



on the house

housing news for Winchester City Council tenants and leaseholders

In agreement – new pact signed by **all!**

Tenants, Councillors and Housing staff have signed a new Agreement, known as the Tenant Participation Compact, paving the way for greater involvement and consultation in Winchester's housing services.

The Agreement was formally signed at a ceremony at Godson House, Winchester, attended by TACT joint chairs Alan Rickman and Beryl White and other members of the group, Cllr Tony Coates, Portfolio Holder for Housing and by Richard Botham, Head of Landlord Services (pictured right).

Beryl White said: "The Agreement sets out clearly the roles,

responsibilities and duties of everyone involved in our housing services – whether you are a tenant, member of staff or councillor.

"I have only lived in Winchester for two years but I have found it very easy and rewarding to get involved in the service – we achieve a great deal but it is also friendly and good fun!"

The Agreement includes a useful star chart for involvement – one star activities do not take much time whereas three stars require a more frequent level of commitment.

Richard Botham, Head of Landlord Services, welcomed the new Agreement: "We really value the advice and feedback we receive from TACT and other tenant groups.



The success of our landlord services is largely thanks to the partnership we have all built over the years!"

Cllr Coates added: "I must thank the enthusiastic and dedicated tenants, fellow members and Council staff for producing this Agreement."

All tenants should have received a summary of the Agreement with this edition of *on the house*. The full version is available online or on request from the **Tenant Involvement team** on Freephone 0800 716 987.

inside this edition:

- Begonias and baskets!
- ASBO for ex-tenants in Swanmore
- Annual Report – our performance in 2007

Dear Readers



It was a real pleasure to join with tenants, councillors and fellow staff in August this year to formally celebrate the launch of the new Tenant Agreement.

Consultation and communication with tenants and leaseholders is central to everything we do here at Winchester and it gave me a real boost to see our past successes in print and look forward to future projects.

Another highlight was our gardening competition and this year I had a great day travelling around the district with our judge Council Leader George Beckett.

I learned a lot about gardening (he is a nursery-man) and about the Olympics because his daughter was part of Team GB!

Three gardens struck gold in our competition – and you can see the results on page 4

Best wishes

Glynis Cole

Help us to check our service is fair

The Council aims to provide a fair service to all tenants but we need your help!

We check who *should* and who *does* use our service, whether all tenants are treated equally and whether some people are less satisfied than others.

But we may also need to know about you – your age, ethnicity, religion and any disability.

Janette Palmer, Project Co-ordinator, said: "The checks allow us to find out if we are treating all tenants the same and not putting people at a disadvantage but we need information about tenants and their household to carry them out properly.

"Details will be kept confidential and will be used to look at customer groups – not individuals – and the service they receive."

thebigword

telephone interpreting service

The Council uses a 24-hour Telephone Interpreting Service, which also provides written or recorded translations including audio tapes and CDs.

If you, a relative or a neighbour would like to talk to the Council through an interpreter, please contact your **Area Housing Manager** on **01962 840 222**.

get it taped



If you would like any of the information in *on the house* made available in large print or audio format, please call Glynis Cole on **Freephone 0800 716 987**

TEXTPHONE

This facility is available for readers who are deaf or hard of hearing. **Please telephone 01962 878 982.**

If you have any particular needs which affect how you are able to use or be involved in our services or how you would like to receive information - for example translation, interpreters, Braille, audio tape, large print, sign language - please contact the Customer Service Centre either by **telephone: 01962 840 222** or by **email: customerservice@winchester.gov.uk**

Want to Exchange?

The Council now subscribes to the national "Homeswapper" website that allows you to advertise your property and search for others looking to exchange.

The Mutual Exchange list will move across to "Homeswapper" in the next few months and we will write to everyone on the list explaining the changes.

The list will still be available at our Customer Service Centre for people who do not have internet access.

Take a look at the website at **www.Homeswapper.co.uk** – **registration and advertising is free to Council tenants.**

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Telephone calls may be recorded.

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Council gets ASBOs in Swanmore

The Council successfully obtained Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) on five members of a household in Swanmore who were damaging neighbours' health and quality of life.

The ASBOs were gained together with an outright possession order for the family's tenancy, following continual complaints about damage to property and aggressive and intimidating behaviour towards local people and officers.

The case was brought to court thanks to successful partnership working between the Council, Hampshire Police and local residents.

The three five-year ASBOs against the adults, covering the whole of England and Wales, were gained in July 2008. Interim ASBOs were secured on the young people until the full hearing, which is due to be heard in October 2008.

The Council regained possession of the property in August 2008.

Cllr Tony Coates, Portfolio holder for Housing, said: "Due to the behaviour of this one particular household, residents were being deprived of the peaceful enjoyment of their homes. By resolving the issue successfully, residents are now able to enjoy the quality of life to which they are entitled".



Winchester residents can now report anti-social behaviour online at www.winchester.gov.uk/asb

Safety and independence for tenants!

A new service to help elderly and disabled tenants live independently and safely at home was launched in October for a trial period.

The Council has created a special assessment room in Winchester where Occupational Therapists (OTs) can see if people need help with:

- Getting in and out of the bath (picture right)
- Getting on and off a chair
- Reaching and bending and climbing steps etc.

The OT will give advice and information about equipment and adaptations that are available to help people stay independent.

If you are getting older or have a disability and are worried that everyday tasks are becoming more difficult contact **Lynne Lewis** on **01962 848 335** for further information.



Have your say the easy way

Would you like to get involved and influence your housing service, but don't have lots of spare time? Then Tenant Talk is for you! It offers you the flexibility to choose how, where, when and what to get involved with.

Tenant Talk is open to all council tenants and leaseholders, as well as teenagers and younger children – just fill in a questionnaire and we will be in touch!

Contact the Tenant Involvement team on **Freephone 0800 716 987** for more information or visit www.winchester.gov.uk/TACT.



TENANTS SURVEY – have you been chosen to take part?

You may be among the 60% of Council tenants who have been asked to take part in this year's survey on tenant satisfaction.

Last time over 70% of forms were returned – a fantastic result which allowed the Council to find out what was really important to tenants and improve services further.

Now, the Council is asking for your help to achieve another high response rate!

Project Co-ordinator Janette Palmer said: "If you have been chosen to take part in the random sample you may have already received a questionnaire and we would be grateful if you could spare a few moments to answer the questions.

"We will use this important information to help improve our services in the future, and to report back to you on the progress we are making."

council leader **bowled over** by **blooms!**



Above: Berni and Helen Sheppard, from Alresford, winners of Winchester's Best Front Garden competition.

George Beckett, the leader of Winchester City Council, was 'bowled over by the begonias' in Berni Sheppard's Alresford garden.

Cllr Beckett was the judge in the council's annual gardening competition for tenants.

Awarding first prize for the Best Front Garden to Mr Sheppard, Cllr Beckett said: "It was the neatness and attention to detail that struck me. There is obvious close care and attention and the garden is completely pest free."

He added: "And I was absolutely bowled over by the begonias in the front!"

He named the other winners as Ron Ruddle, from Bishop's Waltham, for his hanging baskets and the residents of Victoria House, Winchester, for the Best Supported Housing Garden.

Mr Ruddle who won the prize for Best Hanging Baskets for the third year running, took around 300 cuttings from last year's baskets to create this year's prize winners.

Cllr Beckett said: "I was impressed by the variety, the health of the plants and the colour match.

They are free from pests and all in all are a splendid example of hanging baskets!"

First prize in the supported housing category went to Victoria House, Victoria Road, Winchester. All 25 flats overlook the enclosed garden and the residents enjoy the peace and tranquillity it provides.

Below: Council Leader George Beckett (3rd from right) with tenants in the winning garden at Victoria House, Winchester.



Cllr Beckett said: "There is a huge variety of planting and a wonderful visual effect with all year round colour."

Tenant Rosetta Fuller, 80, organises the fundraising for the garden – a summer fair in July raised £308, which will be used for new plants for the main beds.

King of the hanging baskets Ron Ruddle with Council Leader George Beckett.

