

Summer 2010

Housing NEWS

Tenants' Newsletter from Ashford Borough Council



You're never too old to learn...



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



ashford borough
tenants forum

inside:

- Help us to help you
- Beating the cheats
- Seniors training
- Get involved

Ashford
best placed in Britain



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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,
Kent TN24 8RY

Tel: 08458 247247
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Housing News

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editor's note

Welcome to the summer edition of Housing News. As always the editorial panel has tried to include stories and features which provide information and feedback on service, while at the same time giving readers a chance to comment.

You will notice that the 'you said we did' logo is sprinkled liberally through this edition showing that we are taking readers' views on board.

This year's calendar proved a little controversial and has caused a steady flow of comments. I know we are only half way through the year but this means we need to start thinking about the 2011 calendar so what are your thoughts? Do you want to continue with the children's pictures which have proved so popular, or do you want to see a change of format? Tell us what you think. We will feedback in the autumn edition.

If the budding artists among you feel disappointed that this gives you nothing to draw or paint over the summer, remember the dog picture competition which is still open and may be extended to allow as many people as possible to take part!

Philippa Dale Editor



Philippa Dale



Pat Pearman



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Cover Picture: Daphne Maynard enjoying a recent seniors training workshop.

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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Newtown fencing

Over the last few months complaints have been received that vehicles have been driving over the grassed area of Newtown Green posing a danger to pedestrians and damage to the green and surrounding areas.

After speaking to residents it was felt the best solution to the problem was to introduce low level ranch fencing throughout Newtown.

Fencing has been erected and some positive feedback from residents and businesses has been received.

If you would like to comment please call 01233 330464



Summer Fair

East Stour Primary School is holding its Summer Fair on Saturday 26 June.

With stalls, games and entertainment, a barbecue and refreshments there's something for everyone to enjoy between 2pm and 4pm.

Last year's fair raised over £1100 which went towards buying skills packs and outside play equipment for each class. This year the school hopes to raise even more money, which will be spent on equipment suggested by the School Council and staff.



Help US to help YOU

Please look out over the next few months for your "Help us to help you" survey which will be arriving on your doormat.

By completing this survey you will be telling us about you, your homes and your neighbourhoods and you also have the opportunity to win shopping vouchers, mobile phone top-ups or an iPod shuffle!

If you need any help with your survey please contact our Housing Services Team on 01233 330688.



Happy Birthday

Mrs Maud Codd from Cotton House, Hamstreet recently celebrated her 100th birthday.

Maud puts the secret of her longevity down to keeping her mind and body as active as she can.

She celebrated her birthday with friends and family and even had a visit from Mayor of Ashford Cllr John Holland.

Calling all leaseholders

Leaseholders will have received their tenant profile questionnaire and 25% of you have already completed and returned it.

It's a good start, but we really would like to see more returned. So please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and return it to us as soon as possible.

One lucky person has already received £50 worth of gift vouchers for doing just that and more prize draws are due to take place.

Don't miss out on your chance to win – complete your form today!

We are holding a Leaseholder Forum meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 2 June at the Civic Centre to which all leaseholders will be invited. This will give you the opportunity to meet managers from cleaning contractors Town and Country and tell them what you think about the cleaning in your block.

The Forum is being revitalised to address issues around the leaseholders' handbook, the cleaning contract, and changes to the charging regime.

New homes

A block of empty flats in Brookfield Court, Ashford has been turned into much needed affordable housing by Ashford Borough Council.

Housing Services bought the run-down properties and has spent the past few months renovating them.

The seven, three-bedroom maisonettes were gutted and refurbished inside and out with refurbished kitchens and bathrooms, new double-glazed windows, fencing, washing lines and refuse bins.

Housing Services will manage four of the maisonettes with three managed by YMCA for move-on accommodation.

The first four tenants have already moved in.

Area Plan update



Another two of this year's projects are complete. The garden has been enclosed at St Mary's in Rolvenden, and the communal bin area has been improved at Gregory Court in Wye.

Gregory Court tenant, Mrs Holmes says, "It looks nice but won't get rid of the smell of bins in the summer.

"The new path is now being used as a cut through from the car park making our garden less secure, kids playing on their bikes speed through, straight into the car park.

"We could have done with a gate from the car park as children can wander out, which is dangerous.

"It is tricky to get a pushchair through which means that we have to go on the grass and in the winter it drags mud in the building."

Jo Wickens, Area Manager, is hoping to look into these concerns.

In June the Ashford Borough Housing Forum will be considering the next round of bids from tenants for area plan funding. These include improvements to the play area in Newtown Green, provision of fencing at Meadowsweet House, and help to improve a garden area at Croft Road.



Karen Tomkins, Sue Cleal and Nelli the dog in the newly enclosed garden at St Mary's.



Communal bin area improvements at Gregory Court

Mobile Gateway visits rural areas

At the first of a series of events in rural areas, Housing Services and Housing Plus joined with Affinity Sutton Housing Association, Sure Steps, and the local police on the Mobile Gateway at Chilham and Old Wives Lees in May to meet and talk to residents in their own communities.



A local family get advice from Sure Steps Team Leader Faye Newman

The Mobile Gateway will be in Wye in June, Wittersham in July, and Smarden in August. Final details are being arranged as we go to print, but flyers will be distributed locally nearer the time of each event.

Housing Surgeries

Summer programme

Here are the housing surgery dates for the next three months – please pop along to one local to you if it is more convenient than coming in to the council offices or the Gateway with any housing query.

Phoenix School, Bybrook Road Jo Wickens	Fortnightly 11 June, 25 June, 9 July, 23 July, 6 August, 20 August	2.30 - 3.30
Bluebell Children's Centre, Hothfield Barry Moss	Monthly 11 June, 9 July, 13 August	3.00 - 4.00
Oaks School, Ashford Kat Aylward	Monthly 17 June, 15 July, 19 August	9.00 - 10.00
East Stour School, Earlsworth Road Anthony Crossley	Fortnightly 10 June, 24 June, 8 July, 22 July, 5 August, 19 August	8.45 - 10.00
Willow Centre, Brookfield Road Ray Whitewood and Kat Aylward	Fortnightly 8 June, 22 June, 6 July, 20 July, 3 August, 17 August, 31 August	9.00 - 11.00
Tenterden Gateway Sam Diggins	Monthly 2 June, 7 July, 4 August, 1 September	9.00-12.00

Ashford Neighbourhood Walkabouts



Since the spring edition of Housing News we have completed ten estate inspections.

There's a scoring system based on the actions we carry out against the problems reported to us or spotted by housing officers. Each road or area inspected is scored out of ten which then gives an overall average for the inspection. This helps us highlight issues that need more attention. Further inspections are then carried out to ensure that any repairs that had been requested have been completed, any bulk rubbish that might have been noted has been removed and that graffiti spotted has been cleaned up.

We are pleased to say that the average score for the ten inspections is in the region of 95%.

However, we would still like to hear from you about any issues in your neighbourhood.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have been able to spare the time to accompany your housing Area Manager on these inspections; your input is very much appreciated. If residents are only able to attend while their road or immediate neighbourhood is inspected that's fine; please contact your Area Manager to agree a time and location to meet.

Again thank you, your support is very much appreciated.

Barry Moss, Senior Area Manager

Why not register?

Just contact the duty manager on 01233 330200 and you will be contacted prior to the next estate inspection in your area.

Date of inspection	Area Covered	Area Manager
07 June	St Michaels	Sam Diggins
14 June	Hillbrow / Clockhouse	Anthony Crossley
21 June	Bybrook/Bockhanger	Jo Wickens
28 June	Westwell/Broughton Lees/Molash/Shottenden	Ray Whitewood
5 July	Woolreeds	Kat Aylward
12 July	Godfrey Walk	Paul Hills
19 July	Wye	Sam Diggins
26 July	Brookfield A	Anthony Crossley
02 August	Brookfield B	Jo Wickens
09 August	Tenants Choice / Revisits	Ray Whitewood
16 August	High Halden / Biddenden	Kat Aylward
23 August	Brookfield C	Paul Hills
30 August	Rothbrook (Kennington)	Sam Diggins
06 September	Egerton/Pluckley/Smarden/Little Chart	Anthony Crossley

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
 24 June
 29 July
 26 August

Leaveland, Brenchley, Frittenden, Newenden Close

25 June
 30 July
 27 August

Naureen's routes:

(Ring office for time & meeting place)
Badlesmere & Kildown
 22 June
 20 July
 17 August

Otterden Close and Speldhurst Close

22 July
 19 August

Tracy's routes:

(Ring office for time & meeting place)
Bredgar & Luddenham
 9 June
 14 July
 11 August





In the spring edition of Housing News we launched our Social Housing Fraud initiative where you can help us beat the housing cheats by telling us if you think someone is committing fraud through activities including unlawful sub-letting, obtaining a house by deception or wrongly claiming succession.



BEATING THE FRAUDSTERS

Below are updates on just some of the cases we have dealt with recently.

CASE 1

The Housing Department received a letter from a gentleman wishing to succeed the tenancy on a property where the lady had recently passed away.

The lady had been in receipt of Housing & Council Tax Benefit for the last 10 years as a single person on Pension Credit Guarantee. However, in the letter he stated he was the tenant's husband and had been resident at the property for over two years.

A four month investigation took place resulting in evidence showing that he had been resident at the property and an alternative address at the same time.

A Housing Officer and Housing Benefit Investigator interviewed the gentleman under caution during which there were inconsistencies between the original information supplied given during the interview.

Subsequently a joint decision was made by both departments resulting in the refusal of the succession of tenancy releasing a townhouse for another family on the waiting list.

CASE 2

The council's Revenues and Benefits team received information about possible fraudulent claims of Housing Benefit and Council Tax.

It was alleged a resident of a privately owned property was claiming Single Person Discount despite the fact the tenant of the council house next door had been living with the claimant at the property for over six months.

Meanwhile the council tenant left a non-dependant daughter and children living in the council-owned property.

During the investigation Housing Services received an application from the tenant of the council property requesting the tenancy be assigned to their non-dependant daughter, but officers noticed inconsistencies.

An interview took place and the conditions of the tenancy agreement reviewed regarding the tenant's main place of residence and the assignment application. The Housing Benefit was also reviewed regarding income and the Single Person Discount at the privately owned property.

After initially declining to make signed statements the parties involved advised officers of several key pieces of information which resulted in the council tenant being given one month's notice to relinquish the tenancy. During this time the non-dependant daughter vacated the property and moved out of the area.

The council regained a much needed two bedroom home, overpaid Council Tax was recovered and correct Housing Benefit and Council Tax entitlements will be paid in the future.

CASE 3

An allegation was received that various people were in and out of a property with no sign of the tenant.

The property was monitored by Visiting Officers over a period of time and information recorded. During the time the property was monitored there was no evidence the tenant was living at the property.

The information gathered was supplied in a witness statement and presented at court for a possession order which was granted.

SPEAK OUT
IF YOU HAVE SUSPICIONS
YOU MAY GET A REWARD

Housing Fraud Hotline **0800 026 2456**

housingfraud@ashford.gov.uk



Seniors Training

Ashford recently organised two half day training sessions for representatives of sheltered schemes from Ashford, Canterbury, and Shepway. The aims of the course were to:



- Provide tools to enable older residents to confidently enter into debates on issues which affect them
- Consider diversity issues and the importance of making services and information about services accessible to all
- Gain confidence at holding meetings/ speaking at coffee mornings
- Promote elderly people as a resource
 - Valued customers - rent paid on time, low levels of antisocial behaviour
 - A wealth of 'life' experience
 - Potential as mentors for younger tenants

Ken Stickels tells **Housing News** whether these aims were met:

"The training helped us understand how to conduct ourselves in an ever changing world. The older generation have to make themselves heard, but with real understanding of the problems which we and other people have. We also need to listen and be patient as everybody has their own opinions.

"We also learnt that when you have a disagreement, be courteous and listen to what others have to say. They might have different beliefs and be from a different culture. If you have a meeting of any kind make sure you are well prepared, before you go on to the subject you are presenting.

"Everybody had a chance to speak on various topics which were discussed at length. Everyone who attended thought overall it was a very well spent two sessions."

Clean Sweep



A joint operation to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour, improve public safety and smarten up the local environment in the Brookfield Road area of Ashford has been a huge success.

Kent Police, PCSOs and county council wardens staffed a mobile station in Brookfield Court joined by officers from Ashford Borough Council, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, UK Border Agency, Trading Standards, Biffa, and EDF Energy.

The operation helped clear fly-tipping and graffiti, check noise complaints, licensing regulations and food outlet hygiene standards. Alleyways and garage areas were cleared, shrubs cut back, litter picks carried out and bulk rubbish including washing machines and fridges cleared away.

Police road checks targeted drivers not wearing seatbelts, using mobile phones, and speeding. Trading Standards visited local shops and petrol stations while the UK Border Agency uncovered a case of illegal immigration.

Thanks to the hard work of everyone involved local residents have a cleaner, safer neighbourhood.



New play area for Hothfield

Youngsters have a safe and dynamic place to play as Hothfield's old recreation ground gets a complete makeover.

The play area features swings, slides and climbing equipment with the grounds landscaped to reflect the surrounding natural woodland.

Repair Recharges

We recharge the cost of certain repairs and maintenance work. To make sure you don't end up facing an unexpected bill why not check out the costs of some of our most common rechargeable repairs. We only recharge the cost of repairs and maintenance, where the cause is due to misuse, abuse or accidental damage. We do not recharge for items that have failed because of age, or fair wear and tear.



Description of repair	Non-emergency repair cost	Emergency 08.31-16.00 hrs	Emergency 16.01-08.30 hrs
Locksmith services – gain entry repair door and or frame and renew lock	£84.50	£106.00	£169.00
Clear blockage to WC, sink or bath	£77.50	£99.00	£162.00
Repair water leaking service to pipes, stop cock or valve	£48.00	£69.50	£132.50
Trace and rectify electrical fault	£21.50	£43.00	£106.00
Rewire damaged electrical circuit	£92.00	£113.50	£176.50
Boarding up of window or door	£49.50	£71.00	£134.00

You can find more information about rechargeable repairs at www.ashford.gov.uk/housing

Work starts on new council homes

Work has started on the first phase of a £9m project to build 78 much needed affordable homes for local people.

Ashford Borough Council has appointed Kent based Denne Construction as the principal contractor for the first council owned homes to be built in 30 years.

Ashford is one of only a handful of councils in the South East to begin building affordable housing thanks to new rules allowing councils more financial freedom.

The council successfully bid for £5.1m from central government towards the cost of 78 new homes which will be delivered on small brownfield sites already owned by the council.

Denne will build the first 25 homes as well as convert an existing property. They have started work on sites at Towers View, Goteley Mere and Gerlach House in Kennington and Breadlands Road, Willesborough and a further site at Blake Court, Willesborough.

A resident liaison officer has been appointed and will set up arrangements to keep local residents informed as the development progresses.

The first phase of 26 homes are set to be completed by spring 2011.

The second phase, which will see 53 houses, flats and bungalows built in further urban and some rural communities, is expected to begin this summer.

Cllr Peter Wood, Portfolio Holder for Housing & Property hands over the keys of the first development site to Graham Brown, Managing Director of Denne Construction.



Stanhope Update

Work continues on the landscaping, road and footpaths improvement, on track despite the severe weather at the start of the year.

The decanting of the Sandling Close flats is complete and has been handed over to the contractor for demolition. Decanting of the Eastry Close flats continues.

The housing developments remain on schedule with new homes on the former Stanhope Square site set to be available by early summer. Homes on the Kilndown Close and Leaveland Close developments are under way.

The Stanhope Centre, new "Legacy" building is due to be completed this summer.

The National Skills Academy based in Stanhope is continuing to provide training, building trade qualifications and assistance to local people in finding employment.



Youth Homelessness Education Programme

Ten Kent local authorities, led by Ashford Borough Council, have joined together to commission homelessness charity Porchlight to deliver a homelessness awareness raising and prevention programme for young people.

The project, to be launched this summer, will be delivered into Years 8, 9 and 10 of each of the secondary schools in the participating boroughs.

As well as raising awareness, project workers will be able to give young people advice on the services available to help them with issues they might be experiencing at home.

The project is funded by each of the participating councils and the Future Jobs Fund which enabled Porchlight to recruit a coordinator to run

the programme along with three young Homelessness Prevention Workers who all have experienced homelessness and associated issues.

It is hoped that, as a result of the Youth Homelessness Education Programme, the numbers of young people experiencing homelessness in the participating boroughs will reduce.

A Schools Youth Homelessness Conference was held in March 2010 at the Ashford International Hotel which featured a presentation from Porchlight as well as a theatre company and opportunities for young people to learn where to go for advice and guidance if they are experiencing issues at home that have the potential to lead to homelessness.



Youth Homeless Education Workers. L-R: Simon Manning, Ben Cook, Tony Crosby and Carlton Loo.

Gurkha drop in

80 members of the Gurkha community recently visited the Ashford Gateway and temporary Library in Park Mall for a drop-in and coffee information day.

The event, organised by Kent Libraries, Ashford Community Network, Ashford Borough Council and the Sagarmatha Gurkha Community aimed to provide a wide variety of information on public and voluntary sector services in one place with translators on hand.

There were representatives from:

- Job Centre Plus
- Kent Adult Social Services
- Health and Exercise advisors
- Kent Benefits Partnership
- Volunteering Ashford
- Citizens Rights for Older People (CROP)
- Adult Education and English language tutors
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Gurkha Welfare Association

The event was a success and the organisers would like to thank all the people who gave their time to support the Gurkha community.



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 don't 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 as well as your particular area.

Ashford Borough Council will 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 **28 June 2010** 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 Tenants' Forum

FORUM MEMBER NOMINATION FORM



Full name:

Address:

Tel:

Email:

Age

I have been a tenant or leaseholder for _____ years

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.



Sure Start Children's Centres in Ashford

Children's Centre services are coming soon to support families with children under the age of 5, living in these areas:

Chilham, Godmersham, Crundale, Molash, Wye, Hinxhill, Hastingleigh, Brook, Brabourne, Smeeth, Aldington, Bonnington, Bilsington, Ruckinge, Boughton Aluph and Eastwell.

You will be able to access services that will cater for the needs of the local community, examples include:

- Family support and outreach to parents
- Under 1's Group
- Links with services for children with additional needs
- Information on childcare choices
- Art and Craft
- Messy Play
- Support for parents thinking about training or finding new jobs
- Toy Library information
- Breastfeeding, parenting, and speech and language information



Have your say!

Now is the chance for you to tell us what you want in your community.

Your opinions are valued and will help us shape your services.

Please contact the Children's Centre team on the details below:

Faye Newman (Team Leader) on 07540677019 or faye.newman@kent.gov.uk
Sophie Baker (Network Manager) on 07540671560 or sophie.baker@kent.gov.uk



Message from the Chair

At our last forum meeting we met the contractors who are going to construct the new houses being built by Ashford Borough Council.

Denne Construction have been awarded the contract and will build the six schemes in phase one. We met the Construction Manager and Security Manager together with the Resident Liaison Officer who will keep residents informed and deal with complaints from the local community. She will also visit the sites daily.

The AGM will be held on 23 August at 6.30pm for 7.00pm in the Council Chamber - please try to come along.

Light refreshments will be provided and travelling costs can be covered.

The Housing Strategy and Housing Plus Forum was attended by four members of the ABTF. There were presentations from seven partners. Hidden

Harm was one of the presentations about how children cope with parents who have drug problems, domestic violence and about children who are at risk.

I attended a Customer Services workshop where we reviewed Housing Plus information; the Assessment Service Directory and the Customer Satisfactory Survey are going out on a month's trial.



Forum member Ken Stickels also attended and said, "In the workshop I attended we tried out a board game called 'pitfalls and trampolines' based on the ups and downs of the housing experience. Although it is in the early stages of development, it will be interesting to see it in action when it is up and running."

Vice Chair Pat Pearman attended the workshop on the vulnerable adult strategy where the group tried to think of ways these people's lives might be improved. Everything kept coming back to cost, but there were some interesting suggestions. Pat wanted to remind professionals that there are still many tenants without easy access to a computer or the necessary skills to use one.

Stella Cowland

Chair of Ashford Borough Tenants' Forum
01233 334206

Tenant Services Authority


In the spring issue of Housing News we reported on the national standards which have been agreed by the new regulator for council housing, the Tenant Services Authority. This was following extensive consultation with tenants throughout the country. Ashford tenants played their part in this consultation and continue to do so through surveys and in-depth discussions.

The Ashford Borough Tenants' Forum is working on a set of draft questions which it feels best translate the national standards into a set of local standards (or 'offers') for Ashford. They will then ask the 450 residents on the Ashford Back Chat database if they think the forum is on the right track. If you have not yet signed up to Ashford Back Chat and would like a say, simply complete the form on the back of this copy of **Housing News**, and return it in the prepaid envelope, or register online at www.ashford.gov.uk/housing/ashfordbackchat.

The draft report, which will set out the proposed local 'offers', will be launched at the **Ashford Borough Tenants' Forum annual general meeting at 6.30pm for 7.00pm on Monday 23 August at the Civic Centre.**

The Tenant Services Authority will use the report together with other monitoring feedback to decide if we are doing a good job as your landlords. The TSA will only step in when landlords are not performing to a high standard. Otherwise they want residents to take the lead in getting better performance from their landlords.

For more information visit www.tenantservicesauthority.org


Find us on Facebook

Ashford Borough Tenants' Forum has opened a Facebook account.


On our page you will find coming events as well as links to other websites.

I have just started a discussion and we would love to hear your views.

So far we have 22 members and are hoping for a lot more. So, if you have access to the internet, why not look us up?

If you would like to contact me about the Facebook page, please email TFG@ashford.gov.uk

Zoe Amos, Member, Ashford Borough Tenants' Forum





Your Letters...

Dear Editor

Can you make sure tenants are aware of the likely costs of rechargeable repairs before finding themselves facing an unexpected bill?

Mr M, Tenant

Dear Mr M

Thanks for this suggestion. We have updated the rechargeable work information on our website and have included a shortened list showing the cost of the recharges we most often have to make in this edition of Housing News (see page 7).

We only recharge the cost of repairs and maintenance where the cause is due to misuse, abuse or accidental damage. We do not recharge for items that have failed because of age, or fair wear and tear.

Summer Wordsearch

Words to find are: HOLIDAYS, SUNSHINE, ICECREAM, BEACH, FUNFAIR, BARBECUE, SWIMMING, SUNGLASSES, STRAWBERRIES, BLUESKIES, CRICKET

win £25

WORDSEARCH

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

Win fantastic vouchers from Buzzlines Travel

Buzzlines Travel is offering one lucky reader the chance to win £100 of vouchers which can be used against any day trip or holiday in their brochures.

Hythe-based Buzzlines Travel, the leading coach hire, travel and holiday specialist, operates a full programme of holidays and day trips, throughout the year including:

- London Showtime - a regular feature going to all the top London Shows
- UK Airshows - Duxford, Biggin Hill, Farnborough and Eastbourne
- Royal Residences - Buckingham Palace, Sandringham or Althorp House
- Mystery Holidays - UK and continental
- Warners Holidays - many destinations with on-site activities, entertainment and days out.

To enter simply answer the following question:

Which airshows does Buzzlines Travel visit in the UK?

Send your entry on a postcard along with your name, address, daytime telephone number and email address to:

Buzzlines competition, c/o P Flisher, Buzzlines Travel, Lympne Distribution Park, Hythe, Kent CT21 4LR.

Closing date for entries 30 June 2010.

For information about their holidays and excursions call Buzzlines Travel on 0800 334 5590 quoting ABCMay10.

www.buzzlinestravel.co.uk



buzzlines
travel

Summer's here and the theme of this edition's wordsearch is everything that makes you think of summer.

Entries received by 30 June 2010 will be entered into our prize draw for £25 in shopping 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 30 June 2010



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



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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.

