



christian action housing

# TALKING POINTS

ISSUE 20 - APRIL 2010

## MATTHEW COURT HAS "TIME FOR A CUPPA"



Residents at Matthew Court raised an amazing £130 for Admiral Nurses on 6 February. Admiral Nurses are experienced mental health nurses who work with families and carers of people with dementia.

Many thanks are due to Matthew Court's Bright Sparks, Matthew Court residents and Doreen Hearn and Janet Lewis who made trays of cakes to go with the cuppa's. Money was also raised from the raffle and tombola.

Residents have also raised £1,344 from previous fundraising events for their Amenities Fund which they recently used to buy stacking chairs.



They look really nice in the newly decorated lounge at Matthew Court.

Elaine Witcomb, Scheme Manager, entered resident Charles Rowe into an Art competition with Eros<sup>h</sup>\* his entry came fourth and he will be receiving a cheque for £10 and a certificate.

\*Eros<sup>h</sup> - Emerging Role of Sheltered Housing

## 'SETTING LOCAL STANDARDS - WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?'



The biennial tenants' conference was held on Saturday 17th October 2009 at Bounces Road Community Hall. We were very pleased to welcome residents from all four boroughs, including a number of young people from the Foyer. The workshop sessions raised ideas and suggestions which will be used to look at setting our future standards.

*In the Anti Social Behaviour session (ASB) the following topics were discussed:*

- ◆ SORN and abandoned vehicles on estates; rubbish out for collection too early;
- ◆ The use of CCTV and working with the Police and other agencies;
- ◆ Security issues such as communal gates and doors left open.

*The Resident Involvement session concluded that:*

- ◆ Conferences and Forums should be local;
- ◆ Young people would like a Young People's Committee;
- ◆ Residents liked the newsletter.

*The Repairs and Maintenance session identified that:*

- ◆ There were still problems getting through to the repairs line and they felt that system improvements and a greater capacity at peak times should be investigated;
- ◆ There was a need for quicker response to messages;
- ◆ A personal response was preferred above a manned emergency service;
- ◆ Repair jobs should be allocated time slots and residents be advised of job progress with a timescale and a single point of contact for all;
- ◆ A handyperson should be used for smaller jobs.

*The Estate Services session felt that:*

- ◆ Grounds maintenance operatives should have specialist knowledge of gardening and tenants would like to be involved in small scale garden design projects;
- ◆ Estate services staff should be courteous and dedicated to particular tasks and have a personal touch;
- ◆ There should also be an ongoing tree programme for all our estates.

Thank you to everyone who attended and made the day such a success!

## SATISFACTION RISES TO 80%



Thank you to everyone who returned the satisfaction survey that was sent out before Christmas.

The results show that more tenants are satisfied with our performance than when we undertook the last survey in 2006

### Key findings were:

- ◆ **80%** of residents are very or fairly satisfied with the services we provide (up from 72% in 2006);
- ◆ **70%** of residents are very or fairly satisfied with the way we deal with repairs and maintenance (up from 65% in 2006);
- ◆ **65%** of residents are very or fairly satisfied with your views being taken into account (up from 53% in 2006).

More detailed results will be included in the next newsletter and will be available on our website.

All completed survey forms received by 31<sup>st</sup> December were entered into a prize draw. Congratulations to the winners who were:

- \* Mr Dodson who receives a £250 voucher
- \* Mrs Pearce and Mr Buck who both receive £25 vouchers.

## Changes in Repairs & Gas Servicing



**In the last newsletter details of our new contractor Tompkins & May were shown including their ID and logo.**

Our present gas contractor, Pargas will be continuing work for Christian Action Housing Association but under a new name - Liberty - see new logo above.

Christian Action Housing Board members have recognised that whilst there has been hard work done by repairs staff and contractors in making these changes, there may have been some effects on the service and continue to seek residents' views and ideas through surveys and participation in reviews and meetings.

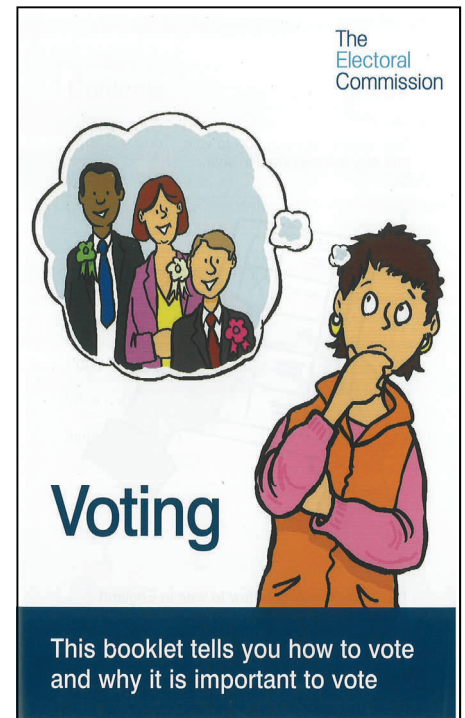
## Don't miss your chance to vote in the 2010 General Election

### Why is voting important?

The people who are voted in at elections make decisions that affect you everyday - ranging from what is happening in local schools and what recreational facilities you have, to national issues like healthcare and education, to global issues like defence and the environment. In the UK, it is your choice whether or not to vote, if you don't vote however, you are letting other people, who you might not agree with, make decisions about issues that affect you.

You need to be on the local register before you can vote in an election or referendum, you are not automatically registered, even if you pay council tax in that area. You can even vote if you do not have a permanent address, a general election will be held by June 2010 and you need to be registered before then in order to vote.

The Electoral Commission has issued a user-friendly booklet explaining the voting process and why it is important to vote, call them on 0845 8500 501 to obtain a copy, or download at: [www.aboutmyvote.co.uk](http://www.aboutmyvote.co.uk)



If you are living in temporary accommodation you are entitled to vote, and people with no fixed address can register using a 'declaration of local connection', this should be done through a local election office.

For further information on registering to vote contact your local electoral registration office; if you do not know where this is please contact your local council, library, or Citizen's Advice Bureau who will be able to help you.

## RENT INCREASES OR DECREASES

**From Monday 5<sup>th</sup> April all CAHA tenants will either receive an increase or decrease to their rents.**

The Association has sent letters to tenants informing them of these rent adjustments and you are advised to take the following actions:

- ◆ For those on Direct Debit Payment, the Association will amend your payments;
- ◆ For those with a Standing Order Mandate, you would need to advise your Bank or Building Society to adjust your payment;
- ◆ For those of you who pay via cheques, AllPay Card and cash payments, you would need to adjust your payment accordingly.
- ◆ For those in receipt of Housing Benefit, you need to contact your Housing Benefit Office to inform them of this change;

## TENANT EMPOWERMENT & PARTICIPATION

We believe that tenant involvement in the running of the Association brings benefits to individuals, the Association, and the community you live in. As well as good quality, well maintained homes, our tenants need strong and effective communities and we are committed to supporting them in achieving this, therefore we are encouraging and supporting our tenants to get involved in the running and workings of the Association.



### Opportunities to Take Part in Running Christian Action Housing Association

The following opportunities are available for participation:

- ◆ Tenant Board Member;
- ◆ Member of the Tenant Audit Panel;
- ◆ Member of the Editorial Board for 'Talking Points';
- ◆ Estate Champion;
- ◆ Set up a Residents' Association or Forum;
- ◆ Mystery Shopper;
- ◆ Become involved in contractor selection and specification preparation.

### Resources available

The Association offers resources to tenants such as:

- ◆ providing information and training for you to get involved in the way that suits you;
- ◆ assistance with producing minutes, preparing agendas, producing posters and leaflets etc;
- ◆ assist with travel to meetings, telephone and childcare expenses.

### Being a Representative

Means that you are able to:

- ◆ act as an advocate on behalf of the local community;
- ◆ engage in dialogue and negotiate with the landlord;
- ◆ act as watchdogs keeping an eye on the organisation;
- ◆ gain useful experience and expertise;
- ◆ participate in and manage any services that the organisation runs
- ◆ participate in the landlord's management structures.

### How can you become a Representative

Representatives can be elected or selected by the members of their community, or you can nominate yourself to become one.

Please contact us Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm on 01992 765900 or email [info@christianaction.org.uk](mailto:info@christianaction.org.uk)

## CAHA SUSPENSE ACCOUNT

**Christian Action has a suspense account in which amounts are temporarily recorded.**

We use the suspense account because tenants' rent accounts could not be identified at the time that the transaction was recorded. When the proper account is identified, the amount will be moved from the suspense account to the proper account.

We would encourage tenants to check their rent statements on a regular basis to ensure that the correct payments are recorded or if there is a missing payment to contact the Revenue Officers.

Please note that we can only make a payment adjustment to your account if you provide us with a valid receipt of payment.

## CAHA ONLINE



**Many thanks to all tenants who now contact us by email.**

It is a much faster way for us to reply to your queries – our turnaround time is hours rather than days. We have a general address for enquiries for those of you who have access to email:

[info@christianaction.org.uk](mailto:info@christianaction.org.uk)  
Don't forget to visit our website:  
[www.christianaction.org.uk](http://www.christianaction.org.uk)

## LOCAL POLICING - SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS TEAM

**Safer Neighbourhoods teams are dedicated to your community and are additional to other policing teams and units in London, they provide:**

- ◆ A team of officers dedicated to every London neighbourhood;
- ◆ A more accessible, more visible, more accountable police service.

Local communities can get a real say in deciding the priorities for the area in which they live, allowing the police to provide long-term solutions to local problems and improving community cohesion, while maintaining a focus on reducing priority crime such as burglary; vehicle crime, anti-social behaviour, tackling gangs and reducing weapon enabled crimes and prevent extremism.

If you have concerns about day-to-day crime and disorder issues, or if you would like to get involved, please contact your local team whose details can be found at :

<http://www.met.police.uk/saferneighbourhoods/involved.htm>.

Safer Neighbourhoods teams are not there to provide a 24-hour response, this is the role of response team officers who you should contact on **0300 123 1212** or in an emergency you should dial 999.

### EASTER CLOSING & EMERGENCY REPAIRLINE

**Christian Action Housing offices will be closed on Good Friday 2nd April 2010 and Monday 5th April 2010. We will re-open as normal on Tuesday 6th April.**

After office hours and during the Easter holiday period please phone the 24 hour Emergency Repair Line:

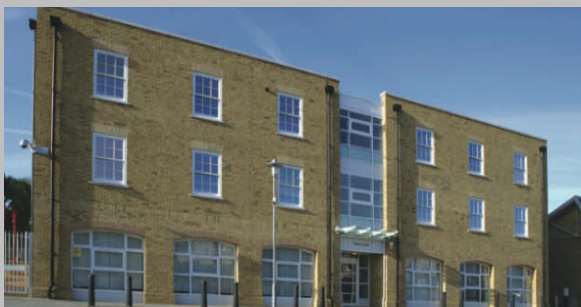
**01992 765 990**



## Our Performance in Quarter 3 - October to December 2009

Measure	Actual	Target
<b>1 Response to letters &amp; phone calls within target</b>		
Reply to letters within the target time of 10 days	93%	85%
Actual calls answered by reception	96%	100%
<b>2 Repairs</b>		
Repair appointments made & kept	84%	100%
The percentage of gas safety checks carried out	99.22%	100%
<b>3 Lettings of empty properties</b>		
How quickly we re-let our homes?	25.5 days	10 days
How many homes we re-let	64	
<b>4 Rent collection</b>		
What is the level of arrears for General Needs?	6.01%	5%
What is the level of arrears for Temporary Social Housing?	7.49%	10%
What is the level of arrears for Supported Housing & Agency Managed?	6.99%	10%
How much rent did we collect for General Needs?	95.97%	100%
How much rent did we collect for Temporary Social Housing?	92.10%	100%
How much rent did we collect for Supported Housing & Agency Managed?	88.54%	93%
<b>5 Anti-social Behaviour</b>		
Number of ASB reported	42	
Number of injunctions granted	4	
Number of evictions	0	

## Keep In Touch...



[www.christianaction.org.uk](http://www.christianaction.org.uk)

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