



**Roddons  
First Resident  
Conference – book  
your place now!**  
  
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update**  
  
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Rent statements – we hope to mail out your rent statements and Home Matters together later this year – watch this space...

## Celebrating two years of Roddons

Roddons first staff conference was held at Barnsdale Hall Hotel in Oakham, Rutland, on our second anniversary in November. The day was for all staff to celebrate Roddons achievements so far, to look at how we have and can make a difference by working together.

**M**aggie Sherlock, Interim MD at Roddons, opened the conference by welcoming all attendees – staff, board members and partners such as Apollo and thanked them for their contribution to making Roddons a successful organisation. This was followed by a speech by Andy Doylend, Executive Director at Circle Anglia, who reminded staff of how much they had achieved by working together and reinforcing the group mission of Enhancing Life Chances being at the heart of our business.

Andy then presented the Roddons Stars Awards. The winners were:

**Bright New Star – Tracy Harper (Work Planner)**

“Does a difficult job consistently well, is always positive and a pleasure to work with”

**The Community Star – Tara Howlett (Mobile Scheme Manager)**

“Develops a real community spirit wherever they are based”

**Service to Customer Star – Derek Grange (Responsive Surveyor)**

“Always puts the customer first by going the extra mile”

**Value for Money Star – Lesley Garner (Repairs Manager)**

“Introduced a new initiative that saved money and time from day one”

**The Roddons Star Team Award – Stan Spinks & Barry Leadbeater (Stores)**

“Always helpful and real team players”

**The Roddons Star Individual Award – Debbie Tuckey (Neighbourhood Officer)**

“Always going above and beyond to help both tenants and staff”



**A Special Award – Customer Services Team**

This team were nominated several times in various categories proving their work is valued and appreciated. For this reason a special team award was presented.

Roddons’ first two years have

been hugely successful and the event recognised the contribution staff have made to this success. We have delivered all of our transfer promises to residents; we are in the process of delivering £8.9 million worth of Decent Homes work and have invested £1 million in

our Community Fund. With more excellent work planned in the year ahead – it’s an exciting time for Roddons staff and residents. ■

**“Anything is possible.....together”**

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### Contents Insurance – are your valuables protected? Peace of mind at affordable cost



- Did you know that your landlord is not responsible for insuring the belongings in your home?
- Could you afford to replace your possessions if the worst was to happen?
- Did you know that you can protect the valuables in your home from just £3.69 per month for £9,000 cover and that if you are 60 or over you may qualify for an even lower monthly amount?

- Circle Anglia offers low cost contents insurance to its residents through Aviva. The policy includes;
- protection for your clothes, furniture and electrical goods
  - covers insurance for carpets and decorations
  - accidental damage
  - theft of your keys and lock changes
  - contents in your freezer

- the contents of outbuildings
  - contents whilst household members are at university
  - documents insurance
- Against damage caused by:
- fire
  - water
  - theft
  - vandalism

For more information on Circle Anglia’s Home Contents Insurance, please call Wessex Administration Services on 01962 844454 or email [resident.communications@circleanglia.org](mailto:resident.communications@circleanglia.org). A full guide to our low cost insurance policy and application form is also available at [www.circleanglia.org/insurance.html](http://www.circleanglia.org/insurance.html)



## Welcome from Christopher Smith



I am delighted to introduce myself as the new Managing Director for Roddons – a dream job for me as it has allowed me to professionally and personally return to my neck of the woods, having previously worked at various housing providers in this region.

This year will see us building on our impressive track record for offering reliable services and decent homes for all. We will continue to deliver our transfer promises to you and improve on last year's hugely encouraging mock inspection results.

One of our biggest successes to date has been our investment in local communities and this will continue with the funding of more sustainable projects to enhance the Life Chances of all of our residents.

We understand that many people are facing financial difficulties and will carry on offering debt and rent arrears advice as well as guidance on how you can save money in your homes. See page three for our tips on cutting energy bills this winter.

Finally – I intend to be a very hands on MD and to get out and speak to residents as much as possible. I look forward to meeting some of you very soon.

With best wishes

**Christopher Smith**

Managing Director  
Roddons Housing Association

## What's On – dates for your diaries...

### February 2010

- 8 – Wisbech Association, 10am at Onyx Court
- 8 – March Association, 7pm at Fleming Court
- 11 – Benwick Association, 7.30pm at the Village Hall
- 15 – Wisbech St Mary Chatting Café, 10.30am, Bridge Inn
- 17 – Chatting Café at Whittlesey Library, 10.30am
- 17 – Chatting Café Eastrea Nags Head, 12noon
- 18 – Thorney Toll Association, 7.30pm at the Village Hall

### March 2010

- 8 – Wisbech Association, 10am at Onyx Court
- 8 – March Association, 7pm at Bradshaw Court
- 11 – Benwick Association, 7.30pm at the Village Hall
- 15 – Wisbech St Mary Chatting Café, 10.30am, Bridge Inn
- 17 – Chatting Café at Whittlesey Library, 10.30am
- 17 – Chatting Café Eastrea Nags Head – 12noon
- 18 – Thorney Toll Association, 7.30pm at the Village Hall
- 29 – Chatteris Association Chatting Café, 10.30am at the Library
- 30 – Chatting Café Benwick, 11am at the Five Alls

**The next Sheltered Forum next meeting is on the 7th April**

## Roddons First Annual Tenants Conference



**When:** Saturday 6th March 2010

**Where:** The Boathouse Business Centre in Wisbech

**What time:** 10.30am to 2pm.

*Would you like to find out more about your landlord?*

**Yes?**

Then come along to the Roddons Tenants Conference.

You must register your interest as spaces will be limited;

**no invitation means no entry on the day.**

**Please complete the Registration of Interest Form enclosed within this newsletter.**

Please state if you require transport, have any special requirements or would like to book crèche facilities. You will be sent your official invitation and confirmation nearer to the date.

### On the day

There will be a presentation from the new Roddons Managing Director, Christopher Smith on the journey of Roddons and various interactive workshops. You will have the chance to meet representatives from TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service), Roddons staff and many involved tenants.

Various other organisations and agencies including our contractors, Apollo, will also be attending.

There will be refreshments/ buffet and limited childrens activities with **a crèche facility which you must book on the Registration of Interest Form and return by 18th February – DEADLINE EXTENDED** or ring **01354 660789** to register.

## Why Roddons Matters to me

**R**oddons is now entering its third year and more tenants are receiving training and being actively involved in many ways.

I've been Chair of Whittlesey & District Tenants' Association since its inception, well over a decade ago, so I've seen a lot of changes.

I hold regular quarterly meetings and innovative Chatting Cafés every month at Whittlesey and Eastrea. They're always well

attended and supported by Roddons staff; we've successfully achieved tenant satisfaction by dedicated teamwork and feedback. I enjoy being at the grass roots, making things better for tenants, so please come along, meet a member of Roddons staff, tell us what's on your mind, we're here to help.

I'm meaningfully involved in many groups, working closely with Roddons, getting my point of view over and listened to, helping



to shape the future for Roddons for the benefit of all tenants. I'm looking forward to the Resident's Scrutiny Panel getting underway; an exciting new venture for all that will be involved.

**Irene Henson**

Roddons resident

## Back to the floor – Mark mops up!!

Assistant Director (Neighbourhoods), Mark Lowthian, recently took up a staff challenge to join them on a 'Back to the Floor Day'. Eager to get out on the front line Mark readily agreed.

One of the challenges Roddons staff frequently face is preparing a property to re-let after a tenancy has ended. Our homes can be left in varying states and Mark Bramham and Colin Pitkin had a treat in store for Mark, as they arrived to clear out a house where the tenant had been evicted for ASB. They worked hard to fill a skip full of unwanted household items and rubbish which had been left by the

outgoing tenant.

"I was amazed at the speed and determination of the team I was with, there was certainly no time to sit down and take a break" said Mark. The house has since been re-let to a family on the waiting list who are enjoying their new home.

Next stop for Mark was to join Rachel Nichols and Maurice Easey to clear an overgrown garden. Mark thought he'd got away lightly with a bit of strimming. But once they'd cleared the area he was also needed to help with loading the brambles before moving onto his next challenge – helping John Oldfield and

Clive Giddens remove a concrete pathway with a mechanical digger!

"It made me realise how valued our gardening service is for older residents and those with special needs" enthused Mark.

Mark then joined Martin Reedman, an electrician. Roddons is exploring new and environmentally friendly heat sources, but some residents still have storage heaters, and Mark was able to assist with explaining how to set them up to get the best results.

Finally, the trades teams

allowed Mark back to the office for a well earned cup of tea.

"It was a fantastic day and I was able to experience first-hand how committed our workmen and women are in responding to our customers needs and getting the job done well."

Following Mark's successful day all Roddons' senior managers have agreed to join staff on future 'Back to the Floor' days. We'll let you know how they get on...! ■



## ▶▶ Helping you to keep warm this winter ▶▶

The price of energy continues to go up. Circle Anglia and its partners are dedicated to offering residents advice on keeping energy costs down and are investing millions of pounds in making homes more energy efficient.

If you have any further questions, speak to your neighbourhood officer or when you call us, ask if we can help. Visit our website [www.circleanglia.org/roddons/resident-info/energy-advice](http://www.circleanglia.org/roddons/resident-info/energy-advice) for useful videos and links to other further information.

### Answering your questions

#### What is fuel poverty?

If you spend more than 10% of your income on energy you are in fuel poverty. It is estimated that 4.6 million UK households are in fuel poverty.

#### How can I save money on my energy bills?



- Don't leave TVs and monitors on standby. **SAVE** up to £40 a year
- Buy smaller LCD TV screens rather than large plasma screens. **SAVE** up to £25 a year



- Put silver foil behind your radiators to reflect heat back into the room. **SAVE** up to £20 a year
- Turn your thermostat down by one degree. **SAVE** up to £60 a year
- Have shower instead of a bath. **SAVE** up to £40 a year
- Buy energy efficient appliances. **SAVE** up to £30 a year
- Wash your clothes at 40 degrees. **SAVE** up to £10. Dry them outside instead of in a tumble. **SAVE** up to £25
- Use energy efficient bulbs. **SAVE** up to £40 a year
- Switch off lights when you leave a room. **SAVE** up to £10
- Making a cup of tea? Only use the water you need. **SAVE** up to £10

That's a saving of up to **£360**. It all adds up!!

## Getting the best deal on energy

### What are social energy tariffs?

Energy deals for people that are classed as fuel poor. Many companies offer these tariffs:

#### EDF Energy – Energy Assist

Call the EDF Energy Priority Services Team on 0800 269 450

#### npower – Spreading Warmth Tariff

Call 0800 9751373

#### E.ON – Staywarm

Go to [www.eonenergy.com/At-Home/Going-Green/Energy-Saving-Advice/Guidance-And-Caring-Energy.htm](http://www.eonenergy.com/At-Home/Going-Green/Energy-Saving-Advice/Guidance-And-Caring-Energy.htm)

#### Scottish Power – Carefree Plus

Call 0845 2700 700

#### Scottish and Southern Energy – Energyplus Care

Call Careline on 0800 622 838

#### British Gas – Essentials

Call Essentials Tariff on 0845 850 2207

For free, impartial advice on energy bills, contact any of the following:

- Home Heat Helpline on 0800 33 66 99 (freephone)
- Energy Saving Trust advice centre on 0800 512 012 (freephone)
- Age Concern on 0800 00 99 66 (freephone)

If you are struggling to pay your bills, don't ignore it. Get advice. Call us on 01306 505 555 or;

- Consumer Credit Counselling Service 0800 138 1111 (freephone)
- National Debtline 0808 808 4000 (freephone)

## Paying your rent

Each time a rent payment is made to Roddons we have to pay a charge which ranges from 25p – £2.34. If you pay by rent collector it costs us £2.34 each time.

The cheapest way to pay is by Direct Debit. This costs us just 25p plus VAT. It's also the easiest way to pay your rent and means that Roddons will have more money to carry out repairs and improvements to your homes.

Direct Debits can be paid weekly, fortnightly, four weekly or monthly. All we ask is that you do pay your rent in advance. Payments will also automatically be adjusted for you when rents change in April or your Housing Benefit amount changes during the year.

**For more information please call 01354 660789. Have your bank details to hand and we can set up your Direct Debit over the phone. ■**



## How are we doing? *You said, We did*

We like to publish figures in Home Matters on how we are performing in delivering services like repairs, collecting rent and letting properties. We asked residents in our Tenant Advisory Groups (TAGs) whether they liked how we presented this information. We had a good response and this is what you told us;

- you wanted to know the real figures involved rather than percentages
- you liked the faces and traffic lights that show whether we are performing well or could do better
- you wanted to know the real stories behind our performance especially when we aren't performing as well as we should as it

helps you to understand what has gone wrong and what we are doing to get back on track

- you would rather that we focus on a few key areas that are important to you rather than try and cover performance of our entire service

So...

- we've changed the

template so that you can easily identify our performance under different teams

- you can now see at a glance if our performance is heading in the right direction from the trend arrows
- green smiley faces mean we are hitting our targets
- amber shows we are not

quite on track but nearly there

- a red sad face is where we need to make improvements.
- This time we have put the spotlight onto repairs so you can see what caused some of the not-so-good performance and the actions we have taken to make sure we do better in the future.

REPAIRS	Apr-Aug 09	Apr-Sept 09	Apr-Oct 09	Direction of travel from	
Number of emergency repairs completed on target	1210 (97.3%)	1432 (97.5%)	1627 (97.5%)	↔	☹
Number of urgent repairs completed on target	471 (95.3%)	574 (95.3%)	707 (94.6%)	↓	☹
Number of routine repairs completed on target	2898 (79.3%)	3503 (77.1%)	4096 (76.6%)	↓	☹
The number of units with a valid gas certificate	2981 (99.97%)	2977 (99.83%)	2981 (99.97%)	↑	☺
The number of residents that reported that their last repair was completed at first visit	1337 (85.7%)	1421 (85.7%)	1868 (86.4%)	↑	☺

Key:



On target



Below target

## How do I deal with condensation in my home?

Every home gets condensation from time to time – it's caused by water in the air collecting on cold surfaces. You can reduce it by doing a few simple things;

- Cover pans when cooking and hang washing outside to dry
- Avoid using paraffin or portable gas heaters – one of the main causes of condensation
- Keep bathroom and kitchen doors shut when you are using them
- Don't completely draught-proof rooms

with condensation as this could make it worse

- If rooms are cold and are not being used, keep the doors shut
- Keep a small window ajar or a trickle ventilator open in each occupied room  
*Don't forget – if you open windows; make sure you shut them when you go out*
- Heating can help but only if it's used in addition to the other suggestions
- It's best to heat your home at a low level for a long time instead of an hour here and there

### Dealing with mildew

Mildew may first appear in corners or behind cupboards, but it can spread across entire walls and on to furnishings.

It can be removed with detergents or mould removers. It can be washed out of fabrics, but may leave stains or spoil colours.

For more information on dealing with condensation, please visit our website [www.circleanglia.org/roddons/resident-info/energy-advice](http://www.circleanglia.org/roddons/resident-info/energy-advice) ■



## Repairs Performance

This year we have made a lot of changes to our repairs service. For example, all tradesmen now have handheld computers to replace paperwork. This has made the job easier for everyone.

As the repairs service has got better, more repairs are being reported. Routine repairs have increased from 1100 a month to 1350 per month. This increase has resulted in some jobs not being completed as quickly as we would like and so this has had an effect on our overall performance figures. To tackle this we have employed an extra carpenter and two more bricklayers.

Making sure you are at home when we call round is a big help in delivering the best service. We have recently introduced a text messaging service which will send you a text the night before we are due to carry out a repair and another message when the tradesman is on his way. This will hopefully reduce



the number of wasted calls and increase the number of repairs we can carry out.

Safety of residents is our top priority and Roddons has put a lot of effort and resources into ensuring that all our properties have a current gas safety certificate. To do this Neighbourhood Officers have called on residents to secure appointments. As a last resort we have used legal means to gain entry to service boilers.

The repairs team is working to provide a service that you can rely on and we are getting there! Satisfaction for repairs in October 2009 was 93.2% and is improving each month. If you have any ideas of how we can improve our service, then we would love to hear from you. ■

### Need to rent a garage?

Roddons has garages in March, Wisbech and Whittlesey that are available to rent for just £6.80 p/w week for existing Roddons housing tenants and £8.80 for non-tenants.

Please call Roddons on 01354 660789 or visit any 'Fenland@Your Service Shop' for more information or to apply.

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