



Villages show TARAs are fun!



Residents enjoying a game of skittles at the Social Event

Residents from Twyford and Colden Common are looking forward to a Christmas celebration to round off a fantastic year.

Around 30 people enjoyed a skittles evening in July and they have also held two fundraising events.

The Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) combines tenants and leaseholders of both the City Council and A2dominion Housing Association across the two villages.

The six-strong committee is chaired by Sandie Benstead, of Twyford, who was elected in June 2009.

Sandie said: "In July we held a table top sale at Twyford Social

Club. The weather was against us – it absolutely poured with rain that day – but we still made £90 towards our first social evening.

"That was held a few days later at the social club and attracted around 30 residents. We arranged transport and the evening was rounded off by a game of skittles with two teams called Cliff's Crusaders and Sandie's Specials.

"Sandie's Specials won by one point – and no we're not calling it a draw Cliff!! The residents thoroughly enjoyed the evening."

Members of the TARA are due to hold a fundraising sale in Colden Common in October to raise funds for either a Christmas show or party for the residents.

They have been granted £400 from Winchester City Council's Community Chest fund.

INSIDE this issue...

- Top marks for Beryl
- A mystery shopper's story
- TACT's view of the Government review
- Meeting dates for 2009/2010

Hampshire Tenants join forces on standards in social housing



Three TACT members, Janet Berry, Alan Rickman and Beryl White joined forces with over 90 residents from 16 Housing Associations and Local Authorities throughout Hampshire to have their say about new standards being put together by the TSA (Tenant Service Authority).



The TSA, which already regulates Housing Association homes and are set to regulate Winchester City Council homes from 2010, have put together the new standards for social landlords following a national conversation run earlier this year.

Beryl White said: "It was great that three TACT members, Janet Berry, Alan Rickman and I, together with the Tenant Involvement Manager Glynis Cole were invited to the Hampshire and District Forum to discuss the new standards".

TACT members also spent part of their recent Independent Day going through and recording their comments on the new standards.



If you want to find out more about the National Conversation this can be found on the TSA website at www.nationalconversation.co.uk or by calling the Enquiries Team on 0845 230 7000.

A tenant-led future in Winchester!

Winchester tenants are more determined than ever to take the lead in their involvement with the Council.

Five members of TACT took part in a conference organised by TPAS – the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service.

TACT joint chair Alan Rickman, who was part of the Winchester delegation, said: "I learned that as council tenants we are not resident or tenant-led as much as we should be. We must not let the opportunity slip from our grasp and we must take up the challenge to do more."

He added: "This is not a criticism of Winchester City

Council. But the Government is encouraging tenants to be involved and the opportunity should not be missed."

TPAS is a national organisation and has a new Chief Executive, Michelle Reid, who is a breath of fresh air at a time when it is needed.



Tenants and Officers at the TPAS Conference

Alan had met her at previous meetings and she spent time with TACT during the conference at Birmingham in August.

Peter Marsh, Chief Executive of the Tenant Services Authority, did not escape TACT's attention either. He was quizzed by Alan during the opening session and understands the situation at Winchester more clearly.

Everyone from TACT worked hard networking, exchanging views and opinions and making the most of the facilities on offer.

Beryl White added: "We would like to thank the council officers and David Lumby, Tenant Participation Officer, who went with us to the conference."



Mystery Shopping

I am one of the 16 Mystery Shoppers.

We meet two or three times a year to discuss what areas of our service as tenants we would like to test.

So far we have been involved in two mystery shops to test whether Winchester City Council is giving tenants the service it says it does and is doing it properly.

The areas we have tested are:

- The Customer Services Staff in the City Offices, the people we talk to when we first contact the Council.
- Written Communication i.e. emails and letters to Landlord Services, the department that deals with housing service.

We never say we are mystery shoppers.

As a tenant I do believe that the City Council is improving its services to us. But the Council still has a long way to go.

A Mystery Shopper

Housing success for Beryl



Beryl receiving certificate from Richard Botham

Congratulations to Beryl White, the Afternoon Chair of TACT, who has been awarded the Level 2 Certificate in Housing from the Chartered Institute of Housing.

It is an introductory vocational qualification for the housing sector and was an intense course with four days in London and masses of home study.

Beryl had to deliver a series of tough assignments with support from a tutor.

The course was made up of four units:

- Housing Provision and Housing Organisations
- Customer Care and Communication Skills for Housing
- Careers and Opportunities in Housing
- Developing Skills for Working in Housing

As part of the communication section, Beryl had to deliver a presentation to her peers and chose 'Disability Awareness' as her topic which was the area and skills she used in her work life.

She said: "I am delighted with my achievement and found the course very challenging and thought provoking. The knowledge I have gained about Housing and the information I have gathered from other organisations I visited will be very useful in my involvement as Chair of TACT (Tenants and Council Together)."

Beryl worked closely with Winchester's Housing Officers and also visited A2dominion to gather information about their services.

A New beginning for the leaseholder forum

The Leaseholders Forum is all set to continue with renewed focus and enthusiasm with the election at their June meeting of Chair Elaine Fullaway and Vice Chair Helene James, both from Kings Worthy.

Elaine has been a leaseholder for 10 years and as well as Chairing the Leaseholder Forum is a member of TACT (Tenants and Council Together) and her local tenant's and leaseholder association in Kings Worthy.

Sixteen leaseholders attended a meeting with officers from the City Council to discuss 'a new beginning' for the forum. TACT Chairs, Beryl White and Alan Rickman spoke about Leaseholder involvement in TACT and the importance of tenants and leaseholders working together for a common cause. This was followed by the election of the committee and discussion on future agenda items, times and dates for future meetings and guest speakers.

At their meeting in September they invited City Cleaning to come along and talk about the cleaning service they provide which was followed by a

question and answer session. They also discussed and agreed their Terms of Reference.

The Forum meets in the Common Room at Godson House Sheltered Scheme, Lawn Street, Central Winchester, starting at 7.30pm and have agreed the following meeting dates for 2010:

- 19 January
- 20 April
- 21 September

So if you're a Leaseholder put the above dates in your diary, and if you are interested in attending future meetings call Elaine on Freephone 0800 716 987.

Contact the TACT chairs Alan Rickman or Beryl White if you want to find out more about TACT, their meeting dates, or want to raise any issues. You can call them on Freephone 0800 716 987 and leave a message or write to them at:

- **Alan Rickman,**
101 Taplings Road,
Winchester, SO22 6HG
- **Beryl White,**
2 Pine Road,
Bishop's Waltham,
Nr Southampton, SO23 1EH

This edition of Tenant News has been produced by a team including Alan Rickman, David Cruden, Sheila Greaves, Joan Downing, Angela Stevenson and Susen Harding.



TACT Meeting Dates



October 2009 - April 2010

Meetings are held on a Wednesday Afternoon from 2.00-4.00pm, and in the Evening from 7.30-9.30pm in The Common Room, Godson House, Central Winchester unless otherwise stated below.

21 October 2009

18 November 2009

16 December 2009

20 January 2010

17 February 2010

17 March 2010 (7.30-9.30pm)

21 April 2010

All tenants and leaseholders welcome

Now turn the magazine over to read

