

TRUST talks

The Wrekin
Housing Trust

and listens

DECEMBER 2008



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We're ten next year – are you?



As you'll see from the Annual Report Calendar, it is the Trust's 10th Anniversary next year, and we will be holding various events in 2009 to celebrate.

We'd like to invite any tenants' children (and Mum or Dad) who were born in 1999, the same year that the Trust was established, to help us celebrate and mark the milestone. We'll be providing a special gift and depending on numbers, even have a party!

So, if you have a son or daughter who is ten in 2009, please phone Colette on **01952 217038**, or email:

trust.talks@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk by Friday 16 January. We look forward to hearing from you.

TRUST SHOPS CHRISTMAS CLOSING HOURS

All Wrekin Housing Trust shops and estate offices will close for the Christmas holidays at 5pm on Christmas Eve, Wednesday 24 December and will reopen on Monday 05 January 2009.

Our Customer Contact Centre will be open between 8.00am and 4.30pm between Monday 29 December and New Year's Eve (Wednesday 31 December) to offer an emergency repairs service.

Outside of these times you can still report **emergency repairs** by calling **01952 217217** (you will be directed to our 24-hour emergency line). We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

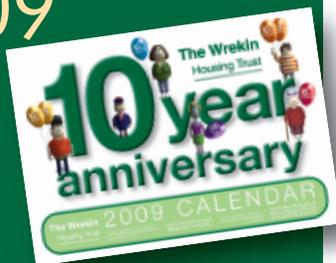
Tenants' Annual Report Calendar 2009

We're pleased to include next year's Annual Report Calendar with this edition of Trust Talks. The theme is 'events where the Trust has homes'.

We'd like to know what you think about the new calendar, so please let us have your comments and suggestions by filling in the FREEPOST feedback form (no stamp required) included in your calendar. All completed feedback forms will be entered into a prize draw to win £25 of shopping vouchers.

The feedback you gave us from the 2008 calendar told us that it was the best one yet! Hopefully you'll find the 2009 just as good.

If you would like to receive a large print or audio version of the information contained in the annual report, please call Andrew on **01952 217040**.



WORKING TOGETHER FOR A POSITIVE FUTURE

At the end of October, we held an exhibition at the Trust's Old Park offices to promote the work that the Trust does in a variety of different areas, entitled Working Together For A Positive Future.

The aim of the day was to bring together representatives from all of the Trust's different areas to share information and best practice and showcase the services that the Trust offers.

Tenants' Panel and Area Panel members were invited along to the event, which was held on Halloween and had a 'spooky' theme.

There were lots of different displays and information stands, covering everything from financial inclusion and income



management, to diversity and housing support. There were also a number of presentations focussing on the different ways that tenants are able to get involved with the management of their homes. These included the National

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• BROOKSIDE • WOODSIDE • STIRCHLEY • HOLLINSWOOD • MAD
• COALBROOKDALE • SUTTON HILL • MADELEY • STIRCHLEY • WO

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If you are having trouble reading this document, please call 01952 217100.
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MONEY MATTERS

IMPORTANT RENT PAYMENT INFORMATION

This year's rent free fortnight falls on the 29 December 2008.

If your rent account is in arrears, you must continue to make your regular rent payment on or before the 29 December 2008.

There are lots of ways to make a payment including.....

- Paying at the Post Office
- By PayPoint or PAYzone
- Direct Debit or Standing Order through your bank
- By calling the Trust's payment line on 217111



If you are finding it difficult to pay your rent, please speak to one of our Welfare Benefit Advisors at your local housing shop, who will be able to offer you some advice and support.

For more information, call **Claire on 01952 217226.**

Are you feeling the squeeze?

Anyone who lives or works in Telford & Wrekin area can save with FAIRshare and apply for a low cost loan – at a rate of 1-2% interest a month on the reducing balance. So for example £1,000 borrowed over 12 months could cost you as little as £100.15 in interest.

Open a FAIRshare account now and save just £10 a week and you could have over £500 in time for Christmas 2009 – plus you can use your FAIRshare account to spread the cost of everything from your TV licence to a special celebration.



Savers can take advantage of having a secure place for their savings - plus access to affordable loans at exceptionally low interest rates with FREE life insurance.

There are no costly set up fees, no penalties for clearing loans early and FREE life insurance on savings and loans as well as access to affordable no-nonsense insurance cover for everything from travel to motoring.

To find out more call **01952 282528** or visit FAIRshare's offices at Southwater Square, in Telford Town Centre.

2-for-1 entry to Telford Tigers Ice Hockey

Trust tenants can now claim 2-for-1 entry to Telford Tigers home ice hockey matches, as a thank you from the team for our support.

Our new scheme called Inreach has stepped in to support the team when they faced financial difficulties after their main sponsor pulled out. As a result, Inreach is now one of the team's shirt sponsors, and also has an advert in the match programme.



To thank us for our support, Telford Tigers are offering a two for one deal to all Trust tenants. That means if you buy one adult ticket, you can have another for free! They are also offering entry for children under 16 for just £1!

To benefit from these brilliant savings, just cut out this coupon and take it along with you to a home match at Telford Ice Rink. This coupon is valid for the rest of the season.

energyextra

As you may have seen in previous Trust Talks, the Trust has joined forces with Energyextra to help you to reduce your energy bills, and make your home more energy efficient.

One of the main benefits of our membership of Energyextra is the free energy advice home visits that they offer to Trust tenants. You can arrange for an energy advisor to visit you at home. They will give you advice, ideas and guidance on how to become more energy efficient at home and ultimately, save money on energy bills.

Deb Morrison, Financial Inclusion Manager at the Trust, said: "Often, it's the families who can least afford high fuel bills that end up paying the most for their gas and electricity, through expensive pre-pay cards or meters. The Trust is committed to working with Energyextra to minimise tenants' energy bills and make their homes as energy efficient as possible."

If you are interested in arranging a home visit, call Energyextra on **0121 561 1969**, or pop in to your local Trust shop or estate office, who will be happy to arrange a convenient appointment for you.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A POSITIVE FUTURE

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Tenant Voice, which is being set up to give tenants more of an influence over policies and practices in social housing (see the article in the Tenants' Panel section for more information about this).

We also held a workshop to review how our decorating voucher scheme works. There were a number of really interesting comments, and this information will be used to complete the review and make improvements.

After the event, which included a buffet lunch, everyone who attended was asked for their feedback about the day, which proved a great success. One person commented: "A very good event, subjects were well presented, let's have more of these events."

Following the day's success, we will be holding the exhibition in other areas throughout the coming months. For more information, please contact Janice Diss on **01952 217248.**

• BROOKSIDE • WOODSIDE • STIRCHLEY • HOLLINSWOOD • MADELEY • COALBROOKDALE • HOLLINSWOOD • MADELEY
• SUTTON HILL • COALBROOKDALE • BROOKSIDE • WOODSIDE • HOLLINSWOOD • STIRCHLEY • BROOKSIDE • SUTTON

DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Since the last Trust Talks in September this year, we've been working hard on a number of new developments across the area:

Old Hall School, Wellington ▼

At the Old Hall School site in Wellington, a mixture of six three- and four-bedroom houses have been completed and handed over to the Trust, for general rent.



Aston Court, Newport ▲

Aston Court in Newport was recently handed over to the Trust after work was completed on six two-bedroom apartments and seven three-bedroom houses for rent and shared ownership. Tenants' Panel member Margo Brotherton went along to collect the keys from the developers and Mayor of Newport Adam Stanton.



Monarch Fields, Donnington ▼

The remainder of the homes at Monarch Fields in Donnington, our largest development so far, have now been completed. 13 homes were handed over to the Trust earlier in the year, and we've now received the final 39 at this site.



Station Road, Donnington ▶

At Station Road in Donnington, developers have finished work on two two-bedroom terraced homes for shared ownership. These have now been handed over to the Trust.



Great opportunity for Trust tenants, or your friends and family!

Want to buy a Trust home, but not the one your rent at the moment?

Have you got friends or relatives who want to buy a home but just can't afford to get on the housing ladder?

Well, we now have a new scheme called **Inreach** that may provide you with an ideal opportunity. Inreach homes are all brand-new homes in Telford and in other parts of Shropshire that are available to 'rent first and buy later'. The rents are set at affordable rates, so they are comparable to what you will be paying already, and there are no fees or deposits to be paid in advance.

This means you can move into a brand new home on a new development, and

because the rents are way below market rents, you can use the period of renting to save towards a deposit so that when you decide to buy, your mortgage will be lower.

You do need to be able to demonstrate that you have the capacity to obtain a mortgage that is equivalent to at least 50% of the property's value, but you do not need to actually buy it until you are ready to do so. We will get a Financial Advisor to work this out for you, free of charge, and without any obligation. So if you have an income, or combined income that would get you into this bracket, and if you don't have an adverse credit history that would prevent you from getting a mortgage in the future, then this scheme could be for you.

To find out more about the scheme, or

where the properties are located, why not visit our website at **www.inreach-homes.co.uk** or contact our Sales Advisors on **01952 278173** and they will be pleased to discuss it further.

The scheme is not just for Trust tenants, so if you know anyone who may be looking for something like this to help them get started on the housing ladder, then please pass the information on.


the 'in' way to buy your new home



Spotlight on Supported Housing

CHURCHWAY RESIDENTS SUPPORT LOCAL SCHOOL

Residents at Churchway sheltered housing scheme in Stirchley have been raising money to support their local primary school.

To mark National Book Week, residents decided to hold a coffee morning to raise money for new books for Three Oaks Primary School. After speaking to the school's literacy teacher, residents decided to put the money towards a set of reference books for the school library, which would benefit all pupils.

Residents invited children from the school to come along to a coffee morning, where they presented them with their new books. Everyone was especially pleased to see that each book carries a sticker to say that they were donated by residents of Churchway sheltered housing scheme.



Lawndale residents raise money for charity

Residents at Lawndale sheltered housing scheme in Donnington recently held an afternoon of musical entertainment to raise money for Breast Cancer Awareness.

The event had a 'Strawberries and Cream' theme and included live music from local singer and X-Factor 'hopeful' Ally Raye. Ally, who has auditioned on X-Factor several times, is the daughter of one of the Lawndale residents. She sang lots of different songs, and favorite requests.

In total, residents raised £40 for Breast Cancer Awareness.



Scheme Manager Margaret Phillips gets the Strawberries and Cream ready.

Schemes celebrate anniversaries

Several sheltered housing schemes have been celebrating their anniversaries over the last couple of months. The events were marked with presentations to the residents who had lived at the schemes for the longest, as well as a get together and a buffet.

Morton Court sheltered housing scheme in Dawley celebrated their 20th anniversary, Carvers Close in Wellington celebrated their 25th anniversary and Oliver Court, also in Wellington, celebrated their 30th anniversary.



Wayne Gethings presents Joan Turner and Joan Massie with flowers at Morton Court.



The cake that was specially decorated to mark the moment at Carvers Close.



Residents at Oliver Court celebrated with a VE Day themed afternoon.

HAYBRIDGE HALL GETS GO-AHEAD

We're pleased to announce that planning permission has been granted for five new bungalows and a new communal facility at Haybridge Hall sheltered housing scheme in Hadley.

The approved plans will see the Trust sell Haybridge Hall, and use the income to build the five new two-bedroom bungalows and a purpose-built communal facility in the grounds of the hall.

Currently, sheltered housing residents live in existing bungalows within the grounds of the hall. At the moment, the hall is only being used as a communal room for tenants and as an office for the scheme manager. This is due to the age of the building and it not meeting residents' needs.

We have been inviting contractors to tender for the work.



An artist's impression of the new communal facilities.

IS RICHARD THE OLDEST PAPERBOY?

Richard Hughes, a resident at Hallcroft Gardens sheltered housing scheme in Newport, recently featured in the Shropshire Star as the area's oldest paperboy!

Everyday, whatever the weather, Richard, who is 95, collects the papers from his local shop and delivers them to his fellow residents, even on Sundays! Richard also even takes his neighbours wheelie bins in and out each week.

Richard says his secret to a long life is not smoking, staying active and enjoying the occasional tot of brandy!



Picture courtesy of the Shropshire Star

Bridle Court supports local youth club

Residents at Bridle Court sheltered housing scheme in Madeley held a bring and buy sale recently, to raise money to help set up a new local youth club.

Local youngsters approached their Community Support Office Ben Bates to complain that they had nothing to do in the area and needed a regular meeting point.

CSO Bates contacted local organisations to ask for their help in raising money to fund a youth club, so residents at Bridle Court decided to hold a bring and buy sale.

The event raised almost £200, which was donated to the youth club.

CSO Bates thanked residents of Bridle Court for their efforts in helping to support activities for young people.

External decorating prizes



◀ Mrs Wright receives her vouchers from KRM Director Colin Rumbles and the Trust's Dale Heaton.

Miss Wilson is ▶ presented her vouchers by the Trust's Dale Heaton and Chris Griffiths, supervisor for Seddon.



Our contractors who are working with us on external painting and repairs jobs recently handed out £50 worth of Tesco's vouchers to two lucky tenants whose completed Customer Feedback forms were drawn out of a hat.

It is important that we are able to monitor feedback from customers regarding the quality of contractor and the work done. Often these feedback forms are discarded before they are returned to us.

To encourage people to return the forms, and to say thank you for completing them, our painting contractors KRM Ltd and J & S Seddon are each donating £50 of Tesco's vouchers for a prize draw three times per year.

Have you got a cute pet?

In the last edition of Trust Talks, we launched a competition to find the cutest Trust pet. We've had lots of good entries, but there's still time to send yours in!

Send your cute pet pictures to our FREEPOST address, or email them to trust.talks@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk. Don't forget to tell us why your pet is special.



ADULTS COMPETITION

Make sure you're covered, and win £25 high street vouchers!

Home contents insurance is something that many people take for granted, but what would happen if you had a fire, or were burgled and didn't have insurance? Could you afford to replace your home contents out of your own pocket?

We offer an improved Tenants' Contents Insurance scheme, through Norwich Union Insurance. For just a few pounds a month, you can insure your home against theft, fire or accidental damage. The scheme offers an easy payment method, no excess to pay if you claim, and no minimum security requirements.

For your chance to win £25 in high street shopping vouchers, simply find the ten hidden words in our Wordsearch, fill in your details below, and return this section to us at our FREEPOST address (no stamp required) at The Wrekin Housing Trust, Communications & Marketing, FREEPOST (SY1 095), Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, TF3 4ZA, by Friday 09 January.

Find these 10 words:

Lightning

Water

Accident

Gas

Flood

Leak

Fire

Breakage

Burglary

Damage

W	K	M	D	O	I	F	S	M	A
L	I	G	H	T	N	I	N	G	C
E	L	W	A	T	E	R	B	C	C
A	O	D	P	F	N	E	Q	J	I
K	H	U	A	T	F	L	O	O	D
E	N	S	A	M	O	R	K	D	E
B	U	R	G	L	A	R	Y	C	N
D	H	O	R	W	T	G	A	S	T
B	R	E	A	K	A	G	E	J	G
Y	K	P	E	R	L	S	T	N	B

Name:

Address:

Tel No:

Please send me details of The Wrekin Housing Trust Tenants' Contents Insurance scheme

Trust gets RSPCA's PAWS Award



In recognition of our pet-friendly policies and procedures, we're pleased to announce that we've been awarded the RSPCA's Bronze Housing Footprint.

This award rewards good practice and celebrates housing providers that have gone above and beyond the call of duty in protecting animal welfare. The Trust is the first housing association in Shropshire to receive this award.

Morag Bailey, Continuous Improvement Manager, said: "The award recognises the Trust's 'Keeping of Pets' policy, which was drawn up in consultation with our tenants, as good practice in tackling animal welfare issues."

GAS SERVICE RECOGNISED AS ONE OF THE BEST

Our Gas Servicing team has been recognised as one of the best in the country at the 2008 CORGI awards.

The Trust was named as one of the top three landlords in the country after we were shortlisted for the Consumer Gas Safety Award, in recognition of the work we have been doing to promote gas safety, and raise awareness of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Fleur Whittingham, manager of the Gas team, said: "It is very pleasing that the Trust's efforts to promote gas safety have been recognised for our hard work. We will continue to work with tenants to make them aware of gas safety."



The Gas team and tenant representatives receive their certificate at the Consumer Gas Safety Awards.

COMPETITION WINNERS

Congratulations to Shafia Bi of Malinslee, who won the **STATUS competition** in the last edition of Trust Talks. Ms Bi won £25 in high street shopping vouchers.

The winner of the **children's competition** was Logan Campbell from Woodside. Logan correctly unscrambled the back to school words, and won a goody bag.

Talk to us...

We've set up a new email address so that you can tell us what you think of Trust Talks. Email your feedback to trust.talks@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk

KIDS COMPETITION

Spot the difference and win, win, win!

Have a look at the snowman pictured here. Can you spot the eight differences? If so, you could win a goody bag!

All you have to do is mark the differences on the bottom picture and post this form back to us at our FREEPOST address (no stamp required) at The Wrekin Housing Trust, Communications & Marketing, FREEPOST (SY1 095), Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, TF3 4ZA.



Name: Age:

Address:

Tel No:

Welcome to the Tenants' Panel section of Trust Talks

Here you can find out more information about the Tenants' Panel. We'll use this section to tell you more about us, who we are, what we do and how you can contact us.



Energy Consumption meters

Recently I was given one of these new meters to check my electricity consumption. Would I understand it? Would it make a difference?

With a little apprehension I fitted the box to the meter and everything came on, as it should. After a short time switching on and off various appliances, I began to notice a difference.

The main culprit seemed to be the microwave (no more TV dinners?) and leaving everything on standby. Walking around in the dark isn't sensible, and after stubbing my toe a few times and apologising to the Hoover after falling over it in the dark, I realised that you do need to put lights on, but should turn them off when you don't need them.

I have only had the meter for a couple of weeks, but it certainly seems to be making a difference. Will it save the planet? I don't know, but it will certainly help to cut my electricity bills. Watch this space for more information...

If you would be interested in trying one of these Electricity Consumption Meters, and seeing if you could cut your electricity bills, call us on **01952 217259**.



Len Harley



Shropshire Tenants' Community Show

The Shropshire Tenants' Community Show was held recently at Hadley Learning Centre, and several Tenants' Panel members went along to represent the Trust, including Margo Brotherton.

The event was open to tenants of all social landlords in Shropshire, giving them the opportunity to have a look at how other housing associations are doing things, and share experiences.

There were a number of different workshops throughout the day including sessions on Adult Learning, and Crimestoppers.

Entertainment at the event was provided by Telford West Indian Association Senior Sunshine Steel Band and Telford dance troupe DNA. There were also several martial arts demonstrations.

If you would be interested in come along to the next one of these events, contact Margo from the Tenants' Panel on **01952 217201**, or Janice Diss on **01952 217248**.



Margo Brotherton

The National Tenants Voice

You may have seen in the media that the Government is making some changes to social housing. Their aim is to increase the opportunities for social tenants to have a stronger influence over the policies that affect us, the attitudes and practices of social landlords that manage our homes, and the services we receive from them in return for rent.

They propose to establish a professional organisation for tenants called the National Tenant Voice (NTV). The NTV represents a genuinely new approach to the social housing sector and has the potential to be a new, vibrant and inspirational initiative that challenges the traditional management of our homes.

We will be watching closely to see how these changes benefit us, and will let you know in future Trust Talks.



Sandra Smith

World's Biggest Coffee Morning

Tenants and staff did their bit to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support recently, by taking part in the World's Biggest Coffee Morning.

A number of events were held in Trust local shops, as well as at sheltered housing schemes. Scheme residents baked cakes and biscuits, organised raffles and tombolas and joined in with quizzes and competitions to raise money for the charity.

At our Wellington shop and at our Old Park offices, we held coffee and cake mornings, and asked staff to donate money to this worthwhile cause.

In total, almost £2,400 was raised for the charity, which provides practical, emotional and financial support to people living with cancer.

Ciarán Devane, Chief Executive of Macmillan Cancer Support, said: "I'd like to say a massive thank you to staff and residents from The Wrekin Housing Trust for taking part in the World's Biggest Coffee Morning for Macmillan Cancer Support. By simply having a cup of coffee and making a donation you've helped us to improve the lives of more people affected by cancer."



Estate Walkabouts

The Wrekin Housing Trust has used estate walkabouts for a number of years to highlight and deal with any concerns in your community.

The Trust uses quarterly walkabouts to go with tenants to the areas that concern them so they can see first hand what problems there may be.

As well as this, a new set of walkabouts have been set up to highlight problems a lot quicker. The new walkabouts will consist of Trust employees and Community Support Officers heading out into the community every month. This will allow any problems to be dealt with sooner than the quarterly walkabouts.

The Wrekin Housing Trust has a commitment to improving communities and working with others to ensure our tenants receive the best service possible and through estate walkabouts we can really find out what affects you and your community.

Estate walkabouts are your chance to join us for a walk around your estate to look at any issues that are concerning you about where you live.

The next round of estate walkabouts will take place:

AREA	DATE, TIME AND MEETING POINT
Stirchley	Wednesday 07 January, 9.00am, Meeting at the Trust's Stirchley shop, Stirchley District Centre
Brookside	Thursday 08 January, 9.30am, Meeting at the Trust's Brookside shop
Woodside	Thursday 08 January, 10.00am, Meeting in the reception area of Park Lane Centre
Hollinswood	Wednesday 14 January, 2.00pm, Meeting at Hollinswood Community Centre
Sutton Hill	Wednesday 21 January, 9.00am, Meeting at Sutton Hill Community Centre
Randlay	Thursday 22 January, 9.30am, Meeting outside Randlay shops
Hills Lane Drive	Wednesday 29 January 9.00am, Meeting at the Trust's Hills Lane Drive shop

For more information about these walkabouts, please contact Emma Humphries on **01952 217215**.

We draw up action plans after every walkabout and these are sent to everyone who took part in the walkabout, as well as being displayed in our local shops.

STATUS SURVEY... RESULTS JUST IN... STATUS SURVEY... RESULTS JUST IN...

What did you tell us about our services in the recent satisfaction survey?

In September over half of you received a questionnaire in the post. Thank you to those of you who took the time to complete it and send it back. You could be the lucky winner of some high street vouchers to help towards the cost of Christmas.

Almost 3,000 of you took the opportunity to tell us what you think about the services that the Trust provides and here are some of those results:

- 83% of you are satisfied with the services we provide – the figures below show the improvement over time
- 84% of you are satisfied with the overall quality of your home
- 79% of you are satisfied with your area as a place to live
- 75% of you told us when contacting us you found it easy to get hold of the right person
- 84% of you found our staff helpful
- 78% of you are satisfied with the way the Trust deals with repairs and maintenance
- 75% consider the Trust is good at keeping you informed of things that might affect you as a tenant.

All of the information you gave is currently being looked at in more detail. A summary of the findings and plans for improvement will be included in the next edition of Trust Talks in the spring.



DIGITAL SWITCHOVER

Digital switchover describes the process of switching all TV services delivered through an aerial from analogue format to digital format. This will involve a phased process of switching off the current analogue terrestrial transmissions.

The Government, broadcasters, manufacturers and retailers are working together to make this happen by 2012.

Here in the central region switchover is due to happen in 2011. The Trust has an obligation to install an appropriate system

capable of receiving this new digital format to all its communal flatted accommodation, for example, blocks of flats and Supported Housing Schemes connected to a central aerial point.

If you live in a Trust house or flat that is not linked to a communal aerial then it is your own responsibility to ensure you can receive these new digital services when switch over happens.

If you have any queries regarding digital switchover or what you need to receive digital television please call the Building Services team on **01952 217120**.



TRUST WEBSITE REMAINS POPULAR

Our new website, which we launched almost twelve months ago, in January 2008, is proving to be very popular.

On average, almost 350 people are visiting it each day, to find out about the Trust, how to find a home, what jobs we currently have, and lots of other information.



There are also lots of useful guides and leaflets that can be downloaded from our website. The most popular have been our Guide to Asbestos in the home, job application forms, the Tenants' Handbook and application forms for garages.

If you've not visited the site yet, why not go to **www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk** and have a look around – you might be surprised at what you find!

Madeley redevelopment



In the last edition of Trust Talks, we mentioned that work was about to start on the redevelopment of Madeley Centre.

This multi-million pound plan aims to redevelop Madeley's centre and, alongside the new Tesco supermarket, provide much needed new housing and shops, as well as new access to the town's library and improvements to roads and public space.

The regeneration partnership is currently drawing up an action plan to address physical, economic and social regeneration issues. They are keen to hear from Madeley residents, and especially Trust tenants, to give us their views and ideas for Madeley's regeneration.

Our Hills Lane Drive team have some questionnaires for Trust tenants and all completed questionnaires will be entered into a prize draw. They can be handed in at the Trust shop or to any member of Trust staff, or dropped into Madeley Parish Council.

TENANTS GET 'HANDS ON' AT WENDOVER

Trust tenants have been getting hands on at our Wendover training property recently, learning useful skills like decorating and plumbing.

Tenants from across Telford and Newport have been going along to Wendover, an empty property in Madeley that we use for training our trades people, to find out more about repairs and maintenance and have a go at DIY themselves.

STARs members suggested we relaunch the sessions, which begin with a number of presentations, including: home security from PC Fred Jones, Crime Prevention Officer, and fire prevention from Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service.

These are followed by more interactive sessions such as handy hints and tips on decorating, and a plumbing demonstration. There's even a chance for you to try out your new DIY skills, under the guidance of our experienced trades people.

The day aims to give tenants the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to be able to undertake all those small household tasks not

covered within the tenancy agreement.

Lorraine Law, who attended one of the recent events, said: "I learned a great deal at Wendover, and thoroughly enjoyed the day."

Janice Diss, customer research consultant, who helps to organise the sessions, said: "These events are very popular with tenants. Due to the amount of interest we have received, we'll be holding more of these events in the future. Anyone interested in coming along should give me a call on **01952 217248.**"



MR MORRIS KNOWS HIS ONIONS



We recently held a gardening competition to encourage tenants and leaseholders to make the most of their gardens during the summer, following a suggestion by the South Telford Area Representatives (STARs).

"Looking after your garden and maintaining it in reasonable condition is a term of the Trust's Tenancy Agreement. The STARs decided they would like to reward people for having nice gardens, so this competition was aimed at encouraging people to look after their gardens and have some fun too," said Janice Diss.

Tenants' Panel Chair Len Harley, along with two members of Trust staff, judged the competition. Although we didn't get too many entries, we did have one overall winner, Mr Alec Morris of Tunnel Row, Stirchley for his fantastic vegetable garden. Mr Morris grows all kinds of different vegetables such as marrows, runner beans and leeks. He also grows a variety of different onions, which he enters into local vegetable competitions.

Mr Morris said: "I love spending time outside in the garden and growing vegetables. I like to enter local competitions and am well known for my giant onions."

Advice for preventing condensation

At this time of year, condensation can begin to form in homes, as the outside temperature falls and warm, damp air builds up.

Cooking, bathing, and washing and drying clothes are all common causes of condensation, which happens when there is too much moisture in the air. If condensation occurs regularly, it can cause damp and mould.

You can prevent condensation by keeping your home heated and well ventilated and by closing the kitchen or bathroom door when you're cooking, washing or bathing. Also, try to dry clothes outside; if you must use radiators, open a window.

Traditionally, most homes had high levels of ventilation, which prevented condensation forming. More recently, as homes have become better insulated, houses have become more effectively sealed, keeping any moisture inside and encouraging condensation to form.

It is unlikely that a British home can be completely condensation free, however by keeping your property properly maintained and thinking about your lifestyle and decoration, you should be able to live with condensation without it causing major problems.

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PRIDE IN OUR HOMES

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