

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING NEWS

JANUARY 2008



News for Tenants and Leaseholders



SOUTH LAKELAND
CRIME & DISORDER
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIP



'IT'S YOUR CHOICE' COPS TELL DISORDERLY YOUTH

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

PCs Tony Lees and Tony Davison, based in the COPS (Community Orientated Problem Solving) Team at Kendal Police Station have responsibility for looking at issues in relation to anti-social behaviour across the Kendal and South Lakes area. They work in conjunction with various agencies, including South Lakes Housing, and their work ranges from a local scheme called 'It's Your Choice' through to applying for Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) and Closure Orders (commonly known as 'Crack House closures').

The first stage of the process with youth-related disorder is a scheme called 'It's Your Choice'. When the police are called to incidents involving youths committing anti-social behaviour those youths' names are taken and entered on to a computer database. If they appear on this database twice within a certain period of time, the Police will write to their parents, with a view to parents taking more responsibility for their children's actions. A third entry on the database will result in the local Community Police Officer visiting the youth at home and speaking with him/her in the presence of a parent. They will warn the youth that his/her behaviour is unacceptable, and will be given the opportunity to be referred to other agencies for help, if appropriate. If there has been a breach of the tenancy agreement the Housing Officer will also attend this interview and may serve a notice seeking possession of the tenancy.

Should the anti-social behaviour continue, we can ask the youth to sign an **Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC)**. This is a voluntary agreement aimed at modifying their behaviour, in which the youth will enter into an agreement not to commit certain acts. An ABC, which can be used against anyone and is not restricted to young people, generally lasts for 6 months.

Should all these interventions fail, we can apply for an **Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)**. An ASBO can be imposed on anyone aged 10 years or more who can be shown to have acted in a manner which has caused harassment, alarm or distress to others. Application for an ASBO is made through the Magistrates' Court, or the Magistrates may impose an ASBO following an individual

being convicted of an offence. An application may also be made by the police. An ASBO lasts for a minimum of two years, with no maximum time limit. Stringent conditions can be imposed to stop the offending behaviour, and these can be very wide ranging. Some prohibitions imposed on individuals in the Kendal/South Lakes area include:

- Not to drink or possess alcohol in a public place
- Not to enter certain parts of a town
- Not to associate with certain other individuals
- Not to enter any licensed premises
- Not to be in possession of a can of spray paint

Breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence which can result in a maximum penalty of 5 years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £5000.

We recently worked with colleagues from the police to address a problem in the Waterside area of Kendal. Following a number of complaints regarding disorder and nuisance a warrant was executed at an address and we found evidence of Class A drug use. Under powers introduced a few years ago we successfully applied for a **Closure Order**. The effect of this Order was that the occupants were required to vacate the property for a minimum of three months, and the property was boarded up. This Order expired towards the end of November, and we are monitoring the situation to ensure there is no repetition of earlier problems if the occupant returns.

These are just a few of the ways we can tackle anti-social behaviour – there are various other tools and pieces of legislation available to us, but we can only act upon a problem if we are aware of it. If there are any issues of concern in your area, please ALWAYS report them to your Housing Officer on 0845 057 0080 and/or the Police on 0845 3300 247.

SOUTH LAKES HOUSING RESIDENTS WALK THEIR WAY TO HEALTH

Tenants and Staff of South Lakes Housing joined staff from Bramall Construction and local MP Tim Farron on a 3 kilometre walk in the Milnthorpe area as part of a celebration of the donation the Bramall Community Fund recently made to 'Walking the Way to Health'. Walking the Way to Health run a local initiative to get older residents to participate in exercise by organising accompanied walks on easy routes.

Tim Farron MP said ' We all need opportunities to get out and exercise more often and it's great to see organisations like 'Walking the Way to Health' providing opportunities for us to do just that.'

If you would like to Walk your Way to Health or would be able to help, contact Mary or Jane on 01539 790109 or email walks4health@yahoo.co.uk. If you would like to make an application for a grant to the Community Fund contact Bev Townley on 01539 717717.



Of SLH tenants only 0.12% are from ethnic minorities.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Money Matters • Windermere Cruise Winner
Strictly Come TIC Club • Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour
Decent Homes Update • Inspectors are coming!
Mailbag • Leaseholder newsletter



Phone Lines are now open 8am-6pm Monday to Friday.

DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO MIGHT NEED THIS NEWSLETTER ON TAPE?

★★★ CONTACT JOHN STIRLING ON 01539 717717 ★★★

TENANTS' COMMITTEE



CRUISE WINNER COLLECTS PRIZE

TIC Club member Brian Berry from School Knott Close in Windermere won the star prize for joining the Club – a family cruise on Windermere. Brian said he will be taking his cruise when his family next visit. Pictured above is a delighted Brian with John Short of the Tenants' Committee next to the Pier in Bowness, from where Brian will be taking his cruise.

ARE YOU OUR OLDEST TENANT?

South Lakes Housing would like to help you to celebrate if you are approaching your big 100 in 2008. Give us a call or get a friend to let us know!

We'd also like to hear from people who have been tenants for many years, and perhaps also lived with their family in a council home before they had their own tenancy.

Call the Tenant Participation Team on 01539 717717 or have a word with your Scheme Manager if you live in sheltered housing.

AWARENESS SESSIONS FOR TENANTS 2008

The Tenant Participation Team is putting together a programme of awareness sessions for tenants and Residents' Associations for next year. In this way we can help you get involved in improving services and neighbourhoods. We would like to hear from you if you are interested in coming along or finding out more.

The topics listed below are our first suggestions for the sessions. Please call John Stirling with your ideas for other topics, or if you would like to be put on the mailing list for these events.

'A place of my own' – Homelessness and affordable housing

'Who does what?' – Local authority housing issues including the relationship between the Council and South Lakes Housing (the ALMO)

'How can they do that?' – The differences between the Council and Housing Associations

'Where am I on the list?' – How properties are allocated

'Pay up or else!' – Rents and the recovery of arrears

'Is that allowed?' – Terms and conditions of a council tenancy

'Please fix it' – Response repairs and planned maintenance

'I could do better myself' – Managing your estate through a Tenant Management Organisation

'How your rent money is spent' – SLH budgets and finance

'Understanding differences' – Equality and diversity

'Making meetings work'

'Chairmanship skills'

'Negotiating skills'

'Teambuilding'

THANKS TO KIND CONTRACTORS

The Bramall Community Fund coffers have been swelled by generous donations from the following contractors:

Electrium • Ideal Standard UK Ltd. • Worcester Bosch • Astons • Howdens
In signs • PHJones • Farmer Controls • LTS • Birch Plastering • Deva taps

Thanks very much!

TIC CLUB STILL OPEN

Applications are still open for tenants to join the TIC Club, which allows you to tell South Lakes Housing exactly what you think about the service you receive. You can take part from the comfort of your own home, or come to open events, in fact, if you have just a few minutes to spare you could simply fill in a short questionnaire! There are regular prize draws for members. If you are interested in finding out more call the Tenant Participation Team on 01539 717717

TELL US ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY

Tenants' Committee would like to have a regular 'Community Counts' page in the newsletter. We need your help! We would like to hear about any of your community news, any person who contributes to their community by helping others, or new ideas for bringing your community together.

We would like to publish your stories. Not only that, the new look Area Discussion Groups which are taking over from the Panels will be able to decide grants for community projects and social events. Contact the Tenant Participation Team on 01539 717717 or talk to your Housing Officer. Alternatively, you can send your story to the team, or email to s.duffy@southlakeshousing.co.uk

SITUATIONS VACANT Interested in the environment and energy saving?

The SLDC Warm Homes Group is looking for a tenant of South Lakes Housing to join up as soon as possible. The Group meets in Kendal and looks at all sorts of energy saving topics. You will need to be able to attend the meetings in Kendal every couple of months. Assistance with travel and carer expenses are available. If you are interested please contact the Tenant Participation Team or Lisa Maguire on 01539 717717 or email info@southlakeshousing.co.uk
Go on, have a go!

EXHIBITION FOR BIRTHWAITE PAINTERS

Resident of Birthwaite, Derek Attwood, started an art class at Birthwaite sheltered housing scheme in Windermere and many complete beginners joined the class, never thinking that they would get so good, they would be holding their own exhibition! Everyone developed their own painting style and are now very pleased with the results of their endeavours – with very good reason. On 17 November the class members had a buffet lunch before putting up their pictures for display for other tenants and visitors to the scheme. Some of the artists plan to make Christmas cards from their paintings, and some will be framing theirs to give as Christmas presents.

Pictured are left to right, back row, Derek Attwood, Scheme Manager Tina Armitage, Jack, Mary and Charles. Front row, left to right, Edith, June, Nancy, George and Mary. Missing from the photo are other class members, John, Donna and Nikkie, and not forgetting 'tea ladies' Norma and Muriel.

If you would like to start some sort of class or interest group at your sheltered scheme, talk to your Scheme Manager, who will be pleased to find out if anything can be arranged.



SLH has a higher proportion of elderly and retired tenants than the local population.



27.5% of tenants have a disability with 25% with mobility problems.

LEASEHOLDER NEWS

Calling leaseholders!

South Lakes Housing is looking for a leaseholder who is interested in 'mystery shopping' the leaseholder service. A mystery shop is where a person calls South Lakes Housing and asks a question about the service, records the answer, and sends the results in. Sue Mallinson, the Leasehold Manager, will use the results of the 'shops' to make improvements to the service. Interested? You will need a telephone and be able to fill in a simple form. Someone will show you what to do. Call the Tenant Participation Team or Sue Mallinson on 01539 717717 to find out what's involved. We're waiting to hear from you!

INSPECTORS ANNOUNCE DATES

South Lakes Housing to be inspected in 2008

Government Inspectors from the Audit Commission will be coming to check South Lakes Housing's performance and service promises at the end of March 2008. Regular readers will remember the last major inspection in 2004, where the new ALMO, (Arms Length Management Organisation), South Lakes Housing, earned 2 stars out of 3. The 2 stars meant that the performance of the ALMO was judged 'good' and allowed for the funding for the Decent Homes improvement programme.

The latest inspection will check that South Lakes Housing is managing your housing service to high standards set by the Government.

It is unlikely that any of the Inspectors will contact you direct, though you may be invited to attend a local event to tell them about your experience of the service. Any Inspector who did contact you would always carry proper I.D. Don't forget our usual advice – if you are not sure who your caller is, don't let them into your home, and ask them to write to you to make an appointment.

If you want to attend any of the events the Inspectors will be holding around the district during the Inspection or would like to write to them, contact the tenant participation team on 01539 717717.



FLAT DWELLERS SMOKING BAN

South Lakes Housing staff have been busy putting up signs in common areas and stairwells of blocks of flats to remind tenants and residents that it is now against the law to smoke in any enclosed or substantially enclosed area – that means stairwells corridors and lifts. **STUB IT OUT!**

BURNESIDE RESIDENTS SEEK LOCAL AGREEMENT

A new Residents' Association has been founded in the Burneside area, covering estates and homes at Hall Park, Howgill Close, Gowan Lea, Chapel Field, and Holme Houses. Senior Housing Officer Bev Townley has been working with the residents and Debbie Binch of Cumbria County Council's Neighbourhood Development Department to set up a Neighbourhood Agreement.

The Neighbourhood Agreement will be signed by all the partners working in Burneside and will include details of how local concerns such as youth disorder and vehicle nuisance will be tackled.

If you live in Burneside and would like to join in or suggest what the Association might like to discuss, call Bev Townley or Louise North on 01539 717717 or email Bev on b.townley@southlakeshousing.co.uk

The Association's next meeting will be held at the Bryce Centre on Thursday 31 January at 7.30pm – Burneside residents - please come along and contact Bev or Louise if you need any help with transport or care expenses.



43% of our tenants have been tenants for over 21 years.

NEED SOME WORK DOING?

South Lakes Housing can help

South Lakes Housing is now offering internal works to leaseholders. To get your job done, just report the repair using South Lakes Housing's repairs hotline on 0845 057 0080. Tell the operator that you are a leaseholder – this will ensure the work is carried out efficiently and that you are charged correctly for the works you have reported. Your repair will be charged to you at an hourly rate plus cost of materials. You will be invoiced for the cost of the works you have requested via a one-off bill – it will not be part of your annual service charge bill.

You do not have to use South Lakes Housing Maintenance to carry out your repairs – but you may find it convenient to do so!

Leaseholders can also take advantage of our 24 hour 365 day a year emergency call out service. Urgent repairs and out of hours repairs can be reported on the hotline number, 0845 057 0800.

JOIN THE CLUB!

The leasehold service has recently been given a thorough overhaul resulting in many changes to the way we provide services to leaseholders across the district.

The majority of the proposed changes were to be discussed at the next Leaseholder Club meeting on 14 January 2008 in Kendal Town Hall. Look out for feedback in our next issue.

Topics for discussion/vote at the meeting include:

- Election of leaseholder chairman for the Club
- Co-option of leaseholder onto Tenants' Committee
- Estate Management with Alison Kinnon, Housing Manager
- Guide to Decent Homes with representative from Bramall Construction
- Drafts of Leaseholder Compact, Leaseholder Guide, Leaseholder Policy 2007/10, and Leaseholder Strategy 2007/10
- Proposed changes to invoicing of service charges
- Feedback from invoice query slips
- Membership of Service Improvement Groups
- 'Mystery Shopping', that is, checking the leaseholder service

If you would like to become a member of the Leaseholder Club and attend the quarterly meetings please contact Suzy Duffy, Community Participation Coordinator on 01539 717717. We can help with your travel or care expenses. Just ask. If you would like to give your views in some other way you can join our TIC Club, and participate as much or as little as you like. Ask Suzy when you call.

COMMUNITY DROP IN EVENTS

South Lakes Housing are running two public events in South Lakeland which will provide information on: Benefits, Basic Bank Accounts, Debt Advice, Council Housing / Allocations and how to register, Other Social Landlords. These events will take place in:

- **Town Hall, Kendal on 30th January 2008, 11.30 to 3pm**
- **Coronation Hall, Ulverston on 6th March 2008, 11.30 to 3pm**

Bags will be given out at the venues containing leaflets and other items! These are general advice days open to anyone in South Lakeland and may be useful to those due to leave school, who might be looking at opening a bank account or wanting to know more about Council Housing and other options. Other agencies such as Barclays Bank, Age Concern, Citizens Advice, Pension Service etc. will also be in attendance to provide information on their services.

Please feel free to call in and see us at either of the two events – all welcome.

If you require further information please contact Alison Kinnon, Sue Mallinson or Lisa Maguire on 01539 717717, details can also be found on www.southlakeshousing.co.uk

EMMA IS NEW CLERICAL ASSISTANT

Student of Lindeth College in Bowness Emma McQuade, 17, recently started working 3 hours per week for South Lakes Housing. Emma is a year 2 student, and will be working until summer 2008. Emma says she is really enjoying working at South Lakes Housing and is pictured below putting together copies of that most important of documents, the Tenants' Handbook.



We aim to save you money by obtaining grants that benefit tenants. Here are some examples:

- We receive £60 per week Government Grant to employ a Housing Officer apprentice to help give a better service for Ulverston tenants
- A grant for free computer training for tenants was set up in conjunction with Kendal College
- A grant paid for lots of energy saving devices provided free to tenants, such as draught strips for doors and letter boxes, cylinder jackets, kettles and low energy light bulbs
- A big grant was received to improve cavity wall insulation, loft insulation top up and grants for energy saving boilers



AMBLESIDE GETS MUGA POLICE AND HOUSING TEAMS TARGET TROUBLEMAKERS IN LAKES

Residents at Castle Field in Ambleside were delighted to see the construction of a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) on their estate. Housing Officers and the Police team who look after the Ambleside area had received plenty of complaints from residents on Castle Field who were irritated by young people larking about on the estate. Kirkfield estate has also suffered from youth disorder.

The Decent Homes improvement scheme includes a percentage of funding for works to improve communities and the Ambleside MUGA was given the green light for funding along with larger MUGAs in Kendal. The Police and Housing teams are delighted that Ambleside has benefited. Fiona Harrison, Senior Housing Officer for the Lakes area, remarked 'I am really pleased that we have finally been able to provide something for the older children on our estates. Who knows there may be the next Ronaldo out there!'

Pictured above are Housing Officer Pam Wilson and Senior Housing Officer Fiona Harrison putting a goal past PC David Buxton in the completed MUGA.

GET SMART! HAVE A LOOK AT THE TRAINING WE ARE OFFERING YOU!

MONEY MATTERS! Come and join us!

We all know money matters! Cumbria Tenants Forum is holding an awareness date for tenants from all over the County on Wednesday 23 January in Whitehaven. You will be able to chat with people who know a great deal about the money matters and fundraising opportunities you and your community are interested in.

If you are interested in coming along give John Stirling a call on 01539 717717.
We will be offering transport, lunch and refreshments, and carer expenses.
Places are first come first served.

CALL JOHN TODAY!

HOW TO CONTACT US

24 Hour repairs hotline number 0845 057 0080

You can text us your repairs on 0792059 3487

All day-to-day repairs and Estate Improvements: 0845 057 0080

TENANCY ENFORCEMENT, NEIGHBOUR NUISANCE, HOUSING ADVICE AND ALLOCATIONS:

Lynne Huxley	01539 717718
Fiona Harrison (part time)	01539 717704
Bev Townley (part time)	01539 717720
Simon Hughes	01229 584424

RENT COLLECTION, ARREARS RECOVERY, TENANCY ENFORCEMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD NUISANCE:

Lindsay Moorhouse (part time)	01539 717708
Vince Carter (part time)	01539 717708
Stephen Roe	01539 717720
Pam Wilson	01539 717711
Louise North	01539 717719
Angela Brockbank	01229 584424

SHELTERED HOUSING, CARELINE AND SUPPORTED HOUSING

Gordon Aitken	01539 717713
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TENANT AND RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT AND TRAINING

Suzy Duffy	01539 717714
John Stirling	01539 717715

Our Website: www.southlakeshousing.co.uk
Email: info@southlakeshousing.co.uk

DECENT HOMES

Bramall Construction	0845 389 0690
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52% of the local population are women and,
of SLH tenants, 62% are women.

DECENT HOMES NEWS

ADAPTATIONS PART OF DHP HOME IMPROVEMENTS Alterations for disabled tenants included in home upgrades

Up to now, aids & adaptation works have been identified and carried out under the Decent Homes Programme (DHP). These works help our tenants to use their homes to the full despite their mobility problems, for example installation of walk-in showers. To date, our DHP partner, Bramalls Construction, have completed 74 adaptations to homes across the district and achieved a high customer satisfaction level of 90%.

From now on, South Lakes Housing will carry out the installation works for the adaptations. However, you can still report any adaptations you need to the Resident Liaison Officers of Bramalls who will pass them to the local Occupational Therapist. The Occupational Therapist will make an assessment of your needs and pass on the referral to South Lakes Housing.

South Lakes Housing already carries out a full range of adaptations to help tenants to live comfortably in their homes. If you think you could benefit from an adaptation to your home, or have any questions about Decent Homes or have adaptation works pending and would like further information, please contact Trevor Woodward at South Lakes Housing on 01539 717261 or email us at info@southlakeshousing.co.uk

YOU SAID — WE DID

YOU SAID We want clean and tidy homes to move into.
WE DID We are introducing better cleaning services and a specialist voids team.

YOU SAID Be firm with people who don't keep up with their rent.
WE DID Review and improve the letters we send to tenants in arrears.

YOU SAID The lettings standard is not reader friendly.
WE DID Redraft the standard taking on board tenants' suggestions.

YOU SAID We would like you to change the locks when we move into our new home.
WE DID Arrange for the locks to be changed on all vacant homes.

YOU SAID Leaseholders should be able to use the SLH repairs service.
WE DID Arrange to provide internal repairs as well as external repairs to leaseholders.

YOU SAID You wanted us to tell you when your introductory tenancy had been completed, making you a secure tenant.
WE DID Introductory tenants will receive a visit after nine months and will receive confirmation about whether their tenancy can become secure.

www.southlakeshousing.co.uk