



Tenants' forum update

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Tenants' forum update



Having been elected as Chair of Castle Morpeth Housing's Forum at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) on the 8th July, I readily accepted.

Building on its success the forum has been amazingly busy on your behalf. We have solved many problems, from repairs and maintenance to the prevention of anti-social behaviour and we have learned so much.

Is this enough? No, it is not! At the last meeting it was decided that the heads of each department of Castle Morpeth Housing be invited to meetings and instruct members about how individual departments function, thereby giving us greater insight to the workings of the company.

This forum is an integral part of Castle Morpeth Housing and there solely for the benefit of you, the tenants.

Membership is good, but more are needed, remember, every tenant can join the forum by right.

We need to see younger tenants coming forward, having a voice and shaping the future of Castle Morpeth Housing.

The more the merrier.

Thank you for reading this little item of praise for forum members, and when you have thought about it, *I expect to see you at the next forum meeting at the Community Centre, St. Georges Park on the 28th October 9.30am.*

David A Henderson, Forum Chair

Down your way

The focus of this edition's down your way is a group of residents at West Greens, Morpeth who are sowing the seeds for success.

Led by Bill Hewitt, 63, a number of residents have helped to transform an unused area of scrub land adjacent to their homes into a flourishing community garden.

Thanks to the hard work of the tenants and donations from members of the local community, the garden features an array of evergreen plants, shrubbery, flowers and a table and chairs where residents can socialise.

Bill Hewitt said: "As neighbours we all enjoy having a chat and keeping up to date with local news. The garden provides a pleasant outdoor space where we can pass the time.

"By improving this area of land we also hope to encourage people to take pride in the area."

Garry Scurfield, tenancy enforcement officer with Castle Morpeth Housing added: "It is great to see residents become actively involved in shaping the area in which they live. The group at West Greens have been passionate and committed to this project and have created a space that is being well used by tenants."



Bill Hewitt (foreground) who has helped create the community garden.

Noticeboard

Warmer windows are on the way

Our window replacement programme is well underway. Warmseal which is delivering the scheme is soon to complete work in Ponteland, moving onto Mitford for mid October. To date 234 properties have benefitted from new windows this financial year.

Shopping spree for survey winners

By completing a residents' repairs satisfaction survey tenants are automatically entered into a prize draw for the chance to win a £20 shopping voucher.

Congratulations to:

Miss Ross from Pegswood who won May's prize draw.

Mrs Potts from Heddon-on-the-Wall who won June's prize draw.

Mrs Hardy from Hadston who won July's prize draw.

Events and activities over the coming months that may be of interest:

- **25th and 26th October**, Wallington Food and Craft Festival at Wallington Hall. Free entry from 10.00am – 5.00pm. For more information please contact The National Trust on 01670 773 600 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- **1st November**, History Day at Ponteland Memorial Hall. Free entry from 10.00am – 4pm. For more information visit www.ponthistsoc.freeuk.com
- **5th November**, 6.00pm Matten Village Bonfire. Donations welcome. For more information contact Kath Wallace on 01661 885 930
- **14th and 15th November**, Continental Village Market in Morpeth. For more information contact: Val Pope on 01670 515 806 or email val@litnotes.co.uk
- **30th November**, countryside Christmas fair, Kirkley Hall from 10.30am – 4.30pm. For more information please call 01670 841 235 or email enquiries@kirkleyhall.co.uk

Housing group goes back to school



Tina Drury, managing director of Castle Morpeth Housing, goes back to school.

Tina Drury of Castle Morpeth Housing is going back to school in support of a national children's charity.

She is visiting Newminster and Chantry Middle Schools in Morpeth to deliver a booklet – called Respect- to pupils.

Produced by The Children's Safety Education Foundation (CSEF) Charity it covers topical issues including the dangers of drug and alcohol abuse, citizenship and anti social behaviour.

Featuring real life case studies it is hoped that the pupils aged 11-14 will be able to better identify, relate to and understand that all actions and decisions have consequences.

The schools' will also benefit from a classroom activity pack which will include lesson plans, curriculum links and a 'Good Health Guide to Drugs' video.

Talking rubbish

Castle Morpeth Housing is 'talking rubbish' reminding residents what household waste can be recycled.

Tenants are encouraged to put the following items in their blue recycling bin:

- Cardboard and paper. This includes magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, brochures, telephone directories, books, cereal and cardboard boxes. Shredded paper should be put into a clear bag before being placed into the bin
- Plastic bottles, including drinks, detergent, milk, cooking oil, shampoo and toiletry bottles
- Metal – aluminium and steel food tins and drinks cans

Please ensure that all plastic bottles and food and drink tins are empty and thoroughly rinsed. This is very important as your recycling bin may not be collected if the items still contain food or drink.

Tenants are reminded that the following items must be placed in the household's general waste bin:

- Food waste • Polystyrene
- Nappies • Glass
- Plastic carrier bags (except clear bags that contain shredded paper)
- Textiles • Green waste
- Bricks/soil • Cat litter
- Vacuum cleaner bags
- Crisp packets • Aluminium foil
- Bottle tops • CD and DVD cases • Food containers
- Grass cuttings • Cling film • Yoghurt/margarine cartons



Partnership's project blooms

A partnership between Rio Tinto Alcan, Castle Morpeth Borough Council and Castle Morpeth Housing and its residents has sown the seeds for success.

Thanks to a donation of £3,000 from Rio Tinto Alcan, through its Community Foundation Fund, a communal garden has been created in the heart of Lynemouth, Morpeth.

The garden, at Castle Morpeth Housing's Park View sheltered accommodation scheme, has benefited from a new seating area, easy access walkways and low maintenance plants and shrubs, delivered by Macleod Groundworks Services Ltd.

As part of the project, residents were encouraged to put forward ideas for the garden's design, with a tenant representative appointed to ensure that the space meets

residents' needs and expectations.

John McCabe, spokesperson at Rio Tinto Alcan, said: "We are very pleased to be supporting the Park View project. Investment in our local communities has an extremely important role to play in developing the region and helping it to thrive."

Barry Love, a resident at Park View, added: "The garden is a valued asset to the tenants at Park View. It means that green fingered residents can get involved in maintaining the garden and that we have a purpose built, outdoor open space where we can socialise.

(From Left to right) Angeline Rochford, community involvement officer for Castle Morpeth Housing, John McCabe spokesperson at Rio Tinto Alcan and Mr Love, a resident at Park View.



Rising to the flood challenge

The traumatic events of early September certainly tested the mettle of the Isos Group partners and hundreds of our residents who were caught up in the floods which swept through so much of the North East.

Particularly hard hit was Morpeth where 145 of Castle Morpeth Housing's properties were swamped with up to five feet of water. Seven NomadE5 properties were also affected.

And there were problems too at our offices at Gosforth, headquarters to NomadE5 and Isos, where the IT and phone systems were submerged in water.

One of the few positives to come from the first few hours after the deluge was the way in which the group members, communities and the support organisations pulled together to deal with the crisis.

Our first priorities - helping those forced to leave their homes to find alternative accommodation and getting electric and gas safety checks carried out in the properties by Milecastle Housing - were completed within the first few days.



We were also able to appoint a project manager, Faithful&Gould, to oversee the repair programme within 10 days.

The programme could take many months and even up to a year to complete. This is because work cannot be carried out successfully until properties have thoroughly dried out.

These will be testing times but what we can assure everyone caught up in the crisis is that our teams will do everything they can to support you and keep you informed of progress throughout the process.

Castle Morpeth Housing has established a flood response team which can be reached on 0845 117 0020, please speak to Kath Glen, Carole Moir, Lindsay Jones or Garry Scurfield.



Residents' event 2008

Thriving and healthy communities

The first ever group wide residents' event, which took place in September at the Lancastrian Suite in Gateshead, welcomed residents, young and old, who enjoyed a fun filled day of interactive workshops and informative sessions.

A new twist

We welcomed back local theatre company, the Twisting Ducks, which performed at last year's NomadE5 event. The performance, *Neighbours from Heaven*, illustrated how neighbours, without realising, can cause others to feel upset and how we can all try to understand each other better and get involved with local community activity.

Under the theme of *thriving and healthy communities*, the day aimed to bring all residents together to experience it means to be part of Isos Group. The day's activities were based upon extensive feedback from last year's individual NomadE5, Castle Morpeth Housing and Milecastle Housing events.

The Real Food Works provided food for thought with a healthy cookery demonstration, using easily available produce. The workshop also included handy hints, cooking samples, leaflets and recipe ideas.



New additions included a first aid workshop, led by the St John Ambulance and *Isos, working together* – a unique question and answer session with managing directors Bill Tina and Alison.



Fun for the young

Children and young people were treated to two special workshops; circus skills and graffiti art. Youngsters tried their hand at a number of circus skills including juggling, the diabolo and magic tricks. The graffiti workshop produced several colourful boards, which will be used at NomadE5's World Mental Health Awareness activities in October.



Residents at the helm!

Among the workshop leaders were some of our very own residents including Wyn Varity, who led a creative session on card making. Wyn is part of a group of Milecastle residents who meet weekly to practice card making, socialise and of course, have fun!

Ed Fisher inspired many others with his demonstrations and ideas on how to make your space green. From hanging baskets to pepper plants, composting to an enormous red cabbage, this session was colourful!

Twenty one-year-old NomadE5 resident, Jennifer Barnett, held a therapeutic workshop on feeling good on the inside and out with pamper treatments also on offer.



A day to remember

The event came to a close with an interactive voting session – in the style of *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?* – where residents were able to prioritise issues and ideas in order of importance to them. The results of this will shape how we operate and make sure that your needs and priorities are being met.

Thanks to everyone who came along and to those who gave up their time to help, especially our residents. We look forward to seeing you all for another successful event next year!

