

Competition



Digital switchover

AS you will have read in the media, television in the Channel Islands will be going digital in November 2010. What this means is that the existing analogue TV signal will be switched off and replaced with a new digital signal.

Since news of the change was made public, Brunel Management have been looking into the implications that the switchover will have for our tenants. For those of you who already subscribe to Sky nothing will change. For those of our estates where the television signal is received via a communal aerial, most existing television sets will still work, but you will need to purchase a "digibox".

We will be in contact with everyone affected nearer the time. ■

Hidden in this Wordsearch are the surnames of the politicians who make up Jersey's Council of Ministers. Find the names in the grid, circle them and post your completed entry to Home Front Competition, Jersey Homes Trust, 48-50 New Street, St Helier, Jersey, JE2 3TE. Don't forget to include your name and address. The first correct entry to be opened after the closing date of 18th January 2010 will win a £20 gift voucher.

Try your luck!

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Well done to JHT tenant Mr Glennie, who was the winner of the Wordsearch competition in the last issue of Home Front. He received a £20 gift voucher from W H Smith.

Make it easier on yourself

FOR many people rent is the biggest single outgoing they have. As tenants of the Jersey Homes Trust your rent is accepted in arrears, which means that you have to keep back enough money until the end of the month to pay it. This can be difficult for some people, particularly if you are on Income Support or do not have a bank account in which to save the money until it is due.

Fortunately, Jersey now has a "credit

union", an organisation which allows people to get help managing their money.

Community Savings and Credit is a self-help savings and loan co-operative whose purpose is to encourage members to save regularly, make available low interest loans and provide free financial advice.

It is situated on the ground floor of the Town Hall. Their telephone

number is 737555 or you email them at community.banking@jerseymail.co.uk

'We are delighted that this new service is available,' commented the chairman of the Jersey Homes Trust, Michael Van Neste. 'Although in some cases our managers are prepared to accept rent on a weekly basis rather than monthly, they are unable to handle cash. Community Savings and Credit offers a service which gets over the problem.' ■

Issue number 9, Winter 2009

HOME FRONT



JERSEY HOMES TRUST NEWSLETTER

JHT shines in annual comparisons

THE Jersey Homes Trust once again achieved well in an annual benchmarking exercise against performance parameters of UK housing associations.

The exercise showed that the JHT's weekly operating costs per unit were £33.97 compared to £52.56 in the UK. Rent arrears

are also lower than in the UK with the JHT having just 0.2% of its total rental income in arrears, compared with 5.4% in the UK. And whereas it takes the JHT managers less than one day on average to let vacant units, it takes UK associations 40.7 days.

Commenting on the results of the exercise, which is carried out every year, JHT Chairman Michael Van Neste said: 'These results demonstrate that the Jersey Homes Trust is achieving what it was set up to do, that is to provide value-for-money social rented housing for the people of Jersey.' ■

Maintenance and repairs – how the system works

ONE of the key services we offer to our tenants is a responsive and efficient call-out procedure for maintenance and repairs. But tenants have their part to play too and the following explanation of our call-out system may be helpful.

Reporting the problem

We are normally notified of a problem by telephone. The in-coming call is quickly routed to the Estate Manager in charge of the property concerned.

The Estate Manager takes as much information as required to gain an understanding of the problem. If it is a problem caused by the tenant and possibly chargeable to the tenant, the Manager will offer advice on how to resolve it, possibly without the need for a call-out.

If the problem is the responsibility of the Trust, the tenant is advised that the relevant contractor will contact the tenant directly to

arrange access. The tenant can request that the contractor may gain access by collecting a key from our offices. The issue and redemption of keys in such circumstances is carefully controlled and is subject to the prior permission of the tenant.

Fast Response

A fax/e-mail is immediately sent to the contractor describing the fault and providing the contact information of the tenant. This automatically creates a

computer record and also a paper "job-sheet" for the work concerned. A copy of the information supplied to the contractor is sent by post to the tenant, together with a questionnaire form. The tenant is able to check that the correct information has been provided to the contractor and also, by completing the questionnaire at a later date, confirm that the work has received proper attention by the contractor.

Recording and checking

When the tenant returns the questionnaire, or when the contractor sends an invoice to the Trust, the "job-sheet" is removed from the maintenance folder and the computer record is updated. This avoids any possibility of the Trust paying twice for the same work. The computer records provide the Trust with a permanent record of every call-out made and all the maintenance undertaken in every home.

Estate Managers check the maintenance folder every week and if there

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It's child's play

CHILDREN'S play equipment has now been installed at Victoria Place on the Waterfront and is proving extremely popular. The playground is for younger children on the estate and is also available for use by residents of the adjacent privately-owned Albert Place.

The project has been funded with money earmarked in the original building budget. The Trustees would like to thank resident Helen Birrell for her enthusiasm and persistence in support of this worthwhile addition to the amenities of the estate. ■



The new playground at Victoria Place

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HOME FRONT



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appears to be any delay or inaction by the contractor, it is followed up. Sometimes there is a good reason for a delay, the illness or holiday of the tenant for example, resulting in access problems.

Our Contractors

We know that tenants are normally very satisfied with the way that this system works and with the standard of work of contractors. All our contractors are independent and carefully selected for their integrity and efficiency. Brunel Management makes sure that all contractors have third-party insurance. Neither the Trust nor Brunel has any interests financial or otherwise in the contractors, who are independent. Completion of the questionnaire by tenants helps us to monitor the performance of the contractors.

Before reporting a fault

If there is an electrical fault it may be your own appliance causing the problem. Check the fuse box and your appliances first. Unnecessary call-outs have to be charged to tenants.

Tenants' Responsibilities and Minor Repairs

Tenants are responsible for minor repairs and replacements such as fluorescent tubes, starters and light bulbs, bath plugs, toilet seats and tap washers.

Tenants are responsible for repairs which are necessary through damage or neglect. They have an obligation to keep the interior of their homes in a reasonable state of cleanliness and repair.

Emergencies

If there is a major emergency (at any time of day or night) call the emergency services.

If there is a maintenance emergency in office hours telephone our Managers;

if outside office hours but requiring urgent attention, you may telephone an electrician or plumber of your choice (or from the Yellow Pages). Remember to inform us as soon as possible that you called out the contractor.

Lift break-down: Any such break-down is a serious fault and should be reported immediately. Telephone the 24-hour number displayed in the lift car. In the case of an emergency Telephone the Fire Service (112). Also please telephone our Managers.

Your Tenants' Handbook contains detailed information about emergencies and what to do in the event of different emergencies such as fire, gas leaks and flooding. An understanding of this information may save life and reduce damage to property.

What is an Emergency?

Please use judgement and common sense. For example, loss of heating for a whole weekend by a disabled tenant could be regarded as an emergency. Loss of hot water by teenagers and their parents is a nuisance but should wait for the next working day.

The extra reasonable cost of unnecessary emergency call-outs will be charged to the tenants concerned. ■

Energy saving tips



On sunny days open your curtains to allow the sun to warm the room

THE cost of electricity has increased considerably over the last couple of years which has had an effect on everyone's housekeeping bills. Fortunately, there are some simple steps you can take to cut down on your usage of power and save money. Some of these can be introduced immediately; some can be achieved in the longer term. But they will all save you money!

- When buying new electrical appliances look for the energy rating sign. This is denoted by colour coding which will indicate clearly how efficient the machine is.
- If you are able to, turn down your heating thermostat by just one degree. This can reduce your heating bill by £15-£20 per annum.
- Keep doors to unused rooms closed to stop heat 'escaping' into them.
- On sunny days, open the curtains to let the sunlight in to warm the room.
- Keep lampshades clean – you may then be able to use a lower wattage bulb. Old-fashioned bulbs will soon be obsolete so replace them with low energy ones. If you shop around you can get good deals.
- Don't light up the whole room if you don't need to. Use lamps to light only the part of the room you are using.
- Turn off lights when they are not in use.

- Turn off appliances such as computers, microwave ovens and televisions at the socket when not in use. The little green or red standby lights on these items burn electricity needlessly.
- Have a shower instead of a bath – you'll use less hot water that way.
- Defrost your fridge and deep freeze regularly as a build up of ice causes them to run less efficiently.
- Make sure food is chilled before putting it in the fridge or freezer as hot food can increase running costs.
- If possible, install your fridge or freezer out of sunlight.
- Freezers run more efficiently when they are full. If yours is running low, stock it up with sliced bread or bottled water.
- Use saucepans that are the right size for the hob and steamers that fit on top of saucepans.

| Energy | | Washing machine |
|--|---------------|-----------------|
| Manufacturer Model | | |
| More efficient | A | B |
| | B | |
| | C | |
| | D | |
| | E | |
| | F | |
| Less efficient | G | |
| Energy consumption kWh/cycle (based on standard test results for 60°C cotton wash) | | 1.75 |
| Washing performance | A B C D E F G | A B C D E F G |
| Spin drying performance | A B C D E F G | A B C D E F G |
| Capacity (cotton) kg | 5.0 | 5.5 |
| Water consumption | 5.2 | 7.8 |
| Noise (dB(A) re 1 pW) | 5.2 | 7.8 |

Look for this colour-coded sign when buying new appliances



Pans should be the right size for the ring to maximise energy use

In Brief

Keeping up appearances

THE Trust is committed to ensuring that all its properties are maintained to a high standard. The refurbishment programme for 2010 will include external decoration for both Berkshire Court and La Roseraie. Meanwhile, new planting will be taking place soon at Victoria Place and next year the interior corridors there will be decorated and floor coverings replaced.

Timely reminder

PREVIOUS newsletters have carried articles warning about door closers and smoke detectors but it has come to the notice of our managers that the advice has not been noted by everyone. Automatic door closers are fitted on internal doors to prevent the spread of fire should one occur and also to cut down on draughts. Some tenants have removed these devices. Should a fire break out, this could have an effect on home insurance and also the Trust's building insurance. So if you have taken your door closers off, please put them back. All JHT homes are fitted with smoke alarms, but it is important that these are

checked regularly to make sure they are working properly. We advise testing the alarm once a week to make sure that the battery is working.

Be insured

TIMES are tough financially at the moment and everyone is looking for ways to cut back on expenses. But there are some things that you mustn't skimp on. Home contents insurance is one of them. Your landlord is not responsible for damage occurring to the things that belong to you, how ever that damage may be caused, so please ensure that you are adequately covered. Many companies have policies that allow the premium to be paid monthly, which spreads the load.

JEC key meters

KEY meters are a fairly new way of paying for electricity using computer technology. However, in order to install one, the householder must have access to the property's main electricity switch cupboard. This may not be possible in blocks of flats. If you are considering installing a key meter, please contact Brunel Management first for advice on whether your property is suitable.

Meeting a need in the community

THE Jersey Homes Trust is acutely aware of its social responsibility towards providing affordable homes for island residents. So when, in 2006, it was announced that Les Amis was having difficulty in finding suitable properties to allow it to continue with its work, the Trustees were delighted to be able to help.

The main objective of Les Amis, which was opened in 1975, is to offer care and support in residential settings to adults with learning difficulties. The charity's philosophy is to offer homely environments where people feel free to express themselves and make real choices that affect their lives. This is achieved

through empowering residents by helping them to gain the necessary skills to participate and contribute to their local community as equal and valued members.

Without suitable properties in the community the charity would be unable to continue with its work, as Les Amis Director Carl Blackmore explained: 'We reached crisis point a number of years ago and could not find any suitable properties, hence the move into private rental. Fortunately we have excellent relationships with the States of Jersey and the various housing trusts and associations who have never been anything other than totally supportive of all we do.'

The charity now rents four properties from the JHT and Mr Blackmore is delighted with the way things have progressed. He said: 'We have an excellent relationship with the JHT and their managers. We find the Trust and Brunel Management helpful and speedy at responding to issues or problems and concerned that we are happy as tenants.'

Neighbours of the Les Amis homes have also been welcoming. 'We have received open support, help and approval of how we are as tenants and members of the community,' commented Mr Blackmore.

Most of the homes have 24-hour staffing reflecting the needs of the most disabled resident in a house and others have peak-time staffing – early mornings and evenings. Having access to suitable properties is vital to the charity as Mr Blackmore explains: 'Without properties in the community we could not do our work.' ■



The Deputy Manager of Les Amis' Town Project, Ian Tomkins (right), with some of the residents

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 Company (main switchboard): 01534 755500

Jersey Gas Company (emergency 24 hour service): 01534 755555
Citizens' Advice Bureau: 0800 735 0249

Jersey Electricity Company (main switchboard): 01534 505460
Fire Service: 01534 445951

Jersey Electricity Company (emergency 24 hour service): 01534 505050
Jersey Telecom: 01534 882882