

Riley Squaretalk



Whitefriars resident Sheila McKenna celebrates the Big Lunch with 15-year-old Armani Basi who visited Farmcote Lodge sheltered housing scheme for a Big Lunch intergenerational afternoon tea.

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 2743
- Telephone calls dealt with 8349
- Home visits by Estate Officers and Rents Services Officer 1480
- Bulk rubbish removal 199
- Graffiti removed 14

The Big Lunch!

The Riley Square team took part in the Big Lunch on Sunday 5 June by holding a garden party at Farmcote Lodge.

The idea of this is to bring back the good old street party atmosphere that the tenants of Farmcote Lodge were used to between the 1940's up until the 1980's. The Big Lunch is a very simple idea from the Eden Project. The aim is to get as many of the 61 million people in the UK as possible to have lunch with their neighbours once a year. The event can be anything from a simple lunch in your garden to a huge street party. Nearly 1 million people took part last summer.

Why it was started?

The Eden Project started The Big Lunch in the belief that we, as a society, are better equipped to tackle the challenges that we face when we face them together.

The thinking behind the Big Lunch

The Big Lunch is based on a belief that the world can be a better place through people working together, with nature, optimism and common sense.

- Getting together we become more positive and start to sort out some serious stuff.
- Having some fun with our neighbours on one day in the summer, we can build new friendships that we can enjoy for the rest of the year.
- A chance for neighbours from different generations and backgrounds to share stories, skills and interests.

We hope to see you there next summer!

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Office News

Location move

From 4th April 2011, staff from the Wood End Housing Office will be based at the Riley Square Office.

In addition to our customers using this site to report any issues they have, you are also able to access your Estate Office from this office. Our contact number, and opening times will remain the same.



Anyone for Tea?

On Monday the 18th April the Riley Square Housing office held an event in the square in conjunction with Neighbourhood Management to kick off the Royal Wedding celebrations.

The square was decorated with bunting, flags and balloons. Cream teas, coffees and soft drinks were served to local residents and their children all of whom were invited to join in the fun and celebrations.

Whilst the adults enjoyed their tea and scones the children enjoyed activities such as decorating cakes and flags and making and decorating crowns for them to wear on the big day.

The day was a great success and attracted a lot of people to the square bringing the local community together and benefitting the local businesses. Feedback from the local businesses was very positive and they were happy to see the square being used and attracting passing trade.

A special thanks should go to the Luxury Bakery who supplied the most delicious scones and cream.

Neighbourhood Cohesion

At the beginning of March a cohesion day was held in the Longford area in conjunction with the West Midlands Fire Service, Midland Heart and the Coventry City Wardens.

The aim was to identify any ASB issues and trends in the Longford area, to give practical advice about how and when to report ASB and to raise awareness of fire safety in our homes.

The fire service carried out fire safety checks in all properties visited and gave safety tips to residents. They also fitted additional fire alarms for any resident who requested and checked existing fire alarms and escape plans.

A customer perception survey was carried out, the results of which have been compared to two previous surveys conducted in the area and are very encouraging. They show a large drop in the ASB issues across the Longford specifically on the Chingford, Kegworth and Kendrick Estate.

For those areas that have reported ASB in the past it showed work that has already actively been carried out with the local Police, Community Safety Team and Coventry Wardens has been a great success. The overall consensus is that ASB had been “dramatically reduced” or gone away altogether. Feedback from residents has greatly improved since the last perception survey was carried out.



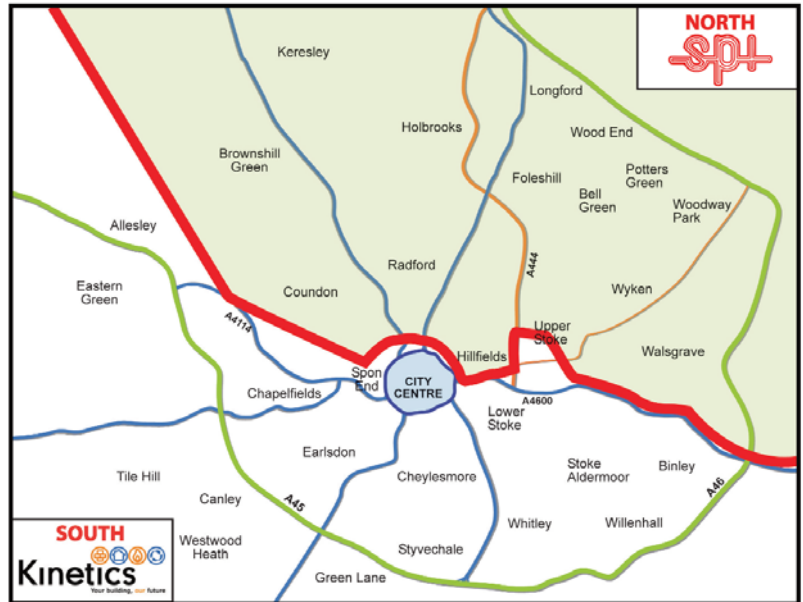
Gas services change

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 7670 8400 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

Help with Finances

Rent Arrears!

Paying your rent on time is a crucial part of your tenancy agreement with Whitefriars Housing. As a customer it is your responsibility to ensure that your rent is paid in full and on time.

If you pay your rent with the assistance of Housing benefit, it is your



responsibility to ensure that housing benefit are paying your rent. You must inform Housing benefit about any changes that occur in your household. For example: an Increase or reduction in money, Partner moving in with you, a child turning 18. You are responsible for payment of rent, not housing benefit.

Last year 17 tenants in the local area were evicted for non payment of rent and increasing rent arrears. Rent is a priority debt and not dealing with your arrears can lead to the loss of your home. If you are in arrears and have not done anything about it, you are at risk of losing your home. If you wish to discuss your rent please contact the local office on 024 7670 8400.

Struggling with Debt!

With increasing energy and food costs more and more customers are struggling to meet the all important priority bills such as rent and Council tax. More and more people are finding themselves in debt and struggling to manage their debts. Peter from the Coventry law centre runs weekly appointments at Bell Green Housing office to help and assist people with their debts. Peter has managed to generate £25K of financial gains for customers and has managed more than £64K of priority debts.

If you do find yourself struggling to manage your debts, Please contact the Bell Green housing office on 024 7670 8400 to arrange an appointment.

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

ئایا 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 29-31 Riley Square, Bell Green.

We are open from 9am - 4.30pm every day except Thursday, when we open later, at 11am.

Call: 024 7670 8400 Email: info@whitefriarshousing.co.uk www.whitefriarshousing.co.uk


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