



Fun at Page Road

Celebrating the final summer of construction



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Welcome

to the autumn issue
of *Housing Matters*



We provide services to thousands of residents and it was great when one of our residents took the time to write to us thanking members of the South East team (see right for more details).

As part of our drive to improve how we deliver services, we've decided to bring together all of the community development activities in Catalyst Housing Group (our parent company). This new team will become a separate charitable trust called Catalyst Gateway (page 4).

This issue is also packed with details of the interesting activities that have been taking place in our communities. These include the community harvest tour (page 4), Page Road fun day (page 5) and an event at Amersham Road where residents told us which of our services are most important to them (page 5).

Best wishes,

John Foxall

Managing director

Thank you



It's always nice to be appreciated and that's just how Theresa Crayton and Peter Curtin, from the South East team, felt after receiving feedback from a former resident.

Margaret Eaglestone moved into Farndon Court, Oxford, after her parents had to sell their family home. Margaret's father was diagnosed with cancer and subsequently passed away, and her mother has Alzheimers.

Margaret then had to quickly find a new home but didn't have much time to do this as she was working, visiting her father in hospital and helping to co-ordinate care for her mother. A friend then recommended Farndon Court as a nice, affordable place to stay.

'I didn't have time to look for accommodation in Oxford, and was so relieved when Theresa offered me a lovely room at an affordable rent. I was then able to care for my parents without worrying about where to live.'

Having a safe and stable home has made a huge difference to Margaret's life. She's since found a new job and passed her driving test. Margaret has also recently moved out of Farndon Court and in the process of buying her own home, but she'll still miss our team.

'I'm very grateful to Theresa and Peter's constant kindness and professionalism. Theresa was very supportive and calm, whilst Peter was always very helpful and sorted out any maintenance issues I had. I really want to give them a big thank you. I'll miss them!'

Hugh Clark



Hugh Clark passed away in August

We're sad to tell you that Hugh Clark, former Chair of Catalyst Housing Group and before that the Ealing Family Group, died in August after a short illness.

Rod Cahill, Chief Executive of Catalyst, remembers Hugh with great admiration and affection. 'Hugh was one of Ealing Family's earliest board members and served on the board for 36 years, helping to turn the acorn that was Ealing Family into the oak tree of today. He was a constant source of wise counsel and never forgot our underlying purpose – to help people get access to good housing and then provide

excellent customer service. He will be remembered as a superb chair because of his unfailing good humour and diplomacy.'

Hugh's contribution was recognised when one of our sheltered housing schemes, Hugh Clark House in West Ealing, was named after him. Bob Copland, current resident at the scheme, remembers him well. 'I first met Hugh 20 years ago when I was on the Ealing Family Board. He always saw things from both the residents' and housing association's perspective. He was a respectable gentleman, who'll be sorely missed.'

Terry hangs up his boots



Terry retires after 34 years of public service

After five years of hard work as one of our two estate services supervisors, Terry Drury is retiring. Many residents will know Terry from his regular visits to their estate, clipboard in hand, to check the condition of the common parts and grounds as well as to sort out abandoned vehicles and dumped rubbish.

For Terry this is a well deserved rest after many years in public service – he also spent 29 years with Hounslow Council/Hounslow Homes. It will also be an opportunity to spend more time following the fortunes of his beloved Brentford Football Club and of course, to spend more time with his wife! We're sure that you'll want to join us in wishing Terry a long, happy and healthy retirement.

He's a hard act to follow but Terry's replacement is Eugene Brown. Eugene has served a long 'apprenticeship' as a highly popular caretaker on our Invicta Grove estate in Northolt.

If you're interested in accompanying our estate services supervisors on one of their inspections, please contact the Customer Services Centre in your area.

Lock, stock and barrel



Many residents will have recently received a letter from us advising them about their main entrance door lock being changed. This has been prompted in part by new fire regulations which require us to undertake a survey of the common parts of our properties to determine what works are required to improve fire safety.

We're using this as an opportunity to change to a system of suited locks that will enable us to gain access to common parts of all properties more easily, whilst preserving the security of residents' homes. Please note that we're not changing the locks of any individual homes.

Following the programme of lock changes it's likely that we'll need to fit a basic fire detection/alarm system and emergency lighting in the common parts of a number of properties. We'll regularly test these to ensure that they're working properly.

We're grateful for your co-operation whilst the lock changes are carried out. If you have a query about the work, please contact our contractor Mears on 020 8832 2262.

Getting kitted out



Budding young footballers show off their new kits

We recently sponsored the Greater Leys Football Club under 9's team and this has helped the team pay for new kits for its young footballers.

Ian Fieldwick, the club's chairman said: 'Greater Leys Youth Football club really appreciate the support Catalyst has given over the past few years. The Under 9's team look great in their new kit and really are enjoying their football this year.'

We've also supporting the team by providing them with additional equipment, which includes goal posts to use on training nights.

catalyst gateway

CCHA runs a wide range of community development projects that offer local residents opportunities for greater choice, prosperity and independence. You can read about some of these below and opposite.

We're part of Catalyst Housing Group, along with two other housing associations. All three of us already work closely together and share many policies and procedures. In the future we plan to work even more closely together, to provide a better and more cost-effective service. We've decided to bring together all the group's community development activities into one team. This team will become a separate charitable trust called Catalyst Gateway.

This change will make it easier for us to get funding for community development projects, so that we

can do more of them. At the moment there is less government money available, which means there's a lot of competition for it. It's easier for one charitable trust to access funding than it is for a collection of local projects run by different housing associations.

This change won't make any difference to your local community development projects or local staff. It just means that from now on our training, regeneration, health and wellbeing projects, as well as those for families and children, will be known as Catalyst Gateway projects, rather than CCHA projects. It also means that more of these schemes will be open to all Catalyst Housing Group residents.

We are keen to hear what you think of these changes. If you have any comments, please contact Wendy Sweeney on 020 8832 3186 or wendy.sweeney@chg.org.uk

Community harvest tour



Young residents try out new facilities at one of our community gardens

To celebrate the achievements of all residents involved in the community gardens on their respective estates, we held a community harvest tour in September. The tour involved visiting all the community gardens which have been involved in food growing projects and ended with a barbecue at the Invicta Grove garden, where our green fingered residents got to showcase the food they've been growing over the summer.

Encouraging residents to think about seasonal and local food is part of our sustainability policy. This initiative is a Catalyst Gateway project (see above) in collaboration with Catalyst's gardeners' clubs.

To find out more about our food growing projects or to set one up in your neighbourhood, contact Nuria Rodriguez on 020 8832 3233 or nuria.rodriguez@chg.org.uk



Celebrating the final summer of construction work

Page Road fun day

Residents turned out in force at a community fun day in August to celebrate the final summer of construction of the Page Road estate in Bedfont. Over 70 residents were treated to a range of performances and activities including line and limbo dancing, musical statues, face painting and music from the St Michael and All Angels Steel Band.

Community spirit was evident as the Ease Youth Work Group organised a talent show and an Appreciation Awards ceremony, where prizes were given to residents who had given their time and effort to help their neighbours.

The seven-year regeneration of Page Road will result in 320 new homes. The transformation of the estate has already been recognised with multiple awards including 'Best Regeneration Project' at the 2009 National Affordable Home Ownership Awards.

Training and employment opportunities

Residents showcased the skills they had learnt from a CIH housing (level 2) course at the Jasmine Community Centre, Southall, in August. They told an eager crowd, made up of other residents and CCHA staff, how they've been able to expand their knowledge of the housing sector through the course.

'The course was great. I had an excellent tutor and enjoyed studying with a diverse range of fellow Catalyst residents. I would recommend it to everyone', said resident Joshua Ayshford. We've also offered Joshua a six-month work opportunity through the Future Jobs Fund and he's now working for us as a sustainability assistant.

The participants initially contacted us about the training and employment opportunities we offer, as part of Catalyst Gateway (see opposite). They were then given either advice, training or work placements.

For more details on the opportunities available, contact Kerry Starling on 020 8832 3366 or kerry.starling@chg.org.uk

Local offers for Amersham Road residents



Residents enjoy some interesting activities before telling us their local offers

We joined forces with London & Quadrant Housing Trust and Reading Borough Council to host of a fun day for Amersham Road residents in August. Younger residents got the chance to take part in a range of fun activities and adults were treated to massages!

But it wasn't all fun and games. Residents also got the opportunity to tell us which of our services are most important to them, how they want to receive these services and how they'd like to be kept informed about them. This is part of the work we're doing to set our local offers to residents.

Staff from the South East office were also on hand to answer residents' questions and queries. There was also a representative from the Environment Agency to provide advice against flooding.



Tackling anti-social behaviour

Resolving conflict through mediation

We're committed to keeping the property you live in safe and peaceful. From experience we know that disputes between neighbours can be extremely distressing and seriously affect people's 'quality of life'.

Where it's clear to us that nuisance is being caused by one resident, we'll tackle the situation in a way that we believe will resolve the problem. It isn't always easy or quick to deal with nuisance but we're determined to tackle the blight of ASB whenever and wherever it occurs.

Sometimes, however, it's simply case of neighbours falling out with each other and it isn't clear to us who is at fault. In these situations, we're able to offer mediation as a way of helping people patch up their differences. The mediators we use aren't our employees but independent specialists. They'll help neighbours who are in dispute to sort out their differences and come to a mutually acceptable agreement about how they will behave in future.

If you're experiencing problems with a neighbour and you've been unable to sort the problem out yourself or it's too difficult to contemplate doing so, please contact your neighbourhood manager. They'll discuss the problem with you and decide whether we can offer you mediation services.

For more details, download a copy of our mediation leaflet from our website at www.chg.org.uk. You can also visit your local office or ask your neighbourhood manager for a copy.

ASB: make it stop!

Earlier this year we started a comprehensive review of the way in which we handle ASB based on what you told us in a recent survey. In the future we aim to deal with ASB in ways that are more streamlined, prompt and designed around residents' needs.

The review involved collecting and analysing information about what our residents want, so we could identify the purpose of our ASB service from your perspective. Unsurprisingly, we were able to determine that residents wanted ASB to stop and not happen again.

By mapping and analysing the processes we use to manage ASB, we were able to see where things were not happening as quickly or efficiently as they could be. For example, we rely on written communication with alleged perpetrators which can delay the investigation process. Similarly, the absence of a clear case closure process resulted in cases staying open too long.

As a result of the review, we expect to see ASB cases dealt with more efficiently. This will shorten the time it takes to deal with and then close cases and increase resident satisfaction, which will hopefully be evidenced in the next STATUS survey.

We'll be piloting recommendations for change in October, when we'll be testing whether the proposed changes are workable and likely to improve the way we manage ASB. So watch this space!

We've recently obtained a court order against a family who were causing serious anti-social behaviour (ASB), which requires them to behave themselves over the next two years or be evicted. In this case, we're grateful to the police with whom we worked closely to get the court order.

CCHA is serious about dealing with tenants who make the lives of others miserable and we won't hesitate to take legal action to deal with the situation.

Search online

You can search for new homes for free on the PC that we've installed in the reception area of our London office.

Locata – www.locata.org.uk

Every fortnight all available council and housing association are advertised on this website. If you see any properties that you like, you can bid for up to three of them for which you are eligible.

HomeSwapper – www.homeswapper.co.uk

On this website you can swap your home with another tenant in the UK if both parties get permission from their landlords.

You can also use the PC to search for information about Housing Benefit, Council Tax, your rights as a tenant as well as emailing us.

Please note that you'll only be able to use the PC for 45 minutes at any one time. The London office is open from 9am to 5pm.

Independence, accommodation and employment (aka The InComE Project)

Is your current home overcrowded and you or a member of your family wanting to become independent? Well the InComE Project may be able to support you if you're working, training, studying or willing to start and not the tenancy holder of the home you live in.

We've been working with Shepherds Bush Housing Association and the West London Housing Partnership to provide you with a supported route out of an overcrowded environment and into your own home.

The project will help you find apprenticeships and other opportunities that will allow you to gain new qualifications and a career. The reward will be your home, new qualifications and a career.

So if you're over 18, living in West London and are interested in taking part in this unique opportunity, please contact the Customer Services Centre on 020 8832 3298.

Sheltered housing



If you're over 60 and want to live in a supported environment, you can move into one of our sheltered housing schemes in West London, Reading or Oxford.

Sheltered housing is designed with the needs of older people in mind. It provides convenient and comfortable housing in a setting which allows residents to come and go as they please. We organise many social events and outings for residents who live at the schemes. They also get the chance to meet residents from other sheltered housing scheme at quarterly meetings.

At least one sheltered scheme manager (SSM) works on each scheme, and their office is linked to every flat and communal area by a Warden Controlled Alarm System. In an emergency, such as sudden illness or an accident, a resident can quickly get in touch with the SSM for help through the system.

To apply for sheltered housing, you'll firstly need to tell us why you want to live in one of our schemes. We'll then carry out an assessment and tell you know if you're eligible. If you are, we'll then inform you when a place becomes available.

For more details, visit our website at www.chg.org.uk or contact Jane Endersby on 020 8832 3320 or jane.endersby@chg.org.uk

Putting an end to illegal subletting



Over the past few months, we've discovered more people who are illegally subletting our properties. For some time now we've been checking tenancies, asking for identification and inspecting properties.

Illegal subletting deprives other households of much needed accommodation and exploits people as the rent charged is often much more than we would charge.

If you know of someone who's illegally subletting, please report this anonymously to our customer services team on 0800 085 8680.

If you need any part of this information in large print, Braille, on CD or explained in your own language please contact us the numbers below.

Ky dokument ju jep informacione në lidhje me të rejat për strehim, ngjarjet dhe informacionet locale, nëse ju duhet ndonjë pjesë e këtij informacioni në Braille, në CD, në kasetë ose të shpjegohet në gjuhën tuaj, ju lutemi kontaktoni në numrin poshtë.

এই দস্তাবেজটি বাসস্থান সম্বন্ধীয় খবর, ঘটনা ও স্থানীয় তথ্য সম্বন্ধে তথ্য সরবরাহ করবে। যদি আপনি এই তথ্যগুলোর বে কোন একটির সম্বন্ধে বিস্তারিত জানতে চান, অথবা আপনার নিজের ভাষাতে ব্লে, সিডি, অডিও টেপ-এ পেতে চান তাহলে নিম্নলিখিত নম্বরে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

本文档提供关于住房新闻、事件和当地信息方面的信息。如果您需要将这些信息的任何部分以大字印刷形式、盲文形式，或通过 CD、磁带，或以您的本国语言的形式提供给您，请通过以下号码与我们联系。

Niniejszy dokument zawiera nowości z rynku mieszkaniowego, informacje o wydarzeniach społecznych oraz doniesienia miejscowe. Jeżeli potrzebujesz aby całość lub część tego tekstu były przedstawione większą czcionką, w języku Braille'a, na nośniku CD, na kasecie audio lub zostały przetłumaczone na Twój język ojczysty, prosimy o kontakt pod numerem podanym niżej.

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How to contact us

London

Ealing Gateway
26-30 Uxbridge Road
London W5 2AU

Monday to Friday, 8am-5pm.

Translation services are available if you visit in person or call.

Telephone: 020 8832 3298

Gas heating & hot water: Call Mears Group Plc on 01707 290562

Emergency repairs: Call Mears Group Plc on 01707 290561

South East (Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire)

The Farmhouse
Nightingale Avenue
Blackbird Leys
Oxford OX4 7BU

Monday to Friday 9am-5pm except the first Wednesday every month for staff training days. Residents can call the emergency repairs number for any queries.

Translation services are available if you visit in person or call.

Telephone: 01865 712244

Gas heating & hot water: Call Robert Heath Heating Ltd on 0800 783 0833

Emergency repairs: Call Frontline on 01489 884697

Website

You can contact us on the web by visiting www.chg.org.uk



Catalyst
Communities

Housing Matters is published by:

Catalyst Communities Housing Association,
Ealing Gateway, 26-30 Uxbridge Road, W5 2AU.

Printed by Countrywide Publications IP19 8BX