

## *Tenants help launch St. Leger Homes of Doncaster*



**Mrs Marjorie Ritchie (left) and Mrs Mavis Williams (centre) cut the cake with Doncaster's Mayor Martin Winter. Also pictured are St. Leger Homes' Chief Executive Mr Martin Musgrave (left) and The Chair, Mr Peter Chapman (centre)**

# St. Leger Homes

## St. Leger Homes Takes The Reins

The management of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council's housing stock formally transferred to St. Leger Homes of Doncaster on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006.

There was an official launch ceremony at Doncaster Racecourse, attended by around 70 guests, including The Chair of St. Leger Homes, Peter Chapman, Board Members, Chief Executive, Martin Musgrave and Doncaster's Mayor Martin Winter.

The transfer was sealed as the Mayor and Chair of St. Leger Homes signed the Management Agreement, which is a detailed legal document stating the responsibilities of the new company.



Pictured left to right – Martin Musgrave (Chief Executive), Peter Chapman (The Chair) and Mayor Martin Winter

The guest list included tenant representatives from the Doncaster Tenants & Residents Federation and the Tenants Commission, who have worked tirelessly with the Council throughout the Options Appraisal and on setting up the new company.

Guests arriving at the venue had their first sight of St. Leger Homes branding, as they were met by a fleet of vans in the new colours and displaying the new logo.

Several members of staff wearing the new uniform were on hand to escort guests inside the venue.

In his opening speech, the Chair, Peter Chapman said



Martin Musgrave (Chief Executive), Jim Gorman, Steve Cassidy, Kerry McLaughlin, Gary MacDonald, Dean Warren, Stephen Langham and John Fisher

"St. Leger Homes marks an important step forward for housing in the area". He went on to say "all involved with the new company are fully committed to achieving the best possible standards of service for council tenants".

The Mayor said he believed that this was the beginning of a new era for social housing. He went on to say that "everyone in Doncaster deserves to live in a home that has modern facilities .... The new company will have to demonstrate to its customers that it is going to make a real difference to their lives by meeting their aspirations and continually improving services which really meet their needs".

In addressing the company, the Mayor said "I understand that you have chosen the strapline 'Quality Homes in Quality Neighbourhoods' .... This hopefully sends a positive message ... it conveys that you want to provide more than what may be considered to be decent".



# The Launch

Special guest was Hon. Yvette Cooper, Minister for Housing and Planning, who had rearranged her itinerary in the area to personally wish our company every success.

Following the launch, The Minister held a question and answer session with the Board of Directors.



All our housing offices were involved in launch week celebrations. We had a guess the number of sweets in the jar competition for the children and welcomed new tenants with a bouquet of flowers.

## Sweet Jar Winners!

*Congratulations to -*



*Sean Atkinson*  
Conisbrough



*Lauren Simpson*  
Thorne

*M Cowles* - Adwick

*Enya Pollitt* - Bentley

*Natasha* - Rossington

*Natalie McClelland* - Town Centre

*Owen Wells* - Sandbeck



*Lucy Reidy*  
Stainforth



*Jake Croft*  
Mexborough

Each winner received a prize of £25

## Welcome to St. Leger Homes



Mrs Daisley and  
Dave Wilkinson (Service  
Delivery Manager -  
South West)

Mr and Mrs Eales and  
Alan Hindson (Service  
Delivery Manager -  
South East)



Ms Allison Garth with  
Rebecca Wilkie (Service  
Delivery Manager -  
North East) and Denise Fox  
(Lettings Officer)



# Our Aims

## St. Leger Homes of Doncaster – Our Aims

We are working to bring all the Council houses in the borough up to the Decent Homes Standard by December 2010. This will include upgrading kitchens, bathrooms and heating systems, replacing doors and windows, rewiring and re-roofing, wherever necessary.

We agree that these improvements have been a long time coming, so we plan to make sure that as many tenants as possible quickly see at least some benefit. This means that we will be running several programmes across the Borough at the same time, covering internal works, external works and 'one hit packages'.

Planning such a massive programme of work has been a lengthy process, but as soon as we are able to, we will make sure that all tenants know exactly what work they can expect doing on their home, and most importantly, when this work will be done.

As an Arms Length Management Organisation, we can access the massive amount of money needed to do this work – so long as the government judge us to be providing you with a good service.

We don't think "good" is good enough – we are committed to providing our customers with an excellent service.

## TENANT PARTICIPATION

We believe that all our customers should be able to have a say in the things that affect their homes and neighbourhoods, and have many formal and informal channels for tenant participation.

### How you can get involved

Compact is an agreement between St. Leger Homes and its tenants, residents and leaseholders on consultation and participation. This agreement ensures that you receive full support to participate effectively. This includes ensuring that you have access to training, facilities and advice.

- ◆ You can join or form a Tenants and Residents Association (TARA). The Doncaster Federation of Tenants and Residents (contact 01302 737490) or our Community Liaison Team will give you full support in this (contact 01302 737491)
- ◆ Talkback is a panel that meet to ensure that the leaflets etc we send out are in plain English and relevant.
- ◆ Focus and Working Groups – set up to target specific areas of service.
- ◆ Customer surveys

If you don't have the time for any of these, but would still like to be involved, giving us your comments and suggestions on service improvement would be most welcome, contact our Customer Relations Team on 01302 862320.

# New Initiatives

## *DIRECT DEBIT is on its way*

This service will soon be offered as a convenient method of rent payment. There are distinct advantages in using this method, where payments can be made directly from almost all bank accounts with no additional costs.

Once set up, you can be assured that payments will only be taken out on the given date and any change in your payable amount will be recalculated automatically, there will be no need to make new arrangements with your bank.

Even existing standing order customers can take advantage of this, so they don't need to contact the bank to change their arrangement at the start of each year.

If you would like further information please contact:

Dave Harrison

Telephone: 01302 736656 Email: [dave.harrison@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:dave.harrison@stlegerhomes.co.uk)

## Everyone's a Winner...

### ***...New Rural Maintenance Scheme is Piloted***

We're piloting a regular maintenance scheme for those of you living in the more remote rural parts of the Borough.

As part of the scheme, the repairs team will make regular scheduled visits to rural areas, where they will undertake the smaller jobs needing attention. Tackling problems in this way reduces the chances of problems developing into more expensive and inconvenient repairs.

Taking this proactive approach means that even those living outside the pilot areas also benefit. Because unplanned visits to the

remote spots will be reduced, more resources will be available to carry out repairs in other areas of the Borough.

Areas included in the pilot scheme are Fishlake, Moss, Braithwaite and Sykehouse, and details of how to take advantage of the service has been sent to everyone included in the scheme.

Once we've run the scheme for about 6 months, we'll be asking for the views of those using the service. These opinions will be important in helping us to evaluate how effective the scheme has been.

Martin Musgrave, Chief Executive, said this is an exciting time for our new company, and we are determined to provide our customers with improved levels of service. This is just one of the new initiatives to be introduced, and I look forward to receiving the customer's reactions.

# Bulletin Board

## Mr Fixit says...

### Don't be caught out this winter!

With the nights getting colder and winter taking a hold, it's a good time to think about protecting your home from burst pipes – prevention is better than cure.

- If you're going away, either turn off the supply at the stop-cock and drain the system, or leave the central heating on low

- Don't forget to insulate your outside taps – better still, turn them off in winter

If the worst does happen, you can minimise the amount of damage caused.

- Switch off any water heaters or boilers and put out any fires in solid fuel heating
- Turn off the mains stop-cock to stop more water coming into the house
- If the leak is from a tank in the loft, turn on the taps as this will help drain the water faster
- Catch as much water as you can in buckets etc.

## Did you know...

- ♦ Turning down your thermostat by just 1c can cut 10% off your fuel bill
- ♦ Lighting can account for as much as 15% of your electricity bill
- ♦ If we all stopped leaving our TV's on standby, we would save enough electricity to power a city

## EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

### Electricity

YEDL General	01132 415155
Loss of Power	0800 375675
Powergen - Customer Services	0800 733000
Powergen - Supply Line	08453 300 889

Emergency Repairs (24 hrs) 01302 737694

Floodline 0845 988 1188

Gas Emergency (TRANSCO) 0800 111 999

### Water

Anglian Water - water & sewage	08457 145 145
Anglian Water - language line	08457 919 155
Severn Trent Water	08007 834 444
Yorkshire Water	08451 242 424/20

## Winter Fuel Payments - Are you claiming what you're entitled to?

The Winter Fuel Payment is paid annually to help people over 60 with their winter heating bills.

### Aged 60-79?

If you are entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment, the standard payment is between £100 - £200, depending on your circumstances during the qualifying week (19-25 September 2005).

### Aged 80 or over?

If you're entitled to the Winter Fuel Payment, you will get an extra £50 - £100 on top of the standard payment, depending on your circumstances during the qualifying week.

Find out if you are eligible and make sure you claim what you're **ENTITLED** to by contacting the Winter Fuel Help Line:

Telephone: 08459 15 15 15

Textphone: 0845 601 5613

Lines are open 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday

# STAFF FOCUS - Regular Feature

Each issue will feature a different team.

## Repairs Contact Centre

### *- a hive of activity*

Our Repairs Contact Centre is designed to give you a single point of contact for reporting a repair at any time of day or night. Since opening for business in August 2003, our call centre has taken around 100,000 calls. During the winter months in particular, the staff will take around 2,000 calls a week.

We've got 9 staff taking calls between 8:30am and 5:00pm, and between them, they answer at least 95% of calls within 5 rings. If the lines are busy when you call, please leave your contact details and a brief message on the answer phone, and an Operator will call

you back within 2 hours.

If the repair is outside your home, the Repair Operator will tell you the date by which the repair should be completed, this will be confirmed later by a letter.

To reduce inconvenience to you and to cut down on the number of ineffective calls made by the trades people, we operate an appointment system for repairs inside your home. This has proved very popular with most of you, and occasionally, demand has outstripped availability. We're looking for ways to increase the number of appointments available, but in the meantime, if no convenient appointment is available when you call, we will give you a target date for the repair to be completed. Don't worry if you're not at home when the tradesperson calls, because they will leave a card to tell you what to do next.

Please remember that the tradesperson will not be able to enter your home unless there is a responsible adult in the house throughout their visit.

When you call to report the repair, you may find it useful to have your Repairs Handbook with you (this will have been given to you at the start of your tenancy). The Handbook will help you to give a full and accurate description of the problem.

All our Operators try very hard to give you an excellent service and are constantly challenged to meet demanding targets. Calls are recorded, and the Centre Supervisor will replay a number of them to ensure that Operators have given accurate advice.

We want you to be satisfied with our service, so if you feel that the service you've received has not met our published standards in either the time taken to complete the repair, or in the standard of work or materials used, then please contact us and we will try to put things right.

We are continually looking for ways to improve our service to you, so if you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to contact us. If your comments are about the Repairs Centre, you can either ring them direct on 01302 737694, or you can call the Customer Service Section on 01302 862320.



# Customer Services

## *St. Leger Homes online...*

If you would like to access our services online, please register for the Housing Direct Internet service by contacting your Area Housing Office or by logging onto our website at:

[www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/housingdirect](http://www.stlegerhomes.co.uk/housingdirect)

## PERFORMANCE

In future issues of this newsletter, it is our intention to inform you of St. Leger Homes' service performance.

## Home Alone?

We understand that there may be circumstances which make it difficult or even impossible for one of our tradesmen to enter your home where a woman is alone. We are working to identify the households where this is likely to happen in advance. In the meantime, if one of our tradesmen calls and there are difficulties, we will be happy to work with you to make alternative arrangements.

## *You told us - we did...*

If you want to make a comment or suggestions about any of the services we provide, then we would be pleased to hear from you. In each issue of House Proud, we will publish a selection of the letters or emails you send us, and let you know what we have been able to do about the matter you raised.

**Please let us know if you would prefer your letter/email or name to be withheld from publication.**

Send your letter to:

Customer Relations Team, Floor 11 Council House,  
Doncaster DN1 3SZ

or email: [gail.harris@stlegerhomes.co.uk](mailto:gail.harris@stlegerhomes.co.uk)

## Difficulty Reading This?

If you would like this newsletter in either:

- Large Print
- Braille
- Audio
- Alternative Language

Please contact the Customer Relations Team on 01302 862320

## Customer Service Improvements

As part of our commitment to provide an excellent customer service, any of our staff visiting your home, whatever work they have come to do, will now be able to help you with any other query, problem or concerns that you have. Before we leave your home, we will take details of your query and ensure this reaches the appropriate department within one working day. We will leave you with a name and number so you know who to contact later if you need to.