

# in vision

in winter

09

## Residents put heart in their art

We transformed our head office into an Art Gallery recently to showcase a variety of art work completed by some of our older residents.



full story on page 2

Valuing community and valuing its diversity

### Inside this issue

- Improving homes **page 2**
  - Estate Inspections tackle 132 untidy gardens! **page 4**
  - Excellent Exhibition **page 5**
  - Day in the life of... **page 6**
  - Residents get set for Digital switchover **page 8**
  - Our great BIG survey – The results **page 9**
- ...and much more*

Also available in Large-print,  
Braille and Audio CD.

For General Enquiries call 01432 384000  
Minicom users please call  
(01432) 378487

 business for neighbourhoods



## Improving homes



In January, February and March we will be completing over 600 home and neighbourhood improvements.

**Internal improvements:** including kitchens, bathrooms, rewires and heating installations:

- 141 kitchen improvements, 100 bathroom improvements and 71 electrical rewires in areas such as Hunderton and Tupsley
- 220 heating installations, and 74 boiler replacements to homes throughout Herefordshire

**External improvements and neighbourhood improvements:**

- Re-roofing to some properties at the College estate, and Whitecross in Hereford, and Rudhall Close, in Ross-on-Wye
- Digital aerial installation to flats throughout Herefordshire
- Environmental improvements to estates following estate inspections

More detailed information can be found in your Home Improvement booklet or you can call us on **(01432) 384057** or email [assetinfo@hhl.org.uk](mailto:assetinfo@hhl.org.uk)

## Residents put heart in their art

Continued from front cover...

It's never too late to learn to become an artist and over 40 residents from across the county have taken part in our Wellbeing Arts Project. Residents have been encouraged to create art work which reflects their memories and personal stories.



The project was run by our dedicated Housing Support Team and its aim was to bring older people together in a fun and relaxing environment where they can learn new skills or rediscover old ones. It is open to all residents regardless of any barriers they may have and meets the hidden needs of residents particularly in rural areas.

The exhibition of work was opened by Cllr Olwyn Barnett who told us, *"The work I have seen is a revelation to me. So much joy and reward has come to so many people with this project. It is true: the simple ideas are always the best."*

The types of activities available at the weekly sessions include painting, ceramics and working with textiles. We will be rolling the project out to other areas with a third group forming in Ross-on-Wye in the New Year.

One resident involved in the project told us, *"I've been totally relaxed here because I've switched my phone off, it's been so nice to be me, not mum or a carer; this is my time for myself."*



Inspirational leaders

vision

in winter 09

3



**HHL resident helps us on our estate inspection**

# Estate Inspections tackle 132 untidy gardens!

At the beginning of the year, housing officers consulted residents about what we should be looking out for on our regular estate inspections. One of the overwhelming issues that you wanted us to look at and tackle was untidy gardens.

So far this year, housing officers have dealt with 132 untidy gardens. This involves inspecting the gardens, taking photos, talking to residents to encourage them to tackle the problem, identifying any support needs and ultimately, as a last resort, providing evidence for court action.

In every case, we try to work with the residents to get the garden tidied. Where residents are having difficulties, we are able to advise them of different organisations and charities who may be able to assist.

An untidy garden can be uncut grass, an overgrown hedge, rubbish or old furniture left in the garden or an overgrown tree or a combination of these.

102 untidy gardens have been dealt with and the issues resolved. A further 30 cases are currently being dealt with.

Of these 30 cases, 6 are with our Legal Team for court action to be taken and 1 case has recently been to court.

Our last resort is to take court action but we can and will go to the court to ask the judge for an injunction if necessary. An injunction is a court order which orders the tenant to tidy their garden. Failure to do this would result in being in contempt of court and it would be for the court to decide how they would deal with this.



# Excellent Exhibition

Around 150 residents came along to our Excellent Exhibition held at the Three Counties Hotel in September. The exhibition was held to celebrate the successes of the year, including our 2 stars and excellent assessment from the Audit Commission and to provide more information to residents about our services.



We welcomed around 45 of our partners to the event who set up exhibition stalls to provide information about what they do and to offer help and advice to residents. Some of the partners who attended were The Newton Farm Information Centre, West Mercia Police, Council Recycling Team, Age Concern, Citizens Advice, Community Protection, Home Point, Connexions, South Wye Regeneration and many more.



We set up our very own Big Brother style diary room so that residents could enter the room and tell us what they thought of our services, in particular our customer care, including what makes good and bad customer care. Around 15 residents took part and we created a DVD from the feedback.



Our competition to win a Nintendo Wii was a big hit! People of all ages took part. We wanted to get peoples thoughts about The Oval area in Newton Farm as part of our regeneration project, The Oval Community Plan. Those who came along and shared their views with us were automatically entered into the prize draw....after they'd had great fun competing against us on the Wii!

Following the exhibition we held the formal Annual General Meeting where we announced the winner of our Resident Board Member election, Rebecca Whittaker. You can learn more about your new Board Member on page 8.



**S**ervices excellent; improvement driven by customers and tenants



**Win a  
32" TV!**

It's Christmas Time once again, the Season of good cheer, and here at Herefordshire Housing we would like to say **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!**

Over this festive period we are running a competition for all of our tenants who have a clear or in credit rent account.

**Prizes up for grabs:**

**1st Prize:**

32" Flat Screen Television

**2nd Prize:**

£100 High Street Vouchers

**3rd Prize:**

£50 High Street Vouchers

To be in with a chance to win all you need to do is have a clear or in credit rent account by 10th January 2010, and you will be automatically entered into the prize draw.\*

**Remember**, if you currently have a clear rent account then the week of the 21st December is the Christmas Rent Free week.

If you have rent arrears, it is important that you pay your agreed repayment during the Rent Free week.

If you are experiencing difficulties paying your rent please contact Income Services on **(01432) 384040**.

\*conditions apply does not include garage licensees, employees, family members and tenant board members

# Day in the life of ....Resident Inspectors

**Well, where do we start?** Our role as Resident Inspectors is very varied, but very interesting. It is not exactly a 'day in the life' – more a collection of different things to do over a few months.

We start off by discussing which service we should be inspecting. So far, this has been for the Internal Improvements carried out to tenant's homes, such as installing new kitchens, bathrooms and rewiring.

We then set about planning how we will inspect this service – this includes things like interviewing the contractors who will be carrying out the improvements to find out how things should be done. We then arrange to interview other tenants to find out what the reality is and what people actually think of their improvements and the services they receive.

It was nice that the tenants trusted us enough to ask us about other issues, which we then passed onto Herefordshire Housing on their behalf. It also showed up how good it was for residents to talk to other residents, because they felt comfortable enough to talk openly with us and to tell us exactly what they thought.

Herefordshire Housing fully supports us and helps us get to grips with arranging visits to other tenants. They arrange things like transport for us and mobile phones, so that we can easily contact people as and when we need to.

The inspection we have recently done for internal improvements was extremely interesting. You get to find out so much about what goes on, some very good and some bad examples from tenants. All inspectors have been fully trained and have signed a Confidentiality Agreement and Code of Conduct, and we know to treat all information in a confidential manner.



**Pictured from left to right: Helen (HHL Customer Involvement Officer) with Resident Inspectors Tony, Richard, Angie, June and Stacey**

A couple of us have also been involved in job shadowing the contractors. We are now at the stage where we are meeting together to discuss what we have found out and to put a report together of the results. As part of this, we are making recommendations to Herefordshire Housing about what they should be doing to improve areas that are going wrong.

We have already attended one meeting with the managers of HHL to discuss what we had found out so far. It was really interesting being part of this group and the managers were very keen to hear our results and findings.

We will be presenting our report to senior managers and board members. We will also be going back to the contractors who are carrying out the improvements to give them a 'from the horse's mouth' account of what tenants really feel about the improvements they are installing. A summary of this report will also be on HHL's website and will also be reported in the newsletter.

**Look out for what we have found out!**

**In the forefront, a leading RSL and a great place to work**

**vision**

**in winter 09**

**7**

## Rebecca is on Board!

### Rebecca Whittaker

won the recent Board Member election and took up her position as Resident



Board Member at our Annual General Meeting in September.

Rebecca tells us a bit about herself *"My family moved to the College Estate just before my fifth birthday. At 18 I moved to London and, after completing my law degree, came back to Hereford. Between 2002- 2004, I worked in the council housing department, then for HHL, in the lettings team. From 2005-2008 I worked for Birmingham City Council's homeless team. My son was born in September 2007, so I found a job closer to home, and no longer work in housing.*

*Over the past year I have become a trained "resident inspector", finding out what experience people have of services and working with HHL to achieve improvements. I was also on the panel that selected the contractor for the digital aerial upgrade.*

*I work hard, and am passionate about all HHL homes and communities being the best that is possible.*

*Thank you so much to everyone who took the time to vote".*

# Residents get set for Digital switchover

Residents who live in flats and have existing communal aerials will be set for digital switchover well ahead of the switchover deadline.

We're starting work early to replace aerials and connections and the scheme will be completed by March 2010, well ahead of the 2011 switchover deadline for Herefordshire. We are carrying out over 950 connections and installation will be free of charge to residents.

We will provide a connection to each property within the block of flats, which will allow residents to access over 40 digital channels (Freeview) including BBC 3, ITV 2, E4, Dave and many more. A DAB radio connection and a connection for Sky + will also be provided however, residents would still need to have a sky subscription and box to view this service but would no longer need a separate dish.

We are taking steps to meet the needs of all our customers by also offering the option to access other foreign language channels not provided by Sky, such as Polsat (Polish TV). Any residents who wish to access this service can do so at no extra cost.



If you have any queries about the Digital Switchover you can contact us on **01432 384000**.

get set for digital

# Our great BIG survey –

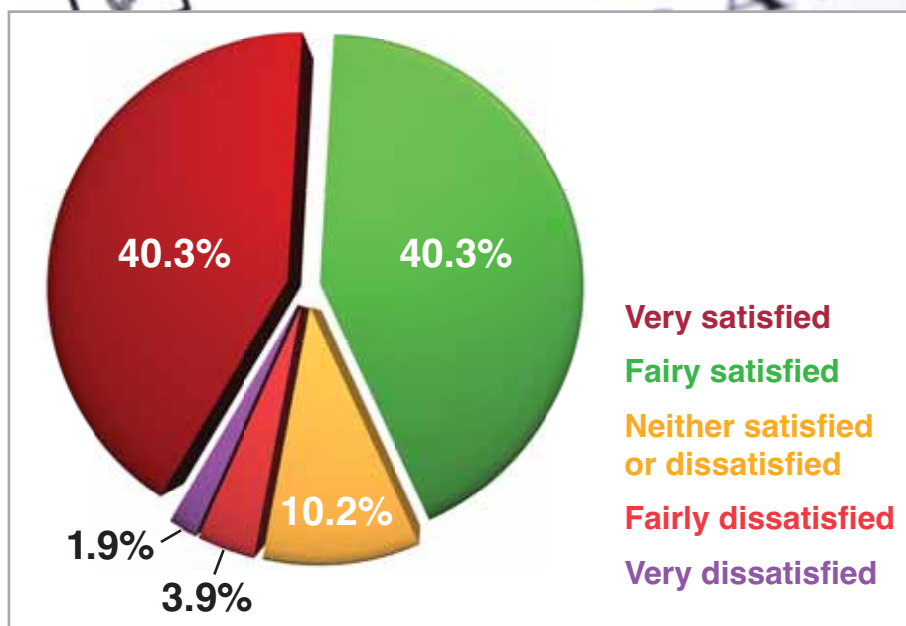
## The Results

Every three years we ask what you think of where you live, what we do and how we do it. This summer an independent company, BMG, wrote to over 2,500 of you as part of our most comprehensive survey ever.

What you told us will help us to improve the services we provide to you.

### The Results

- More than eight out of ten of you are happy with the overall service we provide
- 87% of you are satisfied with Repairs and Maintenance
- 86% are satisfied with the quality of your home
- 80% believe your rent represents value for money
- 81% of you are satisfied with your neighbourhood
- 84% said that we are good at keeping you informed



Offering choice and going the extra mile

vision

in winter 09

9

# Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

We take all complaints of anti-social behaviour seriously. We have two dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Officers and a wide range of tools for tackling and resolving anti-social behaviour, including negotiation, mediation, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's), injunctions, demotion orders and possession proceedings.

These tools help to protect the community from perpetrators of anti-social behaviour whilst allowing problems to be resolved, ensuring that, wherever possible, people can remain in their own homes.

Recently we have used the following tools to resolve anti-social behaviour issues.

## Mediation

We use mediation where there are differing lifestyles, a lack of understanding and breakdown in communications leading to disagreement.

We use a trained and impartial third party (the mediator) to help the people involved find a mutually acceptable solution. It can only work where there is a willingness to do this. In agreed circumstances, we will make a referral to a mediation service provider and pay the costs of this.

## Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC)

We use Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for minor anti-social behaviour and where a warning has been unsuccessful in addressing the problem. This is a voluntary written agreement between the person committing anti-social behaviour and one or more agencies such as Herefordshire Housing, Police etc. We most commonly use ABC's for young people involved in anti-social behaviour.

The ABC specifies a list of anti-social behaviour acts in which the person has been involved e.g. graffiti, vandalism, intimidation etc and which they agree not to continue.

## Injunctions

An anti-social behaviour injunction is a court order which can be applied to a range of anti-social behaviour relating to housing matters and the wider neighbourhood.



Injunctions can be used to stop the person concerned from engaging in the behaviour set out in the injunction. Some injunctions can exclude the person from specified places or areas.

We have recently acquired two injunctions, one where a resident threatened a Herefordshire Housing colleague and another where one resident threatened another in a racial abuse incident.

Breach of the conditions of an Injunction can result in up to two years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine for contempt of court.

They can be used for a wide range of anti-social behaviour such as playing loud music at night, verbal abuse and vandalism.

## Demotion Orders

A Demotion Order ends the tenants existing tenancy and replaces it with a less secure type of tenancy for a period of at least twelve months. Evicting the tenant and gaining possession of the property is much easier when the tenancy is a 'demoted' tenancy.

We use Demotion Orders where ASB is too advanced for negotiation or mediation but is not currently significant enough for eviction.

**If you want to find out more about how we can help with Anti-social behaviour, you can contact us on 01432 384000.**

# Could you be one of our Resident Inspectors?

- Would you like to play an important role in helping to improve what we do?
- Would you enjoy investigating our services and interviewing our colleagues, contractors and other residents to find out what our services are like?
- Could you think of ideas to recommend how we could improve what we do?

If so, you would be an ideal person to be part of our Resident Inspection Team. These are a group of tenants and leaseholders who inspect our services, put together a report of what they find out and tell us their opinions on how we can ensure that all residents receive excellent services from us.

Full training is provided and you would be fully supported to ensure that you are comfortable and confident in your role as an inspector. The current resident inspectors would also welcome new people and will help you get to grips with what is involved. (See page 7 for A Day in the Life of a Resident Inspector).

If you would like to find out more, please call Helen Greenway – Customer Involvement Officer on (01432) 384010 or email [involvement@hhl.org.uk](mailto:involvement@hhl.org.uk)

We will look forward to hearing from you.

## Rent a Garage from £5.57

As well as providing homes, we provide garages which you can apply to rent from us. You can rent a garage from as little as £5.57 per week if you are a Herefordshire Housing tenant or £6.40 for non-tenants. We currently have garages available in the following areas:



- **Hillside** (Pencroft Road, Pentwyn Avenue)
- **Hinton** (Beech Grove, Maple Grove, Lilac Grove)
- **Hunderton** (Cagebrook Avenue, Springfield Avenue)
- **Newton Farm** (Waterfield Road, Brampton Road, Charlton Avenue, Wilton Avenue)
- **Putson** (River View)
- **Redhill** (Greencroft, Honddu Close, Redhill, Merestone Road, Usk Close, Priors Walk)
- **St. Martins** (Priors Walk)

If you would like more information please contact us on (01432) 346070

Neighbourhoods and communities that are popular places to live

# vision

in winter 09

11

# in vision in winter

# Merry Christmas



## from Team HHL

### Christmas & New Year Office Closures

- **Head Office** (Legion Way) will be closed from 12:00 noon on Thursday 24th December 2009 and will re-open on Tuesday 29th December 2009. We will also close on Friday 1st January 2010 and will re-open on Monday 4th January 2010.
- **South Wye Office** (Jubilee Court) will be closed from 12:00 noon on Thursday 24th December 2009 and will re-open on Tuesday 4th January 2010.
- **City Centre Office** (Widemarsh Street) will be closed from 12:00 noon on Thursday 24th December 2009 and will re-open on Tuesday 4th January 2010.

**\* For all Out of Hour emergencies please call: (01432) 352555**

[www.hhl.org.uk](http://www.hhl.org.uk)

#### Polish

Niniejszy biuletyn zawiera istotne informacje dotyczące mieszkalnictwa i usług w tym zakresie, Jeżeli życzylibyście sobie Państwo otrzymać niniejsze informacje przetłumaczone na język ojczysty, proszę dzwonić pod numer I (01432) 384011.

#### Russian

Это информационное письмо для жильцов содержит важную информацию о работе отдела по обслуживанию жильцов. Если Вы хотите получить перевод этой информации, то, пожалуйста, звоните по телефону: (01432) 384011.

#### Portuguese

Este boletim informativo para os inquilinos contém informação importante sobre os serviços de habitação. Se quiser que esta informação seja traduzida, por favor telefone para (01432) 384011.

#### Head Office:

Herefordshire Housing Ltd.  
Legion Way,  
Hereford, HR1 1LN.  
Tel. 01432 384000  
Fax. 01432 384198

#### City Centre Office:

One-Stop Shop,  
84-86 Widemarsh Street,  
Hereford, HR4 9HG.  
Tel. 01432 346070  
Fax. 01432 346089

#### South Wye Office:

Jubilee Court Community Facility,  
Kilvert Road, Newton Farm,  
Hereford, HR2 7FE.  
Tel. 01432 346091  
Fax. 01432 379260