



St. Leger Homes
OF DONCASTER

House Proud

ISSUE 6 SEPTEMBER 2006

Good things come in threes...

We're pleased to announce the latest three developments in the services we provide. Others are in the pipeline—so please keep telling us your views and suggestions.

The first one is a FREE PHONE number for customers to call our Repairs Contact Centre. The new number is

0808 126 3123

Please note there may be network charges from mobile phones.

Secondly, as some of you tell us that the weekend is the only time you're able to be at home for us to carry out repairs, we've extended the appointment times we offer to include Saturday mornings.

And thirdly, again as a result of you telling us that the most convenient time for you to contact the Repairs Contact Centre is during the early evening, our dedicated Repairs Contact Centre is now open between 8 am and 7 pm Monday to Friday. The Repairs Contact Centre staff will be pleased to take calls, arrange appointments and give advice on all repair issues. Calls made outside of these times will still be answered but access to the appointments system and other facilities may be restricted.



Staff at our Repairs Contact Centre ready to take your call

Please note that the emergency repair service will still be available 24 hours a day, all year round on the same free phone number.

We hope that you find these changes useful. If you would like to discuss the changes please contact Joanne Cage, Contact Centre Manager on 01302 737296.



Free fridge magnet with this issue of House Proud

Translation Available

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অনুবাদের ব্যবস্থা রয়েছে।

Tradução Disponível

Traduction Disponible

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Community News

Fun and Games at Balby Bridge

Community spirit was at the forefront, as Balby Bridge Tenants and Residents Association held its first ever 'Fun Day' on Saturday 19 August. The Right Honourable Rosie Winterton MP opened the event, which, as always, was also supported by local Councillors.

The well-attended event was a joint effort between St. Leger Homes and DMBC's Safer Neighbourhood Team, and funded by New Deal for Communities.

Julie Jablonski of St. Leger Homes said *'Many people had put a lot of time and effort into organising the event, but it was a good example of both partnership working and the community spirit that's evident on the Balby Bridge estate'*.

The Fun Day provided many



Pictured from left to right: Councillor Stuart Exelby, Diane Ashmore—Chair of Balby Bridge TARA, Rosie Winterton MP, Councillor John McHale and Julie Jablonski of St. Leger Homes

free activities for all age groups including funfair rides, competitions, 5 a-side football and nail painting. The newly opened Boughen Community Centre, named after Vera Boughen who had worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for the people in the Balby Bridge area for many years, served free tea and coffee throughout the day.

The TARA chose to donate some of the funds raised on the day to the Alzheimer's Society.

Diane Ashmore, Chair of the Balby Bridge TARA said *'the day was a great success, the kids really enjoyed themselves. I was very pleased to see that the event was so well supported'*.



Doncaster Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations

Hi, my name is Naz Hussain and I'm the new Federation Support Officer. My main role will be to support the Federation by actively encouraging tenant and resident involvement in decision-making, consulting tenants and understanding their views and helping to develop the Federation.



However, my role doesn't stop at working with the Federation, but also includes helping provide support to TARAS in things like forming a TARA, funding issues, training for groups/individuals and providing information and guidance. If you'd like to contact me, I'm based in the Haywood Room at the Council House, phone **01302 737490** or email **nazaqat.hussain@stlegerhomes.co.uk**

- I look forward to hearing from you!

Customer Notice

WORKING TOGETHER TO FIGHT BENEFIT FRAUD

During the coming months, we'll be joining with Doncaster Council to take part in a national data matching exercise. The National Fraud Initiative (NFI) began in 1996 and now runs every two years. This exercise allows service providers including local government, central government and the NHS, across the UK to identify fraud and error running into several million pounds.

The exercises are extremely effective - the last one carried out during 2004/2005, identified over £111 million worth of fraud and overpayments.

The Council has a legal requirement to participate in this NFI anti-fraud initiative, and to provide the Audit Commission, (who's the public spending watchdog), with the data you've supplied relating to your tenancy. The Audit Commission has legal power to take extracts from various data sources including the Council's payroll, Housing and Council Tax Benefit records and tenancy records.

Information gathered is secure as the Audit Commission is tightly regulated to ensure that all the data collected is used in accordance with the Data Protection Act and Human Rights legislation. The Council also has a duty to comply with this legislation and to protect personal information.

It's a legal requirement that you're advised

that information you've provided will be used for data matching for the prevention and detection of fraud, both within Doncaster Council and across other Councils. You'll have been told about this on your tenancy application forms, but you must also be reminded in other ways, such as by the information in this newsletter.

As a responsible public authority, Doncaster Council has a duty to safeguard public funds. The Council combats fraud in many different ways, for example, they employ Benefit Investigation Officers. If you've ever wondered if this does any good, last year, these officers carried out over 1,000 investigations, and as a result of their efforts, the Council received £268,400 in additional Government subsidy.

As you can see, identifying and stopping fraud has a direct positive effect for all our tenants, as money from any identified savings can be invested in improvements to community facilities and homes.

If you know of someone who's committing benefit fraud, please ring the 24 hour Benefit Fraud Hotline on 01302 735343 (answer phone after 5:00 pm) or you can report a cheat online at:

www.doncaster.gov.uk/Living_in_Doncaster/Homes_and_Housing/Help_with_Housing_Costs/benefits_fraud/Benefit_Fraud.asp

Value for Money

Are you getting value for money?

In the previous articles we told you about the money we receive, where it comes from and where we spend it. We also told you about the processes we have to follow when we buy goods or services to make sure we get value for money.

But that isn't the end of the story – we then measure the standards that were set in the contracts for the goods, services or works by

using Key Performance Indicators (KPI's), the same as other similar organisations. This process allows us to 'benchmark' – or compare our results. For example, for our Decent Homes works we currently benchmark against Barnsley, Rotherham and Sheffield. Information from benchmarking will be used to determine whether the performance of contracted suppliers is up to standard. For an example of KPI's in action, in the Decent Homes works we measure resident satisfaction and have set a target of 95%. We

also measure the number of properties completed within the allotted time, which again has a target of 95%, and the amount of money we spend compared with what we'd budgeted for. During July, we either met or exceeded all these targets.

Taking value for money even further, we make sure that all our staff are suitably qualified and receive training appropriate to their job. All staff have work plans and targets and their progress is monitored on

an ongoing basis. As with all our other performance measures, monitoring staff performance is an important part of making sure that we're giving you the best value service we can.

So, now you know how we go about things, do you think you're getting value for money? Are there any areas where you feel we could provide a better value service? We really want to hear your views so please take the time to contact us.

Are you missing out on benefits?

A wide range of benefits and allowances for the people of Doncaster are delivered by the Council's Benefits Section.

The benefits they might be able to give you include Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and free school meals. They also provide travel passes for disabled people and offer welfare benefit advice.

Information on benefits and claim forms are available from the Council's Customer Service Centres across the Borough or from Colonnades House on Duke Street. Alternatively, you can telephone the Benefits Section on (01302) 735336.

More information is available at www.doncaster.gov.uk



Credit Union Loans don't break the bank

Thinking about taking a loan out to pay your rent arrears?

STOP!!!!

Ditch the Doorstep Lenders and take a look at this:

- Low cost loans with no hidden charges
- 2% per month (£100 = £2.20 per week for 52 weeks)
- FREE insurance on savings/loans
- Consolidation loans
- Flexible and easy ways to save
- 25 Community Outreaches and 3 shops
- New shop opening on Netherhall Road, Doncaster Oct 06
- RING **01302 841155** FOR MORE DETAILS



Danum Credit Union Limited
8 Station Road • Stainforth • Doncaster • DN7 5QA
Telephone/Fax: 01302 841155
Webster: www.danumcu.co.uk
E-mail: adminstrator@danumcu.co.uk

FSB, Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority
Member of Association of British Credit Unions Ltd

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Anti-Social Behaviour and Neighbour Nuisance **ONLINE REPORTING**

If you prefer, you can now report anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance on our new website:

www.stlegerhomes.co.uk

Click on the Anti-Social Behaviour icon on the home page and go to the Nuisance and ASB Report Form. Once you have submitted your form an Estates Officer will contact you to discuss the matter in more detail. Whether you report online, by phone or in person, your complaint will receive the same prompt attention.



Anti-Social Behaviour Satisfaction Surveys

In April this year we introduced Satisfaction Surveys. At the close of each case of anti-social behaviour or neighbour nuisance, we send a letter and a survey form to the person who reported the incident to us. We ask a few questions about the service that they received from us and ask for their overall level of satisfaction. This information helps us to keep a check on the service we provide and to make improvements where they're needed.

Out of the surveys we've received the feedback has been very positive. At the moment, 75% of the surveys say we provide an excellent service, with comments like:

'Everyone was polite and courteous'
'Quick, efficient and resolved the situation'
'Very grateful, it's made a big difference'

Please keep your surveys coming in, we do take notice of what you have to say. Our staff work very hard to resolve the problems of anti-social behaviour and it's reassuring to know that you appreciate what they do.

Anti-Social Behaviour Statistics

During August, there were 344 reports of anti-social behaviour. Of these, we were able to deal with and close 243 cases within the same period.

Risk Ratings

We treat all reports of anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance very seriously. To help us ensure all reports are dealt with in the most effective way, we will use our new risk rating system. See the last issue, or contact us for more details.

**High Risk – we will
respond within 24 hours**

**Medium Risk – we will
respond within 2-5 working
days**

**Low Risk – we will
respond within 5-10 working
days**

Survey on Opening Hours

We're reviewing our opening hours to provide a more customer focused and accessible service.

We'd like to know what you want from the service and what opening times would suit you best? Would you like late night opening one day per week? Or perhaps Saturday mornings?

Please contact the **Estate Improvement Team with your comments on 01302 737309** or fill in our online Comments, Compliments and Complaints Form at www.stlegerhomes.co.uk

Staff Focus



The Gas Team

We have our own fully trained, qualified CORGI registered team of gas engineers. They carry out all our repairs and servicing for gas appliances and systems in all our homes.

The gas section is responsible for carrying out an annual safety check of the gas appliances in all our properties. Currently, this amounts to a total of 16,000 properties

We cover all the gas and district heating repairs within the Borough, and last year we had more than 21,000 orders for servicing and repair works. 95% of which were completed on time. Out of the 5,000 repairs to be done within 24 hours, 98% were done within time.

Faulty appliances can cause explosions and can also give off poisonous carbon monoxide fumes, with possibly fatal consequences. We therefore have a legal duty to make sure all of our gas appliances are checked every year by properly qualified gas engineers. As a tenant, you also have a legal duty to

allow our engineers into your home to carry out these annual checks. If a tenant refuses to allow us access, we have the legal right to obtain an injunction for access to do the work, and to charge the tenant for the court costs.

Our engineers can only handle repairs to central heating systems, boilers and fires that have been installed by us – please note that servicing and repairs to tenants own gas appliances are their own responsibility.

When your safety check is due, we'll send you a letter with a suggested appointment time. There is no additional charge for the check. If the appointment isn't convenient, please contact the gas section directly on 01709 858659 to arrange another appointment. We can offer a small number of Saturday morning appointments if necessary.

Leaseholders are responsible for arranging their own annual safety check and should supply us with a valid safety certificate each year.

Please report gas repairs to our Repairs Call Centre on (free phone)

0808 126 3123

Service Agreements

Communal Area Cleaning

We have a new agreement with Metroclean for the cleaning of our communal areas. This agreement states that all the communal areas in flats should be cleaned once every 15 working days and to a set schedule of works which includes the following:

1. Sweep floor
2. Damp mop stairs and surrounding areas
3. Damp wipe banisters and surfaces
4. Dusting cupboard exterior surfaces/doors
5. Check and secure windows as necessary
6. Clean light switches
7. Dust radiators/heating units/window sills and notice boards/window shutters
8. Emptying waste containers
9. Spot clean walls/doors/glass
10. Wash waste containers
11. Clean all accessible internal glass.

There will be a notice displayed stating the date the clean was last completed and a contact number for complaints/comments/compliments. If you have any comments about the service please contact Metroclean's **Customer Care Line on 01302 862832** or email **cleaning@doncaster.gov.uk**

Grounds Maintenance

We have a new Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Doncaster Council's Neighbourhood Management (formally Community First) for maintenance of our open plan areas. The agreement states that standard grassed areas will be:

1. Cut a minimum of 13 times per year between April and September
2. Cut cleanly and evenly to the same height on site without damaging the surface
3. Cleared of all litter and debris prior to the commencement of any grass cutting
4. Cleared of dumped rubbish after liaison with St. Leger Homes
5. Cleared of grass cuttings from pathways on all open plan bungalow estates

If you have any comment about the Grounds Maintenance Service please contact **01302 736000**.

Latest Winners of the **TENANT REWARD DRAW**

Each winner received £250 in Argos vouchers as a thank you for keeping their rent account up to date.

The next draw will be held at the end of September. Remember—keep your rent account clear to be in with a chance of winning in future draws!



Mr L Hart (Denaby) with
Gillian Ferguson
of St. Leger Homes



Pictured left to right:
Mrs and Mr
Stockdale (Auckley)
with Dave Harrison
of St. Leger Homes

Mrs Mawer of Carcroft was also a winner



Mrs E Bradey (Edenthorpe)
with Becky Street
of St. Leger Homes

Customer Services

Are the signs right?

We'd like to know what you think about our company signs.

- Do the signs contain the information you need?
- Are our offices easy to find?
- Are our receptions well sign posted?

Whatever your opinion, we'd really like to hear it. Please contact Gail Harris on 01302 862732 or email Gail.Harris@stlegerhomes.co.uk

Stay warm this winter

You've probably already had to have your gas central heating on at some point this summer, but if you've not already given it a run, now's the time to make sure that everything's in working order before the winter has us all reaching for the thermostats.

If you have any problems, please call our **Repairs Contact Centre** on **FREE PHONE 0808 126 3123**

Furniture Recycling

The phone number for **JUNCTION** was misprinted in the last issue. The correct number is **01302 349341**.

Email Newsletters

Have you moved into the world of electronic communication? Would you rather receive your copy of House Proud by email? If so, just send your email address to:

Gail.Harris@stlegerhomes.co.uk

You can also download any of the issues from our website.

VIP Group

The VIP's (Visually Impaired Persons) are a social group that meet every Friday between 11:30 am and 2:30 pm, and every Tuesday between 12 noon and 4 pm, at venues in Hyde Park and Kirk Sandall.

The group was set up to allow people with sight related disabilities to socialise and to provide social events for them. The group has links with Doncaster Royal Infirmary Eye Clinic, Sue Ryder Care and Social Services Sensory Team. Training courses, via Doncaster College, are provided on

subjects varying from First Aid to Gardening or Craft Work.

Founder Colleen Tiffany, says that there's 2,500 people in Doncaster with visual impairments but only 100 of these (5%) take part in social events. People who have difficulties with their sight can find leaving their home quite daunting and the mentoring and support offered by the VIP group can be a way of helping these people to regain their confidence, independence and self esteem.

For further details contact Colleen Tiffany on 01302 880681.

There's still time to tell us what you think

You may be one of the 4,000 tenants who have been randomly selected to take part in our three yearly customer satisfaction survey. If so you still have time to tell us what you think of the services we provide and by doing so you will be entered in to a prize draw to win £250 of high street shopping vouchers.

If you have been selected we need you to fill in the questionnaire and return it to BMG Research (the market research company who are carrying out the survey on our behalf). What you tell us will influence how we deliver our services to you in the future so it is important that as many of you as possible take part.

The results of the satisfaction survey will be available in November 2006.