
Venue: Stoke Park School  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details contact:  
Jo Ford Tel: (024) 7651 1228

### BASKETBALL

Organiser: Coventry Crusaders  
Dates: Thurs 1st August & Thurs 22nd Aug  
Venue: Barras Heath  
Dates: Thurs 8th Aug & Thurs 15th Aug  
Venue: Stoke Park school  
Venue: Roundhouse Rec  
Tuesdays: 8-10 yrs & 11 - 13 yrs  
Wednesday: 14-16 yrs  
Thursday: 16 yrs plus  
Time: 11am-1pm  
For further details and to register contact:  
Barbara Mann (024) 76811751

### PLAY SCHEMES

Dates: Mon 22nd July-8th August (closed Fridays)  
Venue: Community Centre  
Time: Mornings  
Venue: St Catherine's Church  
Time: Afternoons  
Age: 4-11 years old  
For further details and to register contact:  
Meriel Barnes Tel: (024) 7660 2590

### TRIPS

Ice Skating Party (End of Summer Programme)  
Venue: Skydome, Coventry  
Date: Thursday 22nd August  
Time: 4.30-6.30pm  
To register and for further details contact Sean Coleman: Tel: (024) 76 257312

### YOUTH SERVICE ACTIVITIES/ TRIPS

For Events & further details contact Hamida Khalifa Tel: (024) 7645 0215





## Looking for a new challenge?

If you answered yes, the **Adult Education Service** offers an interesting range of courses.

They are run across the city in local communities by friendly, helpful tutors, and there are lots to choose from: some are for leisure, such as salsa dancing, flower arranging or music; while others are more formal, such as GCSE English and maths, and Basic Skills and English for speakers of other languages. Or how about learning stress-busting techniques using

aromatherapy or joining a craft class to make gifts and cards?

All courses are advertised in the city council's CHOICE magazine, which is sent out to every house in Coventry, in July each year. For more local courses you can get a copy of our Local Learning newspaper, which is sent to homes every August.

For more information telephone 02476 251684 and ask about Adult Education courses in your area.

## Whitefriars funders' £700 grant nets five-a-side sessions for teenagers

Teenagers are looking forward to weekly five-a-side football thanks to a £700 grant from Whitefriars Housing Group funders.

Coventry YMCA kicked-off the sessions for up to twelve 13 to 19-year-olds last year, and the grant means the Tuesday night games at Coventry Sports Foundation's AT7 Centre can continue well into 2003.

But the initiative is about much more than just playing football, according to YMCA neighbourhood support fund project manager Lee Rogerson: "It's an opportunity to introduce the lads to education and training, and we have ambitions to get them involved in coaching so that they can pass on their skills and tell others about what we're doing.

"We're really pleased with progress so far, the response from the lads has been phenomenal and we're hoping to establish a league that would include teams from Stoke Aldermoor and Willenhall.

"The Whitefriars grant is very welcome and shows that it acknowledges the need for a joint approach with the likes of the YMCA when addressing social needs in the community."



## Busy time for new occupational therapist

**Whilst undertaking our kitchen and bathroom improvement works, we realised we needed the professional advice and guidance of an occupational therapist to tell us how we could make it easier for elderly people and those with disabilities to use the new facilities in their home.**

So an initiative was developed with Coventry City Council that has resulted in us employing our own in-house occupational therapist.

Chris Giles, who joined us on a secondment from city council social services, works across the city.

The work she is doing covers two main areas:

- working with the property investment team and partnering contractors to ensure that kitchen and bathroom improvements meet the needs of our many disabled and elderly tenants, including a review of facilities in our sheltered housing blocks.
- speeding up the Disabled Facilities Grant process by providing advice on plans and signing them off

From the outset it became clear that Chris would be kept very busy with our improvements programme, and after just two months she had undertaken 128 home visits, establishing the needs of those residents identified as experiencing some difficulties in managing with their present kitchen and bathroom equipment.

In many cases Chris has specified the positioning of an over bath shower with the aid of specialist equipment to allow easy access for both able and disabled persons. Other recommendations have included a number of level access showers and grab rails in bathrooms, and kitchen adaptations for wheelchair users.

She has also undertaken a city-wide survey of all our sheltered and very sheltered blocks, looking closely at kitchen and bathroom layouts within flats and communal bathroom facilities.

Chris maintains her links with social services to ensure effective communications between them and Whitefriars. This is important for dealing with assessment for their adaptations, including those outside the current year's kitchen and bathroom improvement programme.



## New Tenant Board Member

**Paul White of Tile Hill has been appointed to the mid term Board vacancy following the untimely death of Derek Wells.**

Paul, who is the Chair of the Tile Hill North Residents Association, joined the Boards in May and will also serve on the Finance Committee. In order to fill the vacancy, Tenants Associations in the south were asked to nominate members of their committees who were willing to stand. Paul came forward and following an interview with the Board Chairs, was appointed.

When asked what he could bring to the role he commented said " I believe that I can bring forward my skills and experience to the Board and make a real contribution to the future of Whitefriars and its customers"

Paul will stand until the AGM in 2003 when all of the south tenant Board members will stand down. Elections will be held in May/June of next year to find replacements. Existing tenant board members will be able to restand. Information events for interested tenants will be held later this year.

## Want help with this magazine?

If you, or a friend, would like a copy of Home on audiotape or in a large print format, call Teresa Kimbrell on 024 7676 7029, and she'll make sure you receive a copy. We want all tenants to know what we are doing on your behalf.

এই ম্যাগাজিনটি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে হলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে জানাবেন। এই ব্যাপারে আপনাকে সাহায্য করতে পারলে আমরা খুশি হব।

آر آپ یہ رسالہ انگلش کی بجائے کسی دوسری زبان میں حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو سہیلانی کر کے ہمیں بتائیں، ہم آپ کی مدد کرنے کیلئے خوشی چاہیں گے۔

જો તમારે આ મેગઝિન તમારી પોતાની ભાષામાં જોઈવું હોય તો, મહેરબાની કરી અમને જણાવો. અમે તમને મદદ કરતાં ખુશી અનુભવીશું.

यदि आप इस मैगज़ीन की अपनी भाषा में प्राप्त करना चाहते हैं तो कृपया हमें बतायें। हमें आपकी मदद करके प्रसन्नता होगी।

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਮੈਗਜ਼ੀਨ (ਗਸਲਾ) ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ, ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

إذا اردت ان تحصل على نسخة من هذه المجلة بلغة مختلفة, من فضلك دعنا نعرف فسوف نسعد بمساعدتك.

这本手册杂志还有其他语言可供选择, 如果您需要,

请与我们联系, 我们将热心为您服务。

Jeśli chcesz otrzymać to wydawnictwo w języku polskim, proszę nas powiadomić .  
Chętnie to załatwimy.

## Our website

If you have access to the Internet, you can keep up to date with what Whitefriars is doing at:

[www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk](http://www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk)

