

Resident Checked



Carbon monoxide – how to spot the signs
Page 6



What the inspectors said
Page 4



Decent Homes update
Page 5

Rent statements – we hope to mail out your rent statements and Home Matters together next year – watch this space...

Customers – at the heart of Roddons

Inspectors give glowing report on progress made so far.

Roddons was inspected in the the summer and the results are in! As we approach our second anniversary, we are delighted to report back on the feedback from the Housing Quality Network (HQN) on how we have been performing.



Roddons' offices will be closed all day on Thursday 5th November because it is holding its annual staff conference. Please see page 2 for more information.

Some residents came along to focus groups or spoke to inspectors on the telephone. We're really pleased that you helped and we achieved some great results.

In short, the inspectors said:

☺ Roddons displays "maturity beyond its age", and is ahead of many other housing organisations that are four to five years old - not bad for 20 months old!

☺ Roddons has achieved much in a short time, is never complacent in its service delivery and is always looking to improve.

☺ Residents are clearly at the heart of the business and have helped

to shape Roddons' direction and policy. Residents can see the change and talk about it very positively.

Turn to page four for more of what the inspectors said. ■

This magazine is printed on paper which is obtained from sustainable sources. Please recycle after use.

 **recycle now**



**Less paper
save trees**

Paperless Home Matters is here!

We want to save money and help the environment.

To help us do this we are now producing a paperless Home Matters, available by email - all the same articles and information but straight to your inbox rather than your letterbox!

If you want to opt out of receiving your Home Matters by post, please register by emailing us at resident.communications@circleanglia.org, sending us your full name and postal address.

 **recycle** Home Matters, the cover sheet and poly wrap are all bio-degradable.

Contents

- 3** Job hunting tips
- 4** What the inspectors said...
- 5** Decent Homes update
- 6** The silent killer, CO info
- 7** How are we doing?
- 8** Gardening Competition

Dear Home Matters Editor

Welcome to your Autumn issue of Home Matters.

We had a good response to our call in the last issue for people to register for paperless Home Matters. By opting for an email version of your resident newspaper you are helping us to save money and reduce our carbon footprint. If you would like to receive paperless Home Matter, simply email your request to:

Resident.Communications@circleanglia.org

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

Remember, Home Matters is made from sustainable paper and can be recycled so do put it in your recycling bin when you have finished with it. ■

Rodddons matters to me

It is almost two years since Rodddons took over the housing stock from Fenland and in that time things seem to have improved enormously.

Being the Chair of the Benwick Residents Association I get many comments about how much Rodddons are doing for us and how helpful the staff are, as the youthful philosophy of Rodddons seems to have rubbed off on all the workers and they are polite, helpful, courteous and willing.

Several new initiatives have appeared such as the Chatting Cafes in each area where tenants can go and have a chat, coffee and biscuit and air complaints or compliments to staff directly; the TAGS that are set up at Rodddons offices where tenants are listened to about rent payments or the letting of properties or repairs,



all encouraging resident involvement and enabling us as tenants to work with Rodddons to improve the housing stock and have our ideas listened to and implemented.

Things are definitely changing and I think for the better.

**Patricia Tickner
Resident and Chair
of Benwick Residents
Association**

Farewell and thanks to Pauline Ford



Rodddons' first Managing Director, Pauline, did a fantastic job – in just 20 months she turned Rodddons into a high performing organisation that has exceeded many of its initial promises to residents. We wish her the very best of luck in her new role as MD of Merton Priory Homes.

To ensure that the focus on customer service continued,

Circle Anglia employed an interim Managing Director, Maggie Sherlock, who has been running Rodddons until permanent replacement Christopher Smith starts. Maggie has more than twenty years' experience in housing and was until recently the Chief Executive of Guinness Midsummer Housing Association, based in Milton Keynes.

Stop press! New MD for Rodddons

Rodddons has appointed Christopher Smith as its new permanent Managing Director. Chris will be taking over from Interim MD, Maggie Sherlock, as of Monday 11th January 2010.

Christopher has worked in housing since 1995 and started as a rent officer at Broadland Housing Association in Norwich. He progressed to become assistant director of housing management at Broadland Housing before moving to Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Council as head of housing management. Christopher



has also been head of housing at Freebridge where he managed the DLO. Most recently he was director of housing and support at Merlin Housing Society.

We will be fully introducing your new MD in the next issue of Home Matters so watch this space.

PLEASE NOTE:

Rodddons Housing Association celebrates its second anniversary on 5th November 2009. Beacon House will be closed on this day as all staff and board members attend a conference. Telephone cover will be provided by Invicta Telecare in the event of an emergency.

If your call is not an emergency please leave a message and we will get back to you the following day, Friday 6th November.

Residents Forum Community Award Scheme

Do you know someone who deserves recognising for their caring attitude, consideration for their neighbours or their contribution to the community?

The Residents Forum have organised an Award Scheme for Rodddons tenants or their children to have this recognition.

There will be three categories:

- Good Neighbour
- Caring person
- Helping in the community

There are two age groups

Children (up to 16) and Adults (over 16).

Enclosed with this newsletter is an entry form to complete to nominate anyone you think that deserves recognition for their good deeds.

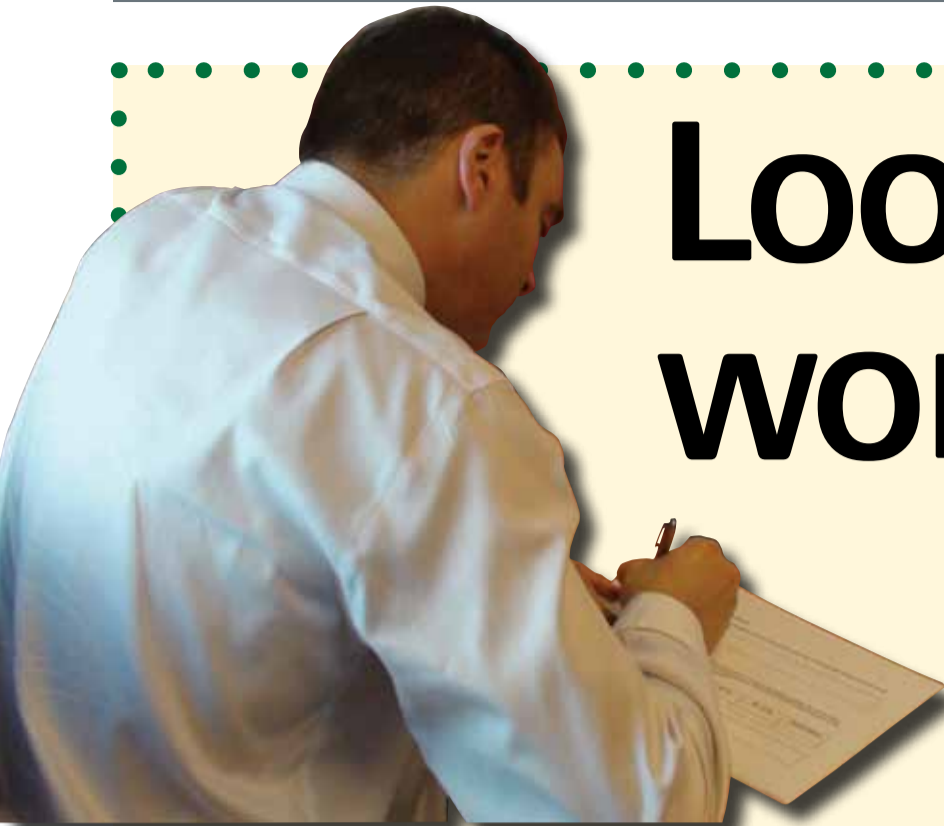
Closing date is 21st December and judging will take place in January, results in February and an Award Ceremony in March 2010.

The person to be nominated must be a Rodddons Resident or children who reside in a Rodddons property, and whatever they are nominated for must be voluntary.



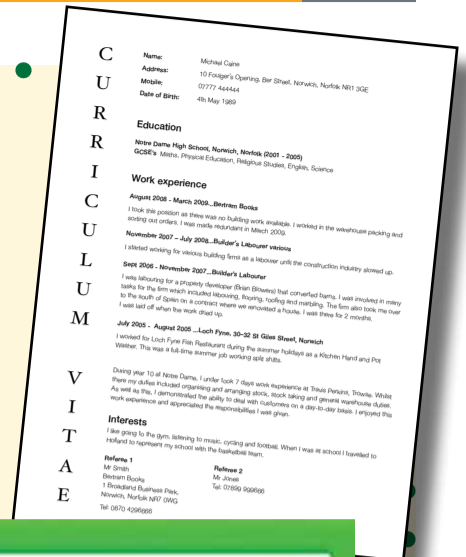
Each category winner will receive £50 and a certificate.

Send all entries to Sally Taylor, Resident Involvement Officer at Beacon House, 23 Hostmoor Avenue, March, Cambs PE15 0AX or telephone 01354 660789.



Looking for work?

If you want to brush up on your CV or just get some advice about how to improve your job prospects, we are here to help.



jobcentreplus

Training and adult courses

Creating a CV

Having a CV is essential in your job search. When applying for jobs you will usually have to send your CV first to present yourself to the prospective employer. A CV will include:

- Your job history
- Your achievements
- Your skills

Your CV is a tool to promote yourself so it is important you make the most of your best qualities and experience.

Things to remember when writing your CV:

- Keep sentences short, recruiters won't have long to read it
- Use standard typefaces such as Arial
- Be honest and factual
- Keep it to two pages
- Lead with achievements, use positive words like determined, created, devised, motivated

- Dates and employment should be easily found and consistent
- Follow up all claims with examples
- Include awards or recognition received for good work, together with professional memberships and relevant training
- Put content that is relevant to the job you are applying for near the top

- Include figures where you can like number of staff or the budget you managed
- Check and re-check spelling
- Always send your CV with a covering letter ideally to a named individual

For more tips on putting together your CV visit www.cvtips.com.

The Job Centre Plus website also has lots of tips on getting ready to find a job at www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/outofworkhelplookingforwork/Getting_job_ready

Looking for a job

Once you have your CV prepared, you are ready to look for work. But how do you go about this?

1. Think about the skills and work experience you already have and what jobs you might like to do. Visit the JobCentre Plus www.backtowork.direct.gov.uk/find-work to get more tips on planning your job hunting.
2. Once you have decided on what you may like to do, there are many places you can find work:
 - Directgov has a large database of vacancies. You can also search for jobs using your mobile phone – just text JOBS to 83377 – or on your TV (if you're a Sky or Virgin Media customer). Visit www.backtowork.direct.gov.uk/find-work for more information.
 - Local newspapers can tell you whether companies are moving into your local area or expanding. They also advertise local jobs both in print and usually online too.

- Jobcentre Plus can help you search for vacancies. Call **0845 6060 234** (textphone **0845 6055 255**). Lines are open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 1pm Saturday.

- Companies do not always advertise available jobs, so it is a good idea to contact them to find out if they have any vacancies.
- Ask friends and people you know. They may know of a suitable vacancy for you or think of you when they hear of vacancies in the future.
- Register with recruitment agencies.
- Self-employment is another option. You can find more information on how to get started by visiting www.backtowork.direct.gov.uk/find-work
- 3. Keep track of your progress to help you to remember who you have approached, and what responses you have received.

Useful links

- www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk
- www.jobseekers.direct.gov.uk
- www.ukonlinecentres.com



What the inspectors said...

As you can see from the graph, the inspectors judged Roddons to be a one star organisation with promising prospects for improvement.

This is a really good start for Roddons. Even better is that the inspectors said that we were well on the way to two stars with promising prospects for improvement.

Where does that place Roddons now?



What does this mean?

The Audit Commission inspects housing associations like Roddons on behalf of our regulator, The Tenant Services Authority. It looks at two aspects – the quality of services and the prospects for improvement in the future. Service quality is currently rated between 0 and 3 stars with 3 being the highest and prospects as Uncertain, Promising and Excellent.

All our services received either a 1 or 2 star rating and, very importantly, the inspectors believe that we had either promising or excellent prospects for improvement in most areas.



Finally, the inspectors were most impressed with Roddons staff and their dedication to working with residents to improve our services. Your input will help Roddons become an excellent organisation we can all be proud of.

So
much
more

On specific areas the inspectors concluded the following:

Investing in your homes

What we do well

- ☺ Good track record in stock investment and delivery of the enhanced 'Fenland' standard
- ☺ Most plans and targets are delivered on time, and action taken where this is not happening

What we are doing to improve

- > Looking closely at information to improve customer satisfaction and value for money
- > Aiming to carry out servicing within 12 months

Managing your homes and estates

What we do well

- ☺ The basic services are in place and supported by good policies and procedures, like our sign up process and starter tenancies
- ☺ Obvious improvements to Estate Services have been made and linked to Anti-Social Behaviour hotspots
- ☺ We have visited most residents and gathered information about them

What we are doing to improve

- > Reviewing our grounds maintenance contract
- > Look at the ways we deal with Anti-Social Behaviour

Allocating and letting property

What we do well

- ☺ Choice Based Lettings including support for older and vulnerable applicants
- ☺ Good progress in dealing with hard to let properties

What we are doing to improve

- > Monitor the costs and standards of empty properties
- > Develop methods to test customer satisfaction

Managing our income (most of Roddons income comes from rents – about £14m per year)

What we do well

- ☺ Good at preventing rent loss and making most of income
- ☺ The agreement with Fenland Housing Benefit department helps both tenants and the Roddons to get benefits quickly

What we are doing to improve

- > We've increased the number of ways residents can pay their rent including Direct Debit, All Pay and Debit Card
- > Develop methods to test customer satisfaction

Sheltered Housing

What we do well

- ☺ Achieved Supported People accreditation
- ☺ Well thought out strategy and plans

What we are doing to improve

- > Telling people how EPIC work with Roddons to improve services for older people
- > Reviewing all sheltered schemes and looking at what needs to be improved

Customer Access and Customer Care

What we do well

- ☺ Customers clearly at the heart of the business – mystery shopping and customer surveys started
- ☺ Customer Service Centre is new and making a real difference

What we are doing to improve

- > Working with customers to put together service standards across all areas
- > Developing how we deal with complaints

Equality and Diversity – treating everyone fairly and equally

What we do well

- ☺ Staff are very positive about making sure services meet your needs
- ☺ Good progress has been made on gathering information about you

What we are doing to improve

- > Using customer information and feedback to improve and tailor our services
- > Assessing the impact of each service on all sections of the community

Decent Homes update

Roddons posted out its latest Decent Homes newsletter a few weeks ago which provided residents with the latest information on how we are progressing with this improvement work. For more information about our Decent Homes programme, please call 01354 660789.



Re-investing the savings in our stock

Members of the Decent Homes focus group were asked to select from a number of proposed projects for how Roddons' share of the savings should be re-invested.

Ideas for projects ranged from an extension to one of our sheltered schemes to providing a community hub through the funding of additional adaptation work and fencing. Residents were consulted on each proposed scheme and the successful projects were:

- Part funding for the astro turf football pitch in Lime Avenue, Wisbech
- Refurbishment of Fleming Court in March to create an enlarged communal lounge to provide a community hub
- Funding for 25 disabled adaptation referrals
- Funding for 30 over-bath showers



£187,000 savings given back to Roddons from Apollo

Apollo and Roddons marked the end of our partnership's first year with Roddons Housing Association by presenting a cheque of £187,000 to former MD, Pauline Ford.



The money will be reinvested back into the community and residents will be given an input into how the money will be allocated.

Calvin Fisher, who leads Roddons Decent Homes work said: "We have worked closely with Apollo to deliver our promises for Decent Homes and it is fantastic that this has enabled us to reinvest this money in the local community."

Start up an online account

If you start an online account with Circle Anglia, you can:

1. View your rent balance and statements online
2. View the repairs history of your home, and any outstanding repairs together with their due date
3. Request a repair to your home
4. Request rent information
5. Set up a Direct Debit with us
6. Pay your rent via Allpay

What else is on our website?

We've got a great 'get involved' and community section, and maps to find out what amenities and activities are going on in your area.

You can catch up on the latest news and press, watch some of our handy hint videos, and opt-out of your printed Home Matters.

You can also report anti-social behaviour, let us know what you think of our services via our compliments and complaints reporting, find out about shared ownership and all your housing options, or just find out which number you need to ring with your enquiry.

www.circleanglia.org/roddons



Don't miss out!

Do you have children, live in rented property but don't get any Housing Benefit at the moment?

Then from November 2009 you may become entitled.

Changes to the rules will mean that any Child Benefit you get will not count as income anymore.



Don't miss out make a claim!

Extra Housing Benefit for families



The silent killer – can you spot the signs?



What is carbon monoxide and why is it dangerous?

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas. You can't see it and you can't smell it but CO can kill quickly without warning.

Where does it come from?

When fuel such as gas, oil, wood and coal does not burn properly it produces CO. It can be caused by gas appliances and flues that are not properly installed, maintained or that are poorly ventilated.

What does it do to you?

If CO enters your body, it stops the blood from bringing oxygen to cells, tissues, and organs, which can eventually lead to death. Levels that don't kill can cause you serious harm if breathed in over a long period. In extreme cases paralysis and brain damage can be caused as a result of prolonged exposure to CO.

What are the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning?

Symptoms to look out for include:

- Tiredness
- Drowsiness
- Headaches
- Giddiness
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Pains in the chest
- Breathlessness
- Stomach pains
- Erratic behavior
- Visual problems

How common is the problem?

Hundreds of people die every year from carbon monoxide poisoning. Just a small amount of carbon monoxide in your home can cause health problems over time.

What can I do to protect myself?

By being aware of the risks of CO poisoning and taking precautions you can dramatically reduce the risk in your home.

It is essential that you allow us access to your home to carry out checks on your gas boiler and appliances.

If CO enters your body, it stops the blood from bringing oxygen to cells, tissues, and organs, which can eventually lead to death.

Top tips on detecting carbon monoxide

- Get yourself a carbon monoxide detector from your local DIY store
- Read the instructions carefully and make sure CO detectors are put in the recommended place in your home
- Carbon monoxide detectors do NOT work as smoke detectors
- Smoke detectors do NOT work as carbon monoxide detectors
- Test CO detectors at least once a month, following the manufacturer's instructions
- Replace CO detectors and batteries according to the manufacturer's instructions (usually every five years)
- If there are any signs that there may be excess CO in your home, get it checked out by a professional immediately. Evacuate everyone from your home, leaving the door open for ventilation on your way out. Notify the fire service.

For more tips on detecting carbon monoxide in your home and links to other useful websites and helpful videos, visit our gas advice area of our website www.roddons.org/resident-info/carbon-monoxide ■

Benwick Dickensian Christmas Market

An outdoor street festival for the entire family!
Saturday November 28TH 12.00pm – 5.00pm
Outside the Five Aalls, High Street, Benwick

Come along and enjoy an afternoon of family entertainment including;

- Punch & Judy
- Santa's Grotto
- Face painting
- Victorian fancy dress competition
- Hog Roast
- Peterborough Highland Pipe Band
- Roast Chestnuts
- Various Stalls and much more

Refreshments will be provided including hot soup and tea and coffee.

Evening entertainment will continue in the Five Aalls Public House. Organised by the Benwick Residents Association in conjunction with the Five Aalls Public House. Supported by Roddons community award.



How are we doing?

These figures show Roddons' performance to the end of June 2009. The figures represent key areas in Roddons services and are used to monitor our performance throughout the year.

	Apr – Sept 2008	Apr – Sept 2009	Direction of travel from Sept 08 – Sept 09	
Repairs appointments made and kept	97.1%	89.70%	↓	☹
Emergency repairs completed on target	99.30%	97.50%	↓	☹
Urgent repairs completed on target	98.50%	95.30%	↓	☹
Units with a valid gas certificate	97.60%	99.80%	↑	☹
Properties with a gas safety certificate more than 6 months overdue	0.00%	0.00%	↔	☺
Tenants satisfied with the way that Roddons dealt with their last repair	95.70%	92.30%	↓	☺
Complaints resolved at first stage	98.60%	96%	↓	☺

Resident Involvement – What's On

Every Thursday 10am to 1pm – open to all – drop in session at the Tenants Resource Centre, Beacon House, Hostmoor Avenue, March – call in and have a chat over a cuppa.

Chatting Café – being held in:-
Chatteris, Benwick, Eastrea, Guyhirn, Whittlesey and Wisbech St Mary.
Ring for dates.



November

- 9th Wisbech & District Residents Association at Onyx Court, Wisbech – 10am
- 9th March Ivy Leaf Residents Association at Morton Avenue Complex March – 7pm
- 12th Benwick Residents Association at Village Hall – 7.30pm
- 19th Thorney Toll Residents Association at Village Hall – 7.30pm

December

- 10th Benwick Residents Association at Village Hall – 7.30pm
- 14th Wisbech & District Residents Association at Onyx Court, Wisbech – 10am
- 14th March Ivy Leaf Residents Association at Bradshaw Court, March – 7pm

Getting involved

Earlier in the year residents received a Roddons 'Commitment to Resident Involvement Leaflet' which talked about resident involvement and included a 'Menu of Involvement' with many different ways that you could get involved.

Many residents told us they wanted us to come out to them, particularly in the rural areas. We have listened and Chatting Café sessions have been set up in Benwick, Eastrea, Wisbech St Mary, Chatteris and Whittlesey as a result. These are proving very popular and giving residents a chance to have a say about the services they receive.

Some of you wanted to get even more involved and look at policy and performance issues and we set up Tenant Advisory Groups to aid this.

We are pleased to announce we are making progress. Last year the percentage of residents that said they were satisfied that their views were being taken into account was 63%. This year it is 83%.



Blooming marvellous!

This year we are doing something different in regards to our gardening competition. Roddons staff, Neighbourhood Officers and Scheme Managers have been asked to nominate residents who would not nominate themselves but deserve recognition for their gardening achievements for a 'blooming marvellous' garden, hanging basket or container.

Here are some of the residents who have been nominated.



Pictured: Hilda Dickens



Pictured: Michael Walsh (above)
Mr & Mrs Kavanaugh's Garden
(top right) and Arthur Cracknell
(bottom right).



Roddons Anniversary Quiz

To celebrate the second anniversary of Roddons this month, we are offering one resident the opportunity to win a room makeover, courtesy of Roddons! The lucky winner will be able to choose one room of their home to be professionally

re-decorated including painting walls, ceilings, skirting boards and any other woodwork.

All you have to do to enter this competition is answer the Roddons questions below and send your answers back to the following address:

Roddons makeover competition
6 Central Avenue
St Andrews Business Park
Thorpe St Andrew
Norwich NR7 0HR

Please remember to include your full name and address with your entry.



Questions:

1: What is the name of the Officer responsible for Resident Involvement at Roddons?

2: What year did Roddons launch as a housing association?

3: Who is the Chair of the Roddons Board?

4: What is the name of Roddons' new MD who starts in January?

5: Alan Westlake holds which position at Roddons?

6: How much money has Apollo given back to Roddons in its first year of partnership?

7: What is the name of the contractor Roddons is using for its five year Decent Homes works programme?

8: What is Roddons web address?

9: What percentage of residents said they are satisfied that their views are being taken into account this year?

10: Corgi registered engineers used to undertake gas servicing, what is the name of the organisation Corgi has now been replaced by?

Competition prizes are non-transferable, non-negotiable and no cash alternatives will be offered. The closing date for this competition is 11th December 2009 and the draw will take place on 14th December 2009. The winner will be notified after this date. Prize draw is open to current Roddons residents only. Only one entry per person. Circle Anglia will not accept responsibility for loss of entries through technical fault, incomplete, illegible or other damaged entries. Proof of entry is not automatically proof of receipt. The promotional draw is held at St Andrews Court, Norwich NR7 0HR. Details of the winner can be obtained by sending a SAE marked Circle Anglia Makeover Competition to the above address. These terms and conditions shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

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 01354 660 789 and we will do our best to help.