

Competition



Issue number 12, Summer 2012

HOME FRONT



JERSEY HOMES TRUST NEWSLETTER

'housing people'

Win a prize!

CONGRATULATIONS to Ronnie Turner of Victoria Place who was the winner of the Wordsearch in the last issue of the newsletter. Your prize of £20-worth of vouchers has been sent. This time we have another Wordsearch with a topical Olympics theme. The names of the 12 cities that have hosted the summer Olympics from 1968 up to and including London in 2012 are hidden in the grid. Ring the names and send your entry, together with your name and address and best contact telephone number, to Jersey Homes Trust, 48-50 New Street, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3TE. The first correct entry to be opened will win the prize. The name of the winner will be published in the next newsletter.

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Gateway to housing

The way Island residents can apply for social rented housing has changed. The Affordable Housing Gateway has been set up as a single point of access for all social rented housing in Jersey. This should make the application process much easier as, instead of having to apply to several different providers (the Housing Department and the housing associations) just one single application now has to be made.

The Gateway is independent of all social housing providers. All new applicants are assessed by Gateway Assessment Officers. The existing waiting lists of the housing associations and the Housing Department have been amalgamated. This new system is intended to streamline the process and reduce duplication and will provide valuable data about current and future housing need. Applications are banded by the

Gateway according to greatest need.

Commenting on the change, Jersey Homes Trust Chairman, Michael Van Neste, said: "Through our access to the Gateway we will continue to allocate homes to people in the greatest need, as we have always done. The main change as far as our existing tenants are concerned is that it should be easier for people to apply successfully to move home when the need arises. We are very supportive of the principles of the Gateway and congratulate the Housing Minister for this welcome initiative."

New face in the office

A new member of staff has joined the team at managers Brunel. Jane Chevalier replaces Michaela Hayden who has emigrated to Australia. Welcome to Jane and all the very best to Michaela and her family for their new life Down Under.

As a result, individual responsibility for managing the estates is now as follows:

Patricia De Vai: Belle Vue, Cherry Grove, Clos Le Gallais, Le Grand Clos,

La Folie Estate, La Roseraie, and Maison De St Nicolas.

Susan Farrar: Brooklands, Clos Du Ruisseau, Clement Court, Le Coie, St Paul's Gate, St Saviour's Court, Le Jardin Fleuri and John Wesley Apartments.

Jane Chevalier: Berkshire Court, Kent Lodge, Victoria Place, Parkside and St Clements Road.

Summer living

Now that the finer weather has finally arrived and we begin to spend more time outside, don't forget to consider your neighbours when organising outdoor pursuits. Be aware that your activities might impinge on the enjoyment by others of their homes and outside spaces.

Balconies: It's fantastic to see colourful plants and home-grown veggies on balconies, but when watering spare a thought for those below you. Ensure that you trap any excess water from pots and growing bags so that it doesn't drip down onto your neighbour's balcony below.

Smoking: Many people smoke outside their homes these days, which, if you choose to smoke, is a sensible thing to do.

But remember, not everyone likes the smell of cigarette smoke wafting up from the balcony below or near communal exterior doors.

BBQs: BBQs are not permitted on common areas or balconies. If you have a garden, eating al fresco is a great way to wind down at the end of a busy week. But please remember your BBQ etiquette. Watch the way the wind is blowing so that bits and pieces don't fly into your neighbour's garden; remember to clear away all left-over food to avoid being plagued with seagulls; and don't stay outside too late in the evenings – your neighbours might be trying to get their children off to sleep or people on shift work might be trying to get to sleep.

Children: Many of our estates have play areas where children can play safely. Ensure that your children respect these areas by not causing a nuisance and by removing any litter when they leave.

Keep corridors clear

We make no apologies for once again appealing to all tenants in flats to please not leave ANY ITEMS in corridors, stairwells and hallways. If you do, they will be removed and you will have to pay a minimum of £20 to get them back.

Any item left out is a potential hazard. It

could be the one thing that hinders access to the emergency services. It could be the one thing that prevents you or your family from escaping from the building. In times of panic people may trip and fall over items left in corridors.

Items left in stairwells are tempting targets

for arsonists – don't leave things there.

Our managers make regular checks of all Jersey Homes Trust properties to ensure that all public areas are kept clear. We would be failing in our duty of care to you, our tenants, if we did not do this. So please, heed this warning and do not leave anything in corridors, under stairs or in hallways. Thank you.

New doors for Berkshire

New doors have been fitted at one of the entrances to Berkshire Court following concerns expressed by some residents.

In last year's tenants' survey several people voiced concerns about the difficulties they experienced opening the heavy doors.

"We looked into the matter

and had to agree that not only were the doors difficult to open, particularly for our older residents, but once open they were difficult to hold," said Stephen Van Neste of managers Brunel.

There are two entrances to the estate, one on Hilary Street and one on La Motte Street, so the decision was taken to fit automatic doors at the La

Motte Street side.

The change has been welcomed by the residents. "Absolutely marvellous," was a typical reaction of Shirley Aubignac. "The old doors were so hard to open and particularly difficult to manage when carrying shopping. These new ones are like a dream come true."

"We are always delighted to be able to respond in a positive way to concerns expressed by our tenants," said Mr Van Neste.



Shirley Aubignac and Stephen Van Neste try out the new doors.



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Getting together

Tenants representing some of the Jersey Homes Trust's largest estates attended a meeting recently with managers Brunel to talk about general issues surrounding social rented housing and particular concerns facing tenants.

The meeting was prompted by last year's tenants' survey in which a number of tenants expressed an interest in becoming involved in the formation of residents' associations.

"We are very keen to initiate greater communication with our tenants," explained Stephen Van Neste from Brunel, "however our past experience of residents' associations" has not

always been positive. This time, rather than rush in and set up new associations, we felt that a more productive way forward would be to hold a meeting with those people who had expressed an interest and explore the best way forward."

Everyone who had indicated an interest on the survey form was invited and the meeting was attended by tenants from Le Coie, John Wesley Apartments and Victoria Place.

Matters discussed ranged from the new Housing Gateway and how tenants can apply for transfers, to estate matters such as fly-tipping. "One thing that arose at the meeting

was that people are unaware of just how many properties the Jersey Homes Trust has under management," said Mr Van Neste. "So with this issue of the newsletter we have included a flyer with details of all the estates."

Further meetings with tenants will now take place on a regular basis. "The first meeting was extremely encouraging," said Mr Van Neste. "The trustees are keen to ensure that JHT tenants have a forum through which to voice concerns or ideas so we will continue holding regular meetings to allow this to happen."

- Anyone who would like to attend a future meeting should contact Brunel either by email at jht@brunel.je or telephone 750270.

Problems in the bin stores

Bin stores are provided on every estate for the clean and safe disposal of domestic refuse. Unfortunately, a small minority of people continue to abuse the system by clogging up the areas with large items of unwanted household furniture and equipment such as push-chairs, washing machines and even beds!

When this happens the managers have to pay to

have these items collected and dumped properly which diverts funds from other projects such as gardening and general maintenance. Another effect of this random dumping is that the parish refuse collectors are unable to access the rubbish bins to empty them, which causes more problems.

There are also instances where people cannot be bothered to place their

rubbish in the bins provided and simply throw their bags in through the door, which is unpleasant for people coming in after them and unhygienic too.

"It is such a shame that the actions of a few people are making life difficult for the majority of tenants who abide by the rules," commented Stephen Van Neste of managers Brunel. "I would urge anyone who is having

a new appliance fitted to ask the supplier to remove the old one.

Any tenant who is unsure about where to dump large items can seek advice from us.

We can't shift the item for you but we can give you the name of someone who can help."

Responsibilities – ours or yours?

From time to time confusion arises as to who is responsible for the care and maintenance of some items in a property – the Jersey Homes Trust or the tenant. In the main, larger items such as boilers are the responsibility of the Jersey Homes Trust, whilst smaller things and general maintenance are the responsibility of the tenant. The following list contains some of the things over which confusion sometimes arises:

Light bulbs: These are the tenants' responsibility as are the starter motors on fluorescent tube lights.

Garage doors: General maintenance of the opening mechanism of garage doors is the responsibility of the tenant. Hinges should be kept clean and lubricated with WD40 or a similar product (not grease) and doors should be opened in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, i.e. from the centre of the door not the side as this could damage the mechanism. Faulty parts that are deemed to be "wear and tear" will be dealt with by the managers.



Window hinges: When windows have been left closed for a long period, particularly after the winter, the hinges can become stiff and, if forced, may snap.

These hinges should be cleaned at least annually and sprayed with a non-greasy silicone spray. If a hinge which has not been properly maintained breaks the tenant may be charged for a replacement.

Patio doors: Door tracks should be cleaned regularly to allow for smooth running of the door.

Toilet cisterns: There have been recent reports that some proprietary brands of toilet cleaner may cause damage to the interior workings of the cistern. Please ensure that you read the instructions before use as any improper use leading to damage could be down to you, the tenant.

In Brief

Recent refurbishment

The JHT runs a rolling programme of refurbishment of all its properties. Works undertaken or in the pipe-line include:

- Re-painting of the corridors at St Saviour's Court.
- Exterior redecoration at Le Coie.
- Replacement of the carpets in the communal areas in the flats at Belle Vue following re-decoration.

Victoria Place to get the "green" light

Lighting in the car park and communal areas at Victoria Place is to be replaced with LED lights operated by sensors. This follows the successful introduction of a similar system at Berkshire Court where substantial savings have been made. "With the current system lights are often left on for long periods when they are not required, which needlessly wastes money," said Stephen Van Neste of managers, Brunel. "The new system will not only save funds which can then be used for other improvements, but it will also reduce our carbon footprint."

Paving stones to be replaced

Quotations are being sought from contractors in an effort to rectify the problems with the paving slabs at Victoria Place some of which have become raised. The problem has been ongoing for some time, but the Trustees are hopeful that a solution will be found soon.

More lights for Brooklands car park

Increased lighting is to be installed in the car park at Brooklands following reports of anti-social activity in the area. A number of tenants expressed concern in their responses to last year's tenants' survey. Work will also be undertaken to thin out and clean around the trees there. "We take very seriously any concerns expressed by our tenants and we hope that this work will help to solve the problems," said JHT chairman Michael Van Neste.

New homes at Belle Vue

Planning permission has been granted for two new houses at Belle Vue. The three-bedroom properties will form "infills" between existing terraces on the estate. Work is due to start soon. Jersey Homes Trust chairman Michael Van Neste said: "We are delighted that we are able to proceed with the project. There is a chronic shortage of social rented housing in Jersey and we are pleased that we will be able to offer homes to two families."

Telephone List:

Jersey Homes Trust Managers:
01534 750270

Jersey Water :
01534 707300

Crimestoppers:
0800 555 111

Department of Employment
and Social Security:
01534 445505

Health and
Social
Service
(all enquiries):
01534 442000

Housing Department:
01534 445510

Jersey Gas
(main switchboard):
01534 755500

Jersey Gas
(emergency 24 hour service):
01534 755555

Citizens' Advice Bureau:
0800 735 0249

Jersey Electricity
(main switchboard):
01534 505460

Fire Service:
01534 445951

Jersey Electricity
(emergency 24 hour service):
01534 505050

Jersey Telecom:
01534 882882

