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A great tenant conference

Our latest Tenant Conference, which took place at the Ripley Arts Centre on Friday 12 July, was a great success.

This year's conference themes were wellbeing and green issues.

Our guest speakers, Dean Baldwin (pictured below) and Kirsty Treadwell from Bromley Well, held thought-provoking sessions about how physical activity of any kind can benefit health and wellbeing – and they shared ideas on preventing falls.

We were also lucky enough to have Will Ray, Head of Sustainability from Clarion, available on the day. He talked to us about green issues, which are coming to the forefront of the political agenda.

We hope you enjoyed the day as much as we did and got some useful information from it.



Pension Credit - are you eligible?

Nearly a third of people of pension age who are entitled to Pension Credit, do not claim. Are you one of them?

Pension Credit tops up a single person's weekly income to £167.25.

To find out who qualifies, call free phone 0800 991234 and quote your National Insurance number.



Maria and Pat raise £540

Maria and Pat would like to thank everyone who helped them raise an amazing £540 for Parkinson's UK by sponsoring them on their five-mile walk.

Well done to them both.

The Big Brew 2019 Lingwood raise funds for SSAFA

Tenants at Lingwood took part in an annual fundraising event for SSAFA, the UK's oldest national tri-service military charity – raising an impressive total of £110.

SSAFA's mission is to relieve need, suffering and distress amongst the Armed Forces, veterans and their families, in order to support their independence and dignity.

Every year, the charity invites supporters to host an event for friends and family, colleagues or neighbours. By having a natter over tea and cake, they raise vital funds for Armed Forces veterans and their families.

Congratulations to Lingwood on their successful event.



Consulting you on our good neighbour awards

We are ending our good neighbour awards scheme, after consulting with tenants.

For many years, we have invited tenants to tell us who to reward for their kindness, so that we can give them one of our annual good neighbour awards.

But some tenants told us they thought the awards were outdated and could be unfair.

They felt that some tenants do kind deeds that don't get recognised, while other tenants put forward their friends' names, rather than genuine good neighbours.

Consultation

So, in June 2019, we consulted all our sheltered housing tenants about what to do.



In all, 56% of the tenants who took part voted to stop the awards.

As a result, we will no longer issue good neighbour awards. Instead, we will give each scheme £50 each year. The money will be held by our Sheltered Housing Managers, to spend on small items for their schemes.



Becky and Pam raise money for Bexley and Greenwich Hospice

Congratulations to Sheltered Housing Manager Becky and Pam, who is a tenant at Bertha Hollamby Court, who conquered their fear of heights and raised a whopping £1,105 by walking over the O2 arena in August.

A big thank you to everyone who sponsored them. You have helped a fantastic cause: the Greenwich and Bexley Hospice.

Investing in your homes and schemes

To keep your homes and schemes in tip-top condition, we are always looking for ways to improve our properties.



During 2018-19, we carried out a variety of improvement works to our sheltered schemes, including the following.

- We installed digital kiosks and Wi-Fi in the communal lounges at all six schemes.
- We upgraded 15 kitchens and 16 bathrooms.
- We put in extra parking at Lingwood and made improvements to the front elevation.
- Tenants at Evelyn Rogers

Court benefited from a laundry room upgrade.

- We compartmentalised the loft at Stanley Glyn Court.
- At Blackmore house, we upgraded the telecare system and the communal lighting. We also carried out six boiler replacements.
- At Bertha Hollamby Court, we upgraded the master key system, put in new washing machines and replaced the awning.



The Innocent Big Knit: Little hats, big difference

Tenants and staff have knitted a fantastic 605 little hats for the Innocent Smoothie Big Knit - helping to raise money for Age UK.

The hats are placed on smoothies and sold in supermarkets. For each one sold, Innocent donate 25p to Age UK.

The efforts of CSHA's knitters should raise an impressive £151.25p. A huge thank you to all the knitters who took part.

What the Tenants' Panel does - and how to join

The Tenants' Panel is made up of two elected representatives for each scheme. There are currently nine members, with vacancies at Evelyn Rogers Court, Bushell Way and Bertha Hollamby Court.

Each year, the Panel holds four meetings, usually led by their Chair. The Chair is elected by members of the Tenants' Panel from amongst the existing members. However, the Housing Services Manager is currently acting as Chair, as we do not currently have a tenant Chair.

Tenants' Panel duties include scrutinizing policies and performance, and making recommendations for improvements. We developed no, new, housing-related policies during 2018-19, however the Tenants' Panel did make recommendations about the performance of our cleaning contractor, garden contractors and window cleaner. We have addressed these concerns by appointing new contractors in all of these areas.

In May 2019, we provided training to all Tenants' Panel members on topics including:

- an introduction to social housing
- an overview of CSHA finances
- repairs
- equality and diversity
- handling complaints, and
- the role of tenant representatives.

This year, we will be working with the Tenants' Panel to look at consultation methods, as well as reviewing our service standards to make sure they remain relevant and meaningful. If you have any comments relating to our service standards, please feel free to share these with your Tenant Rep.

If you are interested in becoming a Rep, or if you are an existing Tenants' Panel Rep and would like to be considered for the position of Chair, please contact your Sheltered Housing Manager, who will pass the message on to head office.



Help with water bills

Under WaterSure schemes, suppliers cap water bills for customers who are on a low income, or who need lots of water and have a meter.

To be eligible, our tenants would need to have a household income of less than £16,105 (£19,201 in London) excluding disability benefits.

Bills can be reduced by 50% and you may receive £150 cash back if you claim.

The water supplier for the boroughs of Bexley, Bromley and Lewisham is Thames Water. Their Watersure scheme is 'WaterSure Plus'.

Apply direct to Thames Water by phoning 0800 980 8800 or go online to: www.thameswater.co.uk/my-account/billing-and-payment/help-paying-your-bill/watersure-plus-scheme



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