

Houseproud

NEWS FOR TENANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

PRINCESS drops in



WHERE'S THE SUN WHEN YOU NEED IT? - The Princess shares a joke with City Council Leader Cllr Sheila Campbell. The sundial will become the centrepiece of the communal gardens at Makins Court.

The Princess Royal has opened the new look Makins Court sheltered housing scheme, developed by the City Council. During her visit Princess Anne met local resident Nena Duncan in her two bedroom flat, before popping into the residents' shop to meet Connie Turner. Then it was on to meet Valerie Viljoen and her husband Francois,

It was an extra special day for Makins Court residents Louis and Hazel Beresford, who have lived in Alresford for 60 years, as it was Louis' 84th birthday. The Princess chatted with residents and guests for half an hour and everyone was impressed with just how knowledgeable the Princess was about affordable and sheltered housing. (Continued on back page)



BIRTHDAY TREAT - HRH The Princess Royal meets Louis Beresford on his 84th birthday. Next to him is his wife Hazel and Mary Gay, who presented the Princess with a bouquet.

who live in the bungalows owned by Eastleigh Housing Association, the City's partner in this flagship project.

After unveiling a commemorative plaque, the Princess received a posy from resident Mary Gay and was then joined by City Council Leader Cllr Sheila Campbell to unveil a sundial, which will be placed in the communal gardens.

MAYOR IN NEW MARATHON

The Mayor of Winchester Cllr John Steel, has embarked on yet another marathon journey around the district, this time in a bid to visit as many of the residents of the City Council's sheltered housing schemes in one day as possible.

"It was lovely to see the Mayor, especially as he must be so busy," said Pauline McManus, Scheme Manager at King Harold Court. "He is always so warm and friendly and the residents were delighted to meet him again."



The Mayor meets residents at King Harold Court, Winchester, including Dolly Naylor (95) left and Win White (94) centre. Also pictured are Joan Dummer right and (back row - left to right) Jetta Everard, Pat Jones and Laura Harvey.

RENT INCREASE

Winchester City Council's Cabinet has agreed a 2% increase to council housing rent in April.

The cabinet considered a number of options, including increasing the rent by the government guideline of 3.5%, but opted for the lower increase after hearing that this would still leave a balance of £1.25m in the housing account next year, and after opposition from tenant representatives.

The 2% increase was supported by members of TACT (Tenants and Council Together, the Council's district-wide tenant consultative group), who were consulted throughout the process. The 2% increase represents an average rise of £2.16 per week - excluding any additional element of rent restructuring. Cabinet also agreed a 2.5% increase for garage rents.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Sheila Campbell, said "With Council Tax increasing across Hampshire next year, we will do anything we can do to help ease the burden on our tenants."

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LOOK OUT FOR CONTACT



WORDSEARCH

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

- | | | |
|---------|---------|-------------|
| Bait | Keepnet | Salmon |
| Bank | Line | Sandwiches |
| Bream | Maggot | Sinker |
| Carp | Mayfly | Spinner |
| Caster | Minnow | Stickleback |
| Catfish | Perch | Tench |
| Flask | Reel | Tiddler |
| Float | Roach | Trout |
| Heron | Rod | Umbrella |
| Hook | Rudd | Waders |

Put a toe in the water and make a splash with our fishy Wordsearch in this edition of Houseproud. A £15 voucher will be on its way to you, provided that you are the first correct entry drawn out of the hat. Entries should be returned by Friday 11th April 2003.

Send your entries to: Housing Services, Winchester City Council, FREEPOST, Licence No. SO6048, Winchester SO23 9BR.

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Daytime Tel. No.:

For competition rules send an SAE to the above address.

WORDSEARCH WINNER



Congratulations to Mrs. Beatrice Morgan (87) of central Winchester, whose correct entry was drawn in our Fireworks Wordsearch. £15 worth of vouchers are on their way!

ACCESS For All

Does the Housing Service treat all its customers the same regardless of their colour, ethnic origin or religious beliefs? We aim to find out. Our objective is to operate policies and practices which help to ensure equal treatment for all our customers. We have recently developed a strategy which aims to identify areas where we fail to do this and to take the action necessary to meet this objective.

The Housing Services Strategy for Equal Access & Treatment in Service Delivery sets out how the service intends to go about ensuring it meets the needs of all its customers and how it can encourage those from minority groups to become more involved with their service.

Statistics show that at the 2001 census only 2.2% of Winchester City Council's community were black or minority ethnic and research has shown that smaller groups are more vulnerable to discrimination and isolation and are less likely to challenge racism if they encounter it.

Having regard to customers from minority groups is important even where the community is small as these customers may find it more difficult to access the services they need due to poorly developed local support networks. We need to get a true picture of:

- ▶ how close we come to delivering the same standard of service to all our customers
- ▶ the things we do which stop people receiving the service they need
- ▶ whether all customers know about the services that are on offer

We want to involve black and minority ethnic customers on a regular basis in planning and reviewing the service in a similar way that TACT (Tenants And Council Together) currently operates.

You may be contacted in the near future regarding whether you would be interested in attending regular meetings of the Asian and Black and Other Minority Ethnic Housing Services User Group, to discuss the services we provide and identify any inequalities and barriers to access.

We are also interested in your views on the Strategy as it stands. It has been presented to TACT and discussed with Housing Services staff and elected members. Their views have been incorporated into the document.

If you are interested in receiving a summary of the Strategy or if you would identify your cultural background as being part of a minority group and are interested in being involved in the Users Group, please contact Janette Palmer on 01962 848577.

PVCu Window Repairs Report Cards

With many properties now having had PVCu windows fitted since the 1980's, a repairs procedure is needed and we intend to carry this out in conjunction with our rolling programme for external repair and painting.



At addresses where external work will be carried out this summer, you will be given a Customer Care card as usual by the Clerk of Works plus a postage paid card for reporting any faults you may have with your PVCu windows. We would ask you to complete and return it to the City Offices so that we can arrange for any necessary repairs to be carried out by our specialist contractor.

If you should have any queries about this please contact Andrew Kingston on 01962 848240.

CHANGES TO SHELTERED HOUSING



From April 1st there will be changes to the way your sheltered housing services are funded. These include support services you receive from your Scheme Manager and the provision of community alarms.

These changes are happening because of the introduction of a new government programme called *Supporting People*. The aim of Supporting People is to improve the funding arrangements and quality of housing-related support services across the country. This article explains how the Supporting People Programme may affect you, especially if you receive Housing Benefit.

If you get Housing Benefit:

After April 1st Housing Benefit will continue to be paid towards your rent, as previously, but it will no longer pay for the support services or the community alarm available at your home. Because of this the amount of Housing Benefit you receive will reduce. *However you will not be worse off under these arrangements.* This is because the costs of these services will be met for you by the Supporting People Programme through a new **Supporting People Grant**. This grant will be paid directly to your service provider (*your landlord or someone providing support on the landlord's behalf*).

If you don't get Housing Benefit:

If you don't currently get Housing Benefit, and instead pay for your support services yourself, then there will be no change in your circumstances; you will continue to pay for the costs of both your rent and your support services yourself. Again, **you will not be worse off** under these arrangements.

Personal Care Services

Personal care and home care services arranged by yourself privately, or through Social Services, are unaffected by these changes.

If you have any questions about the changes outlined above you can contact your Scheme Manager who can then contact the Hampshire Supporting People Team for a response on your behalf.

External Repair & Painting Programme

As in previous years the Council will write and advise you which contractor will be carrying out external repair and painting at your home. This year the letter will contain added information so that you are aware of where the work is expected, the type of materials used, and the methods and standards specified by the Council. We hope that this improved information will help you with any queries you may have and assist with any planning you may wish to make to facilitate the work. **However, if you should have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Gaynor Bromley on 01962 848141.**

GET IT TAPED

If you are visually impaired or have a friend or neighbour who would like HOUSEPROUD delivered to their home on an audio cassette, please call Glynis Cole on Freephone 0800 716987 for your copy today. These publications are recorded by the Winchester & District Talking Newspaper Association. **Larger printed versions of HOUSEPROUD can also be made available, call the above Freephone number to obtain your free copy.**

NASTY NIFFS IN LIFTS

No Smoking signs will be placed in city blocks of flats in the hope of deterring people from making them so unpleasant for others. Not only is smoking in a confined space putting other people's health at risk, but it makes the lifts smell awful for visitors and other residents.

COMPACT LATEST

The Tenant Participation Compact is being reviewed by a working party of tenants, officers and councillors. It is working to strengthen the Compact and update it to reflect the current opportunities for tenant involvement. Its action plan will include targets for improving the service in line with the Best Value continuous improvement initiative.

RENT BY DIRECT DEBIT

As part of the ongoing review to improve the amount of payment options available to tenants, we will be increasing the number of direct debit collection dates in any one month. Tenants who do not currently pay by direct debit will receive notification in the new financial year of the revised payment options available.

CUSTOMER CARE CARDS

Please don't forget to fill in your Customer Care cards when a job has been completed. It not only helps us to keep an eye on how our contractors are performing but also helps us to maintain standards. We make a note of all your comments and of course postage is free.

YOUR RENT ACCOUNT

Please remember to have your tenancy reference number handy when making ANY enquiry about your account, either in person at the City Offices or by phone. This seven-digit reference number is unique to you and your tenancy. You will be asked for this reference number before details relating to your rent account are given.

All correspondence that is sent from Housing Services, along with your plastic rent payment card will quote this number.

RENT PAYMENTS

When making payments for your rent account at the Cashiers in the City Offices, please ensure you have your plastic payment card with you. If you pay by post, it is most important you write your tenancy reference number on the reverse of the cheque.

NEW Housing Manager

There have been some changes to the Housing Management Team and by popular demand, we bring you a round up of the new faces and the areas that they cover in a handy guide for you to keep. The district consists of seven areas, and each of these has its own Area Housing Manager.

You will find below a description of what each job entails and you can find out about

your Area Housing Manager using our map and we have also provided full contact details for each Housing Manager.

In charge of the team is of course, **Bob Merrett, Director of Health & Housing.** **Robert Heathcock is Head of Health & Housing Management and Luke Bingham is Team Leader (Housing Management).**

Area Housing Managers

Each Area Housing Manager will be responsible for an area containing between 600 and 900 properties. Their duties cover the full range of Housing Management functions, including tenant participation and consultation, management of sheltered schemes and arrears recovery.

AREA 1 MARK BARNETT Tel. 01962 848142

Email: mbarnett@winchester.gov.uk

Mark's area covers Old and New Alresford, Bighton, Bishops Sutton, Bramdean and Cheriton as well as part of central Winchester. This includes the following sheltered housing schemes: Chiltern Court and Makins Court in Alresford, as well as Danemark Court, Richard Moss House, Godson House and Lawn House in Winchester.



AREA 5 ANGELA SIMPSON Tel. 01962 848467

Email: asimpson@winchester.gov.uk

Angela covers the villages of Denmead, Hambledon, Corhampton, Meonstoke, Droxford, Shedfield, Curdrige, Bishops Waltham, Durley, Upham, West Meon, Kilmeston and Exton, including the sheltered housing schemes at Pine Road, Greens Close and White Wings.



AREA 2 DOMINIC AMANS Tel. 01962 848506

Email: damans@winchester.gov.uk

Dominic is the newest member of the team and looks after Stanmore including sheltered housing schemes at Airlie Corner, Drummond Close, King Harold Court, Lisle Court and The Valley.



AREA 6 FIONA HILL Tel. 01962 848198

Email: fhill@winchester.gov.uk

Fiona's area covers Highcliffe as well as the villages of Wickham, Soberton, Boarhunt, Southwick, Widley and Swanmore. This includes sheltered housing schemes at Mildmay Court, Normandy Court, Penton Place and Spring Vale.



AREA 3 AMBER CROSSKEY Tel. 01962 848400

Email: acrosskey@winchester.gov.uk

Amber looks after Weeke and Abbotts Barton, as well as the villages of Hursley, Sparsholt and Crawley. She also covers the sheltered housing schemes at East Acre, Hyde Lodge, Simmonds Court and Stoney Lane.



AREA 7 KATE MOOGE Tel. 01962 848260

Email: kmooge@winchester.gov.uk

Kate looks after the villages in the Itchen Valley as well as Kings Worthy, Twyford, Colden Common, Otterbourne, Compton and Owslebury, which includes the sheltered housing schemes at Harwood Place, Hyde Gate, Northfields, Saxon Road and Spring House Close.



AREA 4 PETER ROBERTS Tel. 01962 848466

Email: proberts@winchester.gov.uk

Peter looks after Winnall, as well as properties at Micheldever, Itchen Stoke, Littleton, Headbourne Worthy and Wonston. He covers sheltered housing schemes at Southbrook Cottages and at Chester Court, Firmstone Road (old and new) and Colson Close.

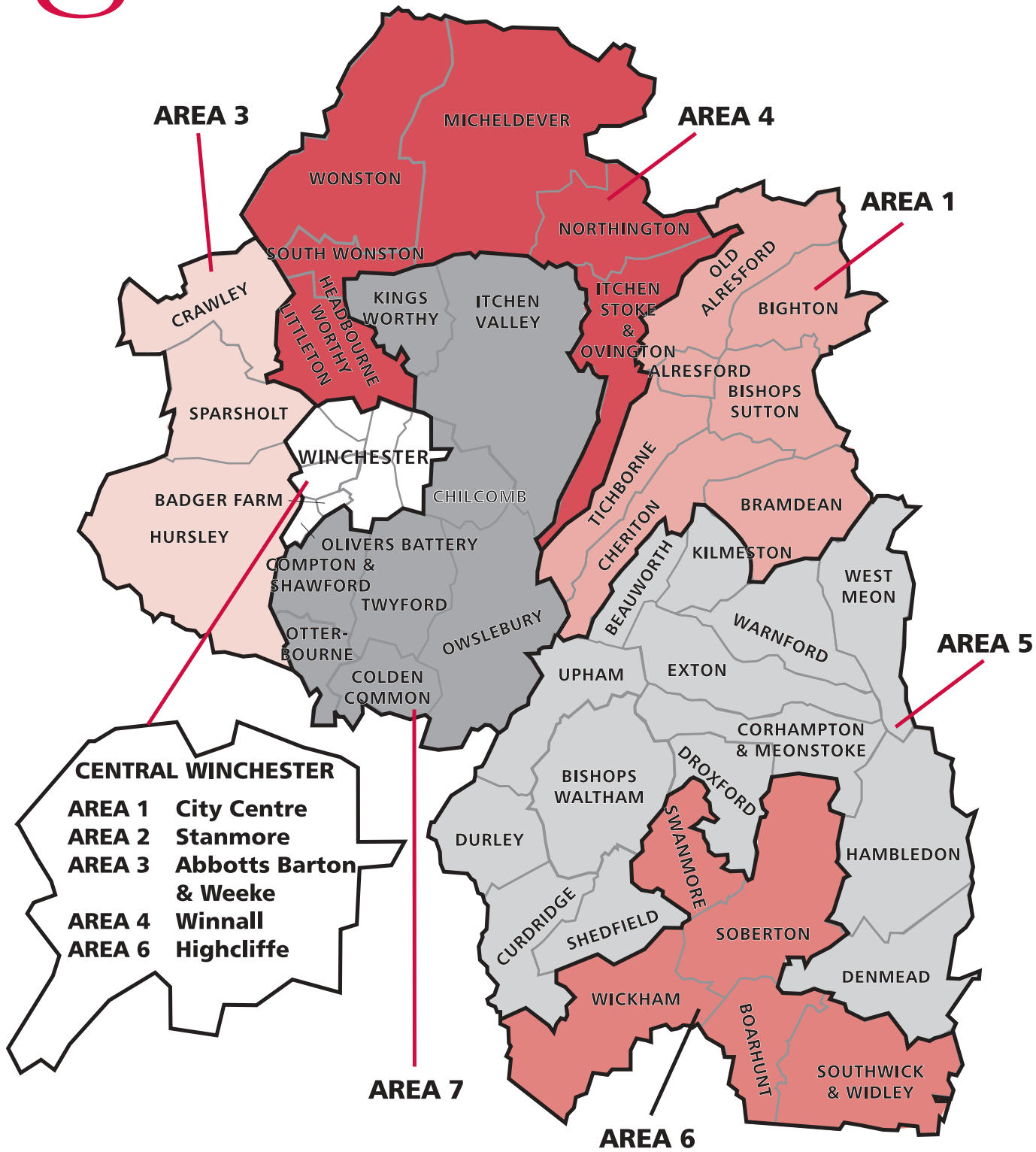


ZANDRA WINDEBANK is the Arrears & Enforcement Officer and has responsibility for the management and control of the rent arrears recovery service across the district. She takes on serious cases if legal action becomes necessary and represents the Council in court and at evictions.

Tel. 01962 848343

Email: zwindebank@winchester.gov.uk

LOOK Management Team



Three Administrative Technicians provide vital back up as part of the Housing Management team. They give administrative and practical support to the Area Housing Managers, as well as the management of garages let to non Council Tenants and T.V. licensing.

Zadia Green

Tel. 01962 848148

email:

zgreen@winchester.gov.uk



Margaret Kilcommons

Tel. 01962 848375

email:

mkilcommons@winchester.gov.uk



Eddie Pillinger

Tel. 01962 848375

email:

epillinger@winchester.gov.uk



LOUISE MCMAW is Community Relations Officer. Louise deals with serious nuisance and cases of persistent anti-social behaviour. She works with many different agencies, such as Social Services and the Police, in an attempt to resolve issues.

Tel. 01962 848133

Email: lmcmaw@winchester.gov.uk



GLYNIS COLE is Tenant Liaison Officer, she is a specialist officer who promotes and co-ordinates tenant involvement throughout the district. As well as dealing with Tenant Participation strategy and publications, she works closely with the Tenants Associations, TACT and the Area Housing Managers.

Tel. Freephone 0800 716987

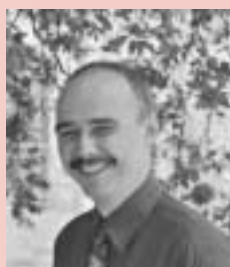
Email: gcole@winchester.gov.uk



STEVE TONG is Supported Housing Manager and is responsible for supported housing which includes the extra care sheltered schemes at Victoria House and Matilda Place, the hostels for homeless persons and the re-settlement service.

Tel. 01962 848324

Email: stong@winchester.gov.uk



LESLEY PARADISE is Supported Housing Officer. Lesley provides an intensive housing service to help certain groups of tenants cope with the management of their homes.

Tel. 01962 848436

Email: lparadise@winchester.gov.uk



BEST VALUE REVIEW COMPLETE

The Council, with the support of tenants and other specialists, has undertaken a comprehensive Best Value review of the Housing Service. This review has now been completed and a wide range of improvements have either already been made or will be made over the next five years. These will all contribute towards ensuring that the Housing Service is something of which we can all be proud. Proposed Improvements include:

- **Improving Performance** - a number of steps will be taken to improve performance in areas which are currently not achieving their targets, such as homelessness applications, re-letting of empty properties, and repair response times.
- **Better Financial Management** - reduce void periods, to ensure value for money from support services, to make the Community Alarm service self financing, greater promotion of direct debit for rent payments and to charge rent in advance for new tenancies.
- **Improved Services for Tenants** - providing more information at the time of tenancy sign-up, holding local surgeries at sheltered housing schemes, ensuring tenants priorities are considered when preparing business plans and a number of steps to improve customer care.
- **More Effective Use of Information Technology** - offering on-line payments for rent and improvements ensuring comprehensive performance information is available on the Council's website.

- **Clear Strategies for the Future** - developing the Housing Strategy and Housing Revenue Account Business Plan to ensure they are "fit for purpose". It also includes developing a Homelessness and an Equalities Strategy and to undertake a comprehensive options appraisal exercise to identify the most appropriate way of providing housing services in the future.

During the course of the review, the service did not stand still and a number of improvements identified by the Review have already been implemented. These have included:

- **The new Rents & Business Planning Forum** - created to address TACT's concerns over the business planning process and rent setting.
- **A New Tenants Handbook** - prepared, approved and produced with a tenant team.
- **The relocation of Tenant Liaison** - moved to the Housing Management team, recognising the responsibilities of Area Housing Managers to promote and co-ordinate tenant involvement in their areas.
- **The relocation of Area Property Surveyors** - relocated to operate from hot-desks at the contractors depot and in the main Housing office to address communication issues with the Council's main responsive repairs contractor.
- **The relocation of Hostel Management** - staff involved in delivering the service have transferred to the Housing Management team, recognising that hostels have a direct link with the Supported Housing service.

RENTS & ARREARS

Following the consultation exercise in the June edition of Houseproud, the key actions that are contained in the Rent and Areas final report include:

- Encourage tenants to pay by Direct Debit by increasing the number of dates in the month when payments can be collected. Also offering financial incentives to tenants who pay by Direct Debit and maintain clear rent accounts.
- Providing more information on rent accounts through the Council's website. Possibly extending this facility to checking balances, requesting rent statements and eventually accepting payments via the Internet.
- Improving tenant access to a free and comprehensive debt counselling and money advice service through a partnership arrangement with the Citizens Advice Bureaux in the Winchester District.
- Retaining the Rents and Arrears Services within the Health and Housing Department. Keeping the existing structure whereby Area Housing Managers have a role in dealing with all issues, including rent arrears.

ESTATE Management

The Estate Management team has recommended a number of improvements including:

- Upgrading the policy and practice for dealing with anti-social behaviour, aiming to deal with cases more efficiently and effectively whilst improving the information available to customers.
- Structuring sheltered housing to provide a cost-effective service where supply is matched by demand, allowing it to remain a vibrant and sustainable part of the community.
- Ensuring that new tenants are provided with the correct information and advice when they sign up for new tenancies. Existing tenants, will have more contact with their Housing Service.
- The setting up of district surgeries to make it easier for tenants to contact housing management officers.
- Increasing and sustaining tenant involvement across the district, ensuring that the correct level of resources is allocated.
- Introducing a tenants incentive scheme, giving an enhanced level of service to those who comply with the tenancy conditions and maintain clear rent accounts.

PROPERTY SERVICES

Key actions from the Property Services Best Value Review team include:

- Raising the financial means test limit from £500 to £4,000 on disabled adaptations, ensuring many of the aids and adaptations fitted for tenants are carried out that much quicker, and with the minimum of bureaucracy.
- The services of a dedicated occupational therapist will be enlisted initially for a period of one year. This will mean that City Council tenants will benefit from the services of a dedicated specialist to assess and prioritise their needs. The occupational therapist will work at the city offices as part of the Property Services team.
- Revised sign-up procedures, minimal void (re-let) periods, minimum void standards, and tighter controls on checking tenants in and out of properties.
- Expanding the ways in which tenants can report and track their repair requests (i.e. by access through the Internet).
- Promoting closer partnership working with all our local contractors, including establishing minimum service standards.
- Establishing better-targeted pre and post inspection of repair jobs to ensure quality is maintained.
- Moving the Area Property Surveyors to the Bar End depot to work closer with Serco.
- Greater involvement of tenants in setting and agreeing work programmes, specifications, performance monitoring and post-contract reviews.
- Carrying out a second House Condition Survey to underpin the long-term management of your homes and to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

HOUSING STRATEGY & POLICY

The work of the Housing Strategy and Policy Best Value Review Panel has concentrated on improving performance in two main areas, the Community Alarm Service and Homelessness/Housing advice.

Key Improvements include:

- Expanding the services offered by Community Alarm section
- Improving standards of service to customers of Community Alarms
- Offering more effective housing advice
- Reducing the use of Bed & Breakfast for homeless families
- Providing a women's refuge
- Improving reception facilities for those seeking housing advice

COLE'S COLUMN

Dear Tenants,

This edition of HOUEPROUD has turned out to be a right royal one, with lots of photos of the official opening of Makins Court. It was certainly worth all the hard work and planning as Princess Anne, The Princess Royal, spent much longer than anyone expected looking around and chatting to residents. Alresford has never seen anything like it and I think it will be quite a while before we see it again!



Glynis Cole

There has been lots of hard work put into the Best Value Review of the Housing Service too and in this edition we bring you a complete round up of all the decisions that have been made and the actions that will be taken in the years and months ahead.

Inside you will also find an up to date guide to the Housing Management team, including the latest additions - new Area Housing Manager Dominic Amans and new Supported Housing Officer, Lesley Paradise. You will see that there have been slight changes to the areas that the Housing Managers cover, but the map should help you to contact your Area Housing Manager.

Finally a thank you to everyone who sent cards and good wishes to me while I was away on compassionate leave, they were much appreciated.

Don't forget, you can call me any time if you want more information on tenant activity in your area - and calls are free on 0800 716987. If I am not in the office you can leave a message and I will return your call as soon as I can.

Best wishes,

ASBESTOS IN THE HOME

You should have had a copy of our *Asbestos in the Home* booklet delivered with this edition of HOUSEPROUD, which addresses questions and concerns about asbestos in homes. It explains what it is, where it is found, why it might be a problem and how to deal with it. We suggest that you pop it in your Tenants Handbook for safekeeping.

If, for some reason, you have not received a copy of *Asbestos in the Home*, please call Barbara Howells on 01962 848458.

HELP Beat Benefit Fraud!

The ANTI-FRAUD HELPLINE has been set up by Winchester City Council, as part of its drive to beat fraud. If you suspect that someone is making a fraudulent claim or receiving benefits to which they are not entitled, please call the ANTI-FRAUD HELPLINE in confidence. If you would like to speak to someone during normal working hours **please ring**

01962 848173

If you would like to leave an anonymous message AT ANY TIME **please ring**

01962 848306

Call now. This line is open 24 hours a day. All calls will be treated in complete confidence.

WHAT IS HOUSING OR COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT?

HOUSING BENEFIT is available to anyone on a low income who has to pay rent for the property that they are living in.

COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT is available to all Council taxpayers on a low income, who are resident in a property.

There is also an alternative benefit called Second Adult Rebate that may be claimed where there is one person liable to pay the Council Tax and they have other adults living with them who are on a low income. This benefit is an attempt to compensate for the loss of the single person discount.

How are these benefits paid?

HOUSING BENEFIT - The amount of rent that you have to pay to the Council will be reduced by the amount of benefit that you are entitled to.

COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT - Your Council Tax bill will be reduced by the amount of any Council Tax benefit that you are entitled to.

How do I know if I will be entitled to these benefits?

- If you receive Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance (income based) you will generally receive 100% help with your eligible rent and 100% help with your Council Tax.
- If you DO NOT receive Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance (income based) your weekly income is calculated and compared with your applicable amount - figures set by the Government based on your personal circumstances such as age, disability and size of family.
- If your weekly income is less than your applicable amount you will receive maximum Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, i.e. 100% of your eligible rent and 100% of your Council Tax.
- If your income is higher than your applicable amount, your maximum Housing Benefit is reduced by 65% of the difference and your maximum Council Tax Benefit is reduced by 20% of the difference.
- If you have additional adults living with you, known as non-dependants, then your Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit will be reduced to reflect an assumed contribution that they make to household expenses based on the income that they receive.

For further information, advice or for an application form, please contact the Benefit Office on 01962 840222.

YOUR GARDEN NOT OURS

The Council has seen an increasing number of requests for work to be carried out in tenants' gardens. Apart from tenants living in sheltered accommodation, under the terms of your Tenancy Conditions, it is your responsibility to maintain your garden, ensuring that the grass is kept short and boundary hedges and shrubs are well maintained. Rubbish must not be dumped or stored as this can present a health risk.

The Council will not undertake to carry out maintenance work in your garden. In cases of extreme difficulty i.e. disability or infirmity, and where you have no family living locally, your Area Housing Manager will be able to refer you to a charity that may offer help. There is usually a small charge involved.

If you fail to keep your garden to a reasonable standard and do not carry out the improvements requested by the Area Housing Manager, we will serve a Notice of Seeking Possession for breach of Tenancy Conditions. This is the beginning of legal action, which could result in you losing your home.

Should you have a problem with a tree that is diseased, dangerous or overgrown, you must report it to your Area Housing Manager who will have the tree inspected and arrange for any necessary work to be carried out. If the tree is growing in your garden, you may be liable for a recharge for any works carried out, or be asked for a contribution. Please note that some trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders and others are protected because they are in a Conservation Area. It may be a criminal offence to lop or cut down trees without consent.

If your garden is becoming a burden, contact us on 01962 848140 and we may be able to arrange a transfer to a property without a garden.

(Continued from front page)



PLEASED TO MEET YOU - Nena Duncan gives Princess Anne a guided tour of her two bedroom flat, accompanied by Scheme Manager Carole Barnes.

Although the Princess had had a very busy day with four engagements in Hampshire, it was obvious that she had enjoyed her visit to Makins Court too as the helicopter of the Queen's Flight gave a royal salute as it lifted off from the adjoining Stratton Bates recreation ground. It seems that this is the only royal visit that Alresford has ever had and it will certainly be one that the residents of Makins Court will remember for a long time to come.



KITCHEN CAPERS - The Princess Royal calls in to meet Valerie Viljoen and her husband Francois, the newest residents of Makins Court, in their two bedroom bungalow.

The first phase of this sheltered housing scheme, constructed by Benson Ltd, began in 2000, providing 16 elderly persons flats, a Scheme Manager's house and communal facilities. Wheelchair-friendly, all the flats are self contained and the scheme incorporates a lounge, dining room, kitchen and communal facilities like guest suite and laundry, with space for an assisted bathroom should the need arise. The 12 one and two bedroom bungalows were completed this summer. The scheme has cost the City Council and Eastleigh Housing Association in excess of £3m.



OFFICIAL OPENING - The Mayor of Winchester, Cllr John Steel helps the Princess to unveil the commemorative plaque, which will be placed in the entrance hall at Makins Court.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

Doris Rose has gained her NVQ Level 3 in Care after 18 months of hard work. She is Scheme Manager for Airlie Corner and Lisle Court and joined the City Council in 1995. Doris has a wealth of experience working for elderly people and previously worked for Hampshire Social Services and for St James' in Portsmouth.

Doris loves to keep her brain active and started her working life as a bookkeeper. She confesses she can't sit still and enjoys studying in her spare time, which is just as well as the NVQ needed lots of written work and research, although with her long experience in the care sector, she found her depth of knowledge an immense help.

"Who knows where you can get to if you work hard," says Doris who recommends that if young people want to succeed in their profession, they must grab all the training they can get.

Doris is a hard worker and has always worked full time, despite bringing up six children - three boys and three girls.



Doris Rose

TACT AGM

WEDNESDAY 21st MAY 2003
SAXON SUITE,
WINCHESTER GUILDHALL
7.30 - 9.30 pm

When the new committees for both the afternoon & evening groups will be elected for the coming year

All Welcome

Refreshments will be served after the meeting
Wheelchair access

Only registered members of TACT will be able to vote

For further information
and to book your free transport,
contact Glynis Cole on
FREephone 0800 716987

TACT is Tenants and Council Together, the Council's district-wide Consultative Group