



**St. Leger Homes**  
OF DONCASTER

# House Proud

ISSUE 5 JULY 2006

## New Website!



The home page of our new website.

**H**ave you checked out our new website yet? It was officially launched on 5 July, so if you don't have time to call in to one of our offices, you can now visit us online instead.

We've had a group of tenant representatives and staff working with the developers to make sure the site offers you a wide range of facilities and importantly, that it's easy to use.

The site has a host of features, one of which is Google Maps; this facility allows you to take a virtual tour so you can locate any one of our area offices very easily. You can also use a postcode to find any other place that might be of interest to you.

You'll find that there's a wide range of information available, for example: anti-social behaviour, leaseholder information, applying for a home and making improvements to your home.

Here's just some of the things you can do online:

- **Pay your rent**
- **Report a repair**
- **Send us your comments or make a complaint**
- **Get involved with TARA's etc in your area**

Visit us on [www.stlegerhomes.co.uk](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk) - we'd be very pleased to receive any feedback from you about the site.

Translation Available

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# Community News

## Tribute to Vera

The new community centre on the Balby Bridge estate had its official opening on 21 June and was named after the late Vera Boughen.

Vera was very well known and highly respected for her tireless campaigns to improve the quality of life for residents in the area. Vera's husband Eric hosted the ceremony which was attended by many people who'd had the privilege of working with Vera over the years.



Diane Ashmore, Chair of Balby Bridge TARA (left) and Julie Jablonski of St. Leger Homes (right)

## Mexborough

### Common

Hold their 4<sup>th</sup> Summer Gala on 22 July, with all proceeds going to the park regeneration.

## Morton and Chaucer Road



Frank Knapton (left) and Councillor Malcolm Jevons (right)

## Radburn Estate Gala Day

Eddy Jones, Chair of the Rossington Parish Council, officially opened the Gala held on 27 May.

Rossington Parish Council, Groundwork Dearne Valley and Excel of Bawtry kindly sponsored the event. Many local businesses in

Rossington generously donated raffle/tombola prizes. The money raised will provide a day out to the coast for TARA members and children.



Eddy Jones—Chair of Rossington Parish Council

Two community gardens in Chaucer Road Mexborough were opened on 3 June with an official ceremony, and named Knapton Gardens as a tribute to the Chairman Frank Knapton. The TARA provided a bouncy castle, free drinks and food for the children and held a fancy dress competition. There was also a tree planting ceremony in memory of the late Geoff Lee, who was a founding member and Treasurer of the TARA.

## Cathedral TARA

The Dunscroft group has received funding for 'Fitness for the Future' - which is a gym programme for youngsters. The programme is now up and running.



The Community Liaison Team

## Considering setting up a Tenants and Residents Association (TARA)?

We've put together an information booklet containing all you need to know about setting up a TARA. The booklet details the support you will get from our Community Liaison Team and gives useful information about holding your meetings.

If you'd like a copy of the booklet, or would like further information, please contact Lynsey Hind on **01302 862740** or email [community.liaison@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:community.liaison@stlegerhomes.co.uk)

# Value for Money

## The Procurement Process itself and how we buy goods.

### Can you explain the rules that govern Procurement?

Whenever we buy anything we have to operate under the same Procurement rules as all Public Sector bodies, e.g. Local Authorities, Police, National Health Service.

These rules fall into 2 categories; UK Law and European Law and also the Standing Order requirements imposed on our company. This might all seem like lots of red tape, but the rules are legal requirements and are in place to protect the public's interest by making sure that a common set of standards are applied across the UK and Europe.

### How are these rules applied in practice?

When we're buying goods or services, we use the same rules as DMBC. These are shown in the table below:

Contract Value	Number of Tenders/Quotes
Below £10,000	Obtain quotes either verbally or in writing from a minimum of two suppliers.
Contracts with a value between £10,000 & £50,000	Written quotations must be obtained from at least three suppliers.
Contracts for goods and services with a value between £50,000 & £144,371 and for works up to £3,611,318	Competitive tenders being obtained from a reasonable number of capable contractors following advertisement.
Contracts for goods and services over £144,371 and £3,611,319 for works	Tender subject to EU rules. These tenders are to be advertised in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).

### The process followed by St. Leger Homes when selecting suppliers and awarding contracts.



**Apologies**—In the last issue of House Proud, we published our income and expenditure figures. While the charts were accurate, unfortunately, there was a typing error in the income figure stated in the main article. The actual income figure is £63,560,000 as shown in the charts. We apologise for any misunderstanding arising from this.

## New Initiative



### ESTATE WALKS

**W**e've started an Estate Walks programme for each area.

These walks are to be carried out quarterly to highlight areas of concern and to make sure that the general appearance of the estates is satisfactory.

Representatives from the Police, Community First, the Highways Department, Local Ward Members and local Tenants and Residents Associations (TARAs) accompany our officers on the walks. By doing this we're able to work together to tackle problems on the estates. These problems may be ones of anti-social behaviour, environmental problems, crime or nuisance.

A list of walks will be displayed in our reception areas and the results of the walks will be printed in future issues of House Proud, together with details of proposed improvements.

If you're interested in joining an Estate Walk in your area,

please contact your local St. Leger Homes' office. We'd be very happy to have you along.

- **Adwick Office**  
**01302 734145**
- **Conisbrough Office**  
**01302 735806**
- **Council House Office**  
**01302 737460**
- **Mexborough Office**  
**01302 735821**
- **Rossington Office**  
**01302 734183**
- **Sandbeck House Office**  
**01302 736730**
- **Stainforth Office**  
**01302 734102**
- **Thorne Office**  
**01302 735940**

## Well Done to all winners of the Design a Mascot Competition!



Heather Clark  
Under 12's  
1<sup>st</sup> prize winner

Rachel Smith  
Under 12's  
2<sup>nd</sup> prize winner



Becky Smith  
Under 12's  
3<sup>rd</sup> prize winner

Martine  
Hepplewhite  
Under 8's  
1<sup>st</sup> prize winner



Brooke Coy  
Under 8's  
2<sup>nd</sup> prize winner

## Meet a Board Member

**J**ohn Young is one of five independent members of the Board. He acts as Chairman of the Finance and Performance Committee.

Working life for John began as a housing trainee in Doncaster. Moving on in 1978, he later occupied key positions in Humberside and East Yorkshire over the next 20 years. He is a retired member of the Chartered Institute of Housing and holds technical and professional qualifications.

Along the career path John gained extensive experience of managing services in differing environments. The learning curve continued when he was seconded to help with the seamless implementation of local government reorganisation. Some may say this sort of experience is ideally suited to the emerging needs of St. Leger Homes during its early development.

After retiring as Head of Housing John chose to reposition himself as a freelance consultant in the field of social housing. He later took a gap year out and returned with batteries fully charged.

The lure of social and economic regeneration in Doncaster proved too strong to resist; John then set up



John Young—Independent Board Member

and managed three local social enterprises and continues to act as Chief Executive of the national award winning Doncaster Community Recycling Partnership. Put simply John's philosophy is "if you rest you rust".

John represents the Community Sector on a variety of advisory and strategic bodies. He is committed to equal and fair treatment for all and will challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination. He strongly believes in all accountable actions, with measured outcomes and cost justifications and collaborative workings.

In terms of the future John promotes a positive message. He has previously said: "For far too long the social housing sector has

*been treated like a political Cinderella and starved of basic resources. The St. Leger Homes' solution allows a line to be drawn under past inertia. Working together, our immediate priority is securing the much-needed housing investment allocation sufficient to meet the raised expectations and aspirations of existing residents and future stakeholders. Implementing innovation needs people ownership and society engagement. All partners must remain acutely focused on the future challenges ahead".*

Outside his formal responsibilities, he cites his main interests as being all forms of sports, horse racing, social history readings and mathematical puzzle solving. John also acts as a Local Authority nominated school governor.

# Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

**T**enants and residents in the Balby Bridge area of Doncaster are resting a bit easier since a team of our officers and South Yorkshire Police successfully brought an end to the problems that one tenant was causing by his acts of anti-social behaviour to the many law abiding tenants and residents of Sandbeck House and the surrounding areas on the Balby Bridge estate.

A Closure Notice was issued on the tenant's flat at Sandbeck House and he was given an Anti-Social Behaviour Order, which bans him from causing harassment, alarm or distress to residents, or encouraging others to act in this way. Also, he must not be involved in anything to do with drugs. The Closure Notice will remain in force for 3 months and the Anti-Social Behaviour Order is for 2 years.

Anti-social behaviour can take many forms, but the one thing that they all have in common is that they stop other members of the community being able to have quiet enjoyment of their own homes. We're determined to tackle this type of behaviour in all of our neighbourhoods and to help us achieve this we have introduced a new risk rating system. This is so that the more serious cases can take priority over cases of a less serious nature.

Here are the new risk ratings and a few examples of the type of case associated with the risk rating.

## High Risk

**We will respond within 24 hours – 1 working day**

This would include: threats of physical assault, serious intimidation or harassment, racial incidents, domestic violence, serious damage to St. Leger Homes' property and insecure or abandoned premises.

## Medium Risk

**We will respond within 2–5 working days**

This would include: allegations of criminal activity, drug dealing, verbal abuse, youth nuisance and noise nuisance.

## Low Risk

**We will respond within 5–10 working days**

This would include: minor neighbour disputes, minor breaches of tenancy, boundary and land issues.

No one should have to put up with serious nuisance, crime or anti-social behaviour, and we'll do everything we can to help those suffering. Please contact your local St. Leger Homes office in the knowledge that everything you tell us will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

Pictured left to right: PC Pyle, Julie Jablonski of St. Leger Homes, Diane Ashmore-Chair of Balby Bridge TARA and Councillor Stuart Exelby



## Staff Focus

### Strategy Development Team

**O**ur Strategy Development Team is based at Stanley House in Balby and is part of the Business Planning Section. The Team is responsible for identifying areas and estates where local solutions will be needed to ensure the long-term viability of the housing stock we manage.

Tenant participation is at the heart of everything we do and as part of our consultation process, the Team hold 'Drop-in' days on the estates undergoing a review. All members of the estates are invited to come along and discuss the current problems

and ideas for developing the areas. As a result of these events, local steering groups have been set up, made up of local tenants, residents, TARA representatives, St. Leger Homes' staff and key partners such as DMBC's Safer Neighbourhood Team and South Yorkshire Police.

The Strategy Team have recently organised a training day at Northern College, Barnsley for all members of the various Steering Groups. This training was specifically designed to help our tenants and residents make well-informed decisions about the future of their estates.

The Team are also reviewing our leasehold service, and will be sending out a questionnaire to leaseholders. Your views and opinions are a valuable source of information and will



The Strategy Development Team

help us to identify future improvements to the services we currently provide. In addition, a Leasehold Handbook is being developed which will provide a comprehensive guide to buying and maintaining a leasehold property.

If you'd like more information on current initiatives we are dealing with, or you would like to talk to our Strategy Development Team, please contact:

Kelly Brookes—Strategy Development Assistant  
**01302 736319**

## You Told Us, We Did

***You told us that the Visually Impaired Group was under utilised.***

We ran an article in the March issue of House Proud asking for members. We're happy to report that the group's organiser received a huge response and the membership of the group has now grown substantially. We'll feature more news on the group in the next issue.

***You told us that you were unsure who to contact about problems on the estates.***

We now display posters in all our receptions with full contact details for all areas, including email addresses.

***You told us that residents at our Tenants and Residents meetings did not know what was in the House Proud newsletter.***

Our Community Liaison Team now take along spare copies of the newsletter to all their meetings.

# Customer Services



## Gas Safety Advice

There have been several incidences of thieves/vandals stealing the external copper gas pipes from buildings. Some of our properties, mainly flats and maisonettes, have external pipe work from the meter to the property. Removing these pipes while the supply is still live is obviously highly dangerous.

If you have a sudden and unexplained interruption to your gas supply, please check if there is any damage to visible external pipe work - if you can do this safely. If you see any damage, or the external pipe work has been removed, please contact:

**TRANSCO on 0800 111 999  
without delay.**

## Furniture Help

If you're looking for low cost furniture, or you have something that's still in good condition but you no longer need, contact:

**Junction** 01302 349341  
**Highway** 01709 861269  
**Refurnish** 01302 329955



## Changes in Store

We've taken a critical look at our receptions and found that there were quite a few improvements needed. After listening to your comments, we've now made more information available and our reception staff will soon be wearing uniforms.

We've made sure that the range of information available is consistent across all the area offices. Some offices have limited space and so can't put all the information out on display. If you can't find the information you need when you visit us, please ask the receptionist who will be pleased to help.

## Early Closing

With effect from 2 August, we'll be closing our office doors early to allow for staff training. We've consulted with you to make sure we know the days and times that will cause the least disruption to you or the services.

The training sessions are an important part of our efforts to improve our customer services.

**Each Wednesday, offices will close at 4pm and cash offices will close at 3pm.**

