

Home Matters

The newspaper for residents of Roddons Housing Association



www.circleanglia.org/roddons

January 2011



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Residents attend Review Day

On Saturday 20 November we held the Residents' Review Day at the Sports and Community Centre, Wisbech St Mary.

Residents met staff and other residents and shared their views on our services via a 'roving mike' session, suggestions box, wishing line and praise and grumble wall.

Everybody had the chance to enter competitions, including a colouring competition for children. A fun lunch was put on with burgers and hot dogs followed by a slice of Roddons birthday cake (our 3rd birthday was celebrated on 5th November).

Residents were treated to presentations from Brenda Reynolds, Chair of the Board, and Mark Lowthian, Assistant Director of Neighbourhoods.

Residents from the Scrutiny Panel and TAGs took to the stage to talk about their involvement and experiences over the past year in a series of bite-sized presentations including resident involvement, repairs, income, tenancy management, customer services, anti-social behaviour and decent homes.

Sally Taylor, Resident Involvement Officer said "It takes a lot of courage to stand up and give a presentation in front of an audience, they did extremely well."

Mrs Knuth who attended the day said "We have thoroughly enjoyed the day, it's a great way of meeting people and socialising."



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Need help with your finances this New Year?



There is plenty of free money advice available and organisations that can help you. These include:

The Citizens Advice Bureau: www.citizensadvice.org.uk or www.adviceguide.org.uk

The Financial Services Authority: Visit www.money.made.clear.fsa.gov.uk/publications or call 0300 500 5000 for a range of free guides on topics including budgeting and borrowing money.

Your local credit union.

Yvonne Wilson on 01354 660789 or email Yvonne.wilson@circleanglia.org

Don't be tempted by loan sharks, they will only add to any financial problems. If you are approached by a loan shark call 0300 555 2222.





Keeping your family safe...

The crackle of a solid fuel fire is always welcoming on a cold winter's night.

But did you know you can get carbon monoxide poisoning from a solid fuel fire?

When was your heating appliance last serviced?

Please ensure you and your family are safe. If your service is due or if you are unsure please contact us on 01354 660789 or speak to a staff member today.

For more information please speak to us or see our website: www.circleanglia.org/roddons

Housing Benefit – are you missing out?



Income Team

We recently sent out leaflets to those of you who do not receive Housing Benefit, asking you to contact the Income Team to check if you were entitled to receive Housing Benefit.

A number of you contacted us and found out you were entitled. In fact, two customers were eligible for full Housing Benefit, but had been paying their own rent for years! One customer told us he wouldn't get any Housing Benefit because he received too much money, but we calculated that he was entitled, and he now

receives £18 Housing Benefit per week.

There have been lots of changes to the regulations for Housing Benefit; things like Child Benefit and maintenance for children are no longer counted as income. Between December and March, the Income Team will be visiting you if you are not receiving Housing Benefit to check if you may be entitled.

Don't miss out. Contact the Income Team on 01354 660789, we can check if you may be entitled and can also help you to complete the Housing Benefit form.

Welcome from the Scrutiny Panel

Resident John Feary tells us why the Scrutiny Panel matters to him.



The Resident Scrutiny Panel is made up of residents working to improve services for residents in partnership with Roddons.

The Residents Scrutiny Panel (RSP) matters to me because I find it interesting and challenging.

It certainly keeps the brain cells working. It gives me the chance to get involved, learn new skills and gain new knowledge and experience.

The RSP is a new way of independently checking the quality of services offered by Roddons. The Panel takes part in a training programme; have support from consultants and other resources provided by Roddons. This enables us to have the necessary skills and knowledge.

Our first project was the 'Re-let Standards and Voids Process' which involved us looking at the service standards, sign up process, welcome packs, customer satisfaction, and performance information. We also carried out a void property visit and reality checks. The Panel then put together a report with recommendations and praise good practice.

So if you're looking for a new challenge this New Year why not get involved with Roddons and make a difference by joining the Scrutiny Panel.

If you would like more information on how to get involved contact Sally Taylor, Resident Involvement Officer on 01354 660789.

Roddons Garden Competition – Blooming Lovely!

Roddons Garden Competition winners recently received prizes of engraved glass trophies and garden centre vouchers for: 'Best Hanging Basket or Container', 'Best Front Garden', the 'Best Rear Garden' and the 'Best Vegetable Plot,' with 'Highly Recommended' prizes also being

given in recognition of the high standard of entries. On hand to present the prizes were Brenda Reynolds, Chair of the Board and Christopher Smith, Managing Director. Please remember to enter the competition this year – more information coming in the next edition of Home Matters.



Note from editor

Happy New Year and welcome to the Winter edition of Home Matters.

Did you know you can get involved with the production of this newsletter? We welcome residents to join our editorial panel where you can help to decide what articles go in to the newsletter. If you would like to get involved contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01354 660789.

If you wish to opt out of receiving this newsletter in paper format and receive it via email instead simply log on to www.circleanglia.org/optout and fill in the short form.



Rodsons welcomes new recruits

It is important that every member of staff at Rodsons has a clear understanding of how we work and so each new member of staff follows an induction program. The induction program includes how the organisation works, what social housing is all about and what both Rodsons and the Circle Anglia Group believe.

An overview of the business is also completed and a key part of this is the introduction to our involved tenants. Our latest induction program ran during the first two weeks in October.



Involved tenants from the Board, Resident Scrutiny Panel and Tenant Advisory Groups all joined the new recruits to talk about how

they work with staff, the positive influence they have on our service delivery and working in partnership.

Pat Tickner was just one of the residents present during the training session. "What a fascinating insight in to the recruitment process of new staff, in particular for some of the specialist areas of working. It is always very informative and nice to meet them. I feel reassured that the new staff will continue with Rodsons' inclusive approach and appreciate the benefits of working in partnership with us the residents."

Learning from your complaints

We value your comments, complaints and compliments as they provide us with information about how it feels to experience our services and allows us to change our processes to provide a more satisfactory service in the future.

A complaint received from Mrs S of March about our gardening service.



Jenny Bamford,
Customer Insight Officer

You said

On your leaflet it says a nominal fee of £1 but on your website it quotes £1.08, to make things worse when I contacted you about the service I was advised there is a waiting list – you make no mention of this when you promote the service.

We have arranged for the leaflet content to be amended to include both accurate payment information and that there is a waiting list. The website has been updated so that the information is the same on both. We are also committed to providing customers with information about where they are on the waiting list and an approximate wait time.

We did!

We appreciate your feedback. If you wish to make a complaint, compliment or comment about our services you can contact the Customer Services Team on 01354 660789, write to us: The Complaints, Compliments and Comments Team at Beacon House, Hostmoor Avenue, March, Cambs PE15 0AX, e-mail us at Rodsons_complaints@circleanglia.org, complete the form on our website or drop in to our reception.

Leaseholders and Shared Owners



Gas Servicing for Homeowners

As a homeowner it is your responsibility to ensure that your gas fittings are safe. We recommend you have an annual gas safety check carried out by a qualified engineer who is on the Gas Safe Register.



The Gas Safe Register replaced Corgi on 1st April 2009 and is the official stamp for Gas Safety. You can check that any engineer is qualified and registered by visiting www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Circle Living Service Improvement Panel



The Customer Liaison Team

Are you interested in receiving training to help you understand how Circle Living manages its service to you?

- Would you be interested in reviewing Circle Living's services in depth, including reviewing policies and procedures, interviewing staff and speaking with other residents?
- Would you like to review Circle Living's performance so you can make recommendations for which areas we should focus on improving, and get involved in helping these improvements happen?

Then the Service Improvement Panel could be just the thing for you! The panel invites shared owners, leaseholders and freeholders to get involved in reviewing the services Circle Living provides.

What you'll need to do:

- Contact us for an application form
- Attend an interview with members of the Circle Anglia Leaseholder Forum and senior members of Circle Living staff
- If successful, you will need to commit to being a member for three years and attend four to six meetings annually.

We are currently recruiting members for the Service Improvement Panel, so if you'd like further information please get in touch on the details below.





Contact: The Customer Liaison Team

T: 01603 595125

E: customerliaisonteam@circleanglia.org

How are we doing?





Performance April – September 2010

Performance Area	Year end position 2009/10	April – Sept 2010	How are we doing?	Target
Emergency repairs completed on target (24 hours)	97.9%	100%		98%
Urgent repairs completed on target (7 days)	95.2%	96.30%		97%
Routine repairs completed on target (28 days)	81.4%	96.10%		94%
Tenants that were satisfied with repairs and maintenance	92.8%	97.30%		91%

Performance has continued to improve in all areas. The biggest improvement over the last year is the number and percentage of routine repairs completed on target where we have seen nearly a 15% increase in performance.

Average number of days taken to re-let a <i>General Needs</i> property	19 days	16.1 days		19 days
Average number of days taken to re-let a <i>Supported Housing</i> property	31 days	12.4 days		35 days
The number of vacant homes (<i>General Needs</i>)	0.6%	1.00%		0.6%
The number of vacant homes (<i>Supported Housing</i>)	5.8%	11.20%		15.0%

Rodsons has maintained the average re-let time for *General Needs* within target since May and *Sheltered Housing* re-let time has been consistently under target since April 2010. The percentage of vacant *General Needs* homes is over target but this is being monitored by the voids management team. The percentage of properties empty in our *Supported Housing* relates to the impact of our *Sheltered Housing Review* and empty properties at *Napier Court, Wisbech* and *The Dale, Elm*.

The amount of rent & service charge collected (<i>General Needs</i>)	101.1%	99.00%		98%
The amount of rent & service charge collected (<i>Supported Housing</i>)	101.8%	98.50%		100%
Total amount of current tenant arrears (<i>General Needs</i>)	2.4%	2.40%		4.0%
Total amount of current tenant arrears (<i>Supported Housing</i>)	0.4%	0.60%		1.6%

Rent arrears for general needs properties has been consistently held at the year end figure. It is disappointing that we are not achieving the target for rent collection of supported housing at present. However, we are working hard to ensure that the year end target of 100% is reached.

How we are doing – Key to symbols



Good



Improving



Needs to improve

What's On – dates for your diaries...



Every Thursday 10am – 1pm Chatting Café Drop In session at Rodsons' offices – come and enjoy a cuppa over a chat with the Resident Involvement Team. Internet café style computer access, advice and support on resident involvement issues.

February 2011

- 14 – Wisbech Association 10am Onyx Court, Wisbech
- 14 – March Association 7pm Fleming Court
- 16 – Whittlesey Chatting Café 10.30am Library
- 17 – Thorney Toll Association 7.30pm Village Hall
- 21 – Chatting Café Wisbech St Mary 10.30am at Bridge Inn

March 2011

- 14 – Wisbech Association 10am Onyx Court, Wisbech
- 14 – March Association 7pm Bradshaw Court
- 16 – Whittlesey Chatting Café 10.30am Library
- 17 – Thorney Toll Association 7.30pm Village Hall
- 21 – Chatting Café Wisbech St Mary 10.30am at Bridge Inn
- 28 – Chatteris Association Chatting Café
- 29 – Benwick Chatting Café 11am 5 Alls
- 31 – Benwick Association 7.30pm 5 Alls

April 2011

- 6 – Sheltered Forum – venue to be confirmed
- 11 – Wisbech Association 10am Onyx Court, Wisbech
- 11 – March Association 7pm Morton Avenue
- 13 – Whittlesey Association 3pm St Marys House
- 14 – Thorney Toll Association 7.30pm Village Hall
- 18 – Chatting Café Wisbech St Mary 10.30am at Bridge Inn
- 20 – Whittlesey Chatting Café 10.30am Library
- 21 – Benwick Association 7.30pm 5 Alls

At the time of going to print the above dates were correct – any queries concerning dates not provided please contact the RI team on 01354 660789.

Your Association contacts:-

Tony Roughton, Wisbech Association
01945 474362

Jean Key, March Association
01354 652933

Gill Smith, Chatteris Association
01354 692006

Tony Coleman, Thorney Toll Association
07887655380

Irene Henson, Whittlesey Association
01733 208368

Patricia Tickner, Benwick Association
01354 677279

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