

# Roddons life

Winter 2008

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## Happy Birthday – Roddons One Year On



As we head towards 2009, it's the ideal time to take a few minutes to reflect on some of the things that have happened in the last twelve months. It has been a busy and eventful time since the transfer and we've all come a long way in a short time.

The Roddons five year investment programme is now delivering results, and many of you will be moving into the new year with new kitchens, bathrooms and boilers. Work has begun on driveways and the creation of communal parking. The decorating and gardening service set up during 2008 is proving to be very popular for odd jobs around the house.

2008 has also been about tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB). Over the last twelve months an ASB strategy has been developed and a reporting system has been set up. In charge of it all we've now got a dedicated ASB officer, Tanya Watson.

Perhaps the biggest change of all during 2008 though, has been the way in which you are getting involved and helping to steer the future of Roddons. You now play a crucial role by driving things forward whether it is as a member of a Tenant Advisory Group, providing feedback on an informal basis as a Casual Active Tenant, or by simply popping into the Chatting Cafe to discuss things with our officers.

With so many projects underway, and with so many people getting involved, 2009 is sure to be another busy and productive year for all of us.

*Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.*

Best wishes,

*Pauline Ford*  
Managing Director,  
Roddons Housing Association



# The future's looking bright

As Roddons Housing Association approaches its first anniversary I have to say how pleased I am with the progress it has made. As Chair of the Residents' Forum, I get to see more than most the challenges faced by the organisation as well as its achievements. And as the organisation develops, the services it provides will continue to improve, so the future is looking bright.

Being Chair of the Residents' Forum means that I have the opportunity to speak to residents and hear your views. I like to think that any of you would be happy to come and talk to me, whether you want advice or a friendly chat. We are working hard to get young people involved, so that as residents we can continue to make a difference into the future.

As Roddons progresses into its second year, I hope that more residents will take an active involvement in the events, meetings and opportunities that are on offer. After all, to make things better, Roddons needs to know what we think is important. I hope to join many of you at meetings and events in 2009.



## Opening Hours over Christmas and New Year;

**Our office will close at 12.45pm on Christmas Eve and re-open for business on Monday 29 December.**

**We will be open between Christmas and New Year closing at 5.00pm on Wednesday 31st December.**

**We will also be closed on 1st and 2nd of January.**

**Out of hours cover will be provided by Invicta Telecare and the telephones will be diverted as usual. We will have standby cover for emergency repairs.**

**Contact Details Roddons Housing Association including out of hours emergency cover is 01354 660789.**

# Winter Money Worries

The Christmas period can put a strain on your finances, which this year may already be more stretched than normal. If you're worried about being able to pay your rent or would simply like help managing your money, Roddons can help, along with other local organisations.

## Where to go for help?

Inclusion Officer. She can give you advice on debt problems or help you to claim benefits. Whatever your financial worries, Yvonne is here to help. She will be happy to answer your questions, either in a visit to your home or at one of our offices. Contact Yvonne on 01354 602190, email: [Yvonne.wilson@circleanglia.org](mailto:Yvonne.wilson@circleanglia.org) or write to her at the main Roddons address.

Your local **Citizens Advice Bureau** offers free advice on many things including debt management. Visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) or look in the phone book to find your local branch.

**National Debtline** provides FREE confidential and independent advice on how to deal with debt problems. Their website has factsheets and a personal budget tool as well as sample letters to send to creditors. [www.nationaldebtline.co.uk](http://www.nationaldebtline.co.uk) or **0808 808 4000**.

**Consumer Credit Counselling Service** is a registered charity offering free, confidential advice and support to anyone who is worried about debt. They have an online debt counselling service and a free helpline with trained advisors. [www.cccs.co.uk](http://www.cccs.co.uk) or **0800 138 1111**.



### Rent arrears

You must keep paying your rent over the festive season. Rent payments can be a worry for everybody, but it is important that you make rent a priority. If you are consistently behind with payments you could face court action. If you are struggling with your rent payments then please get in touch with us as soon as possible. We can help you put together a plan to pay your rent off at a steady pace without stretching your finances.

### Direct Debit Payments

Have you considered paying your rent by Direct Debit? This is a popular way of paying as you don't have to remember to make a payment each month. Simply call income team and arrange to pay a manageable, set amount on a regular basis and the payments will be taken automatically from your bank account. This will leave you with one less thing to worry about.

# Happy Birthday Roddons!

Roddons Housing Association celebrated its first anniversary in November and the Residents Forum marked the occasion by presenting MD of Roddons, Pauline Ford, with a special hand made birthday card by Shirley Wilson, one of the Forum's members.



## Gas and electricity update

Roddons has now completed the re-tendering of the companies that supply gas and electricity to our common areas. The process was an open and competitive and has enabled us to guarantee the best deal for residents.

The energy market is still fluctuating but we are now contracted for fixed prices with the two companies that supplied us with the lowest tender - Scottish and Southern Energy Plc. As the lowest bidders, will continue to be our group supplier of electricity alongside Total Gas and Power who will be supplying our gas.


If you have any queries about this matter, please do not hesitate to contact your local Neighbourhood Officer.



# Making the switch

There's not long to go until the country's analogue TV signal is shut down, and digital TV becomes the only option. Here's our no-nonsense guide to the digital switchover.



- **When will the switchover happen?**  
Different regions switch at different times. The Anglia region is due to go digital in 2011.
- **Will I need a new TV?**  
Probably not. Your current one can almost certainly be converted using a digital box.
- **What if I already have digital TV?**  
You need to make sure all your sets are converted to digital TV. If only your main set is digital you will need to buy a freeview box for the others, or add them to your digital TV subscription.
- **Will I need a new aerial?**  
If your current aerial is getting good reception, it is unlikely you will need a new one. If you do need a new aerial, you should look for a Registered Digital Installer who carries the **digital**  logo. This means they have been trained and security checked. Work should cost between £80 and £150.

**You should never agree to have aerial work carried out by someone who calls without an appointment or has no identification.**

- **Can I get any extra help?**  
If you're entitled to Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance or a mobility supplement, are registered blind or partially sighted or are over the age of 75 then you can get help with switching one TV set to digital. You will have to pay a subsidised amount of £40 towards it.

*For more details on how to obtain this subsidy please contact the SwitchOver Help Scheme on Freephone 0800 4085 900.*

**We will be replacing aerials in shared or communal areas. If you have an individual aerial and it needs to be changed, we can help you find a Registered Digital Installer. Call us on 01354 660789 for more information.**

**Digital UK** is the not-for-profit company responsible for leading the UK's switchover from analogue to digital TV. Their website [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk) has lots of information about the switchover and you can also call them if you have any questions about how the switchover will affect you. Call their Contact Centre on 08456 50 50 50.

# New homes for Roddons rent



Roddons is delighted to announce the opening of a new affordable housing scheme at London Road in Chatteris.

The London Road development is the first to be delivered as part of Roddons' promise to start building more affordable homes for rent. It is based in a quiet cul-de-sac location with a private parking court and comprises of eight two bedroom homes which

include four two bedroom bungalows, and are a mixture of shared ownership and rental properties.

Pauline Ford said, "When Roddons was formed last year, we made a number of promises to residents about how we would improve their homes and neighbourhoods. Building new affordable housing was one of these and we are thrilled to be opening this new

quality development just one year on."

Brenda Reynolds, Chair of Roddons and a resident added: "It's been a fresh start for us all over the past year and, from a resident's perspective, I can say that it's really good to know that the things that are important to us are starting to happen. It's not all been easy, but we're getting there and that's what matters."

## How are we performing?

Performance Area	Actual	Target
Rent & service charge collection	96.4%	100.1%
Current tenants arrears	5.4%	3.1%
Average number of days to re-let properties	45.5 days	25.0 days
Vacant dwellings as a % of stock	1.4%	0.9%
Routine repairs	90.8%	n/a
Repairs completed at first visit	85.5%	80.0%
Complaints resolved at first stage	98.4%	n/a
Customer satisfaction with repairs	97%	85.0%

### Brand new Roddons website

In January 2009, Roddons Housing Association will have a full-blown website presence.



We recently consulted all Circle Anglia Housing Associations as to what improvements we could make to our online services, to provide a one-stop shop for self-service, queries and community interaction through the web.

New features will include:

- Searchable maps for activities, amenities and opportunities in your community
- The ability to view your rent statements
- Question and answer forums to chat with residents
- All the latest news and customer information

### Everyone wants to be a quitter

If your New Year's resolution is to give up smoking then Roddons Housing Association wants to help.

There are now 100 places where you can get help to kick the habit from NHS CAMQUIT, the specialist 'stop smoking' service for this region. Help is available from local GPs and pharmacists.

It is estimated that smoking kills more than 750 people in Cambridgeshire alone each year. The cost of cigarettes is pretty scary too. Quitting a pack-a-day habit could save you more than £30 a week.

Whatever the reason, more and more people are giving up. Over 2,800 people stubbed out the habit in Cambridgeshire last year with help from NHS CAMQUIT.

To help as much as we can and to fulfil the legal requirement to do so, we've put up posters in all Roddons communal areas reminding everyone that these are now No Smoking zones. So if you're trying to give up in 2009, good luck, and you won't be surrounded by other smokers in our communal areas while you try to kick the habit.



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