



Housing News

Information Bulletin from Wigan and Leigh Housing

No. 41, November 2005

New Board Members

Council tenants have been balloted to elect three new Tenant Board Members from the Wigan Homes area and two from the Leigh Homes area.

Mick Baines from Beech Hill was the successful Wigan Homes candidate re-elected to the Wigan and Leigh Housing Board. Joseph Baldwin from Scholes and Margaret McIntosh from Worsley Hall were the successful candidates elected to the Wigan Homes Board.

Reg Holmes from Atherton and Cris Nehls from Leigh were the successful candidates elected to the Leigh Homes Board.

It was pleasing that a larger number of tenants voted in this year's elections with over 6,500 tenants voting.

The company would like to thank the retiring Wigan Homes Board Members, Kath Lowe from Standish and George Barlow from Pemberton

for their good work over the last two years.

Councillor Joy Birch has been appointed, as a representative of the Council, to the vacancy on the Wigan Homes Board following the sad death of Board Member Councillor Christine Hitchen.

Contact: Jeff Prescott - ☎ 01942 486511

Allocations Policy Changes

We are proposing to change the way that we allocate Council properties to prevent the rush of people queuing at our two property shops in Leigh and Wigan.

Currently 20 per cent of tenancies are allocated on a first come – first served basis. This approach had proved a very successful way to encourage take up of tenancies on estates where demand for property was low.

Now the demand for properties is outstripping supply and our customers have expressed

frustration at having to contact their local housing office or queue at the property shops to see the homes available.

The Council has agreed that in future properties will be advertised weekly and customers will have six days to express an interest. The need for queuing will be removed and the new system will be fairer for everyone.

Contact: - Debbie Emmitt ☎ 01942 767341

Top of the spots



The team from The Hollins sheltered scheme at Hindley is "Top of the Spots" after edging out the team from The Rowans at Mosley Common 4-3 in the final of our domino competition for sheltered housing schemes in the borough.

Teams from sixteen sheltered housing schemes all over the borough set out on the road to the Kildare Grange final, with The Hollins emerging victorious after a nail-biting tussle.

Ken Berry, captain of The Hollins team summed up the views of many of the residents that have taken part in the competition when he said:

"We've had a lot of fun playing in the competition and we're delighted that

we managed to win. The tenants from The Rowans gave us a great match in the final and every match has been played in good spirits. We play the match and then have a game of bingo, a cup of tea and a good chat. It's been really enjoyable meeting people from other parts of the borough and finding out how much we have in common."

Several teams that were knocked out in the earlier stages of the competition have gone on to play friendly matches with other schemes enabling elderly tenants to get out and visit other schemes and build up new friendships.

Contact: - Elaine Davies ☎ 01942 767343

Another Successful Year

We held our third AGM and celebration dinner at the JJB Stadium on 14th October 2005. The Company was celebrating another successful year of business in the company of over 150 guests including staff, Board Members and representatives from the Council and other partner organisations.

The general consensus was that this event was the best one yet. Guests were treated to two sets by "Branded a Fool" the winners of our "Battle of the Bands" contest held during marketing week. The guest speaker was Joyce Redfearn, the Council's Chief Executive who commented positively about the progress that the Company has made and the commitment and dedication of our staff. There were also a number of tributes to our Chief Executive, Peter Gee, (much to his embarrassment!) at what was his last AGM, together with a presentation from the Tenants Federation.

The main business of the evening concluded with awards to the winner of this year's gardening and photography competitions and to the winners of the various categories in our Team of the Year.

Contact: - Tony Gerrard ☎ 01942 486509

Des takes the lead



A warm welcome to Des White, the new Chair of FOTARA (the Federation of Tenants and Residents

Associations) from all the tenants and residents and staff at Wigan & Leigh Housing. Des became the chair elect at the FOTARA Annual General Meeting on 1st September 2005. He is a founder member of the Golborne Tenants & Residents Association that was formed 18 months ago.

When asked why he had got involved in his local community, Des replied: "I wanted to help people and to make a difference in my local area. I enjoy meeting people, listening to their stories and helping to resolve issues. "

Sounds like Des is the right man for the job!

Contact: - Patsy Murray ☎ 01942 705702

Tenants Conference 2005

This year's conference was another roaring success. 170 people attended the event and it looks like we will

need to find a bigger venue for next year's conference.

The annual conferences are planned and organised by a steering group



made up of tenants and residents with representatives of FOTARA (the Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations) and support from the Tenant Participation Team. This year the group decided to base the conference on 'Involving Everyone' in our communities.

The day included contributions from two young people's groups. First of all we had 'Step Beyond', a group of five to nine years olds who provided us with an excellent dance routine. The other group was from the Higher Folds Theatre group and are young people aged around 16 years old. They provided a marvellous portrayal of life on a council estate from 1952 to present day. It was very funny and very interesting. It was obvious that a lot of hard work had been put into both young people's acts. The highlight of the day was our celebrity Lemm Sissay. Lemm is a local poet and broadcaster and was chosen to appear by the steering group after some members were lucky enough to see him perform earlier this year at Wigan Town Hall. Lemm was very funny and gave a brilliant insight into his life growing up in Leigh.

Members of FOTARA led and chaired the event wonderfully. They kept

the momentum going and introduced all the acts. Another highlight was the presentation made to Karen Armitage, Area Director for Leigh Homes, who is leaving us at the end of October. Karen is very popular with the tenants and residents and they bought a special award to thank her for the good work she has done on their behalf while she was here and to wish her every success for the future.

Contact: - Elaine Davies ☎ 01942 767343

Top Teams

A panel of three Wigan and Leigh Housing Board Members has chosen the winners in this year's Team of the Year Awards.

There were more entries than ever this year and the panel deliberated long and hard before choosing the winners in each of the five awards categories. The winners were:

- Achievement – Property Shops
- Customer Satisfaction – Business Management Services
- Innovation – Human Resources and Equality and Diversity Teams
- Inter-Agency Working – Leigh Homes Repairs Team
- Motivation – Estate Caretakers

The judges also made a special recognition award to the Concierge Team for their impressive work with the police on CCTV monitoring in the Scholes area.

The successful teams received their awards at the company Annual

General Meeting held at the JJB Stadium on 14th October.

After what was the most closely guarded secret since the Da Vinci code, the overall winners were announced. That honour went to the Human Resources and Equality and Diversity teams who were the



category winners for Innovation. The bid demonstrated strengths across all the categories and the judges, were impressed by the progress made by the Company and by the contribution made by these teams to that progress. They will now go forward to the finals of the Council's Team of the Year in January 2006. It was pointed out by the judges that both the numbers of entries and the standard was higher than ever and demonstrated the quality of work that is being carried out on a daily basis across the company.

Contact: - Tony Gerrard ☎ 01942 486509

Introducing SID



Security

Independence

Dignity

Read all about it!
The brand new sheltered housing agreement was launched at the tenants conference.

The agreement gives details of the standards that tenants living in sheltered housing can expect. These standards are supported by an action plan agreed with tenants that aims to improve the service even more.

Copies of SID can be obtained from the Tenant Participation Team.

Contact: - Karen McHugh ☎ 01942 486544

The search is on

Our Tenant Auditor Group, known as TAG, is searching for tenants and residents to join their mystery customer team. The mystery customer team will assist TAG in their review of our services.

TAG is a group of tenants and residents who independently inspect the services provided by Wigan and Leigh Housing and make recommendations for improvements.

If you or someone that you know are interested in joining the team, please contact our Tenant Participation Team and your details will be passed

on to TAG. Full training will be provided and you can spend as much time or as little as you like being a mystery customer.

Contact: - Patsy Murray ☎ 01942 705702

Estates under the spotlight

Tenants from across the North West joined together over the summer to compare the services on estates managed by seven different housing organisations. Tenants from outside the borough visited the Hag Fold estate in Atherton. They were particularly impressed with the fencing improvements on the estate and overall Wigan and Leigh Housing compared favourably with the other housing organisations. Tenants gave us top marks for the overall impression of the estate. A feedback day was held in August when tenants questioned Chief Executives and senior managers from the seven organisations about estate management.

We carry out regular estate inspections on all our housing estates and any resident can take part.

Contact: - Elaine Davies ☎ 01942 767343