

Houseproud

NEWS FOR TENANTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

SUMMER STUNNERS

Bernie Sheppard of Mitford Road, Alresford, has scooped the top prize in our Best Front Garden competition 2004. The judging team travelled the district to visit gardens large and small and Bernie's perfect plot was voted number one for its immaculate grooming.

Bernie and his wife Helen have lived in Alresford for 45 years and they keep their display on top form by deadheading and feeding their tubs, planters and borders regularly. Their garden is small but perfectly formed and the couple have even found room for a bubble fountain in this green oasis, which is a riot of colour packed with every kind of cottage garden plant.



FLOWER POWER - Scheme Manager Gloria Pike (right) with residents Betty Wadham and Ray Stratton and Assistant Scheme Manager Sally Dunn, at Victoria House, winner of the Best Sheltered Scheme Garden.

Best Sheltered Scheme winner was Victoria House in the city centre where, thanks to Scheme Manager Gloria Pike and her willing waterers, a gloriously colourful display is sustained throughout the summer months to delight the 23 residents who love sitting in their sheltered courtyard



MASTER OF ALL HE SURVEYS - Bernie Sheppard from Alresford, winner of the Best Front Garden competition.

garden. Assistant Managers Sally Dunn and Denise Stephens, along with four care assistants, water the blooms at this Extra Care scheme, which also boasts a scree garden and a massed planting of Japanese anemones, maintained by Serco. Some of the residents have sponsored individual planters, while the rest are paid for from the scheme's amenity fund.



BOOMING LOVELY - Joan Sherfield of West Meon, winner of the Best Hanging Basket category.

The Best Hanging Basket Award went to Joan Sherfield of Long Priors, West Meon, who had produced an incredible display of over 50 hanging baskets crammed with beautiful fuchsias, geraniums and petunias. The baskets were strung along the length of her home and take around an hour to water every day, a job which Joan enjoys and doesn't see as a chore.

Sandy Worth of Water Meadow Nursery in Cheriton provided the judging expertise for this annual competition staged by the Health & Housing department, but it proved a tough challenge with the standard of entries extremely high. However, she was so impressed with the interest that the residents had created at Chester Court sheltered housing scheme, that she gave a special Judge's prize to John McDonagu and the residents for their planting for brightening up a small corner of the city.

All the prize winners received garden vouchers and Sandy Worth presented a selection of plants for a shady corner from Water Meadow Nursery and Herb Farm in Cheriton, as her Judge's prize.

NEW HEAD OF LANDLORD SERVICES

Richard Botham has been appointed as the new Head of Landlord Services, responsible to the Director of Health & Housing for all Council Housing issues. This is a new post set up to ensure that ambitious plans for the future of the Council's housing are delivered in the coming years.



Richard Botham

Formerly Head of Business Services, Richard has worked very closely with tenants on rents, Right to Buy and Housing finance. He has worked in local government since 1981 in a variety of roles including accountancy, procurement and waste management. He has worked with the Housing Service since 1999 and has been responsible for the development of the Council's Housing Business Plan and the implementation of rent restructuring and is currently co-ordinating the review of housing options for the future management of the Housing stock.

"I am looking forward to working even more closely with tenants and staff to ensure that the high standard of the current service is maintained and improved in the future. Winchester's housing is in good condition and well on course to meet the Government's Decent Homes standard by 2010. However, making sure that we have enough resource to invest in the stock and the service generally will be a real challenge," said Richard.

"I am fortunate to take on responsibility for a service that has been operating well for many years, with tenants expressing very high satisfaction with both their homes and the service they receive."

mini HOUSEPROUD

It was felt that as tenants have been swamped with questionnaires and newsletters lately that you would appreciate a 'mini' Houseproud. Normal service will be resumed in the spring, when Houseproud will return to its usual size.

NEW METHODS OF PAYMENT

You can now pay for the following services via the internet and touch tone telephone:

- council tax
- business rates
- parking penalty charge notices
- housing and garage rent accounts
- general invoices (internet only) e.g. housing management and sewerage charges, commercial rents, Piper Lifeline accounts, pitch hire
- housing benefit overpayments.



Internet payments can be made via the Winchester City Council website on www.winchester.gov.uk and telephone payments can be made by dialling **0845 6024438** and using the numbers on the telephone key pad to enter the account and payment details.

If you want to use the new methods of payment you should have your account details handy, together with your debit or credit card details. Debit card payments are accepted for all services and credit cards for parking penalty charge notices and general invoices.

Payments made up to 3pm will be credited to accounts at the end of the working day. Payments made after 3pm will be processed at the end of the following working day.

DON'T GET YOUR PIPES IN A TWIST

Southern Water has been sending out letters to households in the district informing them that they are "legally responsible" for the water supply pipe which brings water into their property, offering an annual insurance scheme to cover households for repairs to leaks on this pipe.

Council tenants and leaseholders are NOT responsible for this pipe. As your landlord it is the Council who will arrange any necessary repairs if a leak occurs. Tenants should ignore this letter and **NOT** pay any money to Southern Water for this insurance cover.