

**Happy New Year!** Welcome to the latest edition of the Involver magazine, in which we celebrate our third birthday. We've come a long way since Lewisham Homes was set up in January 2007 and we couldn't have done it without you: our resident involvement champions.

Residents are at the centre of everything we do, and we are pleased that 4500 of you have chosen to get involved in some way. Whether it's through focus groups, improvement groups or attending the Open Day, residents across the borough have been getting involved by making suggestions, interviewing contractors and reviewing services. All of this has helped improve the way we manage your homes and deliver service.

We've got an exciting six months ahead. In June, we will be inspected by the Audit Commission. We are confident that we are on track to get two stars in this inspection, as a result of the service improvements you have helped us deliver.

We have also asked a company to carry out a survey of all our tenants to find out how they rate our services. The surveys will be taking place in February, by telephone. If you are called, please take part as we value your feedback. We will let you know the results when they are available.

Thank you for all your support over the last three years. We look forward to working with you during 2010.



## Residents' Business Plan takes shape

It's been five months since we started on our journey to develop a Residents' Business Plan (RBP), but with our very first RBP now finished, the hard work of over 60

residents has paid off!

In August 2009, we held the Make a Wish event, attended by many

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- ▶ What do you think of the Residents' Compact?
- ▶ How to contact us: new numbers

and much, much more..!

residents who had never been involved with us before. Residents discussed which services were most important to them and how they could be improved.

Following the event, a group of residents met regularly with staff to prioritise tasks and allocate money from the £500,000 budget. Residents also put forward suggestions at our Open Day, or by responding to requests in the rent statements and in the Leasehold Newsletter.

Lastly, the group agreed on what should be included in the RBP and have been working with the us to design the final document. We spoke to resident Bill Stevenson who has been involved from 'Day 1'.



**The Involver:** Hi Bill, is there any particular reason why you were interested in being part of the Residents' Business Plan?

**Bill:** I had already been involved with a repairs focus group earlier in the year and saw some of my suggestions taken forward. Surveys alone can focus too much on the numbers whereas face-to-face input can help everyone to understand what's happening in real terms.

**The Involver:** How have you found the process of putting together the Residents' Business Plan?

**Bill:** I think it's helped Lewisham Homes to find out what residents' concerns are and put the 'wheels in motion' towards resolving them.

**The Involver:** What have personally gained from this experience?

**Bill:** The opportunity to meet new people and to affect my surroundings. If you have the spare time, you've got nothing to lose and everything to gain.



Stella UzOije, Alan Barker, Jayne Eyles, TPAS consultant (l-r), at the Make a Wish event.

## New play areas designed by residents underway

Last year residents from three different estates successfully applied to the Mayor's Playbuilder Scheme to fund new play areas on the estates. Since the residents were notified of their successful bids, Lewisham Homes have consulted with both children and adults on the estates. All three play areas are due to be completed by the end of March 2010.

### Lapwing Tower (Evelyn Estate) £50,000

- » Residents were consulted on the proposed designs for the play area at a consultation day last September.
- » The Community Involvement team spoke to several residents on the day.
- » The design with the most votes won and feedback from residents was included in the winning design.

Chair of Evelyn Tenants' and Residents' Association Julia Donovan said "I am delighted that we will finally have a play area, I just can't wait for it."

### Crandley Court (Pepys Estate) £30,000

Not only will the new area provide a safe environment for children of all ages to play in, but it is also hoped that it will dissuade groups of young people congregating in the area late in the evening and disturbing the residents.

- » Residents chose the final design following a period of consultation which involved them meeting with the architect on site to provide their initial ideas and then voting on three different options drawn up by the architect.
- » The Community Involvement team also ran a consultation drop-in session on the estate in November.

### Hillcrest Estate

- » The final round of Hillcrest Consultations took place last November. We had a fantastic response and the most popular design has now been chosen.
- » The architects are now seeking contractors to carry out the work.

**"I am delighted that we will finally have a play area, I just can't wait for it"**

Julia Donovan, Chair of Evelyn TRA



## Resident Led Programme RLP

We're almost there! It's been two years since we first opened up the bidding for the Resident Led Programme, to give you the opportunity to win a share of £500,000 to improve your environment. Now we're over two thirds of the way through the programme - on time and on schedule. The Landscaping Plus Contract is the last one in the programme with all works on target to be completed by the end of March 2010.

### Landscaping Plus Contract

Scheme	Description of works	Status
Somerville 'HeartBbeat' Improvements to areas on the estate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remove shrubbery</li> <li>features include: paving, trellis work, fountain, arbour, lighting, benches and planting beds. Community to provide plants and arrange planting</li> <li>install a picket fence - to be decorated by community</li> <li>provide a tarmac area for recycling bins by 8-23 Mona Road</li> <li>install knee rail fencing around perimeter of grassed area alongside 8-23 Mona Road to prevent vehicular access.</li> </ul>	Works start on site 11/1/10 for 5 weeks
Trundleys Terrace - Green Fingers Community garden accessible to the disabled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whole area to be paved and fenced</li> <li>features include: raised planters, beds with trellis panels, benches, a compost box and a wormery</li> <li>planting to be arranged by Lewisham Disability Coalition and residents of Trundleys Terrace.</li> </ul>	Works start on site 18/1/10 for 6 weeks
Daubeney Tower Environmental improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remove and thin-out the vegetation to prepare the area for planting</li> <li>residents attended a workshop in June 2009 to choose plants and in November 2009 assisted with the planting.</li> </ul>	Works complete, exception of two trees for planting / mulching of beds.
Valentine Court Under 8's play area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>install play equipment, safety surfacing and signage.</li> <li>existing fence will be tightened and improved and the site secured with extra fencing.</li> </ul>	Works start on site 27/2/10 for 5 weeks
Heston House Nature Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>selective pruning</li> <li>install footpath using self-binding gravel that will wind around the existing trees and vegetation</li> <li>purpose-built railing to be installed</li> <li>features include: benches, painted features with log retaining walls</li> <li>planting will be added to thinned out areas</li> <li>possible perimeter bed to improve security to ground floor dwellings.</li> </ul>	Works start on site 1/2/10 for 8 weeks
Evelyn Green Community Garden to the rear of Magnolia House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>remove existing vegetation and level the area for a vegetable garden to be planted by Evelyn residents</li> <li>install benches and a compost box</li> <li>secure area with chainlink fencing and double gate</li> </ul>	Works in progress - started 11/1/10 to continue for 3 weeks

## Rainbow Play Area opens on Dacres Estate

Both children and adults alike celebrated the opening of Rainbow Play Area on Dacres Estate which was officially opened on Saturday 21 November 2009 by Sergeant Philip Moore of Perry Vale Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

Debbie Lester and Marion Richardson, Chair and Vice Chair respectively of Dacres Tenants' and Residents' Association, submitted the bid for the play area in July 2008 when the Resident Led Programme was launched. Their vision was to give the children living on the estate a fun and safe environment to play in within easy reach and sight of the flats.



## What do you think of the Residents' Compact?

It is time for the annual review of the Residents' Compact and your comments are vital to this process. We want to hear your views on how easy it is to understand and how useful it is when you're looking for information about involvement and support available to you. Please email your comments or call us to let us know what you think.

☎ 020 8613 7660

@ getinvolved@lewishamhomes.org.uk

## Improvement group update

There are four Improvement Groups set up to look at specific areas of service. Housing Management, Property Services, Leasehold Services and Major Works. These forums give residents the chance to shape the services from the inside out.

### Leasehold Improvement Group

The Leasehold Improvement Group met on 19 November to discuss value for money and how service charge bills are calculated. Chris Culleton, Head of Repairs Services, gave a presentation on piloting a repairs' service for leaseholders.



The Group met again on the 14 January 2010 to discuss the new grounds maintenance contract and major works.

The next Leasehold Improvement Group meeting will be in March - details to be confirmed. For more information or to make any comments about topics discussed at the Group, please contact the Leasehold team.

☎ 020 8613 4220

@ leasehold@lewishamhomes.org.uk

### Property Services Improvement Group

The Property Services Improvement Group met on the 11 November - the next meeting date will be set shortly.



Residents heard a brief update on the Repairs and Mechanical and Electrical services and also participated in four short discussion groups about satellite dishes, gas access, communal repairs service standards and the responsibilities of Lewisham Homes and Lewisham Homes' residents.

**"I was impressed with the patience shown by the staff especially when dealing with aggressive phone calls."**

Monica Applewhaite and Irene Mead, who have been involved in the Contact Centre Monitoring Group and Resident Void Inspections, gave a brief talk about their experiences. Monica commented "I was impressed with the patience shown by the staff especially when dealing with aggressive phone calls".

### Housing Management Improvement Group

The Housing Management Improvement Group is looking for new members. The group is still developing and it's an exciting time to help steer its direction and how it operates. This year the group will focus on issues such as antisocial behaviour, estate services, rent and tenancy and will be involved in the review of policies and procedures.



Contact the Community Involvement team for further information about any of the Improvement groups.

☎ 020 8613 7660

@ getinvolved@lewishamhomes.org.uk

### Major Works Improvement Group

On 18 November, the Major Works Improvement Group met to discuss the Lewisham Homes Standard for the refurbishment work that is planned for properties over the next few years. The Lewisham Homes Standard exceeds the Government's Decent Homes Standard and will reflect the priorities of residents within the scope of available funding and long-term affordability.



Residents who attended the meeting identified that the most important priorities were around wind and weather tightness. The group also stressed the need for residents to be involved in the design of work carried out inside their homes.



The group discussed that with a limited budget it is even more important to achieve the right balance between the amount of work to be carried out and the quality of the materials used.

Another meeting will be arranged for February 2010 in which residents will receive feedback on the proposed programme, the Lewisham Homes Standard and the specification for each work-stream.

To find out more about the Major Works Improvement Group or to request a copy of the report from the meeting on 18 November, please contact the Community Involvement team.

## How to contact the us: new phone number

### To contact Community Involvement

☎ 020 8613 7660

🌐 www.lewishamhomes.org.uk

@ getinvolved@lewishamhomes.org.uk

📞 'Involved' to 07781 481 783

📮 Lewisham Homes Community Involvement, FREEPOST (No stamp needed), 9 Holbeach Road, Catford SE6 4TW

📍 Holbeach Housing Office, 9 Holbeach Road, Catford SE6 4TW

### For all other housing enquiries

Lewisham Homes has a freephone number for all housing enquiries 0800 028 2 028. Please note that calling our landline number may be cheaper from a mobile 020 8613 4000.

## Read all about it!

In October last year, we set up a reading group of 10 residents who volunteered to get involved. The purpose of the group is to ensure that all publications we produce are reader-friendly and written in easy to understand language.

The group are asked to read several publications every few months and comment on the layout, language, information and length of each document. So far they have provided feedback on three of our leaflets: Former Tenants Arrears, the Self Help Debt Pack and Everything you need to know about rent.

### Interested in joining the reading group?

We're looking for new members to join so if this sounds like your 'cup of tea' then we would love to hear from you. You don't need to be a bookworm or have lots of free time to take part, just the ability to read and review documents objectively and provide us with your feedback either by post or email.

We send you documents every six weeks and to thank you for your time we give out gift vouchers each time you take part.

## What are Area Panels?

The three Area Panels represent the North Western, Deptford and Southern areas.

There are three Area Panels in Lewisham, with representatives from Residents' Associations across the borough. In areas without a Residents' Association, residents can be voted in to represent their own block, street or community.

Each Residents' Association or area has two representatives on the Area Panel, who have voting rights. However, all residents are invited to attend the meeting as observers.

Area Panel members can ask staff from Lewisham Homes, Lewisham Council and external partners to attend meetings for discussion and debate. Ward Councillors and Lewisham Homes Board Members are invited to attend Area Panels.

All Area Panel members are able to do a wide range of training - made available by Lewisham Homes to help in the role of Area Panel representative. Please contact the Community Involvement team for more information.

## Residents take the lead at Community Forum

The Community Forum, held on 10 December, focussed on 'How to start up a Tenants and Residents' Association and keep it strong'.

Over 45 residents attended the event - chaired by Janet Farquharson, (Chair of Bembridge TRA). Two of Lewisham Homes' resident Board Members - Mel Couldwell and Danielle Heath, also took a lead role as expert panel members for the question and answer session.

Special guest speaker, Martin Howie, Director of Voluntary Action Lewisham, spoke about the support available from external and statutory agencies to support Residents' Associations in achieving their goals.

Cuthbert Jack, an empowerment and motivational speaker encouraged Residents' Associations to involve their communities through his 'ABC of successful community involvement'.



## Staff news

### Sue's new!

As many of you will know, Sue Asquith recently took over from Alanna Curd as our new Community Involvement Manager - after the draw of the Aussie sunshine saw Alanna return home. Sue brings with her a wealth of experience and bundles of enthusiasm. We chatted to her over a coffee...



**Involver:** Welcome Sue! Can you tell The Involver a little bit about what you did before joining Lewisham Homes?

**Sue:** I've worked for Housing Associations and Local Authorities in a variety of roles, but always community-facing. Before that, I taught in colleges often with young people and adult learners.

**Involver:** And what about outside of work? Any hobbies / interests?

**Sue:** At the moment I'm studying Art History at the Open University and for a professional qualification with the Chartered Institute of Housing, so much of my spare time is devoted to reading and writing assignments. However, I do have still have time for my family and friends and love cooking, films and music.

**Involver:** Thanks Sue. We look forward to working with you in the future.

**Sue:** I have really enjoyed my first couple of months at Lewisham Homes, the team have made me very welcome and supported me while I find my way. I've already met some of our residents at recent Area Panel meetings and the Community Forum and look forward to meet many more over the coming months as we work our way towards inspection.

### Briony on maternity

Community Involvement Officer Briony Kwok is now on maternity leave. We are currently recruiting for her position internally and hope to appoint a temporary Officer in the near future.

## Ward Assemblies come through for Residents' Associations

Congratulations to the following Residents' Associations that were successful in gaining funding from the Mayor's Fund and Localities Fund of the Ward Assembly.

### Baizdon Road TRA - Blackheath Ward Assembly

Joan Barker (Chair) and Kathryn Johnstone (Secretary) were awarded £6,950 for Baizdon Road TRA for additional work needed on their play area, Baizdon Homezone. This project is based upon residents' wishes for a disused washing area to be cleared and improved to provide a safe environment in which children can gather and play.

### Milton Court TRA - New Cross Ward Assembly

Stella Uzije (Vice Chair) was successful in bidding for £2,000 from the New Cross Localities Fund for Milton Court TRA to set up an Elderly Luncheon Club.

### Honor Oak TRA (HOTRA) - Telegraph Hill Ward Assembly

HOTRA were awarded £3818 from Telegraph Hill Ward Assembly Localities Fund for their summer event in 2010.

In addition Lewisham Homes was also fortunate to be awarded funding for two projects from the Brockley and Telegraph Hill Ward Assemblies in 2009:

### Brockley Ward Assembly

In partnership with Peabody Housing Association, Lewisham Homes was awarded £1550 for an older people's community event to be held Spring/Summer of 2010. The event, 'Senior Moments', is open to residents aged 55 years and will give information about accessing services for older people - in a fun and social environment.

### Telegraph Hill Ward Assembly

In partnership with Elevating Success, the Telegraph Hill Ward Assembly awarded us £6000 for a training and mentoring project for young people aged 16-21 who are not in education or employment. The project will be held on the Honor Oak estate and will start in Spring 2010.

## Youth Engagement Plan

The Community Involvement Team are currently working on a plan to get more of our young residents, aged 16 to 30 years old, to take part in the many involvement opportunities we offer.

We recently surveyed all residents aged 16-30 to find out:

- » what types of activities they would like to get involved in;
- » what discourages young people from getting involved; and
- » how we can improve the way we communicate with our young residents.

We received 144 surveys back with suggestions including: community events, youth forums and online forums/discussion groups. The information and outcomes from this piece of work will make up part of our Lewisham Homes Involvement Strategy.

The surveys were entered into a prize draw for an Ipod Nano and the lucky winner was Kylie Matthews, who will be receiving her prize shortly. A big thank you to all residents who took the time to complete and return their surveys.

# Spotted!



Monica Applewhaite (left) and Lesley Fitsall (right)

Residents networking and finding out about keeping their Residents Association strong at the **Community Event** held on 10 December 2009.



Stephanie Brown (above right) and Minty Challis (above left) preparing a presentation for the Lewisham Homes' Board on the **Residents' Business Plan** at an away day session on 27 November 2009.



Paul Brownlow (left) and Dave Shinn (right)

**Resident Estate Inspectors** carrying out an inspection of Dacres Estate.



Debbie Lester with Caretaker Barry Vidler



John Culleton and Jean Kirby discussing the Lewisham Homes Standard at the **Major Works Improvement Group** meeting on 18 November 2009.



Peter Hughes, Kerrie Maitland and R Nelson



Joy Usen

## Engaging all communities

Following recent consultation, we are implementing a new strategy aimed at giving all residents the opportunity to become involved in our service and have their views heard.

The strategy focuses on some communities who are underrepresented in the involvement opportunities that we offer. These communities include the Vietnamese and Somali communities, various faith groups, elderly residents and people with mental and physical disabilities.

To make involvement more accessible to these residents we will be working closely with local support agencies and community groups and bringing the involvement opportunities to them. To make this happen we will try to use: local venues, bilingual members of the community who can act as interpreters, estate notice boards and the newsletters of various support agencies.

The information from this piece of work and from the Youth Engagement Plan will form part of the Community Involvement Strategy which will be available later on in the year. The Community Involvement Strategy will set the scene for our commitment to involving Lewisham Homes' residents for the next three years.

## Dates for your diary

26 January	Advanced Microsoft Excel training	Honor Oak Housing Office
27 January	Residents Compact review 1, 5:30-7pm	Holbeach Board room
28 January	Lewisham Homes Board meeting 6.30-8.30pm	Holbeach Housing Office
1 February	Residents Compact review 2, 5:30-7pm	Holbeach Board room
2 February	Joint Area Panel meeting 7-9pm	Civic Suite
9 February	Discovery Event (day 1)	Powerleague
10 February	Discovery Event (day 2)	Powerleague
11 February	Discovery Event (day 3)	Powerleague
16 February	Plumbing in the home training	Lewisham College
18 February	Chairing Skills	tbc
25 February	Treasurer Skills	tbc
25 February	Equality and diversity strategy consultation	Civic Suite, Room 1
4 March	Secretary Skills	tbc
11 March	Resolving Conflict	tbc
18 March	Applying for funding	tbc

## Lewisham Homes are committed to promoting equality and diversity to residents and staff

This means making sure our services reach and benefit all our residents, particularly those most in need. It also means providing services that are fair, equal and accessible to all. As part of this process, we are reviewing our equality and diversity strategy and wish to consult with residents. If you would like to take part please contact Simon Eversley, the first meeting will be held at: 7pm on Thursday 25 February 2010, Civic Suite Room 1.

☎ 020 8613 7678

@ simon.eversley@lewishamhomes.org.uk

## Translation: The Involver

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- Ky informacion është për shtëpinë tuaj. Për përkthim, ju lutemi të jepni detajet tuaja më poshtë:
- Ces informations concernent votre logement. Veuillez nous donner vos coordonnées pour l'envoi de la traduction:
- 这是关于您家庭的信息。为了翻译起见，请提供如下详情:
- Macluumaadka ku saabsan gurigaaga. Haddii aad tarjamad rabto fadlan bixi macluumaadka hoose:
- இந்தத் தகவல் உங்கள் வீட்டு குறித்தது. மொழிபெயர்ப்புக்காக, உங்களைப் பற்றிய விபரங்களைக் கீழே அளியுங்கள்:
- Bu bilgiler evinizle ilgilidir. Tercümesi için lütfen aşağıdaki detayları verin:
- Thông tin này là về nhà của quý vị. Để dịch, xin cung cấp các chi tiết dưới đây:

Name, Emri, Nom, 姓名, Magac, பெயர், Isim, Tên:

Telephone No, Numri i telefonit, Numéro de téléphone, 电话号码, Lambarka telefoonka, தொலைபேசி எண், Telefon no, Số điện thoại:

Address, Adresa, Adresse, 地址, Cinwaanka, முகவரி, Adres, Địa chỉ:

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- 中文/Mandarin
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