

# Tenant News



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## Packed house for the AGM



New Chairman Beryl White with evening Chairman Alan Rickman.

TACT's Annual General Meeting was held in May and every seat was taken to vote in a new Chairman and hear two different speeches on the future of council housing in England.

Chairman of national pressure group Defend Council Housing, Alan Walter, called on the

Government to invest in council homes which "had stood the test of time and made sense".

Mr Walter, a council tenant in Camden, central London, said: "All of our money goes to central Government and they decide how much money they're going to give back to each Local Authority.

"The bottom line is that they clear £6.1billion and only give back £4.7billion. They are robbing £1.4billion from council tenants."

Simon Eden, Chief Executive of Winchester City Council warned the Council had to look at all options to maintain and build decent, affordable homes in the future – but said large scale transfer of homes "was not at present on the cards".

Mr Eden warned that Winchester City Council faced severe financial pressure because its Government grants had increased by only 0.5% - where as other costs were rising in line with inflation.

He said the Council had last year helped to create a record 154 new, affordable homes in the district but the credit crunch could affect this in the future.

Mr Eden added: "We need to be creative in thinking about how we are going to protect the stock in our district.

"We need to look forward. We will be thinking about what's best for tenants now and today – we need to think what's best for tenants in the future."

## Beryl is new tenants Chair

A retired residential social worker who moved to Winchester two years ago is the new Chairman of TACT's Afternoon Group.

Beryl White succeeds David Cruden who stood down at the AGM after four years at the helm.

Fellow Chairman Alan Rickman paid tribute to David's joint leadership and sense of humour before presenting him with a gift on behalf of TACT. Beryl moved to Winchester from the London Borough of Bexley

in 2006 to be near her son who lives locally.

She said: "I'm really happy to be living here – when I moved in the Council gave me lots of information, like the Tenants Handbook, which I never had where I lived before.

Beryl lives in one of the Council's modern sheltered housing blocks in Winchester. She added: "I was living under the threat of closure before – that's why I support TACT so much."

Beryl also has two daughters, eight grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

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# David Cruden says goodbye



Former TACT Chairman David Cruden

David Cruden has chaired his afternoon TACT meetings with a good sense of humour and a common sense approach – but after four years at the helm he has decided to stand down.

David was in the licensed trade for 25 years and had no burning ambition to lead TACT or become deeply involved in housing issues. He took on the Chairman's role because "there didn't seem to be anyone else to take it on!"

It was not long, however, before he got to grips with the issues of the day – notably Housing Options and the negative subsidy.

He said: "Having not been involved in housing before it has been a steep learning curve and I've found it very satisfying. Through my involvement I have received a tremendous amount of support from city council officers.

"I just feel that it's about time someone else took over. It's time for some fresh blood."

David added: "I'll still be a member of TACT. You can't get rid of me that easily!"

## TACT is non-political

TACT would like to remind tenants and leaseholders that we are non political. TACT however would not be doing its duty if we did not challenge things that cause us concern. TACT at times will heap praise or

criticise a political party. It is most likely to be the party that is in power at the time – so if it is the party you vote for we do not mean to cause offence. Whatever party is in power, we will tell it as it is!

## Training course a real eye opener

Susen Harding, from Compton Tenants' Association, says she's learned a lot about people from the latest training course.

These are offered to TACT, Tenants' and Residents Associations, and also to tenants who have signed up to Tenant Talk, a list of tenants and leaseholders who have expressed an interest in getting involved.

Susen joined Alan Rickman on the Understanding Groups and Diversity course, run by South Coast Training.

Susen said: "We learned that you must be polite and listen and that if you are chairing a meeting you must respect that everyone has different views and you shouldn't let any meeting get out of order.

"I think it might help me when speaking in public. I'm now a Parish Councillor in Compton and Shawford so it will give me a bit more confidence. Sometimes I just sit there and don't say anything."

Anyone interested in training courses should contact the Tenant Involvement team on Freephone 0800 716 987.

# Alan's TV update!



Alan Rickman with the BBC's Steve Humphrey and Ian Da Costa.

Alan Rickman, the TACT co-chair, has taken the campaign against the Government's negative subsidy to Strasbourg.

His case against the UK Government has been lodged with the European Court of Human Rights and will be considered over the next few months.

This milestone in Alan's and TACT's five year battle over negative subsidy payments brought widescale media coverage and invitations from other councils across the country.

Alan said: "It was marvellous to get the BBC interested in the story – I think they were surprised not to have covered it before.

"We had a really nice morning with the reporter Steve Humphrey and cameraman Ian da Costa – it was interesting to see the news from another angle!"

Government minister Hazel Blears was campaigning in Southampton the same day and was quizzed over the subsidy by the BBC.

The news travelled fast and Alan was also featured in the Southern Daily Echo, Hampshire Chronicle and specialist magazine Inside Housing.

Alan added: "I've been invited to talk to tenants, officers and councillors in Taunton, Crawley and London. It's a great opportunity to let people know what we're doing here in Winchester and gather support for the campaign."

## Leaseholders have a voice!

Angela Stevenson represents Leaseholders on the editorial team for both *on the house* and *Tenant News*.

Angela ensures that Leaseholders views are taken into account and are included in both publications.

It was Angela who suggested that Glynis Cole's letter on page 2 of *on the house* should be changed to "Dear Readers". It used to be "Dear Tenants"!

The quarterly Leaseholder Forums are another good way of getting issues raised. Recent topics for discussion included grounds and planned maintenance and recycling.

The next Leaseholder Forum is on Wednesday 23rd July at 7.30pm. If you are a leaseholder and interested in more information please contact Richard Boardman, on 01962 848 447.

If you would like to suggest items for the October issues or have any other comments please contact the editorial team on 0800 716 987 or email [tenantinvolvement@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:tenantinvolvement@winchester.gov.uk).

## Keep safe this summer!

Now that summer is here remember to keep your home and garden safe.

- Don't leave your windows open when you go out
- Do lock your door when you are in the garden
- Do check ID if someone knocks on your door claiming to be from the Council or utility companies

- Do contact the Customer Service Centre if you are in doubt on:  
01962 840 222

Hampshire police has Crime Prevention Officers across the county who can give talks to your Tenants or Residents Association and Information Sharing Sessions held at Sheltered Housing schemes.

They can be contacted through Hampshire police on:

**0845 045 45 45**

- Mr Jim Ingram  
Winchester
- Mr Tony Walters  
Fareham
- Mr Stuart York  
Havant

 Cut out and keep

- I Do not buy anything from Door to Door callers
- I will ask for proof of Identification
- I will contact your employers to verify details

# TACT is on the move!



New afternoon group meeting place

TACT's afternoon group is leaving Makins Court in Alresford and will now meet at Godson House in Winchester.

The group has been well looked after in the comfortable surroundings of Makins Court.

However travel costs and logistics led the afternoon group to join their evening colleagues in the central location of Godson House.

Former afternoon Chair David Cruden said: "Godson House is very convenient for the bus station, car parks and is in a central position in Winchester.

"We've been looked after really well by our friends at Makins Court, but feel that we can save money by this move. I would like to thank the manager and residents for making us so welcome over the last few years!"



## TACT Meeting Dates 2008

TACT afternoon and evening meetings are held on Wednesdays at The Common Room, Godson House, Central Winchester

- 16 July (2.00pm and 7.30pm)
- 20 August (2.00pm and 7.30pm)
- 17 September - Joint Meeting - (7.30pm - 9.30pm)
- 15 October (2.00pm and 7.30pm)
- 19 November (2.00pm and 7.30pm)
- 17 December (2.00pm and 7.30pm)

**All tenants and leaseholders welcome**

**For further information contact Glynis Cole or David Lumby on Freephone 0800 716 987.**

## TACT Committee 2008

	Afternoon Group	Evening Group
<b>Chairman</b>	Beryl White	Alan Rickman
<b>Vice Chairman</b>	Chris Barton-Briddon	Judith Steveton-Baker
<b>Secretary</b>	Sheila Greaves	David Chafe

*Co-opted representatives on Council Committees :  
John Bond and Alan Rickman*

- Contact the TACT Chairmen Alan Rickman or Beryl White if you want to find out more about TACT 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, 20 King Harold Court, Stanmore, Winchester SO23 9SA

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

Now turn the magazine over to read

