

Tenants' Voice

Issue Number 2, Winter 2012/13

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NOVOTEL

Fareham tenants at South Coast Training

New Freephone number for Reporting Repairs

The Council is pleased to announce that it has a freephone number which tenants can use to report repairs.

The Tenants' Forum has campaigned for a long time to have a freephone number and the Council has listened. So, to report a repair in the future, please call 0800 1412194 or email responsiverepairs@fareham.gov.uk. Please note that calls are not free when using a mobile phone.

A newsletter for and by Tenants and Leaseholders

FAREHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Welcome to our Winter Newsletter 2012/13

Welcome to the latest edition of the Tenants' Voice which has been put together by our Editorial Panel of staff and tenants including Yvonne Goddard, Liz Bartlett, Mike Busby and Steve Lovelock.

The newsletter has input from The Tenants' Forum, Sheltered Housing Forum and Leaseholders' Forum. All three groups work hard on behalf of tenants to ensure that tenants and leaseholders have a say in the services that are provided to them by Fareham Borough Council.

If you would like to know how you can get involved and have a say, please contact Jennie Larkin (Tenant Involvement Officer) on 01329 824463 or email jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk.

I hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and if you have any suggestions for articles for future editions, please let us know. In the meantime, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a very happy New Year.

Steve Lovelock

Chair of the Tenants' Forum



Useful Contacts



Citizens Advice Bureau
01329 237121

Debt advice

For debt advice, the Citizens Advice Bureau has a debt advisor called Jacquie Smart. Jacquie can be reached by contacting your Area Housing Estates Officer.

For planned repairs

Contact buildingprojects@fareham.gov.uk

Gas boiler related problems and servicing

Contact TSG on Freephone 0800 781 2739.

Council Tax
01329 236100

Housing Benefits
01329 236100

Website

www.fareham.gov.uk
(Tenant Participation/Involvement and Leasehold information).

Anti Social Behaviour

Please contact your Area Housing Estates Officer.

Lovelock, Paula Weaver and Graham Wood and the leasehold representative is Brian Lee.

The dates of meetings (which all take place at 6pm in the Council Offices) are as follows:

- 21st January 2013
- 18th March 2013
- 20th May 2013

If you would like to contact your tenant or leaseholder representative, please speak to Jennie Larkin (Tenant Involvement Officer) on 01329 824463 or email jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk.

South Coast Training

The last South Coast Training Event was held in October. Fareham Borough Council sent 10 tenants and 1 leaseholder and they attended workshops on What's New in Housing; Presenting with Confidence; Understanding Local Offers and Smart Money. The next event will take place in April 2013.

If you would like to know about training opportunities for tenants, please contact Jennie Larkin on 01329 824463 or e mail jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk.

Change of areas for Area Housing Estates Officers

There have been some staff changes in recent months and the Area Housing Officers have been given different areas to cover. You will find information about the housing officer covering your area below.

Your Area Housing Estates Officers deal with anything that affects your tenancy such as rent queries, estate inspections and anti social behaviour.

Area Housing Estates Officer	Estate/area to be inspected	Date of inspection
Stubbington & South Fareham Gemma Lewis 01329 824492 gLewis@fareham.gov.uk	Spencer Court & Marks Road	16th January 2013 at 10:30am
	Salterns Estate	30th January 2013 at 10:30am
	Marchesi Court & Foster Close	13th February 2013 at 10:30am
	Trafalgar Court	6th March 2013 at 3pm
Portchester & South Fareham Sian Jeffery Monday & Tuesday 01329 824484 sjeffery@fareham.gov.uk Keith Nevitt Weds – Friday 01329 824466 knevitt@fareham.gov.uk	Robinson Court & Linden Lea	25th January 2013 at 10am
	St Quentin House, Ramillies, Caen, Vimy, Flanders & Tebourba – meet outside St Quentin.	22nd February 2013 at 10am
	Kenwood Road, Webb Road, Roman Grove.	28th March 2013 at 10am
Western Wards Helen Ayers Mon–Weds 01329 824464 hayers@fareham.gov.uk Tania Meskouri Thurs & Friday 01329 824464 tmeskouri@fareham.gov.uk	Holly Hill Mansion	11th February 2013 at 10:30am
	Winnards Park	14th February 2013 at 10:30am
	St Michael's Road	25th February 2013 at 10:30am
	Hewett House, Hewett Close/Rd, Ransome Close & Bellfield	28th February 2013 at 11am
	Lincoln Close	11th March 2013 at 10:30am
North Fareham Jon Johnson 01329 824458 jjohnson@fareham.gov.uk	Valentine Close & Privett Rd – meet outside Menin House.	17th January 2013 at 10:30am
	Frosthole Close – meet outside communal lounge	14th February 2013 at 10:30am
	Nashe Way, Gaza House, Arras House – meet outside Arras House.	14th March 2013 at 10:30am
	Nashe House/Hillson House & Nashe Close, Hill Walk & Park Walk – meet in Nashe House car park.	10th April 2013 at 10:30am



Tenants' Forum

17th January 2013 at 1:30pm at Ferneham Hall

Annual General Meeting

14th March 2013 at 6:30pm at Ferneham Hall

Sheltered Housing Forum

13th March 2013 at 10:30am at Melvin Jones House

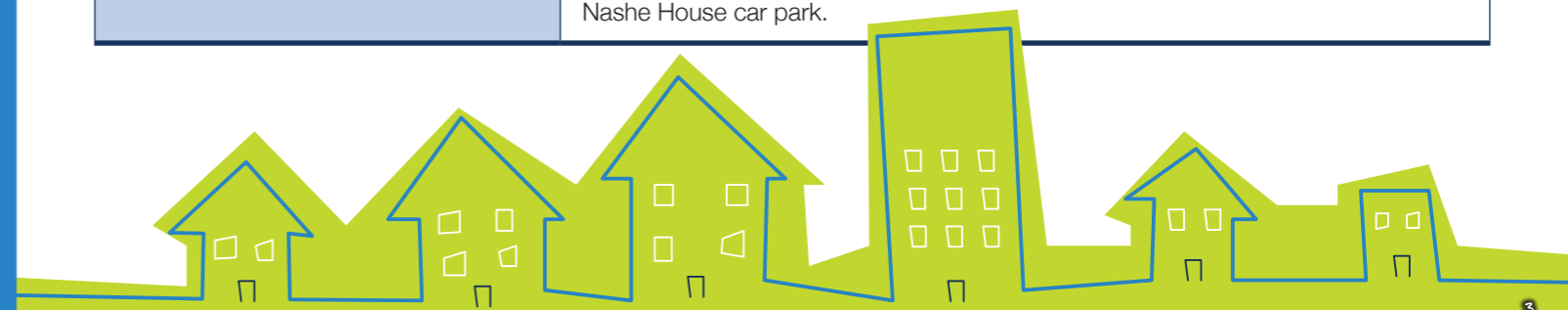
Leaseholder Forum

19 February 2013 at 4.00pm in the Civic Offices

23 May 2013 at 2.00pm in the Civic Offices

Housing Tenancy Board dates:

Tenant representatives regularly meet up with officers and councillors at the Housing Tenancy Board to discuss the services that tenants and leaseholders receive. All tenants are welcome to attend Housing Tenancy Board or ask their tenant or leaseholder representative to raise an issue on their behalf. Your tenant representatives are Steve



Outcomes of Estate Inspections

Area & date inspected	Problem	Outcome
Endofield Close July 2012	Weeds around the flats.	Now cleared.
Blenheim House & St Julien House July 2012	Cleaning in communal areas unsatisfactory.	Housing Officer to monitor.
Nashe Way July 2012	Fly tipping in bin area at Arras House. Grass cutting poor in Nashe Way & cleaning poor in Nashe House.	Housing Officer to monitor. Fly tipping removed by Building Services.
Robinson Court & Linden Lea August 2012	Sign missing at Robinson Court.	Ordered and will be fitted shortly.
Bishopsfield Road flats August 2012	Fly tipping in drying area at Caen House. Litter around block.	Fly tipping reported & removed. Litter removed.
Lincoln Close July 2012	Garden waste bags not removed for 3 months. Bin areas only ever swept & not cleaned. Trees on private property blocking out light.	Garden waste issue & cleaning to be monitored by Housing Officer. Letter sent to private owners re trees & a timetable agreed to monitor improvement.
Beverley & Birchen Close August 2012	Guttering needs clearing at 31-35 Beverley. Strimming not done in some areas.	Strimming done within 24 hours of reporting. Guttering to be cleared.
Winnards Park August 2012	Dog fouling & overgrown hedges .	Letters sent to all identified dog owners. Letters sent to residents of properties with overgrown hedges.

Applying for Council Housing in Fareham

In May 2007 Fareham Borough Council introduced a Choice Based Letting scheme known as LetSelect. Using this system, social housing properties that become available for re-letting are advertised so that those on the Housing Waiting List can express an interest. An outline of the system is as follows:

- To qualify, you must complete an application form. The Council will then place your application in one of 5 bands.
- You will be asked to state what areas you would like to move to on your application form.
- Offers of accommodation are made to the highest placed applicant (who has expressed an interest in that particular property) on the Housing Waiting List.
- Applicants are considered for both Council and Housing Association properties in the Borough.
- The demand for social housing in the Borough far exceeds the supply, so, you could wait a long time for a particular type of property and or area.
- There is a user guide available with more information about the LetSelect Choice Based Lettings scheme. Contact the Customer Service Centre for a copy on 01329 236100.

Welfare Reforms and how they may affect you

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 may introduce big changes to the present welfare benefit system and it will affect many tenants of Fareham Borough Council.

Most changes will take effect from April 2013 and they are listed below:

Date	Type of benefit	What it means
April 2013	'Bedroom Tax'	Working-age households who are under-occupying their home will lose 14% of their Housing Benefit if they are under-occupying by 1 room & 25% for those under-occupying by 2 or more rooms
April 2013	All benefits to be capped	A cap will be introduced on the benefits which 1 household can receive. It will be set initially at £500 per week for couples & single parents & £350 for single people without children.
April 2013	Community care grants & crisis loans	These will be abolished & local arrangements run by local authorities will replace them.
October 2013	Universal Credit will replace all other benefits	This will be introduced initially for new claimants. Existing claimants will be migrated over to Universal Credit by April 2017.
October 2013	Minimum wage increases	

What can you do to prepare for the changes?

You will need to set up a bank account in order to receive Universal Credit. If this is difficult for you for any reason, you may wish to look at the Hampshire Credit Union whose details can be found on page 7.

If you receive housing benefit, you must notify us of any changes to your circumstances as soon as they happen.

For more information about Welfare Reform and how it might affect you, please contact your Area Housing Estates Officer or contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau.



Collingwood House Sheltered Housing Scheme, North Fareham

In July 2012, we started to move residents out of Collingwood House ready for its demolition in 2013. All remaining residents have now moved to new homes within the Borough. A new sheltered housing scheme will be built on the site by 2015.



Proposed development – Collingwood House, Fareham.

Information for Leaseholders about Window and Door Agreements

A number of leaseholders have in the past signed windows and doors agreements, giving a discount on their cyclical repair charges in exchange for maintaining their windows and doors.

The Council has been reviewing these agreements and concluded that it wishes to terminate them because of the extra work involved in administering them and cost to the Council. Letters were sent out at the end of November to those affected.

This will mean that from 1 January 2013, the Council will be responsible for maintaining all leaseholders' external windows and doors.

Leaseholders will still be able to install their own windows and doors at their own expense should they wish but permission must be obtained in writing before any work is carried out.

Should you have any queries about this change, please get in touch with the Leasehold Management Officer.



The Financial Crisis & How Credit Unions Can Help

Credit unions are not for profit, member-owned financial co-operatives and unlike many banks, there are no shareholders to consider.

Fareham Community Savers is the Credit Union we have in Fareham and it works in partnership with United Savings and Loans. It aims to provide safe accessible banking services including to those with imperfect credit history. It is funded by Fareham Borough Council, First Wessex and the Southern Co-operative.

An example of how the Hampshire Credit Union compares with others is shown below:

Provider	Repayments	Total to pay back	Extra you pay	APR
Hampshire Credit Union	£10.85 x 52	£563.45	–	26.85%
LoansAtHome4u	£20.00 x 41	£820.00	£256.55	£281.50%
Provident Personal Credit	£15.00 x 57	£855.00	£291.55	189.20%

What can Fareham Community Savers offer you?

- A current account and pre-paid card
- With the introduction of Universal Credit this year, it can help you with budgeting
- Signposts to other advice and support services
- Money management and practical tips
- Savings opportunities
- Safe and affordable lending

Weekly drop-in sessions are held at Highlands Hub, Highlands Road, Fareham on Thursday mornings and Broadlaw Community Space, Bishopsfield Road, Fareham on Tuesday mornings.

For more information contact Maria Ganderton, Fareham Community Savers Development Worker on 07511 900833 or email maria@sehco.org. You can also contact United Savings & Loans at www.usal.org.uk or telephone 02392 827980.



A Winter Word Search

C H O C O L A T E S G I F T S
 A H L B W E E K G R I N T O A
 K O R N A M G N T H Y E N O M
 A D A I C G M G R V F N U P R
 E A F C S O C K S E P O M R E
 S F S E I T F L E C H O L A P
 S L R B E D M E A B E C K E M
 L G I A R E D A R M N G U I U
 I U B P D X D I S K A B H O J
 C A E C P O V L P S O S X B V
 N S B O L E D H E O T T A E Q
 E E M A G C R E K O M E K L J
 P A E I N I A S O N T A E X A
 J Z A P E R F U M E T Y S W P
 S E I R T E L I O T E Q A R S

CHRISTMAS • TOILETRIES • MONEY • SLIPPERS • SOCKS • BOOK
 VOUCHER • JUMPER • TIES • SWEETS • PERFUME • DVD • CHOCOLATES
 PENCILS • ORNAMENT • GAME • GIFTS

The closing date is Friday 22 February 2013. Please return your completed wordsearch to Jennie Larkin at the address below. There is a £20 M & S voucher for the first correct entry drawn after the closing date.

The winner of the anagram competition in the last newsletter was Mrs Martin of Longmynd Drive who wins a shopping voucher.



Letters & poems to the editor

Do you have something you would like to share with other tenants or leaseholders? Also, what would you like the Council to do for you? Have you got a suggestion about how your estate could be improved?

If you would like the chance to win a shopping voucher, please send in a letter, poem, recipe or a good idea and if it is published, you will be sent a voucher.

Please send in to Jennie Larkin by email to jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk or by post to:
 Jennie Larkin, Civic Offices,
 Civic Way, Fareham, Hampshire,
 PO16 7AZ.



Contact

Fareham Borough Council Tenancy Services, Department of Community, Civic Offices, Civic Way, Fareham, Hampshire PO16 7AZ

Email: jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk or tel. 01329 824463 – Tenant Involvement Officer

Email: hsaich@fareham.gov.uk or tel. 01329 824499 – Leasehold Management Officer

Website: www.fareham.gov.uk (look under the A to z at Tenant Involvement/Participation).

If you would like to receive this publication in another format such as Braille or audio tape or in another language, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 01329 236100.