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Winter 2007

Tenant Talk

For Tenants and Leaseholders in Partnership with Norwich City Council

IMPROVING RESIDENTS' PARTICIPATION



Representatives of residents' groups joined staff from Norwich City Council to meet Chris Stock and Michael Hewlett from Croydon to share ways of improving housing services through increased tenant and leaseholder involvement.

Norwich City Council and representatives from the CityWide Board, Norwich Leaseholders' Association, Norwich Residents' Forum and residents' groups from all over the city have begun working in partnership with Croydon Council to look at how we can continue to improve residents' participation in housing services issues.

Thanks to an open and trusting working relationship, Croydon Council has been

recognised by the government as a Beacon Authority. Chris Stock, resident participation and performance manager at Croydon Council, and Michael Hewlett, a Croydon tenant and vice chair of Croydon's Tenant and Leaseholder Panel, visited Norwich on Tuesday 6 November for the first in a series of meetings with Norwich City Council staff and resident representatives. "Beacon is the highest accolade the council could get and our aim is to share good practice around the

country. The government has given us funding for what is called 'peer mentoring' for those who want to boost this area of work," Chris explained at the meeting.

"At the end of the day, we share with you things that have worked in Croydon and the things that haven't worked and also to use this as an opportunity for us to learn from what is being done in Norwich. It has taken us 14 years to get where we are today. Hopefully you have ideas in place and we can work together," he said.

Norwich already has a strong base to build on, with local tenant resident groups, the CityWide Board – where representatives are involved with policy discussions, the Norwich Residents' Forum, the Norwich Leaseholders' Association and the Sheltered Housing Tenants Forum. The new tenant compact has also been signed.

"We appreciate the help Croydon is giving us to develop our existing framework for resident participation," said Chris Cox, head of landlord services at Norwich City Council. "As a key part of our neighbourhood strategy, we can't do it without resident involvement and the fact that it's happening in partnership with residents' groups across the city is excellent news and will help us to shape services for the future."

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Tenant Talk is published by Norwich City Council and includes contributions from tenants and leaseholders, so the views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily always those of the council. While every effort is made to give accurate information, the publishers cannot be held responsible for errors or omissions in editorial content.



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A FEW WORDS FROM JULIE WESTMACOTT

Welcome to the winter edition of your newsletter, which contains many articles that reflect the council's continuing commitment to its tenants, the positive changes that have taken place under the new administration and the ways in which we're working together with tenant and leaseholder groups to make your neighbourhood a more pleasant place to live. And with this in mind, a copy of the *Tenant participation compact* is enclosed.

Thanks to residents' co-operation, we are delighted to report on the excellent progress that has been made in tackling antisocial behaviour – including closing a crack house – and enforcing tenancy agreements: find out more on pages 8 and 9. As you will recall, we highlighted a more robust approach to tenancy enforcement across the whole city and, as part of that, are also seeking to increase the ways in which we recognise the large number of tenants in our communities who cause no problems to their neighbours and pay their rent on time. Turn to page 10 for information about our new 'leave it clean' reward scheme.

As ever, meeting the government's decent homes standard is very important, so we hope that the questions and answers on page 6 will be helpful in understanding our decent homes process.

On behalf of the council, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you and your family a merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Councillor Julie Westmacott,
Portfolio holder for housing

WALKING THE WALK

As part of its promise to residents and councillors to proactively manage the city's housing estates, the council has begun its programme of neighbourhood walkabouts to look at local issues.

Our team of neighbourhood housing officers (NHOs) has begun its walkabout programme, which involves visiting each neighbourhood patch four times a year with interested parties, including residents' associations, councillors, the police and neighbourhood wardens.

The idea is to proactively manage estates and check that tenancy conditions are being kept, such as tidy gardens, and to consider any area of concern, eg ways to reduce antisocial behaviour in the area. If you believe that non-housing matters – like environmental, green spaces or play equipment – need to be discussed, please tell your NHO in advance and they will do their best to make sure that the relevant council department is represented at the walkabout. All issues or suggestions raised are recorded and followed up.

Residents' associations are automatically invited to neighbourhood walkabouts but non-members are also welcome to attend and make the most of these opportunities to influence decision making with council officers and local councillors present. A total of 60 neighbourhood walkabouts are planned during the next 12 months and the timetable, on the right, shows when the first visits takes place.



HOME|OPTIONS UPDATE

Home Options – the new scheme to promote and let affordable housing in the Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk areas – launched on 29 November.

Full details have been sent to all 12,000 people on the three councils' housing registers, giving them a banding based on their housing need and information on how to use the scheme.

If you would like more information, ring the tenancy services team on 01603 212888 or email homeoptions@norwich.gov.uk

NEIGHBOURHOOD	DATE OF WALKABOUT
Sandy Lane	Friday 11 January 2008
Beecheno Road	Monday 14 January 2008
Southwell Road	Tuesday 15 January 2008
Bussey Road	Wednesday 16 January 2008
Cannell Green/Mousehold Street/Heathgate	Wednesday 16 January 2008
Oak Street/Sussex Street	Thursday 17 January 2008
Fugill Road/Woodforde Road	Tuesday 22 January 2008
Vauxhall Street	Friday 25 January 2008
King Street/Music House Lane/Sherbourne Place	Wednesday 13 February 2008

To find out more about these planned visits contact:

- your NHO at your local housing surgery
- the tenancy services team on 01603 212888.

Or for information on other ways to get involved in your local area, speak to the council's tenant participation officers Jonathan Smith on 01603 213582 or Jeff Compton on 01603 213567.

SERVICE STANDARDS

The council has service standards, eg response times for repairs; if you would like a copy of our housing landlord services leaflet, please contact the tenancy services team on 01603 212888 or email tst@norwich.gov.uk

MAKING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFER

Tell us what affects the quality of everyday life – that's the invitation from the safer neighbourhoods team to everyone who lives, works or does business in the city.

Roll out of safer neighbourhoods teams across central Norfolk represents a major change in the way that the council, police and other partners work together to tackle issues and concerns.

All of the city's eight teams are now up and running, providing each community with its own dedicated resource to address problems that affect the everyday quality of life, such as litter, graffiti and antisocial behaviour (ASB).

Regular meetings ensure that everyone has an opportunity to have their say, help set priorities and hear what progress is being made. Team profiles, priorities and meeting dates can be found at www.safernorfolk.co.uk

Current priorities include:

City centre: Pottergate (speeding and

ASB); Norwich Market (ASB, begging, drinking and drugs); Castle Gardens (criminal damage and ASB).

West centre: West Pottergate/Paragon Place (including drug misuse and ASB); ASB in Westwick Street/New Mills Yard and Oak Street; pavement cyclists in Earlam Road.

Earlam, Marlpit and Larkman: fly tipping; the misuse of motorcycles and mini motos; street cleanliness in West Earlam.

Mile Cross/Catton/Fiddlewood: ASB in Sloughbottom Park and along the Marriott's Way cycle path; the antisocial use of mini motos, motorbikes and other vehicles on Pointers Fields.

Bowthorpe/Costessey: speeding in Costessey; ASB in Three Score, Bowthorpe; littering in East Hills Woods.



Ray Loveday, of Pottergate Residents' Association helps remove graffiti; photo courtesy of Archant, Norfolk.

Heartsease/Thorpe Hamlet: Rosary Road (prostitution and associated ASB); Pilling Park; Heathgate Community Centre.

Lakenham/Tuckswood: prostitution and drug misuse in the area bounded by Queen's Road, City Road, Hospital Lane and Hall Road; traffic offences; ASB, criminal damage and drug misuse around Netherwood Green.

University/Eaton: Eaton Park (ASB); The Avenues/Colman Road (ASB and violent crime); pavement cyclists on Bluebell Road.

Why not go along to your team's next meeting? Look out for posters publicising dates and venues.

To get in touch call 0845 456 4567, visit www.safernorfolk.co.uk or email enquiries@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

MAKING HOME IMPROVEMENTS?

We appreciate that you may want to make improvements to your home and, as a tenant, you have the right to carry out some alterations at your own expense, providing you get written agreement from the council before starting. But before you do any work, it is always worth checking to see if your home is to be included in a future upgrade scheme and if you might need planning permission or building control approval.

Improvements for which you need permission include:

- erecting any satellite, telephone, radio, TV or microwave receiver
- changing kitchen or bathroom fittings, eg sinks, baths or toilets
- installing central heating
- erecting a garage, carport or conservatory
- knocking down walls
- installing double glazing

You will also need to get permission before doing anything that

affects the gas, electricity or water supply to your home.

If granted permission, you will need to use qualified tradespeople where appropriate and conform to the all the conditions explained in the *Tenants' Own Improvements* leaflet. And please be considerate to your neighbours while you work.

When you leave

Providing you had written permission from the council to make the alterations, you may be entitled to reclaim some costs in accordance with the compensation for tenant's improvements scheme.

Contact the tenancy services team on 01603 212888 or email tst@norwich.gov.uk for a copy of the *Tenants' Own Improvements* leaflet. Turn to page 10 for a reminder of what you need to do when moving.

HEARTSEASE YOUNGSTERS HELP DRIVE COMMUNITY SPIRIT



Local children aged between four and 15 have been helping to drive forward a road safety campaign organised by Heartsease Residents' Association (HRA).

Following a competition in June to design posters encouraging motorists to kill their speed, the 12 winning entries are now road signs that will be rotated around the six entrances to the estate. Then, as part of a technology project, year 10 pupils at Heartsease High School made five of the designs into luminous badges and key rings for all of the pupils at Heartsease Primary School to help promote the nationwide Road Safety Week message. Children's entertainer Olly Day visited the primary school on Friday 2 November (pictured) to perform his Road Safety Magic Show, which was followed by games and a disco.

"I wanted to tell people to slow down. The people in my picture are waiting for the cars to go by before they cross the road. I feel happy to see the signs along the road," Bethany, aged seven, told *Tenant Talk*, adding: "I am really pleased about the badges too – I have an orange one!"

Claire Smith, chair of HRA, is also delighted with the initiative. "As the whole community has been involved, the children have a sense of ownership and pride in their work," she said. "There is always added respect if they do the work themselves. Our main achievement is that we did it on a community level.

"There are always opportunities to become involved in the HRA to improve the local area. Our main aim is to pull in the community and develop social links. The way to tackle antisocial behaviour is to engage with the children to improve and change things. By creating links at a young age, we are hoping to improve the situation for the future."

To find out more about HRA, visit www.hra-info.com

CATTON GROVE MEETS THE BUILDER

Plenty of Catton Grove residents took the opportunity to find out more about planned housing improvements to their kitchens or bathrooms at their CityCare 'meet the builder' day.

All residents involved in this upgrade phase were invited to Oak Grove Chapel in September to see the choice of kitchen or bathroom fittings on offer and had the opportunity to ask the decent homes team about the work while enjoying a cup of tea and a biscuit.

Mr and Mrs Harvey of Sleaford Green, pictured on the front cover with CityCare resident liaison officer Kelly Chipperfield, won a £20 Argos voucher after getting the most correct answers in a CityCare-themed quiz. Having moved into their home 38 years ago when it was new, the couple has seen many changes but told *Tenant Talk* that many of the original residents who moved in at the same time are still there.

The event also included a colouring competition, which helped keep the children amused. There was a boy and girl winner in each age group but the overall winner was Jack Johnson, aged eight, from Dakin Road who did a fantastic job of colouring in the CityCare-themed picture. All winners received a prize from Kelly Chipperfield and had their photo taken.



Pretty as a picture themselves, twins Bethany and Deanna Burnham from Penn Grove were the winners of the girls under five age group. "I coloured the picture yellow and purple," said Deanna (left). Not CityCare colours but a prize-winning combination anyway.

RAISING THE STANDARD

The government's decent homes standard introduced property management targets for local authorities and housing associations in 2000; it relates to maintaining and improving the quality of their properties by 2010 to meet minimum conditions and levels of safety that are appropriate for modern day lifestyles.

Here are some of frequently asked questions about the decent homes process.

Q How do you know which properties need work to meet the standard?

A Our housing property services department has a team of asset surveyors working on the second year of a five-year rolling stock condition survey programme to collect information on the age, condition and remaining life of each property's key components, ie roof, chimneys, walls, doors, windows, bathroom, kitchen, heating and electrical systems.

Q How do you decide what work, if any, is done following a survey?

A The survey information is captured using small hand-held computers and put into our asset database back

in the office. The database reports on which properties do not meet the decent homes standard now and those that will fail in the future. This information is used to prepare programmes for the necessary repair or replacement work.

Q My kitchen is 30 years old and my neighbours is only 20 years old, so why is theirs being replaced and mine is not?

A For a kitchen or bathroom to fail the decent homes standard it has to be old and in poor condition. An old kitchen may still be in good condition with a satisfactory layout so not fail on the age criteria. Equally, a newer kitchen or bathroom, if in a poor state of repair, may not automatically fail under the decent homes standard and will be repaired rather than replaced.

Q How will I know if I am having any work done to my home?

A We are surveying every home as part of a five-year rolling programme. The properties surveyed in one financial year will be programmed to have work carried out in the next financial year, eg the Clover Hill area was surveyed in September/October 2006 with the results evaluated in November 2006 to build up the programme of works for the 2007/08 financial year. The council sets its budget for improving homes in February each year so this is when we know exactly how many homes can be improved. We will write to you if you are to be included – normally in March or April – and our contractors tenant liaison officer will contact you again before the pre-works survey takes place.

GAS SURVEY'S GOOD NEWS

After dealing with a leak in the external gas service supply pipe at Seaman Tower in October 2006, the council asked National Grid Gas (NGG) to complete a survey of all its supply pipes to the council's tower blocks.

We're pleased to report that following excellent partnership working, NGG has completed the survey and found that, apart from a minor repair which has now been completed and has a 30-year guarantee against further seepage, all pipework is in good condition and free from leaks.

GETTING INVOLVED IN CATTON GROVE



Since its creation in February 2007, Catton Grove Tenants' and Residents' Association (TRA) has been working hard to raise awareness of the group and promote residents' involvement in local issues that will 'bring back respectability and pride to the area', which includes Jewson Road, George Pope Road/Close, Palmer Road/Close and George Winter Court.

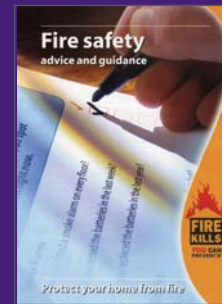
Chaired by Nigel Browne, the TRA works closely with the council – in particular, its neighbourhood housing officer Nigel Wilson – and with other agencies, including the police, local police community support officers and neighbourhood wardens. Councillors take part in local walkabouts and, when possible, join the association's monthly meetings. Links are being formed with other Norwich TRAs and important contacts are being made with council officers and partner agencies.

Advertised by local leaflet drops, the Catton Grove TRA meetings always

include a guest speaker. Ali Pridmore, (seated left) pollution control officer, spoke at September's meeting when he gave advice on noise and general antisocial behaviour and explained the correct procedure for reporting noise nuisance, stressing that completed noise log sheets must be returned to the council before an environmental health officer can investigate any further.

September's gathering also discussed: riding of motorbikes in unsuitable areas; finding hypodermic needles (sharps) in the area; inappropriate clearance fires; police presence; shed burglaries; and, restarting a neighbourhood watch once a co-ordinator is found. Other areas of concern are the ongoing problems of people not clearing up after their dogs and wheelie bins being left on paths.

If you would like to know more about Catton Grove TRA, please contact Nigel or Sue Browne on 01603 499779.



FIRE SAFETY ADVICE

Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service (the service) is urging anyone with concerns about fire safety in the home to contact them for free advice, quoting the reference NCCTT.

The service has a range of leaflets addressing all kinds of issues, including checking and maintaining equipment and planning an escape route. It is able to provide extra information for people with eyesight or mobility problems; translations and alternative formats also available.

Top tips include:

- make sure you have an adequate number of working smoke alarms
- know what to do if there is a fire
- ensure candles are used safely and extinguished after use
- shut all doors at night
- switch off electrical items
- don't overload electrical sockets: only use bar adaptors and don't plug one adaptor into another one.

For a free home fire risk assessment and smoke alarm, or if you have any questions about fire safety, ring 0800 9178137, email HQ@fire.norfolk.gov.uk, visit www.norfolkfireservice.gov.uk or www.firekills.gov.uk

AVOID BURST PIPES

In frosty conditions, uninsulated water pipes in unheated homes, stores or sheds can freeze and burst so tenants are reminded not to leave their homes with inadequate heating and unprotected pipes, eg when they go away, and to turn off and drain down the supply to avoid burst pipes and subsequent water leaks. Protecting pipes and preventing them from bursting is your responsibility and, as any damage will affect you and your belongings, you may want the peace of mind offered by our specialist tenants' home contents insurance scheme. Contact TST for more information and an application form on 01603 212888 or email tst@norwich.gov.uk

YOUR CO-OPERATION AND SUPPORT IS VITAL

The council takes antisocial behaviour very seriously and can help to sort out most cases quickly. But we rely upon the support of residents to inform and work with us to resolve incidents. This partnership working between the council and residents is particularly important in tackling more serious cases of antisocial behaviour, such as closing a crack house.

On Friday 31 August, Norwich magistrates court granted a crack house closure order on a home in Ebenezer Place. A closure order is obtained following police evidence of the production, supply or use of class A drugs at a property, supported by the council's proof of serious, associated, antisocial behaviour (ASB).

The council had been investigating complaints of ASB from the address for a long time and, in June, individuals at the property were found to be in possession of class A drugs and arrested.

The case was referred to the antisocial behaviour and tenancy enforcement (ABATE) team on 9 July 2007, when the council's level of investigation was stepped up. Complainants were asked to be extra vigilant and report all incidents to the ABATE case officer. The overwhelming, unwavering co-operation from the complainants enabled the case officer to quickly gather the relevant evidence to

confirm allegations of serious ASB directly relating to the supply and use of drugs.

Our case officer worked with various support agencies and the property's tenant to try to achieve a solution but she repeatedly failed to comply with all requests to curtail her behaviour and that of her many visitors. The tenant was then considered in serious breach of her tenancy conditions so possession proceedings began and the council worked with Norfolk Constabulary to provide the information needed to get a closure order.

Before the action was taken, the tenant strongly denied any wrong doing and claimed that complainants were acting maliciously. However, when faced with the overwhelming evidence against her, she admitted to the problems and surrendered the property. She has now moved away from the area.

The community had suffered countless incidents of blatant drug usage, violence, criminal damage, foul, abusive language and threats over a long period and had exercised tolerance in some terrifying situations. Their willingness to report incidents to us by way of nuisance logs, calls to neighbourhood wardens and ongoing communication with the investigating officer resulted in the successful eradication of this serious ASB.

Complainants have since expressed their thanks in letters and cards. One wrote: "We can now finally enjoy our home. You would not believe the sense of relief we both felt when told it was finally over. It's like a black cloud has been pushed away and we can finally see the sun again after such a long time."

The council would like to thank all of those who helped in this case and in resolving other cases of ASB, your support makes all the difference.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WORKING IN ACTION

We received a letter from a couple in the Mile Cross area thanking Sue Scarnell from the neighbourhood wardens team and police community support officers Tania Fiddy and Julia Benson for their assistance with an antisocial behaviour (ASB) problem. The couple said that Sue, Tania and Julia were very helpful and since their involvement there had been no further trouble. Sue had also been a great help with a non-ASB-related issue.

FINANCIAL HELP AND ADVICE

Keeping up with rent payments can sometimes be a struggle but the council's team of caseworkers and money advisers is able to help all tenants.

If you are in financial difficulties the council's housing services department can give free advice to help you manage your rent payments and settle any arrears in a fair and affordable way to prevent the need for court action and reduce the possibility of losing your home.

A dedicated caseworker will meet you at your home or make an appointment to see you at a council office to discuss your current income and expenditure and agree a personal repayment plan that matches your circumstances and which will help to relieve the stress and anxiety. Your caseworker can also:

- help complete housing and council tax benefit forms
- arrange to link you up with specialist support agencies
- refer you to the council's money advisers, who provide a free and confidential service to help you manage your money better.

Our specialist money advice team will help you to take control of your finances and relieve the burden of debt. Your personal money adviser can meet you at your own home or at another convenient location to provide free and confidential advice about your financial situation, ranging from basic budgeting skills to intensive debt management.

Remember, you are not alone and we will not judge you.

We are here to help you pay your rent and keep your home, not to take it away from you. For more information, ring the tenancy services team on 01603 212888 and ask to speak to the caseworker for your area.

Because uncollected rent affects all tenants and the services the council can provide, all rent debts will be collected with firm but fair action when necessary.

IMPROVING YOUR REPAIRS SERVICE

Miss Wyer from the University area was first out of the hat for CityCare's summer prize draw and is pictured on the left of this photo receiving her prize from Kelly Chipperfield. "The money will go towards my kitchen," she said, adding: "I don't usually send back the repair notices but I did this time and I won, so everyone else should too!"

Don't forget, giving CityCare feedback will help to improve their service and you could win a £25 cheque.



A TENANT WRITES...

John Charman emailed in response to the Togetherness article in the summer edition. "I read the last issue with interest. Things seem to be looking up in the constant battle against the louts and thugs who seem to rule a lot of our streets. In particular the item 'Togetherness' on page 4 was interesting but... Yes as far as it goes it is a welcome story but what it doesn't do is say what happened to the 'youths' that were caught. I cannot provide a solution but would welcome comment on what could be done to rid us of these sort of people – ASBOs are no deterrent, they are a status symbol amongst (mainly) the young, even custodial sentences are seen in this way – so what can we do to make sure this behaviour is stopped for good? Why can we not learn lessons from places like New Zealand and India, where youths respect and help their elders rather than terrifying them."

Wendy Weal, tenancy services manager, replies: "Thank you for your comments. We support your opinion about ASBOs not necessarily being a solution and are working hard to find other methods of preventing antisocial behaviour (ASB). We have caseworkers in our families unit who work with some very problematic families to challenge and support them to develop their capacity to live independently in their community without being the cause of ASB. We work with parents to improve parenting and general lifestyle skills and with children to improve their self-esteem, self-regard, school attendance and use of positive activities to help them avoid offending and ASB."

Lucy Hayman, community sergeant for the Mile Cross central area police team, provides an update on the youths involved: "The young lady who was the main offender has been interviewed under caution, she admitted to causing the damage and has received a final warning from the youth offending team. The other youngsters who were on the fringes have all been issued with formal verbal warnings."

PLEASE LEAVE IT CLEAN



Each year the council spends a lot of time and money cleaning and clearing out empty properties before they can be repaired and re-let, so is introducing a reward scheme to encourage outgoing tenants to 'leave it clean'.

Any delays to re-letting homes because previous tenants have left them in a bad state affects people who need somewhere to live and means that there is less money to spend on repairs and improvements to other council-owned properties.

For this reason, the council will pay £100* to tenants who comply with the following conditions of their tenancy agreement when moving out:

General conditions

- Give us a minimum of four weeks' notice that you intend to move out.
- Allow council officers or representatives in to inspect your home.
- Allow us to show prospective tenants around your home before you move out.
- Return all the keys to your property to the council by midday on the Monday your tenancy ends.
- Leave us a forwarding address.

Cleaning and clearing

- Make sure that your garden is tidy and free of rubbish.
- Remove all furniture, belongings and any rubbish from the property, including the loft, garden and sheds.

- Leave the property in a clean condition – windows, floors, cupboards, work tops and all sanitary ware.

Decorations/fixtures and fittings

- Make sure the property is in reasonable decorative order.
- If you remove your own fixtures, repair any damage.
- You must repair everything that you have damaged.
- Clearly mark any items that you have agreed to leave behind for the incoming tenant.

* If on leaving your home you owe the council any money, the £100 will be offset against this. If you do not meet our 'leave it clean' guidelines, you will be charged for the cost of cleaning and clearing your home. You will also be charged for any outstanding repairs that were your responsibility.

For more information, please contact the tenancy services team on 01603 212888 or email tst@norwich.gov.uk

YOUR CHANCE FOR A REWARD

Next year the council is launching a reward card scheme, giving a 10 per cent discount at a selection of independent shops and services, and we'd like your help in naming it.

The card will reward tenants who, among other things: keep their rent payments up-to-date; have no antisocial behaviour claims against them; do not have any outstanding court

costs; and, whose home has had a gas service within the past 12 months.

More information on the scheme will follow; in the meantime, for your chance to win a £25 National Book Token, send your suggestions for a name to *Tenant Talk* Reward Card, Room 118, City Hall, Norwich, NR2 1NH.

WORTH THE EFFORT

Nicola Rider of Dolphin Grove won the *Tenant Talk* summer 2007 prize of a £50 Argos voucher; she's pictured on the right of the photo with Trevlyn Potter, resident liaison manager at Lovell. Nicola said: "The survey sat on my coffee table for two weeks but I finally sent it in – I'm glad I did as I've won."

Turn to page 12 for your chance to win this issue's Lovell-sponsored prize.



ACCESS NEEDED

In the interests of safety for you, your family and neighbours, the council is implementing a new procedure to quickly gain access to the homes of tenants who do not allow entry for gas servicing, which, in some cases, could go as far as court action.

If your boiler or fire has not been serviced within the past year, please ring CityCare on 01603 462450 to arrange for an engineer to call.



New Broadland Housing flats on the corner of Elizabeth Fry and Gould Roads.

NEW HOMES

The last council-built home in Norwich was completed in 1990. Now, almost 20 years on, the council has successfully qualified for funding with the Housing Corporation to build a mixture of new affordable rent and low-cost, environmentally friendly homes in the city.

Thanks to the success of our funding bid, schemes to build new council homes can be put forward to receive a grant from the Housing Corporation. This will initially provide 150 new affordable homes in the 2008/11 National Affordable Housing Programme but a longer partnership could result in many more being built. And, as it is council policy to create communities as well as houses, the package includes provision for open spaces, jobs and community facilities.

Councillor Steve Morpew, leader of Norwich City Council, said: "Only a couple of councils from around the country will have access to these grants, so it is a really exciting opportunity for the city. The Housing Corporation said that they wanted to see a diverse, dynamic and efficient set of organisations in the market for a grant, and it is great news for us that we have been considered in that regard. This will be a real boost for young couples and families as we will be able to offer more affordable homes for those setting up households for the first time."

UNITARY BID UPDATE

In July 2007, the government announced its intention to commission a review of local government structures and boundaries in Norwich and Norfolk. And although it was made very clear that Norwich's bid for unitary status on existing boundaries had not been accepted, ministers gave a clear indication that they were inclined to support the city council's supplementary bid for unitary status on extended boundaries.

The Boundary Committee for England visited Norwich on 17 October to talk about how the review of local government in Norwich and Norfolk will happen. In brief the committee said:

- Norwich City Council has to submit a revised business case on its Greater Norwich proposal by February/ March 2008
- all other Norfolk councils have also been asked to develop unitary proposals for the rest of the county on the same timetable
- the committee seemed to rule out two-tier status quo as an option
- all councils will be expected to work together to come up with effective solutions to cover the whole county area
- any unitary solutions would need to be 'effective and convenient and reflect local communities'.

The committee is expected to start work in January 2008. Its work will include gathering information about current local government arrangements across the county, including a three-month period of stakeholder consultation about possible new models.

It is expected that the committee will take up to a year to complete its work, so may not report its recommendations until late 2008. The secretary of state for communities and local government will make a final decision in early 2009. Any resulting changes to local government structures would not, therefore, take effect until 1 April 2010.

For more details contact Paul Spencer, Norwich City Council's director of transformation, on 01603 212238 or paulspencer@norwich.gov.uk



NORWICH
City Council

CONTACTING NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

HOUSING SERVICES ENQUIRIES

Tenancy Services Team (TST) at City Hall
Phone: 01603 212888
8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday
Email: tst@norwich.gov.uk
Visit TST's counter service at City Hall:
8.45am – 5pm, Monday to Friday

Or use the reception service at the area offices from 9am until 12noon and from 1pm until 4pm, Monday to Friday at:

- Catton and Mile Cross (closed Wed am)
- East Norwich and Lakenham (closed Tues am)
- West Norwich and Colman Road (closed Thurs am)

HOUSING BENEFIT ENQUIRIES:

01603 212792
COUNCIL TAX ENQUIRIES:
01603 212893

Phone lines open 8am – 6pm, Monday to Friday
Counter service at City Hall, 8.45am – 5pm, Monday to Friday

FOR ALL OTHER COUNCIL ENQUIRIES, eg parking, environmental health, planning and green spaces contact the **Residents' Services Team (RST)** on 01603 212212

Providing homes,
building communities

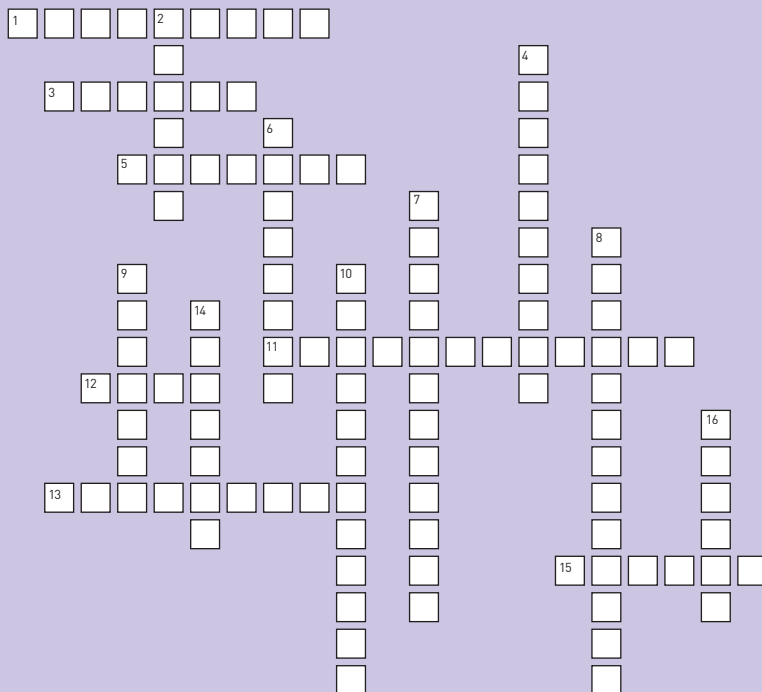
HAVE YOUR SAY...

Please contact us if you have any concerns as a tenant or leaseholder or if you'd like to share something with other readers: *Tenant Talk*, Room 118, City Hall, Norwich NR2 1NH; or tenant-talk@norwich.gov.uk; or ring the *Tenant Talk* hotline on 0800 7314515.

PRIZE CROSSWORD: WIN A £50 VOUCHER!



One of our respondents to the summer edition's survey asked for 'a nice crossword': we hope this fits the bill. All tenants and leaseholders are invited to enter the Lovell-sponsored competition, which is about roads in Norwich, so it may be useful to have a map of the city at your side! For your chance to win first prize of a £50 Argos voucher or a runner-up prize of a £10 Argos voucher, complete and return your crossword by Thursday 31 January 2008. The two winning entries will be drawn at random, based on the most correct answers. Please note, no alternative prizes will be offered and only one entry per household. Good luck!



ACROSS

- 1 Climb this rebel's rise before you get to Plumstead Road. (5, 4)
- 3 A gipsy found between Violet and Gertrude? (6)
- 5 Norfolk writer, author of *She* – find him by turning off Heartsease Lane (Rider, 7)
- 11 This lady involved in prison reform is laid out across The Avenues. (9, 3)
- 12 Might Cleopatra have been seen on a barge between Nelson and Adelaide? (4)

- 13 This street off Hall Road is named after the battle of 1805. (9)
- 15 Canadian city perched above the gas works? (6)

DOWN

- 2 A sailor's lookout? (6, Tower)
- 4 English poet wandering in West Earham? (10)
- 6 Norfolk name for a ladybird in Bowthorpe! (Bishy, 8)
- 7 Cheesy American city near Waterloo Park. (12, Lane)
- 8 Yellow crocus found in a cube near Harmer Road? (7, 6)
- 9 Crescent off Aylsham Road named after the first bishop of Norwich. (Herbert de, 7)
- 10 A well-known circus company found in Heartsease? (12)
- 14 A famous public school in north Norfolk has the same name as this road in Mile Cross. (7)
- 16 The Lone Ranger's horse seen running between Barrack Street and Sprowston Road? (6)

CONTACT DETAILS

Name

Tel (optional)

Address

Please complete the entry form and post to: *Tenant Talk*, Room 118, City Hall, Norwich NR2 1NH. Or hand in your form at your local area office.

Data protection: your details will only be used in relation to this competition – they will not be passed on to any other organisation.

