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# Local heroes awarded for showing community spirit

**M**ore than 140 people came together to celebrate their neighborhood heroes at the South Anglia Housing Community Spirit Awards ceremony in the autumn, which was hosted by Olympic 400m silver medallist Iwan Thomas, at Boreham House in Chelmsford.

Winner of the 'Outstanding Contribution for Resident Involvement' Award, Rita Youens, said: "I am absolutely gobsmacked! This is the first time I ever lost my voice. Winning this award means a lot to me, I do work tirelessly for the community on a voluntary basis and it is worth it. I am asking everyone to get involved and strengthen the community. At first I was a bit nervous to go up on stage in front of all these people but it is an amazing experience to be applauded and I feel very proud".

The six local heroes of the evening, which all had been nominated by their neighbours, were:

- Inspiring Personality; which was won by Carla Inskip from Vange, for her inspiring support and care for her disabled neighbour
- Community Safety Champion; which was won by Vera Deal from Harlow, for her outstanding contributions to the 'smart water' scheme and ongoing work with the local police
- Community Champion; which was won by Sandra Ashdown from Sawbridgeworth, for her inspiring and tireless work to help with all residents' activities
- Outstanding Neighbour, which was won by David Cresswell from Brentwood, for his devotion and support to help residents of Rollason Way and establishing a residents association
- Outstanding Contribution for Resident Involvement, which was won by Rita Youens from Sawbridgeworth, for the incredible work she does to



help other residents resolve issues and signpost them in the right direction and for all the time she dedicates to being involved with South Anglia Housing

- Young Achiever; which was won by Brooke McDermott from Harlow, for her brave engagement and neighbourly support during a fire at Berecroft
- Iwan Thomas, who presented the awards, said: "I really enjoyed the event and met some fantastic individuals who showed real enthusiasm

for their communities."

Winner of the 'Community Safety Champion' Award, Vera Deal, said: "It is a great feeling to be recognised and truly motivating. I hope the event motivates more people to do good things in their community and look out for each other. Everyone can make a positive difference. It's so easy and very rewarding."

South Anglia Housing's Managing Director, Chris Ellison, added: "Our residents are at the heart of everything

we do and we feel it is important that they have the opportunity to shine. The Community Spirit Award is about enhancing people's Life Chances and creating a real community spirit. This is a great event and it is good to see everyone enjoying themselves and having a good time."

Residents interested in South Anglia Community Spirit Awards can contact Carla Wood on phone 01376 559 401 or email [carla.wood@circleanglia.org](mailto:carla.wood@circleanglia.org) for further information. ■

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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 Chris Ellison



I am delighted with the recent STATUS results which showed a rise in customer satisfaction – read more further down this page. We achieved 100% satisfaction from our supported tenants and resident satisfaction increased to 78%. We will carry on working with you all to ensure this continues to rise.

South Anglia understands that many residents still face financial difficulties and we would encourage anybody struggling to contact us for information about how we can help you during these times. Keeping warm on a limited budget is a concern and with the cold weather looking set to continue, turn to page three to see our guide to cutting your fuel bills and getting a good deal on your energy.

With Best wishes,

**Chris Ellison**

MD South Anglia Housing

**W**elcome to the first Home Matters of 2010.

This year, we hope to continue building on the achievements of last year, such as increasing resident participation in the shaping of our services and the development of your communities.

I hope you enjoyed reading about our 2009 Community Spirit Awards on the front page of this newsletter. Every year we are overwhelmed by stories about residents who tirelessly work to improve their local neighbourhoods. Well done again to all the nominees.

## Raising the profile of mouth cancer

Last year Bedfordshire Community Health Service worked with South Anglia and Diverse 102.8 FM to raise awareness of Mouth Cancer and the take up of oral health services.

In particular the Bangladeshi and the Gujarati community within the South Asian communities were targeted by the campaign as they are at greater risk of mouth cancer as a result of chewing tobacco, gutkha or paan.

Approximately 3,500 people are diagnosed every year with mouth cancer; and it kills four people in the UK every day. In the early stages, mouth cancer can be almost invisible, making it easy to ignore. The mortality rate is over 50%, despite treatment. More people die of mouth cancer every year, than



of cervical and testicular cancer, combined.

It is more common in men than women, however the number of women affected has increased significantly over recent years. Younger people are also increasingly being affected.

Early detection not only saves lives but can give more treatment options.

Reduce your risks of mouth cancer by:

- Not smoking or chewing tobacco, gutkha/paan
- Drinking less alcohol
- Having lots of vegetables and fruit daily, lower meat and fat diets
- Refraining from oral sex
- Having regular dental check-ups
- Wearing sunscreen on the lips

If you notice anything abnormal in your mouth or throat should be checked out by a dentist. ■

## Doorstep Challenge – last dates of 2009

South Anglia's 'Doorstep Challenge' visited Sawbridgeworth in November and Rollason Way in Brentwood in December to bring its housing services to those areas that do not have easy access to its offices.

Residents met the South Anglia Housing team to talk about issues such as anti-social behaviour, repairs and maintenance and resident involvement in the spacious state-of-the-art vehicle. Visitors used the consultation lounge while younger people – and the young at heart – got competitive in the Nintendo Wii play area.

At Sawbridgeworth, East Herts Housing Options teams were on hand to give advice to older people on moving to a more suitable property and accessing appropriate benefits without them having to travel to a Council office.



Issues that were handled in Brentwood included one resident who had been experiencing problems with their heating, so the team at South Anglia immediately sent someone along to make a temporary repair until an appointment could be arranged for the complete works to be undertaken. Another resident who was in rent arrears was able to see an Income Officer and work together with them to find a solution.

Chris Ellison, Managing

Director for South Anglia Housing, said: "The 'Doorstep Challenge' is about getting out to rural areas – where services can be hard to access – and helping residents with their problems. With this mobile centre we can reach even more people."

South Anglia housing officers also visited other parts of Brentwood to see more residents in the Retreat, Sawyers Grove and The Base development. ■

### If in doubt – check it out!

For more information contact:

Mouth Cancer Foundation  
[www.mouthcancerfoundation.org](http://www.mouthcancerfoundation.org)

Sue Jordan BSc (Hons)  
Oral Health Promotion Manager  
Bedfordshire Community Health Service  
Tel: 01525 636822 or

Ashuk Ahmed MBE  
Community Development Manager  
South Anglia Housing  
Tel: 01582 808562

email: [ashuk.ahmed@circleanglia.org](mailto:ashuk.ahmed@circleanglia.org)

To find a dentist please contact:

Luton Homes	01582 528854
Bedfordshire Homes	0845 603 0857
NHS Direct	0845 4647

## STATUS update

South Anglia has received the results from this year's STATUS surveys that were carried out during August and September 2009. These results are very important for us to complete our published key performance indicators and will be used by our regulators to assess our performance.

The results in a nutshell:

- Resident satisfaction with your landlord has increased from 69% to 78%



- Satisfaction with views being taken into account has increased
- Sheltered and Supported Housing achieved very high satisfaction rates including a 100% satisfaction with South Anglia for supported tenants ■

# ▶▶▶ 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/southanglia](http://www.circleanglia.org/southanglia) 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)



## Cold weather payments

You may be eligible for cold weather payments if you have experienced freezing temperatures for over seven days. Find out on the Direct Gov website - money and tax benefits

### Outdoor Tips:

- When outside wear lots of layers.
- Wear a hat – lots of heat is lost through your head.
- Wear sensible shoes for walking in slippery conditions – flat with plenty of grip.
- Don't forget to check your Local Authority website for the latest travel and weather information for where you live.
- Make sure you enable your landlord to carry

out its annual Gas Servicing to ensure your boiler is working properly and safely.

- If you go away over the winter months it's best to set your central heating to come on twice a day at a low temperature – this helps to avoid freezing and burst pipes if there's a sudden cold snap.
- The average central heating system takes about half an hour to properly heat up a home and many modern boilers now take around 15 minutes. So set your heating to come on about 30 minutes before you get up. If the heating turns off 30 minutes before you go to bed, there will still be plenty of residual heat in the home.

## 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/southanglia](http://www.circleanglia.org/southanglia) ■



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

These figures show South Anglia's performance to the end of December 2009. The figures represent key areas of South Anglia's services and are used to monitor our performance throughout the year.



Measure	Performance Figure	Traffic Light	Period Trend
Rent and service charge collection	99.7%	😊	↑
Current tenant arrears	4.07%	😊	↑
Re-let time (for all managed stock)	33.0	😞	↑
Vacant dwellings	0.9%	😊	↑
Emergency repairs completed in target	94.4%	😞	↑
Routine repairs completed in target	97.0%	😊	↑
Complaints resolved at first stage	90.9%	😐	↑

## New affordable housing for local people in Watford

A new affordable housing development on the site of Outlook Place in Watford was officially opened in December.

South Anglia has redeveloped the 1967's build property into 37 new homes and the £4.1 million development received £1 million in funding from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). 16 of the one bed homes are for renting to people in housing need on Watford Borough Council's housing register and 12 are shared ownership properties. The shared ownership scheme, known as New Build HomeBuy, gives first time buyers the opportunity to buy their home in stages, whilst paying a subsidised rent on the remainder.

An additional nine four-bedroom houses for families on the local authority's housing register were also developed on the site of Outlook Place to respond to the need for large family sized homes in the area.

The new homes are clad in a mixture of slate and timber to blend in with the site's leafy surroundings. The scheme complies with Level 3 of the Code for Sustainable Homes and incorporates the use of high levels of insulation, solar thermal water heating and water-saving technology, ensuring heating and water bills are affordable for residents.

Resident Emma Akwah said: "We couldn't be happier here, the location is fantastic and we have an amazing view. The flat is lovely and South Anglia has been great from start to finish."

Elected Mayor of Watford, Dorothy Thornhill, said: "I am really happy with this lovely new green development! Watford now has 37 new homes which are sustainable and affordable.

Nine of these 37 new homes have four bedrooms which is fantastic for families on the housing register. It's also great news that the 12 shared ownership flats have all sold, despite the economic climate." ■

## ASB – what is South Anglia doing to address it?

**A**nti-social behaviour (ASB) is behaviour which causes, or is likely to cause, harassment or distress. It can be anything from low-level persistent nuisance to serious violent behaviour. It includes all behaviour that harms residents' quality of life in and around their homes.

Some examples of ASB are neighbour nuisance, vandalism and graffiti, noise nuisance, misuse or serious neglect of gardens, nuisance from pets, car crime, drug related crime, verbal abuse, intimidation, domestic violence and racial harassment.

South Anglia aims to

promote a safe and secure environment for people to live in.

We aim to prevent ASB from happening. We set out clear requirements of our tenants in our tenancy agreements and take enforcement action where appropriate. We work in partnership with the police and other partners to prevent and deal with ASB.

We will:

- Use a range of prevention measures to reduce anti-social behaviour
- Take a victim-centred approach
- Investigate all complaints of anti-social behaviour
- Always have someone available to deal with anti-

social behaviour during office hours

- Respond to racial harassment and domestic violence within 24 hours
- Remove offensive or discriminatory graffiti within 24 hours of it being reported
- Support and work with you in trying to resolve your complaint
- Agree an action plan with you within two weeks of you reporting an incident and review this every month
- Offer clear advice and support when you report an incident
- Use a range of legal and non-legal remedies



to resolve anti-social behaviour, taking an approach that is appropriate to the case

- Review all open cases after three months.

If we feel your case should be closed, we will discuss this with you and give you an opportunity to appeal. After your case is closed we will ask for your opinion on how we dealt with the case.

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