

Winter 2010

Housing NEWS

Tenants' Newsletter from Ashford Borough Council



Fun for all at Bybrook

inside:

- Need to talk?
- Transfer inspection guide
- Bybrook play area revamp
- Competition



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL



Ashford
best placed in Britain

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
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

The Tenterden Gateway Centre

2 Manor Row, High Street Tenterden Kent TN30 6HP

Tel: 0845 8247202
Typetalk: 08458 247905

Ashford Borough Tenants' Forum:

TFG@ashford.gov.uk

Housing News

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Email: philippa.dale@ashford.gov.uk
Tenant Editor: Pat Pearman
Telephone: 01233 820756

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www.ashford.gov.uk

2011 Calendar

In this edition of **Housing News** we've enclosed the new and improved Housing Services calendar. As promised we've made more space for your important dates and appointments and included information from our Annual Report.

The photos show some of the things we've been getting up to. You can tell us what you think by using the enclosed prepaid envelope.



New garden competition for 2011

Travelling round the borough I get the chance to see how many of you have great gardens. What better way to salute the green fingered among you than a garden competition.

We aim to keep things simple with just four categories: best front garden, best back garden, best container display (hanging basket, window box or other container) and best children's prize.

Look out for more details in the spring edition of **Housing News**.

In the meantime, we have a small silver cup presented by Alexander Hammond for 'The best kept garden on the Repton Estate' which was last won by C A Davey. If anyone has any information or photos of this competition I'd love to hear from you.

Philippa Dale Housing News Editor



You said we did

We use the 'you said we did' logo whenever we report back on something tenants have asked for and we've been able to deliver.



contents

- 3 Help to manage your money
- 6 How we're doing
- 8 Leaseholders' Corner
- 10 Area plan update
- 11 Competition

Cover Picture: Fun for all at Bybrook



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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Tel: 01233 623131 www.headley.co.uk



Christmas opening hours

	Civic Centre & Ashford Gateway	Tenterden Gateway
Friday 24 December	Closed	9am – 1pm
Saturday 25th December	Closed	Closed
Sunday 26th December	Closed	Closed
Monday 27th December	Closed	Closed
Tuesday 28th December	Closed	Closed
Wednesday 29th December	Normal Working day	Normal Working day
Thursday 30th December	Normal Working day	Normal Working day
Friday 31st December	9am – 4pm	9am – 4pm
Saturday 1st January	Closed	Closed
Sunday 2nd January	Closed	Closed
Monday 3rd January	Closed	Closed

Struggling to manage your finances?



With Christmas on the way it's easy to end up struggling to make ends meet. But there are plenty of places to go for help including the Housing Services team.

Area Managers – can help you budget and check to see if you are entitled to any benefits – call 01233 330688.

Kent Supporting People Team – offer housing related support for up to a year through Floating Support Services. Find out more at www.kent.gov.uk, email supportingpeopleteam@kent.gov.uk or call 08458247100.

Ashford Citizens Advice Bureau – dedicated debt advice available at:

Ashford Gateway, Park Mall
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
9.30 - 12.30

Tenterden Gateway, Manor Row
Monday 9.30 - 12.30

Drop in or make an appointment by calling 01233 330368.

Consumer Credit Counselling Service – call for debt advice on 0800 138 1111.

Housing Services and Area Managers are here to help

You can

- Pop in to your nearest Housing Surgery (see page 4 for details)
- Go along to your local Estate Inspection (see page 5 for the programme)
- Make an appointment for an Area Manager to visit you in your home
- Email us at housingservices@ashford.gov.uk
- Or call us on 01233 330688

Your friendly Area Manager team:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| Rebecca Wilcox
Housing Operations Manager | 01233 330233 |
| Anthony Crossley | 01233 330464 |
| Barry Moss | 01233 330376 |
| Carole Winder | 01233 330377 |
| Kat Aylward | 01233 330372 |
| Paul Hills | 01233 330373 |
| Ray Whitewood | 01233 330379 |
| Sam Diggins | 01233 330374 |



Rent free Christmas

Remember, if you have a clear rent account on the 19th December 2010 you will be entitled to two rent free weeks over the festive period!

If you pay your rent by monthly Direct Debit or use our Monthly Bank Standing Order payment method your Rent Free weeks will have already been included in the calculation of your monthly payments.



Help yourself to advice

You can get information on housing, employment, benefits and much more thanks to new touch screen kiosks at three of Sure Start's children centres.


Kiosks are located at The Willow Centre, The Ray Allen Centre and Bluebells Children's Centre.

Employment adviser

We also have a dedicated Employment Adviser based at The Willow Centre. If you would like a one-to-one chat about getting back into work, thinking of changing careers or even looking to enrol on educational courses ask to see Julie Waissen, call 07835 417514 or email julie.waissen@kent.gov.uk.



Can we help you?



FREE
Legal Advice

Ashford One Stop Shop

support for those experiencing domestic abuse

Every TUESDAY

from 9.30-12.30pm at the Willow Centre,
Brookfield Road, Ashford TN23 4EY

07598 74 50 44

Children Welcome

Housing Surgeries Winter Programme (Please note times are subject to change)

Willow Centre Brookfield Road, Ashford	4 January, 18 January, 1 February, 15 February, 1 March, 15 March, 29 March	9.30 – 11.30 am
Tenterden Gateway Manor Row, Tenterden	5 January, 2 February, 2 March	9.00 – 11.00 am
Sure Steps Children's Centre Belmont Road, Kennington	7 January, 14 January, 21 January, 28 January, 4 February, 11 February, 18 February, 25 February, 4 March, 11 March, 18 March, 25 March	9.00 – 11.00 am
Bluebells Children's Centre School Road, Hothfield	11 January, 25 January, 8 February, 22 February, 8 March, 22 March	2.00 – 4.00 pm
East Stour School Earlsworth Road, Ashford	3 January, 10 February, 24 March	8.45 – 10.00 am
Oaks School Oak Tree Road, Ashford	20 January, 17 February, 17 March	9.00 – 10.00 am
Little Explorer Children's Centre Tenterden	18 January, 15 February, 15 March	11.00 am – noon

You can also email housing@ashford.gov.uk call 01233 330688 or write to:
Housing Services, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, TN23 1PL.



Ashford Neighbourhood Walkabouts

**WINTER
2010**

We've completed nine estate inspections including a Tenants' Choice since the last edition of Housing News.

Estate Inspections are a great opportunity for you to tell us what needs putting right in your area. It could be street lights not working, uneven footpaths, litter, graffiti or any other problem affecting your neighbourhood. We value your input and would like as many of you to come along as can make it.

Tenants' Choice inspection dates offer

you the chance to contact us and request that your neighbourhood be included. If you can put forward suggestions where improvements can be made we might be able to put these into a small area plan.

To nominate your neighbourhood for a Tenants' Choice inspection simply email barry.moss@ashford.gov.uk or call 01233 330376.

Make sure you give us your name and contact details so that we can get back to you with a time and location to carry out the inspection.

Barry Moss, Senior Area Manager



In Newtown Green and Bybrook tenants regularly accompany Area Managers on inspections.

Area Manager Anthony Crossley explains, "The idea is to identify issues such as anti-social behaviour hotspots or areas that need repair and maintenance. It's also a chance for me to meet a cross section of residents and discuss any ideas that can help improve people's quality of life. Representatives of other agencies such as the police can come along too as long as tenants give me a week's notice that they would like them to attend."

Inspections start at Newtown Post Office at 10.30am the third Monday of each month. If you would like to take part email anthony.crossley@ashford.gov.uk or call 01233 330464.

Planned date of inspection	Area Managers	Location
10 January	Sam Diggins	Brookfield A
17 January	Kat Aylward	Tenants' Choice/Revisits
24 January	Paul Hills	Rolvenden/Newenden/Wittersham
31 January	Ray Whitewood	Brookfield B
7 February	Anthony Crossley	Brookfield C
14 February	Sam Diggins	Kingsnorth/Shadoxhurst/Great Chart
21 February	Kat Aylward	Rothbrook (Kennington)
28 February	Paul Hills	Newtown Green
7 March	Ray Whitewood	Hothfield
14 March	Anthony Crossley	Twelve Acres
21 March	Sam Diggins	Repton Manor/Poet's Corner
28 March	Kat Aylward	Tenants' Choice/Revisits
4 April	Paul Hills	Charing/Charing Heath
11 April	Ray Whitewood	South Willesborough
18 April	Anthony Crossley	Hampden
26 April	Sam Diggins	Chilham/Old Wives Lees/Godmersham/Crundale/Hastingleigh/Brook

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, and Crundale

27 January, 24 February, 24 March

Leaveland, Brenchley, Frittenden & Newenden Close

28 January, 25 February, 25 March

Tracy's routes:

(Ring office for time & meeting place)

Bredgar & Luddenham

5 January, 9 February, 9 March

Naureen's routes:

(Ring office for time & meeting place)

Badlesmere & Kildown

17 January, 15 February, 22 March

Otterden Close and Speldhurst Close

20 January

17 February

24 March



How we're doing...

Un-let properties

The Housing team aims to re-let empty council homes as quickly as possible.

The current average time before an empty property is re-let is 24 days. This is the same as last year and is a good turn around time when compared to other landlords.

Sometime properties have to be cleaned, repaired, even redecorated depending on the state they have been left in by the previous tenants making it longer before they can be let to a new family.

Housing register

Demand for council homes is always higher than the number available and recession always adds to this pressure.

Our charts show the number of people registered for housing between April and September 2010 and the number of people we were able to house.

There are alternatives to getting a council home including help to access the private rented sector, affordable homes to buy on a part rent/part buy basis or to buy at a discounted rate.

To find out about these other solutions contact our Housing Options team to find out more.

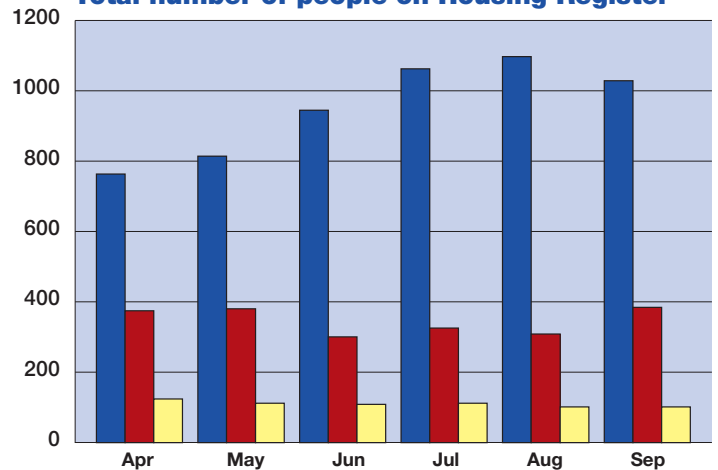
Visit: Ashford Gateway, Park Mall, Ashford
Tenterden Gateway, Manor Row, Tenterden

See: www.ashford.gov.uk/housingplus

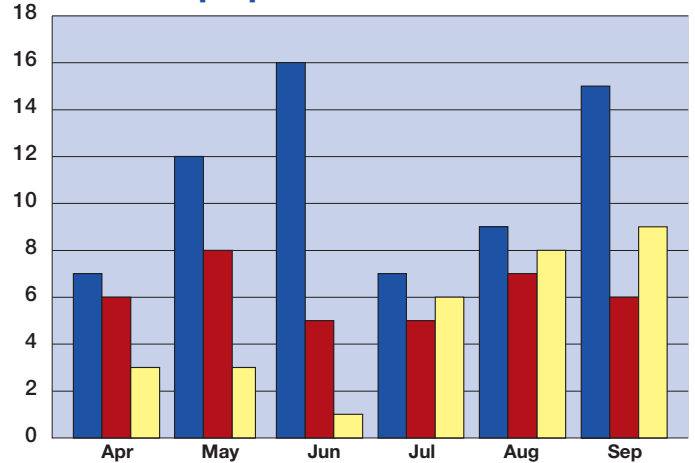
Email: housingplus@ashford.gov.uk

Call: 01233 330368

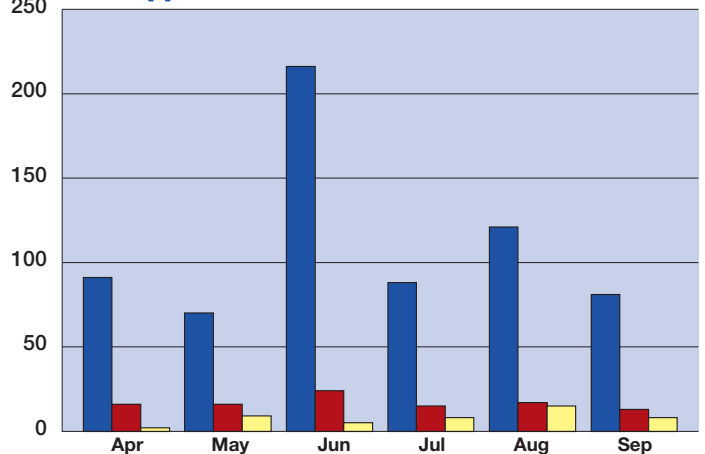
Total number of people on Housing Register



Number of people housed



New applicants each month



■ Housing Waiting List applicants
■ Transfer applicants
■ Homeless applicants

Looking for a swap?

There's a new free website for tenants looking to swap their homes.

Simply register your details and, once approved, your property will be advertised on the website and you will be able to search for homes in Kent and elsewhere.

Remember, you will need permission from your landlord before you can exchange.

To find out more visit www.kenthomechoice.org.uk

Kent
Homechoice





Transfer Inspection Guide

Every year many tenants put in for a transfer. It could be for a bigger home, different area or different type of home.

When you apply for a transfer the Area Management team will inspect your home and it's here where most applications fail.

Here's a guide to help transfer applicants obtain the best possible chance of passing an inspection.

Inspection checklist

Inside

- Make sure decorations are to a good standard, wallpaper is intact, woodwork painted white with gloss paint, and natural wood should be clean and varnished. Any doors previously removed must be replaced complete with handles etc.
- Clean window sills, ledges, skirting boards, shelves and other woodwork including fitted cupboards and wardrobes.
- Clean all tiled areas and painted walls to ensure free of marks, mould etc.
- Clean all kitchen units inside and out and all worktops.
- Clean all sinks, basins, toilets, baths and shower areas with the appropriate cleaning materials.
- Ceilings should be sound and free of defects, stains and evenly painted with suitable paint.
- Make sure wall mounted power sockets, extractor fans and light fittings are clean, free from paint and defects and firmly fitted. Light pendants should be soundly fixed to the ceiling complete with lamp holders.

Outside

- All garden areas should be tidy with grass cut and if the garden contains trees, shrubs or hedging they must be manageable and at a height of no more than 2 metres or they must be removed.
- All boundary fencing and gates are to be in good condition.
- Remove and dispose of all possessions and rubbish from the garden areas
- Remove children's swings and play equipment.

You may be requested to:

- Remove sheds, clear and dispose of greenhouses.
- Clear, fill and level ponds and make good the area.

You may be charged for repairs or reinstating missing items. Charges are made on an itemised basis.

Charges made for clearances are dependent on size.

Small clearance	£115.00
Medium clearance	£270.00
Large clearance	£370.00

Bulk refuse

Bulky items including old furniture, carpets etc will not be collected with your normal weekly refuse.

You can arrange for bulky items to be collected by calling Ashford Borough Council on 01233 331111.



Making sure your home is clean and well looked after could help you get a transfer.

Tenant Survey

Helping us to help you

Our Help Us to Help You tenant survey has hit the streets so keep an eye on your letter box for your copy.

It's important to complete it and return it to us so that we can continue to tailor our services to best suit your needs.

If you need help completing your form please contact your Area Manager.

If you prefer you can complete the questionnaire online at:
www.ashford.gov.uk/tenantprofilesurvey

Complete your form and you could win a great prize as all returned questionnaires are entered into our prize draw!



Leaseholders' Corner

Leaseholders' Forum

The forum met in September and discussed a range of issues including the concept of installing solar panels on council properties and the draft welcome pack for new leaseholders.

The meeting was well attended but general feeling was that meetings should be kept to once a year with the option for additional meetings to discuss specific issues. Communication, particularly via email, should be improved.

Welcome Pack

New leaseholders will receive a welcome pack including information on insurance.

It is hoped the information will help to clarify which repairs are the responsibility of leaseholders and which are the responsibility of the landlord.

The pack will also contain a profile survey, the leaseholders' handbook and the latest copy of Housing News.

Service Charges and communication

As a result of discussions at the September forum, the Housing team are looking at changing procedures so that leaseholders receive earlier advice about any potential insurance claims in relation to their property.



Message from the Chair

New Tenants' Forum members

At the Annual General Meeting in August we welcomed five new forum members. Three months on, here's what Julie and Leigha have to say about being a forum member.

Julie – "It is very interesting to hear about what is going on in our borough and having the opportunity to express my views, and those of my fellow tenants, on various topics. It's a wonderful way of interacting with people and knowing that our views count."

Leigha – "It's good to be able to help people who are, for one reason or another, unable to speak for themselves. I've been finding my feet and helping to get things done but think the forum could work together more."



Julie Okane (left) and Leigha Wilding

Other work

The forum has been involved with the selection of the contractors for the second phase of the new council house project. We have also had an input into Housing's new Annual Report to tenants, highlights of which you can read in the new 2011 calendar.

I would encourage tenants to read the **Housing News** article about Kent Savers on page 10 and think about joining.

Finally the forum expects to be as busy as ever in 2011 and will continue to make sure that tenants are getting a good service.

Stella Cowland
Chair of Ashford Borough
Tenants' Forum
01233 334206

Repairs Monitoring Group visit Swale Heating



Swale Heating hosted the October meeting of the Repairs Monitoring Group when members got the chance to tour their new warehouse and training suite.

Issues discussed included the new easy guide to help tenants get the best out of their boilers, the importance of gas safety checks, and customer satisfaction.



Tenants Linda Stevens and Dorothy Clayton on their tour of Swale Heating's offices



Equality and Diversity Training

Tenants from Ashford and Thanet attended a workshop aimed at explaining what equality and diversity mean for housing tenants, how the laws regarding this subject are changing, how to encourage tenants to get involved, and how to work to represent tenants from all backgrounds and experiences.

Comments from those taking part included:

"I have more understanding of people's circumstances"

"This will help to develop the role of the Tenants' Forum"

"It was worth the effort of giving up a Saturday".

Stanhope Update

The new Stanhope Centre was completed in August with housing management services now provided from this location. The new central park area, ball court and youth shelter are under construction and demolition of the last block of flats is underway.

Work to provide properties for rent at Kilndown Close is now complete.

Construction of homes at Leaveland Close is progressing well with some properties likely to be handed over before Christmas.

Site 2 – Sandling Close, construction of homes underway.

Site 1 – Eastry Close, site preparation is underway.

What's in a name?

Powerminster Gleeson Services are now called Lovell Respond. The same team of people will continue to provide the repairs and maintenance services to the PFI contract.

National Skills Academy

Local MP Damian Green recently visited Denne Construction's National Skills Academy, based on Stanhope, meeting a number of apprentices. The initiative continues to provide real job opportunities for local people.

Damien Green (left)



Affordable housing update

A number of new affordable homes have been completed or are due to start construction in partnership with housing associations working in our borough.

All rented affordable housing is made available through the choice based lettings system from Kent Homechoice. Find out more at www.kenthomechoice.org.uk.

Shared ownership homes are sold through the housing association. For more information on this affordable housing option, contact the housing association directly or visit the HomeBuy website www.HomeBuy.co.uk.

Hardinge Road

A development of nine flats for rent by West Kent Housing Association completed in August 2010 providing 4 x 1 bed flats and 5 x 2 bed flats.

Waitrose Flats

23 one and two bedroom flats for rent above the new Waitrose store in Ashford were completed in November. The flats, owned by Southern Housing Group, have easy access to the town centre and nearby M20.

Hunter Avenue

Around 100 affordable homes are set to be provided as part of a larger development by Fairview Homes in Willesborough. It is anticipated the first phase of these new homes will be handed over to West Kent Housing Association by the end of 2010.

Moat Park, Charing

A local needs housing scheme of eight homes for rent and shared ownership, developed by English Rural Housing Association, were completed in November. The homes will help people stay in or return to their village. The development is a mixture of houses and flats with 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms. Ashford Borough Council made land available for the development.

Greenside, High Halden

Work recently began on a further local needs scheme of six homes for rent from English Rural Housing Association with 2 x 2 bed houses, 2 x 3 bed houses and 2 x 2 bed flats.

Helping resolve disputes



Ashford Mediation Service provides free help to people looking for solutions to disputes.

These can be anything including problems with neighbours such as loud music, noisy parties, parking issues, boundary disputes or anti social behaviour.

They also help with disputes between young people and parents and can even mediate between parents, pupils and teachers.

The Ashford Mediation Service is always looking for more local people to join them to train to be volunteer mediators. If you are a good listener, can listen to two sides of a story and be non judgemental you could be just what they are looking for.

If you need help with mediation problems, visit www.ashfordmediation.co.uk, email ashfordmediation@hotmail.com or call 01233 663488.

If you are interested in becoming a mediator call 01233 663488.

Bybrook play area revamp – every little helps!

Parents and children from Bybrook recently celebrated their play area's fresh new look with a family fun day.

Ashford Borough Council has added three new exciting pavement games to the play area next to the village green and spruced up existing equipment.

The fun day included face painting, hula-hoop making and a chance for parents and older children to decorate the boundary fence.

Deputy Mayor Matthew French opened the revamped facility then got stuck in with ward councillor Michael Claughton to help out with the painting along with Go4Play and Sure Start workers.

The project has been funded by BIG Lottery Go4 Play, Ashford Borough Council's housing team and the Bockhanger Community Group.



Area Plan update

Meadowsweet House, Ashford



This block of flats was suffering from damage, graffiti, anti-social behaviour and nuisance compared to similar blocks in the area.

A multi-agency approach was taken to try and curb some of the problems.

External improvements were agreed by the residents including fencing around the block, enclosing the green area, new signs for the block and internal



Above and below: before and after the new fencing.



Kent Savers is a credit union for people who live or work in Kent and Medway.

Kent Savers, launched in March 2010, is supported by Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council and has already made over 150 loans.

Kent Savers offers a secure and profitable savings scheme which offers a significantly better return than any high street bank.

Kent Savers offers loans to people on lower incomes and is happy to consider those with poor credit history and will lend up to £10,000 although most loans are under £1000.

Some loans include a savings plan with the repayments so when you have paid off the loan you have a small amount of money saved up for future rainy days.

To find out more visit www.kentsavers.co.uk or call 0333 321 9050 (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm) or 0300 456 9990 (Mon - Fri 8am - 8pm, Sat 9am - 5pm).



Your Letters...

Dear Editor

I was really upset to discover a neighbour hasn't had her annual boiler check carried out. She said it was because she doesn't have time, but I told her that Swale Heating had fitted in round my working hours and only took 45 minutes.

I think people who don't have this done are putting other people's home and lives at risk.

Do you keep a list of homes with outstanding boiler checks and do you chase tenants to have the work carried out?

Mrs Smith

Dear Mrs Smith

Yes, we spend a lot of time chasing people to get their gas checks done, even though as you point out it is actually easy to arrange and takes very little time.

Although gas boilers are generally very safe, they do need to be serviced regularly or problems can arise creating a greater risk of explosion and potential damage to people and property.

David Green, Assistant Planned Maintenance Manager

Digital change over

In 2012 TV in our area goes digital and the analogue broadcast system will be turned off.

The Housing team, along with many other landlords, is looking at options to provide tenants and leaseholders with the best service with the least problems and at the lowest cost for its customers.

Housing are working with the Ashford Borough Tenants' Forum (with help from Digital UK) to draft a policy which will hopefully be workable for all our tenants and leaseholders however they currently receive their television signal.

For people on a low income who are not yet ready for the switch over there may be assistance.

If you would be interested in talking to us about this and would like to take part in consultation contact Philippa Dale on 01233 330365 or email philippa.dale@ashford.gov.uk

For more about the digital switch over visit www.digitaluk.co.uk

Christmas Wordsearch

The 10 words to find are: CRACKER, PUDDING, TREE, HOLLY, MINCEPIE, MISTLETOE, SANTACLAUS, TINSEL, TURKEY, CAROLS

win £20

WORDSEARCH

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

Wordsearch winner

The winner of the autumn wordsearch was Mrs Valentine Sayer from Twelve Acres who received a £20 shopping voucher.

Christmas is coming and the theme of this edition's wordsearch is all things seasonal.

Entries received by 30 January 2011 will be entered into our prize draw for £20 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 January 2011**



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:
- | | |
|---|---|
| <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.

