



New director

PAGE 2



Learn a trade

PAGE 3



Festive flavour

PAGE 8

Division's first ASBOs

Riverside is pleased to announce that after many months of hard work the housing team has secured its first two anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs).

These two orders took nearly eight months to achieve, as our housing team worked with others including legal advisors, police, the local authority anti-social behaviour team and the youth offending team. This marks a significant achievement in our fight against anti-social behaviour and our policy of zero tolerance.

We know all tenants feel strongly about anti-social behaviour – no one wants to be on the receiving end of it and staff want to deal with it as effectively and quickly as possible.

Sometimes it can be difficult to deal with and often can take months to resolve. However, the majority of cases are dealt with successfully reaching an effective outcome.

Continues on page 2

Ship ahoy!



Young people from Southwark took to the River Thames to learn the tricks of the trade for life on the ocean.

Riverside teamed up with the AHOY (Adventure, Help and Opportunities for Youth) Centre in Deptford to offer young tenants the opportunity to learn to sail.

If tenants of any age or ability are interested in learning more about sailing, power-boating or rowing, they can contact Wendy Mason on Tel: 0845 111 0000 or on Tel: 0345 111 0000.

Riverside has been awarded



Have your say... 2 • House swap... 2 • Know your responsibility... 3 • Forward together... 4 • A tenant's view... 4-5 • Wanted... 4-5 • Tenants' top 10... 5
Meet the staff... 6 • News in brief... 6 • Contract for change... 6 • Handy hints... 7
Safety first... 7 • Brainteaser... 7 • Feedback and fireworks... 8

First ASBO for Division

Continued from page 1

Riverside wants to reassure tenants that we take incidents of anti-social behaviour seriously. When you report an incident to us, we will keep you updated with its progress, the actions we take and how we hope to resolve it. Riverside is keen to tackle the problems behind anti-social behaviour and offers support to the offender and their family to help them move forward in a positive and meaningful way. In these cases, the court gave Parenting Orders as part of the ASBO, which allows us to continue valuable work with the family.

If you are suffering anti-social behaviour, contact our Customer Service Centre 24 hours a day on Tel: 0845 111 0000 or on Tel: 0345 111 0000.

Have your say

Riverside is asking tenants to tell us what they think of our services.

Over the next few months, we are sending out a survey to a selection of customers so we can find out what we do well and where we need to improve. This survey is different to the follow up calls or feedback forms that you may have had in the past after receiving a repair or starting your tenancy with Riverside.

If you receive this survey, make sure you fill it in and have your say - and you could win up to £100 in gift vouchers!

Handing over the baton

Riverside has appointed a new Director for its South East office.

Chris Flynn will take over from Anna Bishop, who stood in as Interim Director when Sasha Harrison left Riverside last year.

Chris has been a member of the Executive Committee in the Division since the merger with ECHG. She is currently the Director of Riverside's Midlands office and will manage both divisions, splitting her time between the two regional offices.

She said: "As a member of the Executive Committee I have already been working for the tenants in the South East for the last few years.

"Now I have the opportunity to use the knowledge I have gained to continue to improve the service we give to you."

Chris will take over the role from the start of April, while Anna will head back to Riverside's head office in Liverpool.



House swap

Riverside has joined a mutual exchange scheme giving customers the chance to swap homes with tenants of other affordable homes providers across the UK.

House Exchange is an online tool which gives tenants access to homes managed by other social landlords, whether it's around the corner or at the other end of the country.

Riverside's tenants can register on the website at www.riverside.houseexchange.org.uk for free, and can search suitable homes. The site includes photographs of properties available for exchange, as well as details about the area the home is situated in.

The site also has a three-way matching service, which helps when it is difficult to find a direct swap. By building a 'chain', the site provides tenants with more choice and increases their chances of finding a suitable exchange.

Tenants without internet access can contact the Customer Service Centre on Tel: 0845 111 0000 or on Tel: 0345 111 0000 and an advisor will register for them.

Pick up a trade with Riverside

Riverside is giving tenants the chance to learn a valuable trade, offering apprenticeships in the building trade.

The apprenticeships are in general building repairs and maintenance, including trades like carpentry, plumbing, brickwork, and gas repairs and servicing.

The programme gives participants the skills needed in the repairs and maintenance industry and will also lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

There is no set time to complete the programme, as the length of time taken will depend on the ability of the individual apprentice, the employer's requirements and the specific trade. Apprenticeships typically take between one and four years to complete so it is important that participants are committed to seeing it through.

How to apply

The selection process is like any other job



You could learn a trade with Riverside

application and applicants will have to go through a selection process and convince the employers that they are committed and have what it takes to complete the programme.

To express your interest, write to Olajide Akintelure, Riverside, 3rd Floor Regus House, Victory Way Crossways, Dartford, Kent, DA2 6QD, including your name and address.

Know your responsibility

As part of your tenancy agreement, you are responsible for any damage to your property resulting from a deliberate act, negligence, misuse or accident.

If you ask Riverside to carry out a repair like this at your home, you will be asked to pay for it in advance. For example, if we have to replace a broken window you will have to pay up to £140 and if you ask us to unblock your drain, this will cost you £18.

If the repair is as a result of a crime being committed, you will not be charged but we

will want you to provide us with a police crime reference number.

You should report your repair in the normal way and you will be advised how much the repair will cost and if it is non-urgent, you will be given the chance to repair it yourself. However, in emergency situations, we will ensure that we immediately remove the source of any danger and bill you for the work carried out.

For more information contact the 24-hour Customer Service Centre on Tel: 0845 111 0000 or on Tel: 0345 111 0000.

Forward together

Riverside has amalgamated with its sheltered and supported specialist ECHG, after tenants gave plans the green light.

This is the second stage of a process started last April when other areas of the organisation joined together to cut down on legal red tape and allow us to invest more money in frontline services.

After overwhelming support from 90% of tenants across Riverside and ECHG who responded to our consultation, and backing from the relevant authorities, the amalgamation went ahead on March 31 2010.

From April 1, ECHG became known as Riverside ECHG and has a new logo. Tenants should not notice any changes to the service we provide.

If you receive housing benefit, this should continue as usual. We have written to all the housing benefit offices to tell them about these changes. If they contact you about it, please show them the letter called 'Notice of landlord details' posted to all tenants in April 2010. If you need more help, please call the Customer Service Centre on Tel: 0845 111 0000 or on Tel: 0345 111 0000.

A tenant's view

I attended the Board Members' Conference at Cranage Hall, Cheshire on 6 November 2009.

The event was facilitated by Winifred Robinson who presents You and Yours on BBC Radio 4. The guest speaker was Peter Marsh, the Chief Executive of the Tenants' Service Authority (TSA) which is the new social housing regulator.

The Conference began with Winifred interviewing Peter in a relaxed manner – each of them sitting on stage in armchairs. All her questions

were relevant to housing regulations and Peter answered them confidently even though the TSA was fairly new.

Ann-Marie Jones, a Tenant Board Member, spoke on how and why she became interested in resident involvement. Then a discussion panel answered questions from the delegates.

After lunch we had a chance to see Divisional exhibitions...I may be biased, but this Division's was quite impressive as tenants could participate – as did Deborah Shackleton, Riverside Chief Executive.

We were then ushered to our workshops which were followed by an interesting discussion from the floor.



Christine Nightingale

Wanted!

Do you want to get involved in making key decisions at Riverside, making sure we act in the best interests of tenants and follow the guidelines set down by the government?

If so, Riverside has two vacancies for tenants from the South East on its Executive Committee.

What would you be expected to do?

You will attend quarterly Executive Committee meetings, which are normally held in the afternoon, at the Riverside office in Dartford. You may also be asked to attend national meetings. Travel and subsistence expenses will be paid for by Riverside when attending meetings and events on Executive Committee business.

What do we look for in a Committee Member?

An Executive Committee Tenant Member will be someone

By Christine Nightingale, Tenant Federation Board Member

Deborah Shackleton then gave a heartfelt presentation on the challenges Riverside is facing during this economic climate and how it is intending to achieve its goals.

Winifred then closed the meeting, which was deemed by all who attended to have been a complete success.

I must say that as a tenant I felt very much part of this Conference and at no time was there feeling of 'them and us' between tenants and staff.

I look forward to maybe being invited to attend the next one.



Riverside Chief Executive Deborah Shackleton tries her hand at Jenga during the conference

who can apply their own specialist knowledge appropriately, analyse information and data, take part in debates and make independent and critical judgements.

If you are interested in this position and you feel you do not have the necessary skills, training will be provided to develop you in this role.

For more information contact Wendy Mason, Community Initiatives Officer, on Tel: 0845 111 0000 or on Tel: 0345 111 0000.

One vacancy is open to application from all tenants, while the other will be offered to the Tenant Advisory Panel, which is the tenant body monitoring performance in service delivery.

Tenants' top 10

At Riverside, we have many different ways of checking and reporting how well we deliver services to you.

For example, we may contact you to ask about the quality of a repair or we may measure how long it takes us to reply to letters and phone calls. We set targets to measure these things and help us improve.

We want to make sure that these targets focus on the services that you – our tenants - think are the most important. Following discussions with Riverside's Tenants' Federation Service Quality Group we recently wrote to you, asking you what matters most. In total, 700 tenants responded and, from the replies we have drawn up a Tenants' Top 10 of the things you have said you want us to measure and report on.

They are:

- keeping repairs appointments
- keeping properties safe through gas safety checks
- satisfaction with overall service
- satisfaction with repairs
- satisfaction with our handling of anti-social behaviour
- satisfaction with most recent contact or service
- value for money of service charges
- responding to your letter within 10 days
- repairs completed right first time
- aids and adaptations completed when agreed.

We are now looking at the best ways to feed back the results of the Tenants' Top 10, so look out for updates in future editions of Tenants' News.

Paul Lynch, tenant chair of the Service Quality Group, said: "This consultation has allowed Riverside to find out exactly what services you think are important and, armed with this information, they can now report on, and ultimately improve, the things that really matter to us."

Meet the staff

Steven Bray is the recently appointed Caretaker for Pike Close in Bromley. He started with Riverside in September and has proved to be a great asset, with feedback from tenants telling us he has made some great improvements to the estate. Not wanting to let tenants down Steven also braved the extreme weather conditions back in January and took to his bike in the snowy conditions to get to work.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy meeting new people, dealing with contractors onsite and know that I am providing a good service and making a difference to tenants' living environment.

What is your biggest work-related achievement so far?

I'm too new to be able to say.

What would be your one desert island item and why?

A solar powered iPod so I can have music at all times.

What is your favourite book or film and why?

Raging Bull – a good true story about boxing.

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

Woody Allen – he has a sense of humour.

News in brief

- Are you the tenant who has been with Riverside the longest? If you think you are, write to us for your chance to win £200 towards your energy bill. Tell us how long you have been a Riverside tenant and you could share your story in the next edition of Tenants' News. Write to Wendy Mason, Community Initiatives Officer, Riverside, 3rd Floor Regus House, Crossways Business Park, Victory Way, Dartford DA2 6QD.
- Riverside is helping tenants get on the first rung of the property ladder, with a grant of up to £9,000 to buy their home outright. The scheme, called Social HomeBuy, can help you to buy the property outright or to buy a 75, 50 or 25% share while paying rent on the remainder. For more information contact Tel: 0845 111 0000 or Tel: 0345 111 0000.
- Riverside has joined forces with 18 other housing associations to promote shared ownership, which this year celebrated 30 years of helping people become first time buyers. The group will lobby key politicians and decision-makers to make sure they are fully aware of the successes of shared ownership and the great value that it adds.
- Riverside Home Ownership has launched a new website to make it even easier for first-time buyers to get onto the property ladder. The site applies the principles of shopping for groceries to shopping for a house and guides buyers through the process. Would-be buyers can also set up email alerts if they can't find what they are looking for on their first visit. To find out more visit www.riversidehomeownership.org.uk

Contract for change

Tenants in Westminster have been involved in a pilot scheme introducing Neighbourhood Agreements to improve conditions in a defined area.

Neighbourhood Agreements, a voluntary contract between residents and service providers, are a first for Riverside and it is hoped that they will help to improve services delivered in the area. Tenants living in Westminster have been involved in a consultation process since September 2009,

where they worked with officers to identify action points to improve the area.

One of the main points is to look at redesigning the courtyard, making it more user-friendly. To achieve this, tenants and Riverside will be working with Groundwork to draft a design.

The agreement also sets out the service standards that tenants have the right to receive. This will empower them to challenge us should they feel we are not living up to our promises.

Money management

Do you need a bit of help getting the most out of your money? Why not try one of these tools?

- Keep track of your money by downloading the free Moneybasics Spendometer, which makes day-to-day budgeting simple and practical.

You will be able to set budget limits so that you don't overspend, see your 'spending speed' – where and how much of your money has been spent so far in a given week or month, log spending in under 10 seconds and set a special 'going out' function to help to limit overspending on a night out.

Visit www.moneybasics.co.uk and follow the links to the quick start guide. You will need a WAP-enabled phone.

- Visit www.bbc.co.uk/raw for useful tips and tools for managing your money better, without having to read pages and pages of financial jargon.

- At www.whataboutmoney.info/budgeting_tools you will find a cutback calculator from the Financial Services Authority.

- For all manner of money saving tips and money off deals go to www.moneysavingexpert.com

- Help keep your mobile phone bill under control at www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/Money/ManagingYourMoney

Safety first

Riverside is responsible for carrying out an annual service and safety check in all our properties that have a gas supply.

This service is free and is designed to keep you safe, but we still have some tenants who refuse to allow us access to carry out this important work.

We are updating our gas servicing procedure and would like to know what you think we could do to improve it.

- How can we encourage tenants to allow us access?
- Why don't we get access to some properties?
- Do our gas servicing letters and leaflets give you enough information? If not, what's missing?
- Did you know that you must allow us access as part of your tenancy agreement by law?
- Are the dangers and legal responsibilities highlighted enough?
- Is it clear when your appointment is?

All you need to do is write down your thoughts and ideas on improving gas servicing on a piece of paper and return it to us at: Freepost Plus RLUC-ASXE-BKUB, Riverside, Policy and Information, 2 Estuary Boulevard, Liverpool, L24 8RF. No stamp needed.

Brainteaser

Fancy cooking up a tasty treat this weekend? Try our food-related wordsearch to get your tastebuds tingling. Hidden within the grid are 10 words but can you find them all? The words are:

Baking Dessert Oven Fridge Chocolate Fresh food Roast dinner Cookery Vegetables Apron

C	H	O	C	O	L	A	T	E	D	A	H
I	J	Q	S	F	V	B	N	Y	L	P	M
R	O	A	S	T	D	I	N	N	E	R	S
A	V	F	T	U	E	C	X	M	K	O	E
R	E	E	D	F	S	Z	B	K	C	N	L
W	N	V	G	G	S	T	R	L	O	H	B
H	B	S	U	L	E	A	Y	B	O	A	A
F	A	L	N	G	R	S	G	F	K	J	T
A	C	B	D	K	T	L	W	I	E	P	E
Q	U	I	R	H	R	C	N	S	R	I	G
H	R	T	N	D	U	G	L	O	Y	Y	E
F	R	E	S	H	F	O	O	D	K	J	V

Feedback and fireworks for tenants

Tenants from Pike Close in Bromley were treated to a fireworks display after having their say on plans for a new community garden and hangout zone for young people on the estate.

Tenants aged eight and over attended a consultation event in November to put forward their ideas for the design, which includes a new leisure garden with scented flowers and herbs, seating and a barbeque area. The hangout zone will include game tables, strength and stamina games, a stage and much more.

The project will improve security and reduce anti-social behaviour in the area by giving young people something constructive to do with their time and a place to call their own.

Festive fun



Tenants get into the festive spirit

The Close Tenants' Association went all out this Christmas for the Lambeth Estate.

Riverside awarded funding to the group to encourage community spirit and it was put to good use – with a pantomime trip and a party where the young tenants showed off their talent.

For the first time, the Estate had a community Christmas tree where tenants gathered together to sing carols by candlelight.

Eileen Gorman, Vice Chair of the Tenants' Association, said: "Thanks to funding from Riverside we really had a fantastic and busy Christmas on our estate – giving is what Christmas is all about and Riverside certainly did that."

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

अनुवाद माटे अमने झोन करे

अनुवाद लयी सानुं फोन करे।

Appelez-nous pour vos besoins en traductions

Ina soo wac sidii aan kuu turjimno

अनुवाद के लिए हमें फोन करें

ترجمہ کے لئے ہمیں فون کریں

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