

Viewpoint

Blackpool Coastal Housing

Newsletter

Winter Edition 2009

**HAVE YOUR SAY ON
THE NEW VIEWPOINT
FRONT COVER**

Ring 477472 to vote for your preferred layout. You can also Text A or B with your name and address to 07795 640 834.

Spring Edition 2010

A Blackpool Coastal Housing
viewpoint
newsletter



New benches are a hit in kilmory

The Kilmory community would like to say a big thank you to BAAS who have recently replaced some broken benches around the pond area on Kilmory.

The area had been unable to be used as the previous seating was either broken or missing. BAAS also kindly fixed the walled area around the benches which has made it a **new focal point** for local residents to get together, enjoy the good weather and watch the wildlife in the pond.

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Introducing Moor Park Schools' 'Hideaway'

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Example Styles



Copies of this newsletter are available in large print, tape, disc and in other languages on request.

Welcome to the final edition of Viewpoint for 2009



Following the feedback received in our Viewpoint Survey we have designed two new potential front covers and we would like you to choose your favourite. Once you have picked your favourite please ring Suzanne on 477472 or text A or B plus your name and address to 07795640834.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all those tenants and leaseholders who visited the 2009 Tenant Conference at the Winter Gardens in August. The conference proved to be our biggest yet with over 250 of you visiting throughout the day; see if you can spot yourself in our centre page conference special.

This edition is crammed full of stories from around our communities including the Grange Park Juniors helping to clean up their area, a fire safety event at Queens Park, our Decent Homes Contractors creating new community gardens and the winner of £1,000 in our Gas Safety Incentive Scheme. There is also a nomination form enclosed for our Community Involvement Awards. If you know someone who has made a positive difference to your life, neighbourhood or community then why not celebrate their hard work by nominating them for one of the awards? The winners will be invited to the glitzy award ceremony in January. The closing date for nominations is 23rd December 2009.

Finally I would like to wish you all a happy Christmas and prosperous New Year and look forward to seeing you in 2010.

Mike Glennon

Customer Involvement & Projects Manager
 Email: customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk
 Blackpool Coastal Housing, Progress House,
 Clifton Road, Blackpool FY4 4US

Aim 2 To empower our customers, ensuring that they are placed at the heart of everything we do.

Aim 1 To provide our customers with high quality homes and services that represent excellent value for money.

YOU SAID...	WE DID...
You said you would like more news and information about Anti-Social Behaviour to be included in Viewpoint.	We have introduced a regular Anti-Social Behaviour Update page which members of the Anti-Social Behaviour Focus Group will help to produce.
You said that useful contact numbers should be included in the Leaseholders Newsletter.	Future editions of the Leaseholders Newsletter will include a section for useful contact numbers.
Rubbish was being dumped on the landings at All Hallows Road.	We worked with the local Tenant's Association who produced a letter that was sent to all residents requesting that rubbish was not dumped.

Is your home suited to your needs?

- Are you living in a house that is too big for your needs?
- Is your garden becoming overgrown because you are unable to maintain it?
- Are your heating costs expensive because you are paying to keep rooms warm that you don't need?
- Are you finding it difficult to manage the stairs or climbing into the bath?
- Would your life be made easier with an adaptation?

If you have answered yes to any of the above questions, have you considered moving to a smaller, more manageable property? The Homestop Team, in conjunction with some of our customers, have developed a range of incentives in order to make this an easy process for you. Should you decide that now is the right time for you to move, a member of the Homestop Team will be happy to assist you in completing a transfer application form and will explain all the details to you.

Homestop advertise properties on a weekly basis. Some of these properties have been adapted and the adaptations may have a positive impact on the quality of your life. Adaptations can include:-

- **Ramped Access** • **Level Access Shower** • **Grab Rails**

On occasion it may be possible for minor adaptations to be done in the property you are currently living in. You can discuss this with your own Doctor who may consider referring your case to an Occupational Therapist. For more information contact Homestop or your local housing office. Details are on the back page.

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A Customer Experience



Currently we have over 240 customers who get involved with us and help shape the services that we provide. You can have your say on services from Anti-Social Behaviour, Repairs, Sheltered Housing and everything in between! We caught up with Ray Masson from the Bispham area to find out what he thinks about being involved with BCH.

What got you involved with BCH?

When the new ALMO was being formed, I took an interest and wanted to know more about what BCH did. I then became a Green Warden after seeing an advert in Viewpoint and thinking to myself it would be something I would enjoy doing.

What involvement activities do you take part in now?

I'm still a Green Warden and recently helped with the selection process for the new grounds maintenance contract. I went to London and Liverpool with the Maintenance Contracts Manager to visit other sites and depots to carry out 'reality checks'. These checks involved looking at equipment and staff and making sure the contractors were doing what they said they were doing.

I am a Tenant Inspector and a Committee Member of my local Tenants Association. I also attend the Repairs Partnering meetings to help BCH monitor

their day to day repairs contracts and currently take part in Repairs Sub-contractor Selection meetings.

What do you get out of being involved with BCH?

I enjoy being involved and getting to meet various different people and staff members. I see what BCH are doing for their customers and I feel I have a strong say about the services I receive. I like all the activities I take part in and feel my opinions are valued by BCH. I am provided feedback and information which helps me to see what improvements are being made as a result of my involvement.

Would you recommend that others get involved?

It is up to the individual but I feel that tenants should get involved to help improve services for themselves and future tenants. Sometimes people may be worried about attending meetings but BCH provide a lot of information and support and you soon pick it up. There are also other involvement activities that you can do from your own home.

If you would like further information on getting involved then contact the Customer Involvement Team on 477472 or email customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk

Mystery Shopping Update

BCH have a number of Mystery Shoppers who check the services we provide and help us identify any changes that may be required in order to improve. The Anti-Social Behaviour Service has recently been Mystery Shopped and below is a table of what the shoppers found and what BCH have done about it.

Shoppers Found

On the website customers have to read through all the Hate Crime Policy before they get to the information on how to actually report a crime.

Some staff were not wearing ID badges

Homestop answer machine on after 9.00am

Sometimes the appropriate ASB Officer was not available and there was no option to speak to anyone else.

BCH Improved

We have changed the document to just the reporting form.

Managers will speak to staff to ensure ID badges are worn at all times

We will make sure the answer machine is taken off by 9.00am

If an appropriate ASB Officer is not available customers will be offered the opportunity to speak to another ASB Officer where possible.

enGAYge

Gay Information on Social Housing

Are you a member of the L.G.B.T community? If so join us to find out about local news, views and events. enGAYge meet monthly. Why not ring Sandy for the next meeting date?

INTERESTED? WANT MORE INFORMATION? CALL FOR A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT WITH BCH'S SANDY WHO POSITIVELY IDENTIFIES AS AN L.G.B.T MEMBER OF STAFF ON 07796994837

Aim 3

To contribute to the wider regeneration of Blackpool; creating jobs and opportunities for local people and improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

Community Gardens add colour to Bostonway and Low Moor



Residents of **Bostonway** joined together to unveil the new garden that has been created at the rear of the local community centre. The garden was opened by the Mayor and Mayoress.

The project was undertaken by BCH's Decent Homes Partner BAAS Construction Ltd, with extra labour provided by Blackpool Build Up. All who were involved in the project, including local community centre users, worked together to make the new garden a space that will benefit the local community.

BAAS transformed the spare land at the back of the centre into an enclosed floral oasis with new paving and raised flower beds to make it easily accessible for everyone to use. Two benches were provided by BAAS and a further two were donated B&Q.

BAAS Contracts Director, Haydn Williams said: "The success of this project is a true reflection of the local community spirit and commitment in Blackpool and seeing the finished scheme and the people who will benefit from it makes it all worth while"

Chris Warrender from Blackpool Build Up said: "The project was an ideal opportunity for the learners from Blackpool Build Up to demonstrate the skills they have gained whilst on the scheme"

The Mayor and Mayoress were also joined by local residents to open the new garden at **Low Moor** in Bispham.

Herbert T Forrest led work on the scheme while a number of sponsors, including Jewsons, Blackpool Build Up, TW Fencing Ltd, Carman Plastics Ltd and

Fylde Coast Gate Ltd, provided labour and materials.

To enable access for disabled residents, the garden features raised flower beds containing an array of flowers and shrubs. Other characteristics include decorative stonework and benches.

John Chew, Commercial Director for Herbert T Forrest, said: "Many of the homes in this area are flats and so this community garden provides local residents with a low-maintenance communal space in which to do a bit of gardening if they wish, or they can just sit and enjoy the tranquillity."



Cyril Holland, Director of Property services for Blackpool Coastal Housing, added: "This project has transformed an unused piece of land and provided a colourful and peaceful space for local residents to enjoy."

BCH Performance Information

In partnership with the Tenant Liaison Forum (TLF) we have identified tenant's top eleven Key Performance Indicators. We will be reporting on these in every future edition of Viewpoint, in area offices, community centres and on the web site.

KPI	Description	Good to be	Current quarter	Target	
BUS03	The percentage of emergency repairs completed on time	High	99.5%	99%	😊
BUS04	The percentage of urgent repairs completed on time	High	98.6%	99.8%	😞
BUS05	The percentage of routine repairs completed on time	High	98.5%	98%	😊
BUS10	The percentage of empty homes available for letting or awaiting minor repairs	Low	2%	1.8%	😞
BUS12	Percentage of repairs completed "Right First Time"	High	88%	90%	😞
BUS14	The percentage of non-decent properties	Low	6.56%	5.5%	😐
CUS02	Customer satisfaction with repairs service	High	96.7%	97.5%	😐
FIN03	The Percentage of expenditure on planned to responsive maintenance	High	52%	50%	😊
FIN05	Current tenant arrears	Low	£409,000	£350,000	😐
FIN11	The Number of tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	Low	11	18	😊
HEH03	Average relet time in calendar days excluding properties undergoing Decent Homes work	Low	33	31	😐

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The Bosch Factor

Our Trades Staff have recently been issued with new Bosch toolkits to help us carry out repairs to your home in a more efficient and professional manner. We are continuously looking for ways to improve the service we provide and as you can see by the photo, our team are happy with the new tools as well!



Fancy a grand in your hand?

If you want to win - Let us in

You may remember that in the last winter edition of Viewpoint, we ran an article regarding the importance of having your gas appliances maintained during BCH's annual gas servicing programme. We said that every tenant that allowed our gas contractor, Read & Errington, access to their property on one of their routine service visits would be entered into a prize draw and could win £1000.

Mr Colin Beeley of Mereside did just that and was picked out in the prize draw. He can be seen in the photograph receiving a cheque for £1,000 from the Chief Executive of BCH Peter Jefferson and Director of Read & Errington Adam Farrar.

Read & Errington have kindly agreed to provide £500 towards the £1,000 prize fund for the new gas servicing programme due to start on the 7th December 2009.



Work will commence on the 2009/10 programme as follows:

North Blackpool & Bispham Area
7th December 2009 – 5th February 2010

Grange Park Area
8th February 2010 – 2nd April 2010

Layton & Queens Park Area
5th April 2010 – 14th May 2010

Mereside Area
17th May 2010 – 9th July 2010

Central & South Shore Area
12th July 2010 – 10th September 2010

Remember, only tenants who allow access to their property during Read & Errington's routine visit on the servicing programme will be entered into the prize draw.

So, if like Mr Beeley you want to win £1,000 - then **'Go-on let us in'... it makes gas sense!**

Repair Request

Recently we have noticed an increase regarding the number of toilet repairs that have been reported. Our plumbers have advised many of the faults seem to be caused by toilet fresheners that are put in toilet cisterns and change the water colour.

It has been found that some cisterns have been getting clogged up as often the fresheners do not fully dissolve. The Operations Team have requested that customers do not use these products in their toilet cisterns in order to prevent further repairs. **Thank You.**

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Fire Safety at Queens Park

In September 2009 Lancashire Fire & Rescue in conjunction with BCH carried out a training exercise in Charles Court.

A spokesperson for Lancashire Fire & Rescue said: "The exercise simulated a severe flat fire with a person trapped inside and people trapped on floors above, due to heavy smoke. The purpose of the exercise was to practice our procedures in relation to high rise fire fighting and to see if there were any improvements that could be made.

Another purpose was to familiarise other stations within the locality who may not deal with a high rise fire as often as the Blackpool crews. We had 6 fire appliances, 30 fire-fighters and simulated 6 casualties. It was a successful exercise as it showed the

operational plans that we have to deal with high rise incidents are as good as they can be. This coupled with the co-operation from BCH ensures the residents of Queens Park receive the best possible service from Lancashire Fire & Rescue.

Fires in high rise buildings present different challenges to the fire service and the actions of residents can be just as vital to everyone's safety. By disposing of rubbish correctly, not blocking escape routes and making sure all fire doors are closed, residents can ensure their homes are safe for themselves and their visitors"

All BCH tenants are eligible for a free home fire safety check. For further information, please contact the Fire Service Hotline on 0800 169 1125.

Junior residents give Grange Park a lift



Grange Park Junior Residents Association gave the areas around Chepstow Road shops and Christ The King Church and School a welcome lift with an organised litter pick in

September. Volunteer Maureen Horn, who organised the event said that it had really brightened up the area, especially around Christ The King car park. The 22 young people who took part had a great day and managed to collect 15 bags full of rubbish in an hour and a half. Well done to everyone involved!

You have got to be in it to win it

Congratulations to Queens Park Residents Association (QPRA) who have been awarded £385,623 from the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) for the Hive Centre. The money is from BIG's Reaching Communities programme that supports people most in need and helps build stronger communities.

Queens Park Residents Association offer healthy eating courses, a low-cost community café, exercise classes for senior and disabled people and a warmer project to help vulnerable residents to stay warm during winter. The award will allow QPRA to continue and expand as tenants will get home visits, ongoing support including filling in forms and housing and debt counselling.

Gwen King, Chairperson of Queens Park Resident's Association said: "This is fantastic news for our Association and the people of Queens Park, this grant funding will ensure that our Association is secure financially for the next 5 years. Our group have worked hard over the past 5 years with our partner agencies to make Queens Park into a vibrant community and we have big plans to expand our services to the residents even further. This Money is going to make such a huge difference to us".

Organic Gardening Course at Chepstow Garden a success

Local Residents and volunteers at Chepstow Community Garden on Grange Park have been enjoying the benefits of a free course in organic gardening. The course was led by Alan Hulme, Director of Urban



Organic and aimed to teach people skills relevant to winter gardening through practical demonstration and hands on experience. It included lessons in tree pruning, growing indoor and outdoor fruits and seed and bulb planting. Community volunteer Robert said "We've learned a lot from Alan, he's a very good teacher. I wouldn't have known that you can plant potatoes in winter. Now we will be able to include fresh vegetables in the Christmas hampers we give out to the elderly."

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Happy Couple celebrate their Platinum Wedding Anniversary



We would like to congratulate Ernest and Lily McGowan who celebrated their 70th Wedding Anniversary on 5th September this year.

The couple, of Aysgarth Court, first met in Sheffield aged just 16 when Ernest, who was a joiner at the time, was sent out to a job at the gown shop where Lily worked. In 1939, when they were both 22, they were married, two days after the Second World War was declared. The couple didn't have the easiest of starts to their marriage as after a few months, Ernest was posted abroad to support England in the war. This was the news the couple had dreaded, especially as Lily was pregnant. After three long years of separation, Ernest finally came home to see his son for the first time. The couple went on to have another son and the family moved to Blackpool in the 1950's.

Mr and Mrs McGowan are still an extremely active couple and spend most of their time within the local community or out shopping in Cleveleys. When asked what the secret to a successful marriage is, Mrs McGowan replied, "Give and take... We have arguments like any other couple but we always get over it".

Mr and Mrs McGowan are pictured with the congratulatory card they received from Her Majesty The Queen.

Multi Agency Door Knock at Charles Court

Reassurance Plus and BCH teamed up with Blackpool Libraries and Lancashire Fire and Rescue Service, to bring their services to the people as part of a Multi-Agency initiative.

Officers from the different organisations took to the streets, knocking on doors and talking to residents in their own homes about the services that are available to them. It also gave organisations the opportunity to follow up on previous projects and gather feedback on how people feel about their neighbourhood and the services that are available to them.

Lancashire Fire and Rescue took the opportunity to fit brand new smoke detectors in properties and give advice to most residents in the high rise flats about making sure they answer their intercoms promptly when the concierge initially calls to check on them in the event of a smoke alarm going off.

Scott Arnold, BCH Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officer for Queens Park, found that there were no new cases of ASB reported and that most of the residents that the team spoke to, felt safe and happy in their neighbourhood and were extremely satisfied with the service provided by BCH.

Table top sale raises funds

On 5th October The Tenants Social Committee at Sevenoaks held a table top sale in order to raise money to fund social activities. The turnout was good and an enjoyable afternoon was had by all. The Committee is made up of sheltered and general needs tenants who organise bingo on Mondays and Wednesdays at Sevenoaks Community Centre and arrange activities and trips out. They are currently preparing for a Christmas Fayre at the centre.

World Karate Champion visits Grange Park Karate Club

Nine time Gold Medal winning World Karate Champion and England National paid a visit to members of Grange Park Karate Club. Wayne Otto OBE is considered to be one of the greatest fighters to come out of the UK and now devotes much of his time to helping others to achieve success. The aim of his visit was to talk to and teach the members of the club.

Martial Arts have long been considered a great way to help children to develop their confidence and self esteem. They teach concentration, discipline and respect for themselves and each other whilst feeling part of a team. Martial Arts are also great way to keep fit and healthy, for both adults and children – it's a great, fun activity for all the family. The club is offering a first lesson for free, for anyone who would like to give Karate a go and see if it's for them. Contact Sensei Andy Irvine on 07825 548 836.

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Annual Tenant Conference a big success

On 27th August BCH held their annual Tenant Conference at The Winter Gardens and over 250 Blackpool Council tenants and leaseholders attended the event.

The conference was the biggest one yet with over 40 exhibition stands from Blackpool Coastal Housing a variety of Blackpool Council departments and other external organisations.

'Who wants to be Millionaire' style voting pods were used during interactive consultations which enabled tenants and leaseholders to help identify service priorities for the forthcoming year. Those who took part were entered into a free prize draw to win a Freeview box.

All BCH services were represented at the conference including; Rents, Sheltered Housing, Homestop, Anti-Social-Behaviour, Customer Involvement, Estate Management, Repairs and Maintenance and Emergency Housing. Partners including Connaught Environmental, Advice Link, Reassurance Plus, and The Decent Homes Partnership Contractors were also present as well as other organisations such as The Police, Fire Brigade, Trading Standards, BIG CAT, Transport, Veterans Agency, Age Concern and Citizens Advice amongst others. Digital Switchover help and advice was available as well first aid demonstrations and life size examples of new kitchens and bathrooms. Each exhibition stand provided help, advice and freebies. The Credit Union signed up over 40 people to the scheme and the Customer Involvement Team signed up numerous volunteers for 42 new involvement activities.

Thank you to everyone who attended and we look forward to seeing you all next year!

Interactive Consultations

One of the main points highlighted during the interactive consultations was that our customers did not get involved as they felt their views would not be listened to. As a result of this, we have introduced a new Customer Involvement page that will let you know what we are doing as a result the hundreds of customers who get involved with us and help us make improvements to the service.

Congratulations to the Freeview box winners Mr Hodgson of Central Blackpool, Mr Czapiewski of Grange Park, Mr and Mrs Archibald and Mr Dobson of Mereside. Thank you all for taking part in the interactive consultation and giving us your views.

Well done also to Sharon Knott from Queens Park who won £25 worth of high street vouchers in the Estate Management prize draw.

Thank you also to everyone who returned their Tenant Conference Feedback Surveys. The information you provide is very important to us and will help us plan for next year's event.

Congratulations to Mr Garton of South Shore who is the winner of the prize draw for a Freeview box.



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Board Update

In August 2009 the Tenant Board Member elections took place. A letter was sent to all tenants early in June inviting those people who were interested in becoming Directors to attend one of two Information Events held on 16th and 24th June. All tenants and leaseholders received a ballot paper and the results were as follows:

Candidate Name	Number of Votes Cast
Terry Bennett	301
James Bratby	192
Stephen Case	117
Martin Francis Lawless	234
Bill Rogers	364
Janet Stirling	508
Ronald Francis Whittaker	232

Janet Stirling and Bill Rogers received the most votes and will therefore serve as Tenant Board Members for the next three years until the Annual General Meeting in 2012.

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ASB UPDATE

The ASB team have now been centralised and the officers will be present in the local housing offices on the following days:

Queens Park - Scott Arnold will be at Queens Park Housing Office on a Tuesday

Bispham - Jane Gardner will be at Queens Park Housing Office on a Wednesday

Grange Park - Lesley Ronson will be at Grange Park Housing Office on a Wednesday

Mereside and South Shore - Phil Anderton will be at Mereside Housing Office on a Friday

All incidents of ASB should still be reported to your local housing office in the usual manner. Contact details can be found on the back page.

ASB Surgeries taking place in your area

The ASB Officers are holding surgeries on the following days. No appointment is needed.

Mereside Housing Office

10am to 12pm Every Thursday

Grange Park Housing Office

10am to 12pm Every Wednesday

Queens Park Housing Office

10am to 12pm Every Tuesday

Kincraig School

2pm to 3pm Every other Monday
(Commencing 7th December)

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BCH successfully evicts two problem tenants

A 39 year old man from Churchill Court, was evicted following non-payment of rent and repeated acts of anti-social behaviour.

Before proceedings were commenced against the tenant, numerous warnings were given concerning his rent arrears and anti-social behaviour, which included the playing of loud music at all times of day and night, visitors to the property shouting, screaming, swearing, fighting, arguing and throwing items out of the flat windows including a television.

Despite further warnings about the anti-social behaviour, the tenant continued to make life for his neighbours unbearable and in light of this, further legal action was taken by BCH to ensure possession of the property.

On 3 August 2009, Blackpool County Court made an Order for Possession. BCH made an application for a Warrant on the 18 August 2009 and were successful in evicting him on 6 October 2009.

An 18 year old man of Horsebridge Road was also evicted following repeated acts of anti-social behaviour by himself and visitors to his property.

Again, several warnings were issued to the resident concerning his anti-social behaviour, which included fighting, arguing and shouting, playing loud music, causing damage to the property, throwing bottles and cans out of a window and using foul and abusive language, causing distress to his neighbours.

On 17 September 2009, Blackpool County Court made an Order for Possession of the property and BCH applied for a Warrant. On 22 October 2009 the tenant was evicted.

Peter Jefferson, Chief Executive of BCH, said: "We are committed to ensuring that life for our housing communities are comfortable and peaceful and we will continue to take strong and decisive action against anyone who repeatedly and deliberately flouts the law and makes life difficult or unpleasant for our other tenants.

The successful outcome of these cases was the culmination of months of hard work by both Blackpool Coastal Housing and Blackpool Council Legal Services Department working in close partnership with the Police and with the assistance of neighbours who completed diary log sheets to evidence the anti-social behaviour and breaches of the tenancy agreements."

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Meet Jane Gardner The New ASB Officer for Bispham

I have recently joined the ASB Team as a Housing Officer. So what have I done up to now...

After leaving school I went on to gain a University Degree in Criminal Justice and Policing then decided to see a bit more of the world and spent twelve months travelling and working around the world. On returning to the UK I got a job as an Information Advice and Guidance Worker at HMP Garth and moved on to work for Nacro as the Housing Advice Co-ordinator at HMP Preston for two years. I really wanted to work out in the community so when this opportunity came up with BCH it was perfect timing.

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Could you be a Buddy?

BCH's Buddy Service offers confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair caused by anti-social behaviour. The Buddy Service is delivered by volunteers who are also tenants and works upon a self help ethos. BCH believes strongly that tenants who have been victims of ASB are the best placed people to provide support.

What Skills are useful to be a Buddy?

- Be a good listener.
- Question gently, tactfully - without intruding.
- Encourage people to tell their own story in their own time and space.
- Offer confidential emotional support.
- Always try to see the other point of view, regardless of your own religious or political beliefs.

You don't need formal qualifications or previous experiences, but a natural ability to listen and remain open minded are essential skills. Contact the ASB Team on 477968 if you are interested in volunteering to become a Buddy.

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THE RENTS TEAM – LATEST NEWS

'Grange Park Family evicted for Rent Arrears'



A family from Grange Park were evicted last month for rent arrears. A failure to pay the weekly rent of £30 per week resulted in Court Action and

the possession of the 3 bedroom BCH property.

This could have been avoided... Don't end up Homeless... The Rents Team are 'Here To Help'

If you have answered **YES** to any of the points opposite, then please contact us - **WE CAN HELP.**

- Do you have a rent query?
- Are you in arrears with your rent?
- Struggling to meet rent payments?
- Buried your head in the sand?
- Do you need confidential debt advice?
- Have you received a letter, telephone call or been visited by us and are worried?

Contact the Rents Team on 01253 477942 - making that call is the 1st step (The Rents Team can also be contacted by email: rent@bch.co.uk)

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Full bloom ahead for residents

Layton residents took part in a hanging basket competition to add some colour to the front of their newly-refurbished homes. Residents in and around Addison Crescent were provided with compost, plants, flowers, hanging baskets and brackets by construction company Herbert T Forrest, which is working in partnership with BCH to improve homes in the area. A total of 62 homes in and around Addison Crescent are having kitchen and bathroom upgrades, new electrics and external refurbishment. The competition was judged by BCH Board Member Alan Marsh and Pauline O'Leary, of Ascot Road, took first prize for her arrangement. (Pictured) Elaine Froggart and Ben Hargreaves, both of Addison Crescent, took second and third place respectively. All residents who took part received a certificate.

John Chew, Commercial Director for Herbert T Forrest, said: "This community initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to tenants in the area as we work to improve their homes and community. Residents have demonstrated considerable skill and care in producing some beautiful displays".

Trevor Oliver, Project Manager for BCH, said: "The hanging basket competition was a great success and has added a lovely splash of colour to homes while continued refurbishment work is carried out".

SKY+

The existing Sky installation does not support Sky+ and Blackpool Coastal Housing do not allow additional satellite dishes to be fitted to tenanted or leasehold flats. We can however, arrange for the installation of an additional coaxial cable and by upgrading the head end of the Integrated Reception System (IRS) will enable you to have Sky+. There is a cost for this upgrade, part of the cost will be paid by Blackpool Coastal Housing and part will have to be paid by you. Your part is approximately £100 including VAT and this must be paid to Avonline.

This upgrade will enable your satellite Sky+ or Sky HD system to work correctly, however you will still have to subscribe to Sky for these additional features. The weekly IRS cost will not be affected by this improvement.

To have your system upgraded please write to:
**Blackpool Coastal Housing, Repairs Section,
Progress House, Clifton Road,
Blackpool FY4 4US**
or telephone the Repairs Hotline: 0800 073 0184
(Please quote Sky+)

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Connaught receive the 'Thumbs Up' for encouraging Customer Involvement

Connaught have received a glowing recommendation by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) for encouraging resident participation while delivering repairs, maintenance and improvements to homes across the UK.

Karen Ingham, Connaught Customer Experience Director, said: "I am thrilled that our continued dedication to focussing on tenant involvement before, during and after our works has once again been recognised.

In receiving this award it offers the perfect opportunity to thank all of our staff for their hard work in putting our processes into practice, our clients for supporting our new ideas for improvement and of course our tenants for constantly giving us feedback which we can act upon to really make a difference."

Aim 1

To provide our customers with high quality homes and services that represent excellent value for money.

New Tenancy Support Service

The Tenancy Support Service has a team of three new Tenancy Support Officers (TSO's) and each officer covers an allocated area to enable the community to get to know & recognise who we are.

What is Tenancy Support?

It is help and advice to enable our customers to keep up and manage their tenancy. The support can be provided within your home, at your local estate office or over the phone. The main aim of the team is to help you manage your housing and tenancy commitments and we can adapt the service to meet your specific needs. We can also help you contact a range of services from other agencies including training and employment services, leisure activities and advice agencies.

How the Tenancy Support Service works

We will work with you to create a tailor-made Support Plan. The Support Plan will identify and prioritise your



support needs and work towards setting up targets and goals to work towards. It will also say what you aim to do about things like:

- Helping you keep to your tenancy agreement.
- Safety and security.
- Preventing rent arrears and improving your budgeting skills.
- Help and advice with housing and other benefits.
- Liaising with other agencies.
- Social and personal development.

The Support Plan will be regularly reviewed to ensure it stays relevant to you.

Who can we help?

We can help anyone living in a BCH property who may be at risk of losing their tenancy for many different reasons or feel that they need extra support. You may be falling behind with the rent, this may be your first tenancy or you may be experiencing difficulties with neighbourhood issues. We can accept referrals directly from you. Contact your local housing office or any team within BCH and they can help you fill in a short form. It will then be directed to the allocated TSO for your area. When we receive your form, we will write to you and tell you if there is any waiting time. We will then arrange a meeting to discuss the service and your individual needs in more detail.

Lynn Conifey Grange Park

I have a long standing support background, from working within childcare, to providing intensive support to homeless families and single people often with complex support needs.

When I applied for the TSO post I felt I had a wealth of experience and skills that would go hand in hand with this brilliant and much needed new service.

My role as a TSO is something I am enjoying and I continue to look forward to becoming more involved within the community.

Nikki Williams Mereside & South Shore

Prior to being appointed as a TSO I was a Scheme Manager for Sheltered Housing with BCH. My role as a TSO is diverse and varied with no two days the same. I have clients ranging from 18 to 89 with everything else in-between.

My motto in my job is '**If you don't ask you don't get**' so please ask for support if you think you need it!

I am approachable and enjoy a challenge.

Sarah Stott Queens Park & Bispham

When I graduated from University I began working as a Housing Assistant and became interested in housing issues. I then took on the role of Estate Management Officer.

Now the role of TSO has brought me to Queens Park and I look forward to meeting up with you all when I'm out and about on the estate.

Aim 3

To contribute to the wider regeneration of Blackpool; creating jobs and opportunities for local people and improving the health and wellbeing of residents.

Healthy Food on a Budget



Tuna Fish Cakes

Serves a family of 4.

You will need: 2 x 200g tins tuna steak in spring

water, 1kg white potatoes, 1 bunch spring onions, 1 loose broccoli, 1kg carrots, 50g plain flour (items from your store cupboard: cooking oil).

Preparation time: 50 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

1. Peel 1kg potatoes and boil until they are soft
2. Peel and chop spring onions into small pieces

3. Mash the potatoes and mix with the 2 drained tins of tuna and chopped spring onions
4. Lightly oil a non-stick baking tray with olive oil
5. Roll the mixture into 8 balls then flatten into fishcakes, coat with flour and bake on the oiled tray for 30 minutes at 200c, (fan assisted 180c) gas mark 6, turning halfway through
6. Whilst the fish cakes are baking, peel and cut the carrots into slices and break the broccoli into pieces (florets). Boil the carrots and broccoli until tender

For an even healthier option, steam the carrots and broccoli instead of boiling



New bike promotes positive activities

The son of a tenant was given a new bike by local childrens charity Swallowdale. The bike was donated to help him take part in positive activities.

Swallowdale is just one of the many charities the new Tenancy Support Officers approach for assistance.

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Unique money advice scheme is top of the pile

A scheme which helps Blackpool residents who are struggling to pay their bills has been recognised with a prestigious national award.

The Advice Link Money Advice Team helps those who are feeling the squeeze of the credit crunch and who are worst affected by debt, analysing their situation and offering advice and support to help them to deal with this, as well as to maximise their income. The excellence of the service they offer has now been recognised with an award from the Institute of Money Advisers for the Best Partnership of 2009.

The Advice Link Money Advice Team is an independent service which works closely with both the revenues team at the Council, and with BCH, to identify people struggling with Council Tax debts and help tenants who live in Council Housing with rent arrears.

Maggie Cornall, Director of Housing Services at BCH, said "This award demonstrates the excellent partnership work undertaken in Blackpool between our services, which has been going on for some time. This partnership work benefits our customers helping to reduce debt and maximise incomes, which is particularly important in the current economic climate."

Any tenants who feel they are in difficulty can approach BCH or their Council Tax collector and ask for an assessment by the Money Advice Team.



Aim 2

To empower our customers, ensuring that they are placed at the heart of everything we do.

Dog Awareness Days with Reassurance Plus and the RSPCA



Two Dog Awareness days have been held in Reassurance Plus areas recently. The RSPCA Blackpool & North Lancashire Branch provided free micro-chipping for dogs and handed out neutering vouchers for pets whose owners were on means tested benefits. Staff and volunteers from Longview Animal Centre were also in attendance.

The events were held at Walter Robinson Court Community Centre on Queens Park and outside Chepstow Road shops on Grange Park. There were plenty of smiling faces and wagging tails and both events were considered a great success.

Reassurance Plus staff were on hand to deal with any queries from residents from each area, taking referrals on environmental issues such as litter and dog fouling amongst other things and had also invited partner agencies along to hold advice stalls.

RSPCA Inspector Bryony Jones said, "It was good to see so many people attending the events and the dogs that were brought in were all very well behaved, good natured and obviously well cared for.

Such events provide us the opportunity to offer pet care advice and prevent potential future problems, rather than just having to deal with emergencies or cases of neglect or ill health."

Look out for more of these events in Reassurance Plus areas in future. For more information on Reassurance Plus events and activities please contact Customer First on 01253 477477 or email customer.first@blackpool.gov.uk and ask for your local Reassurance Plus Team.

What's On Guide

All Hallows Road Tenants Association

Wednesday 9th December
Open Meeting, 6.30pm at
Whiteholme Community Centre

Wednesday 6th January
Open Meeting, 6.30pm at
Whiteholme Community Centre

Wednesday 3rd February
Open Meeting, 6.30pm at
Whiteholme Community Centre

Wednesday 3rd March
Open Meeting, 6.30pm at
Whiteholme Community Centre

Bostonway Residents Association

Wednesday 27th January
Open Meeting, 10.15am at
Bostonway Community Centre

Grange Park Residents Association

Tuesday 15th December
Open Meeting, 5pm at the
Cherwell Centre

Tuesday 19th January
Open Meeting, 5pm at the
Cherwell Centre

Linden, Edmonton & Washington Residents Association

Friday 8th January
Open Meeting, 3pm at
Lowmoor Community Centre

Melbourne, Brisbane and Hobart Tenants Association

Thursday 10th December
Open Meeting, 6.30pm at
Sevenoaks Community Centre

Munster Avenue Tenants Association

Tuesday 5th January
Open Meeting, 2pm at
Bispham Community Centre

Queens Park Residents Association

Monday 15th February
Open Meeting, 6pm at
Walter Robinson Court
Community Centre

Anti-Social Behaviour Focus Group

Thursday 14th January
2pm at Tarnside Community Centre

Disability Forum

Wednesday 9th December
2pm at Spencer Community Centre
Wednesday 9th February
2pm, venue to be confirmed

LGBT Forum

Tuesday 12th January
5.30pm at Shiver offices Dickson Road
Tuesday 23rd February
5.30pm at Shiver offices Dickson Road

Sheltered Housing Forum

Friday 11th December
2pm at Dunsop Court
Community Centre

Community Involvement Awards

Wednesday 27th January

Stronsay Over 55's Club

Bingo every Wednesday at 1.30pm at
Stronsay Place Community Centre
Cards and dominoes every Friday
from 1.30pm at Stronsay Place
Community Centre

Useful Contacts



Blackpool Coastal Housing

Head Office: Progress House, Clifton Road,
Blackpool FY4 4US Tel 01253 477900
Email enquiries@bch.co.uk

Grange Park Housing Office: Tel 01253 477969

Mereside Housing Office: Tel 01253 477968

Queens Park Housing Office: Tel 01253 477971

Homestop Property Shop

57 Chepstow Road, Blackpool FY3 7PH
Telephone 01253 477047
Email homestop@bch.co.uk

Homeownership

Telephone 01253 477984
Email homeownership@bch.co.uk

Customer Involvement

Telephone 01253 477472
Email customerinvolvement@bch.co.uk

Repairs Hotline

0800 073 0184 Email repairs@bch.co.uk
Text 'Repairs' to 07786 201409

Customer First Centre

Municipal Buildings, Corporation Street,
Blackpool FY1 1NF
Telephone 01253 477477
Email customer.first@blackpool.gov.uk

Welfare Rights

Telephone 01253 477770
Email welfare.rights@blackpool.gov.uk

Housing Benefit

Telephone 01253 478847
Email benefits@blackpool.gov.uk

Social Services Direct

Telephone 01253 477750
Email social.servicesdirect@blackpool.gov.uk

Age Concern

89 Abingdon St, Blackpool FY1 1TH
Telephone 01253 622812

Citizens Advice Bureau

6-10 Whitegate Drive, Blackpool FY1 9AQ
Telephone 01253 308400

Carers Line

Telephone 0808 808 7777

Blackpool Carers

Telephone 01253 393748
Email www.blackpoolcarers.org

Blackpool Police

Telephone 01253 293933 (Non emergency)

Free Fire Safety Advice

Telephone 0800 1691125 (Non emergency)

Lancashire Crimestoppers

Telephone 0800 555 111

National Grid

Telephone 0800 111 999 (FOR GAS LEAKS)

United Utilities

Telephone 0800 330 033
(FOR MAINS WATER LEAKS)

Race Hate Awareness and Prevention (RHAP)

Telephone 0808 8087398

Broken Rainbow (LGBT Domestic Violence Helpline)

Telephone 08452 604460
Email www.broken-rainbow.org.uk

To ensure our services are accessible to all, documents prepared by Blackpool Coastal Housing are available in large print, Braille, on audio-cassette or disc upon request.

We can also provide help with British Sign Language users and provide information in other languages.

Please ask for details 477900.