

# CSR annual report

## Riverside has produced its first annual report on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The report explains what has been achieved so far on the four key impact areas of community, environment, marketplace and workplace, and sets out our plans for the future. Ronnie Clawson, Group Director for Corporate Services, said: "Corporate Social Responsibility sits at the heart of our business. It's about treating customers and staff fairly, ensuring that we all act ethically and with integrity, in a way which helps sustain the environment for future generations."

• The report is available to view on our website at [www.riverside.org.uk](http://www.riverside.org.uk)

# Gardeners get ready

## Riverside Pennine's annual gardening competition is gearing up for another season with tenants and residents invited to get involved.

"Believe it or not spring is on the way so people need to get planting," said organiser Nigel Crompton. "The colourful displays which have been produced in previous year have really brightened up neighbourhoods and given people a real interest."

This year the last date for applications is 31 July. Judging takes place during the week starting 17 August with prizes presented week commencing 7 September.

Categories include Best Garden with three prizes of £100, £50 and £25 in vouchers; a £50 voucher will go to the winner of the best container/hanging basket display. Children in school years 5 and 6 are being invited to grow plants from seed with the winner scooping a £25 voucher.

Under 7s can also get involved by coming up with pictures or paintings. The best one will be used to promote next year's competition.

**Get your application from Riverside Pennine, 17 Lingmell Close, Middleton, M24 4PD or Tel: 0845 111 0000 (local rate) or on Tel: 0345 111 0000.**



If you require this magazine in another format e.g. large print or audio cassette or in another language, please telephone ☎ **0845 111 0000 or 0345 111 0000**

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We are happy and able to accept Typetalk calls.

# VISION

NEWSLETTER OF

 **Riverside**

Issue 12

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For Riverside tenants in the Pennine area



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## A new beginning

**Bowlee Park Housing has changed – but we will still offer our tenants the same service as before.**

From April 1, we became known as Riverside Pennine, but other than changes to our logo and name, there will be very little difference to the way we operate and no difference to the service you receive.

### Better together

The Colshaw Farm estate which is near Macclesfield in South Manchester merged with the existing Bowlee Park stock in April to become part of the Pennine Division. Like Langley, Colshaw Farm which sees the Division grow by almost 500 properties, is a former Manchester Council estate which transferred to The Riverside Group in February 2000.

The idea behind the reorganisation, called 'Better Together', is to make savings, which will allow us to invest more money into



Colshaw Farm staff – Housing Officer Graham Wallace and Customer Service Assistant Shazma Butt – are now part of us

improving our homes and the services we offer to tenants. It also means that we are in a good financial position despite the credit crunch. A number of tenants have made some comments and raised concerns about issues including whether the service we offer will be affected and any impact the changes would

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# A new beginning

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have to our repairs programme. We can reassure all tenants that our service will only be improved by these changes and our repairs or investment programmes will continue as planned.

Director Jane Keegan said: "The idea behind Better Together is to improve the running of the organisation and ultimately the service we offer to tenants."

## Local focus

"We understand the importance of keeping a local presence in the communities we serve and hope tenants will feel their views, opinions and concerns have been taken into account."

- As part of Better Together we have changed the colours and style of our newsletter and have also changed it's name from Bowlee Park Vision to simply Vision to include all our tenants across the Pennine area. Vision will still be packed with news about you and your homes – we hope you like the new look.

## Our new number

**From April 1, Riverside has one telephone number for all tenants to contact us on.**

You can contact our Customer Service Centre, open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, on Tel: 0845 111 0000 (local rate). Tenants with inclusive call packages or mobile phones may find it cheaper to call Tel: 0345 111 0000.

# Zero tolerance pays off

**Riverside Pennine's zero tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour is paying dividends with incidents reduced by 30 per cent.**

In partnership with local police forces and, in the case of Langley, a dedicated Warden Team, the overall number of anti-social behaviour cases has fallen significantly across all our management areas.

In the last 12 months we have issued possession proceedings against seven tenants as a result of their anti-social behaviour or conviction of criminal activity in the vicinity of their home.

Crimes include cultivation of cannabis, drug dealing and handling stolen property. As well as repossession cases where three families have lost their homes, we have obtained two Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), one dispersal order and one injunction.

Said Jeff Allen of Riverside Pennine: "We come down hard on nuisance neighbours and it is not all about eviction notices being served.

"In the last year alone we have undertaken 62 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) with young people involved in anti-social behaviour who, with the exception of two individuals, have caused no further problems.

"We also work very closely with support agencies such as the Shelter Inclusion Project who will work with families causing a nuisance to their neighbours

"We would like to praise residents. In the cases mentioned none of the action could have been taken without complainants providing statements, incidents diaries and, when required, appearing as witnesses in court."



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Andy Medina

# Building careers in the community



Riverside's Sharon Thomas and Stuart Holt with Year 8 pupils from St Anne's Academy

**Students from St Anne's Academy, Middleton, gained an unusual insight into the construction industry when they learnt about the role of the community in new building developments.**

A workshop led by Riverside Pennine was part of a day seminar organised by Education Business Solutions. Introducing the Construction and Built Environment Diploma to Year 8 students, they were able to link the subject to their current studies in technology, geography and engineering.

Riverside was in prime position to share its experiences of involving residents in construction. Tenants and residents in Langley have been involved in the design and planning of the £37 million regeneration of the estate since the start.

Sharon Thomas, Community Initiatives team leader for Riverside, said: "The workshop was a real eye-opener for the students. They discovered many human angles to architecture and design that they hadn't thought about before. Housing isn't just about physical buildings, but about people and the way they live once the buildings are finished."

The year 8 students entered the world of housing as Sharon gave them insight into a day in the life of the community initiatives team. They then used their new found knowledge to design fictional posters inviting residents to plan new homes.

The construction workshop is one way Riverside is opening career opportunities for young people and helping more people to find jobs.

## Help us to help you



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Mental Art

**Riverside has commissioned research by the Policy Studies Institute (PSI) to gain a better understanding of the needs and situations of our tenants.**

This will help us to understand what sort of support you may need and the best way to get that help. During spring 2009 researchers from the PSI will interview a small number of tenants on three of our estates across the country about their work and family life and their experience of living on the estate. A selection of tenants on those estates will be contacted by researchers to ask if they would like to participate in the research. We hope those of you who are contacted will take part as it will help us to help you.

**If you have any questions about the research contact Riverside Research Manager Amy Redman on Tel: 0151 295 6031 or Rebecca Taylor at PSI on Tel: 0207 911 7533.**

# High pro



A crane positions itself at Keswick Court to remove the old mast signal

**Langley residents have unanimously given Riverside their seal of approval for the way the mass tenant relocation was carried out to the £5.2 million Millbeck Gardens development.**

Over a six-week period, tenants were moved from the Three Sisters tower blocks to the 48 apartments and two purpose-built bungalows in Millbeck Gardens as part of the extensive redevelopment of Langley. An opening ceremony before Christmas marked the official handover of the apartments and bungalows to tenants - specially built for wheelchair access. Now a customer satisfaction survey has given Riverside Pennine a resounding thumbs up from residents.

A total of 24 survey forms were returned with only one resident expressing dissatisfaction with the way the move was handled, the rest of the tenants were delighted with the level of service. The Millbeck Gardens development was built by contractor

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...ing the go ahead for demolition of the tower blocks.

G & J Seddon in 16 months using £2.8million from the Housing Corporation and £2.4million from Riverside. Rochdale Housing Market Renewal provided £78,000 for the gardens and landscaping.

Riverside Pennine Director Jane Keegan, said: “We are delighted the tenants at Millbeck Gardens are so pleased with the standard of service they received during the move.

“Our staff deserve praise for all the hard work, effort and consideration they employed while helping our residents settle in during a challenging period. The recognition received from tenants is ample reward for all of those involved.

“Millbeck Gardens is a fantastic development and long may this spirit of communication and mutual appreciation continue.”

The removal of the mobile telephone mast on Keswick Court now leaves the way clear for demolition of the three 1960s tower blocks later this year.

## Thinking of improving your home?

**If you are thinking of carrying out improvements or alterations to your home make sure you are not in breach of your tenancy agreement.**

We always ask tenants to ask for our permission in writing before changing any aspect of their property. We do this for a number of reasons:

- We have to make sure that all work carried out in our properties is done to a high standard.
- Our properties need to conform to certain Health and Safety criteria so we need to be aware of any changes to buildings so we can be certain they comply with the law.
- There can be dangers from a wide range of substances in the home, including asbestos in older properties. Our contractors are specially trained in how to handle these.

**If you are thinking of carrying out any alterations to your home, please contact our 24-hour Customer Service Centre on Tel: 0845 111 0000 (local rate) or on Tel: 0345 111 0000.**



## Meet the staff

**Martin Rose is a Service Delivery Officer covering Yorkshire properties in Keighley, Leeds, Sheffield, Wakefield and Ossett. His role includes dealing with general housing issues such as repairs, voids, evictions and anti-social behaviour.**



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

I never know what tomorrow might bring and that makes my job enjoyable and a challenge!

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

I consider my biggest achievement is to always carry out my job to the best of my ability.

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

It would have to be a knife and fork - I can't stand eating with my fingers.

### What is your favourite film or book?

With films it's possibly the Shawshank Redemption. There are too many to list though.

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

Me, no one knows you better than yourself.

## New name in gas

**Gas Safe Register is the new name in gas safety after replacing CORGI as the country's official body in April 2009.**

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 our tenants who are urged to allow engineers access whenever a gas safety check or maintenance needs to be carried out.

It's important to remember that if you think a gas appliance is faulty turn it off and let us know immediately.

All existing gas safety records are valid until their expiry date. Any gas safety record issued after 1 April 2009 will only be 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.



## Adaptations to your home

**If a long term illness or disability is making life around the home difficult for you or someone in your family, installing an aid or adaptation in your home could really improve your quality of life.**

An adaptation is a piece of equipment, extra fitting or minor alteration in your home and examples include grab rails/ hand rails, walk in shower/over-bath shower, door entry system, hoists/lifting equipment, vibrating smoke alarms and access ramps.

### Who can apply?

If you are a Riverside Pennine tenant, you can apply for an adaptation for anybody who lives

in your home, provided there is a recognised need for the changes to be made. If this adaptation is major, we may ask for a report from an Occupational Therapist to back up your request. And, if the work needed could change the structure or design of your home, it might be better for you and your family to move to a property that suits your needs more. If this is the case, we will try our hardest to find another home that you are happy to live in.

**If you would like to learn more about aids and adaptations and find out how to apply, please contact Tel: 0845 111 0000 (local rate) or on Tel: 0345 111 0000.**

## Handy hints

Here are some steps you can take to deter burglars from targeting your home and minimise the risk to your property.

- Don't leave windows open or doors unlocked, even if you are in the garden or near your house.
- Never leave car or house keys within sight of the letterbox or a window.
- Never leave spare house keys under a plant pot or doormat – burglars know all the 'secret places'.
- Security mark all your home and garden equipment with full postcode using a UV marker or permanent marker.
- Use internal timer switches for lamps and radios. This gives the impression that someone is at home.

**Be aware of 'bogus callers' to your home:**

- Use your door viewer (spy hole) and door chain before opening the door to anyone.
- Make sure visitors are who they say they are by asking to see their identity card.
- If in doubt, phone the visitor's company and check their details.

## Get it covered

Tenants are being urged to take out home contents insurance to ensure they are not out of pocket if things go wrong.

Many people believe Riverside Pennine, as their landlord, is responsible if anything goes wrong at home. This isn't the case and tenants need to check they are covered. Said Brian Melton of Riverside Pennine: "Riverside is a landlord not an insurance company. We, or our contractors, may be liable for damage to your things if we do work in your property.

"However, we are not liable for damage due to day-to-day failures like plumbing leaks or roof leaks, or water coming in from the flat above if a neighbour leaves a tap running and the plug in the sink.

"This is why you need home contents insurance. This needn't be expensive. Riverside has negotiated a deal with a leading insurance company to provide low cost insurance to our customers."

**Details are available from our customer service centre on Tel: 0845 111 0000 (local rate) or on Tel: 0345 111 0000 or by calling in at our offices on Lingmell Close.**



## Brainteaser

A few simple security tips can help to keep you safe in your home. Can you find the 10 words in the grid below? Have a go – it's just for fun this time, but we will be running prize competitions again soon.

The words are:

|             |               |        |          |
|-------------|---------------|--------|----------|
| Security    | Steering lock | Police | Break in |
| Fingerprint | Window locks  | Safety | Beware   |
| Thief       | No doubt      |        |          |

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