

# Torringtontalk



Representatives from our grounds maintenance contractor Glendales, and Estate Officer Manjit Mawee helping with the Canley Green Spaces funding.

## How are WE Doing?

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

- Callers to reception 2602
- Telephone calls dealt with 9782
- Home visits by Estate Officers and Rents Services Officer 2203
- Let 156 properties
- Graffiti removed 749 lots

## What's in a name?

Last year we launched our grants scheme called 'Street Pride', which was available to all residents to apply for funding to make your communities stronger and safer places to live and work.

This year it is the same scheme, we just changed the name. It is now known as 'Pride in our Streets'.

So far we have concentrated on events to be held in the summer months, and across the city we have received some really good applications for funding.

We took the applications to the Customer panel who agreed to fund two applications for our areas, these were:

- **Canley Green Spaces** applied for funding to provide the youths on the estate with litter picking equipment and bulbs for planting, this event has been planned for the summer holidays.
- **Canley Activities Group** asked for us to assist in funding for day trips for local families during the summer break.

The panel felt these were just the type of events they were

looking for and issued funding for both requests.

We would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to apply for grants and we hope the events are a great success.

Over the coming months we will be actively helping and assisting customers who apply for a grant and in this issue of **talk** we have some updates on how things went and what other schemes have been funded (see pg 2).

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# Seasonal Advice

## Keep Warm /Keep Well

We can all feel the chill in winter, but cold weather can sometimes lead to serious health problems, such as heart attacks, strokes and pneumonia. There are several things that you can do to help yourself stay healthy and warm this winter.

## Heating your Home

Some of these energy saving tips may be obvious but they can make a big difference when it comes to reducing your fuel bills.

Set your heating to the right temperature, your main living room should be round 18 – 21°C (64-70 °F) and the rest of your home at least 16°C (61°F).

Anything above this means you may be wasting money; below this, you may be risking your health.

If you can't heat all of your house, heat the living room in the day and your bedroom just before you go to bed.

Set your heating to come on just before you wake up and switch off after you have gone to bed.

Heating your home safely is very important, please remember we will check your gas appliances annually.

## Eat Well

Eating regular and healthy meals will keep your energy levels up during winter, have plenty of hot food and drinks and aim to include your daily portions of five fruit and vegetables.

## Stay Active

We all know that exercise is good for us all and it can also keep you warm in winter, even moderate exercise can bring health benefits. If possible move around at least once an hour, but remember to speak to your GP

before starting any exercise programme.

## Financial Help to Heat your Home

There are grant and benefits and sources of advice available to make your home more energy efficient or help with bills. Each year in the UK billions of pounds of benefits are not claimed. It is important to make sure you are claiming everything you are entitled to. For a free and confidential Benefit Entitlement Check, call 0800 072 9006, or alternatively contact us at Torrington Avenue.

**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/torrington](http://www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk/torrington)

# Pride in our streets

This year your "Pride in Our Streets" panel which consists of residents within your communities have approved a number of schemes across your estates.

### Some of the successful schemes:

**Supply and fit a 6ft high security fence** to the rear of 26-32 Thomas Sharp Street

40-48a John Rous Avenue- **supply & fit security gate** with fence between the flats and the houses.

**Remove concrete hard standing** outside front entrance door of Penn House.

**Supply 5 skips** to residents of Gerard Avenue to enable them to dispose of bulk rubbish.

3&4 Devon House - **supply & fit 2 security lights** to communal area to give additional lighting.

Provide low level fencing to the fronts of bungalows in Milrose Way.

**Supply 5 skips** to residents of Queen Margarets Road to enable them to dispose of bulk rubbish.

William Batchelor House - **Purchase flat screen television** for communal lounge to host film nights and reduce the fear of isolation.

## Don't miss out!!

We need your idea's for future schemes. For more information relating to "Pride in your Streets" application please contact us at the Torrington office.

# 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.

## Kits for Kids

During the summer we know that it can be financially difficult for customers with children, to buy school uniforms.

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.

The questionnaires were sent 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.

*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.*

## Financial Advice

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



Customer Services Improvement Group member Jillian Hogg draws the prize winners

## Children in need

With your help the Torrington office raised a fantastic £601.37 for Children in Need.



We would like thank everyone that contributed by buying cakes and raffle tickets on Friday 19 November 2010.

You may not be aware, but behind the scenes the managers at Torrington kindly volunteered to take a 'pie in the face' in aid of Children in Need. Those included were our Director, Rachel Hobbs and Chief Executive, Pat Brandum. This event was a huge success, with staff being able to throw pies at their managers, some enjoying it more than others!

We would also like to thank the following companies who donated gifts for the raffle prizes:

Boots, Dulux, Subway, Go Outdoors, Cost Cutter in Tile Hill, Indiana Restaurant, Rehab Hair Salon, Creations Hair and Beauty, Xcel Centre, The Newlands Pub, Farm Foods, Subway and Tantrums and Talons.

# 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 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](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/childcaresa)

or contact: Coventry Early Years and Childcare Service on 024 7678 5901  
E-mail: [eyccs.citywide@coventry.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://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](http://www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk) or contact the Customer Involvement Team on 024 7676 7018.

# Dealing with ASB

At Whitefriars we recognise that anti-social behaviour can be a problem for us all and may affect our quality of life. As an organisation we have concentrated our efforts to try and resolve any issue of anti social behaviour as quickly and easily as possible.

We give specialist advice and assistance to anyone suffering from anti social behaviour and we have a dedicated recording system that has made the way we deal with issues more efficient.

We know that not all cases are the same and we do not always get it right, so to get a better understanding of our performance we are conducting customer satisfaction surveys.

Since April 2009 we have completed 274 Customer Satisfaction surveys.

The results show that on average 69% of our customers are satisfied with both the handling and outcome of their cases of anti social behaviour that we have dealt with.

As part of this process we also welcome comments on how to improve our service.

One resident said, 'I am very happy with the service provided by my estate officer. She is always willing to help and is very supporting to all of the people in the area'

We continue to carry out these surveys each month and we have shown a consistent improvement in satisfaction levels. But we will not stand still and we will continue to try and improve the services we deliver.

If you are suffering from problems with anti social behaviour please report these to us. The sooner you report the problem the quicker we can try and resolve it.

Please contact us at the Torrington Avenue office on telephone number **024 7649 6700** to report any problems you may have.



## 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 یارمه تی به زمانی خۆت ههیه.

### Urdu

اپنی زبان میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے۔

t: 024 7676 7000

## Contact corner

Our office is based at 192 Torrington Avenue, Tile Hill, Coventry. We are open from 9am - 4:30pm every day except Thursday, when we open later, at 11am.

Call: 024 7649 6700 Email: [info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk](mailto:info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk) [www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk](http://www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk)

  
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