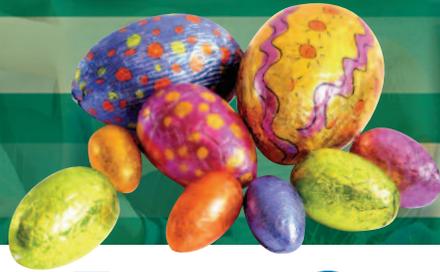


# TRUST talks

The Wrekin  
Housing Trust

and listens

MARCH 2008



## Work begins on Extra Care Scheme at Park Lane

It's all change at Park Lane in Woodside where work has started on the site where the new Extra Care scheme will soon stand.

Once completed in Summer 2009, the scheme will offer 53 new homes. Most of these will be two bedroom apartments with bathroom, kitchen and separate sleeping and living rooms. Communal areas will offer dedicated activity rooms, a shop, hairdressing, restaurant and a library. There will also be a secure landscaped garden and open area.

Residents will be able to take advantage of a range of social activities that will be available, including keep fit, hobbies, IT and therapies.

Extra Care offers housing, care and support that falls somewhere between traditional sheltered housing and residential care. Residents can enjoy the benefits of living independently at home in their own apartments, with 24 hour flexible care and support based on individual needs.

Care has also been taken to ensure that the building is environmentally friendly, with the design featuring high levels of thermal insulation, high efficiency boilers, solar panels to assist heating and facilities to recycle rainwater.

The new scheme is being built on the former site of Wilton Court in Woodside. As well as offering a range of features that will enable people with disabilities to live independently, such as accessible buildings with smart technology, it will include a number of interesting design features too. Upper floor apartments will have balconies and there will be a four storey high glazed atrium that will be overlooked by more than half of the apartments.



Artist's impressions of the new Park Lane Extra Care Centre.

A ceremony was held on 7 March to mark the official start of construction work. Trust employees and board members were joined by local Councillors, representatives from Telford & Wrekin Council and other key partners to celebrate the 'cutting of the turf'. Guests were able to view displays at the Park Lane centre showing plans and designs of how the scheme will look once finished.



The turf cutting ceremony.

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## EASTER HOLIDAY TRUST SHOP OPENING TIMES

Although Trust shops will be closed over Easter, **you can still report your emergency repairs during the Easter holiday by calling our repairs line on 01952 217217.** (You will be directed to our 24-hour emergency line).

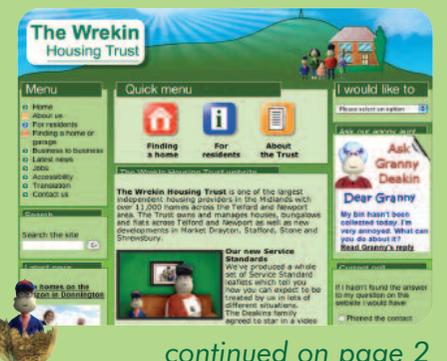
All Trust shops will be closed on Good Friday (21 March) and on Easter Monday (24 March). Shops will re-open at 9am on Tuesday 25 March.



## NEW WEBSITE IS UP AND RUNNING!

Using a new design voted for by tenants and staff, the Trust's website has been re-launched. We think you'll find it friendly, accessible and much easier to use – and the feedback we've had so far has been very positive!

'The Deakins from the Wrekin' are featured throughout the site to help you find your way around - read a bit more about them in their biographies that are now online. Even Granny Deakin has got involved by becoming the Trust's Agony Aunt.



continued on page 2

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਪੱਤਰਨਾਮਾ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ 01952 217100 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੇ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਿਜੇ ਮਿਤਰ/ਸਹੇਲੀ ਨਾ ਕਿਸਤੇਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਫੋਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਹੋ ਜੋ ਅਹਿੰਸਾ ਵਿਚ ਗੱਲ ਕਰ ਸਕੇ।

W razie problemów z przeczytaniem tego dokumentu prosimy zadzwonić pod numer 01952 217100.

如果你不明白這份文件的內容，請致電 01952 217100 求助。

اگر آپ کو پتھر نامے کا ترجمہ ضروری ہے تو براہ کرم اس کے ساتھ ساتھ 01952 217100 پر رابطہ کرنے کے لیے ہمیں آگے بڑھیں۔

# MONEY MATTERS



Kerry

## Do you have money worries? Are you struggling to pay your rent?



Carole

Don't bury your head in the sand - contact your local Welfare Benefit Advisor for confidential advice on claiming the benefits and tax credits that you are entitled to.

The team has brought in an extra £300,000 in welfare benefits for Trust tenants over the last six months - so give them a call and make sure you don't miss out!

For an informal chat or appointment, call your local Advisor direct on the number below, or drop into your local Trust shop or office.



Claire

**East Call Kerry Turner on 01952 217240**

**West Call Carole Bernardes on 01952 217261**

**South - Stirchley/Brookside Area**

**Call Sarah Robson on 01952 217283**

**South - Madeley/Woodside Area**

**Call Claire Prince on 01952 217226**



Sarah



## "My debts are getting out of control and I don't know what to do"

If you are in debt, you are not alone. The good news is that getting help can be easier than you think.

We are working in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau to make it simple for you to get FREE, confidential, expert help and advice, so if you are worried about your debts, please talk to us.

The referral process involves us passing your details direct to the CAB, who will then contact you and arrange to see you at their new offices in Ketley.

For more information, please speak to your Welfare Benefit Advisor or pop into your local Trust shop or office.



## Important information about Working Tax Credits and Child Tax Credits

If you receive either of these payments, you should expect to receive a review form through the post during April or May.

**It is very important that you complete and return this form as soon as possible** - it is for the Tax Credits team to gather information about what you actually earned during the last financial year (2007/08).

The form will explain exactly what you need to do, and what information you need to provide. You might even be able to give your details over the telephone.

If you are asked to supply more information, you must do so **by 31 July at the latest**. If you don't provide the information that they need, your payments will stop.

For help and advice, contact your local Benefit Advisor or call Tax Credits on 0845 300 3900.

## It's important to tell us when your circumstances change

At this time of the year, it's usual for your income to change.

- Will your wages go up?
- Will your Working Tax Credit go down?

If you get Housing Benefit to help with your rent, any changes might affect the amount you have to pay us.

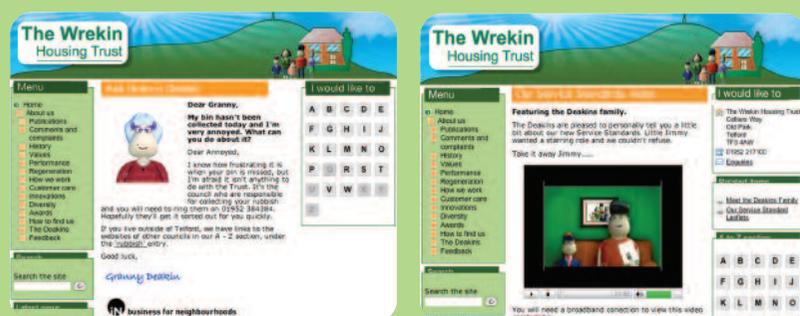
**Remember to report any income changes in your household to make sure that you are receiving all of the help that you are entitled to.**

For advice or to report a change, call your area Welfare Benefit Advisor, drop in to your local Trust office, or contact the council direct on **01952 383838**.



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You can ask her any question about housing by clicking on the **Ask Granny Deakin** section of the homepage.



Members of the Deakin family also star in their own animated video which introduces our new range of Service Standard leaflets on the website.

If you find the text too small or too dark, you can easily adjust the settings with just one mouse click, or you can even have the website read out to you by using our new 'Browsealoud' feature.

So, if you want to know anything about us, why not make the website your first port of call? There's a comprehensive A-Z, as well as a search facility that makes it easy to find the information you want.

Tell us what you think! If you've got a comment about the website you can e-mail us at [webadmin@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk](mailto:webadmin@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk)

# TENANT PARTICIPATION

## Have your say! Tenants' Panel Elections 2008

The Tenants' Panel is made up of tenants who have been elected to represent the views of other tenants. They get involved in the way the Trust is managed, helping us to improve our services to you.



This year's elections will be held in June. Representatives who have served three years on the Tenants' Panel will compete for their place with any new candidates who might be standing.

If the Tenants' Panel representative for your area is up for re-election you will receive a ballot paper so that you can choose who you want to represent you. If you don't receive a ballot paper it means that your representative is not up for election this year.

If you have been involved with your local panel and would like to stand as a representative for your area, or just want to find out more, contact our Resident Involvement Manager Jo Rowley on 01952 217194.

## 2008 Tenants' Conference a success

Organised by tenants for tenants, this year's event was a huge success, with 97% of attendees rating it as good or very good. More than 60 tenants and leaseholders attended the day, which was themed "Working to the future", on Saturday 2 February.

Delegates heard a review of what's happened as a result of last year's conference during the morning session and were invited to view an exhibition over lunch featuring displays from the Tenants' Panel, DMW, Neighbourhood Watch and FAIRShare Credit Union, amongst others.

Four afternoon workshops gave those attending the opportunity to take part and have their say, and electronic voting pads were used to help customers identify their priorities for the coming year in the "your vision for the future" session.

The day ended with customers putting their questions to a panel of experts that included Trust employees and Tenants' Panel members.



Children from Ladygrove School can be seen receiving a cheque from Trust Chair Bob Floyd - this was donated to them for their musical entertainment during the first hour of the conference.



## NEW Quality Inspectors initiative

A meeting was held recently to launch the new Quality Inspector initiative, which will see tenants monitoring the quality of the services they receive.

Set up to reinforce the Tenant Inspection process, tenants who volunteer to become Quality Inspectors will monitor the quality of a variety of Trust services.

The objectives of the Quality Inspectors project are to:

- offer local residents and business people an innovative way to monitor and influence the quality of Trust services
- increase resident satisfaction with Trust services
- increase opportunities for tenants to get involved in, and influence, the management of their homes and neighbourhoods
- make sure that residents' views and priorities are at the heart of all service planning and reviews
- assist vulnerable and hard to reach groups to get involved, at a level to suit them, in the management of their homes.



The meeting had a Mission Impossible theme, which proved a great success with the tenants involved. For more information please contact Chris Shepherd on 01952 217181.

## Gender Equality

**Do you believe in equal opportunities?**

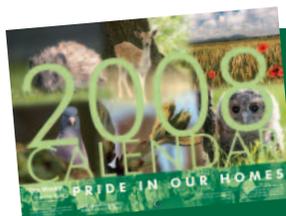
**Do you think that all residents should have the same rights to access the same services regardless of their gender?**

**Would you like to have your say in our Gender Equality Scheme?**

We're looking for men, women and transgender people to help us understand people's different needs, and the things that can make it difficult to access our services. Our gender equality scheme will set out practical steps to make sure that men and women are treated equally - but we need your help to develop it fully before



it's published in April. To get involved, please contact Paul Birch, Diversity Manager on 01952 217022.



## TENANTS' ANNUAL REPORT CALENDAR

More than 300 people returned their calendar feedback forms and were entered into the prize draw. This is the most feedback we have received for a calendar!

The feedback that you've given us has been even better than last year, with 98% of respondents stating that the calendar was good or very good in every category. The photos were particularly popular, with only one person telling us they didn't like them.

Mrs Doreen Brookes, of Riverdale in Roddington commented: "I've loved each year's calendar, but 2008 is the best ever, so thank you again".

Congratulations to Mrs Betty Bolam of Frizes Leasowes sheltered housing scheme in Ketley Grange, who was the lucky prize draw winner. She has received £25 in shopping vouchers as a thank you for completing and returning the feedback form.



# Spotlight on Supported Housing

## Service User Involvement Group - have your say

The Housing Support Service has started holding quarterly meetings with past and present users of the service to find out what they think and to look at where improvements can be made. The latest meeting was held on 10 March at Haybridge Hall in Hadley.

Anyone who has used the Housing Support Service is welcome to attend the meetings. Suggestions made in previous meetings are already being put into practice and the Housing Support team is currently looking at:

- ways to make forms more user-friendly
- ways to promote the service - a roadshow around community centres, featuring people who have benefited from the service, is being considered to give people the chance to find out more about it.

If you'd like to know when the next meeting is, or find out more about the Housing Support Service, you can call the team on 01952 217467.

## Spooky goings on at Margaret Court

Residents at Margaret Court celebrated Halloween last year with a spooky themed fancy dress party and buffet dinner.

Everyone joined in to decorate the communal room, make costumes and organise the fun and games.

Residents are seen here getting into the spirit in their spooky fancy dress.



## LOTTERY BOOST FOR HALL BARN

Residents at Hall Barn in Madeley have been celebrating after receiving a grant from the National Lottery 'Awards for All' scheme for nearly £7,000.

Residents were presented with a cheque and certificate and are looking forward to spending the money on social events and a new bingo machine.

The photo shows Hall Barn residents with scheme manager Rose Taylor and their certificate from the Lottery.



## George Chetwood Court Christmas Party

Residents at George Chetwood Court sheltered housing scheme in Dawley held their Christmas party in December with a sit-down dinner, songs and entertainment from The Jeans Girls.

Local police officer Mark Morgan, and CSO Anne Moore, kindly served the dinner and PC Morgan even dressed up as Santa Claus!

George Chetwood Court resident Doreen Davis and her friend Margaret are seen here telling Santa what they'd like for Christmas.



## Val retires from Highfield House



Highfield House Scheme Manager Val Rowley retired in November, after more than 19 years service.

To mark the occasion, residents presented Val with flowers and a commemorative crystal bowl.

Val Rowley is seen here being presented with her gifts by some of the Highfield House residents.

## WEDDING BELLS RING AT LANGLEY FOLD

Wedding bells have been ringing at Langley Fold recently, when two residents tied the knot.

Sidney Timbrel and June Coburn, who met at Langley Fold, got engaged in December last year, and were married at the Great Hay Golf and Country Club on Friday 29 February.

The happy couple are pictured on their wedding day.



## HAMPERS FOR SEVERN WALK

Residents at Severn Walk had something extra to smile about recently when Wrekin Lions donated a number of food hampers to the scheme.

John Marsh, President of Wrekin Lions, and Bob Scott, Lions' Publicity Officer, came along to Severn Walk to present the hampers to the lucky residents, who shared the goodies between them.

John Marsh and Bob Scott from Wrekin Lions are pictured with Severn Walk Scheme Manager Jackie Smallman and Supported Housing Tenants' Panel representative Barry Senior with some of the hamper food.



## Brookside Underground Art Gallery (Phase II)

Young people from Brookside have brightened up their local centre by creating two new art murals as part of a Trust-managed Community Art Project.

Following design workshops held in January at Brookside Youth Centre, the young people involved chose hobbies as the theme for the murals and worked on three different designs that were put out to public consultation.

The murals were then painted over two days during the February half-term break, with the young people supervised by staff from The Wrekin Housing Trust, Children & Young People's Services and Connexions.

Yvette Greasley, who organised the project, said: "The art gallery created in Brookside last year successfully demonstrated that using art in this way does make a positive difference. None of the murals have suffered any damage and no more graffiti appeared on adjacent walls. We're pleased that, with funding from the Local Network Fund, we have been able to continue this worthwhile project."



## Service standard leaflets available now

Don't forget that you can find the answers to your questions - about anything from the standard of customer service you should be receiving, through to what you can expect us to do if you report a repair.

Our new range of service standard leaflets complement the Tenant's Handbook, give you more information on a variety of subjects relating to living in your home, and tell you about the service you should be receiving from us.

The leaflets are available in your local Trust shop or office and on our website by visiting [www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk](http://www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk)

# Give a bit of RESPECT

We've told you how, as part of our commitment to tackling antisocial behaviour (ASB) and promoting respect within communities, we've signed up to the government's Respect Standard for Housing Management. But what does it really mean?



**Give respect Get respect**

By working with local residents and other agencies, we've been involved in many activities to contribute to the Respect Standard during the last year. Here are just a few examples:



- **ASB training for employees**
- **nominating five residents for the Home Office's 'Taking a Stand' awards** to recognise the efforts of residents who have taken a stand against ASB
- **working with other RSLs in the area to develop and implement a Peer Witness Support Scheme** for residents
- **involvement in many diversionary activities** with partners, diverting young people into meaningful activities
- **piloting a scheme with Telford & Wrekin Council to provide intensive support** for tenants who need help to sustain their tenancy, complementing the Trust's own housing support service
- **introduction of a computer system**, enabling us to manage and monitor ASB cases better
- **reviewing and updating our ASB policy** with the help of tenants
- **improvement works** on our estates, which have contributed towards 'designing out' ASB
- **continued use of enforcement tools** where behaviour doesn't change. For example, obtaining injunction orders, demoting tenancies and evictions where everything else fails. *And many more....*



Since Gordon Brown became prime minister last year, more emphasis has been placed on helping young people to fulfil their potential, preventing them getting into trouble and giving, and getting, respect in their communities. As a result of this, the government has set up a Youth Taskforce.

The Taskforce will look at ways to make sure that young people have positive activities available to them, measures are in place to help to change behaviour if they do get into trouble. The Youth Taskforce will be publishing an action plan in the Spring detailing how they plan to do this.

If you'd like any further information, then please contact Louise Holland on **01952 217323**.

## COMPETITION TIME



Congratulations to the winner of the **Christmas hamper competition** featured in the last edition of Trust Talks. Mrs Dawn Pugh from Hadley is seen here with her daughter Suzanne receiving her prize.



The winner of the **children's competition**, who managed to unscramble all of the jumbled up words, was Mia Edwards of Malinslee.

### Kids - fancy winning a special Easter prize?

All you have to do is find the special Easter eggs that are hidden throughout this copy of Trust Talks. Each tiny Easter egg has got a mini Deakin family member hidden in them. There



are six of them, one for each of the Deakins. Once you've found them, write and tell us which page they are on, along with your age, name and address to our FREEPOST address at The Wrekin Housing Trust, Communications & Marketing, FREEPOST (SY1 095), Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, TF3 4ZA by Friday 18 April.

### LUXURY EASTER EGG COMPETITION

We've got three luxury Easter eggs to give away. To be in with a chance of winning, all you have to do is answer the following questions. You'll find all of the answers in this copy of Trust Talks.



1. **How many new homes will be at the new Park Lane Extra Care Scheme?**
2. **Where was the 1,000th home to be advertised on Choose Your Home located?**
3. **Who dressed up as Santa at the George Chetwood Court Christmas party?**
4. **What percentage of people thought the calendar was good or very good?**
5. **Which company won the contract for all of the Trust's lift services and maintenance?**



Send us your answers, along with your name, address and telephone number, to our FREEPOST address at The Wrekin Housing Trust, Communications & Marketing, FREEPOST (SY1 095), Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, TF3 4ZA by Friday 18 April.

## New contracts up and running



Over the last twelve months we've worked with tenants and leaseholders to look at the contracts we have in place with the providers of services such as communal cleaning, landscaping and maintenance of door entry systems. We've been reviewing who does the work, and for what cost, to help us to improve the services you receive.

There have been a number of opportunities for residents to get involved, from completing questionnaires to attending workshops and helping us to choose the best contractors to deliver your services.

The process has now been completed, and we're pleased to be able to announce the new service contractors that have been selected based on quality of service and value for money.

- **Cleaning contract: Hi-Spec Services** has been appointed as the cleaning contractor for all of your communal areas, such as halls and stairways in flats.
- **Fire equipment maintenance: Shires Fire & Safety** has been selected as the new contractor to maintain all the fire safety equipment.
- **Door entry maintenance: Delaware** has been chosen to maintain all of the door entry systems at the Trust's flats and supported housing schemes.
- **Communal window cleaning: JWI** has been appointed as the contractor for the cleaning of all communal windows.
- **Lift services and maintenance: LES** was selected as the contractor for lift services and maintenance.

A big thank you to everyone who took the time to get involved with the consultation process and who helped to select the best contractors. Each of the new contractors has now started work, so we hope that you'll already be seeing an improvement to the services you receive.





# BRINGING YOU NEW

We told you in the last edition of Trust Talks about our plans to provide new homes for rent and to buy through shared ownership. Work is progressing well, and we've added a number of new developments to our list. Here's an update of what we're currently working on:

## Extra Care Scheme - Park Lane

– a 'turf-cutting' ceremony was held on 7 March to celebrate the official start of the project, which will provide 53 new homes for rent. Still on track for completion in Summer 2009, the scheme will also offer communal facilities including a restaurant, hairdressing and activity rooms.

**WORK STARTED**

**WORK STARTED**

**Infill sites, Newport** – work started recently on site at Meadow Road and is due for completion in

August. The two two-bedroom bungalows that will be built follow hot on the heels of identical schemes built in earlier phases at Sandiford Crescent and Hallcroft Gardens.

## Old Bingo Hall, King Street, Dawley

– this is one of the Trust's latest schemes which will offer new homes for rent and for sale through shared ownership on this site close to the centre of Dawley. Two two-bedroom apartments will be available for rent, while there will be a total of three one and two-bedroom apartments for sale through shared ownership.

**NEW SITE**

**WORK NEARING COMPLETION**

## Maddocks Court, Wellington

– the fourteen new homes that have been built on land at the side of the car park are nearing completion. Some have been advertised on chooseyourhome and have already proven to be popular choices.

**WORK STARTED**

## Aston Court, Newport

– work has now started to provide much-needed homes for rent and shared ownership. The foundations are complete on what will be 11 new apartments.



## Monarch Fields, Donnington

– work is progressing well on the Trust's largest new development in Telford. We'll have a total of 52 new homes offering a variety of different homes for rent and for sale. Some of the first homes will be ready in the next few months, with the overall site due for completion in 2011.

**WORK STARTED**



choose your home

## Choose your home and make your move

Trust tenants from the Telford and Newport areas now have the added opportunity to consider a move to any of our new homes both within and outside of our traditional geographical area. We now also have new developments in Shrewsbury, North Shropshire and Staffordshire. All you need to do is log on to [chooseyourhome.org.uk](http://chooseyourhome.org.uk) and choose them in the same way that you'd choose the Trust's existing homes. Although there are local lettings plans in place at a small number of developments, most of the time you don't need to have a local connection to be eligible for one of these new homes. Here's a summary of what we're working on outside of the Telford area:

**Radbrook Hall, Shrewsbury** – 21 new homes, including one and two bedroom apartments available to rent, for low cost sale and shared ownership - due to be completed in the summer.

**The Davenports, Shrewsbury** – a mixture of one and two bedroom apartments and three bedroom houses will be available for rent, low cost sale and shared ownership.

**Leasowes Close, Bridgnorth** – work is underway to build four two-bedroom homes for rent, with completion due in October.

**Wrekin Road, Bridgnorth** – work recently started to build a seven-bedroom home for a family with children who have special needs – also due for completion in October.



**Infill sites, West One, Woodside** – tenants moved into the seven new family homes for rent in time for Christmas. The homes are highly insulated and benefit from advanced heating and ventilation systems, which not only provide healthy and comfortable environments but also significantly reduce running costs.



Unused plots of land already owned by the Trust have been transformed to provide stylish and spacious family homes. The new residents were delighted with their moves. Colin Gough, who is seen here with his partner and children receiving his keys from the Trust's Sue Chambers, told us: "When I saw this home on Choose Your Home I never dreamed I'd be able to move in to a house like this." Neighbour Miss John added: "It's like winning the lottery, it's so nice to be shown around a property that's so warm".

**WORK COMPLETED**



**WORK COMPLETED**

## Lancaster Avenue, Dawley

– residents have now moved in to the six new three-bedroom homes after they were advertised on Chooseyourhome. The homes offer large back gardens, as well as parking spaces at the front and are equally spacious inside, with accommodation arranged over three floors. A large third bedroom situated on the third floor overlooks the back garden.

Adam Webb and Claire Pickering, two of the new residents, were over the moon to see their new home: "It will be superb for us. It's unbelievable that we've got such a great house. We've got a young child, and another on the way, and this is somewhere we can settle down and live as a family. It means a lot to us because it's not just a house, it's our new home."



# HOMES

Find out about our new homes for rent on our chooseyourhome website, or see more about our new developments at [www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk](http://www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk)



## Oakwood Meadows, Hinstock

- five houses for shared ownership and seven for rent are now complete and residents have moved into all of the new homes.

## Priors Meadow, Market

Drayton - 17 homes for shared ownership and 29 for rent, made up of apartments and houses, will soon be available.

## Highgate Mews, Whitchurch

- the final two apartments are available for shared ownership, with town houses due to be completed later in the year.

## Charlotte Place, Ellsemere

- six of the fifteen two-bedroom houses for rent have been completed and let to new tenants - the remaining nine are due to be completed later in the year.

## Shrewsbury Road, Cockshutt

- work's due to finish in early summer to provide four new homes for rent and one for sale through shared ownership.

## Aston Street, Wem

- a mixture of 21 houses and apartments for rent and for sale through shared ownership will be available later in the year.

**Church Farm, Tilstock** - all of the homes for rent have been let - work continues on the homes that will be for sale through shared ownership.

**The Crossings, Stafford** - houses and apartments in the final phase of this development are now complete, giving the Trust a total of 54 new homes on this site.

**Brindley Manor, Stone** - residents have now moved into all of the new homes built for rent and for sale.

# Chooseyourhome advertises its 1,000th home



choose your home

Chooseyourhome, our choice-based lettings system, has recently reached two milestones:

- It recently advertised its 1,000th home since its launch in November 2006. The home advertised was one of our newly built, two-bedroom bungalows in Bomere Heath near Shrewsbury. It was advertised in January and has now been successfully let.
- A customer recently placed the 100,000th choice since Chooseyourhome was launched, showing the popularity of our homes.

## OPTIONS

As a way of increasing customers' housing options, the Chooseyourhome website now includes a link to Open Door - a lettings agency that lets and manages homes on behalf of private landlords. Customers can check the Open Door website and explore whether renting a home privately may solve their housing needs.

Here's what else we've got planned for the future:

- Looking into including shared ownership options on the Chooseyourhome website - this is where you buy a share of a new home, and pay rent on the remaining share.
- Developing links to a new mutual exchange system to provide customers with a simple, hassle free way of exchanging their home with another tenant.

We'll bring you more news on this in future editions of Trust Talks.



## Gas safety

Used safely, gas is an effective fuel. But it is important that you let us in to carry out annual safety checks - and if you suspect that there may be something wrong with your central heating, gas appliances or gas supply in between services, you should report it immediately. Call our repairs line - 01952 217217 and our gas contractors will visit and repair the fault.

Here are some gas safety tips to remember:

### DO NOT:

- attempt to fit a gas appliance yourself, it is illegal and could seriously harm yourself and others around you
- use a gas appliance if you notice a yellow or orange flame (except flame effect fires which display this colour flame) or if you notice soot or stains around the appliance
- cover the appliance or block the air vents
- block or obstruct any fixed ventilation grilles or air bricks
- block or cover outside flues
- remove the surround or gas fire without written permission from your housing executive

- paint or alter the appearance of your gas appliance, especially your fire and surround. If you do this you are breaking gas regulations and we would have to replace the appliance - which we will charge you for
- allow any person to tamper with the fire and surround

### DO:

- allow the Gas Engineer access to your home to complete the safety check and service
- keep ventilation clear and unobstructed
- keep your copy of the Gas Safety and Service record
- check the identification of the engineer calling to your property - remember all our engineers carry CORGI identification cards and will show these to you on arrival.
- contact the Gas Team if you have any queries in relation to your gas appliances and safety checks.

Remember we want you to be safe in your own home, if you are unsure of whether your gas central heating is safe to use, if you would like advice on the above or would like to receive a copy of our gas safety leaflet, contact the gas team on **01952 217259**.



**Warning!** Following the tragic death of baby Rhianna Hardie in Wales, who died after being scalded by water from a faulty immersion heater, the Health and Safety Executive has issued a guide for tenants and housing associations.

If you have a cold-water tank in the loft, the warning signs to look out for are:

- excessive hot water coming out of the hot water taps
- excessive noise or 'bubbling' from the hot water cylinder
- hot water coming out of certain cold water taps
- steam/moisture in the roof space

The risks of such an incident are very rare, and there is no risk for properties fitted with a 'Combi' boiler.

We have a programme of updating older heating systems, with 800 boilers and systems being renewed this year alone, and many other heating and hot water systems being renewed over the next few years.

If you notice any of the warning signs listed above, turn off your immersion heater or boiler and call our repairs line on 01952 217217. Our service engineers will check your immersion heater during your annual gas safety check, so if you haven't had one yet, call our gas team on 01952 217259.



# TRUST SPONSORS 'PRIDE OF SHROPSHIRE GOOD NEIGHBOUR AWARD 2008'



Because creating good neighbourhoods is one of our key priorities, we have sponsored the Shropshire Star's Good Neighbour 2008 Award.

The award recognises people who have proven to be an asset to their local community. This may be through good deeds done on a regular basis or just someone who brightens their neighbour's day.

If you have a neighbour who goes that extra mile and who you think deserves to be recognised for their efforts, why not nominate them for the Good Neighbour Award 2008?

Application forms are available from the Pride of Shropshire website:

<http://pride.shropshirestar.com/downloads/>

The closing date for nominations is 24 March, so you haven't got long!

If someone you know makes your day, why not nominate them for the Good Neighbour Award – you never know, you might make their day in return!

## GRAB A GARAGE

Are you looking for somewhere more secure to keep your car or motorbike? Or perhaps you need extra storage space? We have garages to rent across Telford and Newport from as little as £5 a week - and you don't even need to be a Trust tenant! Not only will this protect your vehicle from vandalism, but it will reduce your insurance premiums. And to make life easier, you can pay your rent by Direct Debit, so you won't need to worry about forgetting to make a payment. **To find out more, contact our garage team on 01952 217197.**



The winner of the **Garages Crossword** competition featured in our Christmas edition of Trust Talks was Mrs Rita Taylor from Little Dawley, who won £20 of shopping vouchers.

## Hope House cheque

In the last edition of Trust Talks, we told you about the Halloween party held at the Trust's Stirchley shop last year.

The event was a great success, and activities such as apple bobbing, fancy dress and pumpkin competitions helped to raise £50, which was donated to Hope House Hospice.



Michelle Lewnes, Appeals Organiser for Hope House, collected the cheque from the Trust and said: "It's wonderful to hear about people having fun while fundraising.

The money raised will go towards our playtime appeal, which by the summer we hope will see our children, and their brothers and sisters, enjoying the new play equipment. We are very grateful to everyone for their much valued support."

Monica Hammonds, Michelle Lewnes (Hope House) and Gerry Foxall are pictured here with the cheque for Hope House.



## WELLINGTON GOES GREEN

A number of Wrekin Housing Trust tenants have become eco warriors after the introduction of a recycling scheme at their homes. The Trust has worked with Telford and Wrekin Council to provide recycling boxes and bags for the residents of the High Street area of Wellington, including Nelson Court and York Flats.

The flats will also receive a racking system to make the recycling boxes easier to access and use. The scheme has been well received by tenants and the racking system will enable more boxes to be added in the future.



## Love is in the air as the East team goes speed dating

Tenants and managers from the Trust's East team recently 'fell in love with resident involvement' by taking part in a speed-dating event. The event was arranged in response to feedback from the East Tenants' Panel that they would like to get to know the East Management team.

Tenants used the opportunity to ask searching questions regarding the East team's priorities and objectives, as part of their ongoing contribution to next year's business plan.

Sarah Woolley, Service Development Manager said: "We have been working very closely with the East Tenants' Panel over the last couple of months. This was a great way for our customers to meet all of our management team, and also a way of saying thank you to them for all of their hard work."

If anyone is interested in being part of the East Tenants' Panel, please contact Carol Smith on 01952 217435.



## STONE SCHOOL VISIT

As part of the Trust's ongoing commitment to working with young people and local communities, Trust officers recently conducted a lesson with students at the Alleyne's High School in Stone. The



Trust's Yvette Greasley and Sarah Woolley gave a presentation to over 200 Year Nine students, focussing on antisocial behaviour, regeneration and the RESPECT agenda. This was followed by a series of small workshops where students were asked to identify types of antisocial behaviour. They were encouraged to suggest how this behaviour could be changed to make it socially acceptable.

The lesson was a huge success, and Yvette and Sarah have been invited back to the school in June to hold some follow up sessions with the same students.

