

Nominate your community heroes

Do you know someone who deserves recognition for their role in your community? Wherry Housing Association's Community Spirit Awards celebrate the people who go the extra mile, whether they help their neighbours, make things happen or show courage to cope with whatever life throws their way. Wherry will this year host its fourth annual Community Spirit awards.

The Community Spirit Awards are open for nominations now, with awards for the following categories:

Good Neighbours

People who provide support to those living around them.

Role Models

People who inspire those around them to make a difference too.

Eager Beavers

People who 'get things done', take responsibility and make things happen.

Examples of Courage

People who show strength of character in coping with the life's challenges.



Last year's winner Robert Norton with his sons who nominated him.

You can nominate your neighbour now using any of these easy methods:

E-mail: wherryCSA@circleanglia.org

Text: Community Spirit Awards to 07797 805631

Telephone us on the Community Spirit Awards nomination line on **01603 703608**.

Fill in the simple form below and send it free of charge to:

Community Spirit Awards
Wherry Housing Association
FREEPOST IH3455
Norwich NR7 0HR

The closing date for entries is 25th July 2008.

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on 6th September.

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 **01603 703561** and we will do our best to help.

My name:

My daytime telephone number:

The person I wish to nominate is:

Please call me to hear why I want to nominate them. The most convenient time/day is:

Wherry update



A round up of news from Wherry Housing Association

Part of Circle Anglia



Community Spirit Awards, see page 4

The results are in!

Wherry residents have been telling us the issues that really matter to them. More than 550 residents took part in our satisfaction survey earlier this year to help us identify what we could do better and what already works.

A lot of positives came out of the survey, such as the quality of our advice on rent payments, along with some clear guidance on what we need to improve. Top of that list was repairs and maintenance, which is a top priority for us to improve on.

All in the numbers

4 in 5 were at least satisfied with:

- The quality of their home
- Their neighbourhood as a place to live
- The value for money of their rent
- The general condition of their property

Top priorities were:

- 70% Repairs and maintenance
- 48% The overall quality of their home
- 44% Value for money for rent
- 37% Keeping tenants informed

An apology

The status survey was carried out on our behalf by ORC International. Unfortunately some tenants had bad experiences with this company as we had reports that staff had been quite demanding or intrusive on the telephone. We're very sorry for any upset caused by this and have taken up this issue with ORC and also with the Housing Corporation.

We hope that this won't discourage anybody from getting involved in future surveys like this as it's extremely important to Wherry that residents are involved in shaping our services.

Staying safe in the home

Wherry residents are invited to a free event to learn more about how to stop themselves becoming the victim of rogue traders and bogus callers.

The Liberation Day takes place at St Nicholas Church, Market Place, North Walsham, Norfolk, on Thursday July 17, from 9am-3pm. The day is particularly aimed at elderly residents and will feature regular drama productions from local youngsters to enforce the messages of staying safe in the home. The day will also feature an organ recital and refreshments.

Agencies staging the event include Norfolk police and Norfolk County Council's trading standards department.

Improving repairs

The status survey confirmed that repairs and maintenance services need to be improved. In most cases, Wherry's residents were happy with the skills of the operative and the quality of the repair itself. The problems appear to be with the repairs system, or how we deal with your repairs once you've reported it.

Partnership for improvement

To help make our repairs service more efficient, we have brought in a specialist contractor, Mears, to work with AMS, our maintenance provider. They are already working on improving our computer systems to make sure repairs are logged quickly and correctly so the right operative is sent to make the repair. Mears will also be helping to recruit and train more skilled operatives.



Property MOTs

In July we'll begin our Property MOT programme. Just like a motor MOT we'll give every home a thorough check and carry out minor repairs along the way. This is the perfect opportunity to check your taps aren't dripping and your kitchen sink is up to scratch.

We'll also be able to keep track of all the adaptations already made to our properties so that we can match the right properties to the right people when they become available.

Every Wherry home will get a Property MOT, but please bear with us as it will take time to reach them all. Mears will be carrying out the programme and will contact everyone in due course.

In the meantime, you don't need to wait for us to come to you. To report a repair or ask about adaptations or support, call our customer services team on 0845 600 1518.

When Mears carry out the MOTs, they will also be collecting the questionnaire you'll receive with the appointment letter. There will be a plain envelope for you to put the questionnaire in, as it asks you

personal details about yourself.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to ensure that both Mears and Wherry have up to date information about you, so that we can make sure that we are providing services that meet your needs. An example is if we know which of our tenants have sight problems, then we can make sure we send you letters in larger size writing, or contact you by telephone instead if you'd prefer. Mears also need the information so that when they are visiting you they are aware of your circumstances, such as if you are deaf and so need to text you to tell you they are outside the door.

We appreciate that you might have been asked similar questions recently as part of a longer survey. However, because these details had to be anonymous for data protection reasons, we were not able to store them. Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill in the questionnaire when you receive it. If you have any questions or require help completing the survey, please contact Hannah Weight, Assistant Director of Continuous Improvement on **01603 703820** or hannah.weight@circleanglia.org

Tackling anti-social behaviour

The survey showed that Wherry residents are concerned about anti-social behaviour and are actually more likely to report it than residents of other housing associations within Circle Anglia. The issues that caused most concern amongst our residents were car parking and rubbish in the neighbourhood. There were also concerns about noisy neighbours and disruptive children.

We are currently working on an updated strategy and action plan for tackling all aspects of anti-social behaviour. Over the last few months we have increased the number of neighbourhood officers and community wardens, which means each one now has a smaller patch to cover and more time to spend there. Our estate walkabouts are another good way to learn where the problems lie and help communities to find solutions.

Look out for more news about how Wherry is tackling anti-social behaviour in the next Wherry Matters.



RESPECT Give respect Get respect

Hands on help, looking for work?

If you have a trade qualification and are looking for work, why not help us to improve Wherry's repairs service?

Mears, the largest social housing repairs and maintenance provider in the UK, is looking to recruit skilled operatives across all trades. **With good rates of pay and career prospects, this could be a great way to make a difference for Wherry's residents.**

To find out more, contact Mears direct on 0845 602 2768.