

Summer 2008

# Housing NEWS

Tenant's Newsletter from Ashford Borough Council

## Block Vote!

Tenant-driven improvements at Bybrook flats begin

### inside:

- Get paid to move
- Transforming star blocks
- Stanhope successes
- £25 DVD quiz



ASHFORD  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



**Ashford**  
best placed in Britain



**ASHFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

[www.ashford.gov.uk](http://www.ashford.gov.uk)

**council contacts**

**Housing Services Team**

Tel: 01233 330688  
Email: [housing@ashford.gov.uk](mailto: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, Kent TN24 8RY

Tel: 08458 247247  
Typetalk: 08458 247905  
Fax: 01233 638012

**Ashford Borough Tenants Forum:** [TFG@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:TFG@ashford.gov.uk)

**Housing News**

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

Editor: Philippa Dale  
Telephone: 01233 330365  
Fax: 01233 330610  
Email: [philippa.dale@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:philippa.dale@ashford.gov.uk)

Housing News is printed on paper made from managed sustainable sources.

 editor's note

I am pleased to report that Pat and I had more copy than space again in this issue of Housing News. We have tried to include something for everyone, but if you feel the newsletter is missing something, please let me know or better still write a letter or an article for the next issue.

At last the Tenant Compact DVD is ready and is enclosed with this newsletter, together with the Compact summary. It only lasts just over six minutes, so please watch it if you can, and then take another six to complete the competition slip on page 11. The DVD is a great way of finding out how you can get involved in shaping the housing service and gives examples of how tenants have driven huge improvements to their neighbourhoods throughout the borough.

We really want you to tell us what you think, and more importantly, we want to know if you were able to view the DVD. Either way you could win a £25 high street voucher so complete and return the competition slip in the prepaid envelope.

**Philippa Dale** Editor



Philippa Dale



Pat Pearman



**contents**

- 4 New rural affordable homes**
- 5 Get paid to move**
- 6 What a load of rubbish!**
- 7 Stanhope – one year on**
- 8 Rate Your Estate**
- 9 Help for vulnerable tenants**
- 10 Join the Tenants Forum**
- 11 £25 competition**



4



5



7



9



**Cover picture**  
Bybrook block residents Evelyn, Karen and Stroma - all members of the project team - celebrate as the first block is scaffolded prior to commencement of the new cladding

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**.

Your new look Housing News has been designed and produced by Lightwave Design, Ashford  
**Tel: 01233 504910** [www.lightwavedesign.co.uk](http://www.lightwavedesign.co.uk)  
Printed by: Headley Brothers Ltd, Ashford  
**Tel: 01233 623131** [www.headley.co.uk](http://www.headley.co.uk)



# Aiming For The Stars!

**Tenants of the Crownfield Star Block are the first to receive much-needed improvements to the flats.**

The old bin sheds have been demolished and replaced while the old mesh wire fencing has been upgraded with secure metal fencing.

A new parking area has been provided – with a space for each tenant. The block also received a bit of a face lift with a coat of paint to brighten up its appearance.

The aim of the work was to improve the congested parking situation in the area and ease the problem of disposing of rubbish.

We hope that this has now made life a little better for the tenants of Crownfield.

The aim is to continue these improvements to the remaining blocks within Ashford. Beaver Lane has already received its parking area and is due to have the bin stores demolished.



**Pictured: Housing Services officers Kat Aylward and Philippa Dale outside the completed block and before and after shots.**



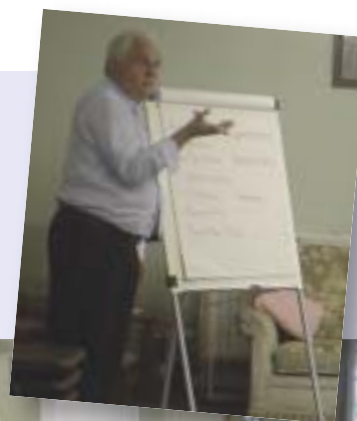
## Tenant Training

**Would you like to get involved with your community but feel you lack either confidence or skills?**

We can help by offering training in a range of topics including time management, committee skills, working with young people and estate inspection training.

Or there may be a field you would like to be trained in but are not sure how to start.

You don't have to belong to an existing community group, we offer a package of travelling and care costs, and, who knows, this could be the start of a whole new career.



**For more information contact Philippa Dale on 01233 330365**

## Have Your Say

A tenant Have Your Say Day is being held at Meadowsweet Willow and Alder House on 18 July from 10am-2pm.

If you want to get more involved in improving your neighbourhood and influencing the service we provide then please come along.

The day will involve various agencies giving advice and information on community safety, fire safety and health and wellbeing.

# Celebrating African Culture

**Did you know that the smallest mainland country in Africa is Gambia?**

Or that the life expectancy in Zambia is just 36?

Those who attended an evening Celebrating African Culture held by The Ashford Integration Project at Swanton House on Friday 4 April discovered these and other interesting facts during a quiz

Jennifer Fothergill started the evening with a talk about Africa, followed by a quiz. Guests were then treated to a fashion show of traditional African dress.

During the interval spicy and delicious food from around the continent was served.

Whilst it is ravaged by famine, poverty and political rest, the overall message

was that Africa has a beautiful landscape and many diverse cultures.



# Work Starts On Affordable Rural Homes

**Work has begun on a development of 11 new homes for rent and shared ownership by local people in Brabourne and Smeeth.**

The homes are being provided by English Rural Housing Association (ERHA), working in partnership with Ashford Borough Council, and Brabourne and Smeeth Parish Councils. Funding has been provided by the Housing Corporation.

The development will provide eight homes for rent and three for shared ownership, and will help households from the village unable to afford market prices.

Like many small villages, Brabourne and Smeeth have been affected by the dramatic rise of property values. A rural backdrop and proximity to good transport links and services has resulted in a high demand for homes in the villages, with many local people being priced out of their home community.

Alison Thompson, regional developments manager for English Rural Housing Association, said: *"The new homes at Brabourne and Smeeth will help many local households who are desperate to remain in the village close to family and support networks but can't afford to because of high property prices."*

*"Support and backing of Ashford Borough Council and the parish councils was essential in ensuring this project came to fruition and is an example to other parishes of what can be achieved."*

Councillor Peter Wood, Ashford Borough Council portfolio holder for housing, said: *"These homes will allow people to stay in their village and contribute to its future prosperity and we want to repeat this success elsewhere in order to ensure our rural communities remain sustainable."*



**Pictured (L-R) are Ashford Borough Council head of housing Tracey Kerly, Brayborne Parish Council chairman Peter Clayton and Christine Knight and Alison Thompson from ERHA turning the first sod on site.**

## Moving Home? Let Us Know

**If you're moving from your home don't forget that you have to give us at least four weeks' notice in writing.**

As well as being a legal duty we need advance warning so we can advertise your property and arrange for a new tenant to

move in after you. If you fail to give us notice we will charge you for your rent during the notice period whether you live at the property or not. The best way to let us know is to complete a notice to vacate form, which is available from the Civic Centre, the Gateway, the Tenterden Office or by calling us on 01233 330688.

Please also remember to clear all personal items, furniture and rubbish from your property to avoid being charged £100 clearance fees.

**Lastly don't forget to return all your keys to us.**

# Get Paid To Move!

**If you're aged over 50 and live in a council property with two or more bedrooms we can pay you up to £1,570 to move into a home that better suits your needs.**

Under our Assisted Move Scheme tenants whose children have grown up and flown the nest are offered financial and other support to move from large homes into a bungalow or sheltered accommodation.

We'll organise and pay for the removal, arrange reconnection of appliances, organise and pay for redirection of your post, remove and lay carpets and even provide a new one if necessary. On top of that we offer a cash payment of up to £1570!

A housing officer would arrange a viewing of the new property at your convenience and visit you at home to discuss all the arrangements.

If you are moving from an Ashford Borough Council mobility property, for example where the property was built with specific features for a disabled occupant who no longer lives there, you will also qualify for an assisted move.



Mr and Mrs Harper, of Egerton, are pictured outside their new home following their assisted move.

We have many happy tenants who have moved through this scheme, and feel that their quality of life has been improved by moving to a more easily manageable property.

**Please contact our Housing Services Team on 01233 330688 for an application form.**

**We are close to selecting a new contractor to carry out cleaning to communal areas of flats.**

Your role as a resident of the blocks will be crucial in ensuring the success of this contract, after all you are the people who live in the blocks and best placed to be able to decide if the required standard is being met.

When the contract is awarded we will inform all residents of the standard that can be expected and issue feedback forms for your use. We will of course monitor performance as well through our estate inspection regime and whilst on the estates and together we should all be able to ensure that the communal areas of flats become a much pleasanter environment for all.

By the time of the next Housing News we will be in a position to introduce you to the successful contractor and look forward to a long and fruitful relationship between them, us and of course you the residents.



Jo is pictured (left) with Sure Start community development worker Heather Curtin.

## Hothfield Housing Surgery

Area manager Jo Wickens will be holding a weekly drop in at the Hothfield Sure Start children's centre starting on Tuesday 10 June between 2pm and 3.30pm. This will be a chance for mums and dads using the centre, and any other tenants, to report any housing related queries and tell us how they feel things are going in the village.



## Lee On To A Sure Thing

**SureStart has appointed a new community involvement worker for the Kennington area.**

Lee Robinson will be based at the Sure Start children's centre at the new Phoenix school complex.

Sure Start is a programme aimed at providing services and opportunities for children aged up to four years and their families. Lee hopes to work with local families to promote the physical, educational and social development of pre-school children in the area. He said: *"If you live in the Kennington Sure Start area (Kennington, Bybrook, Bockhanger, Little Burton Farm, Quantock) we value and need your input and thoughts about the specific requirements of young families in the area.*

*"Indeed I would like to set up a parents' forum to represent the needs of all the local community."*

**For further information on Sure Start children's centre services contact a member of the Community Development Team on 0800 5877455.**



## Rubbish!

**by Pat Pearman,**  
Tenant Editor

**With the summer weather coming we all want to be outside enjoying our gardens and neighbourhoods.**

But it sometimes seems impossible to walk down our streets without seeing litter, dog mess, black sacks of rubbish, and fly tipping. What can we do about it? Well for a start please don't drop litter and ensure people you are with – particularly children – take any sweet wrappers or litter they create to the next litter bin, or home.

If you have a dog, make sure that when you exercise it you take a free dog's mess bag, which are available from the council.

Black sacks should ideally be put out on the day of collection, or after 6.30pm on the day before collection. Besides looking unsightly, black sacks can emit smells which attract animals and vermin.

If you live in a block of flats with a communal bin shed, please use the dustbins if these are available, if not only use properly secured black sacks and, please, under no circumstances put unbagged rubbish in the bin shed.

If you have access to a vehicle, you can take larger items of rubbish and recycling to

the Chart Leacon KCC Household Waste and Recycling Centre, Cobbs Wood, Brunswick Road on Monday to Saturday 8am to 4.30pm and on Sundays and Bank Holidays 9am to 4pm.

The council will collect bulky domestic waste including furniture, white goods, electrical appliances and most other items that you would expect to take with you if you were moving house. There is a minimum, non-refundable, charge of £20 but the overall cost will be based on the number and size of items being collected.

**Call 01233 331111 for more information, or for a supply of dog's mess bags**



## Beware Bogus Callers

Tenants are reminded to be on their guard against bogus callers masquerading as council officers, electricity representatives and other officials

Genuine callers will always be able to show identification and will not call unsolicited unless it's an emergency.

If you are unsure a caller is who they say they are then do not let them in. They could be a thief trying to steal money or valuables from your house. Often they will try and distract you while an accomplice enters your home and steals property.

**If you require information on who polices your area, please contact the Community Safety Unit on 01233 660747 or contact your Area Manager on 01233 330200.**

**In the case of an emergency, always call 999**

**The best advice is to be vigilant and remember some of these precautions:**

- Use a security chain to answer the door to any unsolicited caller
- When answering the door to an unsolicited caller, make sure that other doors and windows are secure
- If you are elderly, try and make an agreement with a friend, relative or neighbour that the caller can have their ID checked by them
- Do not feel pressurised into opening the door. You can check that the caller is actually from the company they represent by using the phone.



# More Successes At Stanhope

## The Stanhope regeneration project celebrated its first birthday in April.

The transformation of the estate continues apace with new homes flying up and the unpopular blocks of flats being steadily demolished.

The last block to be bulldozed was at Otterden Close (pictured) and its removal has already made a dramatic improvement to the look of that part of the estate.

The council and its private sector partners in the groundbreaking scheme are already receiving national recognition for the success of the project.

Stanhope was shortlisted in the final three in the best user involvement category of the annual Public Private

Finance Awards for its engagement of residents in shaping and delivering the scheme.

Councillor Peter Wood, Ashford Borough Council portfolio holder for housing, said; *"Engaging with residents and key stakeholders was seen as a vital component in shaping the strategy for this project and Ashford Borough Council set new standards for community and user involvement, which have been continued under Chrysalis."*

*"To be shortlisted for this award was a superb achievement and just reward for a lot of hard work from all."*

Meanwhile Pam Millington (pictured), who is Moat's Neighbourhood Contracts Manager for Stanhope and a familiar figure on the estate, has won the Chartered Institute of Housing

South East Excellence Award. The award honours excellence for the work that individuals in housing make to their field and the impact of their contribution to the lives of local people.

Pam works at the neighbourhood office based on the Stanhope estate and has overall responsibility for 11 staff who perform the customer services, housing management and community development functions.

She said: *"I am absolutely thrilled! I am grateful for the opportunity to work at Stanhope, where the work we do really does make a difference to the lives of local residents. I really enjoy what I do and I want to publicly thank my team for all of their fantastic efforts."*



Resident Mrs Garlick pictured with Council Officer Jim Lambert

## Free Decoration For The Elderly and Disabled

### We're extending our free decoration scheme to include disabled tenants.

The Housing Department currently runs a scheme where internal room decorations are carried out free for our tenants aged over 60.

We are also looking to extend the scheme to free decoration for tenants in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

Work could start in April 2009 if we receive a good number of applications.

Tenants aged over 60 who receive DLA and are already on the Senior Citizens Redecoration list do not need to reapply.

**Please telephone 330329 or 330335 or visit [www.ashford.gov.uk/housing](http://www.ashford.gov.uk/housing) for an application form.**



## Rate Your Estate

**We've worked out a new scoring system to use in our regular estate inspections.**

It will enable us to enter the individual scores for each road, and an overall score for the area that we are inspecting. The score will be entered in to a table and will enable us to identify neighbourhoods that need inspecting more frequently.

Ashford Borough Council head of housing Tracey Kerly said: *"It would be nice to see more residents accompanying us on our estate inspections. You are most welcome as we value your input, you can accompany us for all or part of the area that we are inspecting. If you're interested please contact us to agree a time, date and location for us to meet you."*

### Become an Estate Inspector.

If you care about your neighbourhood and want to make a difference then this is your chance. The council is looking to train a group of tenants to carry out estate inspections, who would provide a more objective view of any improvements needed.

New estate inspectors will assign areas with a score which will allow us to prioritise the places needing the most urgent attention.

As well as full training we can offer travelling expenses, the support of a dedicated council officer and other incentives.

If you are interested please complete the Ashford Back Chat form on page 12 and return in the prepaid envelope provided.

## Summer Estate Inspection programme

### Estate Inspection Timetable

Date	Location
June 11	Luddenham Cl, Bredgar Cl, Brenchley Cl, Badlesmere Cl, Frittenden Cl
June 13	Ackerly Court, The Square, Newenden Cl
June 16	Brookfield
June 18	Kilndown Close
June 20	Otterden Cl, Speldhurst Cl, Eastry Cl, Sheldwich Cl, Crundale Cl
June 23	Rothbrook (Kennington )
July 24	Eastry Cl, Sheldwich Cl, Crundale Cl, Sandling Cl
June 26	Eastry Cl, Sheldwich Cl, Crundale Cl
June 27	Leaveland Cl, Lynsted Cl
June 30	Wittersham
July 7	Newtown Green/South Willesborough
July 9	Luddenham Cl, Bredgar Cl, Brenchley Cl
July 11	Ackerly Court, The Square, Newenden Cl
July 14	Twelve Acres
July 16	Badlesmere Cl, Frittenden Cl
July 21	St Michaels/Tenterden
July 23	Kilndown Cl
July 25	Leaveland Cl, Lyndsted Cl, Otterden Cl, Speldhurst Cl
July 28	Tenants Choice*
August 4	Repton Manor/Poet's Corner
August 6	Luddenham Cl, Bredgar Cl, Brenchley Cl
August 8	Ackerly Court, The Square, Newenden Cl
August 11	Westwell/Broughton Lees/Molash/Shottenden
August 13	Badlesmere Close, Frittenden Cl
August 18	Hampden
August 20	Kilndown Cl
August 22	Otterden Cl, Speldhurst Cl
August 25	Hillbrow/Clockhouse
August 28	Eastry Cl, Sheldwich Cl, Crundale Cl, Sandling Cl
August 29	Leaveland Cl, Lynsted Cl

**Ashford Borough Council tenants should call 01233 330688 to check exact times and venues.**

Stanhope inspections will normally start at 9.30am but drop in to Moat Stanhope office to confirm or call on 01233 647396.

\*Tenants Choice - Please call us to let us know where you would like us to visit.

## Are You Sitting On A Timebomb?

**As your landlord it is our responsibility to ensure all our properties have gas safety checks every 12 months.**

As tenants it is your responsibility to allow access to Swale Heating to carry this test out. Unfortunately during the last year we have seen several tenants fail to allow access for a gas safety check resulting in them being referred back to the council to take further action. Once a referral has been made to the council an area manager visits the property to serve a notice on the tenant – if you are not in then the notice will be stuck on your front door.

Legal action was taken against one Ashford Borough Council tenant who resides in a high-rise block, when they failed to comply with the terms of their tenancy agreement and allow Swale Heating access. Ashford County Court granted the council an injunction to enter the property within seven days. The tenant failed to contact Swale Heating in the time limit so the council was forced to break in to carry out the gas safety check. This action resulted in costs of over £250 being recharged to the tenant for what would have been resolved in a 40-minute visit.

When Swale Heating contact you please respond and make an appointment – they will give you a morning or afternoon appointment.

If not you are putting your family and neighbours' lives at risk



## Can Furniture Charity Help You?

**A charity which provides second-hand furniture and baby equipment for needy people is appealing for donations.**

If you have any furniture such as beds and tables, electrical equipment, cots or pushchairs you no longer need gateway would be delighted to hear from you.

All items should be in reasonable condition and must comply with health and safety requirements.

**If you need help furnishing your home why not call or visit to see if Gateway can help?**



Gateway, The Old Corn Store,  
Dover Place, Ashford  
01233 638878.



**Porchlight**  
Changing attitudes · Changing lives

# Supporting Vulnerable Tenants

**Help is at hand for vulnerable tenants experiencing problems managing their finances and households or in need of other support**

If you're struggling to keep your head above water then you could qualify for assistance from Porchlight.

A support worker will visit you in your home to help you start putting your life back on course. The service provides assistance in housing-related issues such as evictions and grant entitlement, budgeting, accessing healthcare or specialist services, advocacy and access to training and education.

One Ashford Borough Council tenant told us: *"I feel lucky to have my support worker, especially as she has helped me deal with a new claim for Incapacity/Income Support, as I felt I would have lost the plot trying to deal with them on my own. She also helped me apply for a housing benefit backdate which resulted in over £1,000 being awarded."*

Porchlight, formerly known as East Kent Cyrenians, was founded in 1974 and is one of the foremost charities



Porchlight support worker Vanessa Powney (right) with client Carol.

working across Kent to support vulnerable people and prevent homelessness.

**For information visit Ashford Gateway, Park Mall, or call 0845 8 247 247 or 01622 694953.**

# Ashford Back Chat Is Working



**More than 200 of you have already completed the Ashford Back Chat form (see back page), agreeing to be consulted about the housing service.**

This is just the first step and it will only be useful if we actually engage with you in the ways you have agreed to, to find out what you think, and are then willing to act on what you tell us.

We recently held a successful focus group with tenants and leaseholders to ask about the empty property standard and have already put some of the suggestions into action. This is just the first in a range of consultations we will be asking tenants to take part in – it may be as simple as responding to a short telephone or email survey, or taking part in a group discussion to really dig into a particular topic.

We are committed to only consulting when we have the capacity to act on the results, to achieve this, and to feed back the results of consultation.



## Bowled Over

**A friendly and fun short mat bowls session is held every Tuesday at Hothfield Village Hall.**

The first two weeks are free then it's £1.50 per session plus a £5 membership fee. No experience is necessary.

**For more information contact John Nicholls on 01233 620537.**



The tenants repairs monitoring group, one of the many way tenants are consulted.

## View From the Chair

**Ashford Borough Tenants Forum chair Teri Witcher gives you the lowdown from this month's Housing Services managers meeting**

The manager of Ashford Gateway gave a very interesting overview of Gateway services, which are expanding across Kent and very successful. The good news for people in more remote locations is that a new mobile Gateway has been brought into use, which will also be used to promote Gateway. A new gateway centre will be opening this autumn in Tenterden to include Post Office, tourist information, library and council offices.

Refurbishment of garages and garage areas are under discussion, which will include the disposal and replacement of some and refurbishing others. Tenants will



**Teri Witcher**

be consulted when this project takes place. That's all for this month.

**Teri Witcher**  
Chair Ashford Borough Tenants Forum  
Email [tfg@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:tfg@ashford.gov.uk)

## AGM

**Ashford Borough tenants Forum holds its Annual General Meeting at 6.30pm on Monday 8 September.**

The main speaker will be a senior police officer, who will be talking about the importance of working together through the partners and communities together process.

The event will be held at the Council Chamber, Ashford Civic Centre. Further details and a reminder will be sent out with the tenants forum newsletter shortly.



# Get Involved



**"Improving our homes and neighbourhoods in partnership with Ashford Borough Council"**

Tenants and staff from Ashford Borough Council have shown that working together can potentially make life better for everyone, so why not get involved and see the difference you can make?

This year there are six vacancies for Tenant Forum members. You do not need any special skills or experience to stand for nomination, just a little time and a desire to talk to us about the way you would like your village, road, estate or community to be managed, and how you might influence the way your landlord works for the benefit of the borough as a whole or your particular area. Ashford Borough Council will even pay your travelling and childcare costs.

Nominating yourself is really easy. Just tell us, in 100 words or less, why you want to be a member of the Ashford Borough Tenants Forum. Do you want to see better facilities for young people? Does the thought of representing your neighbourhood really appeal to you? Whatever the reason and whatever your views, we want to hear from you.

Please complete the form below, attach it to your 100-word-or-less candidate statement and return it by 14 July 2008 in the enclosed prepaid envelope.

If we receive more than six nominations, it will be up to tenants and leaseholders throughout the borough to decide who gets elected. Your statement, along with your name, age and area where you live (but not your address) will be printed on the ballot information to help tenants make their decision.



## Election of new members for Ashford Borough Tenant's Forum



### FORUM MEMBER NOMINATION FORM

Name:

Full Address:

Tel:

email:

Age:

I have been a tenant or leaseholder for:

 yrs

Please return in the prepaid envelope provided or alternatively post to:

**Philippa Dale Housing Services, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL. Don't forget to attach your 100-word-or-less candidate statement explaining why you want to join**

## The Easy Way To Swap Your Home

**Ashford Borough Council's new online system for swapping homes is already proving a success.**

HomeSwapper was introduced last November and already 248 households have registered to search for another property to swap with.

To date two mutual exchanges have taken place. Satisfied customer Vicki Tomlins said: *"I had been looking for ages to swap via the council. As soon as I signed up to HomeSwapper I had a lot of interest and equally a few people let me down. Now I have found the perfect house in Ashford and I'm really happy."*

The online system has the ability to property match on a tenant's behalf and can send text or email alerts once it has found a potential swap. Tenants then use the usual system of a mutual exchange application form to have the potential move agreed.



Successful HomeSwapper user Louise Barrow is pictured outside her new home.

**For more information contact Housing Services on 01233 330688.**

## Competition Winner

Mr Sharp from Hothfield was the winner of the Spring Housing News wordsearch competition.

He is pictured receiving his £25 voucher from Ashford Borough Council's Rob Hustwayte.



# win £25 DVD QUIZ

### Quiz One

If you are unable to view the DVD either at home or in any other easily accessible place, all you have to do is complete your details, tell us why you are unable to view the DVD, and return the slip in the pre-paid envelope enclosed.

### Quiz Two

**Those of you who are able to view the DVD, please complete the simple quiz below.**

How much is being spent regenerating the Bybrook Flats?

What is the name of the park Tracey Kerly is standing in?

What's the Housing Services web address?

Where does Linda Stephens live?

Name three ways tenants can get involved in improving the housing service

**The first correct entry pulled from the hat in each quiz will receive a £25 high street voucher.**



We're running two competitions relating to the Tenants Compact DVD enclosed with this edition of Housing News. You can win a prize even if you are unable to watch the film!

Name:

.....

Address:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Tel:

.....

### Terms & Conditions:

Please complete and return this entry form along with your completed questionnaire to: **Housing News Summer 2008 DVD Quiz, 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 Thursday 31st July 2008**



# 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](http://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:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring Groups             | <input type="checkbox"/> Estate Inspections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tenants and Resident Groups   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mystery Shopping   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Groups                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Postal Survey      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ashford Borough Tenants Forum | <input type="checkbox"/> Telephone Survey   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Editorial Board               | <input type="checkbox"/> Email Survey       |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Feedback    |

Name: .....

Address: .....

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.**

