

Progress

WINTER 2003



Housing Association

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Housing Association

Pilgrims House, Horne Lane
Bedford MK40 1NY
Tel: 01234 328828
Fax: 01234 221234
email: progress@bpha.org.uk
www.bpha.org.uk

The members of the Progress Tenants Advisory Group are: Ella Beardmore, Linda Clark, Bill Gillan, David Waterston

Deadline for the next edition:
13th Jan. Mark your envelope "Progress" or email progress@bpha.org.uk

If you have an idea for an item, please contact Carol Solaiman on tel 01234 221343 or email progress@bpha.org.uk

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A word from... the Chief Executive



The Deputy Prime Minister has just announced that BPHA and Genesis Housing Group have been selected to develop 56 sites in South East England over the next three years on land provided free by English Partnerships, the Governments regeneration agency.

BPHA have been specifically chosen to build around 500 new homes in Milton Keynes and a further 40 in Peterborough. The whole programme will cost in excess of £40m to build. The 26 sites that we will be developing will provide a mixture of our traditional housing for rent and housing for sale and rent to key public sector workers employed in education, health, police and social care sectors.

This really is a big competition to win and is the culmination of enormous effort and hard work across the organisation. It will put BPHA in the spotlight and potentially will open up even more opportunities for us.

The first developments should start next spring and the 500 plus new homes will be completed by December 2005.

Best wishes

John Cross, Chief Executive



A new development for key workers at Westcroft in Milton Keynes.

Hillcroft *The national residential college for women*



Courses are for women who may have missed out on opportunities for study earlier in their lives for a variety of reasons.

Whatever the level, from basic skills to advanced university study, and whatever the length, from two days to a year, Hillcroft offers the flexibility and choice to help you achieve your goals. Set in attractive grounds in Surrey, the atmosphere is ideal for study.

For some women on benefits, the only cost is the £10 booking fee. Childcare and transport can be arranged. BPHA may also be able to help.

Telephone 020 8399 2688

Email enquiry@hillcroft.ac.uk Web www.hillcroft.ac.uk

Tenants Voice

There are eight houses in the Close where I live and they surround a lovely green area. Only a few children live in my Close, two of whom are mine. Are my children allowed to play on this green? I do not have a front garden but am able to see this green from my window and would feel happy knowing that my children are safe.
(letter to Tenants Voice)

Progress Reply: Communal gardens are for the shared use of the residents. The tenancy agreement stipulates that you should not cause a nuisance to your neighbours or allow any of your household or visitors to behave in a way that would be considered to be anti-social.

Children should be allowed to play on green areas as long as they are not causing distress to any of the residents. Therefore, we would usually discourage children from playing football, cricket or any other ball games, near to people's homes and cars as this could cause anguish to residents and damage to property.

When things go wrong...

The booklet, Making a Complaint, explains what you can do if you are not happy with the way that you have been treated or the level of service offered by BPHA. You can pick up a copy from Reception at Pilgrims House or we can send you one.

You can also make a complaint by phone, email or letter - and it can be anonymous, if absolutely necessary.



Send your letters to:

Tenants Voice BPHA, FREEPOST
ANG 5107 Bedford MK40 1ZZ. Or progress@bpha.org.uk

When you have a problem with Housing Benefit or payment of rent, BPHA is too quick to threaten you with court action without consultation.

From Customer Satisfaction Survey 2001

Progress Reply: Paying rent regularly and on time is important. We aim to provide rents that are affordable but do understand that tenants sometimes get into financial difficulties. However, it is important that you make early contact with your Housing Officer if you are experiencing problems with paying your rent.

We have Welfare Rights Officers who are on hand to assist you with your Benefit claims and your Housing Officer should signpost you to this service.

Rent arrears are monitored by the Housing Teams and your Housing Officer will contact you if you have not paid your rent.

BPHA aim to make early contact with tenants who fall into arrears. Before court action is commenced, several letters are sent, home visits attempted and then a Notice of Seeking Possession is served. This Notice is the first stage of legal action and gives a tenant 28 days to contact their Housing Officer and make an arrangement to pay.

After this 28-day period, should the tenant not contact BPHA and/or not make any effort to reduce the debt outstanding, we may decide to proceed to the County Court for a possession order.

The tenant then has approximately 8 weeks before the court hearing, giving them another opportunity to make arrangements to pay their rent and arrears.

Eviction is normally avoidable but inevitable in some cases.

You tend to tell tenants what they can have rather than asking them what they would like.

From Customer Satisfaction Survey 2001

Progress Reply: On page 4 we explain the different ways that BPHA tenants can put forward their views, including the new Tenants Panel.

Tenants Panel

Providing feedback on BPHA services

What's it all about?

BPHA are keen to get a wide range of customer views on the work we do. To this end we are in the process of setting up a Tenants Panel. The Panel will provide our customers with a number of different ways they can "talk" to us about the services they receive.

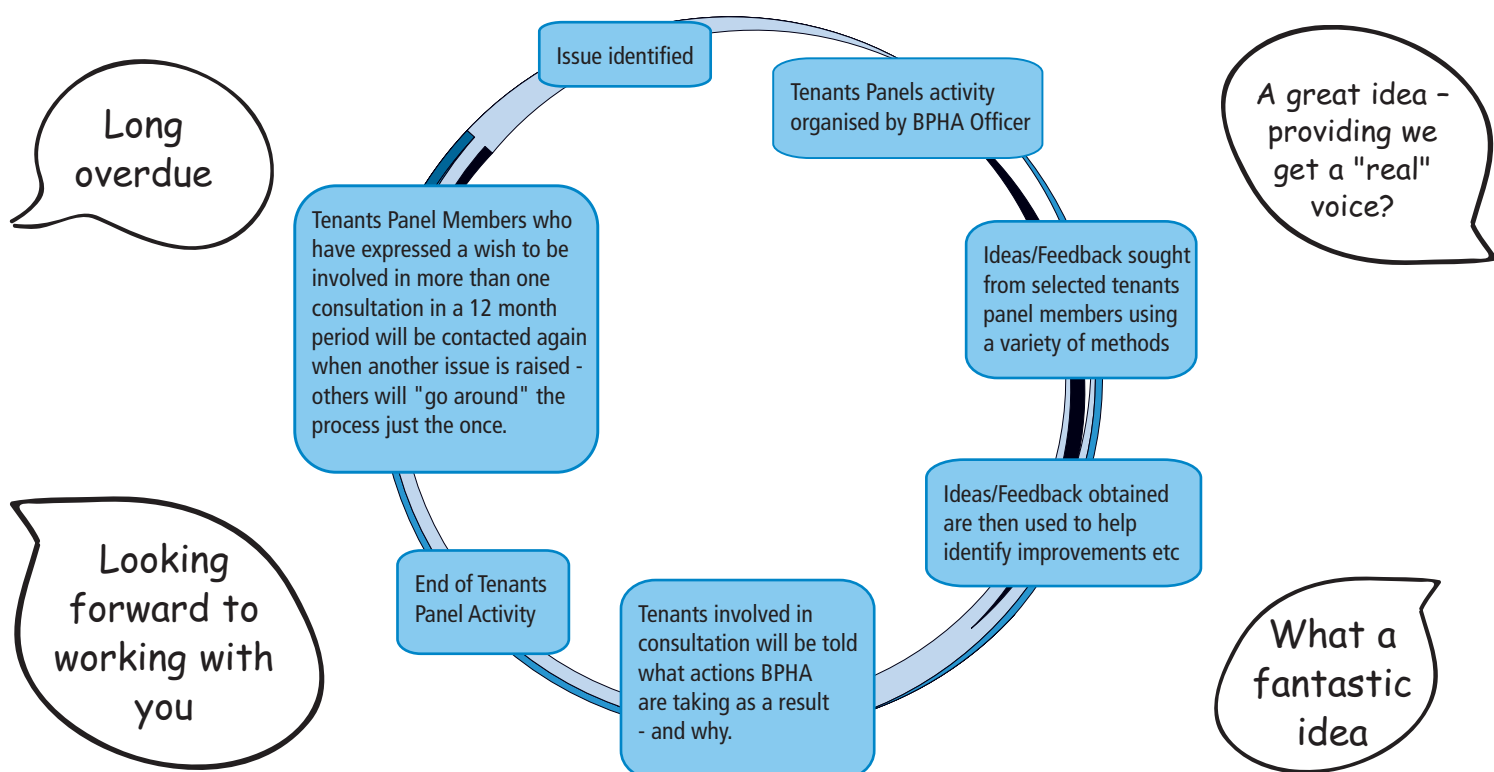
How will the Tenants Panel work?

We will have a list of tenants who have informed us they wish to take part in the Panel and provide us with their views on specific issues. This may be by post, telephone, email or face to face to mention but a few.



We're not saying we'll be able to do everything the Panel suggests – but what we will do is commit to explain the reasons why an idea put forward by the Panel isn't taken up.

In the last issue of Progress we asked people to come forward and volunteer by completing a leaflet. Those that did will be the founder members of the panel, which will grow in size over time. The following diagram shows how we expect the Panel to work:



We are aiming to have everything in place to start work by the end of January 2004. Tenants will, of course, continue to be represented on our various committees – the Tenants Panel will just be another method people can use to communicate with us.

What type of things will the Tenants Panel be consulted about?

We want to ask people who have recently experienced our service to share that experience. For example, anyone who has recently moved into a BPHA property, had a repair carried out, reported a nuisance neighbour etc. This will enable us to get comments and ideas on our services in order to improve them.

What are the benefits of having a Tenants Panel?

For BPHA the benefits are we will be able to find out what customers think of our services and be able to act on their feedback. As we develop future policies and new working practices we will be able to identify how they will impact on our customers by seeking their views early on. For Tenants the main benefits are they have a true voice in the running of the Association and influencing the way we operate in the future.

Useful information

Contact Jim Playle on 01234 221289 if you want more information or wish to join the Panel.

Listening to you improves our service

We have listened to your views over the last two years including the Customer Satisfaction Survey, focus groups and various other methods of communication, and because of this we have made changes to how we deliver our housing management service to you.

One of the main issues that arose from your feedback was that the service we delivered to our customers outside of Bedford was different and not of the same quality as the service we delivered in Bedford.

We rose to the challenge! and have restructured the housing management department of BPHA. No longer are our homes split between North and South (Bedford River being the division of N & S). Did you know we have customers in Peterborough, Northampton, Kettering, Daventry, Corby, Luton, Milton Keynes, Cambridge and Huntingdon as well as

the Mid and South Bedfordshire? Our tenancies stretch far and wide, therefore we have decided to centre our housing management service in the following ways:

1. **Bedford Team** – Managed by Julie Wittich and covering all the tenancies within the Bedford Borough boundaries other than those customers who have intermediate tenancies, such as leasehold, shared ownership and accommodation for key workers (nurses, fire officers, teachers etc)
2. **Counties Team** - This team will work with all our customers in the other towns and counties and work with all intermediate tenancies regardless of where they are located. The recruitment for a manager for this team is currently taking place.

By now, you will have received a letter from us, telling you who your Housing

Officer is. Your housing officer is usually your first point of contact with us, so keep their name and telephone number somewhere safe.

This is only the start - BPHA are committed to listening to your viewpoints in order to improve our service. We understand it is a two way process and will give you feedback on the decisions that are made. On page 4 of Progress there is information on how we intend to do this in the future with the help of Tenants Panel.

Useful information

If you have any comments to make on these changes or have ideas on how we can improve our services further, please do get in touch with me - Gill Higginson, Head of Housing on Tel: 01234 221350 or Maureen Little, Community Development Manager on Tel: 01234 221348

Tenants training

*Dear Maureen, Carol and Cathy
A note to thank you so much for such an interesting Training Day at Wyboston Lakes last Saturday. I thought the program, facilities, arrangements etc were first class (the steak and kidney pie is worth a mention too)*

There was a lot to take in but you girls kept the itinerary rolling along at a pace which never allowed us to get bored and I'm sure we all benefited from the many subjects and exercises you managed to cover.

I'm sure you were all very tired by the end of the day and I hope by now you have recovered.

Many thanks again and best wishes

Maureen Murphy

Brickhill Roundabout Tenants & Residents Group

10 tenants met at Wyboston Lakes for training by staff from BPHA's Community Development Team. For the first day, there were two main themes: how to improve conduct at meetings and communication skills. The second day was more about Information. This included a Who Wants to be a Millionaire type quiz and scenarios with Audrey Hepburn, Pat Butcher and Saddam Hussein (we come up with all sorts of ways to make things interesting!) Tenants came from Residents groups, Regional committees and recent focus groups – but

is open to any tenant who wants to get more involved in BPHA and or their local area.

Useful information

For details of future courses run by BPHA, phone Carol Solaiman on tel 01234 221343

For women looking to study again, have you seen the advert on page 2 about Hillcroft Residential College for women?

Fit Project



This project brings gentle exercise to the residents of all 12 BPHA sheltered housing schemes. We have sessions of chair-based exercise and other activities of interest to the 60+ group. There is a session of T'ai Chi on a Tuesday at Tavistock court and ten-pin bowling at Russell court on a Monday. We hope to use local resources in and around Bedford, to offer activities that are interesting and varied. We also co-ordinate subsidised trips and outings of

interest to keep people active.

Our regular participants have already recognised some health benefits of staying active. Why not give it a try? Sessions are run by Janet Cook, who has been a warden with BPHA for 3 years. Janet qualified recently in exercise and fitness knowledge level 2/3 also exercise for the older adult and G.P referral.



If you wish to know more about any session or the project please contact Janet on 01234 217456 or 07771 673867.

Useful information

THURSDAYS

Chair based sessions: Grosvenor Court The Avenue 11.30
 Russell Court Bushmead Avenue 10.00
 Gwyn and Pattershull Court GreyFriars at 10.00
 Queens Court Queen Street at 11.30

FRIDAYS

Cardington Court Bamford Road 11.30
 Windsor Court Mile Road 10.00
 Williamson Court Williamson Road Kempston 1.30

Activity evenings and afternoons
 Boswell Court T'ai Chi Tavistock communal room Tuesday at 10.00
 Russell Court games afternoon 2.30
 Gwyn and Pattershull court games every other Wednesday evening at 7.00

For security reasons, it's best to ring before turning up to a session

Real Lives



Meet Mr Flawn who has been living in sheltered accommodation since October 2002. He previously lived in flats where there were no adaptations and problems with noise. If he hadn't been offered sheltered accommodation, he would have liked a disabled persons bungalow or flat or an elderly persons bungalow as he needs somewhere to store his mobility scooter. "Living here in comparison to where I lived before is simply like chalk and cheese. I have to take life steady now as I am disabled and moving here was simply the best thing I've done in my life."

"What's it like living in sheltered accommodation?"

"Its so nice to have someone (the warden) popping around four times a week to see if everything's ok. He also checks the intercom system once a week."

"Would you recommend Sheltered accommodation to other people?"

"Absolutely! I had a visit from the district nurse the other day and I gave her a brochure so that she could pass it on and show it to others. I've made so many friends here that it costs me a fortune at Christmas! Those of us at Boswell get together with residents at Tavistock and Chandos Courts and get involved in all types of activities including bingo and different shows. We've just had a Halloween party."

"Are you happy with the service you receive from BPHA?"

"Very!!"

Useful information

For more information about our Sheltered Housing Schemes Tel: 01234 211095.



Street Rangers Double!

Whenever we ask you what is important to you, you tell us that you want your neighbourhood to be clean and safe. That is why we jointly fund with Bedford Borough Council the employment of two Street Rangers – Gary Burchmore in Elms Farm and Montell Neufville on the Balliol estate in Kempston.

Gary and Montell get involved in lots of things including – getting rid of dumped rubbish, graffiti, and abandoned cars and organising community clear up days and activities for young people. They work closely with park rangers,

police officers, local community groups and our Housing Officers.

Because community feedback has been so good, and because clean and safe neighbourhoods are your priority we are continuing our partnership with Bedford Borough Council and are going to recruit two new Street Rangers – one for London Road and one for Faraday Square.

Useful information

If you need Gary or Montell, you can contact them on telephone number 227254.



Estate Improvements

Your quality of life is important to us and BPHA welcome your ideas and proposals on how we could improve the area in which you live. The Housing Management team have an annual budget to pay for the improvements that you suggest.

Some examples of recent improvements that we have paid for are:-

- Provision of hard standings for car parking to improve parking problems and road safety
- Installation of a door entry system to improve security for residents in flats
- Improved lighting in the communal areas of a block of flats
- Flowerbeds and improved landscaping in a Retirement Housing Scheme
- Security Gates

As you can see from the examples, the improvement needs to benefit a group of people or community and not just an individual.

It's a good opportunity for people to come together and make changes to where they live that could make their lives safer, more comfortable or simply more pleasant to be in.

When we receive requests for improvements, we would normally consult all of the residents who would be affected by the work and proceed if the majority of the residents were in agreement that the work would be an improvement to their estate.

Useful information

If you have an idea on how your area could be improved, you should contact your Housing Officer who will be only too happy to put your request forward.

New Pension Credit - are you entitled?

On 6th October 2003, the Pension Credit replaced Income Support (also known as Minimum Income Guarantee) for people aged 60 and above. Many of you will have already seen television advertisements or received information through the post.

Here we look at the changes and how it affects people, and attempt to answer some of the most common questions about the Pension Credit.

What is changing?

People over the age of 60 can no longer claim Income Support. Instead, if they qualify, they will have to make a claim for Pension Credit (the telephone number is given below).

What's the difference between Income Support and Pension Credit?

There are a number of changes which make Pension Credit very different to Income Support. The main differences are shown below.

(currently £77.45 for a single person, £123.80 for a couple). The maximum amount that can be paid is £14.79 for a single person, or £19.20 for a couple. The Savings Credit element can only be claimed by people aged 65 or over.

People over the age of 65 can receive both Guarantee and Savings Credits, or may qualify for only Guarantee Credit, or only Savings Credit, depending on their circumstances.

So, how much will I get?

The amount of Pension Credit awarded depends on a number of factors including your age (remember, you can only claim

	Income Support	Pension Credit
Capital	Capital limit of £12,000. If capital/savings were above this figure you could not claim even if you had a very low weekly income.	There is no upper capital limit. But you will be treated as having £1 weekly income for every £500 above £6000 which will be taken into account in the assessment.
Working	If you worked 16 hours or more per week, you could not claim Income Support.	There is no limit on the number of hours you can work. But any wages/earnings will be taken into account in assessing entitlement to Pension Credit.
Claiming for children	There were additional allowances for children in Income Support.	There are no additional allowances for children in Pension Credit. If you are responsible for a child (ie claiming Child Benefit), you should claim Child Tax Credit.

So, what is the Pension Credit?

There are two elements to the Pension Credit:

Guarantee Credit: This is broadly the Income Support replacement and can be claimed by people aged 60 and above.

Savings Credit: This is an additional payment for people who have income above the State Retirement Pension level

Savings Credit if you are over 65), your weekly income and the amount of capital you have. The amount you are awarded can also be increased (in some circumstances) if you are receiving Attendance Allowance or Disability Living Allowance, or have claimed Carer's Allowance.

As a minimum your weekly income would be topped up to £102.10 if you are single, or £155.80 for a couple.

Example:

Ethel is 62 and single. Her weekly income, including Retirement Pension and her occupational pension, amounts to £94.00. She has savings below £6000.

She would be entitled to £8.10 Guarantee Credit, making her weekly income £102.10. She is not entitled to any Savings Credit (even though her income is above £77.45) because she is under 65.

Example:

Maisie is 67 and single. Her weekly pension income is £64.00. She has capital of £20,000.

We would have to add £28 to her weekly income because of the rules about capital (£1 for every £500 above £6000), making her weekly income for Pension Credit purposes £92.00 per week.

Maisie would receive:

£10.10 Guarantee Credit

£8.73 Savings Credit based on the amount of weekly income above £77.45

£18.83 TOTAL PENSION CREDIT, in addition to her normal weekly income

Her total weekly income increases to £82.83

So, in our example, Maisie would be entitled to maximum Housing and Council Tax Benefits, even though her savings are above £16,000 (the capital limit for Housing and Council Tax Benefit).

People who receive only the Savings Credit element will only be able to claim Housing and Council Tax Benefit if their capital is below £16,000. The formula for calculating Housing and Council Tax Benefit has been adjusted for the 65+ age group so that the extra payment of Savings Credit will not be lost by having to make a higher contribution to the rent/council tax.

So, how can I claim?

People who were on Income Support (or Minimum Income Guarantee) before 6th October 2003 should already have been assessed for Pension Credit. If you are paid by Order Book the amount of Pension Credit payable will be printed inside the book.

People who were not on Income Support and believe they may be entitled can call the Claim Line – 0800 99 1234. Have all your income and savings information to hand when you ring. Once you've given them the details they will send a copy of the claim form through the post for you to sign and return. If you are unable to make a claim by phone you can ask for a home visit to be made.

Don't worry if you haven't claimed yet. All new claims will be backdated to 6th October 2003 (if you qualified from that date) so that no-one loses out by delays in making the first claim.

Useful information

If you would like to check whether you are entitled to Pension Credit (or any other welfare benefits) you can contact BPHA's Benefits Advisers, Annette Pacey or Amanda Ryan, on 01234 221292. Claim Line: 0800 991234

Will it affect my Housing Benefit?

People who receive the Guarantee Credit element will be entitled to maximum Housing and Council Tax Benefits, regardless of the level of savings. (Housing/Council Tax Benefit can, however, be affected if there are other adults living in the home.)

Wardens Pass Course

BPHA has once again hosted a successful yearlong National Wardens certificate. Wardens from BPHA and other Sheltered housing providers completed the distance learning course, studying mostly in their own time. 6 tutorial sessions were held at Tavistock Court in Bedford.

The course helps wardens keep up to date with best practice in sheltered housing and during the period of study they can exchange ideas with other sheltered housing wardens. Alison Baggott BPHA's Head of Supported Housing presented the wardens with their certificates and congratulated them on their achievements.



Four Wardens from BPHA completed the course
Neil Piddock Resident warden Boswell Court
Helen Crearer Mobile Warden
Janet Grant Resident Warden Chandos Court
Mary Reeves Senior Warden Russell Court

The £100 competition

Try your hand at this follow-on Crossword

1						2
	5					
				8		
					6	
		9				
4						
	7					3

Clues

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Humidity (8) | 5. Deliriously happy (8) |
| 2. Withdraw (7) | 6. Satisfied (9) |
| 3. Violent (11) | 7. Stately (9) |
| 4. Scanty (6) | 8. Disclose (7) |
| | 9. Develop (6) |

Name: _____

Address: _____

Daytime Tel: _____

Send your entry to:
 The £100 Competition
 BPHA,
 FREEPOST ANG 5107
 Bedford MK40 1ZZ.
 (no stamp needed) by 16th January 2004

Competition

Sponsor:

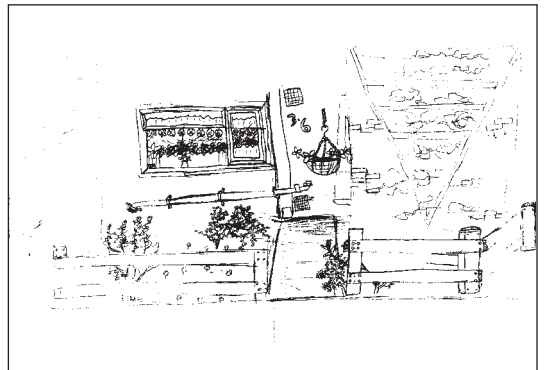


Where you live competition results

We had a great response to our 'Where you live' competition. With so many wonderful pictures it was a tough one to judge but we finally settled on the following winners: Congratulations to Lauren Casswell, Ruslan Fatah and Zoe Kandala who each win £30 in High Street Vouchers.



Lauren Casswell Age 4
Corby



Ruslan Fatah Age 9
Kempston



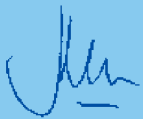
Zoe Kandala Age 12
Bedford

Some Things Are Just Intolerable!

'we are doing our own bit to improve the way we acknowledge equality and diversity. This includes plans that we have to do more to listen to our customers and reflect the differing cultures in the make up of our staffing, in the things that we do and the way that we do them.

All this is important to both the Association and our clients but we know it can pale in comparison, when, for example, someone is being harassed in or near their home because of their race, religion, disability or whatever. Similarly, those having to suffer the ongoing noise or abuse from a nearby neighbour is unlikely to be consoled by the Association's policy change unless it is of help to them.

So our message to our tenants and others living in the areas that we serve is that our drive to improve our own make up and performance includes taking an increasing interest the plight of those who are victims to harassment or other forms of anti-social behaviour. When justified, this will include working with our partner organisations to take action against those who are the cause of the problem.'



John Cross, Chief Executive

The Association's stance against anti-social behaviour and prejudice.

Bedfordshire Pilgrims may well have been known for its tolerance and helpfulness when it comes to dealing with tenants and other members of the public. Understanding that people will have different viewpoints and accepting that there must be the flexibility to accommodate them is all part of the Association's culture.

However, there is one very important exception:

The Association has made it very clear in its various revised policies that it will not tolerate offensive activities that work against the rights of individuals or issues of equality and diversity.

This is not a reference to the relatively minor one-off annoyances that we all experience from time to time. The occasional late night summer bar-be-cue or the 21st birthday party next door. Yes, even minor annoyances can escalate into substantial problems for the individual if it is ongoing and the Association will always try to help and advise. The real issue here however, is the extreme forms of anti-social behaviour and intolerance that can present themselves in a variety of forms including

- Racial harassment or any harassment or abuse based on prejudice
- Violence in or around the home
- Wilful damage to the home or a neighbour's property including graffiti
- Abusive language, gestures or other noise or activity that can cause extreme offence or annoyance in the community.

The Association's policies on such issues are supported by revised tenancy agreements that give greater powers to the Association for legal action to be taken against perpetrators. In addition, new legislation on anti-social behaviour in its various forms and government initiatives to eradicate racism and the harassment of minority groups, all form a welcome part of the Association's armoury. Tracking and making use of such powers in partnership with police, local authorities and other agencies will help the Association play its own part in stamping out racism, nuisance and other forms of unacceptable behaviour.

Clearly there is no denying that these are complex issues that the Association cannot tackle alone. However, the Association is committed to playing its active role that will help effect realistic and long-term improvements.

So if you are a victim – tell us. The Association will give you sympathetic advice and assistance. If there is a proven perpetrator, we will take action to either stop the activities or if a tenant of the Association, instigate legal action that may result in eviction from the home.

If you are a perpetrator of harassment or other forms of anti-social behaviour – be warned! The Association is committed to tackling the various issues touched on here and taking action against offenders.

Employment opportunities in Kingsbrook and Cauldwell

Hello, my name is Kate Francis and I am the new

"Community Development Officer – Employment Initiative" for Kingsbrook and Cauldwell wards.

I'll now explain what that means!

I will be available, primarily (but not exclusively) to BPHA tenants, to provide free advice, guidance and support with accessing sustainable employment.

There is no set formula, it's about providing you with the tools you need to achieve your aims, so whether you need to access training, careers advice, improve your interview skills, or type a CV, I can help! I'll also be linking up with local businesses, to keep you updated on job and training opportunities in the area.

Here are a couple of things already on offer to residents in Kingsbrook and Cauldwell -

New Businesses to 'flourish'

We have £4,000 in total to give as grants to residents of Kingsbrook and Cauldwell Wards who want to start up their own small business. We have been awarded this money by the Learning & Skills Council, through a scheme called "Flourish".

The grant is designed to be a capital fund, i.e. to buy equipment or cover other start up expenses. The maximum amount that can be awarded to each person, or group is £500. All applications must be received by 1st May 2004.

In order to qualify for a grant, all of the following criteria MUST be met:-

- You are a current resident of either Kingsbrook or Cauldwell – you do not have to be a BPHA tenant to qualify for this money
- Your business will be based in either Kingsbrook or Cauldwell.
- Your business must benefit other people within your local community

- You must have a sound business plan (we can help with this)

Free Training

We also hold training sessions at Community House in Faldo Road. Anybody can get involved with this and if you would like some training, or could hold a session, please do let me know! The training does not need to be specifically employment related; it could be anything from budgeting to life skills, computers, women's health to gardening!

Useful information

If you would like to apply for a grant, or are looking to get back into work or training, you can contact me at The Community House, 28 Faldo road, Bedford, phone me on 01234 221386, 07717 814788, or email katef@bpha.org.uk

If I had
the money
I could...

...change that old sofa!

...take the kids to Alton Towers

...change my car

...save towards college

...save for Christmas next year

How much can you save a week?

£2.00 x 43 weeks = £86.00

£3.00 x 43 weeks = £129.00

£4.00 x 43 weeks = £172.00

£5.00 x 43 weeks = £215.00

A small amount each week soon grows!

And don't forget – you could always borrow against your savings

Spread the expense! - JOIN OUR CLUB



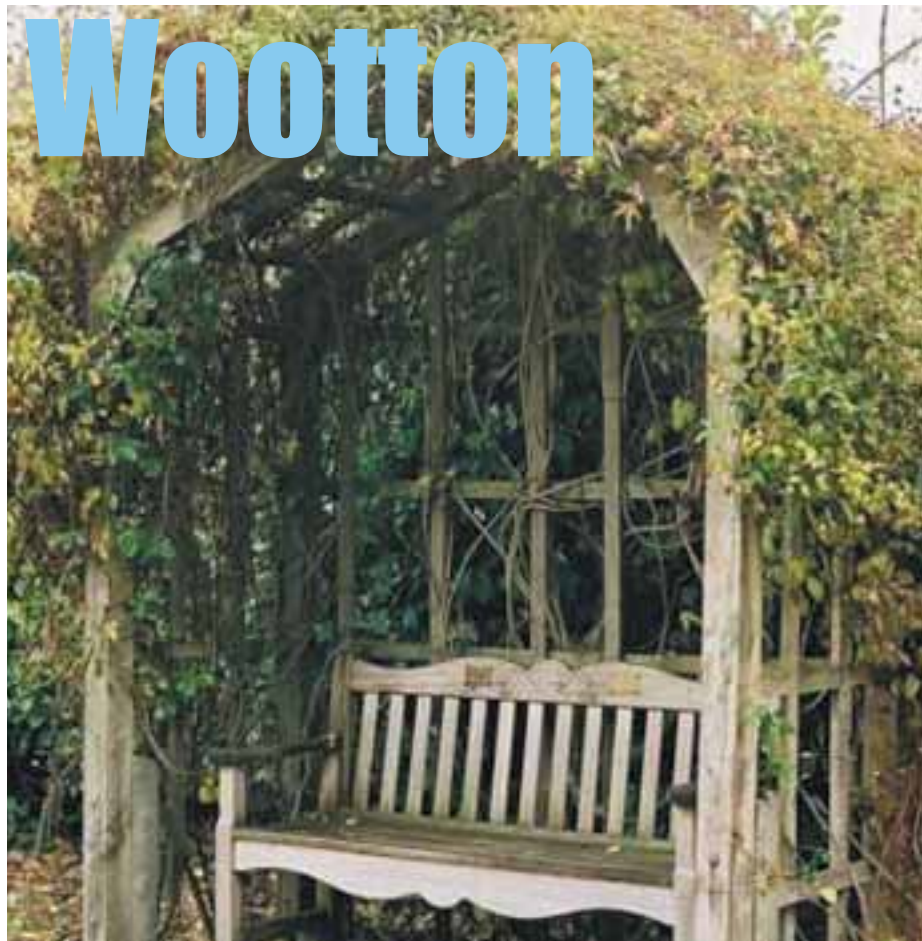
Bedford Credit Union Ltd,

6 St Paul's Square, Bedford. Phone No.01234 346352

Focus on Wootton

There seems to be very little information about Wootton and when the village was first established. The earliest mention recorded appears to have been in 1166 when the Church of St Mary was bestowed on Newnham Priory by Simon de Beauchamp. The arches are the oldest remaining part of the Church.

You may wonder where the name for Monoux Road came from. In 1514 Sir George Monoux, the former Lord Mayor of London, came to live in Wootton House. His son, Sir Humphrey was later to be Lord of the Manor and Sheriff of the County. He was one of the justices who committed John Bunyan to prison. There used to be a "parish cage" to the right of the main Church gate where it was believed that John Bunyan was imprisoned at one time. This was demolished in 1971. There are many monuments to the Monoux family in the Church.



the next David Beckham living in Wootton!

Getting involved

Are you interested in being more involved with the community of Wootton? Do you have ideas of things you would like to see changed in the area or would like to see more of, like activities for the young? If yes, then contact Cathy Martin on 01234 221219.

Also your local Beat Manager, PC James Marshall would like to hear from any residents who would like to be part of a Wootton Community Safety Forum. Tel 01234 842433.

Next issue Focus On:

Corby

Information and articles welcome from tenants living in this area

Contact Cathy Martin on tel 01234 221219

Did you know?

BPHA currently owns approximately 190 properties in Wootton that are a mixture of houses, flats and bungalows. We also offer Retirement Housing and low cost home ownership. For more information about moving to or within Wootton contact our Housing Department.

Football club

Coming right back to the present day, let me introduce you to Wootton Rangers Youth Football Club (WYRFC). The Club has been running for 25 years and its' members range between the ages of 6 and 16. Their aim is to provide exercise and skills training but also fun and the opportunity for local young people to mix. They are currently looking to extend the Club to over 16s. Training is every Saturday morning on the recreation ground, Cause End Road. For more information contact the Chair, Kevin Draper on 07876 130602. You never know we may have

Who should we care for?

Well for everyone of course! But providing accommodation and services for some 10,000 people inevitably means that there will be those that require a little more help with their tenancy and day-to-day issues than others.

Some of the ways we can help include:

- A 24-hour alarm call system that is available for use by the elderly or vulnerable
- Supported tenancies for those identified as needing a little more help from the Association with every day issues that might otherwise result in problems with the tenancy or concern for the tenant
- Physical changes to the home that

are needed because of mobility problems – Bedfordshire Pilgrims works with local occupational therapists to establish what adaptations may be needed and arranges for them to be carried out.

These are some of the more transparent ways in which the Association offers help to those in need. But the issue is reflected throughout the work of the organisation. If it is known that there is a vulnerable tenant, the Association can try all the harder to help and accommodate. For example, just knowing that a tenant has hearing difficulties may be beneficial when, say, responding to a telephone enquiry such as a request for repair. The alternative is that someone may not get the level

of help they need when contacting the Association.

So the message is simple. If you, or anyone else you know who is a tenant of the Association, may be vulnerable in any way then let Bedfordshire Pilgrims know. The information will be kept on record for the Association's use only. From then on, it will assist in providing the right level of help for everyone in the future.

Useful information

For details of any of the services mentioned here contact your housing officer.

Be on the alert for Bogus Callers !



The police call them distraction burglaries, committed by offenders who have become more commonly known as "bogus callers". These people are devious; they do their homework, share information among themselves and, in the main, target elderly, vulnerable people.

The most common method they use to con their way into a home is by posing as a bogus official, usually from a utility company, a local government department or even a police officer. We have even had instances recently where they have posed as a BPHA Officer. Other ploys to gain access include the need to make an urgent telephone call, a request for help or even having lost a football in the back garden of the property. Often, these bogus callers operate in pairs – and while one distracts the householder by, for example, engaging them in conversation, the other goes upstairs

and searches for valuables or money.

Our advice to you is:

- STOP & THINK! Are you expecting anybody? Do they have an appointment?
- CHAIN ! Secure the door bar or chain before opening the door.
- CHECK ! Ask for and double-check the callers identification
- IF IN ANY DOUBT, KEEP THEM OUT!

Do not hesitate to call the Police if you have any concerns.

For practical advice on how to secure your home, contact your local Crime Reduction Officer. If you are interested in starting up a Homewatch in your area you should contact your local Homewatch Manager.

News in Brief

Balliol Community Action Group

"Members of the community, working together for the community to make Balliol a safer, happier, more attractive place to live."

Balliol Community Action Group is the name that has been adopted by the group of residents in the Balliol area of Kempston who are piloting the Investors in Communities initiative.

Using information from the surveys carried out earlier in the year they have put together an Action Plan detailing what issues they are going to tackle. This Action Plan has been given to all the relevant agencies and workers in the area, such as Pride in Bedford and the Youth Service so that they can help

BCAG achieve their goals. Local Councillors and Beds Police have already been supportive of the group and offered to assist where they can. This should mean that BCAG will soon be able to make changes in the area for the benefit of the people who live there.

Useful information

For more information about BCAG contact Cathy Martin on 01234 221219.

For information on the London Road Community Action Group's activities or if you wish to be involved with the group please contact Karen Nicholson on 01234 268807 or feel free to visit the Community House at 28 Faldo Road.

Garages to rent

Bamford Road,
Brackley Road,
College Road,
Costin Street,
Dents Road,
Duchess Road,
Dunham Close,
Fenlake Road,
Gifford Road
Howard Street.

Elliott Crescent - 3
Fieldside - 4
Milburn Road - 3
Rooksmead - 2
Church Lane,
Riseley - 5

Contact:
Alison Breed -
01234 221320

Elstow-Medbury
Lane,
Turvey-Tandys Close
Cotton End-Wood
Lane.

Contact:
Ian Broom -
01234 221365

Mutual Exchanges

1. Do you want to move house?
2. Do you need a larger/smaller property?
3. Do you want to move to another area?

If the answer is yes to the above have you considered mutual exchange?

If you have a clear rent account and no outstanding debts with the Association and no action has been taken against you for nuisance, you can advertise your property in one of the mutual exchange books which are held in our reception area.

You can also browse through the books and if you see an advert for a property that you think you may be interested in all you need to do is contact the person advertising.

Once you have viewed their property and they have viewed yours, and both parties wish to proceed with the exchange, contact your housing officer who will be happy to send you out the necessary forms.

When doing a mutual exchange you must accept the property in it's current condition.

A mutual exchange can take as little as 6 weeks from you submitting your forms to you moving into your new home.

The person you exchange with does not have to be a tenant

of Bedfordshire Pilgrims, as long as their landlord is a Housing Association or local council.

Below are a few examples of Mutual Exchanges that are currently on offer

As at (24/11/03)

Current Property:	Looking For:
2 Bed House Ampthill (End Terrace, cul-de-sac, 2 parking spaces)	2 Bed House/Bungalow in Putnoe/Brickhill.
3 Bed House (Mile Road Area)	2 Bed House Goldington
2 Bed House (Milton Keynes)	2 or 3 Bed House in Kempston
5 Bed House (Kimble Drive Area)	3 or 4 Bed House anywhere
1 Bed flat Clapham (Quiet area close to shops)	1-2 Bed anything considered London Road Area

Useful information

For more information call into reception or alternatively contact your Housing Officer.

Housing Officers

These are often your first point of contact. They can help with all tenancy matters, rent queries, home visits, aids and adaptations etc. Your quarterly rent statement will tell you who your Housing Officer is.

Bedford

Cat Andrews tel 01234 221351

Richard Garnham tel 01234 221354

Gresh Lloyd Jones tel 01234 221352

Philip Keech tel 01234 221374

Rose Khan tel 01234 221379

David Register tel 01234 221373

Tricia Roberts tel 01234 221362

Sohan Sihota tel 01234 221372

Rosemary McCabe tel 01234 221371

Sharron McCloskey tel 01234 221361

Maintenance surveyors

David Imrie tel 221358

Barry White tel 221358

Counties

Janice Anderton tel 01234 221360

Steve Parsons tel 01234 221353

Rob Stanley tel 01234 221363

Maintenance surveyors

Keith Houson tel

Intermediate team

Harprett Chander (Shared ownership)tel 01234 221209

Wayne Breed (Private lettings & sales) tel 01234 221347

Welfare Benefits advice

BPHA tel 01234 221292 / 221287

Jobseekers Allowance Contact your local Job Centre

Housing & Council Tax Benefit Contact your local Council

Disability Living Allowance - Benefit enquiry helpline 0800 822 200

Disabled Persons Tax Credit - Tax Credit Office 0845 605 5858

Invalid Care Allowance Unit 01253 856 123

Attendance Allowance Benefit Enquiry Helpline 0800 882 200

Incapacity Benefit Contact Local Dept for Works & Pensions

Statutory Maternity Pay Contact your employer

Maternity Allowance/ grant Contact Local Dept for Works & Pensions

Bedford Foyer tel 01234 221270

Repairs reporting 0800 581707 - free

Regional Committees

Regional Committees are an essential part of decision-making within BPHA and report to the Board of Management. Your tenant representatives are :

North: Bill Gillan, Kacey Jones, Robert Jones, Marion Smith, Tracey Woods

South: Knorah Bedeau, Marion Denton, Rod Gascoyne, Paul Imrie, Dougie Parsons, Michele Wray

You can contact any of them via Pilgrims House. Mark your envelope CONFIDENTIAL

Residents & Tenants Associations

Abbott Crescent - Michele Wray tel 01234 854730

Brickhill Roundabout - Sue Threapleton tel 01234 270735

Bury Court - Mel Smith tel 01234 327374

Reddall area - Marion Denton tel 01234 344771

Shortstown - Derek Jones tel 01234 403644

Tavistock - Hilda Nixon tel 01234 306864

If you are interested in setting up a new tenants or residents association, or want to tackle a community matter, BPHA's Community Development team can help. Contact us on tel 01234 221348

Other Useful Numbers

Credit Union (Anglia) tel 01223 893642 (Cambridge) tel 01733 371760 (Bedford) tel 01234 346352 (Corby) tel 01536 747918

Bedfordshire Drug & Alcohol Action Team tel 01234 408348 Ext 44358

Carelink tel 01234 211095

Bulk rubbish collection (Bedford) tel 01234 221708 - fee payable

Disability Information Service tel 01234 349988

Furniture Link tel 01234 353578

Tenants Insurance scheme enquiries tel 221292 / claims tel 01962 844454 (Wessex administration)

Handyperson Scheme for the over 60s (check with Age Concern for fee) tel 01234 215995

Morgan & Fone (Heating Contractors) 01582 414100

Christmas arrangements



Pilgrims House will be closed from 12 noon on Christmas Eve and will re-open on Friday 2nd January 2004. Please ring tel 0800 581707 with any emergencies during this time (24 hrs) We wish all our customers a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

If you would like a copy of



Progress on audio tape please ring Dawn Hedge on

Tel: 01234 221304

এটা বুকতে সাহায্যের জন্য অনুগ্রহ করে
01234 221232 নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন

ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਵਿਚ ਮੱਦਦ ਲਈ, ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨੀ
ਕਰਕੇ 01234 221232 ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

اس کو سمجھنے میں مدد کیلیے،

براہ کرم فون کریں ٹیلی فون نمبر 01234 221232

Per aiuto a capire questo documento,
telefona 01234 221232

For help to understand this
please ring tel 01234 221232

Bengali, Punjabi, Urdu, Italian



Housing Association

Pilgrims House, Horne Lane
Bedford MK40 1NY

Tel: 01234 328828

Fax: 01234 221234

email: progress@bpha.org.uk

www.bpha.org.uk

**Please use a direct dial number
if available - it's quicker!**