

Leaseholder Edition

Leasehold Event

Railway Housing Association has held the first-ever event for people living in its leasehold homes.

Sixteen residents from Horsforth, near Leeds, South Shields and Hull, along with five members of staff, attended the event in the Royal York Hotel in York on 5th October 2010. Unfortunately, none of the leaseholders from Hexham were able to attend.

After introductions and a brief description of the four leasehold schemes, the event was broken into sessions each lasting about an hour. The first session focused on the new initiatives that are being implemented to improve the management service to leaseholders (see page 2 for further details).

Karen Dunn, Director of Housing Services then gave a presentation on the various methods available for residents to get involved in the decision making process; and Julie Clark, Housing Manager, talked about how to set up a leaseholders' forum and then asked for volunteers.

Following these presentations, residents took part in a workshop in which they discussed and agreed customer service standards for leaseholders (for more details please see separate sheet enclosed with this newsletter).



Lunch in the hotel restaurant gave residents the opportunity to get to know people from other schemes.

In the afternoon session Shaun Brennan, Maintenance Manager (pictured), explained how planned maintenance works are identified and Julie Clark described the legal requirements for consulting leaseholders about major works. This feedback will be used to improve our services to leaseholders.

Leaseholders were then asked to give their views on what mattered to them, what they felt the Association are doing well, what we are not doing well and what else they would like us to do. The results are shown opposite.

At the end residents agreed that they had found the day's event to be both informative and enjoyable.

Things we are doing well included -

- Consulting residents
- Listening
- Keeping residents informed.

Things we aren't doing so well included -

- Taking too long to answer queries
- Providing details about service charges.

Other things you would like us to do included -

- Set regular dates for residents meetings
- Acknowledge correspondence.

What's New?

At the recent leaseholder event several new initiatives were announced.

Leaseholder handbook

A handbook, similar to the residents' handbook containing information about the service we provide, and other relevant information. This will be printed in the near future and a copy issued to each leaseholder(s).

Information leaflet

This will be given to prospective purchasers when they make an enquiry so they can decide if a leasehold property is the right option for them.

Additional visits

A member of staff will make 2 visits to each scheme every year, in addition to the 2 leaseholder meetings.

The dates will be publicised in advance and leaseholders will have the opportunity to meet privately with the member of staff as well as being invited to join in a walkabout of the immediate area

Visits

New residents will be visited by a member of staff within 6 weeks of moving in.

Leaseholder Forum

A group similar to the Focus Groups will look at issues that affect leaseholders. The first meeting of the Leaseholder Forum will take place in November.

If you have not yet registered your interest and would like to know more about this group please contact Julie Clark on 01325 373055.

Did you know?

We can provide written information in a range of languages, large print, Braille or audio tape.

The Association has a portable hearing loop, compatible with most hearing aids which can be brought to scheme meetings or meetings with staff if required.

Equalities Action Plan

The Association has an equality scheme and an action plan that aims to ensure equal access to our services, employment opportunities and board membership to all members of the communities in which we work.

So far we have made the following progress as we strive to achieve equality:-

- Training for all staff, the Board of Trustees and residents who are members of Focus Groups
- Comparison of our staff and Board profile against the general population to identify any inequalities
- Publicised the availability of information in different formats
- The provision of hearing loops for meetings
- Publicised our commitments to tackling racial or other harassment and domestic violence
- Monitoring of complaints by ethnic origin, gender, and disability of each complainant.

Our equality and diversity policy can be viewed on our website www.railwayha.co.uk



Residents' Associations

Railway Housing Association encourages people to form residents' associations and offer help with the set up costs providing the constitution complies with legislation.

There are many benefits of having a residents' association. The main one is that it gives residents a collective voice in talking to other agencies, such as the local authority, as well as discussions with the Association. It also gives leaseholders additional legal rights.

If you would like help or advice on setting up a Residents' Association please contact Julie Clark (pictured) on 01325 373055.



Updates

Since the last newsletter we are pleased to report that new central heating boilers have been installed at Ernest Hill Court in Hull and Stephenson House in Hexham.

At St Gregory's Court in South Shields extensive works have been carried out to prune and remove trees and new central heating boilers will soon be installed.

NATIONAL HOUSING FEDERATION

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What would you like to see in future editions?

At the recent leaseholder event attendees were asked for ideas on what they would like to see included in the newsletter.

Some ideas included news on what was happening on other leasehold schemes and any interesting stories about leaseholders.

If you have any suggestions for items, or would like to share a story which you think may be of interest to other leaseholders, please contact Julie Clark on 01325 373055. You may also like to write an article yourself.



Contact details

Your named contact at Railway Housing Association is the Housing Manager, Julie Clark.

Julie can be contacted via telephone on the Freephone number **0800 0287428** or on her direct line **01325 373055**

If you would prefer to contact Julie by e-mail send to jlark@railwayha.co.uk.

Our offices are open between 8.30am to 4.30 pm Monday to Friday and our office address is Bank Top House, Garbutt Square, Neasham Road, Darlington, DL1 4DR.

English

Information can be made available in other languages, or other formats such as Braille, large format or audio tape, on request.

Arabic:

يمكن توفير المعلومات بلغات أخرى و صيغ أخرى مثل طريقة بريل أو شرائط سمعية ، حسب الطلب

Bengali:

আপনি অনুরোধ করলে এই তথ্যগুলি অন্য ভাষাতে, অথবা অন্য কোনো মাধ্যমে যেমন ব্রেইল-এ বা অডিও টেপে, পাওয়া যেতে পারে।

Somali:

Faahfaahinta waxa kale oo aad ku heli kartaa luuqadaha kale, ama siyaabo kale, sida Farta waaweyn ama canjal maqal ah, waana in aad soo codsato.

Turkish:

Talep üzerine bu bilgi diğer dillerde veya görme engelliler için kabartma alfabesi ve ses bandı formatında da temin edilebilir.

Urdu:

یہ معلومات دیگر زبانوں اور دوسری صورتوں جیسا کہ بریل (نابینا افراد کے لیے خصوصی عبارت) یا آڈیو ٹیپ پر بھی فراہم کی جاسکتی

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