



TACT AGM attracts large crowds



More than 50 people packed into the Saxon Suite in the Winchester Guildhall in May to enjoy the TACT (Tenants and Council Together) Annual General Meeting.

The evening began with an informal reception followed by a fascinating talk by Christine Holloway, from Winchester Action on Climate Change (WinACC).

WinACC aims to encourage all households in Winchester to reduce their carbon footprint.

Ms Holloway said it was up to people to change their behaviour: "Even though each action on its own may only have a small impact, the sum of

lots of actions by lots of people can make a real difference," she said.

After her presentation TACT chairs Alan Rickman and Beryl White gave their annual report on the year and the new TACT positions were agreed.

TACT published a detailed Annual Report on its activities over the last year. These included:

- National campaigns against Negative Subsidy
- TV and Newspaper coverage of the Subsidy issue and the repairs cutbacks
- Training courses for TACT officers and other tenants and leaseholders
- Representing tenants' interests at Council meetings

The Chairs thanked everyone for coming to the AGM and Beryl White said she had recently moved to Bishop's Waltham – a town with everything apart from a Tenants' Association. "Hopefully we can change that in the future," she said.

WinACC's Top Tips to make a difference are:

1. Buy A-rated appliances and switching to a "green" electricity tariff.
2. Avoid air travel unless essential.
3. Buy locally-grown food or grow your own!
4. Avoid short car journeys, could you walk or cycle instead?
5. Try public transport for longer journeys.
6. Turn down your heating and wear an extra layer.
7. Close curtains at dusk in winter and stop draughts.
8. Use energy-saving light bulbs.
9. Have non-power showers and only use your washing machine and dishwasher when they are full.

TACT officers for 2009/2010

Role	Afternoon Group	Evening Group
Chair	Beryl White	Alan Rickman
Vice Chair	Chris Barton-Briddon	Judith Steventon Baker
Secretary	Rosemary Barnes	David Chafe
Co-optees	Beryl White	Alan Rickman
Deputy Co-optee	John Bond	

INSIDE this issue...

- Plea for new council houses
- Going Walkabout in Weeke
- Justice seen and done

Defend Council Housing Committee Meeting

Defend Council Housing's (DCH) first national committee meeting since the death of founder Alan Walter began with a minute's silence.

Committee members and supporters considered ways to put together an effective campaign for the future and continue Alan's work.

JUSTICE SEEN JUSTICE DONE

COMMUNITY CRIME FIGHTERS

I did not realise what I had put myself in for when I was asked to do the follow up course on Anti-Social Behaviour, writes Alan Rickman.

The aims of the course:

- Share local experiences, knowledge, ideas, and solutions of tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Improve skills, and knowledge, in working more effectively, with the police and other services.
- Explore how to motivate, and engage others, in your local community, to focus on action planning, for local change.

This proved to be one of the best courses I have ever been on and I look forward to putting the skills I acquired into practice, with Tenants and Residents Associations and TACT in the near future.

South Coast Training April Conference

Seven tenants and leaseholders from Winchester City Council joined 68 delegates at April's South Coast Training Conference.

Delegates were offered five workshops, including:



- Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour
- Avoiding Stress and Burn Out
- Get that Job
- Smart Money
- Planning and Event

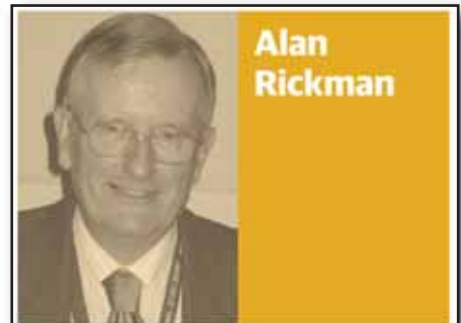
After a couple of hours' hard work, delegates also had plenty of time to swap stories and chat to one another while enjoying a sit down lunch. Then it was back to the workshop in the afternoon before going home.

Alan Walter 1957-2009

As founder and Chairman of Defend Council Housing (DCH) Alan Walter spoke at TACT's annual general meeting in May 2008.

He was a polished and passionate performer telling Winchester tenants that council homes "had stood the test of time and make sense".

He died from a heart attack in March 2009 while working at his computer on the DCH cause.



Winchester council tenant and joint chair of Tenants and Council Together, Winchester

'[MP] Austin Mitchell hit the nail on the head when he said we need to establish how much money each council needs to maintain its homes... and to build a new generation of first-class council homes.'

'Tenants don't trust MPs any more. MPs are so interested in looking after their own affairs, they don't realise how much tenants and councils are struggling.'

'All council tenants feel the rent money we pay should be used by our own council. We don't necessarily expect it to happen overnight... Winchester pays more than £8 million a year in negative subsidy. If we had half of that [to keep] it would help us. The council had to apologise to our tenants this year, saying we're going to have to cut back on things... only essential repairs will be carried out. It's hitting, and yet we're still paying that amount.'

Will ministers go all the way and let councils become self-financing?

'We had high hopes at the beginning of the review... but we will need to see what the final outcome is.'

26 | Inside Housing | 8 May 2009

Winchester's Alan Rickman, joint Chair of TACT, was asked for his views on Council Housing for the respected magazine Inside Housing.

Success in Weeke



the residents of Weeke the choice of supermarkets.

Association members were further consulted on the signs around the Waitrose store, all of which they approved.

John Bond has built such good contacts with the contractor Norwest Holt that his grandson's football club – Littleton Under-16s – have won sponsorship from the company for a forthcoming tournament in Sweden!

Members of Weeke Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) have celebrated two Walkabouts this year and a successful supermarket campaign.

The group fought for the right to have a second supermarket in its area after planners had turned down three appeals by budget chain Aldi.

John Bond, from Weeke TARA, explained: "When Aldi put the first application in it was turned down and nobody was bothered. "But when Waitrose put its application in and it was passed people wanted a choice."

The group backed Aldi's application and it was approved on the fourth appeal to allow

Walkabouts

Each year Weeke TARA aims to arrange two Estate Walkabouts with tenants, Neighbourhood Wardens, County and City Council Officers, and local Police Community Support Officers.

The last Walkabout generated a 'to do' list of 18 items such as unkempt gardens and hedges, missing kerbstones and litter problems.

To arrange an Estate Walkabout in your area contact the Tenant Involvement team on **Freephone: 0800 716 987**

TACT's concerns over Minister's reply

TACT was disappointed – but not surprised – that the Government took nearly five months to reply to a letter from Cllr Tony Coates.

As Housing Portfolio Holder he wrote to complain about Government policy causing massive cutbacks to Winchester's repairs and renovations programme.

But in his reply Iain Wright, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, pointed to the reduced rent rises this year and suggested they may look at these again next year.

Alan Rickman, Joint Chair of TACT, said: "Under normal circumstances we would feel grateful, but the fact they have been robbing tenants blind for years does not inspire us.

"Perhaps we should suggest that council tenants should be allowed further cuts in negative subsidy, on the same generous lines as the allowances given to MPs for second homes?"

TACT calls for new Council homes

TACT has lambasted the Council for preferring to "find new ways of creating social housing" rather than building new Council homes.

Councillors were told that it was important to adopt a positive and proactive approach to promoting social housing, especially in a Credit Crunch.

However TACT will not support the scheme because it believes new council homes should be built for council tenants.

Alan Rickman said: "Building new council housing should be an option and not abandoned as a non-starter. As this is already an issue being considered by government, sweeping it under

the carpet is not the way forward.

"TACT considers that the future for affordable housing has to include building council homes." Earlier this year the Government announced plans to allow Councils to build their own homes but Winchester wants to bring new land for development.

TPAS LONDON & SOUTH EAST REGIONAL FOCUS

By Alan Rickman

As one of four focus members it was Alan Rickman's turn to open the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS) regional meeting in Portsmouth.

We had a fascinating tour of Portsea Action Group & John Pounds Community Trust – a resident-led healthy living building.

It was a marvellous building incorporating:

- Health centre
- Art studios
- Launderette
- Youth centre
- Drama studios
- Rent office
- Offices for small business groups
- Café
- Sport facilities
- Beauty salon.

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

Well done Win!

Congratulations to Win Taylor, from Kings Worthy, who won the Spring Wordsearch competition and £30 in High Street vouchers. The missing six word phrase was "on the house and tenant news".



TACT Meeting Dates



January - December 2009

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 stated otherwise below.

15 July (2.00pm and 7.30pm)

19 August (2.00pm and 7.30pm)

16 September - Joint Meeting - (7.30pm - 9.30pm)

21 October (2.00pm and 7.30pm)

18 November (2.00pm and 7.30pm)

16 December (2.00pm and 7.30pm)

All tenants and leaseholders welcome

For further information contact

**Alan Rickman, Evening Chair on 01962 885 848
or Beryl White, Afternoon Chair on 01489 891 084
or the Tenant Participation Team, Glynis/David
On Freephone 0800 716 987.**

- Contact the TACT Chairs 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, 2 Pine Road, Bishops Waltham,
Nr. Southampton, SO23 1EH**

Now turn the magazine over to read

