

LPS talk



Competition winners receive easter eggs from Jade Hibbert and Hannah Conniff.

How are WE Doing?

Here's an idea of what's been happening at your housing office for the period January to March 2011:

- Callers to reception 3564
- Telephone calls dealt with 9283
- Home visits by Estate Officers and Rents Services Officer 1343
- Bulk rubbish removal 281
- Graffiti removed 39

Easter eggstravaganza

Staff and Customers at Little Park Street Housing Office had an egg-citing Easter with seasonal activities including Easter eggs for the children, a children's colouring competition and delicious home made cakes for callers to reception.

The highlight of the day was the Easter Bonnet Parade. All of the staff worked hard to create unusual and eye catching easter bonnets. Dorothy Senior from the Hillfields area was invited to judge the winner. Sian Slinn was awarded first prize for her shocking pink fluffy hat complete with flashing

bunny ears, chicks and eggs!

It was a busy day, and as well as having fun, staff were also able to offer advice to customers about repairs and paying rent during the Easter holidays.



Inside this issue...

| | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Freemen of the city | 2 |
| Meet and greet : Vernon Court | 2 |
| City wide news | 3-5 |
| What's going on | 6 |

Freeman of the city

Two of our Customer Service Team Carley Farrell and Clare Butler have been made Freemen of the City of Coventry!

They were admitted to the Coventry Freemen's Guild by the Lord Mayor at Coventry Council House, along with 13 other Whitefriars staff who have all served an apprenticeship.

The new freemen were required to swear an oath during an historical ceremony which dates back to the 14th century.

The right to become a Freeman of Coventry is earned by Servitude (serving an apprenticeship) and Coventry is unique in the UK in still awarding the Freedom to its apprentices.

Lord Mayor Brian Kelsey said: "It is a privilege to bestow this honour on people who have learned



their craft through the apprenticeship scheme. It is a mark of recognition for their dedication and skill, and I wish them all the best in the future."

Meet and Greet at Vernon Court

On 24 February 2011 members off staff from Little Park Street Housing Office attended a meet and greet session for our new Customers living at Vernon Court in Hillfields.



The Rent team was represented by Amarjit Deu who is the Rent Officer for Vernon Court, the Estates team was represented by Omar Shaikh who was the Estate Officer for Vernon Court at the time and the Customer Service team was represented by Sian Slinn and Lynda Rule.

The aim of the session was to introduce the Local Office team to our new Customers and to answer any queries our Customers had regarding Rent, Estate Management and Customer Service.

The residents were informed of our session prior to the day and we had over 50% of the residents attend the session. All officers concerned answered various questions from the residents and all parties involved enjoyed the session.

A special mention for Sian and Lynda in their sterling work during the session ensuring every attendee had a drink and a friendly face to chat to!

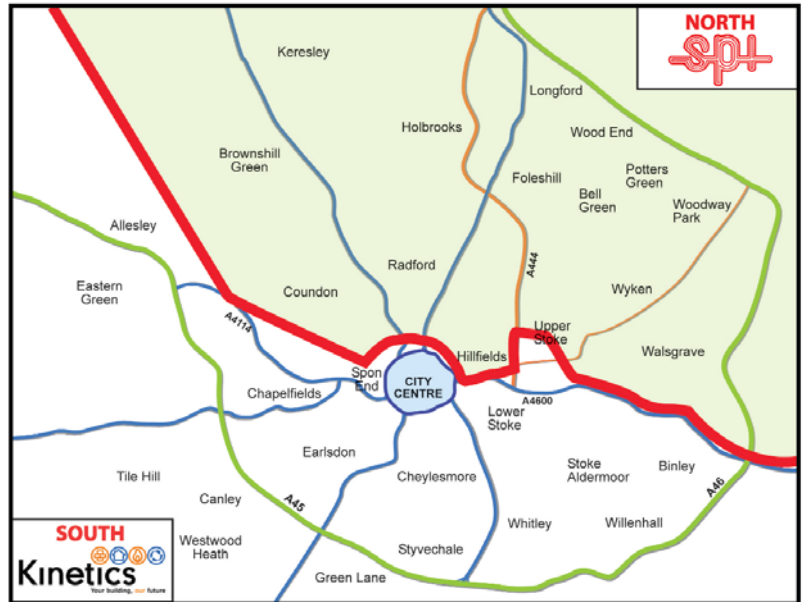
Gas services change

It's important your gas supply and appliances are checked every year!

For your safety we are required by law to inspect your gas appliances and supply every year. Even if you do not use your boiler or fire we still need to gain access to your home to make sure the gas supply is safe.

In the North of the city there has been a change of gas contractor and for the next twelve months it will be SPI who will be calling to your home to carry out any gas repairs and do your yearly gas check. SPI are a well established Coventry based company who's local based knowledge is an asset.

There is no change in the South of the city and Kinetics will still be your gas contractor.



Fair Loans Fair Prices

A new affordable money lending scheme, My Home Finance, has been launched to help Coventry residents on low incomes avoid turning to loan sharks and doorstep cash lenders.

What is My Home Finance?

They are a not-for-profit-social enterprise offering loans for any purpose and ways to help you save.

Is it right for you?

If you have been refused a loan from a bank or building society, this could be for you. They specialise in helping people who struggle to get loans.

How does it work?

If you are offered a loan, repayments will be collected directly from your bank account. No one will visit your home. If you don't have an account, we can help you with one.

How can you apply?

Just give them a call or visit the website to make an appointment.



The Hertford Street-based My Home Finance branch

It will offer people in need of a loan access to affordable credit rather than them turning to illegal money lenders.

It will lend eligible borrowers, who have had a face-to-face interview, loans of around £500, to help them buy everyday items such as school uniforms, a washing machine or furniture.

Already, the shop has made 193 loans to people in Coventry with an average value of £393.

For more information and to make an appointment call 024 7623 1203.

High rises and gardens

The Better Estates Group & High Rise Customer Improvement groups have joined forces.

In order to provide a wider service for residents they have joined together and will now be known as the Estate Improvement Group.

How does this affect you?

The new group will be carrying out joint estate and high rise block inspections with Whitefriars staff and contractors. We will continue to provide essential feedback to

Whitefriars and the contractors to make sure you are receiving the best quality services and value for money.

During the summer the majority of residents will receive a customer survey from our group. This is your opportunity to give us your views on the service you receive. All returned surveys will be entered into a prize draw and we look forward to you taking the time to help us.



If you would like to be part of this new venture why not join our team of volunteers and help make a difference. You can contact us on 024 7655 5229 if you are interested.



Whitefriars is providing a rear gardening service for Whitefriars bungalows in the Radford and Holbrooks areas. Please contact us on 024 7655 5229 for more details.

If you live in a Whitefriars bungalow in any other area and are interested in this service, give us a call for more information.

Benefit change?

Housing Benefit and changes to Child Tax Credits - over 50% of working people could claim Housing Benefit but don't so they miss out.

Did you know that from April 2011 there has been a change to the way that the Tax Credits are worked out? This means that you may see only a small increase in your award or it may even drop to a lower amount.

If you are receiving Housing Benefit then you must let the Benefit Office know straight away so that they can check to see if you will be entitled to more benefit.

If you are not already getting Housing Benefit then you can contact us on 024 7676 7111 or the Benefits Advice Line on 024 7683 2000 to see if you could be entitled to claim, if you are then, you should make a claim straight away.

Remember, that if you get Child Maintenance and/or Child Benefit it does not count when your Housing Benefit it worked out.





Kits for Kids

Kits for Kids Prize Draw for customers of Whitefriars with children aged 4 to 15 years old, to help towards the cost of kitting out kids for school.

Prizes

- 4 prizes of £50 vouchers
- 10 prizes of £20 vouchers
- 5 prizes of £10 vouchers
- Plus other prizes

To take part you just need to answer a few questions. There are three ways to enter:

1. Request a Kits for Kids prize draw form from your local housing office.
2. Enter online at : www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk/kitsforkids
3. Text your answers to : 07535631631

To text you need to include your house number, the first line of your address, followed by each question number, then the response Y for yes, N for no, A, B,C,D for question 2, then your email address. (See the questions to the right)

Example: 192 Torrington Ave 1Y 2A 3N 4Y 5N 6Y 7N 8Y email@address

We must receive your entry before 4.00pm on 29 July 2011. One entry per household.

For texting please answer the following questions:

1. Are you or your partner working? Yes No
2. What is your yearly household income? (pick one)
 - a. 0 to £12,000
 - b. £12,000 to £16,000
 - c. £16,000 to £25,000
 - d. £25,000 +
3. Do you get Working Tax Credits? Yes No
4. Do you get help from Housing Benefit to pay your rent? Yes No
5. Do you have a Housing Benefit Overpayment? Yes No
6. Do you need help to sort out debts? Yes No
7. We offer low cost contents insurance which can be less than the price of a change of lock if you lost your keys. Do you want to know more? Yes No
8. Would you like to be involved in helping us develop the service we offer? Yes No

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

What's going on

Team moves

The Customer Service Team have said farewell to two members of staff.

Charleen Wilkinson has left for pastures new and Clare Butler has taken up an exciting new role at Whitefriars working in partnership with the National Probation Service as a Single Point of Contact Officer or SPOC for short! We would like to wish Clare and Charleen all the best.

We would also like to welcome two new members of staff to the Customer Service Team.

Joe Connelly and Karen Marshall. Some of you may already know Joe and Karen from their previous roles in the organisation. Joe transfers from the Riley Square Housing office and Karen was a Response Officer. Joe and Karen along

with the rest of the Customer Service Team are your first point of contact for any queries you may have whether you phone or visit the Little Park Street Housing Office.

The Rents Team has also changed

Neeraj Gupta has moved to our Riley Square office and replacing her we welcome Shaheda Mansur.

Patch cover updates:

Hillfields - Suki Johal

Holbrooks/Keresley - Gwen Andrew

Radford/Paradise - Sarah McInerney

Radford/Coundon - Omar Shaikh

Stoke Heath - Liz Chaytors / Louise Ell

What's new online!

Kits for kids application at www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk/kitsforkids

Get More Out of Life Online www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk/getmore

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 پنیو بستت 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

