

Competition



Issue number 11, Autumn 2011

HOME FRONT



JERSEY HOMES TRUST NEWSLETTER

Win a prize!



CONGRATULATIONS to Bill Mills of Belle Vue whose photograph taken on the estate during the snow has been the judged the best of the entries. The Jersey Evening Post's Deputy Picture Editor, Matt Hotton, who judged the competition, said that Mr Mills's photograph was: "A good composition using the snow covered hedge in the foreground to lead the eye into the rest of the picture which leaves the coloured houses to contrast against the snow." Your prize of £20 of vouchers will be with you soon. This time we

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have another Wordsearch. By the time you receive this copy of Home Front, the elections will be done and dusted. But who were the 13 Senatorial candidates? Their surnames are hidden in this 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.

Bag it and bin it!

A BIG issue for many tenants who completed the survey is the problem of rubbish. This particularly affects people living on estates where there are communal bin stores. The problems include bins being left open which allows seagulls to scavenge; rubbish not being placed in bags before dumping; glass and other rubbish not being placed in bins; and large items such as furniture and old toys being left in the bin stores for disposal.

As well as being unpleasant for everyone who has to use the bin stores, incorrect disposal of refuse can lead to infestation by insects and vermin and also scavenging by dogs and cats. It is not the job of the parish refuse collectors to take away large items such as furniture.

It is the responsibility of all tenants to put their rubbish out for collection in the proper manner – in bags in the bins provided. It is not the job of the parish refuse collectors to dispose of large items of unwanted equipment, this is the responsibility of the tenant. Ultimately, everyone loses out as the managers have to employ contractors to deal with it, which means that less of the budget is then available for general maintenance.

Several tenants asked whether provision could be made for separate bins to be provided so that tenants could sort their refuse ready for recycling. This is a wonderful idea and one which the Jersey Homes Trust would like to support. Our managers are currently in talks with the parishes to see

whether this would be viable, but it would only be able to go ahead with the full co-operation of ALL tenants.

Meanwhile, if you are keen to recycle your rubbish, there are several sites around the island where you can take it and St Helier has a programme of kerbside collections. Free bags are available from a number of outlets in the parish. Full details of all the parish's recycling schemes can be obtained from the parish halls or via parish newsletters.



Positive response to tenants' survey

MANY thanks to everyone who took the time to take part in the recent tenants' survey. This was the third survey carried out by the Trust and once again it proved to be a valuable exercise.

Over one-third of tenants participated, which in marketing terms is a high response rate. The survey is designed to provide feedback in general terms about how people view their tenancy and their homes and it is also an opportunity to highlight any problems people may be experiencing.

The survey demonstrated that JHT tenants are generally happy in their homes with 77% agreeing with the statement "I enjoy living in my home" and a further 17.8% "tending to agree". In the previous survey in 2005, the percentages were 72 and 15 respectively.

Responses relating to our managers continue to be extremely positive with

73% of tenants agreeing with the statement that the managers' representatives are "polite and courteous" and a further 18% saying that they "tended to agree" with the statement. Tenants are also happy with the way repairs are handled with 69% agreeing that they are dealt with efficiently and a further 22.6% "tending to agree". Of those who responded, 75.5% agreed that maintenance staff were courteous and a further 20% "tended to agree" with the statement.

A new section was included in this year's survey to find out whether tenants are inconvenienced by anti-social behaviour and whether they had reported incidents to the managers and/or the police or honorary police during the preceding 12 months. 76% of respondents either agreed or tended to agree with the statement: "I am not inconvenienced by anti-social behaviour on my estate", while

13% disagreed or tended to disagree. 47 complaints about anti-social behaviour were made to the managers and 78 complaints were made to the police or honorary police in the last 12 months by tenants who responded to the survey. However, the survey responses indicate that many of these incidents concerned a few tenants making several complaints.

"We take very seriously any reports of anti-social behaviour or vandalism that occurs on our estates," said JHT Chairman Michael Van Neste. "This survey indicates that whilst there may be a few problems in a few areas, generally our estates are trouble-free, which is extremely encouraging."

Despite an increase in computer usage in the years since the last survey, over 80% of tenants who took part this time still prefer to receive information from the Trust or our managers by post.

Several tenants took the opportunity to add extra comments in the space provided on the survey form and, where possible, these will all be followed up

continued on page 2

New look for website

THE Jersey Homes Trust website has been redesigned. Since it was first launched nearly ten years ago, the work of the Trust has increased as more homes have been built and much of the content of the old site had become outdated. During

that period the functionality of website design has also improved.

The new site contains updated information about the work of the Trust; a sample lease and application form; the tenants' handbook; past

issues of Home Front and lots of other information.

"An increasing number of people are using the Internet as their main source of information and it is important that our web presence contains as much information as possible

both for our current tenants and prospective tenants," commented JHT Chairman Michael Van Neste.

The address for the site remains the same – www.jerseyhomestrust.org.je



Issue number 11, Autumn 2011

HOME FRONT



continued from page 1

individually by our managers.

A number of tenants expressed a wish to be involved in setting up a residents' association and our managers will be in touch with them in due course.

Commenting on the results of the survey, Mr Van Neste said: "The exercise has once again proved very positive, both in the number of responses received and the encouraging replies given by the respondents. In common with best practise in other areas, we will be

carrying out similar surveys every three years.

"I would like to thank everyone who participated. It is through surveys like this that we can address any concerns that our tenants have and, hopefully continue to make life on JHT estates as comfortable as possible."

Love they neighbour

MANY of the people who took part in the tenants' survey commented on specific areas of concern such as bin stores, balconies, parking, anti-social behaviour and smoking. Inconsiderate behaviour in any of these areas can make life unpleasant for others. Here are a few tips to ensure that your behaviour doesn't spoil things for your neighbours.

Balconies

Growing your own plants is a great hobby and can enhance the appearance of a block of flats. But don't forget that water from the pots might drip down onto the balcony below. If you grow your own, please place the pot in a saucer to stop this happening. You can buy inexpensive plastic saucers from garden centres.



Parking

Although JHT estates are relatively generously supplied with parking areas, not all tenants on all estates will have their own designated space. Some properties on some estate have garages and we would urge drivers with garages to use them rather than take up space in the communal area. Parking

is at a premium so to park on the road if you have a garage is not fair on your neighbours and your behaviour in this respect might cause resentment. Several tenants whose children have grown up and now have their own vehicles were concerned that there was nowhere for them to park. Whilst we have sympathy for your position, unfortunately it is not within the remit of the Trust to provide extra parking spaces. If you have an allocated space which you do not use, you must not lend or let it to anyone else as this is in breach of your tenancy agreement.

Smoking

It is now against the law to smoke in any enclosed places to which the public has access. This includes corridors and underground car parks and we would urge tenants to respect that. Although smoking on balconies is permitted, please ensure that you dispose of your smoking waste carefully. Flicking a cigarette butt off a balcony could have disastrous consequences, for instance if it lands in a baby's buggy below. Please also be aware that your smoke, wafting upwards, could upset your neighbours – the message is, be considerate of others. A number of tenants expressed concern about cigarette butts being left around areas where smokers congregate on some estates. Cigarette ends are litter – please don't drop them on the ground.

Anti-social behaviour

Many of our estates have outdoor spaces where small children can play safely and older children can congregate and socialise. Unfortunately, a minority are spoiling things

for the majority by behaving in a way that upsets other tenants. These are isolated incidents but if you are a parent please ensure that your children respect their surroundings and their neighbours.

The elderly

In time gone by people would look out for their neighbours. Many people still do, but as life has got busier we tend to have less time. If you have an elderly neighbour, take time out occasionally to ensure that they are OK.

Design issues

Some tenants expressed concern about design issues with their homes, such as windows that open inwards rather than outwards, and the size of some of their rooms. Unfortunately, whilst we cannot do anything to remedy these matters now, we value your comments and will pass them on to architects and builders for the future.

Clutter

Clutter in corridors continues to cause serious problems, so-much-so that our insurers have now issued a warning. It is vitally important that NOTHING is left in corridors or under stairwells. This includes bikes, plants, buggies, mobility equipment, toys, clothes driers etc. Not only are items left in corridors and under stairs a danger to other tenants, but they pose a serious fire risk and could impede your escape should a fire occur in your building. Our managers have to employ people to regularly visit estates to remove items that have been left in corridors or stairwells. This not only incurs a cost to the tenant, who has to pay for the return of the item, but it diverts valuable resources from the real business of managing our housing stock.

Be safe – not sorry!

THE number of house fires occurring in Jersey increased by 27 per cent during 2010 – the first increase since 2006. There are some basic precautions that you can take to minimise the risk of fire in your home.

Chip pans

If possible, get rid of your traditional chip pan and replace it with a thermostatically controlled deep fat fryer. If you must use a traditional pan make sure you never fill it more than one-third full of oil and never leave it unattended on the cooker without turning off the heat. If it does catch fire don't attempt to put the fire out by pouring water on the flames and don't move the pan. Turn off the heat, cover the pan with a damp cloth or its lid and call the Fire and Rescue Service.



Unattended cooking

If you are called away from the cooker, turn the heat off. It's easy to forget about pans on the stove. When cooking, always ensure that the handles of pans don't stick out.

Overloaded sockets

Only use one plug per socket unless you have a strip adaptor. Check for any worn or taped up cables as they can be dangerous and need replacing.

Smoking

Every year people fall asleep smoking and start a fire. Don't smoke in bed. It's also dangerous to smoke when feeling sleepy or if you've been drinking. Use a proper ashtray and make sure it can't be knocked over easily. Don't let the ash, butts or matches build up. Wet the contents of the ashtray before disposing in the dustbin.

Candles

Candles should be in a proper holder that won't fall over, especially tea lights. It's never a good idea to leave candles in a room without anyone there. Extinguish them and make sure they are out.



Smoke alarms

All Jersey Homes Trust properties are fitted with smoke alarms, but it is YOUR responsibility to ensure they are working properly. Test them every week and change the batteries if necessary. Many people are saved every year thanks to their smoke alarm, but it's no use having one if it doesn't work.

If you would like more fire safety advice, check out the community fire safety section of the Fire and Rescue Service website. The next issue of Home Front will contain advice on making a fire rescue plan for your home.

- We would like to thank Richard Liron, Community Safety Officer with the States of Jersey Fire and Rescue Service, who helped us compile this information.

In Brief

Benchmarking

THE Jersey Homes Trust has once again fared well when compared to housing associations in the UK. Operating costs of the JHT are £1,829 per property per annum compared with £3,117 in the UK; management costs are £464 compared to £893; and rent arrears are 0.2% per year compared with 4.9%. Commenting on the findings of the benchmarking exercise, JHT Chairman Michael Van Neste said: "These statistics demonstrate that the JHT provides an efficient, value-for-money service to the Island."

Revaluation of properties

FROM time to time all Jersey Homes Trust properties are revalued in accordance with the wishes of the Trust's bankers. The latest revaluation exercise was carried out in July of this year by global commercial real estate firm Jones Lang LaSalle. They visited all the estates and in some cases made internal inspections as well as external. They concluded that JHT properties were well maintained both inside and out.

Berkshire Court lighting

THE sensors in the car park at Berkshire Court have been replaced following concern expressed by some residents there who found that the new system did not allow the lights to remain on for long enough.

Getting smart

THE re-decoration of the exterior of Le Coie is the latest large-scale maintenance project to get underway. Later on in the year, La Roseraie is also going to be redecorated. Cherry Grove has also had a facelift and the internal communal areas in the apartment blocks at Belle Vue are to receive a trial of a new sort of wall covering which is designed to stay clean.

Telephone

Jersey Homes Trust Managers:
01534 750270

Crimestoppers:
0800 555 111

Health and
Social

Housing Department:
01534 445510

Jersey Gas Company
(emergency 24 hour service):
01534 755555

Jersey Electricity Company
(main switchboard):
01534 505460

Jersey Electricity Company
(emergency 24 hour service):
01534 505050

List:

Jersey Water :
01534 707300

Department of Employment
and Social Security:
01534 445505

Service
(all enquiries):
01534 442000

Jersey Gas Company
(main switchboard):
01534 755500

Citizens' Advice Bureau:
0800 735 0249

Fire Service:
01534 445951

Jersey Telecom:
01534 882882

