

Tenant & Leaseholder

Issue 4 Spring/Summer 2014

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Welcome to your first Tenant & Leaseholder News of 2014.

In this issue you will find lots of information about the Tenant Participation Group and how you can get involved. Elections to the Group will be taking place in autumn and, if you are interested in playing an active role in improving your housing service, we hope you will think about standing.

To find out more about the forthcoming elections, or the group's activities, please join us at a future TPG meeting.

Also inside this issue, you will find useful information on water bills, telephone scams, next of kin cards, and helpful contacts to keep you and others safe.

You will learn more about the housing related support service we can now offer to all residents over 65 as well as information on accessing occupational therapists and aids and adaptations.

We focus on the energy efficiency measures we are taking in a move to go greener, including introducing our new eco house pilot scheme and reviewing the benefits of air source heat pumps.

We tell you what we are doing to help stamp out tenancy fraud and, on a very positive note, about the new council homes we are planning to build.

We showcase our team approach to addressing complaints and implementing lessons learned to ensure we get a balanced view of our service.

Finally, look out for information about The Disability Open Day in October 2014 and the Council's free family fun day, ParkLife, taking place on Saturday 28 June at Milton Country Park.



Mark Howell - Councillor & Housing Portfolio Holder



Wendy Head - Tenant Participation Group Chair

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Putting service first

If you phone us we will

- resolve your enquiry as quickly as possible
- provide voicemail if the person you need is unavailable
- answer your phone message within one working day

If you write to us we will

- reply to your letter or email within 10 working days

If we write to you we will

- write in plain language
- arrange for translation, large type, Braille or audio tapes upon request

If we visit you we will

- carry identification that you can check with a phone call to our contact service on 03450 450 500
- arrive at the time we say we will, or give you as much notice as possible if we have to change the time

If we get it wrong we will

- apologise if we have made a mistake or failed to meet our standards
- acknowledge your written complaint within three working days
- reply in full to your complaint within 10 working days

Garden competition 2014

We have a NEW look for our annual garden competition, aimed at the budding and established gardeners among you. Numbers of entrants have been dwindling over recent years, therefore we hope you will come forward as we want to continue running this competition.



Gardening brings with it many benefits, such as exercise, enjoyment of the great outdoors, growing and nurturing something from seed, and it benefits nature so very much, especially with the decline in certain species, such as bees, birds and hedgehogs.

So what's new this year?

We are introducing two new categories:

- ❖ Wildlife Pond
- ❖ Children's tallest sunflower (for children aged 12 and under)

The sunflower seeds will be provided by us in the post at no cost, thanks to our generous sponsors Scotsdales Garden Centre.

All entrants will receive a garden voucher and free expert garden advice from our panel of judges when they visit your garden.

Sunflowers will be judged on receipt of a photo showing their height. The deadline is 12 September.

How do I enter?

Simply complete the form online at www.scambs.gov.uk/housing/gardencompetition or cut out and post the form adjacent to:

Resident Involvement Team (Housing)
South Cambs District Council,
South Cambridgeshire Hall,
Cambourne Business Park,
Cambourne,
CB23 6EA



Best Garden Competition 2014

The closing date for entries is Friday 20 June. Judging will take place in late June through to early July, with winners receiving their trophies, certificates and prizes at a special presentation evening at Scotsdales Garden Centre during the autumn.

Send to: Resident Involvement Team (Housing) ,
South Cambs District Council, Cambourne Business
Park, Cambourne, CB23 6EA

Yes - I am an SCDC housing tenant or leaseholder and would like to enter:

- Best kept garden
- Best kept vegetable garden
- Best new tenant (April 2013 - April 2014)
- Best sheltered housing scheme communal gardens
- Best wildlife pond
- Best window box or container garden
- Best children's plot
- Tallest sunflower
- Best greenhouse (vegetables)
- Best greenhouse (flowers)
- Carol Johnson wildflower garden award

You can enter in more than one category.

Please write your name, address and contact number below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Tenant Participation Group: Get involved

What is it?

The Tenant Participation Group (TPG) is a group of tenant and leaseholder volunteers who meet monthly and work to improve the housing service. (Wherever the word Tenant is used in terms of TPG, it includes leaseholders)



Who is on it?

The Group is formed of 15 elected members who stand for a three year term and five elected members who represent other tenant groups, including the Leaseholder Forum, Disability Forum, and three Sheltered Housing Forums. The next round of elections is due to take place in **Autumn this year**, and we would urge anyone wishing to get involved to stand.

When do they meet?

The Group typically meets the first Monday of every month in the communal room at Denson Close sheltered housing scheme, Waterbeach, CB25 9RN; but please check on the website www.scams.gov.uk/housing/getinvolved or call the Resident Involvement team on 01954 713377/3295. Meetings are held from 6.30pm to 8.45pm to enable working tenants and leaseholders to attend.

What are the aims of the TPG?

The aims and role of the Group is found in its Constitution, which can be found on the website at www.scams.gov.uk/housing/getinvolved/TPG and is available in print on request.

To summarise, the aims of the TPG are to:

- work to improve the housing service and participate in decisions that affect the service
- offer tenants and leaseholders a voice and promote their interests
- review budgets, policies and practices as well as lobby the housing service on behalf of tenants and leaseholders

Opportunities for involvement

The Group offers tenants and leaseholder the opportunity to:

- participate in discussions that affect all council tenants to protect their interests, influence policies, work with council officers and generate ideas
- review performance information and customer satisfaction, and assist in regulatory functions (such as complaints)

What has the Group already achieved?

Over the last couple of years the Group, amongst other things, has been leading on or involved in:

- task and finish groups established by the Scrutiny Committee retendering the repairs contract
- reconfiguring the supported housing service
- open days for tenants
- running the Tenant Scrutiny Team, which has looked at the grounds maintenance contract
- helping to set the five year housing maintenance budget
- working with the Council to recruit new tenant volunteers to help improve the housing service
- lobbying the council on issues important to tenants and leaseholders

What other meetings do Group members attend?

- Mears response repairs contract meetings
- Morrisons heating contract meetings
- Ground maintenance contract meetings
- Housing Portfolio Holder meetings – the Group has a fixed agenda item at his meeting which presents an opportunity to directly influence councillors and the Portfolio Holder on relevant housing issues
- occasional housing conferences to ensure they are informed on current issues
- training sessions to ensure they are effective in representing you and in lobbying the Council

What do Group members say?

“ I fully believe that the TPG has helped the Council to shape the service we all receive today.”

Jim Watson (longstanding member)



“Please consider joining our Group, we need fresh eyes, current ideas and, above all, suggestions as to how to improve the lives of the tenants and leaseholders we represent. You can be sure of a warm welcome and we will listen to all you have to say. Come as an observer until you decide you wish to become a member.”

Thora Saunders (founding member over 10 years ago)

“We all believe that the Council strongly supports the involvement of its tenants. As a group, we are influencing and challenging the way council homes are managed and the service we receive. Now is the time for more people to try and get involved and help us further improve the service. Read this newsletter and see if you can find some time to come along and see what we do.”

Adrian Prentis (Leaseholder Forum representative on the Group)

“I joined the Group because I feel having tenant input to the way the housing service is run is very important, tenants have power if they have a voice. I try to ask pertinent questions and share my knowledge for the benefit of all of us.”

Carol Akribi (joined in 2012)

“TPG stands for Tenant Participation Group so why not come along to a meeting and get involved in the ongoing debate about the work of the Council and the impact its decisions have on resident’s lives. There is so much the Group can offer as the voice of all tenants to influence service delivery.”

Peter Lever (new member 2013)



“When I joined the Group it was comprised of about six tenants who got together to try and change things. Since those small beginnings, a lot of progress has been made to involve tenants in the housing service. I have seen the Group grow into an elected body of 20 members. We also now have other tenant groups, such as the Disability Forum, Sheltered Forum and Leaseholder Forum, that all work to improve services and report back to the Tenant Participation Group. Our network of Village Voice volunteers is also growing so we have many eyes and ears representing tenants. Furthermore, we have our own tenant magazine, put together with the help of a tenant editorial panel and the Group always contribute comments on new policies and procedures that the housing service introduces. After a big recruitment drive last year, the TPG is now overseeing the first ever tenant-led scrutiny of a council service – in this case the grounds maintenance contract. TPG is a worthwhile group to get involved with; it really does make a difference.”

Helen Ballentyne (original member)

TPG elections 2014

Fifteen elected posts are up for grabs in an election to be run in October 2014. All tenants and leaseholders will receive ballot papers by early September 2014.

The deadline to stand is 15 August 2014.

To stand, we ask that you complete a nomination form (available online from May 2014 or by request on 01954 713377/3295) giving some background information about yourself, including why you would like to be elected to the Group.

This will form your pitch to the electorate who are all tenants and leaseholders of South Cambs District Council. You are free to say what you want, up to 500 words. We would also encourage you to provide us with a photo, as people often respond to the more personal touch. We can take a photo of you to include if this is helpful.

There are no barriers to involvement; we will accommodate anyone, from aged 18 upwards, with or without their own transport or computer equipment. We have members aged over 90 and active volunteers aged 25 and under. Previous experience is not necessary. All we ask is that you are enthusiastic, care about your home and neighbourhood, and want to make things better for all.

If you are interested, please contact Gill Anderton, Resident Involvement Team Leader or Helen Pagram, Resident Involvement Officer, on 01954 713377/713295 respectively.

We would advise you to come along to a meeting to see what goes on if you are interested to stand. You are assured of a warm welcome.

The election will be run by an independent election service on behalf of the Housing service and tenants. Come on - take a chance - get involved and really start to make a difference!



Tenant & Leaseholder Group Meeting Dates

Please confirm venue date & time ahead of meetings with Resident Involvement Team



TPG

(Tenant Participation Group)

May 12 - 6.30pm - 8.45pm	July 7 - 6.30pm - 8.45pm	October 6 - 6.30pm - 8.45pm
June 2 - 6.30pm - 8.45pm	August 4 - 6.30pm - 8.45pm	November 3 - 6.30pm - 8.45pm
	September 1 - 6.30pm - 8.45pm	December 1 - 6.30pm - 8.45pm

Disability Forum Meetings



June 3 - 7pm - 9pm
 August 5 - 2pm - 4pm
 October 7 - 2pm - 4pm
 December 2 - 2pm - 4pm

All TPG and Disability Forum meetings at the Communal Room Denson Close Waterbeach CB25 9RN unless otherwise stated

Leaseholder Forum

June 26 - 10am - 12 noon
 October 2 - 10am - 12 noon

Held in the Council Chamber SCDC Offices Cambourne CB23 6EA

Sheltered Housing Forums

Next meetings for the 3 groups:
 Monday 16 June
 2 to 4pm

Held in the Council Chamber SCDC Offices Cambourne CB23 6EA

Housing Surgery Dates for 2014

Do you need housing advice, benefit advice, repairs advice, relocation advice? come along to a surgery.

Gamlingay:

Second Wednesday of each month,
 Communal Room, Avenells Way
 10.30am - 12.00 noon

- 14 May
- 11 June
- 9 July
- 13 August
- 10 September
- 8 October
- 12 November
- 10 December

Willingham:

1st Wed of every month,
 the Baptist Church, George Street
 10am - 12 noon

- 7 May
- 4 June
- 2 July
- 6 August
- 3 September
- 1 October
- 5 November
- 3 December

Sawston:

Every two weeks,
 Communal Room, Chapelfield Way
 10am - 1pm

- 8 & 22 May
- 5 & 19 June
- 3, 17 & 31 July
- 14 & 28 August
- 11 & 25 September
- 9 & 23 October
- 6 & 20 November
- 4 & 18 December

Your Tenant Scrutiny Team's first project

In the last newsletter we told you that tenant volunteers would soon begin work on the first scrutiny project, looking in detail at a specific aspect of the housing service. Among tenants there was a clear consensus to look at the grounds maintenance contract which covers landscaping and trees.

Why have we set up a Tenant Scrutiny Team?

The Localism Act places the onus on social housing providers to get trained tenants involved in detailed scrutiny of the housing service, and we welcome this shift in culture.

What have we done so far to prepare?

In 2013 we ran a large scale recruitment exercise, and now have a pool of tenant volunteers. In late 2013 the Tenant Scrutiny Team was formed of around 20 volunteers who, collectively chose their pilot project - a review of the grounds maintenance contract. The current grounds maintenance contract expires in March 2015 so the contract must be re-tendered this year.

What has the Tenant Scrutiny Team done so far?

Work to date includes a complete desktop review (a detailed look at the contract documents and systems behind the contract) of the grounds maintenance contract, as well as interviews with key staff



members, the housing team and the current contractor.

What's next?

On-site inspections and surveys will be conducted by the scrutiny team as well as a 'mystery shopper' approach to check on the quality and response of the service.

The tenant scrutiny team will report to the Housing Portfolio holder and other key senior staff members in June 2014 with a set of recommendations ahead of the retendering negotiations.

We hope to see the Tenant Scrutiny Team complete two scrutiny reports each year. The next topic will be decided in late spring 2014 with a view to having a report ready for early 2015.

If you are interested in getting involved with tenant scrutiny remember all are welcome, and the training you will receive as well as the varied experience may well help you in a search for work, to re-enter the job market, or to revive skills you had used previously in your life. Just call the Resident Involvement Team on 01954 713377 or 01954 713295.

Leaseholder Forum

The Leaseholder Forum was set up to ensure that equity share leaseholders are represented and included in matters relating to the housing service.

We value the opinions of our leaseholders and it is important that their views are fairly represented in helping to shape the future of our service. This Forum gives the opportunity for leaseholders to get together with council officers to discuss issues that are important to them and to share any concerns in a fairly informal, relaxed environment.

The Forum has been running for a number of years now and is well attended with around 50 people at each meeting. It often provokes lively discussions and is managed by a committee.

The Forum also aims to keep leaseholders updated on anything happening within the Council that may affect them directly or indirectly. In addition, the forum helps to identify local housing and environmental issues that are key to improving the amenities in the area.

Common topics at the Forum include the service charge, issues around sheltered housing, tenant participation and maintenance issues. When the agenda is set, we try to ensure that the appropriate council officers attend to address any questions.

New attendees are encouraged to come along and join in, your views are important to us.



Tenant sponsored community grants

New money from April 2014, don't forget to bid

You may remember from the last issue that we have created a new tenant sponsored community grant scheme. You can bid for up to £1,000 from us for community projects that will improve the area in which you live.

This money is set aside from the tenant participation budget (funded from the rents you pay) therefore any projects must benefit tenants and leaseholders in the majority.

The grant panel comprises elected TPG members. The panel has recently approved grants for the following projects:

- Planting to hide substation on a South Cambs scheme in Barton
- Planting and a bench at a sheltered scheme in Cottenham
- Additional tools and materials for a residents association to carry out voluntary gardening work in Impington

Bid for some money now if you have a good project in mind. If the projects seem too large, don't forget we also work with our main contractors who have agreed to assist with one or two larger projects that need more manpower or equipment; so don't be put off.

An application form and guidance notes can be found online at www.scambs.gov.uk/housing or you can request them on 01954 713377 or 01954 713295.



First New Council houses completed

The completion of four new council homes in Chalklands, Linton, are the first in our biggest programme of new council houses since the 1950s and replace a block of ten under-utilised garages.

The new homes have all been built to the Lifetime Homes Standard, making them accessible and adaptable for residents, and have been designed to be energy efficient with air source heat pumps and solar panels.

New tenant Katy Lester, 25, said: "I'm over the moon. After 5 years in temporary accommodation it's great to have a place to call home. Everything in the house is brand new and finished to a high standard, and there is ample space for me to live in and enjoy. I feel very lucky and look forward to building a new life for myself here."

The new build strategy sets out our programme to build 200 new homes over the next 10 years, together with 200 replacement homes. Our next projects will be in Foxton and Bourn. The New Build strategy is available to view on our website or in print on request.

www.scambs.gov.uk/content/housing-strategies-policies-and-procedures

• New homes in Linton



Update on tackling tenancy fraud

Targeting tenancy fraudsters in Cambridgeshire

What are we doing?

We have worked closely with other local authorities and social housing providers across the county to create the Cambridgeshire Tenancy Fraud Forum. The aim of the group is to establish a centralised countywide approach to raising awareness, reporting and investigating tenancy fraud.

In March 2014 we created a Tenancy Fraud Officer post and this has been filled by Liz Berridge. Liz's work will centre on our 5,350 tenanted homes.

What is tenancy fraud?

Most people applying for housing have a genuine need; they play by the rules and wait to be allocated a home. Housing cheats don't wait, they can be dishonest, jump the queue, taking valuable housing; leaving those in greater need deprived. They are guilty of housing fraud. They cost you money to keep homeless people in temporary accommodation.

What is housing fraud?

There are different types of housing fraud; here are some of the most common:

- Unlawful sub-letting - when a tenant lets out their home without the knowledge or permission of their landlord, they are unlawfully sub-letting. They often charge the person they are sub-letting to a much higher rent. It is not right to sub-let and to profit from a property which should be given to someone with greater need.
- Obtaining housing by deception - when an applicant is approved for a council or housing association home based on false information, for example, not informing the landlord that they are already renting from another Council or housing association.
- Falsely claimed succession - when a tenant dies there are rules about what should happen to the tenancy. Falsely claimed succession is where someone who is not entitled tries to take over the tenancy. For example, they might say they have lived with the tenant before they died, when in fact they were living somewhere else.

- Non-Residence - a tenant who ceases to live at the address provided by their landlord may lose their assured tenancy status and lose their right to retain occupation of that property.



What is the law?

Housing fraud is a criminal offence. The maximum penalty is ten years imprisonment. People who sub-let their properties can have court orders for costs and recovery of the proceeds of their crime awarded against them, even without being prosecuted.

In 2013 the Government introduced the Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act, which makes it a specific offence for a tenant of social housing to sub-let their property. Penalties for these offences include prison sentences of up to two years.

What is the cost?

A 2012 Audit Commission report into tenancy fraud highlights that:

1. Nearly 98,000 social homes across the UK are subject to some form of tenancy fraud each year
2. This costs local councils in excess of £1.75 billion each year
3. There are about two million families waiting for a council house in England
4. A conservative estimate indicates that nearly 3,300 council properties in the East of England are subject to housing tenancy fraud

Why should you help?

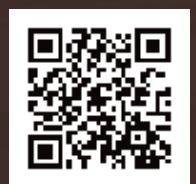
- Housing cheats are making a profit at the taxpayers' expense.
- People in genuine need are missing out on properties. We can achieve so much more with your assistance.
- Housing cheats cost the taxpayer money which could be better spent protecting and enhancing frontline services.

If you suspect a Council tenant of tenancy fraud please report it to Liz Berridge by calling 03450 450 051 or the Tenancy Fraud Hotline number on 0800 952 0075
Alternatively you can report it online through the Cambridgeshire Tenancy Fraud Forum website at www.cambstenancyfraud.net

Housing cheats deprive honest people of a home and cost **you** money

If you know someone who is committing tenancy fraud
or trying to jump the housing waiting list
tell us at: www.cambstenancyfraud.net or 0800 952 0075

To find out more about tenancy fraud please
visit www.cambstenancyfraud.net



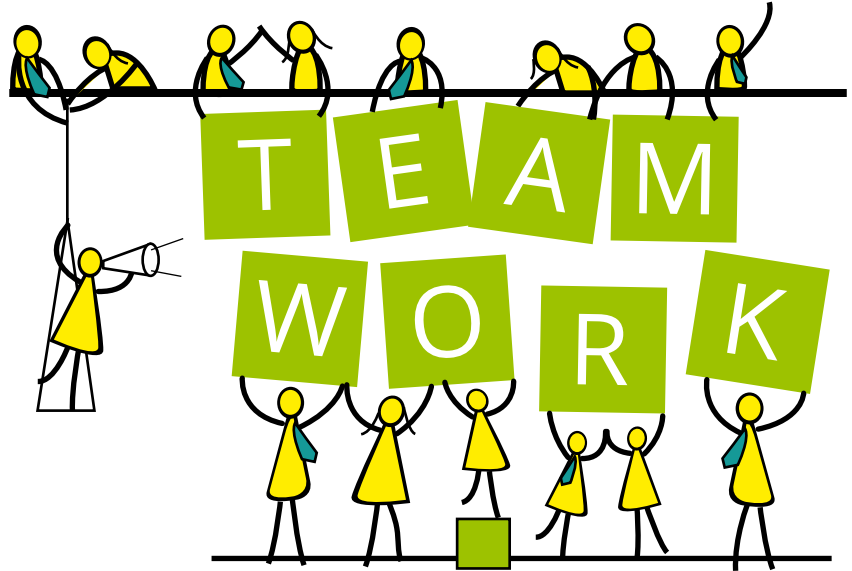
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True Team and Community Working

At 12.30pm on Monday 25 November 2013, our maintenance team took a phone call from Npower who raised concerns about the condition of a property they were forced to break in to, to remove a gas meter due to arrears. They weren't sure if the house had been abandoned and rang because the property was flooded. We knew the property was rented out and asked Npower why they were cutting off the heating supply from a disabled and vulnerable person before contacting us as landlord. Npower hadn't realised it was a council-owned property. They did not remove the meter because of the water on the floors, and left the property secure.



The housing officer and surveyor immediately visited the property and found the tenant at home. The tenant was not aware that Npower had broken in. It was known to us that the tenant was vulnerable and the property was generally untidy, but their living conditions has obviously deteriorated rapidly and worryingly, their washing machine had flooded and had not been reported. There was water over an inch deep with wires and



plugs trailing through it. This was an extremely dangerous situation for the resident, who has physical and learning disabilities. It was believed the tenant was supported by their sister since moving into the property four years ago.

We were informed the sister was now too busy to help, and friends no longer visited. The resident informed us they had asked the GP to arrange a keyworker, but nothing had come of it, so they were trying to cope alone with no support.

The resident could not be left in property due to the health and safety hazards. We collected some of the resident's items together for a couple of nights away.

Social Care Adult Services couldn't help as the resident was able to wash and dress themselves.

The option for B&B was discussed, but that would have been in Haverhill or Boxworth, many miles from the resident's familiar locality, so a guest room was found in a local sheltered scheme.

We made sure the resident had food, was warm and safe. It became apparent that previous to this the resident survived on pot noodles - largely because their benefits had been suspended, and they had no idea how to appeal.

We then found ourselves taking receipt of a set of keys delivered to the office for one of our flats in the local area - it was no longer needed. No notice had been given for this flat so it was a complete surprise, and was perfect as a direct let for this vulnerable resident.

Our housing officers salvaged what they could from the resident's former home, the sheltered housing staff donated a bed and bedding from their communal room.

The housing team also managed to source basic items like crockery, cutlery and a kettle from other residents of the scheme who had offered to help and some basic furniture was sourced from the local Free Church.

A box of food from the food bank, specifically with ring pulls to accommodate the resident's disability, was delivered.

The resident was referred to the Visiting Support Service who will provide support in further settling the resident in to the community, ensuring they get the support and care that they need.

This is the beginning of the end of a really positive team and community effort which shows what the housing service can achieve working together.

Lessons learned

We know that everything we do is not perfect. You may have noticed that we are now sharing information with you about complaints you have made about the service via our Annual Report for tenants and leaseholders.

We think that it is important to share with you what we learn from complaints and some of the changes we make as a result. We always complete a 'lessons learned' form after the resolution of every formal complaint.

Some examples from the last 9 months:



Complaint:

length of time it took to carry out loft insulation work

Lesson:

Fosters will be changing letters sent out to ensure they are totally clear as to when work will be carried out and by what date they need an area cleared.

Complaint:

housing repairs around damp and mould issues

Lesson:

we are working with Mears to review response times and timescales around such issues - this forms part of discussions at regular operational meetings between us and Mears.

Complaint:

outstanding repairs after kitchen refurbishment

Lesson:

Borras to ensure all outstanding work is completed by ensuring tenants complete a satisfaction survey

Complaint:

change of tenancy and outstanding repairs

Lesson:

As part of operational meeting discussions, we work with Mears to ensure an effective system is in place for change of tenancy

Supported housing services update

Visiting support services

In the last edition of the Tenant and Leaseholder's News we advised that the Council was waiting for the County Council to tender the housing related support for older people contract - so where are we now?

The County Council decided that as we still own and manage our housing stock we would not have to competitively tender for the support contract.

Instead, we have signed a co-operation agreement with the County Council to provide visiting support services for people living in our sheltered accommodation **and** for older people aged over 65 living in the wider community for the next three years.

This is good news and the team has been working hard to make sure the service is ready to go out into the wider district from April 2014.

The visiting support service is a short-term, confidential service providing emotional, financial and practical support. Support is provided free of charge should the person meet the eligibility requirements following a needs and risk assessment. Access to the service is by referral, this can be from a family member, GP, a council officer, the voluntary sector, statutory health and social care providers or you can make your own referral.

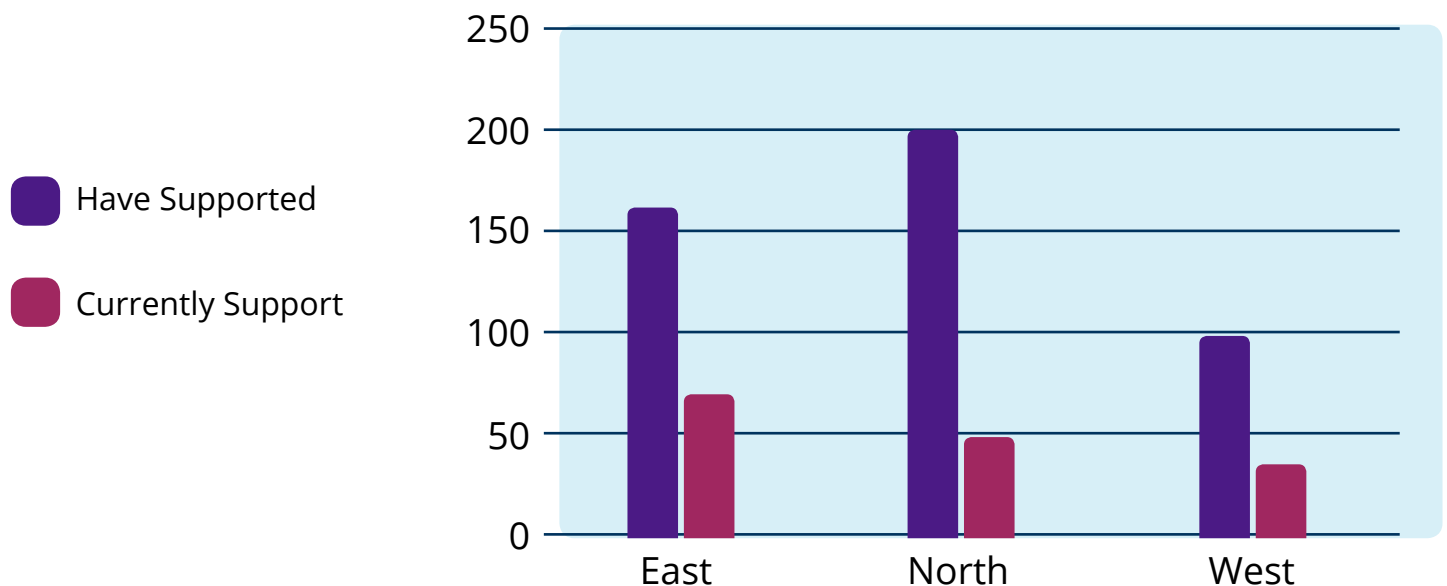
For more information please phone 03450 450 500 or email visitingsupport@scambs.gov.uk



- Mr C commented "he was very, very, pleased with the outcome and the support of the Visiting Support Officer and the Village Benefits scheme. He would recommend the service to his friends and neighbours". He said "I had not been aware of the service before and, whilst I would of course rather not been in a position to need it, I have found it of great benefit in working towards overcoming some major hurdles I'm pleased with the support and information that the visiting support officer has provided"

- Visiting support officer visit is important to Mr A as he feels it gives him some security and someone who can offer advice on lots of issues - as Mr A only has distant family.

The table below shows the number of residents in sheltered housing who have received support since July 2012 and the second column indicates how many residents continue to be supported.



Some examples of the support provided

We thought this would also be a good opportunity to share with you some of the great outcomes that the visiting support officers have achieved with residents who currently live in our sheltered housing.

A couple who were relocating to sheltered housing had been identified by the allocations team as needing support to move. The support officer helped them to access quotes from removal companies, change direct debits for utility companies and purchase new white goods for the property. The officer even helped the couple to access a care agency to provide personal care after one of them returned home after a hospital operation.



A wheelchair-bound resident who was struggling day-to-day in his property was referred by a support officer to the occupational therapist service to see what adaptations could be made to his property to make his life easier. Following an assessment, the resident had a wet room installed, internal doors widened and a ramp fitted to the front of the property. Our support worker also helped the resident move to a different care agency of his choice after he aired that he was unhappy with the service he was receiving.

We put a resident who struggled to do her weekly shopping in touch with Age UK Cambridgeshire who now take her weekly or fortnightly order over the phone and process it online on her behalf. A number of residents have been supported to make claims for attendance allowance, which then makes life a bit easier for them as they now have the income to pay for chiropody, employing a cleaner or gardener to lighten their load.



A resident with dementia was referred by our support officer to the assistive technology team to help her access equipment that would help her to continue to live at home for as long as possible. She was provided with a memo minder with a message that was activated every time she opened the front door.



Emotional support can also be provided to help residents come to terms with the loss of a partner, or a change in their partner's health. Other services in the district we can refer residents to include, community navigators and befriending services, community transport schemes, village wardens and a network of volunteers who accompany residents to medical appointments or social activities if they are re-joining after a period of non-attendance.

Gail Cooke - a fond farewell

On 14 February we waved a fond farewell to Housing Services Officer Gail Cooke, who has retired. Gail served the Council for over 30 years both in the housing and finance teams.

Many tenants will recall Gail's dedication to her role and the friendly manner in which she approached all her customers. This attitude helped to contribute towards a "going the extra mile award" Gail received in 2012, which recognised the guidance and support she provided to a vulnerable tenant.

Gail's commitment to providing an excellent service has been acknowledged by both colleagues and managers over a number of years. Her knowledge and experience in dealing with housing management issues was unrivalled and will be greatly missed.

The vacant role is currently being managed by Pat Cassidy whilst we undertake a review of our housing management service. Once we have further details, we will provide you with these. In the meantime, Pat will be more than happy to hear from you.

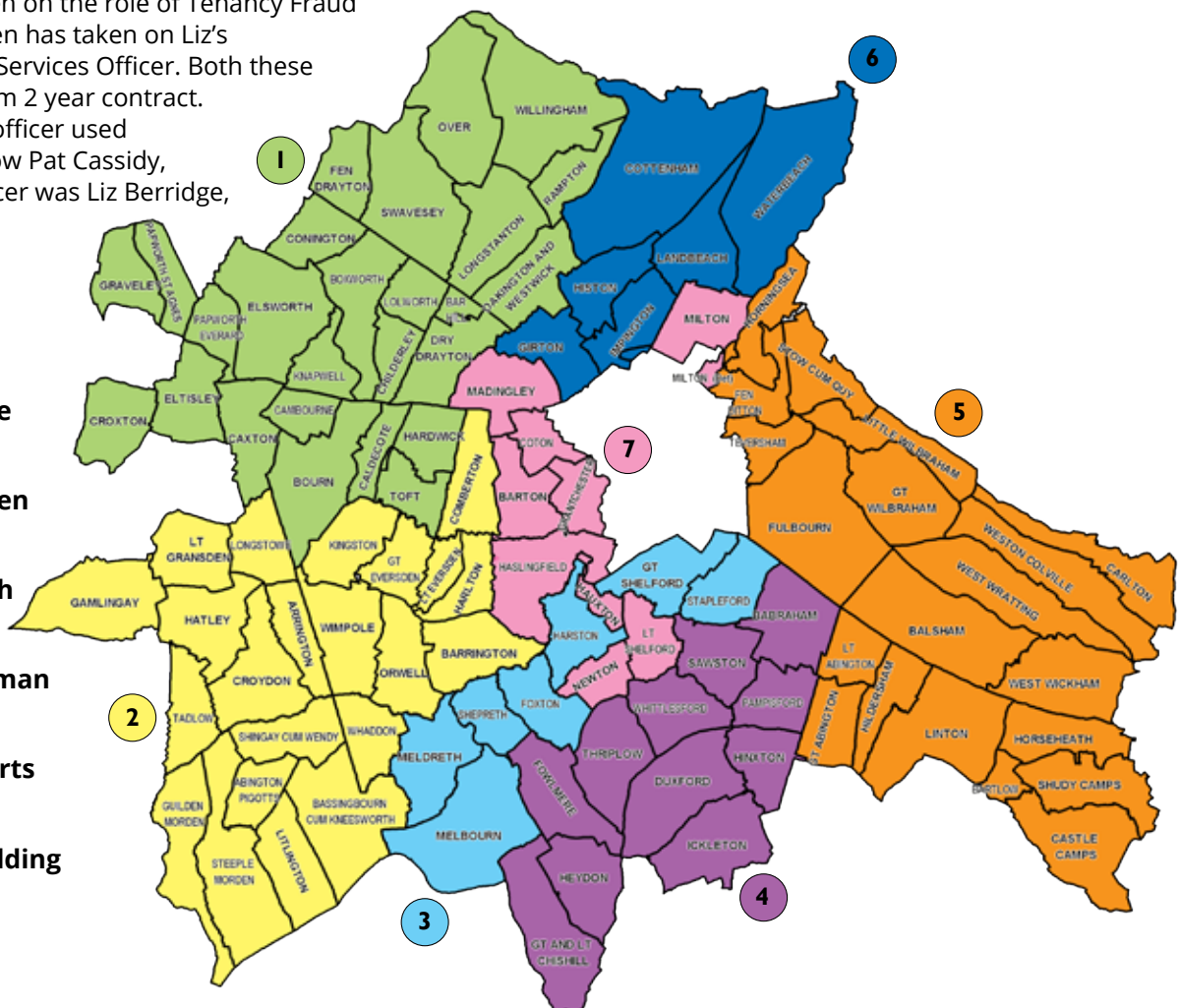


Other changes to the housing team

Liz Berridge has taken on the role of Tenancy Fraud Officer and Laura Kitchen has taken on Liz's former role of Housing Services Officer. Both these posts are for a fixed term 2 year contract.

So - if your housing officer used to be Gail Cooke, it is now Pat Cassidy, and if your housing officer was Liz Berridge, it is now Laura Kitchen.

- 1 Pat Cassidy
- 2 Andrew Cole
- 3 Laura Kitchen
- 4 Simon Booth
- 5 Rachel Winman
- 6 Lynne Roberts
- 7 Louise Moulding



Getting connected ..



Our supported housing team and resident involvement team recognise the importance for our residents to be able to access the internet.

The internet is 25 years old and reports claim that over 90% of the UK population now has access to it. We are doing some practical things to help more people have access to the internet, such as:

- running training events for our Tenant Participation Group members and Tenant Scrutiny Team, from a basic level for absolute beginners to using email and search engines, creating Word documents (for letters and reports) and Excel documents (for spreadsheets for statistical information) as well as sessions on social media networks, such as Facebook or Twitter.
- rolling out WiFi connections to all communal rooms across the district and providing computers for residents to use.
- encouraging trained or computer literate tenants and leaseholders to help their neighbours get online using equipment provided.



● Mrs Amey and Mr Rolfe

● Mr Rolfe who will be teaching others to use the computers commented "it will be good to help other residents to access shopping on-line and achieve savings by doing so"

● Mrs Amey is looking forward to skyping her brother in Canada "I can't wait to see him"

..... Cambridge Online

Regretfully, we cannot fund training sessions for everyone as our budgets are restricted. However, free or subsidised training can be found at Cambridge Online.

Cambridge Online is an educational charity and social enterprise. It helps people, especially the disabled and disadvantaged, in the local and wider area to get online by providing free or fixed-price computer courses.

Who is this service for?

Everyone in the Cambridgeshire and wider area but especially disabled and disadvantaged people, anyone learning to use computers and the internet, and people who do not have internet access otherwise; organisations wanting to improve accessibility; people wanting to train as volunteer instructors.

How this service can help you?

It can help anyone who wants to learn basic or more advanced computer skills and anyone who needs computer access as well as guidance on how to find and use public services online. They have resources for any organisations needing to improve computer accessibility.

How do I access this service?

Visit - www.cambridgeonline.org.uk

When is the service open?

Taster sessions are held Monday to Friday between 10am and 4pm, and you can just drop in, or book in advance by phone. Contact them for details of community access and courses.

Where is it?

Cambridge Online, Hester Adrian Centre, Hawthorn Way, Cambridge, CB4 1AX. T 0845 458 0192 or 01223 300 407

Is it free?

Taster sessions are free and some disabled or disadvantaged people can take part in courses free. Fees for others are subsidised so you should check with the service.

Pest Control

As some of you may be aware, changes are happening at the Council. In June last year we lost our in-house pest control service as a result of cuts to our corporate budget from central government.

This however created a gap in our housing service, as there are occasions when we need pest control to deal with rodents, fleas etc. in communal areas, empty properties, communal rooms, and car parking areas. We have now contracted with a company to deliver this service.

Unfortunately this is not a service that tenants can access. Tenants and leaseholders will need to source and fund the services of a pest control specialist of their choosing should they need such a service.



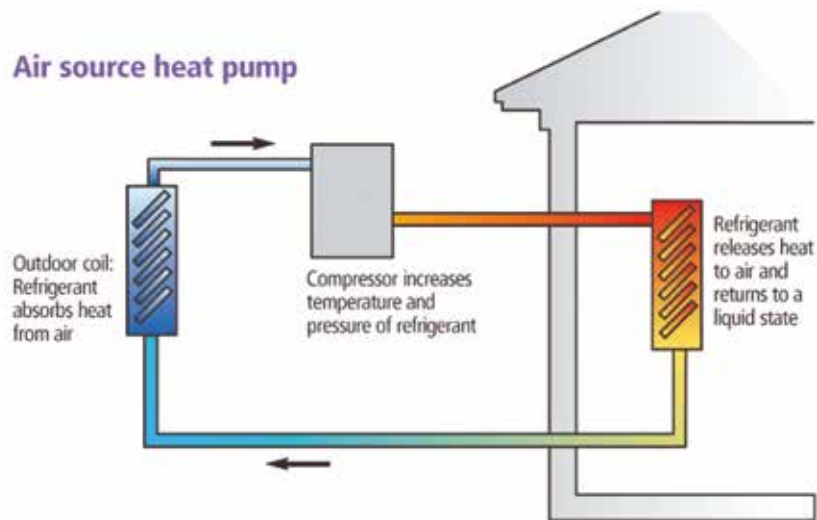
Air Source Heat Pumps: Helping to Improve the Energy Efficiency of Your Home

An air source heat pump is a heating system that provides domestic heating and hot water using energy from the outside air. We install them in our properties where mains gas is not available.

Currently there are over 180 properties fitted with air source heat pumps, and these are typically fitted in conjunction with other energy efficiency improvements, such as cavity or external wall insulation and when existing heating systems are due for replacement.

To ensure the heat pumps run efficiently and effectively, compared with other types of heating in non-gas areas - such as oil, electric and solid fuel - we are sending questionnaires out to over 100 tenants over the course of a year to compare running costs.

To date, we have received some very positive feedback with only a handful of tenants unhappy with their system. When a tenant is unhappy, we get it inspected and will install monitoring equipment to provide detailed information on how it is performing in order to resolve their problems.



One of the positive comments received on the air source heat pumps was:

"My home has never been so warm. It takes a bit of getting used to, but it now runs like a dream and is cost effective too. I am very grateful you fitted my house with this system. The trick is to keep it on all the time and use the thermostat. I use mine from 6:30am to 10:30pm."

A tenant in a 2 bedroomed house that used to have oil central heating.

South Cambs goes green with an ECO House

2 The Green, Weston Colville, was a solid wall (single brick, not cavity) 3 bed semi-detached home built around 1925. It was empty for a time as we recognised there were significant void works required and we did not have the budget to cover this. However, following the housing finance reforms resources to refurbish some of our longer term empty properties became available.



The problems in the property were:

- Downstairs bathroom
- No Central Heating
- Woodworm
- Dry rot
- Poor electrics
- No fitted kitchen
- Collapsing wooden floors
- Fibreboard internal walls
- Ceiling coming down

We considered selling the house; however it was recognised that the property had the potential to draw together all the work we had been doing to make our homes warmer and more energy efficient.

A team was set up, which comprised of staff and contractor (Fosters), to develop the vision for the house and decide on the 'renewable' ** technologies that the house could accept.

We transformed the property into a 2 bed family home by moving the bathroom upstairs, fitting an air source heat pump, solar thermal panels for hot water, PV panels for electricity, an energy monitoring system, over-bath shower, insulated solid floor, wood burner, home office space, drying room and log store/cycle store. The property had previously benefitted from Double Glazing & External Wall Insulation.

The energy efficiency went from a level D to a high level B.

Outcome: This project shows what we can achieve in partnership with contractors to transform our homes. We will be replicating this work on other properties across the district, especially those of non-traditional construction. One lesson learned, was that we need a dedicated project officer to run such works.



** technology that uses sustainable sources of energy such as light and wind.

Aids & Adaptations To Your Home - Some useful information

We categorise our adaptation works into two groups:

- major adaptations
- minor works

Some require a referral from an occupational therapist and some do not.

Occupational therapists are NHS employees specifically trained to identify and understand the needs of those with a disability; and design and recommend practical solutions that would allow for easier home living. Occupational therapists are not Council employees.

Minor works include the installation of grab rails, half steps, lever taps, and additional bannisters/support rails. We can initiate minor works at the tenant's request without an occupational therapists

referral. However, our project manager (Aids & Adaptations), Charlotte Davies, does receive a large number of minor works through referral.

Major adaptations include all work that exceeds £900. Most referrals for major works are for level access showers in bungalows, over-bath showers or ramps. Major work is specialist and therefore requires an occupational therapists' referral to ensure the adaptation is appropriate and tailored to the resident's requirements.

Occupational therapy waiting lists are managed by the relevant service provider and can vary depending on the area. The current waiting list for adult services is 12 weeks.

Residents are entitled to appeal occupational therapists decisions. This must be done through the relevant service provider. The Council cannot influence or overturn a decision.

Our annual budget for council owned property adaptations is set at £800,000 per year. This is for minor and major works – where major works can include building single story and 2 story extensions, installing stair lifts etc. at significant cost per adaptation.



For Minor adaptations, contact our repairs department on 08000 851 313
For Major adaptations, contact the Occupational Therapists helpline on 03450 455 205.

Mears & Morrisons update

Our contractor Mears carries out your day to day (responsive) repairs.

Morrison's is our contractor for all gas servicing and heating repairs. In November 2013, Mears acquired Morrison's and in doing so, combined the two contract operations under one umbrella company.

Mears' responsive repairs team is based in Cottenham and the gas team is based near Cambridge airport, but this has not stopped the two operations coming together to share best practice.

Mears previously offered two hour time slots for responsive repairs, but they found this restricted the number of jobs an operative could do, or meant that jobs over ran, to the frustration of customers. Following consultation with the Tenant Participation Group and Council officers, it has been agreed that Mears' responsive repairs contract will mirror the successful appointment process of the Morrison gas repairs contract, so the following appointment times will be offered by the dedicated team of Call-handlers:

- Morning appointments 8am - 12.30pm
- Afternoon appointments 12pm - 4.30pm

In addition to the above time slots, the 'school run' appointment will be offered between 10am and - 2.30pm and we will continue to offer evening and Saturday morning appointments when our customer's requirements specifically demand. Mears will always try to meet the individual customer's aspirations, whilst balancing requirements for all our customers.

Mears and Morrison's now use the same computer management system. The way of asking customers for their feedback on a repair, therefore, is now the same. The method used is surveys via the electronic hand-held devices used by the operatives. As a result, the number of customer responses has increased from around 20-25% with the previous satisfaction cards up to around 60%. Higher returns help Mears, and us, to learn and improve the service.

If you do not want to complete a customer satisfaction survey via the operative's hand-held device, Mears call-handlers can and will conduct a call-back telephone survey with you instead. Remember, you can always ask the operative for a telephone survey.



Solar photo voltaic panels: Frequency Asked Questions

How is it funded and why do we have different contractors?

Renewable energy projects such as the installation of solar panels attract a form of subsidy known as the 'feed in tariff'. This is paid for by all of us in our energy bills, known in the media as 'green taxes'.

The feed in tariff is enshrined in law, and as such is an attractive option for financial institutions to invest their money. These financial institutions create 'special purpose vehicles' (SPV) and provide them with the funds to invest in renewable energy. The SPV receives payment for every kilowatt of energy produced by the solar installations (also called arrays) on our homes.

The property company Savills works with us, to find funders who are attracted to investing their money on our roofs in South Cambridgeshire. Different funders use different contractors, which is why we have had three contractors in South Cambs: MITIE, Clearer Air Solutions and latterly Sustain Solar. Their group of installations are called 'portfolios'.

The funder is wholly responsible for maintenance for the period of the lease (between 20 -25 years) and then we will take over. The panels are self-cleaning-when it rains!



What happens if a contractor goes bust?

The portfolios have a guaranteed value over 20-25 years, therefore as companies and contractors go out of business in our complicated economy, the portfolios can be traded in the financial markets like any other financial product and future maintenance and liabilities are guaranteed.

Why don't contractors install a whole street at a time?

The contractors have to find those roofs that will produce the most yields in terms of generation, so that the funder can achieve their required rate of return so they pick off those roofs with the highest yields first. Another reason may be that the tenant refuses an installation initially, but then changes their mind, or that they are not present to sign the Solar Agreement or available when a survey is required.

Why do we sign the Solar Agreement?

We are legally required to sign a 20-25 year lease with the funder allowing them to use the air space above roofs. In turn you are required to sign the Solar Agreement which is an agreement between you and us that relinquishes your right to the air space above your roof, and requires you provide access to your home for future maintenance of the panels and the equipment inside your home. The funders are insured for accidental damage to the installations at the time of the installation and to the building and garden, and also for future maintenance work or damage. All installations are guaranteed by the funders for the period of the lease. On expiry of the lease (20-25 years) we will become responsible.

Does the inverter in my loft cost me any money?

An inverter converts the direct current (DC) produced by the panels into alternating current (AC) that we use in our homes. It is installed in the loft and there are no moving parts. It is a simple transformer.

During the day the inverter is powered by the solar panels, at night electricity will be used to keep it on standby. On average, in standby, inverters consume 1 to 3 watts of electricity per hour. So if we take the worst case scenario (3W) the maths is as follows:

3 watts x 12 hours (again worst case scenario for average night time hours) = 36 watts

365 days x 36 watts = 13140 watts (13.14 kW) Average price per kW at the moment is 14p.

Cost of your inverter per year is 13.14KW x 14p = £1.84. (worst case scenario)

Why do you need more than one survey?

Homes were surveyed initially and identified as being feasible, meaning that the orientation was correct; facing south or south west, the roof was of adequate size to install the requisite number of panels and that the roof was free from shadowing. Following this a design survey needs to be undertaken which is more precise and involves a detailed survey both externally and internally. There might also be another survey, by an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) surveyor who needs to assess the energy performance. The government requires homes to have an EPC rating of 'D' or above before the feed in tariff is paid.

How much electricity can I use, should I do anything differently and how much will I save?

When the panels are generating you can use as much of the electricity as is being generated, should you exceed the free supply, you will draw from the grid at the agreed rate that you have with your energy supplier. Panels do not store electricity, so you will draw from the grid as normal at night.

You don't have to do anything, the panels generate in the daylight, and generate more when the sun is shining, however you might want to consider changing a few things, like doing the washing and using a tumble dryer between 11am and 2pm or whenever the sun is shining.

It is estimated that you will save up to £200 depending on your usage, and this of course will go up as the price of energy increases.

How long will they last?

The inverters have a life of about 10 years and will need to be replaced during the period of the lease. After 20-25 years the solar array becomes the responsibility of the Council, and they will become another component of the dwelling like a kitchen or bathroom for asset management purposes.

I have an old style analogue meter, does that matter?

All meters are the responsibility of the energy suppliers, and they have a duty to replace analogue meters to digital, and they are usually quick to do this when the panels have been installed. You can tell if you have an analogue meter because a metal disk will spin when you use electricity, the more you use, the faster it spins. However, when the panels generate the disk spins backwards crediting your meter. Please remember this is not your fault. Energy companies are notified by Ofgem, the energy regulator and it is up to them to change the meters, not you or us. Where meters have gone backwards and credited accounts some energy companies have used common sense and estimated bills reasonably and others have shown poor customer service and tried to extract as much money as they can causing distress.

How many homes are going to have solar panels?

2000 home are set to have them installed



Some news from another of our contractors FOSTERS

Fosters fit new kitchens and bathrooms across a part of our district and say:

"We're happy when the residents we work for are pleased with our work so it was good news to receive some positive feedback from residents recently.

We were delighted when residents expressed their thanks following improvement works to their homes.

When our operatives work on refurbishment projects, we insist that they treat homes as if they were their own. This means that when work is complete, residents can expect to find a standard of finish as good as new.

Foster Property Maintenance has a wealth of experience to bring to this area. Our core strength is working on major property refurbishments, including planned cyclical improvements and refurbishments, void improvements, severely fire-damaged properties to those that have been abandoned or defaced."

FPM's Site Supervisor, Tony Green, praised the work of those involved, saying: "They made sure everything was spot on. I'd also like to thank Victoria Cotterall, Resident Liaison Officer and Claire Kent, Administration Assistant, for the role they each played."

Miss Smith, who works nights, said of the update: "It was a pleasure having the guys there and as I am a night worker I only saw them briefly, but was extremely happy with their attitude and the work carried out." She adds: "The installation has made a massive difference."

Jim Watson from Willingham said: "My kitchen only took seven days to complete from removing the entire old kitchen and leaving me with a very nice shiny new one. I would like to thank the Council for replacing my kitchen and my biggest thanks must go to Fosters who were very professional, polite and hardworking; I would give them 10/10."



● Foster Property Maintenance (FPM) complete the upgrade work as part of the Council's home improvement programme



We could help if you're struggling to meet any shortfall in your rent

If you receive housing benefit you may be able to get extra financial help with your housing costs.

Discretionary housing payments are short term financial assistance available to claimants who we consider need additional help to pay their rent.

Money is available for families who are in hardship and need some additional temporary assistance. We will also be providing a new round of funding for next financial year.

We can consider assisting you with any rent shortfall which is not already being met through the housing benefit scheme and we can also help with deposits and removal costs. To claim, you must already be in receipt of some housing benefit.

Discretionary housing payments may help if:

- You have been affected by the recent welfare reform changes and subsequently you have had your housing benefit reduced due to under-occupancy.
- You have been affected by the welfare reform changes and subsequently wish to downsize to a smaller property but cannot afford the deposit or other associated moving costs.
- You are single and under 35 and are affected by the restricted shared local housing allowance rate.
- You or someone in your family is disabled and needs an additional room for care needs.
- Your benefit has been capped due to the recent welfare reform changes.

This list is not exhaustive and each case would be considered on its own merit.

Money from the fund cannot be used to cover things such as service charges, rent arrears and shortfalls caused by housing benefit overpayments. If you are in doubt as to whether or not this fund may be able to help you, please do not hesitate to contact us and we can discuss your circumstances further.

Discretionary Housing Payments are awarded on a short-term basis and cannot be guaranteed.

Extra advice

We also work in partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau to offer a money advice service. This support can be in addition to receiving a discretionary housing payment if required. The advice is free, unbiased and confidential and can be very beneficial when it comes to budgeting when living on a low income.



For more information or to apply for a discretionary housing payment please visit www.scambs.gov.uk/dhp
You can also call us on 03450 450 061 to speak to someone about the fund or to set up an appointment with the Citizens Advice Bureau

Disability Open Day 2014

Did you know that when we surveyed you all in 2009 over 40% of you told us you had a disability or lived with someone who had a disability?

With tenants & leaseholders we set up a Disability Forum in 2010 and this group is working with the council to host a Disability Open Day on

Friday 31 October 2014 at the Council Offices in Cambourne 10AM - 4PM

The event will highlight services aimed at those living with disabilities, with charities, services, equipment and practical help; as well as providing a meeting place to share ideas, make new contacts and forge new friendships. We aim to have celebrities on the day, with fun events and informative stalls.

Put the date in your calendar now and look out for more information on our website nearer the time. We will be distributing posters to sheltered schemes and out to Parish Clerks.



Did you know?

South Cambs hold an annual Free Family Fun Day called Park Life

Come to Milton Country Park on Saturday 28 June and have a fantastic day out with all the family. Park Life is South Cambridgeshire District Councils largest public event, now in its sixth year, run in partnership with Cambridge Sports Lakes Trust.

Live music, stalls with local produce and entertainment will also be at the free fun-filled day that will run from 10am to 6pm (car parking will cost £4). By peddling down to this year's event you can also get a free bike service from 'Dr Bike'.

At Parklife people of all ages can get in the swing by trying out free sporting activities from golf, fishing, inflatables, kayaking, canoeing, and paddle boarding, to athletics, climbing, archery, football, den building and cycling.

Exclusive to this year's event to mark the arrival of Le Tour (Tour de France) on 7 July is the addition of a cycling village. We are also having a Commonwealth Games area (Glasgow 23 July - 04 August) and a World Cup arena (Brazil 12 June - 13 July) to celebrate the other big sporting events of 2014.

We are confirming activities all the time so please check our website for up to date details.

Around 5,000 people attended last year's event with approximately 450 people taking part in water sports such as canoeing, paddle-boarding and kayaking. The South Cambs Youth Council manned an entertainment stage with over 20 young people showcasing their talents.

We are really keen to hear from anyone who would like to have a stand at the event or anyone who would like to volunteer to steward. Please contact the Council now.

For more information about this year's event visit www.scambs.gov.uk/content/park-life or contact Kirsty Human on 03450 450500 kirsty.human@scambs.gov.uk



Park Life 2014

Park Life is an annual free family fun day held at Milton Country Park that draws crowds of over 5,000 local people. This year will see the sixth Park Life event take place and, as one of Cambridge's main Tour de France celebrations, expects to be the biggest yet.

Organised by South Cambridgeshire District Council, in partnership with Cambridge Sports Lakes Trust, Park Life gives visitors the opportunity to try a range of sports with a view to inspiring them to be more active and improve their health and wellbeing. Exclusive to this year's event, to mark the arrival of Le Tour on 7 July, is the special addition of a cycling village as well as a dedicated Commonwealth Games area and a World Cup arena.

The all inclusive family event also features an entertainment stage showcasing local talent, a host of stalls selling local produce, and exhibitions and displays from local groups.

When: 28 June 2014

Where: Milton Country Park, Milton, Cambridgeshire

Time: 10.00am - 6.00pm

*Carparking £4.00



What's on offer for visitors?

The activities planned for Park Life 2014 include:

- Cycling
- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Paddleboarding
- Fishing
- Climbing walls
- Inflatables
- Archery
- Golf
- Football
- Fencing
- Den building in the Wild Place
- Local produce and craft stalls
- Entertainment stage featuring live music
- Local charity and public sector information stands



Water Bills

The Water UK website www.water.org.uk has information on all the water company schemes across the UK (phone 0207 344 1844)

For example Anglian Water has a number of schemes:

Anglian Water Assistance fund - is a fund donation by Anglian Water and administered by Charis Grants Ltd. Grants are available to help individuals and families in need to clear water and sewerage debt and help them back to financial stability. Call 01733 421060 for an application form

Acquacare plus - available to customers who experience particular hardship because they use large amounts of water for essential purposes.

SoLow - If you have a water meter and use less than 75 cubic metres of water a year, then the SoLow tariff could save you money. You pay no standing charges but you will pay a higher charge per cubic metre than the standard rate charge.

If you're on a meter and on certain benefits, and either have three or more children living in the house under the age of 19 or someone in the household with a medical condition needing lots of water, you could get help from the WaterSure scheme. This scheme caps your bills at the average household bill for your company.

Some providers also offer other special tariffs and/or New Start/Restart (the name depends on where you live), a scheme that can match payments or write off some of your debt if you enter an arrears payment plan. For further advice call your water provider or ask for advice from the CAB.



Home Ownership

Do you think Home Ownership is out of your reach?
... Think again

With the Governments Help to Buy schemes it has been made easier for those individuals and families who can't afford to buy a new home on the open market. The Two main Help to Buy schemes are Shared Ownership and Help to Buy Equity Loan.

Shared ownership allow you to purchase a property in stages, usually starting with a minimum of 25%, you then pay a subsidised rent to the housing provider (usually a housing association). You are then able to purchase further shares as and when you please until you own the full 100% (or sometimes capped at 80%). If you prefer to remain in your property with just your initial share purchase then that's fine too. As you are only purchasing a share the deposit required is based on that amount so you could need as little as a 5% deposit.

Help to Buy Equity allows you to buy 100% of a brand new home from a registered developer but it's more affordable because you only have to raise 80% of the purchase price initially. The remaining 20% is covered by what's called an 'equity loan' from the government. This loan is 'interest free' for the first five years. From year six, you'll start paying a small monthly fee. You'll need to be able to fund at least 80% of the property price through a conventional mortgage with a lender but as lenders usually require you to have a deposit of at least 5%, your mortgage will typically be for 75% of the purchase price.

As a local authority tenant you get priority over other applicants. Visit www.helptobuyeastandsoutheast.uk.com to find out more.



Housing for Older People

Home-Link

your choice is your home

Making the right move

Getting older shouldn't mean losing our independence, especially when it comes to thinking about home. We all want the opportunity to live somewhere with our own front door, the reassurance of feeling secure and knowing assistance is on hand if there's an emergency. We may also want to remain involved with the wider community, our family and our friends.

How we can help

The Councils' and Housing Associations participating in Home-Link provide a range of studio, one and two bedroom flats and bungalows which are specifically for older people, called Sheltered Housing. Many of the homes have:

- A 24 hour emergency alarm service linked to a call centre and;
- Sheltered Housing staff, who get to know residents and their visitors, making sure they know about scheme activities, local services and support available from voluntary and statutory agencies.

Some Sheltered Housing provides on-site communal facilities, such as resident lounges, hobby rooms, a laundry, hairdressers, guest accommodation and garden areas. Sheltered Housing residents living in homes that do not have on-site communal facilities are actively encouraged to join activities at a nearby scheme.



Dobsons Choice

Dobson's Choice is the first web search engine designed for people with learning disabilities who have difficulty with reading and writing. It enables people to find relevant and accessible websites, and it's totally free!

Just go to www.dobsonschoice.co.uk

Dobson's Choice is designed to help people with learning disabilities to find their own information, advice and entertainment. Please encourage anyone you know who might benefit from this to use it.



Get on in Work, Learning and Volunteering

South Cambs District Council have teamed up with CHS Community Investment Services to offer FREE Employment, Education, Training & Volunteering Advice.

This service is completely confidential, offering friendly and helpful advice:

- Finding learning and training that is right for you
- Improving your reading, writing and maths
- Understanding the local job market
- Finding out about funding to support your learning
- Developing your CV
- Improving your Interviews and Applications
- Progressing in your current job
- Registering with and using online career tools
- Volunteering - and how it can help you get a job

Interested in a free one-to-one session with an adviser in the comfort of your own home.

Please contact Julie Fletcher on 01954 713352 or email julie.fletcher@scambs.gov.uk
Available for adults aged 19 plus (or 18 plus if a Jobcentre Plus customer).

Cambridgeshire Enterprising Communities - can provide help and support to people looking for work or wishing to start their own business. It can provide: Careers advice; Life-coaching; skills development; mentoring; business loans and connecting with local people. **Contact T:0300 111 3555 or via info@chsgroup.org.uk**

"Encouraging, positive and knowledgeable"

"Before I had the appointment, I thought it was going to be a waste of time..... After the first 10 minutes I felt as though the whole world had opened up to me"

Next of kin cards

Would it be clear to a stranger or the emergency services who to call on your behalf in an emergency? We would always advise you to have contact numbers in your wallet or purse, but an alternative to this is the nationally recognised Next of Kin card.

The cards can be obtained on request from the charity Lee Harrington set up in 1998 after his mother was rushed to hospital with 48 hours to live. The authorities tracked Lee down within 5 hours and information he supplied to them saved his Mum's life. Lee realised that had his Mum not carried his details the outcome would have been very different; so he set up the charity and now over 3 million people carry the NoK cards in the UK.

Cardboard cards are free on request.

To order send an SAE to:

Next of Kin card, Albany House, Concorde Street, Luton, Bedfordshire, LU2 0JD

Plastic cards are £1 and can be ordered online at www.nextofkin.com

Telephone Scams

Almost all of us have telephones. Phones are convenient and an essential part of life. However people can use them to defraud or confuse and we all need to be aware of some basic rules.

If you receive an unsolicited or unexpected telephone call, be on your guard as it may be a scam. Scams take many different forms but a common route which fraudsters use to contact victims is the cold telephone call. Each year many people fall victim to fraudsters - intent on stealing their personal and financial information and conning them out of their cash.

The fraudsters sound convincing, professional and may claim to represent a business you know, for example your bank or an official organisation. They may pressure you to act quickly, either because they want to trick you into believing you will miss a golden opportunity to make money or that you will suffer some sort of loss.



- NEVER give personal or financial information out to anyone who cold calls you on the telephone. Be cautious and if in doubt, hang up.
- NEVER assume the person calling is who they claim to be. Call them back to confirm - not on the number they give you, but on the head office number
- NEVER be embarrassed about reporting a scam. Call 101 or 999.

- In all cases, if it seems too good to be true, it probably is -

Typical scams:

Fraudsters may contact you by telephone claiming to represent your telecom provider. You may be told your account is in arrears and that you have to make an immediate payment to prevent your phone line from being disconnected. The fraudster may even offer to demonstrate that he has the ability to disconnect your phone line. This simple trick involves the fraudster pressing the mute button. There is no dial tone and you cannot dial out because the phone line is still actually connected, although it appears that the line is dead. The fraudster rings you back in the hope he has now proved he is a genuine telecoms representative, when of course he is not. The fraudster will then require you to make a payment.

OR

Elderly people are being targeted with a new telephone scam that involves con men posing as bank staff or police, a fraud watchdog has warned. The fraud, which has cost victims £7m in a year, is difficult to detect when well-executed.

An automated system calls the unsuspecting victim. Once they pick up the receiver the criminal, posing as a representative of a reputable organisation, claims an urgent need for their debit or credit card. In a cruelly ironic twist, this typically involves telling the bank customer their card has been cloned and fraud is about to be enacted on their account. The crook urges the victim to act straight away to avoid the disaster. If he or she can sense doubt, they urge their victim to put down the phone and ring back. However, the criminal simply stays on the line and either pretends to answer the phone or passes the receiver to another member of the gang.

It may sound far-fetched, but the scam is so believable that four in ten people fail to see through tricks. Once the details have been handed over, the criminal simply empties the account.

For useful information about all types of scams and how to stay safe: www.met.police.uk/docs/little_book_scam.pdf

Nuisance phone calls

To avoid nuisance calls that originate in the UK register your number FREE with the TPS (Telephone Preference Service) on 0845 070 0707 www.tpsonline.org.uk/tps/index.html

Stay safe.

Keeping yourself and other people safe

Reporting Crimes to the Police

In an emergency, where an immediate police response is required, dial 999. Where an immediate response is not required or if you are unsure as to whether the abuse constitutes a crime, honour based violence or Domestic Abuse dial 101.

Where to find Cambridgeshire County Council's Adult Safeguarding Guidance and Procedures:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/adultprot/

Mental Capacity and Deprivation of Liberty

Website: www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/social/mental
 Email: mca.dols@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
 Tel: 01223 715581

Safeguarding Children

Non Emergency - If there is no immediate danger or you need advice or information, you should call;

Children's Social Care Services Tel: 0345 045 5203 (8am to 6pm Monday to Friday)

Emergency Duty Team Tel: 01733 234724 (For all other times including weekends and Bank Holidays).

Emergency - If a child is in immediate danger or left alone, you should contact the police or call an ambulance (Call 999).

OFSTED Tel: 0300 123 1231 Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk (Education)

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Tel: 03000 616161 Email: enquiries@cqc.org.uk (Residential Care Homes)

Mental Health

Cambridgeshire Independent Advocacy Service - Tel: 01223 218500

Older People

Action on Elder Abuse - Tel: 0808 808 8141 www.elderabuse.org.uk

Age UK Cambridgeshire - Tel: 0300 666 9860 www.ageuk.org.uk

(Info Line 9.30am to 3.00pm - after these hours auto transfer to National Line)

COPE - Tel: 01223 364303 www.cambridgecope50.org

Disabilities

Disability Cambridgeshire - Tel: 01480 839192 www.disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk

DISH - Tel: 01480 830833 www.dish.org.uk

Camsight - Tel: 01223 420033 www.camsight.org.uk

Sense East - Tel: 0845 127 0066 www.sense.org.uk

Learning Disabilities

People First - Tel: 0208 874 1377 www.peoplefirstltd.com

Voiceability - Tel: 01223 555800 www.voiceability.org

Domestic Abuse Information

National Domestic Violence free phone 24-hour helpline -
 Tel: 0808 2000 247 www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk

Women's Aid - Tel: 01223 460947 (9.30am to 6pm)

Delicious Bread and Butter Pudding

A traditional pud that's easy and cheap to make.

Serves: 4



Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 12 slices day-old white bread
- 750ml of milk, double cream or a mixture of both
- 5 tablespoons caster sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- cinnamon to taste
- 165g raisins, sultanas or a mixture of both
- Optional additions
- marmalade
- cherry jelly

Method

Prep: 15min › Cook: 45min › Ready in: 1hr

1. Preheat oven to 170 C / Gas 3. Grease a 20cm baking dish.
2. Remove crusts from bread if you like. Butter all 12 bread slices on both sides. If you like, spread marmalade or cherry jelly on one side.
3. Arrange 4 slices of bread in dish. Sprinkle with dried fruit and cinnamon. Repeat this 3 times so that all 12 slices are arranged in 3 layers in baking dish.
4. Beat together milk or cream, sugar, eggs and salt. Pour over bread arrangement. Allow 5 mins for milk to soak into bread.
5. Bake for 45 minutes in the preheated oven.

Fish Pie

Ingredients

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| - 400g skinless white fish fillet | - small bunch parsley, leaves only, chopped |
| - 400g skinless smoked haddock fillet | - 100g butter |
| - 600ml full-fat milk | - 50g plain flour |
| - 1 small onion, quartered | - pinch freshly grated nutmeg |
| - 4 cloves | - 1kg floury potato, peeled and cut into even-sized chunks |
| - 2 bay leaves | - 50g cheddar, grated |
| - 4 eggs | |



Method

1. Poach the fish. Put the fish in the frying pan and pour over 500ml of the milk. Stud each onion quarter with a clove, add to the milk, with the bay leaves. Bring the milk just to the boil – you will see a few small bubbles. Reduce the heat and simmer for 8 mins. Lift the fish onto a plate and strain the milk into a jug to cool. Flake the fish into large pieces in the baking dish.
2. Hard-boil the eggs. Bring a small pan of water to a gentle boil, then carefully lower the eggs in with a slotted spoon. Bring the water back to a gentle boil, with just a couple of bubbles rising to the surface. Set the timer for 8 mins, cook, then drain and cool in a bowl of cold water. Peel, slice into quarters and arrange on top of the fish, then scatter over the chopped parsley.
3. Make the sauce. Melt half the butter in a pan, stir in the flour and cook for 1 min over moderate heat. Take off the heat, pour in a little of the cold poaching milk, then stir until blended. Continue to add the milk gradually, mixing well until you have a smooth sauce. Return to the heat, bring to the boil and cook for 5 mins, stirring continually, until it coats the back of a spoon. Remove from the heat, season with salt, pepper and nutmeg, then pour over the fish.
4. To assemble and bake. Heat oven to 200C/fan 180C/gas 6. Boil the potatoes for 20 mins. Drain, season and mash with the remaining butter and milk. Use to top the pie, starting at the edge of the dish and working your way in – push the mash right to the edges to seal. Fluff the top with a fork, sprinkle with cheese, then bake for 30 mins. Make up to a day ahead, chill, then bake for 40 mins.



Spring Wordsearch



Words to find:

april
 blossom
 bud
 bulbs
 bunny
 chick
 crocus

daffodil
 easter
 equinox
 foal
 hyacinth
 lamb
 narcissus

nest
 rainbow
 showers
 tadpole
 tulip
 umbrella

A gentle reminder for your diary -



June 2014

The last day for garden competition entries is 20 June



Park Life is taking place on 28 June

July 2014

TPG Elections - Deadline for your nominations to stand is 15 August



October 2014

Disability open day 31 October



Dont forget to bid for the Tenant sponsored community grants (see page 9)

If you wish to be more involved in tenant scrutiny contact Gill Anderton, Resident Involvement Team, South Cambs District Council, Cambourne Business Park, Camborne, CB23 6EA

A list of useful numbers for our customers to call back on:

SCDC Customer Contact Service

Benefits	-	03450 450 061
Building Control	-	03450 450 062
Development Control	-	03450 455 215
Development Services	-	03450 455 216
Elections	-	03450 455 214
Environmental Services	-	03450 450 063
Fraud	-	0800 731 1892
General Enquiries	-	03450 450 500
Housing Services	-	03450 450 051
Payments (automated)	-	03450 455 218
Revenues	-	03450 450 064

External SCDC Services

Housing & Heating Repairs		0800 085 1313
Gas Appliance Enquiries	-	0845 650 0065

Out of Hours (after 5:30pm)

Dangerous Structure Enquiries (Building Control)	01253 501 055
Environmental Health Emergency	01253 501 055
Homelessness Emergency Service	0844 736 8591

Website: www.scambs.gov.uk

For more information visit: www.scambs.gov.uk/tenant-information

 www.twitter.com/southcambs

 search 'South Cambridgeshire'

To keep costs as low as possible this magazine has been written and designed entirely by Council officers, and printed at very competitive rates. Further copies can be downloaded from our website or are available on request.