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## Resident Involvement Group and MVHA Launch Joint Action Plan

In November last year staff from the Resident Involvement Team and the Chair of Resident Involvement Group (RIG) held an action planning day with residents.

The aim of the day was to agree how residents wanted to be involved in shaping MVHA's business and services over the coming year. The day also looked at what training residents might need to support their involvement and what we need to do to make sure we are including people from diverse backgrounds.

This is the first time MVHA or RIG had tried this approach and it turned out to be a great success. The ideas captured from the away day were worked up into a draft plan which RIG developed further. The completed document was agreed at RIG's committee meeting in

February. It was approved by MVHA's Board in March.

Roy Hobson, Chair of RIG said: "I was delighted that over 40 residents came along to the action planning day. The feedback from the day was very positive and I would like to thank everyone who took part for their support. We all want MVHA to deliver excellent services for us and MVHA needs residents to help them do this by saying what we want. Our action plan will help this happen and the RIG Committee will be monitoring progress carefully during the year to make sure the plan is delivered. I hope many more residents will choose to get involved this year. I'm sure there's something for everyone in our new plan".

A copy of the summary action plan, setting out the key points, is enclosed for



you with this newsletter. If you would like a copy of the full plan, you can download it from the website: [www.circleanglia.org/mole-](http://www.circleanglia.org/mole-valley)

[valley](http://www.circleanglia.org/mole-valley) or you can get a copy sent to you in the post by phoning the Resident Involvement Team on 01306 505558.

We hope you will find something of interest and we look forward to working with residents during the coming year. ■

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**F** **ACE**  
HAS THEIR FACE  
FALLEN ON ONE SIDE?  
CAN THEY SMILE?



**A** **RMS**  
CAN THEY RAISE  
BOTH ARMS AND  
KEEP THEM THERE?



**S** **PEECH**  
IS THEIR SPEECH  
SLURRED?



**T** **IME TO**  
**CALL 999**  
IF YOU SEE ANY SINGLE  
ONE OF THESE SIGNS

NHS

## MD Welcome



good to work with such a strong group of challenging and committed residents. If you would like to get more involved with the work of MVHA, please contact our resident involvement team at Regent House.

This edition focuses on a range of interesting topics – how to get help with managing money, plans for future grounds maintenance and cleaning services and details on the many ways you can get involved with MVHA. We also meet the repairs team and look at the introduction of some more of our transfer promises – a resident reward scheme and decorating service.

After such an extreme winter, let's hope we can look forward to a glorious spring and summer.

With best wishes

**David Searle**

Managing Director  
Mole Valley Housing  
Association

**W**elcome to the spring edition of Home Matters.

I am writing this introduction having just returned from a meeting of the Mole Valley Resident Involvement Group. We did some work as a group to consider our "Life Chances Plan". This is the plan which sets out all the important activities we have planned for this new financial year. These include new homes and major improvements to your homes, improved services including repairs, work to strengthen our communities, and the provision of care and support for our residents. It was really

## Tenant's View – Janet Chapman – Rough Rew, Dorking

**A**s a tenant of Rough Rew, I got involved when we went through the transfer from MVDC to MVHA and after the transfer I stepped down for a couple of years. Last year I went to the AGM and decided to get involved again. The reason I decided to was because we, as tenants, do a lot of complaining about things at the bus stop and the school gate but don't do much about it. We are being encouraged to have an opinion so I became a RIG committee member and a Residents Voice for my estate.

The first thing I have done as Residents Voice was to have a walkabout with the

Area Housing Manager to discuss things that needed improving on the estate. She took note of all of the things that we discussed and we will be meeting up again in two months for another one. This is the first time in 40 years that this has happened and it shows that getting involved does pay off.

So I'd like to say to all tenants, if you received an invitation to come to a meeting in your area about something that will affect you, come along and have your say. We as tenants must get involved and that is why there is a Resident Involvement Group – so come along and get involved.



If you are interested in becoming a Resident's Voice for your area, road or block we would like to hear from you and we will be happy to give you more information about this. Please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01306 505529/30.

## Free Resident Training

MVHA is in the process of putting together free training sessions for residents. The aim of this training programme is for residents to gain a better understanding of services and what to expect from MVHA as a landlord.

All training sessions will last for up to four hours and will be held at a local venue. We will be carrying

out training on a number of service areas including:

- Repairs service
- Voids and Allocations
- Complaints procedure
- Estate Inspections
- Resident Involvement

If you are interested in attending a training session, would like to find out more or if you have any suggestions for training please contact the

Resident Involvement Team on 01306 505 529/30 or email: [residentinvolvement@mvha.org.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@mvha.org.uk)

## Note from editor

Welcome to your Spring issue of Home Matters.

It's always good to hear residents' views and feedback on Home

Matters. If you have any comments or suggestions for improvements, please send these to

**The Editor**  
**Home Matters**  
**6 Central Avenue**  
**St Andrews Business Park**  
**Thorpe St Andrew**  
**Norwich**  
**NR7 0HR**

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## Residents' Voices for MVHA

**M**VHA have three new Residents' Voices representing residents living in Rough Rew Dorking, Porteridges Dorking and Church Gardens, Dorking. The three residents were nominated respectively by residents of their neighbourhood. Their role will be to act as a contact point between MVHA and residents. Mrs Janet Chapman will be representing Rough Rew, Dorking, Mrs Caroline Whyte will be representing Porteridges, Goodwyns and Mr Tony Butler will be

representing the residents of Church Gardens, Dorking.

If you are interested in becoming a Residents' Voice for your area, road or block we would like to hear from you and we will be happy to give you more information about this. Please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01306 505529/30. ■



## Annual change to your rent

**B**y now you should have received a letter detailing your annual rent increase and service charges. Most residents will see a modest increase; some will see a small reduction. The cost of providing some services has increased so we need to increase some service charges to cover these costs. This will ensure we are able to carry on providing services like repairs, improvements and tackling anti-social behaviour.

If you would like to discuss these rent or service charge changes further or are worried about paying your bills, please contact MVHA for further information. ■

## Enhancing Life Chances through Financial Inclusion

As part of our aim to enhance residents Life Chances, Circle Anglia has adopted a financial inclusion strategy, the aim of which is to ensure that every resident should be offered access to five basic financial services; advice, banking, credit, insurance, savings.

As part of this strategy, MVHA held a Walk – In Financial Advice event at the Christian Centre in Dorking on Monday 15th March 2010. This free event was aimed primarily at MVHA residents but was open to everyone in

the local community and we had a good turn out.

Residents enjoyed talks from key speakers including the Financial Services Authority, Trading Standards and the Consumer Credit Counselling Service to name a few. They highlighted specific areas of interest and also various stall holders were able to provide advice and guidance regarding financial queries that people had. Opportunities to discuss Job Seeking were also provided.



For more information log on to

[www.circleanglia.org/corporate/life-chances/financial-inclusion/](http://www.circleanglia.org/corporate/life-chances/financial-inclusion/)

## Don't get bitten by the shark!

Always remember loan sharks are illegal and charge very high interest rates at an average of 825 per cent APR. There are other ways you can access fair and affordable credit – find out about third sector credit providers such as credit unions that are in your local area and get in contact with them to discuss ways of accessing fair and affordable finance.

Your local Citizens Advice Bureau is available to give you free advice. If you think you've been the victim of a loan shark or that there is one operating in your community contact the Trading Standards Illegal Money Lending team on the 24/7 confidential

hotline 0300 555 2222 or text 'loan shark' and your message to 60003. They will help you deal with your situation and the loan shark. All reports are treated in confidence and the safety of the person calling is given the highest priority.

## Could you be a Resident Inspector?

MVHA is always aiming to improve services and we need your help to be successful. Becoming a Resident Inspector is one of the ways you can get involved in shaping service delivery. You will help to review service standards, test them to see if we are doing what we say we will, and report your findings and recommendations back to senior staff at MVHA.

Although no previous experience is necessary,

you will need to give up some time to be a successful inspector and take part in training to learn the necessary skills. In return, you will get the chance to work with other residents who are interested in inspecting their landlord, you'll gain new skills and you'll have the satisfaction of knowing you're helping to improve services for all MVHA residents.

We wouldn't expect you to sign up for this without more information and we're going to be holding some

taster sessions starting in May 2010, so you can come along, find out more and have a go at Resident Inspection, before deciding whether or not you want to take part.

All MVHA residents are welcome to become Resident Inspectors. If you are interested in attending the taster session and/or becoming a resident Inspector, please contact the Resident Involvement team on 01306 505 529/530 or email [Jumai.gukas@mvha.org.uk](mailto:Jumai.gukas@mvha.org.uk)

## Do you need household insurance?

Think how much it would cost you to replace your valuable items damaged by the floods, burst pipes or theft? Can you afford it?

Mole Valley Housing Association is making it easier for you to protect your belongings by offering you affordable contents insurance for tenants.

Call our friendly Customer Services team on 01306 505555 to find out more about weekly payment option and other benefits.

We strongly recommend you to insure your contents.



# Grounds Maintenance Review

We are currently reviewing our Grounds Maintenance service which includes grass cutting, tree, shrub and hedge pruning in communal areas. A new contract will be awarded to begin early next year. We know this is an important service for residents as it helps keep estates and communal areas looking good. We've encouraged

residents to 'get involved' in this project.

During 2009 we asked residents to complete a questionnaire about the services and to meet staff to talk about how the service can be improved. We used this information to begin planning what the new service should offer. We also set up a working group of 6 residents and MVHA staff. This group will be looking at

the entire process and will make sure that residents' views continue to shape the new service. The process has to be completed by Oct 2010 as the new contractors should be on site and working from 1st January 2011.

Potential contractors have now completed their submissions confirming their interest to submit prices for the Grounds Maintenance Contract. The

next step will be to hold a workshop to give an update on the process so far and to get your feedback on the plans for the new service. If you are interested in getting involved with the development of this service, let us know. We will send you an invitation. We can cover your travel, child care and carer costs if you need to attend any meetings.

You can contact us via email: [Estates.team@mvha.org.uk](mailto:Estates.team@mvha.org.uk) write to us or by telephone on 01306 505575 or fax 01306 505551 or call into our offices.

Your views count – if you have any comments or observations about the grounds maintenance service in your area, please let us know. ■

## Come and enjoy the Mole Valley Play Farm

As part of the links partnership MVHA has been supporting Links Play Farm. This Community led project involves developing a paddock area at the rear of St Johns school, Goodwyns. It will include a growing area for fresh produce and some small animals. Water will be supplied to the farm by our contractors United House who are keen to support local projects such as this. The play farm will be enjoyed



by the children from St Johns and the wider community. If you would like to get involved with this project or would like more information

please call 07789529489 or e-mail [linksplayfarm@hut.co.uk](mailto:linksplayfarm@hut.co.uk)



## Have your say on the Mole Valley Resident Reward Scheme

Incentive and reward schemes have been highlighted as good practice by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) - the governing body that MVHA and Circle Anglia report to. It was also one of the Transfer Promises that we said we would look at in 2010.

A reward scheme can take the form of a prize draw for residents who have paid their rent on time over the year, have kept their house and garden neat and tidy and have not been involved in any anti-social behaviour issues. It can also take the form of a payment for paying by direct debit, a payment

for leaving your house in a good state of repair or a payment for downsizing to a smaller property.

MVHA already offer some of these incentives. However, to see how far you – the residents – wish to take a reward system we invite you to a Focus Group to be held on Monday 10 May at Regent House.

There will be 2 sessions one from 10–12 and the other from 6–8pm.

Please ring Dave Jackson on 01306 505505 or email me at [dave.jackson@mvha.org.uk](mailto:dave.jackson@mvha.org.uk) should you wish to attend.

Light refreshments will be provided. We can help with child care, carer costs and transport for those who find it difficult to get here. There will also be a £10 voucher per household for everyone who attends. ■

## Grow your own at the community garden



MVHA is supporting the Leatherhead community garden which aims to promote organic growing, healthy eating, community learning and building community spirit. If you would like to volunteer for future work parties or would like more information then please contact Simon Woodhams on 01372 361082, e-mail [info@leatherheadcommunitygarden.org.uk](mailto:info@leatherheadcommunitygarden.org.uk) or check out website [www.leatherheadcommunitygarden.org.uk](http://www.leatherheadcommunitygarden.org.uk)



## Competition time is coming...

MVHA will be holding a best kept garden and best kept neighbourhood competition in the summer so start preparing yourself now.

The categories for the garden competition are:

- household garden
- communal garden
- window box
- hanging basket
- best young persons effort.
- best kept neighbourhood

Encourage your neighbours to take pride in where you all live.

If you would like more information then please contact Michelle McSorley in the Community Development Team on 01306 505531.



## Estate Inspections and Estate Walkabouts

Come and join us on an estate inspection or an estate walkabout. Your knowledge is valuable to us so if you have a spare half an hour to an hour, please come and join us.

### Estate Inspections

The Housing Management Team are out and about on site regularly, but at scheduled times every 12 weeks the team carry out inspections on estates which have communal areas such as internal halls and landings and or communal gardens. The team are specifically looking to:

- Identify any health or safety issues.
- Note any repairs that haven't previously been reported.
- Note any abandoned or illegally parked vehicles.
- Look at ways in which to improve the area.
- Check that estate services are being effectively delivered.

At the end of our inspection we give each site a rating of red, amber or green. Red is the lowest score and green being the highest score. Area

Housing Managers then action what needs doing to improve the appearance and safety etc.

### Estate and Community Walkabouts

In some locations we join forces with our residents, resident groups and our partners to look at the local community. Walkabouts cover a wider area and are not restricted to blocks which have communal areas. Partners including the Police and Officers from Mole Valley District Council will sometimes attend to identify areas of concern or areas for improvement.

### How can I get involved?

If you would like to join us on either an estate inspection or an estate walkabout, please contact our Customer Services Team on 01306 50 5555. To view the schedule of estate inspections log on to [www.circleanglia.org/mole-valley/resident-info](http://www.circleanglia.org/mole-valley/resident-info)

## MVHA gets to know its diverse residents

Are you one of MVHA's residents from a minority ethnic background?

If you are, we would like to hear from you and find out what you think about MVHA as a landlord. We invite you to attend MVHA's first Conversation Club.

This will be an informal session where you can meet staff, tell us what you think of us as your landlord and how we can involve you in shaping the services we provide. We would like to set this meeting up so that it's convenient for you. So if you would like to take part, tell us where and when you would like to meet & we will do our best to make it happen. MVHA will pay your travel, childcare/carer expenses to attend this meeting.

If you would like to attend please contact the Resident Involvement team on 01306 505529/530 or email [residentinvolvement@mvha.org.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@mvha.org.uk)



## “Does it make sense?”

MVHA sends out a wide range of communication to you to inform you and consult you about service. The big question is “Does it make sense”? We can only answer this question with your help.

### Why not join the MVHA Communications Group?

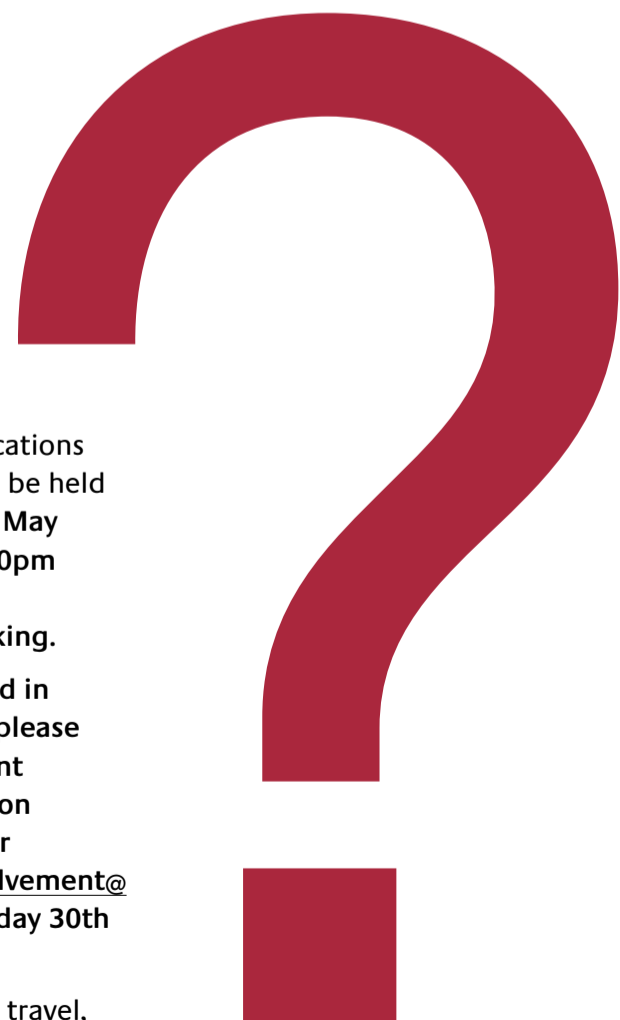
You will work in partnership with staff to create and review a variety of communication materials to make sure they are interesting, informative, relevant to residents and clear and easy to understand.

All you need is some enthusiasm, attention to detail and two hours to spare four times a year. The communications you will be creating/reviewing will include Home Matters, Leaflets and our website.

The first Communications Group meeting will be held on **Wednesday 5th May 2010, 6.30pm – 8.00pm** at MVHA offices, **Regent House Dorking.**

If you are interested in joining this group please contact the Resident Involvement team on 01306 505529/30 or email [residentinvolvement@mvha.org.uk](mailto:residentinvolvement@mvha.org.uk) by Friday 30th April 2010.

MVHA will pay your travel, childcare/carer expenses to attend this meeting. ■



## Don't trust random callers !!

**E**arlier this year MVHA was contacted by a resident in Leatherhead who reported that someone had called at their property saying that they were a representative of a company who had been contracted to install new bathrooms/kitchens for MVHA.

Fortunately our resident was suspicious of the caller and checked with MVHA to confirm the credentials of the caller and didn't allow the caller access to his property. MVHA was able to advise that this person was not known to us and no one should have been calling on behalf of MVHA at the time.

All of MVHA staff and contractors carry Identification Cards which you should check before allowing anyone into your property. If you have any doubt please check with us.

MVHA are undertaking a huge amount of works and unfortunately some people may try to take advantage of the situation and try to gain access to your property to potentially steal valuables.

Be suspicious and always check – do not trust a random caller. ■

## Come along to the major works review workshop

**F**ollowing the stock transfer from MVDC to MVHA we promised to undertake a large planned programme of works to improve the quality of residents' homes. To ensure that the work is being carried out to the quality we require at the right cost, it is important for us to monitor the performance of our partnering contractors who are undertaking the works on our behalf.

Targets have been set to monitor the contractor's performance. These targets are called Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Now that the programme of works has been running for just over two years, we would like to take the opportunity to review the existing KPIs to see if they are still providing us with an appropriate

method for monitoring the works being undertaken.

A consultation workshop will be held to review the KPIs with MVHA Property Manager, Ken Lee and Consultants JRP. We would like residents to attend this event, so come along and find out more about the targets we aim to meet and share your views with us.

**Thursday 29th April 2010**

**6.00pm – 8.00pm**

**MVHA offices  
Regent House, Dorking**

If you would like to attend this workshop please contact Sue Hutton, PA to Head of Property Services, MVHA on 01306 505567 or email [sue.hutton@mvha.org.uk](mailto:sue.hutton@mvha.org.uk)

## The Repairs Service Improvement Group

The Repairs Service Improvement Group (RSIG) gives residents the chance to influence the way the repairs service is delivered by the Repairs Team. The aim of the group is to make sure residents views about these services are taken

on board by MVHA and we deliver a high quality, value for money service.

The RSIG meets every 2 months and membership is open to all MVHA residents. If you would like more information about the RSIG, including details of the next

meeting, please ring the repairs team on **01306 505555**, select option 1 and ask for Jane Richardson or Stuart Mudie. We can pay your travel, child care and carer costs to attend these meetings. ■



## Face behind the phone

**N**eed a repair? Then call **0800 6349876**. Our team of Administrators will endeavour to make an appointment at your first contact; we will call you back with an appointment date if we need to instruct a subcontractor and we will never miss an appointment without letting you know!

In the event of an emergency, such as a significant water leak, total loss of power or that your home is insecure, we will attend within 4 hours to make it safe and then we will rebook an appointment to complete the repair at the earliest opportunity.

When reporting a repair we will ask you whether

you have had any planned maintenance work carried out recently, whether we have attended to the same repair recently and try to establish exactly what and where the problem is. This will enable us to send the right person with the right tools at the right time – our goal is to “Get it right first time”.

Our normal working hours are **8.00am – 12.00 noon for morning appointments and 12.00 noon – 4pm for afternoon appointments**, however, for those people who cannot be available during our normal working hours we are now also able to offer Wednesday evening appointments from **4pm – 7.30pm** and Saturday morning appointments from **8.30am – 12.00 noon**.

You can also report your repairs online at [www.mvha.org.uk](http://www.mvha.org.uk) or leave a message on the Repairs Team answerphone ensuring you leave full contact details (**0800 6349876**).

MVHA are pleased to announce that our partnering contractor Quality Heating are now able to offer Wednesday evening appointments (between 5pm and 8pm) to our residents. Appointments on Wednesday evenings can be made for gas inspections, gas servicing, breakdowns to heating systems and fitting boiler parts. Quality Heating can be contacted on Freephone number **0808 156 1518**. ■

## Enhancing Life Chances



MVHA is passionate about 'Enhancing Life Chances'. We do this by providing great homes and reliable services and building sustainable communities in the areas we operate

## What are life chances?

Life Chances are the opportunities each individual has to improve his or her quality of life and are linked to a person's social situation. The opportunities refer to how much access people have to things like food, clothing, employment, shelter, education and health care.

### Christmas Party

In December MVHA enhanced the life chances of older people living in the community by supporting two Christmas parties. The parties were specifically arranged for older people living in the community who do not already access community services, such as day centres or organised groups. This is important because older people, particularly in rural areas,

may be living in isolation and be unaware of what services are available. Residents who attended were able to find out more about these, while having a great time enjoying the fun and festivities. The parties were organised by a partnership which included Mole Valley District Council, Surrey County Council, Links Partnership, Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership and the Workers Education Association.

Ms Hince, who attended the Christmas Party in Leatherhead, said: "I had a wonderful time. It was very interesting having the different agencies there to answer my questions and they made me feel very welcome. It was lovely seeing some old faces I hadn't seen in a long time

and bringing the community back together."

A variety of entertainment was arranged, including a magician, Carol singing, acts by the Rah Rah Theatre Company, music and much more, together with a festive buffet lunch and refreshments. The organisers, together with other local agencies, such as the Police, the Fire service and the Citizens Advice Bureau were also on hand to talk to the guests, answer any questions, and hear all about residents' ideas for the neighbourhood. Over 90 people attended the two events.

For more information on how Circle Anglia is Enhancing Life Chances log on to [www.circleanglia.org/corporate/life-chances/](http://www.circleanglia.org/corporate/life-chances/)

## Decorate this year with MVHA



MVHA completed a pilot of a decorating scheme recently and after receiving positive feedback, we are introducing this scheme from June 2010. The scheme is to decorate free of charge up to one room a year (subject to budget) for pensioners and residents with disabilities.

### What is meant by 'one room'?

Most rooms are obviously distinct i.e. a lounge, a bedroom, a kitchen or a bathroom and a room is defined as a used & occupied room.

### However to clarify:

- If the kitchen is open plan to a living room, it will be considered to be part of the room.
- Hallways and stairwells are not classed as a 'room'.
- Spare or guest rooms will not be decorated – the room must be in daily use by the resident.

### What is meant by decorating?

- Two coats of emulsion on the walls and ceiling with a limited choice of pastel colours.
- Gloss work cleaned, woodwork sanded and repainted in white gloss or silk paint.
- If the wall quality is particularly poor then lining paper can be hung.
- Wallpapering cannot be considered under this scheme.
- Paints will be good quality and odour free as possible.

### Who may qualify?

- A pensioner who is over 60 and retired from work
- Someone with disabilities needs to be registered disabled, or in receipt of disability benefits or attendance allowance.

### Other important information

- The room to be decorated should not have been decorated in the last five years.
- If the resident is in significant rent arrears they will not be eligible unless an agreed arrangement has been made & is being kept to.
- The resident is responsible for ensuring all ornaments, pictures etc are removed and that all walls are easily accessible. We can help with this but residents would have to sign a disclaimer, otherwise we cannot undertake the work.
- If the property is very dirty, nicotine stained or unhygienic (kitchens or bathrooms especially) an assessment of the conditions by an MVHA surveyor will be necessary in order to establish what the full extent of the job will involve.
- If the applicant has fit and active friends or relatives living with them they will not be eligible for this scheme.
- The applicant should hold home contents insurance to deal with any accidental damage or breakages.

### How do I apply?

To request an application form or if you have any queries please contact Maggie Newland on 01306 505504.

### The application form needs to be completed and returned to

Mole Valley Housing Association, Regent House, Station Approach, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1TF by the end of May 2010. You will be notified if you have been successful by the end of June 2010 and work will be scheduled for the summer months.

## Swap homes with House Exchange

**H**ouse Exchange is a scheme which helps MVHA tenants look for potential home swaps anywhere in the UK, whether that means moving to the end of their street or across the country. The programme was designed to help overcome the issues of overcrowding and under occupation, making it easier for tenants to upsize or downsize regionally or nationally.

*“You’re more likely to get the house you want on here than having to wait until its your turn on the housing list”*

House Exchange User

The scheme was initially developed by Circle Anglia for its residents but the service has now been opened up to all



social housing residents to provide even more opportunities for mutually beneficial exchanges. Launched in January this year, House Exchange Direct enables any UK social housing tenant to join the website [www.houseexchangedirect.org.uk](http://www.houseexchangedirect.org.uk).

The new website allows users to search for properties by location, number of bedrooms, property type and other features, making it an easy way to find matches. You will be sent alerts if someone expresses an interest in your home or if a home you are searching for becomes available.

## Performance monitoring

We have performance indicators in place to ensure that we are delivering value for money from the rent we receive from our customers. Achieving our performance targets will directly influence how good our services are.

- MVHA are pleased to announce that we have reached 100% gas certification compliance in December, this is the third month in a row. In February our performance was 99.2%
- Improvements have been made on rents and arrears collection, we are now within our tolerance level and have collected 99.5% of rent and service charges due.
- 99.3% of emergency repairs were completed within target.
- 86.7% of tenants are satisfied with the services provided by the landlord.
- 95.7% of complaints were resolved at first stage.

## New Residents Association for Beare Green

**A** new residents association has been set up in Beare Green, Dorking. The residents called themselves Circle of

Beare Green Residents Association (COBRA). COBRA held a car boot sale in their neighbourhood in March to introduce themselves to their community. If you are

in the Beare Green area, look out for local publicity and please support COBRA if you can. ■

## Communal Cleaning Consultation

**I**n the December issue of Home Matters we included a leaflet advising that MVHA would be inspecting the communal areas in blocks of flats to assess their cleanliness and to check for any obstructions within the communal areas. Whilst many residents do keep their communal areas clean and tidy, without any obstructions, we do have areas where this is not the case. As a responsible landlord we have a duty to ensure that communal areas are kept clean and clear.

We carried out the first round of inspections during the week commencing 18 January 2010. A notice was posted through each front door to advise residents of the results of the inspection and the reason for the pass or fail.

For those blocks that did

not pass the inspection, the notice advised that MVHA would carry out a further inspection after a two week period to see whether any improvement had been made. The blocks were inspected again during the week of 8 February 2010.

Thank you to the many residents that have addressed issues raised and who have made a genuine effort to tackle the cleaning of communal areas and remove obstructions.

The data has been collated and this has given us information on areas where cleaning is still required.

To help improve the immediate area around your home we are also looking at the cost of putting in place communal window cleaning, for areas where residents can not reach. We are also

looking at the cost of a deep cleaning service for the bins and bin areas to be carried out twice a year.

Some MVHA residents have volunteered to join the Cleaning Working Group – this is for tenants and leaseholders. This group is helping to direct the outcome of the cleaning consultation and the specifications. All findings will be discussed in consultation with this group.

**Your Views Count** – if you have any comments or observations about the cleaning in your area, please let us know. You can contact us via email [estates.team@mvha.org.uk](mailto:estates.team@mvha.org.uk) or by telephone on 01306 505525 or fax 01306 505551 or call into our offices.

## Mystery Shopping

**M**VHA has a team of mystery shoppers, who assist us behind the scenes to ensure we are delivering on our service standards. Just before Christmas mystery shopping was carried out

to check our standards of:

- Telephone calls
- Letters
- Emails &
- Visits

On the whole our mystery shoppers were pleased with the service they received, however we did identify a weakness in responses to letters and we are currently looking at how we can improve on this.

Mystery shopping is a valuable tool in helping us to identify our weaknesses in order to improve our performance. We are always looking for new recruits. If you would like to become a mystery shopper yourself, please contact Jane Arditti on 01306 505554 or email [jane.Arditti@mvha.org.uk](mailto:jane.Arditti@mvha.org.uk)



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