

# Tenants' Voice

Summer 2014

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A newsletter for and by  
Tenants and Leaseholders

**FAREHAM**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Welcome to our summer newsletter 2014

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter 2014 from, Steve Lovelock the Chair of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum

At the Annual General Meeting of the Tenants' Forum in March this year, it was suggested that the Tenants' Forum, Sheltered Forum and Leaseholders' Forum merge. This means there will be fewer meetings and both tenants and leaseholders will be invited to attend the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum.

This change will help stop the same issues being talked about at lots of meetings. Instead, there will be a topic (or topics) affecting all which will be discussed at one meeting. We can also make sure



that we have the right Council staff available to deal with your issues.

Tenants and leaseholders will still be represented at the Housing Tenancy Board.

If you would like to find out more about the Forum and other ways you can be involved please contact Jennie Larkin on **01329 824463** or email: [jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk).

Also, look out for our survey of all tenants and leaseholders later this year.

*Steve Lovelock*

*Chair of the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Forum*

## Useful contacts

### To report a repair:

- Ring free phone number 0800 1412 194
- Fill in a 'report a repair' form on our website by visiting [www.fareham.gov.uk](http://www.fareham.gov.uk)
- Email: [responsiverepairs@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:responsiverepairs@fareham.gov.uk)
- Visit the Civic Offices between 8:45am and 5:15pm Monday to Friday

### To report a gas repair or problem contact:

- Emergency out of hours 0800 374485
- Gas repairs (anytime) 0800 7812739 (TSG)
- For gas leaks or if you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide contact 0800 111 999

### For Planned Repairs: (for example kitchens and bathrooms)

- Contact 01329 236100 or e-mail [buildingprojects@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:buildingprojects@fareham.gov.uk)

### For all other enquiries such as Council Tax, Housing Benefit and the Right to Buy please contact 01329 236100.

- [www.fareham.gov.uk](http://www.fareham.gov.uk)

### Citizens' Advice Bureau



For advice about employment, debt, family, relationships, legal help and more you can contact the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

- Telephone 0300 456 2987
- Visit 1st floor, County Library Building, Osborn Road, Fareham, PO16 7EN (10 am to 4pm Monday to Friday and 5pm until 6:30pm on Thursday).
- Visit the Highlands Hub, 103 Highlands Road, Fareham (Tuesday 9:30am until 3pm)
- Visit Portchester Library on Thursdays (10am until 3pm).
- [www.adviceguide.org.uk](http://www.adviceguide.org.uk)

## Dates for your diary 2014/15

### Tenant and Leaseholder Forum meetings:

Come along and have a say about services which affect your home and estate and hear about issues affecting tenants and leaseholders nationally. Dates of meetings are as follows:

**Thursday 25 September 2014 at 6:30pm at Ferneham Hall**

Update about how the maintenance service is provided - Chris Newman, Head of Building Services.

**Thursday 4 December 2014 at 1:30pm at Ferneham Hall**

Dealing with dog nuisance and other pests - Mark Homeyard, Principal Environmental Health Officer

**Thursday 19 February 2015 at 1:30pm at Ferneham Hall**



**Thursday 19 March 2015 at 6:30pm at Ferneham Hall – Annual General Meeting**

## Helping you take control of your money



For help and advice with money matters contact Fareham Community Savers:

- **Telephone: 07511 900833**
- **Email: [fcs@sehco.org.uk](mailto:fcs@sehco.org.uk)**
- **[www.sehco.org.uk](http://www.sehco.org.uk)**

Supported by United Savings and Loans (Hampshire Credit Union) we can help with:

- setting up a Current Account, savings, Christmas Savings Club, Jam Jar or Business Account
- range of competitive loans available
- advice on how to manage your money better
- regenerating the local economy.

### You can also access services by visiting any of these locations

Fareham Borough Council	Civic Offices, Civic Way, Fareham PO16 7AZ	Tuesday 12.30pm-4.30pm
Broadlaw Community Centre	Bishopsfield Road, Fareham PO14 1FE	Tuesday 10am-12noon
The Highlands Hub	103 Highlands Road, Fareham PO15 6HZ	Thursday 10am-12noon
United Savings & Loans	97 Fratton Road, Portsmouth PO1 5AG	Monday-Friday 9.30am-4.30pm

## Winter Fuel Payments

To find out if you are eligible, or for more information call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on **0845 915 1515** or go to **[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)** or **[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)**.



## Three Families evicted in past year for not paying rent

**The Council works together with tenants to help make sure they pay their rent on a regular basis. Tenants who do not keep up regular rent payments and fall into rent arrears risk losing their home.**

Unfortunately there are a number who don't pay their rent over a long period of time. If this happens we can take legal action through the County Court for repossession of their home.

Evicting tenants from their homes is always the last resort. However, with an increasing demand for social housing in Fareham and over 1300 applicants currently on the housing waiting list, the Council must ensure that it takes firm action against those tenants who do not pay their rent.

Although the Council evicting tenants from their home is nothing

new, it is with concern that in the past year, three tenants with dependent children in Fareham have lost their family home.

In cases where tenants are evicted from their home, the Council don't have to provide alternative accommodation.

Evicted tenants often end up in private rented accommodation where rent is much higher than

Council housing rents. Any tenancy offered privately will not be as secure or long term as what the Council can offer and they will also have fewer rights.

If you are struggling to pay your rent please talk this through with your Housing Officer at the earliest opportunity. Help and assistance is available either through the Council or other organisations and agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureau and Fareham Community Savers. Contact details on pages 2 and 3.



## Paying your rent

Did you know that there are a number of ways in which you can pay your rent which include the following:

1. Direct debit - To request a form, please call 01329 236100 or email [housing@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:housing@fareham.gov.uk).
2. Online – Visit [www.fareham.gov.uk](http://www.fareham.gov.uk) and look up Housing Rents.
3. Telephone - Contact our automated service (which is available 24/7) on 0845 606876 or during office hours contact 01329 236100.
4. In person - come into the office during 8:45am to 4pm Monday to Friday
5. Post – Send a cheque to the address on the back of this newsletter. Please do not send cash in the post.
6. Telephone/internet banking through your own bank. The Council's details are Fareham Borough Council BP Account. The account number is 0702006 and the sort code is 524132.



## Estate inspections in the Borough:

You can come along to one of the Estate Inspections below and tell us about any repairs or improvements that are needed in your local area.

Area Housing Estates Officer	Estate/area to be inspected	Date of inspection
Stubbington & South Fareham  Matt Elsbury 01329 824492 <a href="mailto:melsbury@fareham.gov.uk">melsbury@fareham.gov.uk</a>	Angelus Close (meet in the car park)	14 October 2014 at 2:30pm
	Baytree Lodge (meet in the car park)	11 November 2014 at 2:30pm
	Marchesi Court (meet in the car park)	16 December 2014 at 2:30pm
Portchester & South Fareham  Sian Jeffery Monday & Tuesday 01329 824484 <a href="mailto:sjeffery@fareham.gov.uk">sjeffery@fareham.gov.uk</a>	St Quentin House, Ramillies, Marne, Caen, Tebourba, Vimy and Flanders. Meet outside St Quentin House.	21 October 2014 at 10:30am
Keith Nevitt Wednesday – Friday 01329 824484 <a href="mailto:knevitt@fareham.gov.uk">knevitt@fareham.gov.uk</a>	Linden Lea & Robinson Court	6 November 2014 at 10am
Western Wards  Tania Meskouri 01329 824464 <a href="mailto:tmeskouri@fareham.gov.uk">tmeskouri@fareham.gov.uk</a>	St Michaels Road. (Meet at the top of the road).	4 November 2014 at 10am
	Bellfield	7 November 2014 at 10am
North Fareham  Jon Johnson 01329 824458 <a href="mailto:jjohnson@fareham.gov.uk">jjohnson@fareham.gov.uk</a>	Valentine Close	4 November 2014 at 10am
	Menin House (meet outside Menin House)	6 January 2015 at 10am





## Feedback from Estate Inspections

From October 2013 to June 2014, 8 estate inspections were carried out. Details of some of the sites visited, issues identified and outcomes are shown below:

Areas Inspected	What you said	What we did
Salerno House & Sicily House (11/02/2014)	Repair needed to upper floor communal door at Salerno House	Repaired
St Michael's House (04/03/2014)	Ceiling in communal stairwell leaking	Inspected and repaired
Bishopsfield Road – all flats and maisonette blocks (25/02/2014)	Report of general waste bins being full long before collection is due at 3 blocks	Reported to Waste Management to discuss a possible solution. The problem is being monitored
Northmore Close (10/02/2014)	None - all communal areas clean and tidy and door-entry system in full working order	
Birchen Close & Beverley Close (13/02/2014)	Uneven tarmac in parking area Dropped kerb enquiry	To be surveyed and assessed for repair Tenancy Services to install it next year
Frosthole Close (25/03/2014)	Rubbish dumped in recycling area Cars parked on pavement Hip tiles missing/need replacing on the roof Grounds behind flats 100 and 101 need tidying up	The rubbish has been removed, The Area Housing Estates Officer has written to offenders about parking, The tiles will be replaced Grounds maintenance work will be carried out.
Arras House, Gaza House, Nashe House & Hillson House (03/06/2014)	Uneven paving outside Gaza House and fly-tipping in the bin area at Arras House	Paving to be inspected and repaired. Fly-tipping removed.
Carberry Drive, Norgett Way and Foxbury Grove (19/06/2014)	Overgrown trees in some areas - some overhanging the footpaths.	Tree Officer to survey the area and assess if any work needs to be done.





## Update on Collingwood Court

**The redevelopment of Collingwood Court in the North West of Fareham is looking good and is due to be completed in early 2015.**

The new 40 person sheltered housing scheme will provide a mixture of 1 and 2 bedroom apartments for older people with private balconies, adapted bathrooms and buggy storage. If you are interested in moving to the scheme or downsizing your current

home please contact the Housing Options Team on 01329 236100.

The photos show Collingwood House before work began, work in progress and a final photo of how the new (now) Collingwood Court will look.

### Moving to a smaller property



If you would like to move from a larger property to something smaller, you may be eligible for financial help.

For example, if you live in a three bedroom home and only need one bedroom, you could be eligible for removal costs up to £500, plus an incentive payment of £1750. So, if living somewhere such as Collingwood Court appeals to you, please let us know. Payments are also available for those moving from two bedroom and four bedroom homes.

Collingwood Court before



Collingwood Court in progress



## Information for Leaseholders

### Home Improvements and Alterations

Your lease states that any alterations or additions to your home must not be carried out without written permission from the Council. Examples include window and door replacement and new central heating. Planning restrictions are much tighter for those living in flats or maisonettes. This means that planning permission is required for:

- Any garage, garden shed or greenhouse
- Hard standings including patios, wall or fence
- Any other work that would considerably alter the appearance of your flat or maisonette.

Permission is not required to fit shelving, built in wardrobes, new bathroom suites or kitchen units.

If you are not sure please check whether planning permission is needed. Any work that is undertaken without permission may be taken down or removed. Prosecutions can also be a consequence. Building regulation consent may also be required.



## Great grounds maintenance

**You will have seen the Grounds Maintenance Team cutting the grass verges and working on the roundabouts where you live. Do you know that they also look after the sports fields, parks, cemeteries, Sheltered Housing Schemes and Fareham in Bloom? All of this work is carried out by just a small team.**

I had the opportunity to visit Stubbington recently with Jane Cresdee, Senior Housing Management Officer and Andy Collins, Grounds Maintenance Supervisor, who explained the different types of equipment used from tractors for sports grounds, to rotary mowers for smaller areas. We looked at the bowling green (which is very well kept), the sports pitches and Crofton Court, where

we met two of the residents who maintain the garden themselves.

Over the years some of us have probably moaned about the grass cutting, but, thanks to the team, (who at times have to work in difficult conditions) things are kept looking neat and tidy.

*Yvonne Goddard is a Portchester tenant.*

## Carbon Monoxide and Gas escape awareness

**You can't see it, taste it or smell it but Carbon Monoxide (CO) can kill quickly without warning. It is a colourless, odourless, tasteless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete burning of gas, oil, wood and coal.**

It can also be caused by gas appliances and flues that have not been properly installed, maintained or that are poorly ventilated.

Symptoms to look out for include headaches or dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, loss of consciousness and tiredness.

What should you do if you think one of your appliances is giving off carbon monoxide, or if you can smell gas?

**Call the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999**

You will be asked for your address and postcode and a series of questions designed to help them build a picture of the reported gas escape or gas emergency. This will help them give the right gas safety advice for you - such as opening doors and windows, turning the gas off at the meter and avoiding the use of any naked flames or electrical switches.



## Frosthole Close resident reaches 100!

**Kathleen Patricia Richards (known as Pat) turned 100 years old earlier this year.**

Pat was born on 16th March 1914 at an army hospital in Portsmouth. She attended schools in Bermuda, Borden, Netley and Stamshaw. When she left school she worked for Johnson George Drapers as a sales assistant.

At the age of 19, Pat married Frederick William Richards and went on to have a daughter and son. Sadly, Frederick was killed in the Second World War at the age of 31 and Pat was left to bring up her children on her own. Unfortunately, Pat lost her son when he was only 53 years of age.



Pat lived in Portsmouth for 31 years; she has also lived in Australia and Hong Kong. She eventually came to live in Fareham in 2007 and has lived in Frosthole Close since then. She is regularly visited by her family and has 4 grandchildren and 8 great-grandchildren.

We hope you had a great birthday, Pat!

## Contact

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

**Email:** [jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk) **or tel:** 01329 824463

**Email:** [hsaich@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:hsaich@fareham.gov.uk) **or tel:** 01329 824499

**Website:** [www.fareham.gov.uk](http://www.fareham.gov.uk) (look under Housing; Existing Council Tenants and then Tenant and Leaseholder involvement).

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## Letters and poems to the Editor

Do you have something you would like to share with other tenants and leaseholders? 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 your ideas. It could be a letter, poem, recipe or a photo. If it is published, you will then be sent a shopping voucher.

Please send in to Jennie Larkin by email: [jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk](mailto:jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk)

or by post to: Jennie Larkin, Civic Offices, Civic Way, Fareham, Hampshire. PO16 7AZ.

