

LPS talk



How are WE Doing?

Here's an idea of what's been happening at your housing office for the period September to December 2010:

- Callers to reception 4970
- Telephone calls dealt with 10,339
- Home visits by Estate Officers and Rents Services Officer 1663
- Bulk rubbish removal 599
- Graffiti removed 30

Pride in Our Street

Following on from last years community award scheme, we rolled out an improved version called 'Pride in our Streets' to fund small projects within our communities. The customer panel, who decided on the successful bids, wished they had far more money, given the exciting range of really great projects submitted.

The purpose of this scheme was to identify projects which required funding outside of the normal budgets we allocate. These projects would then be reviewed by a panel of customers who decide which ones were successful and granted the required funding.

These projects ranged from Christmas events to improving

communal areas in sheltered blocks.

Once all the applications had been received they were collated, and a bus tour was arranged for the panel of customers to go and see first hand the impact the proposed project would have.

Following on from the bus tour, a meeting was arranged and

the panel of customers deliberated over which projects to approve.

The bus tour and the meeting was very successful, and in total 11 projects were approved.

We will be looking to run the initiative again next year, so if you have an idea for a project, look out for the posters and submit an application!!

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Help is at Hand

During difficult financial times we are always looking for ways to help our customers. This summer the Kits for Kids campaign not only helped families buy uniforms for their children but also raised awareness of two other services we offer: an Employment & Training Advisor and a Money Advisor.

We have an Employment & Training Advisor, Emma Jones who has now been working for us for nearly a year, supporting some of our customers to get back into employment .

We also have a Money Advisor, Peter Burgher who helps customers maximise their income and make affordable agreements to clear debt, as well as budgeting advice.

We decided to try to help raise awareness of services as well as helping some customers with the cost of school uniforms through a competition called 'Kits for Kids'. Together with Coventry businesses, Charles Ager Shoes, Mrs T's, Andy Blair Sports & School Wear, and WH Smiths, we donated prizes in the form of vouchers to put

towards school uniforms, shoes and equipment.

To enter the competition we asked all of our customers with children between the age of 4 and 15 to complete a questionnaire which would then be entered into the prize draw.

The questionnaires were sent out to over 3,000 customers City wide. We had 217 questionnaires returned and from these we picked 35 lucky winners who won various prizes including Vouchers ranging from £20 - £100 as well as goody bags.

We were able to contact 104 people about money advice and 161 about Employment and Training. We were also able to offer more information

about our contents insurance scheme which can cost less than the cost of a change of lock if you lose your keys.

Our Customer Involvement team were passed the details of 96 customers who wanted to be involved in developing the future services Whitefriars can offer.

Whitefriars would like to say a big thank you to all Customers who took part in the questionnaire and hope they have been able to get a little help through financially difficult times.



Customer Services Improvement Group member Jillian Hogg draws the prize winners

Job success with Emma

Are you still looking for work but not having any joy? Emma Jones our Employment and Training Advisor has been able to help one of our customers. Here is one of her stories:

Billy is 34 years old. He had been unemployed for over two years and has a below level 2 educational level.

After contacting me he attended an initial appointment where we discussed Billy's employment needs and completed the contractual paperwork.

Billy's employment history was predominately as a window maker for various companies

which had given him a rather specialised skills set.

For the first few months we would meet once a fortnight. During this period I would job search, email and post CVs and request application forms on Billy's behalf. I would then help with completing forms and applications.

Eventually, Billy was offered an interview and this time he

contacted me to let me know that he had been offered the job.

I then advised Billy to go in and see his Rents Service Officer who was able to explain to him about the four week run on period for Housing Benefit and as well as this through ESP funding I was able to offer to fund Billy's bus fare for his first four weeks of work.

Would you like Emma to help you get back into work? She is easy to contact, phone or text her with your name and phone number to **0795 772 9989** for an appointment.

What's going on

Freaky Friday

Staff and customers at Little Park Street Housing Office celebrated Halloween in spooky style on Friday 29 October.

An interview room was turned into a ghostly grotto and staff dressed up as witches, sorcerers, cats and aliens. Customers were invited to vote on our service by choosing chocolate eyes or chocolate pumpkins. We are delighted to report that pumpkins won indicating that customers were pleased with the service. It was a busy day enjoyed by all, especially our younger visitors.



Customer Service Officer Carly Farrell as an alien with some young visitors.

Team moves

We would like to welcome back to the Customer Service Team our Service Development Manager Vicky Beacham.

Vicky has returned part-time and is joined by new Service Development Manager Maxine Little. The Customer Service Team would like to thank Mandy Lawrence for her help and support over the past 18 months. Mandy remains at the Little Park Street Office, but has moved to our Rents Team. We would also like to welcome our new Modern Apprentice, Jade Hibbert who will be assisting the team at Little Park Street whilst undertaking an NVQ in Business Administration.

Little Park Street is National Winner

The fourth national Social Landlord Crime and Nuisance Group (SLCNG) Awards were presented in Birmingham on Tuesday 2 November 2010.

Whitefriars were finalists for two awards and were winners in the Best Practice category for their work on the Mossdale Close project.

Staff working on the Mossdale Close project were at the ceremony with partners and residents to receive and celebrate the award on behalf of Whitefriars.



Members of the Little Park Street Team collecting the award on behalf of Whitefriars

What's new online

Each housing office of Whitefriars now has its own section on the website.

Check out what is happening in your area office us at www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk/LPS

Fit for Fun day

The Ricoh Arena has seen many high profile events over the past few years, but step aside Take That, watch out Oasis because on 23rd November Fit for Fun rocked the arena.

Working with our Business in the Community partners, a tireless team of Whitefriars volunteers challenged 120 local children aged between 11 – 12 to get fit and have fun at the same time.

This unique opportunity to get to know some of our young customers saw staff members help teams to plant carrots, leeks and lettuces and discuss how growing your own fruit and vegetables is not only environmentally

friendly but reduces packaging and litter too.

The more energetic volunteers Zumba'd throughout the day. Led by Donna Edwards, a qualified instructor, we discussed with the children how just 30 minutes exercise every day can help keep your heart healthy, before leading them into a dance-based exercise to Latin and international music.

Working within the corporate responsibility agenda, this project is part of our ongoing engagement with the communities in which we work and we are excited about building on these foundations.



What a Bazaar!

Christmas came a little early for older Coventry residents last November. Over 150 people from across the city flocked to St Peter's Centre in Hillfields for the Whitefriars Christmas Bazaar.

Staff and agencies alike really got into the spirit of the day with information about sheltered housing, the digital switchover, tenants insurance scheme as well as support services as diverse as CRASAC, Age UK, Alzheimer's Society, Health Trainers, Neighbourhood Management and the Fire Service.

Traditional stalls included cakes from William Sheridan House, Kath and Muriel from Stretton Lodge brought books. Una, Mick, Maggie and Veronica came from Everdon Road with bric a brac, tombola and plants. Jayne and Terry from Sackville House cleaned up on their tombola and bottle stall. Not forgetting Glynis and Alex's amazing raffle and bric a brac stall. All of

the money raised by each of the sheltered schemes will be put back into social activities for residents there.

Neil Evans, Specialist Housing Manager said, "It was heart warming to see so many people having the opportunity to socialise with each other, especially some of our elderly customers, and it was great to see the networking opportunities with other organisations being positively delivered."

It really was a great day and the resident feedback has been very positive. A 94 year old resident called to sum up the general feeling, "It was absolutely fantastic to get so many people from all over all talking to each other, we could do with a few more like that!"



The results are in

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete this years customer survey. This years lucky winner of the £50 prize draw was Mr Rafferty of Spon End. Should you receive a survey next year this could be you!

Results

Overall satisfaction with the Grounds maintenance service remained consistent at 73%.

The quality of the grass cutting across the City increased 5% to 82%.

Keeping communal gardens to a reasonable standard has remained consistent at 69%.

It has been noticed by the BEG group that a number of residents look after communal areas. Should you decide you would like to adopt a section of communal land please contact Whitefriars at the earliest opportunity.

Parking on Grassed areas

We've also noticed that cars are being driven across grassed areas and being parked. We would like to point out the problems caused by this namely: Damage to the surrounding grass and pavements, safety concerns for the other members of the general public and finally the risk of damage to the vehicle.

Greenery within your garden

We would like to remind residents that should you have trees / shrubs within your garden close to public

walkways, could you ensure these are cutback to ensure the safety of the general public. Should you be unable to manage this please contact Whitefriars.

Tell us your thoughts!

We are always looking for volunteers of all ages to ensure the good work of the group continues. Membership of BEG can happen in a number of different ways. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please get in touch with Whitefriars who can tell you all about the work we do.

Working together to make a difference ...

The Childcare Act 2006 placed a duty on Local Authorities to conduct a childcare sufficiency assessment every three years. This gives the Early Years and Childcare Service the opportunity to secure sufficient childcare for parents and carers in Coventry.

The Service is currently consulting with parents, carers and key stakeholders on the draft report and we would like to invite you to take part in the consultation, which runs from Monday 24th January until Friday 18th February.

To view the latest online draft report and to get involved in the consultation process visit Childcare Sufficiency Audit at www.coventry.gov.uk/childcaresa or contact: Coventry Early Years and Childcare Service on 024 7678 5901 E-mail: eyccs.citywide@coventry.gov.uk

To view a paper copy visit the Family Information Service in the Central Library, Smithford Way, Coventry CV1 1FY, Mon, Tues & Thurs 9.00am - 5.00pm, Wed 9.00am - 6.00pm & Fri 9.00am - 4.30pm



Coventry City Council



www.coventry.gov.uk/earlyyears

Need a Garage?



Garages are available to rent for parking or storage of small domestic goods

Rent from
£7.25
per week

4 rent free
weeks per year

Interested?

Telephone Sarah

024 7676 7182

for more details

A furniture Find

If you are looking for furniture for your property, there are a number of organisations where you can find affordable furniture.

These organisations sell a wide range of good quality second hand items at great prices. From sofas to fridges, chairs to washing machines, you never know what you might find. For more information, see our Moving In and Furnishing your New Home Booklet from your housing office.

If you are updating your home then **why not donate** your unwanted items to one of the organisations detailed below.

British Heart Foundation

25-35 Market Way, Coventry CV1 1DF

Telephone: 0844 248 9164

Coventry Community Transport

269 Sovereign Road, Earlsdon, Coventry, CV5 6LT

Telephone: 024 7669 1433

Emmaus

70 Red Lane, Coventry, CV6 5EQ

Telephone: 024 7666 1466

Does every child matter to you?

Would you like to become a registered childminder in Coventry and offer a child a caring, home from home experience?

One of the most rewarding things about being a childminder is watching children's excitement as they achieve something new for the very first time and being involved in supporting their development.

Childminding is a dynamic and evolving career, and there are a variety of training opportunities available.

To find out more contact:-

The Childminding Development Team on 024 7678 5897



*Photo supplied by NCMA

Focusing on: Neighbourhood and the Community

We have promised to update you on the progress of our Plans for Improvement against the National Standards set by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), the regulator for social housing.

In the first in a series of feedback reports we have put the **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** under the spotlight. Our Plans for Improvement for the standard said we would:

- continue to roll-out the low-rise cleaning project
- improve the number of residents attending estate inspections

The low-rise cleaning project is almost complete with residents of approximately 340 blocks choosing to pay a service charge for a cleaning service provided by Whitefriars. We have completed a customer satisfaction survey for this service and begun a series of estate walkabouts involving residents.

Our latest flat dwellers survey received 448 responses and showed:

- 78% satisfied with internal cleaning of blocks;
- 67% satisfied with areas around blocks;
- 41.3% said, "the service had got better";
- 20% dissatisfied with grounds maintenance service; and
- 13.6% dissatisfied with our services overall.

Anti-social behaviour (ASB)

The Neighbourhood and Community Standard also incorporates our plans to tackle anti social behaviour.

Our Plans for Improvement include:

- carry out an office survey in October/November 2010 looking at service delivery/ satisfaction from our housing offices
- extend the schools project into primary schools

The survey has been sent to approximately 3000 homes and we will report the outcomes in a future issue.

Working with Primary Schools

The Schools project has been extended within Coventry, and Whitefriars has sponsored two booklets, *Play safe, stay safe* and *Will powers*, which will go into five Primary Schools – Grangehurst, Hill Farm, Joseph Cash, Spon Gate and Aldermans Green.

In addition, our Customer Involvement Team will be leading an assembly in each school, explaining what we do and the impact we have on estates where our customers live. We hope to form lasting relationships with the schools and to set up a group of interested young people to work with us.

We have given some of the schools disposable cameras for pupils to record their journey to and from school and to photograph the things that concern them. We will work with those young people to deliver a presentation to the local Ward Forum.

Working with Secondary Schools

Thanks to RESPECT training delivered over the last two years, we have an ongoing relationship with Caludon Castle School. We frequently meet their Positive Contributions group which has been to some of our sheltered blocks to talk to elderly residents about a whole host of issues and to help out. We have now been asked to deliver class sessions as part of the Citizenship curriculum.

We also have strong links with Coundon Court School. An extended Learning Centre for pupils who would benefit from more one-to-one sessions will be established at our old Wyken Housing Office in Vincent Wyles House, next to our own training and development facility in William Malcolm House.

Working with other agencies

We continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders, including Fire and Police Services on projects to understand ASB hotspots and trends, on Community Cohesion Days and on Safer Neighbourhood Groups, and we provide staff with specialist training, for example, dealing with Hate Crime and Domestic Violence.

If you would like to become more involved in Neighbourhood and Community issues go to www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk or contact the Customer Involvement Team on 024 7676 7018.

What to do: Controlling Damp And Mould

Around this time every year we receive a lot of calls from residents reporting damp problems. In most cases, this turns out to be a build up of black mould, caused by condensation. This is caused by excessive moisture in the air settling on cold surfaces.

By producing less moisture in your home, you can help control and prevent the build up of mould. The following tips will help:

- Wipe down wet windows and sills on a daily basis.
- Keep your home ventilated, especially after cooking or using the bath or shower.
- Do not dry clothes inside, especially on radiators.
- If you have tumble dryer, make sure it is vented to an outside wall.
- Always cook with pan lids on and use the minimum amount of water possible.
- Run cold water first when running a bath, then add hot water.

The black mould which forms on walls and ceilings can be harmful. To treat the mould you should only use specialist fungicidal wash products that carry a HSE number.



If you are in any doubt about damp, mould and condensation then please contact the Little Park Street Housing Office on **024 7676 7111**. We also stock a useful advice leaflet to help you with this.

Need help in your own language?

If you would like this leaflet in large print or audio format, please contact the Communications Team on **024 7676 7029**.

French

Vous avez besoin d'aide dans votre propre langue

Arabic

هل تحتاج إلى مساعدة بلغتك

Farsi

آیا به زبان خودتان به کمک نیاز دارید؟

Polish

Wymagają Państwo pomocy w swoim języku?

Kurdish

تایا پنیوستت به یارمهتی به زمانی خۆت ههیه.

Urdu

اپنی زبان میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے۔

t: 024 7676 7000

Contact corner

Our office is based at 9 Little Park Street, City Centre, Coventry.
We are open from 9am - 4:30pm every day except Thursday, when we open later, at 11am.

Call: **024 7676 7111** Email: info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk


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HOUSING