

News in brief



Resident inspectors

Our resident inspectors are coming to the end of their 15 week training that will give them a qualification in housing.

The resident inspectors will start working with us soon. More news in the new year.

Christmas is a time for giving, but remember rent still needs to be paid.

Board Walk

In November 2009 our new Chair of the Board, Paul Lowenberg and Board members, visited a number of estates. The Board walks gave them the opportunity to meet residents and discuss their concerns.



Hello and welcome

Ascham Homes welcomes a new Chair of the Board, Paul Lowenberg. Paul's first task as Chair was to appoint the new interim Chief Executive, Martin Esom.

Paul said, "Ascham Homes will move into a new phase in its commitment to deliver the best possible services for residents. We are finalising a number of improvements that will be announced in the coming weeks, which are designed to achieve high levels of resident satisfaction. We will be taking a thorough look at our financial position and report back to you in the new year.

The Board is totally committed to ensuring that our residents are at the heart of all that we do. We shall renew and extend our current approaches to resident engagement to ensure that we offer every possible opportunity for you to be involved in developing our priorities and improving our services.

2010 will be an exciting year ahead. We will go forward with our residents, Waltham Forest Council and other key partners in the community, to improve our services and maximise the impact of our partnerships."

Martin Esom, Interim Chief Executive until March 2010 said: "Ascham Homes is in a difficult financial position and I am working with a team to build a strategy for the 2010 budget. Our service improvements will be strongly based on what residents have told us.

We want to be proud of our estates and of the services we provide. I shall support the Board in recruiting the next Chief Executive to Ascham Homes and taking this company forward with new initiatives and programmes. I look forward to meeting residents during the next few months."



Residents' Compact

In the Autumn 2009 a group of residents worked with Ascham Homes to revise the Residents Participation Compact. The compact sets out the different ways you can get involved in what Ascham Homes does.

It tells you how you can influence and make changes to the service you receive. It also tells you how we will support you through funding and training.

A copy will be sent to each Tenant and Residents' Association and members of the Residents' Information Network.

A summary will also be published on our website at www.aschamhomes.org.uk and available in hard copies at our reception in Willow House.

Christmas opening times

Our Ascham Direct contact centre and reception at Willow House shall be closed from 5pm Christmas Eve and our normal service will resume on Tuesday 29 December 2009 at 8am until 5pm on Thursday 31 December 2009. We will re-open in the new year at 8am on Monday 4 January 2010.










If you need an emergency repair over the festive season please contact our out of hours service on 020 8496 3000.

We wish you a peaceful and happy New Year!



Our performance for the month of October 2009

Current performance Status

Estate inspections carried out: We aim to make sure 99% of estates inspected achieve a grade A or B for cleanliness	99.9%	
Leasehold service charge collection: We aim to collect 100% of Service Charges	91.8%	
Rent collection: We aim to collect 98%	95.0%	
Right to repairs: We aim to complete 98.5% of urgent repairs on time	99.1%	
Repair appointments made and kept: We aim to make and keep appointments for 98% repairs	98.3%	
Average time to complete repairs: We aim to complete responsive repairs in 9 days	5.3 days	
Repairs right first time: We aim to complete 80% of repairs 'right first time'	91.6%	
Resident satisfaction with major works: We aim to achieve 90% satisfaction for major works completed	98.3%	
Resident satisfaction with day to day repairs: We aim to achieve 90% satisfaction for day to day repairs	87.7%	

In October the overall performance is 80% of Indicators achieving a green status

Help is on hand



Many people are finding it harder to manage their debts and overdue rent in the present financial climate. Ascham Homes can help by providing advice and information.

Our staff are trained to assist you in person or by telephone. Our website also has useful information on how to pay your rent, budgeting and fuel payment advice. If you are struggling to pay your rent, please contact our Rent team on 020 8531 8097.



The Lady Poet

Ethel Dyall, 84, has lived and raised her family in her council home of 54 years. The house was built 1919 for returning war heroes after the first World War.

Ethel got the writing bug after attending a creative writing course in the 1980s and has been writing poetry and rhymes ever since.

One of her latest poems captures her ordeal of being stuck in her toilet for nine hours, not deterred by the experience, she put pen to paper.

Ethel is currently working on a collection of poems titled, 'Pride, Poverty and Piano' which she hopes to get published next year. Due to Ethel's physical difficulties, and as a result of her entrapment, adaptations were made to her toilet and bathroom that include a new walk-in shower. Ethel is delighted with the changes that have been made.

Ethel was full of praise for the Ascham Homes and Breyer Group staff involved and said, "Thank you very much for looking after me, I miss you all being around. Many thanks for what you have done for me."

Ethel recently had another fall and broke her funny bone, of all the bones to pick, Ethel certainly picked the funniest! We wish her a speedy recovery and a healthy new year!



ETHEL'S DILEMMA

The fifth of April, half past three.
 "Twas with a sense of urgency
 That I ran quickly to the loo.
 But then a problem came in view.
 Alas, my toilet is so small
 While I am large and rather tall.
 Rose from the throne, slipped on the floor!
 Let's hope I make it to the door.
 But then I get a fearful jolt:
 Calamity! Can't reach the bolt!
 Oh dear, this causes me great stress.
 Nerves are in shreds, I'm in a mess.
 Quiver and shake to no avail:
 Oh, Guardian Angels, please don't fail
 Me now! I'm well and truly stuck,
 Panic sets in, I'm out of luck.
 I'm all alone inside the house,
 No phone to hand, no friendly mouse!
 I yell and scream, "Come to my aid,
 And summon, please, the fire-brigade!"
 Wedged in for something like nine hours,
 I choose my hymns and funeral flowers.

At last! My grandson's home again!
 "What's up, nan, have you got a pain?"
 "No, but you need to rescue me.
 Just break the lock immediately!"
 Bless him, he isn't one to shirk.
 He tries his best, but it won't work.
 He phones my daughter. Frightened, she
 Calls the police: "Come urgently!"
 Firemen arrive with all their gear
 And now decision-time is here.
 The troops are poised for action, so:
 "We'll break the door down. Go go go!"
 Mission accomplished, but there's more:
 I am still wedged upon the floor.
 Two hunky paramedics then
 Up-end me, and I'm free again!
 And there this horror-story ends.
 Now to relate it to my friends!