

Winter 2009

Housing NEWS

Tenant's Newsletter from Ashford Borough Council



Housing calendar artists' efforts rewarded

inside:

- Readers' Survey results
- New council homes on the way
- More local homes for local people



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tenants forum

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www.ashford.gov.uk

council contacts

Housing Services Team

Tel: 01233 330688
Email: housing@ashford.gov.uk
Repairs Hotline: 01233 330366

Civic Centre

Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent
TN23 1PL

Open: 9am – 5pm Monday
to Thursday
9am – 4.30pm Friday

Tel: 01233 331111
Typetalk: 01233 330744

Lines Open:
8.30am-5.30pm Monday
to Thursday
8.30am-5.30pm Friday

Out of Hours/Emergency:
01233 629911

24 Hour Payment Line:
01233 330625

Benefit Fraud Hotline:
0800 026245

The Ashford Gateway Centre

14 Park Mall, Ashford,
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Housing News

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 **editor's note**

It's the end of another eventful year and a chance to reflect on what has been achieved and what is planned for the future.

More tenants and leaseholders are becoming increasingly involved and having a say about the Housing Service through satisfaction surveys, visiting the housing surgeries, attending the mobile surgeries, community days, and attending resident meetings or estate inspections.

Ashford hosted the first Kent-wide tenants' conference in September which was a huge success and will hopefully be repeated in 2011.

The calendar competition resulted in some really great pictures and although we are continuing with the smaller format I hope you will agree that including dates of fixed events such as the estate inspections and other housing related dates is a useful addition.

We are hoping to introduce a new idea for the 2011 calendar (watch this space!) but to keep the artistic flow going, we are going to launch a competition to produce the artwork for some new signs warning against dog fouling as part of an awareness raising campaign. Details of this competition will feature in the spring Housing News.

On a sad note the youth shelter in Heathside Appledore has been badly vandalised and is the subject of a criminal investigation. After all the work done by the young people who live on the estate to design the shelter, this is a real shame. As usual it looks like a case of a few spoiling things for the majority and we are looking for a positive solution.

Philippa Dale Editor



Philippa Dale



Pat Pearman



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Cover Picture:
Seven housing calendar artists visit the Civic Centre



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If you know someone who is blind or partially sighted who would like to listen to Housing News on cassette or CD, then please contact the Editor on **01233 330365**.

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Readers' Survey

Thanks to everyone who answered the Readers' Survey in the autumn issue of Housing News. We had a very encouraging response rate and generally positive feedback.

The message seems to be that what readers want to see more of in future editions are:

- Tenants' stories
- More about villages and estates
- DIY tips

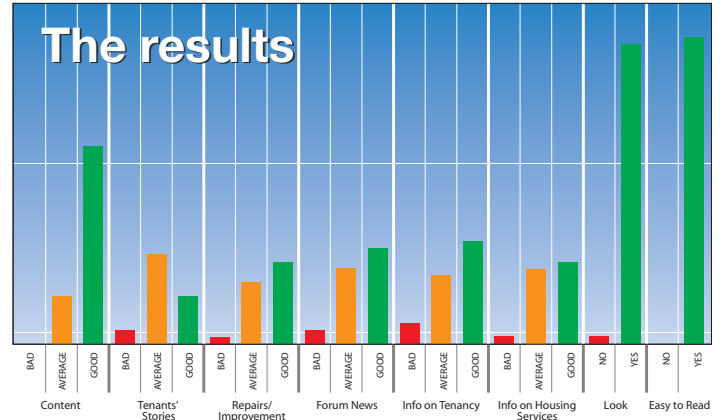
With tenants' stories top of the list.

We will aim to cover these areas but we can't do it without your help so please keep in touch with us and let us know of anything you would like to go in the newsletter including things you would like to see improved in your neighbourhood, things you and your neighbours have achieved

or children and young people's activities you would like to publicise.

Specific issues raised by respondents included the dates of Forum meetings and estate inspections for the whole year not just those in the next three months. So, You Said, We Did, and these are have been put in the 2010 Housing Calendar, which will hopefully help remind tenants and leaseholders of when these are taking place.

You also want us to make contact with vulnerable and hard to reach groups and we are looking to improve how we reach these groups of people.



Housing News Readers' Survey October 2009

Finally, congratulations to Mrs Joan Foxon from Great Chart whose completed survey form was drawn from the hat winning shopping vouchers worth £100.

Joan Foxon from Great Chart receives her vouchers from Rebecca Wilcox, Housing Operations Manager



Christmas and New Year opening hours

Dates	Civic Centre	Tenterden Gateway	Ashford Gateway
Thursday 24th Dec (Christmas Eve)	Closed	Open 9am - 4pm	Closed
Friday 25th Dec (Christmas Day)	Closed	Closed	Closed
Saturday 26th Dec	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sunday 27th Dec	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday 28th Dec (Bank Holiday)	Closed	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 29th Dec	Open 9am - 5pm (Phones 8.30am - 5.30pm)	Open 9am - 5.30pm	Open 9am - 5.30pm
Wednesday 30th Dec	Open 9am - 5pm (Phones 8.30am - 5.30pm)	Open 9am - 5.30pm	Open 9am - 5.30pm
Thursday 31st Dec (New Years Eve)	Open 9am - 4pm (Phones 8.30am - 4pm)	Open 9am - 4pm	Open 9am - 4pm
Friday 1st Jan (New Years Day)	Closed	Closed	Closed
Saturday 2nd Jan	Closed	Open 9am - 4pm	Open 9am - 5.30pm

A new number for reporting repair problems



We've introduced a new number for reporting council housing repairs which could make reporting a repair cheaper for most of our tenants.

The cost of calls to 0300 numbers are included in inclusive minutes or discount packages from mobile phones, BT and other fixed lines or payphones.

Calls not included in call discount schemes will be charged to you at the normal local call rate within the terms of your telephone agreement.

So, you can be assured, when reporting a repair you will only ever pay the lowest rate available.

Ashford Neighbourhood Walkabouts



All change for Estate Inspections

We want to try to increase the number of tenants and leaseholders joining us on estate inspections. To make it easier for you to plan ahead we have decided we will, as far as possible, always hold inspections on a Monday morning from now on.

We also are putting the information in the 2010 Housing Calendar as an extra reminder of the dates.

The other main change is that the Area Managers will be doing the inspections individually and not in pairs.

Remember, you don't need to do the whole inspection unless you want to. You can always just come along for the bit where you live.

If you want to add your area for an extra inspection, let us know and we will pop it in one of the 'tenants choice' days.

Contact the Duty Manager on 01233 330200 for more details.

Date of inspection	Area Covered	Area Manager
4 January	Hillbrow/Clockhouse	Jo Wickens
11 January	Tenants Choice/Revisits	Ray Wightwood
18 January	Rolvenden/Newenden/Wittersham	Kat Aylward
25 January	Bybrook/Bockhanger	Paul Hills
1 February	Woolreeds	Sam Diggins
8 February	Kingsnorth/Shadoxhurst/Great Chart	Anthony Crossley
15 February	Godfrey Walk	Jo Wickens
22 February	Brookfield A	Ray Whitewood
1 March	Hothfield/Little Chart	Kat Aylward
8 March	Brookfield B	Paul Hills
15 March	Brookfield C	Sam Diggins
22 March	Tenants Choice/Revisits	Anthony Crossley
29 March	Charing/Charing Heath	Jo Wickens
5 April	Rothbrook (Kennington)	Ray Whitewood

Stanhope



**Andrew Brackley,
Tracy Batten and Naureen
Ullah**

You can reach Andrew, Tracy and Naureen on 01233 647396

Andrew's routes:

(Ring office for time & meeting place)

Eastry, Sheldwich, Lynsted, Crundale & Sandling Close

28 January
25 February
25 March

Leaveland, Brenchley, Frittenden, Newenden Close

29 January
26 February
26 March

Naureen's routes:

(Ring office for time & meeting place)

Badlesmere & Kildown Close

19 January
23 February
16 March

Otterden Close and Speldhurst Close

21 January
25 February
18 March

Tracy's routes:

(Ring office for time & meeting place)

Bredgar Close and Luddenham Close

13 January
10 February
10 March





Newtown walkabouts

We are pleased to announce that Housing Area Manager, Anthony Crossley (right), will be starting monthly walkabouts at Newtown Green, Ashford. Various other agencies will also be represented which will help residents to highlight any neighbourhood issues they would like addressed.



The meeting point will be the Alfred Arms, Newtown Green and the dates for the next three walkabouts are as follows:

Monday 11th January 2010 at 10:30

Monday 8th February 2010 at 10:30

Monday 8th March 2010 at 10:30

For further information contact Anthony Crossley on 01233 330464.

Housing Surgeries Winter programme

Here are the housing surgery dates for the next three months.

Remember you can always pop in with any housing query to a housing surgery near you if it is more convenient than coming in to the council offices.

Now we can answer even more of your questions on the spot. Through the Community Pot we have been able to acquire a reconditioned laptop which will enable the Area Managers to respond to any query you might have there and then.

Phoenix School, Bybrook Road Jo Wickens	Fortnightly 8 and 22 January 5 and 19 February 5 and 19 March	2.30 - 3.30
Bluebell Children's Centre, Hothfield Barry Moss	Monthly 8 January 12 February 12 March	3.00 - 4.00
Oaks School, Ashford Kat Aylward	Monthly 21 January 18 February 18 March	9.00 - 10.00
East Stour School, Earlsworth Road Anthony Crossley	Fortnightly 7 January 21 January 4 February 18 February 4 March 18 March	8.45 - 10.00
Willow Centre, Brookfield Road Ray Whitewood and Kat Aylward	Fortnightly 5 and 19 January 2 and 16 February 2, 16 and 30 March	9.00 - 11.00
Tenterden Gateway Sam Diggins	Monthly 6 January 3 February 3 March	9.00-12.00

Pictured is Sam Diggins at the Tenterden Gateway surgery.





Could you save money on your gas and electricity?

Some reports suggest that energy costs could rise by as much as 60% over the next five years.

Just a few changes to the way we buy or use our energy could save money.

Here are a few suggestions on how to start saving money.

1. If you use a prepayment meter consider changing your supplier. You could save as much as £100 a year. Comparisons can be made at www.energychoices.co.uk. If you do not have a prepayment meter it is still worth checking prices from other suppliers.
2. Turn down your room thermostat by one or two degrees. This can reduce your energy costs by up to 10% and you probably won't notice the difference in temperature.
3. Don't over-fill an electric kettle. Just put in the amount of water you need, but make sure you cover the element. It will cost less and come to the boil more quickly.
4. Don't leave appliances on standby or charge unnecessarily.
5. Always switch the monitor of your PC off when not in use.
6. If your freezer isn't full, fill empty spaces with crumpled-up paper or bubble wrap to stop warm air circulating when it is opened.
7. Use a lower temperature wash for clothes which aren't very dirty: for most washes, 40C is just as good as 60C. Also wait for a full load before washing.



Granny's Top Tip

Put on extra clothes! Instead of switching on the central heating as soon as you feel a bit chilly, warm up the old fashioned way by putting on an extra layer of clothing or using an extra blanket in bed.

Free safety products

Older tenants can get free safety and security products thanks to a safety scheme run by Help the Aged.

The Kent County Council funded project run by the charity provides free installation of safety and security products in eligible clients' homes. This can include door and window locks, and smoke detectors.

There is also a 24-hour response service called Senior Link for older people needing help in an emergency or assistance when answering a door to strangers. For this scheme equipment is installed free of charge for eligible older people with a small weekly charge for monitoring and maintenance.

The HandyVan fitters travel to clients' homes to review their safety and security needs and carry out the required work.

To find out more about the schemes and the eligibility criteria, call: Tel: 0845 0261055



Age UK is the new force combining Age Concern and Help the Aged.

On 1 April 2009, Age Concern England and Help the Aged joined together to create a new charity dedicated to improving the lives of older people. Operating under the name 'Age Concern and Help the Aged', they speak with one voice on behalf of all older people.

They will be known by their new name, Age UK, from Spring 2010.



Setting up a Direct Debit online is easier than ever

As part of our drive to make our services more accessible and reduce our environmental impact, we have made it easier for you to setup a Direct Debit to pay your rent.

This new online service allows you to setup a Direct Debit for your rent by completing a secure online form. We will then process your request with your Bank or Building Society to ensure your payments are protected by the Direct Debit Guarantee.

Just go to Making Payments section of our website www.ashford.gov.uk or type Direct Debit into our website's search facility and select the result 'Making Payments'.



New self-help kiosks launched

New touch screen information kiosks providing advice on housing, employment, and benefits have been installed at the Civic Centre and both the Ashford and Tenterden Gateways.

The information points provided by Ashford Borough Council's Housing Plus service offer another quick way to receive advice and are also a way of self-referring to other services such as Citizens Advice Bureau and Kent Benefit Partnership.

If you can't find the information you need you can see an Officer at the Ashford Gateway to discuss your housing options.

Housing Advice is available by appointment at the Gateway, 14 Park Mall, Ashford, Kent TN24 8RY

Open 9.00am – 4.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and 10.00am – 4.30pm on Thursdays.

Telephone 01233 330368

Stanhope celebrates

Stanhope celebrated two years of regeneration in September.

In honour of the occasion there was a party with John Webster (Webbo) of KMFM joining in and providing the music.

Chrysalis have refurbished their 300th property and are hoping to complete the property refurbishments by Christmas. The last two blocks of flats are in the process of being decanted. Five of the development sites are completed and three more are underway.

Other councils and even other countries have been visiting Stanhope to see for themselves how the area is being transformed. These included a delegation of housing officers from Milton Keynes Council, a group of Albanian Mayors and a delegation of housing experts from China!

A new website has been set up with information about the new developments and the changes happening at Stanhope – www.visionatstanhope.co.uk



Ashford International Association open day

Everyone was made welcome at Ashford International Association open day at International House in October.

Several of the groups based at the resource centre provided tasty traditional dishes, and visitors were able to learn more about their activities and to create links. Some groups demonstrated and displayed craft work.

Ashford Borough Council and Kent Adult Social Services have been working closely to develop this community resource centre and to support the development of local groups.

International House is the dynamic base for 12 minority organisations and two disability groups:

- Ashford Asian Society
- Ashford Dyslexia Centre
- Ashford Integration Project
- Ashford International Chinese Association
- Ashford Learning Disabilities Community Interest Company
- Ashford Malayalee Association
- Ashford Muslim Association
- AZAYCA (Zimbabwe)
- Bells of Revival Choir
- Blade Entertainment
- Kurdish Gaxmudian Community
- Sagarmantha Gurkha Community
- Uni BME Network
- Zimbabwe Welfare Association

For more information about activities and future events Email: simon.bannister@ashford.gov.uk or keith.wyncoll@kent.gov.uk





View from the Chair

Our Independent Tenant Adviser Paul Reeves spent a Saturday with Forum members discussing the Housing Revenue Account Review. We did a response to a consultation paper. It gave us all a better understanding to how the Housing Revenue Account worked.

Forum members Zoë and Michael Amos attended a meeting about online repairs. You can now report your repair online and a picture comes up so that you can explain the repairs that you need. They were very impressed and have loaded it on our computer at our resource room.

We also did another consultation for the Tenant Services Authority. We answered questions about how council housing will be regulated in the future.

Also, Ashford Borough Tenants Forum has opened a Facebook account – this will enable us to tell you about events and for you to tell us what you think – why not look us up?

Finally, Ashford has pulled out of discussions about joining its housing service with Canterbury, Dover, Shepway and Thanet housing services. This means things won't change dramatically, however Ashford Tenants Forum are hoping that the improvement plans which have formed part of the feasibility work can be adapted to improve services in Ashford. If you have any queries about this please contact me.

I'd like to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Stella Cowland – Chair of Ashford Borough Tenants Forum 01233 334206

Groundbreaking tenant conference held in Ashford

More involvement by local people in the way their homes and communities are run was the main theme of a groundbreaking conference held in Ashford in September.

In a keynote address, 74 year-old veteran campaigner Dennis Rees, Chairman of Derby Homes encouraged tenants to work with housing providers to make a difference in their neighbourhoods.

Dennis, who was originally told by a housing officer that getting involved would only take two hours a week every two months but now spends many hours a week on tenant issues, has been awarded an OBE and is so well known for his work that he recently had a breakfast meeting with Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

At the other end of the age spectrum the audience was treated to a DVD made by four young people who used film to highlight the positive and negative things about life in their neighbourhood in Canterbury.

Guest speaker at the conference was Jane Smith, one of four tenant standard managers with the new Tenant Services Authority, the body that has taken over from the Housing Corporation as the new social housing regulator.

She told the busy conference that the new organisation was determined to make life better for tenants by driving up standards.

The event was supported by the Kent Housing Group, whose representatives Tracey Kerly, head of housing at Ashford Borough Council, and Deborah White, West Kent Housing Association's housing and communities director, joined the main speakers for the afternoon question and answer session.

Resident groups were well represented at the conference.

Also at the conference were Kent County Council's Gateway service, the county's new credit union (due to open for business in November), Neighbourhood Watch, Kent Fire and Rescue Service and Business Link and housing providers Moat, Maidstone Housing Trust, Orbit, Town and Country, MHS, Russet Homes and Thanet Tenants' Group, Shepway Tenants and Leaseholders and Moat South Area Residents' Association.

"The day was a great success," said Ashford Borough Council's Philippa Dale, a member of the joint working group who played a major part in ensuring the high turnout from right across Kent.

"The 'market place'-style exhibition that ran throughout the day provided information about a whole range of community activities, agencies and services, while the excellent programme of speakers provided food for thought for everyone."





New homes under construction in Rolvenden

2009 has seen lots of activity with our housing association partners and parish councils in developing more affordable housing for local people in the rural areas of the borough.

Local Needs Housing helping to keep our villages vibrant

Since the completion of eleven homes at Smeeth in the spring the scheme has been short listed for the Ashford Borough Council design awards, highlighting the quality of local needs housing schemes. We eagerly await the awards ceremony in December to see if the scheme is successful.

On a sunny afternoon in early September six bungalows were officially opened at Forge Meadows in Stone, with the Mayor of Ashford, Councillor Holland cutting the ribbon to mark the occasion.

The homes meet high environmental standards with

heating and hot water heated by ground source heat pumps, a renewable energy system using the warmth stored in the ground. Each home also has a wood burning stove to make use of available local timber.

Looking forward, a further 23 homes are due for completion late this year and early next year, 11 in Smarden and 12 in Rolvenden. Moving into 2010 will see four further schemes completed at Charing, Egerton, Godmersham and Old Wives Lees in Chilham.

The completion of all these schemes will bring the total number of local needs homes in the borough to over 300. These homes provide an opportunity for

people with a connection to the parish to find affordable housing when the cost of remaining in or returning to the village is out of reach of many young people and families.

If you wish to apply for a home on a local needs housing scheme you must have a connection to that parish and be registered on the Ashford Housing Register. To do this you need to complete and return a Choice Based Lettings Housing Application Form.

For more information or to request an application form please contact the Housing Services Team on 01233 330688.

New Council housing

Ashford Borough Council has secured £1.7 million of government funding, which will be used to build 25 new high quality council homes in Ashford in order to meet the growing demand for affordable housing in the borough.

Ashford is just one of four councils in the south east to secure such funding.

The new homes will showcase good design and will be energy efficient, helping to reduce residents' utility bills and contribute to creating a greener borough.

Tackling the recession head on, the council also plans to provide employment opportunities including apprenticeships for local young people through the construction scheme.

This is the first phase for new housing and a further submission has been made for funding to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for a further 57 new high quality homes across the borough. The announcement for the funding of phase two is to be made in December 2009 which, together with phase one, will create many jobs.

The new, one, two, three and four bed homes will be built on council owned land on a scale of council house building unseen in Ashford in the last three decades.

The building project plays a key role in supporting Ashford's targets for growth with the local population predicted over the next 15 years.

Both phases of homes will be available to rent with building expected to start begin in March 2010 and be completed by Easter 2011.

Main photo: New affordable homes in the village of Smeeth
Inset: Residents Tom Wratten and partner Michelle Wilmshurst outside their new home



Operation Cubit

Operation Cubit is a multi-agency approach set up to deal with the problem of untaxed motor vehicles on Kent's roads.

Working together to get untaxed vehicle off our streets is the Kent Cubit Partnership consisting of Kent County Council, Kent Police, Medway Unitary Authority, the Kent district councils, Kent Fire and Rescue, the DVLA, NSL (formerly NCP, who operates the practical removal of vehicles) and other compound contractors who store the vehicles.



Each Operation Cubit aims to find and deal with as many untaxed vehicles as possible.

The latest Ashford Operation Cubit was carried out between 1 and 4 September, targeting 37 vehicles parked on the road with expired tax discs. Of these, seven vehicle owners paid on the spot fees to release their cars on condition that a tax disc was purchased. One owner surrendered his vehicle with the remainder taken to the Kent County Council car pound at Sittingbourne.

For more information about Operation Cubit visit www.ashford.gov.uk

Every vehicle registered in the United Kingdom must be taxed if used or kept on a public road. If the vehicle is kept off-road it must either be taxed or have a SORN (Statutory Off Road Notification) in force. The Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) carries out a computer check each month, as well as roadside checks to identify those vehicles without a valid tax disc. If you do not tax or SORN your vehicle you could face an automatic penalty of £80 as well as a minimum fine of £1000. Your vehicle could be clamped, impounded or even crushed.

For more information about car tax visit www.direct.gov.uk

2010 Calendar

We hope you enjoy the new Housing Services 2010 calendar packed with more information than ever.

This year we've included dates of fixed events such as estate inspections, housing surgeries, your rent free weeks (if you're eligible) and other housing related dates which we hope you will find useful.

The calendar competition resulted in some really great pictures and we would like to thank everyone who entered. This year we had entries from brothers and sisters and from grown ups too including David Burgess from Egerton whose painting in wax can be seen illustrating May while our youngest entrant was Luke Sandy aged 2 ½ whose efforts (thanks to a bit of help from Mum) can be seen in December.

Once again it was a hard choice but after much deliberation the competition winners were:

Sisters Sophie and Cayley Chittenden aged 13 and 6 from South Ashford

John Kellam aged 9 from Willesborough

Ellie Brooker, aged 8 from Ashford

Kitty Hollowell aged 6 from Kennington

Brother and sister Andrew and Leanne Fannon aged 5 ¼ and 7 ¾ from South Ashford

Luke Sandy aged 2 ½ from Willesborough

David Burgess, Egerton

All received £20 gift vouchers. Congratulations!



Winners with their entries



Doggy doo-doo

What annoys you most?

If it is standing in a fresh pile of dog mess then you are not alone.

What are we going to do about it?

In the coming months Ashford Borough Council aims to:

- Encourage dog owners to deal with their dog mess responsibly
- Promote the free dog mess bags available from the council
- Increase the number of places dog mess bags are available
- Increase information on the potential dangers of dog mess.
- Take action against offenders

To start raising awareness we are going to run a competition for images to illustrate the campaign and are looking for pictures from tenants, leaseholders and their children.

The competition will be launched in the Spring Housing News, but if you want to start creating over the Christmas holidays feel free to do so.

Pictures can be of whatever you think will get the message across.



Meet your Canine and Neighbourhood Officers, Colin Leek and Eileen Law

Private Accredited Letting Scheme

With the high cost of buying a home coupled with a shortage of affordable homes for many people, especially first time buyers, the role of the private rented sector has become more vital than ever in meeting local housing needs.

Ashford Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Sevenoaks District Council are keen to increase the supply of decent and well-managed privately rented homes and improve on the availability of safe, warm homes for tenants to live in.

The Private Accredited Letting scheme (PAL) has been developed to encourage and support the many good landlords who already operate in the borough and also to

assist others in attaining the same good standards.

PAL is a free, property-based scheme where landlords and letting agents can apply for some or all of their properties to be accredited through a simple online registration form once they have accepted the scheme code and requirements. Registered properties will then be visited by a Housing Officer to check the scheme standards have been met. An accredited property under PAL is the sign of a good home to rent.

For more information call 01233 330345 email lynn.thomas@ashford.gov.uk or visit www.palscheme.co.uk



Your Letters...

Matt's Mystery Coach Tour

On Thursday, 15th October 2009 I organised a Mystery Coach Tour for Cotton Hill and Luckley House residents with the help from my colleague and another scheme manager, Denise Libbeter. We set off nice and early and headed towards Thanet with no prior knowledge given to the tenants about where we were going. I had done a little homework, so on the way I picked up the microphone and gave out interesting facts and anecdotes about Canterbury and other areas we passed through. I will skip over the fact that I said Thomas Becket was murdered in 1970.



Our first stop was the Spitfire Museum at Manston. Fortunately it was a lovely day so many of us sat outside and had a cup of tea watching over Manston airport. Once back on the coach and ensuring no one was lost I gave out a chocolate and sweets quiz which everyone could think over and complete throughout the day. Our next stop was for lunch which was in the lovely seaside town of Broadstairs. We had a choice of food of either cod and chips or chicken and new potatoes. We had our own dining room and waiter service, which was nicely served in a pub on the seafront called The Pavilion.

After lunch it was back on the coach and we headed through Ramsgate and down to Deal seafront with more of my interesting facts (well at least I hope they were) on the way. Once everyone was off the coach we took a group photograph with the old pier in the background and everyone had around an hour to explore.

It was then time to head on home back to Wye and Hamstreet going past Dover docks on the way. I hope everyone had an enjoyable day and I anticipate "Matt's Mystery Coach Tour 2" sometime next spring.

Matt Stacey
Sheltered Scheme Manager

COMPETITION WINNER

Autumn's wordsearch prize competition was won by winner Michael Barwick from Farrow Court who received his vouchers from Tenant Participation Officer Phillippa Dale.



Christmas Wordsearch

Words to find are: CAROLS; CRACKER; PRESENTS; TREE; MISTLETOE; HOLLY; SANTA; YULELOG; CARDS; TURKEY; MINCEPIE; NATIVITY

win £25

WORDSEARCH

P T C G B R O P R E S E N T S
 Y P O Q J M Q A T N A S Y M L
 T T O Q L Y M C B S M W R N U
 I Z Q Q K K X C I W G R V H E
 V Q W R P M V U F X E C F I D
 I T Y J S S D E I K U L P A H
 T U L Y B K O J C Z X E X W M
 A R L G S D R A C Z C R O R I
 N K O O G U R M V N W Y U G S
 V E H L K C C A I U E A V C T
 H Y Y E Y S L M Z K Q X O X L
 Q S S L O R A C F Z X U E C E
 N Y L U O M S T B L M R W T T
 I Q Z Y J T Q L A F F E H Z O
 W Z P V V D T R E E F G C O E

Winter's here and the theme of this edition's wordsearch is "Christmas". Entries received by 31 December 2009 will be entered into our prize draw for £25 in vouchers.

Complete the wordsearch and entry form and send to: Housing News, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1PL.

Name:

Address:

Tel:

Terms & Conditions:

Please complete and return this entry form along with your completed wordsearch puzzle to:

Housing News, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL.

The decision of the editor is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

Closing date for entries is 31st December 2009



Ashford Back Chat!



Calling all tenants and leaseholders...

We want to make it easier for more people to tell Ashford Borough Council Housing Services what they think, and to get involved in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods.

Most people have an opinion about the way the council does things. We want you to tell us where you think improvements are needed, and what you think we do well. To help you to do this, the council is introducing some new ways for you to talk to us and to make a difference.

We will be keeping a database or list of tenants from all over the borough who have told us how they want to get involved in improving the Housing Services.

Offering a range of options will mean that if you want to have a say, you can do so in the way that suits you best. We really want to attract more people from different age groups and backgrounds so that we get the broadest view possible, and may ask you to complete a Tenant Profile form if you have not already done so.

Here's how you can get involved

Monitoring Groups Discuss issues and ways to improve services that affect particular groups – these include the Seniors Forum, the Leaseholders Forum, the Repairs Monitoring Group, the Housing Options Monitoring Group, and the Housing Survey Monitoring Group [Commitment - one two hour meetings at the council offices every three months – training available]

Tenants and Residents Groups Care and campaign for local communities. [Commitment – regular meetings local to your home – training available]

Focus Groups A small cross section of people brought together to provide feedback on a particular aspect of the service. [Commitment – one-off meetings approximately two hours at the council offices]

Ashford Borough Tenants Forum Made up of elected representatives from throughout the borough. [Commitment – monthly two hour meetings at the council offices – training available]

Editorial Board Write and approve newsletters, leaflets and entries on the website. [Commitment - one two hour meetings at the council offices every three months – training available]

For some people, going to meetings and joining groups is not the way they want to participate. You may not have the time, may have other commitments or just not feel comfortable in that type of forum. But you may still want to have a say about what is happening in your local area and how Ashford Borough Council Housing Service works. If that person is you we can offer quick and easy ways for you to get involved and have your say, in the way that works best for you:-

Estate Inspections Officers, tenants and councillors identifying problems in the area [Commitment – walking around your neighbourhood approximately every six months]

Mystery Shopping A chance to carry out 'reality checks' on service and standards. [Commitment – complete and return a form whenever you contact the council]

Postal Surveys We write to you for your opinion [Commitment - occasional contact]

Telephone Surveys We telephone you for your opinion [Commitment - occasional contact]

@ Email Surveys We email you for your opinion [Commitment - occasional contact]

Online Feedback Give us your views at www.ashford.gov.uk/housing



Ashford Back Chat!



We want to make it easier for more people to tell Ashford Borough Council Housing Services what they think, and to get involved in the management of their homes and neighbourhoods.

Please tick the way/s that you would like to get involved:

- Monitoring Groups
- Tenants and Resident Groups
- Focus Groups
- Ashford Borough Tenants Forum
- Editorial Board
- Estate Inspections
- Mystery Shopping
- Postal Survey
- Telephone Survey
- Email Survey
- Online Feedback

Name:

Address:

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Tel:

Mobile:

Email:

Terms & Conditions:
 All information supplied will be confidential and not shared with anyone unless permission is given to do so.
Please complete this form and return it in the pre-paid envelope with the contact details and chosen options identified. All completed forms will be entered into a monthly prize draw to receive £25 worth of high street vouchers.

