

# TRUST *talks* and *listens*

## Go girls!

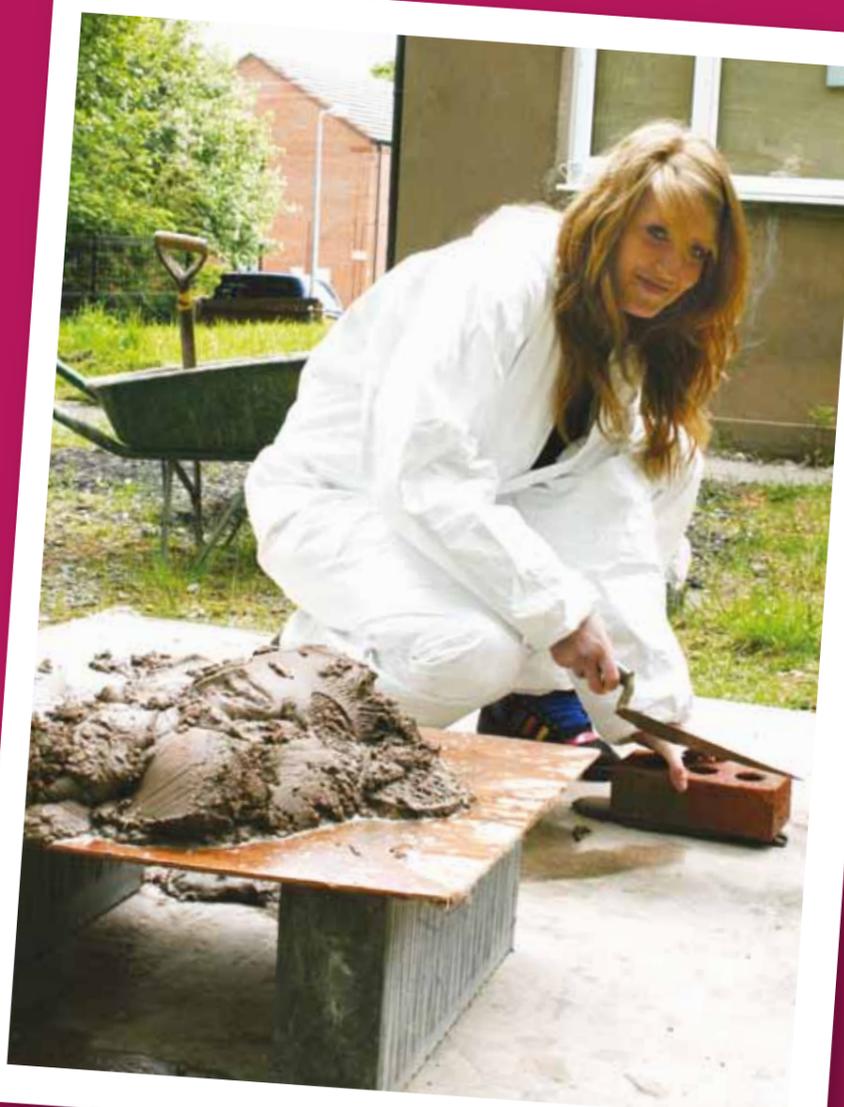
A group of girls recently got a taste of the construction industry when they were invited to a training session at the Trust's specialist training facility, Wendover in Madeley.

The Year 10 girls enthusiastically tried new activities such as **plastering, tiling, painting, decorating and bricklaying** and also got the opportunity to quiz course leaders about the Trust's apprenticeship scheme.

Les Evans, who organised the training on behalf of the Trust, said:

***“Hopefully this taster session will encourage more girls to enter the construction industry, whether with us or with other local companies.”***

The training day was sparked by an information day held at the Trust for local teachers and work placement co-ordinators where the issue of the lack of female trades was raised.



Kayleigh Wills, pictured above, said:

***“ I thought the training day was fantastic. The Trust put my mind at rest by letting me know there are places for girls doing construction with them and other similar companies.”***

**If you are interested in attending one of these training sessions please speak to your school or college or call Les Evans on 01952 217227.**

# Work opportunities for tenants

Here at the Trust we're really committed to helping tenants into work, whether it's through training courses that enhance skills or apprenticeships and work placements. The last issue of Trust Talks advertised our new apprenticeships and as a result more than 100 young people were invited to the Trust for interviews. The three successful candidates have started their apprenticeships and are on their way to a successful career.

Over the next twelve months we will be introducing a number of schemes to help tenants gain valuable experience and training. Here are a few of the opportunities coming up:

- We will be working with Job Centre Plus on 'work ready' packages and a 'Work Programme,' which will continue our commitment to helping young people aged 18-24.
- We are working with our contractors and partners to ensure they maximise the number of apprenticeships and training opportunities available.
- We currently have two housing administration trainees and we are hoping to recruit up to eight.
- There will also be a number of regular voluntary opportunities available to give tenants the vital experience they need but find hard to get.



For more details or to register your interest about opportunities with us please contact our training department on 01952 217434.

## Help us create your new website

We are in the process of improving the Trust's website and we need your help. We want the new website to be full of useful information and include everything you want to see.

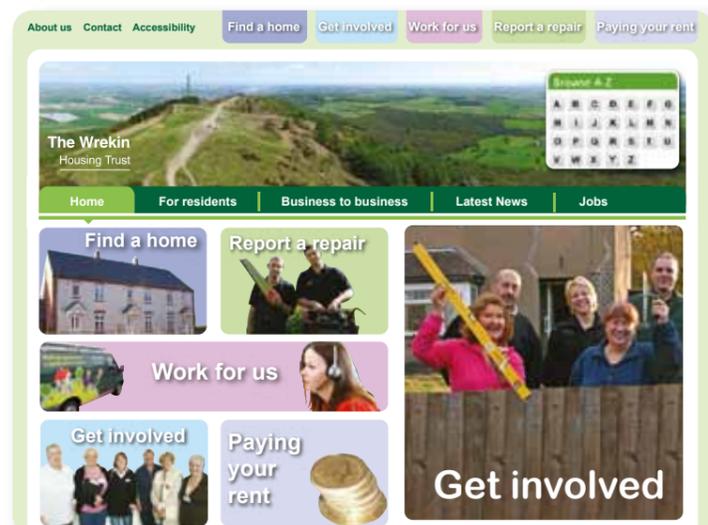
We've put together a new design and we would love it if you could give us some feedback.

**Would you like to be able to pay your rent online?**

**Would you prefer to give us feedback online?**

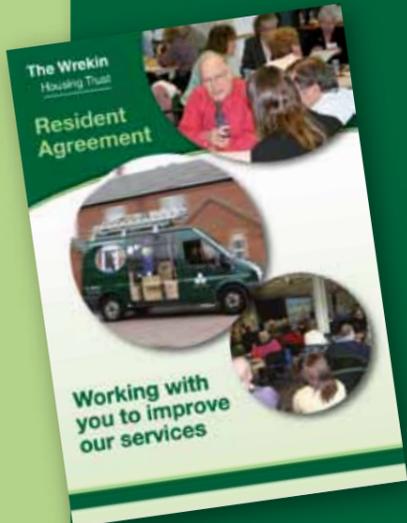
**Would you be our friend on facebook and twitter?**

**Would you find 'how to' videos such as DIY tips useful?**



To answer these questions and more, and to give us your views, please go to the home page of our website [www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk](http://www.wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk) and click on the link.

# Resident Agreement booklet ready



If you have any questions or issues relating to how things work at the Trust and how you can get involved, the new resident agreement booklet is what you need!

The booklet explains each service and what we will do for you. There is even a column to show which tenant groups are involved in the decision making process for services at the Trust.

Also included in the booklet are our aims and commitments to you. **If you would like a copy of the booklet please pop into your nearest Trust shop or call Jo Rowley on 01952 217194.**

# All the information you need!

Don't forget we've put all our leaflets into information sheets which are now available via the computers in Trust shop receptions and sheltered schemes as well as on our website. This makes them readily available and saves money on printing.



# New storyboards

The Trust has developed a set of storyboards that show tenants who are having planned work done to their homes what the process will be. There are storyboards for flat and pitched roofing work, new kitchens and external painting. These have been developed after tenants told us that it would be useful to have a timeline of the work being carried out.

The new storyboards will be sent out to tenants who are due to have work done on their homes.



# Free training for tenants!

Whether you are looking to improve your gardening or DIY skills, hoping to have your views on relevant housing topics heard in a discussion group or you just want to get involved at the Trust, the new training guide details everything you need to know.

With a variety of practical and discussion type courses such as DIY, cultural awareness and resident involvement, there is something for everyone. This will also give you something extra to add to your current skills or CV.

**For more information please call Carol Smith on 01952 217435 or Janice Diss on 01952 217248.**





# Meet a Money Mentor

**Eric Parkes** is one of the Trust's Money Mentors – we asked him about his role and what advice he would give to fellow tenants concerned about money.

## Why did you want to become a money mentor?

I had financial problems several years ago and in those days there was no one to turn to. Being a money mentor means I can help people who are in a similar situation now. It's really important to share the problem – that's the only way you feel like the burden is being lifted and see that there is light at the end of the tunnel!

## What does being a money mentor involve?

It's all about helping people who are having difficulty managing their money. You can call a money mentor to chat about your concerns. We work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB), receive ongoing training and have the contacts necessary to help you resolve your money issues.

## How else can I get in touch?

We have a new service at the CAB, Waterloo House, Ketley, each Thursday. A Money Mentor can take your details, have an initial chat and work with you to decide the best course of action. Where required you can also be seen by an expert CAB debt adviser.

## What questions do people ask you?

Everything from how to set up a bank account to paying a TV licence, payment plans and benefit cheques through to loan sharks and interest rates. Never use a loan shark or high interest loan – always contact a credit union.

## What advice would you give other tenants?

Don't bury your head in the sand, the debt won't go away. Take that first step and ask for help.

## Are more money mentors needed?

Definitely, with changes in the welfare system and payment methods likely over the next twelve months, I think the need for money mentors will increase.

To contact a money mentor, book an appointment or for more information about becoming one yourself call 01952 217234 or email [moneymentors@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk](mailto:moneymentors@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk)

# Fantastic Fundraising

With sheltered housing tenants' royal wedding celebrations raising more than £1,000 for **Severn Hospice** and **Help for Heroes**, it got us thinking about all the fantastic fundraising our residents and staff have done throughout the years. To date, employee fundraising at the Trust has raised £8,000 for **Hope House** and in the last year alone Trust shops, schemes and offices have raised over £5,500 for all manner of other worthy causes.

We know our tenants are busy fundraising too, be it for local projects or national causes. **We'd love to hear about your fundraising efforts so if you're doing your bit let us know** – write to us at Fundraising Information, (C&M) The Wrekin Housing Trust, Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford TF3 4AW or email us at [trust.talks@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk](mailto:trust.talks@wrekinhousingtrust.org.uk)



# Green, Green Grass *of home*

*It's that time of the year again when the gardening tools are dusted down and the lawnmower revved up – it's summer and time for a potter about in the garden.*

This year we have been busy helping you to improve your local areas, and in particular several ongoing community gardens, such as Meadowlea in Madeley and Pool Meadow in Hadley.

Meadowlea, just like Pool Meadow garden, was a derelict and unused piece of land. Residents from both areas suggested turning the land into community gardens that could be enjoyed by all of the community. Our Future Job Fund workers and volunteers have worked tirelessly to create two lovely areas complete with flowerbeds.

Other community gardens we have helped with are Ketley Bank, Regent Street in Wellington and Hallcroft Close in Newport.



## Bug hunt fun for kids



*We held a litter pick in Ketley Bank recently, which included a fun bug hunt for the kids run by The Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Children were encouraged to find a whole host of grubs and creepy crawlies in Ketley Bank Community Garden.*



## Tree of Learning

**Trust tenants are helping improve the environment for children in Randlay with new trees at their primary school. The Central Tenants' Panel and local Tenants' Group, STARS, used their community fund to make the project happen.**

When Randlay Primary School had their wooded areas chopped down to make way for building works surrounding the school, quick thinking Headteacher Bromley Jones put a bid in for some of the Trust's community funding, which is provided by Vaillant, one of our contractors. The successful bid enabled more trees to be planted in a wooded area providing shelter in summer, as well as enhancing the look of the school grounds.



The new woodland areas also means the school can continue to teach through the Forest Schools initiative, which encourages and inspires children through positive outdoor experiences.

A further benefit of the funding saw a fence masked by new hedging and trees around the nursery's outdoor play area; the idea being to create a more natural environment for the youngest children to play and learn in.

# New homes...

## Woodside

We are awaiting the outcome of a planning application to create new homes and shops in Woodside centre, as well as the outcome of a bid for funding for new homes in Wildwood.

## Arleston Lane, Wellington

The Arleston Lane site is now complete and everyone has moved into their new homes, which include a mixture of apartments and houses, two of which have been specially adapted.



## Parkdale, Hadley

A total of seven new homes will be provided here this year, with a mixture of rental through Choose Your Home and shared ownership through our InReach scheme.

## Park Lane (The Pastures), Woodside

We provided eight new homes here over the last two months, including two which are wheelchair accessible, with a further six to follow next year.

## Dothill

This redevelopment is progressing well. We have been working with developer FHM to involve the local community and young people through street naming and art competitions, as well as apprenticeships on the site.



## Monarch Fields

The Trust is continuing to make new homes available at this popular site, with seven provided in May and June and a further seven to come in December, as well as 11 next year.



## Stafford Street in Newport and Royal Way in Malinslee

Contracts have been exchanged on these sites now, which will provide a total of 18 new affordable homes next year.

## Lawley Farm, Lawley

The Trust let eight new homes through Choose Your Home on this site in July.

## Regents Court, Muxton

Seven new homes were let in April this year, as well as two through InReach in July. We will have a further 34 new homes on this development next year.



## Brittania Way, Hadley

We provided four new homes here in June, and will be making five shared ownership homes available next month, as well as 10 around Christmas time.

# Partnership given the go ahead

We are pleased to let you know that the proposed partnership with Choices Housing Association that we asked for your comments on at the end of last year has gone ahead.

Everyone agreed that the partnership would bring many benefits to both organisations, and we have now had full approval from both the Tenant Services Authority and Financial Services Authority.

The partnership has been formed to enable each organisation to benefit from the unique skills and services that each has to offer, which can now be provided across a wider range of clients and geographical areas. Choices are an excellent provider of care

services. The Trust is an excellent provider of vulnerable and elderly support alongside our provision of general needs housing. Together we can provide a full range of housing care and support to tenants, service users and new clients.

***We are delighted that the partnership has now begun and we know that by working together, both Choices and the Trust will grow into even stronger organisations, better able to meet the needs of our customers.***



[www.choiceshousing.co.uk](http://www.choiceshousing.co.uk)

## Positive feedback for gas team

*It's been a few months since we made the gas team part of the Trust's own workforce and we're pleased to say that the feedback to date has been really positive. The move was part of our ongoing commitment to improve our overall service to you and in two areas in particular – new appointments and follow on work.*

***We are now able to arrange appointments when you first call.***

*What's more, if we arrive at your home and can't repair a fault or your gas service shows more work is needed, in most cases we're now able to arrange it there and then, so you know exactly when we're coming back.*

*Nineteen gas engineers, seven office staff and two quality inspectors now make up the team who are responsible for gas repairs and maintenance on all Trust properties.*



## No more unwanted calls and mail...

Many tenants are reporting an increase in the nuisance of unsolicited telephone calls and the amount of direct mail they receive. **Help is at hand!** The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) and The Mailing Preference Service (MPS) are free services that you can register with so that you stop receiving unwanted marketing calls and direct mailings. For more information or to register with these companies please contact them directly.

**Telephone Preference Service (TPS),**  
3rd Floor, DMA House, 70 Margaret Street, London W1W 8SS,  
website [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk)  
TPS Registration Line 0845 070 0707,  
email [tps@dma.org.uk](mailto:tps@dma.org.uk)

**Mail Preference Service (MPS),**  
FREEPOST 29, LON20771, London W1E 0ZT,  
website [www.mpsonline.org.uk](http://www.mpsonline.org.uk)  
Registration Line 0845 703 4599,  
email [meps@dma.org.uk](mailto:meps@dma.org.uk)

# Kids' Competition



Here's a bit of summer fun for you - have a go at colouring in this picture and you could win a goodie-bag containing lots of toys and treats!

Name..... Age.....  
 Address.....  
 Postcode..... Telephone.....



**Simply send your picture to the freepost address below by 30<sup>th</sup> Sept for your chance to win.**

## Congratulations

to the winners of the word grid and kids' competition in the last Trust Talks, who are pictured here with their prizes.



**Anya Bayliss-Powell,  
from Wellington**



**Mary Hutchinson,  
from Leegomery**



## Adults' Competition

How many words of three letters or more can you find from the word **residents**? Each word must include the centre letter from the word wheel - no plurals allowed.

Send your words (which must appear in a standard dictionary) to us at the freepost address below by **30<sup>th</sup> September**.

**Don't forget to include your name, address and phone number.**

*Tenants who are in breach of their tenancy conditions and employees of the Trust are not eligible to enter.*

