



## Investing in your homes

*Home improvements  
in the coming year*

### Plus...

Missing the Acorn Club, page 2

Help us set our Local Offer page 6

IT sessions, page 7



# Welcome

to the spring issue  
of *Fortunegate News*



In this issue, we sadly say goodbye to Joe Chambers who left Fortunegate in March. Joe has been managing director at Fortunegate since September 2007 and we

would like to thank him for all his hard work over the past few years. Joe has now taken up the position of chief executive at Soho Housing and we wish him all the best.

We'd also like to extend a warm welcome to Paul Yates, who will be starting as interim managing director at Fortunegate. Paul has worked in housing for several years and also worked as head of operations at Kensington Housing Trust, Fortunegate's sister company. Paul will be starting in May and we'll feature a full profile of him in the next issue.

This issue of *Fortunegate News* is packed with good news: we've been working with local agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour, we've got planning permission for the regeneration of the Wornington Green estate and we're bringing back the Acorn Club.

Read on to find out more!

Best wishes,

**Yvonne Williams,**

**Head of Community Investment**

## Tackling anti-social behaviour



We've been working with local agencies, including the police and council, over the last three months to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the Church Road area.

During this time, we have helped:

- Secure nine ASB orders against individuals and seven of these have been a result of Operation Soto.
- Secure the laundrette on Church Road after the previous owner had passed away and it was being used as a drinking and drug dealing den.
- Reduce the amount of drug dealing in the car park behind Fortunegate's offices and are now working with the local police who are investigating this.

We are responsible for protecting our residents and properties from ASB, and are committed to ensuring that our neighbourhoods are a safe and peaceful place to live. So if you know of anyone behaving in an anti-social way, please let us know – either by calling us on 020 848 1800 or reporting it through our website at [www.chg.org.uk](http://www.chg.org.uk)

## Online review panel

We're looking for residents to join our Residents' Involvement Panel, which will review our documents online. Types of documents the panel will review include policies, procedures and action plans. These documents determine how we provide services to you, so – when examining them – you will be able to tell us what you think and how they can be improved.

**If you would like to join this panel, please contact Michelle Brown on 020 8438 1800 or [michelle.brown@chg.org.uk](mailto:michelle.brown@chg.org.uk)**

## Missing the Acorn Club?

After consulting with the young people who live on our estates, many of you told us that you were missing the Acorn Club because there was now a lack of activities for young people in the local area. That's why we've decided to bring the Acorn Club back!

We are currently working with young people to devise an action plan on what the new club will include. We hope the Acorn Club will now be able to offer

many opportunities for young people training and employment programmes. To capture the views of the whole community, we need more people to send us their ideas.

**To get involved, contact Michelle Brown on 020 8438 1800 or [michelle.brown@chg.org.uk](mailto:michelle.brown@chg.org.uk)**



# Wornington Green gets go-ahead



*Kensington staff sign a pledge to the residents of Wornington Green*

Kensington and Chelsea Council granted planning permission for the proposed regeneration of the Wornington Green estate in March. This was after more than four years of consultation, discussions, resident involvement and planning.

Situated at the top end of Portobello Road, West London, the redevelopment of 538 1970's style residencies into community friendly and stylish homes will help turn the local area into a thriving community where people want to live, work and visit. The regeneration will also address the high level of overcrowding and lack of local employment opportunities across the estate.

This regeneration project will comprise five phases with the first phase beginning at the Munro Mews end. We have already started temporarily re-housing residents in this area and once their new homes are complete, they will be able to move into their brand-new homes!

# Works to your homes

In the coming financial year, our group asset management team will oversee the investment of over £16.5 million in your homes. All works will start in April 2010 and run until March 2011.



The works will include fitting over 275 kitchens and bathrooms, and 400 new central heating boilers as well as rewiring 350 homes. We will also carry out cyclical maintenance on 1,000 homes that will include painting and minor repairs to windows and guttering. About 350 homes will have their existing windows replaced.

For residents affected by works to the interior of their home, we will send you an initial letter explaining that our contractors will be in touch to arrange an appointment. During the first appointment, the contractor will explain what works will be done and let you know if you can choose anything, such as colour of paint or type of worktop. Where work will be done to the outside of your home, we will send you a letter detailing the works, their start date and when we will be holding consultation meetings.

In all cases, the letter will give the names and telephone numbers of our staff who will be managing the works. You can then contact them if you have any queries.

Please note that not all of the works will be carried out in every home; the process will involve us or our contractor visiting you and then determining with you the scope of the works. Also in some cases, it may not be possible to complete the works by March 2011. Sometimes things may arise that take priority and this may mean some works are delayed. However, we will do our utmost to ensure that the works are complete on time and are of high quality.

# Helping young people into work



Resident involvement officer  
Katerina Getsevich

We've been offering local young people employment opportunities over the past few months through the government's Future Jobs Fund. The programme supports the creation of jobs for long term unemployed young people and others who face significant disadvantage in the labour market.

So far Catalyst Housing Group and its member companies have helped 20 people through this initiative. One of them is Katerina Getsevich, 22, who joined CCHA in January as a resident involvement officer. Katerina found herself unemployed after working for Ealing Council as a youth offending officer. She then saw an advert for this scheme and contacted us. Her time

with CCHA has involved consulting with residents to ensure they get a good service and she has used her previous experience of working with young people to set up a youth forum.

We are now sponsoring Katerina to do a one-year level 4 CIH in housing certificate, which she will start later on in the year. Katerina said: 'Doing this course will hopefully allow me to get a career in housing. I will be able to use my knowledge of working with young people to engage them in initiatives that Catalyst is doing.'

**For more details, contact our training and employment team on 020 8832 3366.**

## Future training sessions:

**Mystery shopping:** 14 April or 9 June

**The development of effective scrutiny:** 12 April

**Resident Inspector:** 10 or 14 May

**Board member skills:** 18 May

**Customer service:** 9 July

**CIH Certificate in Housing (level 2):** 28 April to 21 July (12-week course)

## New look, new feel, same website

Our new look website is now live. We've refreshed the design so the site looks more dynamic and we've also added some new content.

The new website should be easier for you to navigate around and find exactly what you are looking for. But don't worry, we'll still be offering the same online services including reporting repairs or anti-social behaviour, making suggestions or complaints.

Before launching the new website, we carried out extensive testing that involved our residents. The residents who tested the new site said they liked the look and feel of it and also found it clearer and easier to get to different sections.

Now that we've created a new website, the process doesn't stop there. Our website is a key part of our customer service to you. We want to keep improving the site so that it better meets your needs. That's why we would now we appreciate your feedback as to what you think of the new site. So have a look at [www.chg.org.uk](http://www.chg.org.uk) and send us your feedback through the online feedback form.

## Complaining

We aim to provide excellent services to our customers at all times. But sometimes things can go wrong. When they do, we want you to tell us so we can make sure we don't make the same mistakes again.

You can complain to us in many ways: through our website, in writing, by calling us or by visiting us. The best way to complain is in writing, either by filling in an online complaints form or by writing us a letter. We'll then have your views in writing and we can get back to you with our resolution.

Once we receive your complaint in writing, we will respond to you in ten working days and take action according to our three complaints stages.

**For more information on our complaints procedure, please download a copy of our complaints leaflet from our website at [www.chg.org.uk](http://www.chg.org.uk)**

## Gas safety inspections

Every year many people die and suffer serious effects from carbon monoxide poisoning caused by faulty gas fires, boilers, cookers and other gas appliances. It is our responsibility as your landlord to ensure that all gas appliances that we have installed are serviced and that a gas safety check is carried out every year.

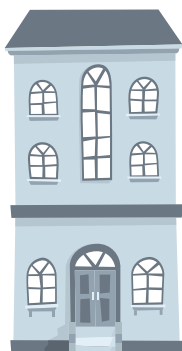
You must allow our engineer access into your home to carry out a gas inspection as part of your tenancy agreement. We will try to carry out the service visit at the same time each year. Before the inspection, our engineers will write to you to let you know the date and time of the inspection. If this is not convenient for you, you must let us know.

Remember that a gas safety inspection may save your life and the lives of your family and neighbours.

## Home insurance

Your home is your castle and everything inside it, your jewels. We, as your landlord, will insure the structure of your home, but you are responsible for insuring the contents. That's why we strongly recommend you take out home-contents insurance. This will insure you against loss of personal belongings, as well as damage caused by fire, theft and water.

You can insure your belongings under a special household-contents insurance scheme available only to our tenants. This scheme is arranged with Royal and Sun Alliance Insurance plc and offers special rates to our residents. To find out more, pick up a leaflet from your local office or call the customer services team.



## KHT goes from strength to strength

**Audit Commission comments favourably on Kensington Housing Trust's services to its residents.**



The Audit Commission inspected Kensington Housing Trust (KHT), part of the Catalyst Housing Group, in mid-January in regards to the services it provides for its residents and found that KHT is performing well in most areas. The inspection involved inspectors spending three days quizzing staff, talking to residents and looking at management information.

The inspection focused on the service areas of responsive repairs, gas servicing and resident involvement. It also included an assessment of how KHT is doing on the issues of access and customer care, diversity, and value for money within those services.

In their report, the inspectors highlighted many strengths at KHT in the inspected areas – especially in relation to responsive repairs, gas servicing, and equalities and diversity. They also provided some welcome feedback on how we can further improve our services.

KHT is now putting together an action plan based on the recommendations made by the Audit Commission. They are doing this by talking to their residents and involving them in drawing up this action plan to ensure it meets residents' expectations.

**Details of the full report are available on the KHT website. It is also available on the Audit Commission website at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/housing)**

# Help us set our Local Offer



In late 2008 the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) was created to regulate housing associations. It is the first time that a housing 'watch dog' has been set up to put residents at the heart of regulating their landlords. The TSA have spent the last year consulting residents on what their priorities are and then drafting the six 'standards' which housing associations have to meet.

The standards are:

- Tenant involvement and empowerment
- Home, including repairs and improvement works
- Tenancy, including allocations
- Neighbourhood and community, including anti-social behaviour
- Value for money
- Governance and financial viability

The TSA have set housing associations with the challenge of ensuring they have a Local Offer which meets the needs of their own residents, recognising that a one-size-fits-all approach will not always work when residents may live in different geographical areas, different types of homes and have different personal circumstances. This is a fantastic opportunity for Catalyst to work closely with our residents to help us identify our Local Offer and we want to make sure that as many of you as possible have the chance to give us your views.

To give you an example of what a Local Offer might be, let's look at grounds maintenance or the upkeep of communal garden areas. Residents living on an estate with lots of hedges might want a Local

Offer on how often these would be pruned and what they can expect to ensure the areas looked presentable. However, residents living in a block of flats that has no hedges or planting, might want a Local Offer which sets out how often weedkiller is sprayed to ensure the gravel looks presentable. These would be examples of Local Offers to meet local circumstances.

We will be consulting all of our residents later this year to find out priorities for Local Offers, which will then shape the way we deliver our services to you.

**If you would like to get involved or find out more about please contact Hannah Weight on 020 8832 3467 or [hannah.weight@chg.org.uk](mailto:hannah.weight@chg.org.uk)**

## Helping you keep your home

At Catalyst, we are not just about housing people and collecting rent. If any of our residents are having problems paying their mortgage, we want to help them so they will not lose their home.

One way in which we do this is through the government's £200m Mortgage Rescue scheme and so far we've helped some 50 families through this scheme. Mortgage Rescue is designed to prevent some of the most vulnerable families from losing their homes and experiencing the trauma of repossession.

One couple which this initiative has enabled to stay in their home is Mr and Mrs Smith from Newton Longville, Milton Keynes. The couple first contacted Aylesbury Council when they were having difficulty

with their mortgage and the council put them in touch with us. Our staff then told the couple about Mortgage Rescue and what it would involve. Mr and Mrs Smith then realised that this scheme would be perfect for them.

Mrs Smith said: 'Mortgage Rescue was the best thing that could have happened to us. Staff at Catalyst were very helpful and kept us fully informed throughout the process. The scheme has allowed us to keep our home so it really was the answer to our prayers.'

**For more information on Mortgage Rescue, please call us on 0845 601 7729 or visit our website at [www.catalysthomebuy.org.uk](http://www.catalysthomebuy.org.uk)**

*Please note the names of the couple have been changed.*

## A one stop to claiming Housing Benefit

If you are claiming Housing Benefit and your circumstances change, then One Stop can help you with your new Housing Benefit claim form.

You can visit the One Stop for help at:

- Harlesden Library Plus from 10am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.
- Willesden Library from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. Except on Wednesday when library closes at 1pm.

## Financial advice

If you're in financial difficulty and having problems paying your rent, mortgage or credit card debt, then Harlesden Money Advice can help you.

The organisation offers free financial advice that can help you get your finances in better shape. Their advisors will:

- ensure anything you tell them is kept confidential
- give you frank advice about your situation
- deal directly with lenders, so you don't have to.

You can call Harlesden Money Advice free on 0800 612 7163.

## IT sessions at the Unity Centre

If you want to improve your computer skills, then why not sign-up for IT sessions at the Unity Centre



We'll be holding sessions in a range of Microsoft applications and letting you know how you can effectively use each application. Subject areas include: Word, creating letters; Publisher, creating presentations; Outlook, using email and the internet; and Excel, calculating your finances.

Sessions will last for three weeks per subject area and are taught by a professionally qualified IT teacher. All courses will be reasonably priced and will be held at the Church End and Roundwood Unity Centre over the summer.

For more details, contact Lillian on 020 8955 1780, 07932 798715 or lvsteacher@sky.com

## Have your say in community matters

The Fortunegate Residents' Forum is now in full swing. With its new committee and constitution, the forum is ready to tackle issues within the community and looking at areas for improvements.

Currently the forum is looking for new members to help them improve the local area for Fortunegate residents. We will be providing full training to new members to help them carry out their roles.

So if you would like to get involved, contact Michelle Brown on 020 8438 1800 or michelle.brown@chg.org.uk



### How to contact us



**223 Church Road  
London  
NW10 9EP**

9am to 5pm each weekday apart from Wednesday when the office shuts at 2pm for training (phonelines remain open). The office also shuts on Bank Holidays. Translation services are available if you visit in person or call.

*General enquiries:* 020 8438 1800

*Maintenance (freephone):* 0800 731 5282

*Out of hours emergency:* 020 8937 1234

You can contact us on the web by visiting [www.chg.org.uk/fortunegate](http://www.chg.org.uk/fortunegate)

On the website you can:

- report a repair
- make a housing enquiry
- download guides and residents' magazines
- find out the latest news on Fortunegate Community Housing
- make a suggestion or complaint.

Services on the web are quick and easy to use and available 24 hours a day.

### Neighbourhood services

**Lilah Haire, neighbourhood manager**  
020 8438 1820

**Muna Jama, neighbourhood support officer**  
020 8438 1811

**Norma James, neighbourhood manager**  
020 8438 1813

**Thelma Grant, neighbourhood support officer**  
020 8438 1821

**Karen Platt, neighbourhood manager**  
020 8438 1815

**Binta Kinteh, neighbourhood support officer**  
020 8438 1819

### Property services

**Ahmed Gasim, property surveyor**  
020 8438 1812

**Brendan Scanlan, property surveyor**  
020 8438 1817

**Kelechi Ukachukwu, service charge & sales officer**  
020 8438 1805

**Frances Holder, property services administrator**  
020 8438 1818



**Fortunegate**  
Community Housing

Editor: Parveen Agnihotri

Design and production: Anu Sharma, Catalyst Housing Group

Fortunegate Community Housing, 223 Church Road, London, NW10 9EP. Tel 020 8438 1800.

A charitable housing association, part of Catalyst Housing Group.