

## News in brief



### Prize winner

Every six months residents who pay their rent by direct debit are entered into our prize draw. Just in time for Christmas, Mr Benhenni had his name pulled out of the hat, winning a 32" flat screen television. To set up a direct debit please contact our Rent team on 020 8531 8097.

Win an iPod with an up to date rent account



Contact our Rent team on 020 8531 8097

## Residents' Compact

We have now rewritten the compact and would like residents to give us their feedback to it either by email or over the telephone. To download the draft summary visit our website at [www.aschamhomes.org.uk](http://www.aschamhomes.org.uk)  
Telephone: 020 8496 4934.

## Resident Inspectors

Last summer we received 72 applications from tenants across the borough who were interested in becoming Resident Inspectors. The successful applicants were offered the free fifteen-week training course, provided by Just Housing. The course is accredited by the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Level 2 Certificate in Housing is equivalent to a GCSE qualification.

We are very pleased to announce that six residents have now successfully completed the course and will receive their certificates at an event planned for March this year. A programme of activity for the Resident Inspectors has been planned and begins with a workshop about Ascham Homes' day to day repairs service. The diverse group will look at all our services from a residents' perspective and take part in service improvement initiatives.

Project co-ordinator, Christine Pullbrook, said: "I am really pleased with the group's commitment and amount of time the residents have given, both in and out of the classroom."

## Neglected garden



### Tenant gets a Possession Order

This is the first case that Ascham Homes has taken to court for neglected gardens, under the new tenancy agreement which was introduced in May 2009. The tenant's garden was described by neighbours as overgrown, un-kept and an eyesore. The tenant had lived at the property for two years and had never carried out any work to her garden.

The matter was heard in court on 5 January 2010 and possession was awarded. The judge commented that the defendant had failed to cooperate with the claimants repeated requests that she comply with her terms and conditions of tenancy and that it was reasonable to make an outright possession order, which means the tenant will lose her home.

## Estate Action Days

Ascham Homes and Kier Building Maintenance (KBM) are visiting estates across the borough to carry out estate inspections and minor repairs. Residents are invited to attend at any of these dates and we expect to face challenges as well as put things right on each of these days.

Ascham Homes staff and KBM staff will be available on these days to talk with residents face to face about housing issues, rent enquiries, repairs and maintenance.

Leaseholders' requests or concerns will be passed to our Right to Buy and Leasehold Services team.

KBM will carry out general estate inspections and also supply a team of staff to undertake a variety of minor repairs as they are identified by residents living on the estates.



First in the programme, is:

### John Walsh and Fred Wigg Towers

28 and 29 January from 10am to 6pm in the TRA meeting room (Portacabin)

### Avenue Road Estate

11 and 12 February from 10am to 6pm in the TRA meeting room (Portacabin)

### Aldriche Way Estate

25 and 26 February from 10am to 6pm in (clearly marked Caravan)

# Customer satisfaction is on the up



Ascham Homes recently carried out its 2009 Customer Satisfaction Survey to find out how you felt about the services we provide. Your responses will ensure that service improvements are directed to areas that matter to you. We would like to thank all residents who took part in the survey.

This summary shows the improvements we have made since our last survey in 2008:

- 73.7% of respondents said they were satisfied with the overall service provided. This has improved by 10.7%
- Overall satisfaction with how repairs are dealt with has increased to 70.1%
- Satisfaction with how we clean and maintain your estates has increased to 77.5%
- 79.4% of residents said they felt their rent was good value for money
- Satisfaction with the neighbourhood as a place to live has improved to 74.3%

Mrs Dorris Carey was the lucky winner of our prize draw competition. The prize was £100 shopping vouchers and bouquet of flowers presented by our Interim Chief Executive, Martin Esom.

If your current tenancy is your first secure tenancy and started on or after 18 January 2005, you may now be entitled to the Right to Buy. Ascham Homes process all Right to Buy applications free of charge. If you are a secure tenant and interested in buying your home from the council please contact our Right to Buy and Leaseholder Services team on 020 8496 4087.

## English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

If you would like to improve your English please contact Rubeena Amanullah on 020 8496 4966. These classes are free to Waltham Forest Council residents.



## Make money work for you

Elfi, East London Financial Inclusion Unit, can help you to keep away from reaching financial crisis point.

Elfi gives practical advice on preventing debt and managing existing debt, so that you can stay afloat.

Contact our Rent team on 020 8531 8097 to find out how Elfi can help you.

## Council Leaseholder news

For Leaseholders who lease their property from Waltham Forest Council

### Compared to other Arms Length Management Organisations

Every year we compare our performance and service charges with other similar organisations through benchmarking. The results for 2008 / 2009 show that Ascham Homes' average annual service charges of £549 was the third lowest, compared to 13 other ALMOs. We will continue to keep your charges as low as possible.

### Paying Service Charges in instalments

The 2010 / 2011 annual estimated service charges will soon be dropping onto your doormats. We offer you the option of spreading these payments across ten months. To request this payment option please contact our Right to Buy and Leasehold Services team on 020 8496 4087.

### Gas servicing

It is extremely important that gas appliances are inspected and serviced at least once a year. This is to make sure that they work safely and efficiently and are not a cause of danger to you, your family or your neighbours. As well as keeping you and your neighbour safe from carbon monoxide poisoning or gas explosions, having your gas appliances serviced every year can also save you money by making sure the appliances are working efficiently. Also, please be aware that if you have let your property, you as landlord, are subject to the Gas Safety (Installation and use) Regulations 1998, which state that it is a legal requirement that you carry out an annual gas safety check to all gas appliances within your ownership. By law, anyone carrying out work on gas installations and appliances in your home must be on the Gas Safe Register. Always ask to see their Gas Safe Register ID card. For more information go to the Gas Safe website at:

<http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/default.aspx>

Our heating and gas maintenance partners may be able to help you, telephone our Decent Homes team on 020 8496 2672. When you have had your gas appliances checked, please send a copy of the gas safety record certificate to the Right to Buy and Leasehold Services team at Willow House, 869 Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4UH.