

Hounslow Homes news

www.hounslowhomes.org.uk

Issue forty-two | September - October 2006

Gardening competition winners announced



How were the gardens judged?

Each gardening competition entry was judged on:

- Visual impact
 - Layout
 - Appeal
 - Ingenuity
 - Overall impact
- Effort
 - Work and time involved
 - Difficulties for gardener
- Special Issues
 - Involvement of others
 - Location

The Hounslow Homes Gardening Competition has come to a close for another year and once again our judges were pleased by the impressive standard of entries.

Each and every one of the short-listed gardens, balconies and

hanging baskets have been outstanding. It was clear that all of the entrants in this year's competition have taken a great deal of time and pride with their plots.

Overall winner Muriel Steadman wowed the judges with her garden, which features a massive fishpond, masses of

colour and an outdoor dining area.

Mrs Steadman said her garden was her pride and joy and her family often helped her with it. She has not been on a summer holiday in years so she could tend to her garden in the warmer months.

As always, Joan Saunders' balcony was

a beautiful mass of colour again this year. Mrs Saunders, like all of this year's entrants, takes great pride in her balcony and it is always an impressive sight from the road.

Six year old Raabia Shuwekh was the winner of our children's drawing competition this year. Raabia's colourful

picture of flowers, trees, birds and butterflies stole the hearts of our judging panel.

David Kwan has won the best communal area prize for two years running. Mr Kwan dedicates a lot of time to his garden, which our judges thought was like a haven despite

being near a busy road.

Mr I J Keen has taken the prize of best garden this year. Mr Keen's garden is a sea of flowers and smells gorgeous. All our prize winners for this year were acknowledged in a ceremony in September at West Thames College.

ASBO secured on vandal

Earlier this year we were granted an antisocial behaviour order (ASBO) for a youth who was tagging around an estate and carried out a high level of vandalism, causing upset to local residents.

This occurred over a considerable period of time and tagging appeared on internal corridors, walls, and to tenants properties in the west of the borough. Neighbours were upset and very intimidated by the behaviour. It was through the work of neighbourhood wardens on patrol who witnessed the vandalism which led to the securing of the order.

A lot of hard work went into the case, especially as it was a DIY legal application. This is another

area where our efforts in tenancy enforcement are progressing well. This type of work shows how our anti social behaviour teams can produce and gather their own evidence and present a case without the assistance of solicitors. This means that Hounslow Homes can achieve a quicker turnaround in deciding if a case warrants legal action.



Anyone experiencing any form of anti social behaviour including racial and any other kind of harassment, violence, social disturbance or graffiti should report it to Hounslow Homes by calling their relevant area office.

Kwest survey

Kwest have sent out their annual survey on Hounslow Homes for 2006. About 2000 residents have been contacted by our research experts at Kwest and asked to complete a questionnaire, which asks you for your views about the services you get from us.



The survey is one of the most important information tools we have as it tells us on a year-by-year basis what you think and we can tell where we are improving and where we need to focus our attention.

Last year was our most successful in terms of overall satisfaction, and we are hoping to continue to make progress this year.

Please try to find the time to complete and return the questionnaire if you are one of the people randomly selected to complete one. There is a Prize Draw of £250 for all forms returned. You could get lucky!

With this issue: Council tenants information on right to buy; Tackling housing benefit and Council Tax fraud.

New board members

Recently four new people were elected to the Hounslow Homes Board.

These are:

Councillor Board Members



Cllr Samantha Davies

Is a resident of the borough and a qualified solicitor. She is active locally in social and community work and is currently the Chair of the

Gunnersbury Park Joint Committee. She serves on a variety of committees and outside bodies and is the Chair of the Licensing Committee.

Cllr Paul Fisher



Has lived in Isleworth for 10 years now and is active locally in community matters. He has been a Councillor since May 2006 and serves on a number of Borough Committees as well as many outside bodies. He is also Chair of the

Isleworth and Brentford Area Committee.

Cllr Gillian Hutchison



Has been a leaseholder for 12 years and is involved in the local Tenant's/Resident's Association. She has been a Councillor since May 2006 and is actively involved locally in community work serving on a number of committees

including Tenants/Leaseholder Joint Consultative Committee and the West Area Committee.

Independent Board Member

Sukhvinder Duggal



is a Senior Manager for a large accountancy firm based in Central London, and has over 10 years of involvement in infrastructure projects in the public sector. His experience includes financial planning and

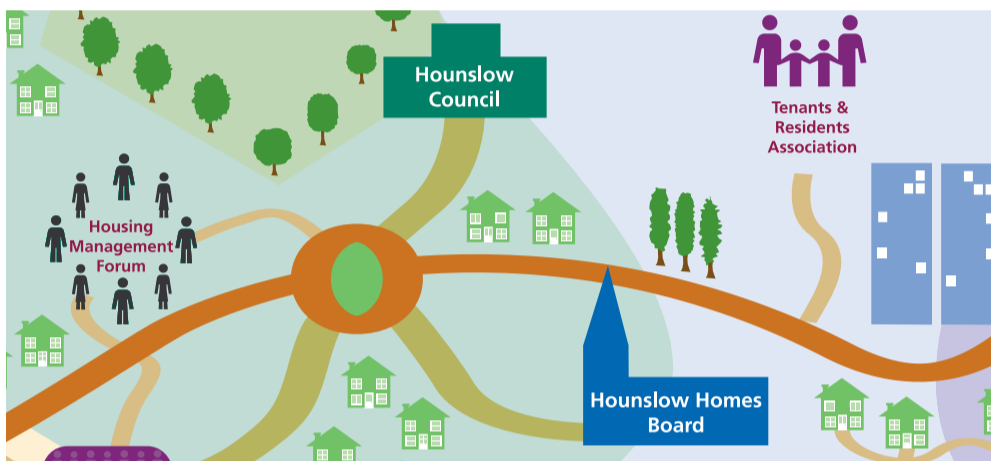
management, PPP/PFI expertise, performance improvement and strategic advice.

Hounslow Homes invited to begin pilot scheme

The government has invited Hounslow Homes and the council to work up proposals to operate its finances outside of the governments current subsidy system.

As one of the first in the country to case study this approach, it means that we can explore the potential to be able to manage our own finances, rather than operate inside the existing system set by the government. Once our proposals are complete in March 2007, the government and ourselves will decide if it is a viable option. This approach will give us more flexibility and allow us to plan more of our future. In turn, this will help us to deliver better services and quality of life for residents on our estates.

The Council's review of Hounslow Homes



When Hounslow Homes was set up in April 2002, a provision was made for the council to review the arrangement before our fifth anniversary.

The council has set up a working party to carry out this review and is holding a number of meetings to ask

residents their views.

The review may mean that we will have the opportunity to grow. Submissions made to the review panel included information on our bids for building new homes and to pilot new ideas for financing services (see above). We have

also suggested to the council that if we took over more of the housing allocations operations from them we could reduce the length of time homes are empty when tenants move out and help more to deal with overcrowding.

Message from the leader of the council



Cllr. Peter Thompson

I would like to personally congratulate everyone who took part and won prizes in Hounslow Homes' annual gardening competition. Judging must have been a very difficult task as standards were exceptionally high.

Tending and keeping a garden is positive from many points of view. While we're all

being told to get a bit more exercise, and gardening is an excellent way, the pleasure of watching a patch of land become transformed through your own efforts is an immense source of happiness and pride.

Pride in our surroundings is something we all want to have. Whether it's having a tidy, litter-free street to live in or a well-maintained park for our children to play in, it's important we live among surroundings we can feel positively about.

This is a central aim of the new Conservative /Community Group executive on Hounslow

Council. We want to build pride in our streets, our towns and our borough as a whole. Hounslow Homes' tenants are playing a huge part in helping us to achieve that goal.

"In addition, I am delighted to learn that a survey of tenants has shown that anti-social behaviour is falling on our estates. But it still remains an issue for many of you, so if you are a victim, please report it. There is plenty the Council and its partners can do to stop it and help you feel safer in your home.

**Cllr Peter Thompson
Leader of Hounslow Council**

Reaching Out



A workshop was held recently at Belvedere House in Feltham, where our Somali workers continue to increase participation to excluded groups. Somali residents discussed issues including domestic issues (including living with disabilities and domestic violence), racial harassment and hate crime and ways to tackle these problems. The residents were encouraged to speak out about these difficulties and were provided with information guiding them to what actions to take and where to go, whenever they become victims of hate and racial harassment.

Also highlighted in the workshop was the importance of community cohesion and how it is achieved without alienating or isolating communities. The group was advised to fully join in the social, political and economic life of the area.

We have recently set up new community working groups to build stronger relationships and to improve our understanding of a range of diversity issues about ethnic minority groups. To find out more about our community groups, please contact your local Tenants' and Residents' Association.

Leaseholder news

Major works for leaseholders – standards in place

In the quest to improve services to our leaseholders, we have undertaken a complete review of the way we manage major projects which affect them. The review was completed in April and an improved major works procedure was drafted.

A key component of the review is the consultation and communication with residents from the inception to the completion of a project, recognising that leaseholder requirements may be different from those of tenants.

In May this year the Leaseholder Forum, lead by Rachel Heydon, was asked to let us know what, in their view, would constitute satisfactory consultation and communication with leaseholders. They identified the following key requirements:

1. There should be a specific communication outlining our plans for the next 5 years
2. When more than one project is proposed in the year for a property or an estate we should seek leaseholders views on the phasing of the work
3. Before finalising the scope of the project, we should explain, in layperson terms, what we are doing, why we are doing it and in particular

explain the benefits to leaseholders

4. Where appropriate leaseholders should be consulted about the scope of the work, recognising always that the final decision rests with Hounslow Homes
5. Where we are unable to revise a scheme in line with leaseholders' comments we should explain why
6. The communication about project personnel and about progress during the contract should be improved

The overall emphasis of the improved procedure should be to improve the communication and consultation in the early stages of a scheme for all residents, before a final decision on the scope of the work has been made.

These requirements have now been incorporated into the procedure and early feedback from Leaseholder Forum representatives is very positive.

We are now working on turning the procedure into a Residents Communication and Consultation Charter or Pledge and also on producing improved Leaseholder Satisfaction survey forms, in order to better measure our performance during the various stages of the scheme.

For sale and to let boards



Your lease agreement states that you are not to fix for sale or let signs to buildings or fences, however these are a common sight on our estates. Boards attached to buildings or fences can cause damage for which you may be charged and they will be removed.

To solve this problem please ensure your estate agent places any advertising boards in one of your windows. This will also increase the chance of a prospective purchaser finding your flat.

July open meeting results

A leaseholders open meeting was held on 3 July.

Four main areas of concern were raised at the meeting:

- Estate issues, such as caretaking, dog mess and graffiti
- Estate repairs and CCTV
- Customer care issues, such as responses to letters and e-mails
- Not enough information about service charges

We will continue to work over the coming months to improve services to our leaseholders and will report back to you on our progress.

HFTRA news

Self-financing – What's in it for us?



The government said some time ago that it would consider more freedom for high-performing Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMOs) like Hounslow Homes. For a long time no-one was quite sure what this would mean, although better control of the money that's needed to run housing and some new ways of making money were expected.

Many familiar with the complex way the

housing finance subsidy system works think that change is overdue. They would probably agree that taking £200 billion plus from councils and redistributing it is an over complicated way of doing things and leads to unfairness and an inability to plan long term.

Now Hounslow has been invited to take part in detailed discussions on how any new scheme would work. They join two other "excellent" ALMOs and three non-ALMO local authorities in this project.

The new name for this idea is "Self-Financing" and early indications are that a large part of a council's housing debt would be written off to balance the books and that

careful borrowing would then be possible to fund future investment and development.

This means that residents would have a greater certainty that their homes will be kept "decent" in the long term and that hoped-for improvements on estates would be more likely. It may also mean more estate renewal where homes are upgraded or replaced, with more opportunities for people to be given the homes that they want.

However, its still early days and the council have to approve any real moves towards joining any new system – so watch this space...



George Fry
Chair of HFTRA

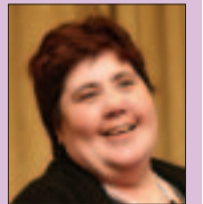
Tenant Participation Certificate awarded at Lewisham College

Hounslow Homes resident Julie Brooker recently completed a Tenant Participation Certificate at Lewisham College with excellent results.

Jenny Rutter from Lewisham College said: "Julie achieved an overall Merit for the course. She delivered an excellent presentation to the class using Powerpoint for the first time. We really appreciated having Julie in the class - her wealth of knowledge gained over the years was a real inspiration to some of the tenants who she always encouraged."

Julie has successfully completed nine other courses through Hounslow Homes since 2000 with excellent results. The courses were all part of the Hounslow Homes Tenant Training Programme.

Julie said: "Since completing a City and Guilds stage 1 in Tutoring and various other courses, I now train other residents. I also successfully landed a job from all my training."



Translations

If you need language assistance with this publication please ring 020 8583 2299 or Minicom 020 8583 3122. If you would like a copy of this publication in large print or Braille please ring 020 8583 2299.

Wargeyska Hounslow ee Guryuhu waa soo saarid qoraal ah oo loogu talo galay qofkasta oo ku nool Hantida ay leeyihin Qaybta Guryuhu. Haddii aad qoraalkan wax kaalmo ah aad uga baahatid fadlan soo garaac 020 8583 2520.

'હાઉસલો હોમ્સ ન્યૂઝ' સમાચાર પત્રક, કાઉન્સિલના મકાનોમાં રહેતાં પ્રત્યેક લોકો માટે માહિતી પ્રબંધ કરવાનો હેતુ રાખે છે. જો તેમાંની કોઈપણ વિગતો તમને ગુજરાતીમાં જાણવા માટે મદદ જોઈતી હોય તો કૃપયા આ નંબર પર ટેલિફોન કરો: 020 8583 2294

ਹੰਸਲੋ ਹੋਮਜ਼ ਨਿਊਜ਼ ਉਚਨਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਾਊਂਸਿਲ ਦੇ ਘਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਮਦਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 020 8583 2297 'ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Hounslow Homes News eshte per njerezit te cilet jetojne ne shtepija te Keshillit (Council Houses). Nese keni nevojte per ndihme per te kuptuar kete botim ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi thirrni Sherbimin per Perkthime ne 020 8583 2298.

हंसलो होमज़ न्यूज़ उन लोगों के लिए है जो काउंसिल के घरों में रहते हैं। यदि आपको इसके बारे में हिन्दी में जानकारी चाहिए तो कृपया ट्रांसलेशन सर्विस को 020 8583 2520 पर फोन करें।

"ہاؤسلو ہومز نیوز" کی اشاعت کونسل کے گھروں میں رہنے والے افراد کیلئے ہے۔ اگر آپ اس اشاعت سے متعلق مدد حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براؤزر میں اس نمبر پر ٹیلیفون کیجئے 020 8583 2293

أخبار المنازل في هاؤنسلو - هي للناس الذين يسكنون في منازل مجلس البلدية. إذا كنت تحتاج مساعدة في فهم هذا المنشور بلغتك الأم، فنرجو الإتصال بخدمة الترجمة على رقم الهاتف: 020 8583 2298.

"اخبار مسكن هانسلو" برای افرادی است که در خانه های شهرداری زندگی می کنند. اگر در فهمیدن این نشریه به زبان خودتان به کمک نیازمندید، لطفاً با خدمات ترجمه با شماره 020 8583 2298 تماس حاصل نمایید.

English
Somali
Gujarati
Panjabi
Albanian
Hindi
Urdu
Arabic
Farsi

It's YOUR newsletter...

Next year Hounslow Homes is hoping to bring you a new-look Hounslow Homes News.

To help us do this we need your help. We want to hear what you think of Hounslow Homes News – what you like, what you don't like and how you think we can make Hounslow Homes News better.

You can share your ideas with us by writing to the communications team at Hounslow Homes - St Catherine's House, 2 Hanworth Road, Feltham, Middlesex TW13 5AB or by e-mailing kate.wiley@hounslowhomes.org.uk

Summer fun days are a big success!

Convent Way

A fun day was held at Convent Way Estate on August 5. Plenty of residents turned out to enjoy this successful day.



Heston Farm

On 30 August an information day was held on the Heston Farm Estate. Residents had the opportunity to find out about joining residents associations and opportunities that are on offer to get more involved in their community.



Clayponds Estate

Clayponds Estate Fun day was held on Sunday 20th August. The Residents Association worked hard to make it a good day and it was very well attended.



Syon Estate



Syon Residents Association held its Fun Day on Saturday 23rd September. Many thanks to the Mayor, Felicity Barwood, who attended to formally open the new football cage (jointly funded by Hounslow Homes and CIP). Thanks also to Councillors Phil Andrews, Shirley Fisher and Jon Hardy who came along and supported the event. Everyone felt that the day was well worth all the hard work carried out by the Residents Association.

Dukes Meadow



A fun day was held for residents of Edensor Gardens, Alexandra Gardens and Staveley Gardens in Dukes Meadow on Saturday 19th August to celebrate the opening of the new water play area, built from grants raised by Friends of Dukes Meadow.

Worple Avenue

A Compact signing ceremony took place at Worple Avenue on 25 July with representatives from Hounslow Homes, HFTRA and Worple Avenue Residents Association.



Oriel Estate

Attended by the Deputy Mayor Cllr Wilson, the opening of the Oriel Community Centre was a great success. The day was well attended by residents who were given an opportunity on the day to have their say about Hounslow Homes Services.



Sheltered Housing information day at Age Concern

The sheltered housing team held a stall at an information day at Age Concern in Brentford this summer. The day was very successful with many people asking for more information on the sheltered housing service. Part of Hounslow's Older People's Festival, the event included stalls and information on a range of topics including social and healthy living activities.

NOTICEBOARD

Housing contacts

EAST AREA

FOR TENANCIES IN BRENTFORD AND CHISWICK

General Enquiries: 020 8583 4220
Minicom: 020 8583 4390
Caretaking Service: 020 8560 5447
Both offices are open to you in person wherever you live. For emails, telephone and post, please contact the Brentford office only.

OPENING HOURS

8.45am - 5pm Monday to Friday
(5.30pm on Thursday by appointment)

ADDRESS

Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, Chiswick W4 4JE or
58-59 Brentford High Street, Brentford TW8 OAH

EMAIL

info.housingeast@hounslowhomes.org.uk

CENTRAL AREA

FOR TENANCIES IN HESTON, CRANFORD, HOUNSLOW AND ISLEWORTH

General Enquiries: 020 8583 4382
Minicom: 020 8583 3959
Caretaking Service: 020 8569 6873

OPENING HOURS

8.45am - 5pm Monday to Friday
(5.30pm on Thursday by appointment)

ADDRESS

The Civic Centre, Lampton Road, Hounslow TW3 4DN

EMAIL

info.housingcentral@hounslowhomes.org.uk

WEST AREA

FOR TENANCIES IN FELTHAM, BEDFONT AND HANWORTH

General Enquiries: 020 8583 4383
Minicom: 020 8583 4387
Caretaking Service: 020 8814 1771

OPENING HOURS

8.45am - 5pm Monday to Friday
(5.30pm on Thursday by appointment)

ADDRESS

St Catherine's House, 2 Hanworth Road, Feltham TW13 5AB

EMAIL

info.housingwest@hounslowhomes.org.uk

CALL CENTRE

Please ring our freephone number

0800 085 6575

Minicom: 0800 389 9821

Language line: 0800 389 9830

Email: housing.repairs@hounslowhomes.org.uk

Open: 8am-8pm Monday-Friday

9am-12 noon Saturdays

(at all other times call 020 8583 2222)

REPORT ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

contact your area office or:

Police: 020 8577 1212

Crimestoppers: 0800 555 111

HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE

020 8583 3844

Minicom: 020 8583 3111

LEASEHOLDER SERVICES & HOME OWNERSHIP

020 8583 3418

(Brentford & Chiswick)

020 8583 4006 (Feltham)

020 8583 3417 (Hounslow)

Fax: 020 8583 4133

CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS

020 8583 3737

Fax: 020 8583 4336

Minicom: 0800 389 9821

complaints.team@

hounslowhomes.org.uk

HOUSING BENEFIT HELPLINE

020 8583 4242

HOUNSLOW FEDERATION OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

020 8569 5823

www.hftra.co.uk

RIGHT TO BUY

020 8583 3918

RE-HOUSING UNIT

020 8583 4422

HOMELESS PERSONS UNIT

020 8583 3842



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE