



Welcome to the second issue of our briefing to share some of our achievements and views with our key stakeholders.

In this issue we have articles describing our response to the current economic climate and help we are giving to our residents. Housing Associations have a key role to play in raising aspirations, providing training opportunities in these tough times.

However, there are real opportunities for new and existing residents with the announcement of a new proposed Eco-Community in Rackheath in the Broadland District. This is an exciting project that Wherry is supporting with our key partner Broadland District Council. If you would like to discuss working more closely with Wherry on any of the issues contained in this newsletter, please get in touch with me at mark.jones@circleanglia.org or call me on 01603 703811.

We have now completed this years Wherry Resident Review and the Circle Anglia Annual Report.

Please find the hyperlinks here to take you to these documents.

[Wherry Residents Review](#) [Circle Anglia Annual Review](#)

Rackheath – Sustainable Construction



Registered Providers (RP's) have long been at the forefront of striving to deliver more environmentally aware construction methods, in excess of the current Building Regulation requirements, to understand and minimise the negative impact on our surroundings.

This universal acknowledgement that what we do today impacts on the natural environment in the future has enabled Circle Anglia to embrace the government agenda of increasing the sustainability of

the homes we build to promote a quieter, cleaner and healthier world.

To support our core purpose of enhancing life chances, a number of refurbishment and new build exemplar projects have been undertaken in partnership with local authorities and the Homes and

So
much
more

Wherry View



Part of Circle Anglia

Communities Agency (HCA) to provide greater autonomy for customers, reduce energy requirements and consumption and thus minimise the costs in use and threat of fuel poverty.

Our small, rural development of 12 new homes for rent for partner RP, Wherry Housing Association at Green Lane, Rackheath is one such project which, following the Governments selection for the geographical location of the groundbreaking Eco Communities has been thrust into the local spotlight.

Work commenced on the scheme some two years ago with funding support being confirmed from both Broadland District Council and the HCA by way of a grant in early 2009. Detailed consultation was undertaken with the local community resulting in a detailed planning consent being granted in July 2009.

However, the original scheme was designed prior to the Eco Community being situated at Rackheath and whilst the homes were to be of a high environmental standard they did not attain the principles required by government of the Eco Communities. Discussions with Officers and Members at Broadland District Council resulted in the mutually agreed desire to enhance the standards of this small rural housing development as much as possible, given the site specific constraints, promote a greater awareness of energy efficiency within both the immediate and wider community and deliver a scheme which accords with the principles of the adjacent Eco Community.

Circle Anglia engaged a number of consultants to undertake a detailed energy assessment of the scheme to ascertain the most practical and economically viable way of reducing carbon emissions. A range of methods and technologies was explored with the conclusion that it is possible to achieve a 100% reduction in CO2 emissions (with current Building Regulation requirements as the benchmark) by a mixture of super insulating the building fabric and installing a Bio fuel Combined heat and power system. This equates to Code for Sustainable Homes (the single national standard for the design and construction of energy efficient homes) Level 6.

This superior scheme will require considerable additional capital grant funding for which discussions with Broadland DC and the HCA have already commenced. Any proposed design amendments will be considered in terms of statutory planning requirements and be the subject of additional consultation with the community.

It is anticipated that a start on site will commence in the summer of 2010 with the revised rural housing scheme leading the way in showing the benefits to be derived from the adjacent Eco Community.

Ultimately, the increased energy efficient homes will aid the quality of life for both their individual residents and those of the wider community, reducing the impact of modern life and the depletion of scarce resources for the benefit of the next generation.

TSA Pilot – Terrington Neighbourhood Charter



In September Wherry successfully bid for funding from the Tenant Services Authorities' 'Tenant Excellence' fund to develop a Safer, Cleaner, Greener Neighbourhood Charter for Terrington St Clements.

The pilot seeks to establish common standards across this multi-landlord estate, whilst also integrating the approach of service delivery agencies with the wider village. The partnership will work with Keep Britain Tidy acting as an independent facilitator to engage with both residents and service delivery partners in agreeing standards.

The standards developed through the pilot will be based on tenant and resident input and this will ensure that the Neighbourhood Charter is developed based on addressing resident's priorities for their area and enable a greater understanding of the services that can be delivered to achieve a clean, safer and green neighbourhood.

Residents will have a key role in measuring the impact of the pilot through ongoing estate inspections and the creation of a local resident scrutiny panel who will monitor performance and service delivery. The recognised landlord wide resident group will enable residents to better monitor the services that they receive, and encourage reporting of issues to organisations other than their landlord to encourage public accountability.

The Neighbourhood Charter will provide clarity of expectation for residents on the estate, who will benefit from a common approach to service delivery and will encourage early reporting of environmental and other issues. Residents and service providers will benefit from a cleaner, safer and greener neighbourhood, which will have a significant benefit on the quality of life of residents living in Terrington St Clements.

The results of this pilot will be shared with other organisations and the Norfolk RSL Alliance to develop a similar approach to set local standards in other areas moving forward.

We will update you with progress for this pilot in the next issue

Future Jobs Fund Programme



Wherry Housing Association through Circle Anglia are currently running the Future Jobs Fund Programme in partnership with the National Housing Federation and Groundwork UK.

The Future Jobs Fund programme is a contract, funded by the Department of Work & Pensions. It was introduced as a measure to help prevent young people from becoming further detached from the labour market during the recession. This funding has received a lot of publicity and we were part of the initial winning bid representing a housing consortium for the first time, this bid has been mentioned by Gordon Brown and John Denham in various recent speeches and announcements.

The main idea behind the programme is to create six month long job opportunities within organisations (salaries fully paid for through FJF). This is a great opportunity for organisations to take on enthusiastic young people and support them in gaining work experience and development opportunities. It also allows Wherry to enhance the life chances of local unemployed young people who live in the communities we work in by providing supported employment opportunities.

There are 3 phases to the programme which is being delivered in Wherry through the NHF/Groundwork partnership. We will be delivering 19 jobs (throughout the Circle Anglia Group) in Phase 1, and Phase 2 is due to start in March for which the jobs will have a start date for the beginning of June. We will be delivering 11 jobs.

The benefits to us are:-

- It will show how we are delivering on both the life chances agenda and the national worklessness agenda
- Reduce unemployment in our area
- Increase community cohesion
- Deliver the message that there are opportunities out there and that the housing sector can be seen as a job generator
- Increase in resident involvement

Trainee role for young people based with Wherry Housing Association



We have recently entered into a contract with Great Yarmouth College to offer two trainee roles for young people aged 16 – 18 to come and work with us here at Wherry Housing Association. While working here they will, at the same time, be studying to gain their formal training and qualifications (NVQ's). Great Yarmouth College will be providing the training and support for these young people during the time they are with us and we hope to give them the experience they need to go further in their careers.

Wherry Housing Association is now on Facebook



facebook

Wherry Housing Association have launched a Facebook page as another method of communicating with residents. With an increasing number of younger residents in our properties, it's important that we utilise all methods of communication available to connect with them. In addition, Facebook allows us to easily signpost residents to other

organisations that offer services we can't provide.

We will utilise Facebook to put on regular updates from the employees who join us from the Future Jobs Fund Programme so that other young people can be encouraged to seek work through other mediums and see how much experience can be gained from working within the housing sector.

Mow and Grow Training Opportunities



Wherry Mow and Grow is a social enterprise that delivers a low-cost sustainable gardening service to our residents as well as career opportunities in horticulture. Wherry's Mow & Grow scheme offers volunteer training opportunities to Wherry residents aged 16 and over giving them the chance to gain valuable work experience, skills and qualifications in horticulture through a specially tailored training placement.

Tom aged 19, has been volunteering for the Wherry Mow & Grow service for several weeks, he was previously unemployed and joined the scheme to get himself out of the house. "I'd just done boring jobs since I

left school and I wanted to look for a job where I'd get training and have future prospects". There are many opportunities to gain accredited training in garden machinery and general gardening maintenance during volunteering as well as the satisfaction of helping make the gardens you visit a better place to be. Tom had no previous gardening experience but working with the Wherry Mow & Grow team has brought out a budding horticulturalist.

"I'm really enjoying my days with Mow and Grow and I am learning a lot every day. Now I've found out how much I like working outside, I'd like to train to be a tree surgeon.

Wherry Overturn DWP Decision re ESA



Wherrys Benefits and Money Advisor recently won an appeal to overturn the decision from the DWP not to award a Wherry resident Employment Supplement Allowance (ESA).

The resident is delighted and this will now enable her to start the process of returning to work and clear her rent arrears. This decision means that the resident will receive an extra £25.00 per week, which is an increase of 28%.

Fun Day Outcomes – You Said, We Did !



Over the last five months Wherry has held 11 Fun Days across the region from Peterborough to Old Catton, Ipswich to Cambridge. Over 700 residents and their families have taken part in the events which included football games, face painting, bouncy castles and treasure hunts. Residents have had the opportunity to meet and talk to members of Wherry staff as well as representatives from other local key organisations including the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT), Stonham HomeStay, Fire Services and other local housing providers.

As well as having some fun Wherry used the opportunity to consult with residents about what they wanted us to introduce a texting service to report repairs, this has now been launched.

These fun days have reached nearly 10% of our residents and it was a very cost effective way to ensure we are engaging wherever possible as well as making it fun.

We have put together a flyer which will be sent to all residents with the January issue of our resident's magazine "Home Matters", which gives more details about the consultation and explains how we have shaped our service to ensure we are meeting their needs. Some examples include:-

- Residents wanted access to our services via the internet and other digital services – we have launched our new digital service "Whigital" where residents can report repairs and contact us using their TV and mobile phones.
- They wanted clearer information about benefits, debt advice and the services of the Credit Union – We have included lots of this information on "Whigital" and Facebook and have held sessions to introduce residents to the benefits of setting up a savings account with the Credit Union.
- Younger residents were looking to get involved but wanted their own group - We have introduced a group called YELL – Youth Engagement in Life and Learning, this is for youngsters aged between 13 and 19. We are intending to set up regular meetings to find out what they want from the group so we can offer a tailored involvement package for them.



Our final resident event of 2009, Wherry Christmas, was held at Thorpe St Andrews High School on 5th December. 172 residents attended the event with over half being children. Entertainment included Father Christmas, fairside stalls, balloon modelling, dance & theatre, kickz and refreshments. We were supported by our partners AMS / Mears, SNT and the Norfolk Credit Union. Initial results show 10 residents opened a savings account with Norfolk Credit Union, 5 young residents have asked for more details on joining YELL, 1 resident wants to join our Mystery Shopping team and 3 residents have expressed an interest in becoming resident inspectors. A great day was had by residents and staff alike.

We would like to wish you all a very Happy Christmas
and a prosperous New Year.

Contact details for further information, comments
or support:

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So
much
more