

# Don't leave it too late

**In the last 12 months Riverside has evicted 42 tenants for non-payment of rent – but, if you are at risk of losing your home, you can take steps to avoid this happening.**

We have a specialist Income team who can offer assistance and support and a specialist welfare benefit advisor who can help maximise your income.

We can also refer you to a free specialist debt advisor from one of our partner agencies.

Don't let you and your family become another statistic – contact the Income Team on Tel: 0800 169 3245 or on Tel: 0345 155 9020 before it's too late.

- Did you know that Riverside can offer you a new way to pay your rent? The Income Team can take rent payments over the telephone if you have a debit or credit card. All it takes is one quick telephone call and we can take the payment on your behalf.

# Tackling youths – on and off the pitch

**Riverside staff and representatives from the police have squared up to local youngsters for a second time – for a game of football.**



The players

The match first took place after youngsters from the Botcherby, Currock and Upperby estates complained to police about a lack of social activities in the area. Around 25 young people took part in the first match, held at Guilford Park. It was such a success that the organisers from Riverside and the police plan to hold them on a regular basis.

Both organisations would like to thank Guilford Park for providing the pitch and football strips, and also Petteril Bank Spar, Boundary Road Co-op and McCalls in Blackwell Road for providing refreshments.

If you require this magazine in another format e.g. large print or audio cassette or in another language, please telephone ☎ to **0800 169 3245** or **0345 155 9020**.

অনুবাদের জন্য আমাদের টেলিফোন করুন।

Jeżeli potrzebujesz tłumaczenia, zadzwoń do nas

Paskambinkite mums dėl vertimų

欢迎电话查询翻译服务事宜。

Para tradução, telefone-nos

ترجمہ کے لئے ہمیں فون کریں

若需翻譯服務，請致電我們。

Appelez-nous pour vos besoins en traductions

We are happy and able to accept Tynetalk calls.

# Tenants' NEWSLETTER

NEWSLETTER OF



Issue 08

Summer 09

For Riverside tenants in the Carlisle area



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# Taking a stand

**Riverside has joined forces with police in a bid to identify potential nuisance neighbours before they begin causing misery for its tenants.**

In a groundbreaking scheme, Cumbria Constabulary will tell us about any criminal convictions applicants on our waiting list have, allowing us to make an informed decision when allocating our properties. It is hoped the initiative will protect tenants from the threat of living with anti-social neighbours and will minimise the potential for crime and disorder. Tenancy Services Project Supervisor Isabel Davison said: "The introduction of this protocol means that Riverside can legally receive information about criminal



We have joined forces with police to crack down on anti-social behaviour

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## Taking a stand

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convictions relating to customers, which can then help us to make a decision about whether their tenancy application should be suspended in accordance with our suspension policy. "This should have a real, positive impact for people living within our neighbourhoods. It will really help us to improve people's lives through greater peace of mind and safer places for people to live."

Work started on the link-up with police last year and has been put into action in recent weeks.

Inspector Adrian Sowerby, Community Safety Inspector, said: "We aim to ensure that Riverside has accurate information, in appropriate circumstances, to enable them to make a decision on whether to accept or suspend a tenancy application. "In turn, we hope we are saving a lot of work for both agencies further down the line, when we may have had to take enforcement action."

## We're the best

**Riverside has been crowned Social Landlord of the Year for the second consecutive year and also scooped the Customer Service Award at the Housing Excellence Awards.**

Riverside is the only company in the history of the Housing Excellence Awards to be the sole recipient of two awards on the same night.

Chief executive Deborah Shackleton said: "The awards are testament not only to all our hard-working and dedicated staff but also our tenants and residents who work with us to continuously help us improve our service."

# Improving our service

**Riverside has improved its service to tenants in Carlisle, offering 24-hour access to its Customer Service Centre.**

Tenants can now call any time of the day or night to report a repair, tell us about anti-social behaviour or speak to us about other housing issues.



Riverside is here for you, 24 hours a day

Carol Vallely, Head of Property Services, said: "While our customer satisfaction levels are at 86% we are always looking at ways in which we can improve the service we give to our customers. "The new service will allow our customers to report anti-social behaviour out of office hours. "This will give people added peace of mind that they can contact someone at Riverside at any time of the day to report cases of neighbour nuisance." To contact Riverside, 24 hours a day, call on Tel: 0800 169 3245. Tenants with inclusive call packages or ringing from mobile phones, may find it cheaper to call on Tel: 0345 155 9020.

# Riverside transforms local park



Volunteers help to revamp the park

## **Riverside has worked hand in hand with young people to transform a park blighted with crime and anti-social behaviour.**

Dowbeck Park had been neglected for some time, impacting on recreation activities available to young people in the area.

Riverside spoke to youngsters to find out what they wanted in their area and developed a programme of events with Cumbria Constabulary and Carlisle City Council.

Our Community Investment Fund gave £4,997 to part fund the project, which saw a BMX track, graffiti wall and youth shelter installed as the centrepiece of the park. Riverside also paid £700 to fund two litter bins.

Several Riverside employees got their hands dirty helping out during the project. Resident Involvement Officer Sean Crossley, one of the volunteers, said: “The event was a great success and really engaged with the young people who live in the area to give them a sense of ownership of the park.”

## **We’re Better Together**

### **After months of planning, Riverside is finally Better Together – amalgamating seven housing associations that previously made up The Riverside Group.**

The process was completed on April 1 and since then, we have been known as Riverside,

with a new logo and branding to go with our new organisation.

Tenants will continue to receive the same great service from us as we face the future in a strong position despite the current economic crisis.

## Praise for team

**Riverside's Accommodation Support team has been praised after stepping in to help a tenant who was facing eviction over accumulating debt and rent arrears.**

We put the man, who also had problems with alcohol, in contact with the Law Centre and continued to support him until the debt was reduced and he had received additional support in relation to his addiction.

He originally turned to alcohol to escape from the various debt collectors and agencies that came knocking on his door. The success of his support over the past few months has given him the confidence to address his issues head on and to no longer turn to alcohol. The tenant said: "Thanks to everyone involved in supporting me over the past year, I am now confident to say I am feeling 100% and my life is getting back on track. "If it hadn't been for the help of the organisation, who knows how I could have ended up? The Accommodation Support team have been fantastic; their dedication has helped me to regain control over my life and helped improve my self esteem."

If you feel your finances are spiralling out of control, contact us on Tel: 0800 169 3245 or on Tel: 0345 155 9020 to see how we can help.

## Your federation – you

**The Tenants' and Residents' Federation is the main body with which Riverside consults on policies and strategies.**

It represents tenants' views, co-ordinates tenant activity and has a national campaigning role. The Federation is made up of representatives from across Riverside, four from Carlisle.



Riverside's Regeneration and Development Manager, Involvement Supervisor Deborah Earl (far right), Martin, Howard Armstrong and Peter Armstrong.

### Frank Atkinson

Frank has lived in Morton for 15 years and trained as a commercial artist. He spent many years working as a publican and is now retired. He joined the Federation so he could represent people and their views and to try and get changes made in response to tenants' needs. Frank was constantly discussing Riverside with his neighbours and joined the Federation to help turn ideas into actions.

### John Martin

John has lived in Botcherby for five years. He is an active member of the community contributing towards the local newsletter and is a member of the Botcherby Regeneration Group. John is now retired but worked for most of the major UK TV companies during his career – starting out as a camera man and ending up a producer.

### Howard Armstrong

Now retired, Howard worked as a publican for 25 years and was club secretary and steward for a sports and social club for 11 years. He has lived in New Harraby for three years. Howard wants to

# our voice!



Manager Anne Quilter (far left) and Resident (far right) with tenant reps Frank Atkinson, John (middle) and Deborah Earl (second from left).

## Riverside runs with Robbie

Riverside is working with CFM Radio to help raise money for Cash for Kids, which offers grants to children's charities and groups throughout Carlisle.



For the last two years, CFM breakfast show DJ Robbie Dee has asked listeners to join him in the annual Cumbrian

Run. This year Riverside is supporting him in his efforts to raise even more money through the half marathon. Riverside's Resident Involvement Supervisor Deborah Earl, said: "Riverside is working with CFM this year in a bid to get as many people running on the day as possible so that we can help raise as much money as possible for local children.

"Any tenants who would like to take part and Run with Robbie should contact either CFM directly or can enquire through Riverside."

## Our campaign to make friends online

**Riverside has launched a page on social networking site Facebook so tenants in Carlisle can make comments and suggestions to help us improve our service.**

The Facebook page launched last month under the name Riverside Carlisle and has been met with enthusiasm from our new online 'friends'.

Resident Involvement Officer Sean Crossley, who is involved in the project, said: "We welcome suggestions, comments and ideas from everyone in the community to help us to improve the quality and standards of our homes, communities and the environment.

"It is a fun way to communicate with the community, share ideas and offer advice and guidance. We hope that this will enable us to involve customers who may not be able to get involved in more traditional ways, such as tenants meetings. We are enthusiastic about how this will benefit the organisation and all of our customers."

To join the Riverside page, log on to Website: [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and search for Riverside Carlisle.

represent tenants and undertake problem solving activities so that he can make a difference.

### Peter Armstrong

Peter has lived in Durranhill for 35 years and worked for the Co-op for 30 years prior to his retirement. He worked in finance, undertaking internal audit stock-taking responsibilities. Peter says he is "not here to be a big mouth but here to be a voice".

You can contact your Federation representatives each week in person at the Tenants' Resource Centre or call them on Tel: 01228 548296. If you want to send an email, please contact Federation members via Deborah Earl on Email: [deborah.earl@riverside.org.uk](mailto:deborah.earl@riverside.org.uk) marking 'Federation' in the subject box.

## Meet the staff

**Sean Crossley is Resident Involvement Officer at Riverside's Carlisle office**

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

Helping people.

**What is your biggest work-related achievement so far?**

Updating the database of involved tenants.

**What would be your one desert island item and why?**

Shirley, my wife, because no one is an island and I would want my best friend with me.

**What is your favourite book or film and why?**

The Harry Potter stories by JK Rowling. It is such a clever, well written series of books that captures the imagination.

**Who would play you in a film about your life and why?**

It would have to be Harrison Ford – who else could do the job?



## A new name in gas

**Gas Safe Register is the new name in gas safety, replacing CORGI as the country's official body from April this year.**

Now, only Gas Safe-registered engineers should carry out work on gas appliances or installations in your home.

Riverside is legally responsible for the safety of gas appliances in your home and we urge you to allow engineers access whenever a gas safety check or maintenance needs to be carried out.

If you smell gas turn off the gas supply, open windows and doors and call the gas emergency service on Tel: 0800 111 999.

All existing gas safety records are valid until their expiry date. A gas safety record issued after 1 April 2009 is only valid if the engineer is registered with Gas Safe Register. All Gas Safe-registered engineers carry an ID card with their licence number and photograph.

## Don't suffer in silence

**Riverside has a network of staff members who have been trained to give help and support to tenants who are experiencing domestic violence.**

Our Domestic Abuse Working Group members can provide initial aid, including guidance on services available in the community and housing issues.

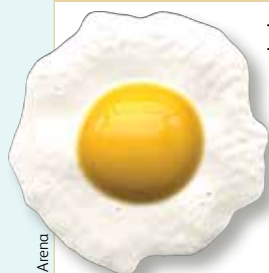
Domestic abuse is any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between adults who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

To speak to a member of the Domestic Abuse Working Group confidentially, please visit the



reception in our Botchergate office or call on Tel: 0800 169 3245 or on Tel: 0345 155 9020 and ask to be put through to the group.

## Handy hints



If you spill an egg on your work surface or hard floor, just sprinkle a good

amount of salt on it and it will be easy to clean up.

To clean the inside of your Thermos flask, scrub it out with a cloth at the end of a wooden spoon. Make sure it's completely dry before storing, and store it without the lid on.

If you are struggling to open a jar lid, slip on a pair of washing up gloves, which will increase your grip.

Give new life to your favourite handbag by rubbing the leather with bees wax. It will not only give it a new sheen but it will also revive the leather and help to keep it longer.

Cool down during the summer by placing a wide tub of water in front of your portable fan. Just be careful no one tips or trips over the water bowl.

Make your microwave easier to clean by placing damp paper towels inside, and turn on to high for 10 seconds.

To remove chewing gum from the bottom of your shoes, simply place them in a plastic bag in the freezer. The frozen gum will be easier to scrape off.

# Thinking of moving out?

**If you are moving out of your home and provide four weeks' notice of leaving so we can get the property ready for a new tenant you could be rewarded with a £100 cheque.**

If you help us reduce the time your home is empty, it avoids boarded-up properties and helps maintain a safer community.

Do all of the following and £100 will be yours:

- give us at least four weeks' notice before you move
- make sure your rent account is clear on the day you move
- let us inspect your home as soon as we get your notice
- if we need to, let us carry out a viewing with a prospective tenant before you move out
- leave your home clean and tidy inside and out, taking all your belongings with you
- provide us with a forwarding address
- hand all keys, including window locks, etc., to the office.

You can also help us to improve our service by completing an exit survey. This will be sent to you with a pre-paid envelope or you can pick one up from your local office.

## Brainteaser

**Summer is finally starting to show its face so here's a fun wordsearch to get you in the mood for the warmer weather. It's just for fun this time but look out for more prize competitions in future editions.**

Hidden in the grid are 10 words, but can you find them all? The words are:

sunshine    heat wave    ice cream    beach    picnics  
gardening    in bloom    blue skies    light nights    holidays

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D	F	A	E	V	J	C	L	L	I	C	Y
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C	G	R	L	E	V	A	W	T	A	E	H