

# Roddons life

spring 2008

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## A big thank you to residents and staff!

I'm delighted to report that we have delivered all of our 100-day promises to residents, as you can see on page 3.

You told us that you were keen to see how quickly we could deliver something tangible and, thanks to the enormous efforts of Roddons' staff, we have done this.

There is still so much to do, but we are committed to fulfilling all our promises and to putting residents at the heart of everything we do.

We are listening to you and taking all your views into account as we deliver our new services, so please keep telling us what you think.

**Pauline Ford**  
Managing Director of  
Roddons Housing Association

## Status survey thanks

Thanks to residents who took part in the recent STATUS survey. Your feedback is valuable to us and we will report the findings in the summer edition. During the survey we received a number of complaints about the interviewers rushing and being difficult to understand. We immediately reported this to the survey company and changes were made. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience. As the survey is anonymous we are unable to write to individuals.

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## Can you help us improve Roddons' services?

Would you like to become a mystery shopper and help us improve the services we offer? We are looking for residents to test out how we handle different problems on the telephone, in the Roddons office and in Fenland District Council @ your Service Shops.

Training will be provided, with any transport and childcare costs covered, and mystery shoppers will be asked to carry out a number of mystery 'shops' and telephone calls a year. Mystery shoppers will be given different scenarios to use and provided with log sheets to complete to compare their experiences.

"We would particularly like residents who aren't normally involved with Roddons to come forward, especially younger people," says Fiona Bebbington, Assistant Director of Continuous Improvement.

For more information contact Fiona on **01354 662821** or email [fiona.bebbington@circleanglia.org](mailto:fiona.bebbington@circleanglia.org)

## Look out for your new residents' handbook

All residents should receive a new copy of their residents' handbook - which contains up-to-date information on our new policies and services - within the next few months.

The handbook, which has been put together by staff and residents, contains all the information you need, from reporting a repair to how to make a complaint.

# Residents enjoy new services as Roddons delivers its 100-day promises

It's been a hectic few months for staff at Roddons as they were determined to deliver every one of their 100-day promises, including some great new services for residents.

Managing Director Pauline Ford has spent a great deal of time talking and listening to residents and is delighted with the feedback she has received.

"People I have spoken to have been incredibly supportive and are prepared to be patient in order to get things done right first time. They have given us a very clear message - they don't want us to rush into things, they would rather they were set up well and done properly.

"We have hit all our targets so far, but we know we have a lot to do over the next few years."

The key things Roddons has achieved so far include:

- Launching a new gardening, handyperson and decorating service. "We have had a phenomenal response, with hundreds of residents saying they are interested in using this service," says Pauline. "For just £1 a week residents will get 12 one-hour visits a year from a gardener. They can also get free help from a handyperson and two rooms decorated in five years.
- Starting to deliver on new homes. Workers are on site in

Gorefield where nine new homes are being built. "This is something residents are very interested in," says Pauline. "There are more than 2,000 people on the waiting list and families want to know that homes will be available for the next generation. We are committed to building 500 new homes over the next five years."

- Getting our investment programme underway. Roddons is working with contractor Apollo on 35 homes in three villages to bring them up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard. "We have launched a fairly small programme to start with as we need to establish the partnership with Apollo and get some initial feedback from residents," explains Pauline.
- Tackling environmental improvements. Roddons has started to tackle issues like car parking on estates.
- Delivered the first round of grants from the Community Fund. See page eight for more details.
- Appointing a new anti-social behaviour officer. Turn to page five to find out more!

"We are pleased with what we have achieved so far, but are now moving on quickly," says Pauline. "The next things we are looking at include a wider range of payment methods, improving services for older people and dealing with the backlog of requests for aids and adaptations."

**Pictured is resident Phyllis Tuck with Jeff Dix from Roddons**



# Meet the Neighbourhood Services team



**Pictured back row  
left to right:**

**Graham Wilson,  
Andy Gilson and  
David Willis**

**Front row left to  
right: Ralph Wilson  
and Dave Suttle**

**Your Neighbourhood Services team deals with a huge range of issues from day-to-day housing management to anti-social behaviour and resident involvement.**

The team is lead by **Ralph Wilson**, neighbourhood manager. Ralph is responsible for a team of five neighbourhood officers, one anti-social behaviour officer and a resident involvement officer. The targets this year are to improve estate inspections, increase resident involvement, improve the way we deal with anti-social behaviour and deliver a more responsive service to residents.

#### **The Neighbourhood Officers are:**

- **Graham Wilson**, who has special responsibility for all of the sheltered schemes owned by Roddons. He also manages Chatteris and Manea for now and is working to ensure a smooth handover of our leasehold properties to Circle Anglia. He is very involved in the final stages of some modernisation programmes.
- **Andy Gilson**, who covers the Waterlees Ward of Wisbech together with some outlying villages.
- **David Willis**, who manages the remainder of Wisbech and other villages.
- **David Suttle**, who acts as a support officer, taking on work throughout the area to help the other neighbourhood officers.
- There is also a vacant post that we hope to fill very quickly.

These officers are responsible for managing properties owned by Roddons, but are extending their areas to take into account the needs of the whole community.

They deal with:

- New residents, from the initial viewing to signing the tenancy agreement when the property is ready to let.
- Initial reports of anti-social behaviour or neighbour complaints.
- Estate management, for their own informal walkabout through to the larger annual inspections. They are always happy for residents to approach them during these inspections to tell them what they want from their community.
- Encouraging residents to become more involved in the shaping of Roddons' future.

The neighbourhood officers will change areas every few months so they can get to know the whole district and residents can get to know the team.

The newest addition to the team is anti-social behaviour officer **Sherradin Lee** -you can find out more about her on page five. Sherradin will be developing links with other groups or agencies who play a part in reducing anti-social behaviour. Her main focus will be on preventing anti-social behaviour but she will also get involved when problems occur.

The final member of the team is resident involvement officer **Sally Taylor**, who was featured in the previous issue of Roddons Life. Her role is to work with residents to give them the chance to get involved in how we run Roddons and develop homes and services.

## Sherradin is on a mission to tackle anti-social behaviour



Some good old-fashioned community spirit would go a long way towards solving some anti-social behaviour problems, according to Sherradin Lee.

Sherradin, a neighbourhood officer before becoming anti-social behaviour officer, says it's sad that people don't know their neighbours any more.

"People seem to shy away from saying good morning to their neighbours, which is a terrible shame," says Sherradin. "If people got to know each other it would help to prevent problems."

Sherradin, who took up her post at the end of January, hopes to introduce good neighbour policies, as well as new initiatives such as an anti-graffiti programme.

"I want to create happier, safer communities," says Sherradin. "A lot of my work will be around prevention and education."

Sherradin has also reassured residents that they can contact her in confidence. "People are often afraid their name will be passed on to the people subjecting them to ASB, but I can guarantee them anonymity."

Sherradin, who hopes to widen her role from just dealing with Roddons' residents to looking at the whole community, is already forging strong links with other agencies, such as the police and social services.

## Roddons provides funding for local ASB project

Roddons has teamed up with a local secondary school in a bid to tackle, and prevent, anti-social behaviour (ASB).

We are sponsoring a book, produced by the Children's Safety Education Foundation as part of the campaign to implement the Government's Respect agenda in schools.

Called *Respect - Your Life, Your Choice* - the book covers topics such as ASB, bullying, domestic violence, vandalism and drugs and will form part of the Citizenship programme at Thomas Clarkson Community College in Wisbech.

As well as paying for booklets for each Year 7 and Year 8 pupil, Roddons' staff will talk to the youngsters about ASB and how it affects the whole community.

"This is an excellent project to get involved in," says Fiona Bebbington, assistant director of continuous improvement.

"It is still in the early stages, but we want to build a relationship with the school and the young people in the community. We want to know exactly what the children learn from this programme and measure the impact this has on problems like ASB in the area."

## Residents Forum takes to the road



The Residents Forum is going on the road and bringing its meetings to a town near you!

Forum members are keen to see as many residents as possible. So why not come along and tell us what you think about Roddons.

"Your views really are important to us. The more ideas we have from you will help us shape the future of Roddons and improve the service we can offer," says Sally Taylor, resident involvement officer.

Resident Forum meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month at 9.45am. Upcoming meetings are **Falcon Hotel, Whittlesey (April 2), South Fens Business Centre, Chatteris (May 7), Oasis Centre, Wisbech (June 4) and Oliver Cromwell Hotel, March (July 2).**

Call Sally on **01354 602150** if you'd like to find out more.

# Celebrating community fund success

**Roddons' first community fund recipients met at a special gathering to celebrate their successes.**

A total of nearly £200,000 was shared among 27 groups across the Fenland area, covering a range of needs and involving all sections of the community. The cash windfall is part of the promises Roddons made when it took over the running of homes from Fenland District Council. Roddons has pledged that the community fund will distribute £1 million to worthy causes over the next five years.

At the event, on Tuesday March 11, held at the Oliver Cromwell hotel in March, representatives from the majority of the successful groups were able to hear how the money is being or will be spent to benefit the community.

Fiona Bebbington gave a presentation on the Community Fund 'journey' leading up to the distribution of the money.

Then five of the community groups – Young People March, Neale-Wade Community College, Wisbech Schools Project, Fenland and Marshland Alzheimer's Society and The Bobby Scheme gave presentations.

Each group explained about their schemes or projects and then demonstrated how the Roddons funding will be spent.

Fiona Bebbington, Assistant Director for Continuous Improvement, said: "Our community fund for 2007 has been hugely successful and we

were delighted and overwhelmed at the amount of bids we received following our roadshows in the summer.

"Roddons is very pleased to be able to provide funding for 27 Fenland organisations. We are confident that the money will benefit huge sections of the community. Unfortunately we had a limited budget so were unable to offer financial help to all of those groups that asked for it."

**Among the success stories are:**

## Young People March

The future of this much-needed youth project is secure, thanks to a grant of more than £16,600 from Roddons.

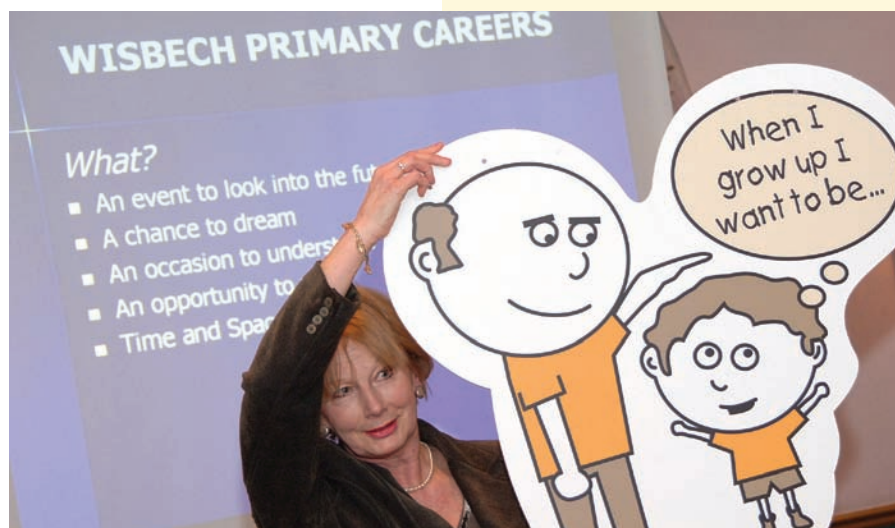
Youth workers were concerned they would have to shut some of their services – so they were delighted when they heard they had been successful in their bid for funding.

"We really thought we would have to scale down our work, so the cash from Roddons has been our saviour," says Sarah Brown, Youth Worker and Manager at the centre in City Road.

"We offer a range of services for people aged seven to 25 and we are so grateful for this cash." The money will enable YPM to offer more sessions including a weekly club for 11-15 year olds, a weekly club for seven-11 year olds, additional drop-in sessions for young people aged 11-25 and a yearly holiday programme."

## March Brass 2000

The group has purchased two new cornets thanks to a donation of £2,400 from Roddons. The brass band equipment is being used by both junior and the senior band members. Chairman Peter Sutterby said: "We are very pleased to receive this money which has enabled us to buy new instruments. Roddons has helped us to ensure we continue to provide instruments for use by local people. We offer a great





Pictured: Bottom left: Pam Clark of Wisbech Schools Project. Above Left - Members of the Guyhirn Village Hall committee. Right - Bowthorpe Board Member Simon King, Bowthorpe Deputy Manager David Tew and Roddons Board Member Gill Smith.

service to the community as people interested in playing instruments can come and learn without having the huge expense of buying their own equipment. We rely on donations and are really grateful to Roddons for its support.”

### Leverington Link

Based at Leverington Primary School, this scheme has been given £7,458 to purchase new computer equipment and digital cameras for its purpose-built computer suite for adult learners in the community. Headteacher Rosie Simmonds said she was “absolutely delighted” with the funding.

### Magpas

Magpas can set up two new Community First Responder schemes in Wisbech and Friday Bridge thanks to its grant award.

Volunteers will be trained to provide life-saving treatment to members of the public as they await emergency assistance. There is currently no such scheme in the Wisbech area and

it will become one of 30 schemes across Cambridgeshire.

Magpas is currently looking for volunteers for its Wisbech responder scheme. Applicants should be aged 18-70, have a full driving license and access to a car. Anyone interested can email [Lorna@magpas.org](mailto:Lorna@magpas.org) for details.

### Benwick Butterflies

Benwick Butterflies Pre-School Group received £1,986 to set up a holiday club for four-12-year-olds. Spokeswoman Jenny Fell said: “We are delighted to receive this funding. As a charity, setting up the holiday club was just not possible without this grant funding. We are small village and there are currently no holiday facilities here for school children.”

The money has been spent on a range of indoor and outdoor toys and games.

### Guyhirn village hall

A £10,000 grant will be spent on new flooring as part of the much-needed improvements to the building.

Vice chairman Sue Pitcher, said: “This grant is fantastic and we are so thrilled. It is going to make a huge difference to the village and will bring the hall into the 21st century. The hall is well used but its current state can put groups off so these improvements will ensure the hall is fully utilised.”

### Bowthorpe Centre

The highest award went to the Bowthorpe Centre, Wisbech, which will receive £43,000 to develop the Fenland Bridge Building Programme. This aims to build sustainable links between isolated groups and individuals with mental health support needs and community services across Fenland.

David Cullen from the Bowthorpe Centre said: “We are very excited at the prospect of enabling more people to become integrated into the community and breakdown the stigma surrounding mental health issues. It will help to improve our ability to support people with mental health needs.”



Back row: Roddons' Calvin Fisher, Steve Smith and Graham Duncan from the Apollo Group and Karl Carr from Roddons.

Front row: Roddons Board Chairman Brenda Reynolds, resident Margaret Rust and Abi Large from the Apollo Group.

## £35million contract for Roddons' Decent Homes work

**A five year £35 million contract between contractors Apollo and Roddons will ensure that residents' homes are brought up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard as quickly as possible.**

Apollo and Roddons will regularly communicate with residents throughout this process.

Roddons will survey all of its homes this year to see how many need to be brought up to the standard.

Roddons' asset manager Karl Carr said: "The partnership is cost effective, the work will be done quicker and we will deal with the same staff which is good for residents. Apollo will work closely with residents from start to finish."

Coates resident Margaret Rust was the first to benefit from a refurbished kitchen following the appointment of Apollo.

Mrs Rust has lived in her South Green home for 25 years. She said: "I was not sure whether I wanted all the upheaval of having my old kitchen replaced but I am very glad that I decided to go ahead with the works. It is very nice – there's so much more room now that my old pantry has gone, and everyone who visits says what a lovely kitchen I now have."

Brenda Reynolds, chair of Roddons board, said: "I am happy to see that Mrs Rust is delighted with her kitchen, and that each resident receives a bespoke kitchen to fit their requirements, colour and choices.

"I think that the kitchen is brilliant and there has been good communication with tenants."

Abi Large is one of Apollo's resident liaison officers who will ensure Roddons residents are kept fully informed of works to their homes.

## Need a helping hand? Give Bridget a call!

Residents now have access to a faster aids and adaptations service, thanks to the appointment of occupational therapist Bridget Peake.

Bridget, who started her new role in January 2008, deals with all requests from residents who need a bit of extra support to help them stay independent in their own homes.

“Roddons promised residents they would get a faster service and I’ve been employed to help get the waiting lists down and speed up the process for people”, says Bridget.

Residents who feel they need equipment or changes made to their home, should call the

Contact Centre on **0845 650 2150** so that our staff can carry out a basic phone assessment.

- If the request is straight forward, such as handrails for the stairs or a raised toilet seat, they will send an order for the equipment through to Bridget who will check it and pass it onto the relevant contractors.
- If the job is bigger – such as a request for a level access shower or downstairs toilet – Bridget will carry out a full assessment. The request will then go to a panel who make the final decision.

“Larger cases have to go through the panel to ensure everyone is being treated fairly,” says Bridget.

## Appeal for a new tenant board member

Roddons Housing Association board looks after the interests of our tenants and leaseholders across Fenland. Board members are crucial to our work and come from various walks of life including local councillors, residents and other local people.

Among the board’s responsibilities is to ensure that Roddons sets priorities, approves budgets and ensures money is spent responsibly.

Members are expected to positively promote Roddons’ work and work with staff and the community to get the best possible outcomes for both the organisation and its customers.

Board members are unpaid volunteers but all expenses are fully reimbursed. There is currently a vacancy for a tenant board member, where full

training and support will be provided.

**Would you like to make a difference to the future of Roddons?** If you have the commitment and drive and are willing to give up some time to help run a social enterprise that provides homes and care for thousands of people and their families across Fenland, you could be just the person we need.

**If you are interested please contact Angela Firman on 01603 703804 or e-mail [angela.firman@circleanglia.org](mailto:angela.firman@circleanglia.org) for an application pack.**

**For an informal chat please call Managing Director Pauline Ford at Roddons on 01354 662810.**

We look forward to hearing from you.

## We’re updating our housing management computer system



A new housing management computer system is being introduced at Roddons in May. This will enable our staff to deal more effectively with your queries and brings us into line with the other Circle Anglia partners. It will also enable us to offer tenants more choice in the way they pay their rent in the future.

As part of the changeover tenants will be given new rent account numbers and this will have an affect on payment cards and standing orders. You do not have to do anything as Roddons will contact every tenant and provide new rent account numbers.

The new system will allow Roddons to set up new payment methods including direct debit and Allpay through outlets including shops and post offices. The Fenland@Your Service shops in Whittlesey, March, Chatteris and Wisbech will still be linked to this system so tenants can pay rent there or ask about any queries.

Roddons ICT project manager Chris Johnson said: “The new system will allow us to give our customers more choice and means that we can make improvements to the procedure of rent payments and help us answer queries more efficiently.”

# Stunning spring gardens

Put your green fingers to work this spring and enjoy some fresh air and exercise! No matter whether you have a large lawn or just a window box, sprucing up the greenery in and around your home can make a dramatic improvement.



Whether you are as experienced as Alan Titchmarsh, or a complete beginner, our top tips will help your home and garden look blooming marvellous in no time!

## The perfect lawn

- Give your lawn a good rake and get rid of dead leaves and moss.
- Stock up on lawn seed so you can tackle any bald patches.
- Avoid weed killers if they are not needed. Apply a regular fertiliser every 10-12 weeks instead to keep your lawn healthy.
- Regular cutting is a must – this will help your grass grow thick and strong.

## Beautiful bedding plants

- Add instant colour by planting flowering bedding plants. They grow fast, are excellent value for money and all you need is a fork, trowel, hoe and watering can to get started.
- Bedding plants should grow in sunny or lightly shaded and sheltered areas. Make sure the beds are weed-free before you get planting.
- Plant fuchsias, marigolds, begonias, pansies or lobelias at the end of May for a splash of summer colour.

## Wonderful window boxes and perfect pots

- Plant pots and boxes now so you get a lovely burst of colour in spring and long into the summer.
- Clean old compost and soil from pots and use a mild disinfectant and water to clean.
- Dampen the soil in your pots and leave it to swell for half an hour. Then you're ready to plant.
- Choose flowers that are already in bud for an instant burst of colour – beautiful!

## House plants

- House plants can bring a touch of greenery into any home, and are ideal if you live in a flat.
- They don't take too much looking after. In fact, most house plants prefer to dry out between watering.
- Stand house plants in a dish, add water and let them suck it up. That way they get just the right amount. Once it's dry, just top up the dish.
- Avoid strong heat or chilly draughts as this can shock them!



## Free sunflower seeds for every reader!

If our top tips have given you inspiration in the garden, why not have a go at growing your own sunflower? We have a free pack of sunflower seeds for the first 100 readers who fill in the form below and post it back to: **Karen Rowley, Circle Anglia, Freepost IH3455, Norwich, NR7 0HR** by May 15th.

And if you think your sunflower could be prize-winning, then send us a photo and we'll print the best ones in the summer edition.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_  
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# Chocolate Puddle Pudding



The children will love this delicious dessert and it is quick and easy to make.

**You will need:**

- 50g (2oz) soft butter
- 50g (2oz) sugar
- 1 large free range egg
- 100g (4oz) self raising flour
- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 tablespoons cold water
- 1 packet chocolate buttons
- A jug containing:
  - 1 1/2 cups cold water
  - 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
  - 50g (2oz) sugar
- A greased oven dish

1. Place the butter, sugar, egg, flour, 1 tablespoon cocoa powder and vanilla extract in a large bowl and mix well, until there are no lumps. You can use an electric mixer, a wooden spoon or a strong whisk to do this.
2. Empty the chocolate buttons into the mixture and stir them in gently with a spoon.
3. Use a spoon to empty the mixture into a greased oven dish. Gently pour the watery mixture in the jug over the cake mixture you have spooned into the greased oven dish.
4. Bake for 40 minutes at 170°C (moderate) and serve.

Send your magazine stories to: Karen Rowley, Marketing and Communications Dept, Circle Anglia, 6 Central Avenue, St Andrews Business Park, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 0HR

**BLOSSOM**   **CHICK**   **HOLIDAY**   **SUNSHINE**  
**BRIGHT**   **DAFFODIL**   **LAMB**

C	H	I	C	K	D	Q	N
D	A	T	H	G	I	R	B
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Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

All competition entries should be sent to: Karen Rowley, Marketing and Communications Dept, Circle Anglia, 6 Central Avenue, St Andrews Business Park, Norwich, NR7 0HR by May 15th.

Under 16s can complete this wordsearch for a chance to win £25 of High Street Vouchers.

# Here to help

## How the out-of-hours' service works

Invicta Telecare provides the out-of-hours' service for Roddons.

If you have an emergency outside working hours that requires immediate attention dial **01354 660789** to be transferred to the out-of-hours' service.

You will hear an automated message where you can opt to report anti-social behaviour or repairs, you are then transferred to an operator.

If you have an emergency repair the operator will ask you questions to clarify what is required, if an emergency

tradesman is necessary one will be sent out within 2 hours, non emergency requests will be referred to the next working day.

If you are phoning to report anti-social behaviour your details will be recorded, along with details of the incident you are reporting and you will be given advice. The incident records will be passed to Roddons' neighbourhood team who will contact you the next working day. Keeping records in this way, as incidents occur, can be strong evidence if the case eventually goes before the courts.

## Disability equality scheme:

Circle Anglia is committed to ensuring that disabled people are treated in a way that enables them to access our services. Our disability equality scheme and action plan ensures that this happens. We have listened to the views of our customers and employees in order to develop this plan,

gaining important feedback from disabled residents and staff.

Our full action plan is available on Circle Anglia's website at [www.circleanglia.org/customers](http://www.circleanglia.org/customers) or by calling **01603 703561**.

## Tell us what you think about housing

Housing issues have been in the national spotlight a lot in recent weeks.

Housing Minister Caroline Flint caused controversy earlier this year when she commented that people in social housing should be forced to find work or face losing their homes.

Circle Anglia's group partners take a positive approach to help our residents with more than just housing needs.

Do you think Caroline Flint's comments are justified? Do you think such an idea could work? Do housing associations do enough

to improve employment opportunities for residents?

Other topical housing issues include meeting housing needs while maintaining green spaces. Do you have any thoughts on how to better meet its housing demand? Should more be done to ensure new homes are green and energy efficient?

We'd love to hear your thoughts about housing related issues. Please write to **Karen Rowley, Circle Anglia, Freepost IH3455, Norwich NR7 0HR**

## Roddons Life is produced by Circle Anglia

**We hope you enjoy reading this magazine.** However, if you no longer wish to receive this, please write to the Marketing and Communications Team at **Circle Anglia, 6 Central Avenue, St Andrews Business Park, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, NR7 0HR**

If you require this publication in **large print, audio, Braille or an alternative format**, or you need this document translated into a different language, please call **01603 703561** and we will do our best to help.

**The next issue will be printed at the end of June 2008.**



This magazine is printed on paper which is obtained from sustainable sources.

