

the grapevine...

Welcome to the winter edition of Grapevine in 2010 - our newsletter for tenants. We hope you find grapevine both interesting and useful. We want to tailor future editions around information you want including - for this reason we have included a feedback slip. Please take the time to complete and return it. By doing this you will not only help us to focus on issues that are important to you but also help with the future development of services provided by the Council.

Combating anti-social behaviour

The Council's Housing Management Team works in partnership with the Community safety team to try and address some of the issues which often result in young people getting involved in anti-social behaviour activities.

Some of the things which have been set up across the district include:

Richmond Area Motorcycle Project (RAMP) - learning to ride and maintain motorcycles safely, Richmond Off-road Cycle initiative (ROCI) - learning to ride and maintain mountain bikes safely, Joint Amateur Boxing Club (JABS) - amateur boxing for fitness and discipline, Friday Night Footie - amateur football club for fitness and team work, Track and Skate - BMX and bladeing club for fitness and skill, Community Idol - amateur talent competition for team work and self esteem, DJ workshops - learning skills and team work, Inspire course - intensive fire fighting course learning consequences and team work, amongst many other projects!

There are times when it is necessary for the council to take more formal action when a young person persistently commits acts of anti-social behaviour. On these occasions the Tenancy Relations Manager, Phil Tweddle, works with North Yorkshire Police, the young person and their parents to try and agree a way forward which addresses the behaviour and improves the situation for everyone. During 2010 eight **Acceptable Behaviour Contracts** with young people and their parents have been put in place. The contracts are used to avoid the need for formal action being taken by either the Police or the Council against the young person.

Sometimes however formal action does need to be taken. This is usually done through serving a Notice of Seeking

Possession and then by monitoring the situation. This monitoring involves collecting information from those affected by the anti-social behaviour and the agencies involved. It is usually done by filling in diary sheets, statements and recordings from noise monitoring equipment - and ultimately the Council taking the case to court for a judge to make a decision with regards to the granting of a Possession Order. This can ultimately lead to someone losing their home.

For more information on what to do if you are suffering from anti-social behaviour contact Phil Tweddle on 01748 827180. If you are interested in finding out more about any of the diversionary activities organised through the Richmondshire Community Safety Partnership contact Kate Davies on 01748 827178.

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The cost of printing this newsletter is 28p

Life after Connaught...

Connaught - the contractor appointed by the Council to undertake improvement works to its homes - went into receivership earlier this year affecting Councils and Housing Associations up and down the country.

Richmondshire District Council had been looking at ways of reducing the impact of this situation - in advance of the official announcement, which meant officers were fully prepared which avoided disruption and upset to our tenants.

As an interim measure three contracts have been set up. David

Cussion Windows, a new company set up by former employees of Connaught, is completing the window renewal programme for 2010/11. Redhead Roofing is carrying out roofing work at Leyburn and Middleton Tyas and Help Link is doing the central heating installations due on the 2010/11 contract.

However these are interim measures - in the longer term the council is taking steps to get a new contractor to do the work in the improvement programme. All of the work originally programmed for years three to

five (2011/12) will be in the new contractors programme a long with all Menu works from the 2010 /11 programme which has had to be delayed slightly due to the collapse of Connaught. Approval from councillors on a revised contracting system is still needed - then the work will be advertised.

It is hoped that a new Improvement contractor will be ready to start on site by the end of July 2011.

If you have any queries regarding improvements to your home please contact Graham Hutchinson on 01748 828718.

If I want to improve my home what do I need to do?

Many people ask this question - when they want to make improvements at their own expense. It's not a difficult process and one which the council knows works best if followed before arrangements for the work are made.

Common requests include:

- changing fixtures and fittings/light fitments
- replacing internal and external doors
- renewing the kitchen
- erecting sheds and fencing

What to do:

1 Put your request in writing,

making sure you give details of the person/company who will be doing the improvement work and the full extent of the work planned.

- 2 Send all requests marked for the attention of the Maintenance Managers Swale House, Richmond, North Yorkshire, DL10 4JE
- 3 If it involves a project like renewing a kitchen make sure you put in a plan to show the intended outcome.
- 4 If you plan on erecting something that was not previously there - or replacing something with a larger one,

such as a garden shed or satellite dish you will need to include a drawing of the shed/satellite dish with its proposed location.

- 5 The Maintenance Manager will respond in writing to confirm the outcome of the request. No work should commence until receiving this written confirmation.
- 6 Remember to make sure that you also obtain any relevant planning or building control consent. For more information contact the Community Maintenance Department on 01748 827051/827053

More homes being developed across Richmondshire

The councils's housing register currently has more than 1500 names on it - all waiting for homes. And with only 1590 properties in total and around 200 allocations being made annually, it is easy to see that demand far outstrips supply.

We therefore work very closely with local communities to identify where we have a need for accommodation, and with local landowners and Housing Associations to try to develop additional homes. Within Richmondshire there are two dedicated officers who work to develop such schemes - Mark Robson and Christine Mavin.

Currently there are schemes being developed in:

- **Richmond Park** - a development with Broadacres Housing Association which is due to be completed by 31

March 2011. It includes accommodation for both rent and purchase under the Homebuy Direct Scheme. The development includes; six, three bedroom houses, four, two bedroom houses and six, two bedroom apartments

- **The Beacon - general needs affordable homes are being developed** between the council, the Riverside Housing Group and the Ministry of Defence. It will provide 31 supported units for ex-forces personnel and 12 general needs homes
- **Catterick Village** - this scheme is being developed between the council and Broadacres Housing Association. It includes seven, two bedroom bungalows, 12, two bedroom houses, 10, three bedroom houses, and two, four bedroom houses. It is due for completion by 31 March 2011

- **YMCA** - an additional eight supported housing units for young people are due for completion in the summer of 2011
- **Scotton** - a site to deliver six, two bedroom houses and six, three bedroom houses has been identified
- **Richmond** - an extra care scheme in partnership with Housing 21 is well underway on the old Lile Close sheltered housing site. It will provide 39 extra care units of accommodation and is due to be completed by late Spring/early Summer 2011
- **Reeth** - six, two bedroom houses are being developed by Broadacres Housing Association. They are due to be completed by March 2011.

For any more information on any of the above developments please contact Chris or Mark on 01748 828755/827021.

Estate Walkabouts...

Following feedback from the summer 2010 edition of Grapevine we know that 97% of you think that estate walkabouts are a good idea.

To help in this scheme a group of tenants who want to be formally included in further estate walkabouts have been recruited. That does not mean anyone who wants to join on the day can't - they can.

Details of the planned estate walkabouts are now posted on the council's website - www.richmondshire.gov.uk under

'what's happening on your estate'.

Details have also gone up in all the community offices and on parish noticeboards. There will be more feedback in future editions to let you know the impact of this.

As part of the Tenant Services Regulatory Framework we are working with tenants across Richmondshire to review our local standards and develop local offers.

Due to the enormous support to develop estate walkabouts we have included this as part of our Neighbourhood and Community

Standard 'local offer' to tenants as a means of improving the neighbourhoods. We also recognise that in undertaking the estate walkabouts in partnership with you it cuts across the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard by providing you with a means of getting involved in something which is important to you. It is important that we develop things which you think will make a difference so please complete the feedback forms and surveys we send to you so we can take your views into account.



How satisfied are you...

In the summer 2010 edition we told you about the Service Standards which had been

developed across the Housing Management Services. With each service received we are asking you

to complete a short satisfaction survey - these are the results at the end of September 2010:

	New Tenancies	Housing Register	Adaptations	Repair Service
	Sept 10	Sept 10	Sept 10	Sept 10
Standard of Advice given	94%	65%	100%	70%
Helpfulness of staff	94%	75%	100%	88%
Standard of Home				83%
Time taken to complete repair			50%	74%
Quality of workmanship				85%

At quarterly intervals we meet with members of the Tenant Panel to review performance over

the last quarter. Next year we plan to compare year on year and set targets with the Tenant

Panel to help us improve our services to you.

Landlord performance...

As well as monitoring the levels of satisfaction we monitor how we are performing as a landlord in specific areas. Some of these

areas include how long it takes us to re-let a property once it is empty - and how many appointments we are able to

make for non-urgent repairs. The following table shows how we have been doing in the first half of 2010:

Measure	Target by 31/3/11	Performance at 30/9/10
Complete cavity wall insulation programme	1148 properties	769
Re-let empty properties (minor repairs) quickly	20 days	27 days
Re-let performance - time taken to complete repairs	Minor repairs - 5 days Major repairs - 10 days	Minor repairs - 4.9 days Major repairs - 11.8 days
Offer appointments for non urgent internal repairs	75%	84.97%
Implement 5 year improvement programme	All scheduled work completed by 31/03/11	Connaught going into administration has halted the programme but decent homes work on target to be completed by 31/12/10

We asked... You said... We did...

In the summer 2010 edition of Grapevine we asked for your views - this is what we did:

Question	Yes	No	Tenant comments	What we did as a result
Did you find the information in the Grapevine interesting and useful?	97%	3%	3% of you told us: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Don't read it ■ Get the information I need without reading the Grapevine ■ Waste of money 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will continue to include the information you have told us is of interest to you. ■ We will tell you how much each copy costs to print
What information would you like to have in future editions?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What's being done regarding anti-social behaviour and young people ■ Help and support to tenants having financial problems ■ Kitchen renewals ■ Double glazing/modernisation /home improvements ■ What's happening now that Connaught has gone? ■ Types of improvements tenants can do ■ Local events ■ More of the same ■ Dog nuisance and gardens ■ Rules regarding Council homes ■ New builds - what's happening? ■ Feedback from Estate Walkabouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We have tailored the winter 2010 edition around a number of your requests and will include others in future editions
Would you like to be part of an editorial panel?	2%	98%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We have recruited three tenant volunteers to form our editorial panel who have helped with this edition
Do you think joint Estate Walkabouts would be a good idea?	97%	3%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A programme of estate walkabouts has been developed
If yes would you like to be involved?	7%	93%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A team of tenant volunteers has been set up to take part in the estate walkabouts
We hope to produce the Grapevine twice yearly; are you happy with this frequency	93%	7%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will produce the Grapevine twice a year - in spring/summer and in autumn/winter

What's happening to my home and when...

Part of the feedback from the summer edition of the Grapevine was specific requests on when certain work is going to be carried

out. It isn't possible to answer all those requests. However to help we can say that the present five year improvement plan is

available on the Council's web site and copies can be sent on request. Contact Graham Hutchinson on 01748 828718.

What's happening in the district...

From feedback we know you want to know what activities are available in the district. Well there is too much to include in full in this issue - they are all available on the website.

But to whet your appetite there is angling, archery, badminton, ballroom dancing, belly dancing, bowling, cycling, keep fit, salsa, pilates and table tennis to name but a few.

For more information contact Lesley Williams on 01609 767242.

Getting involved...

Following a work shop with tenants the council has developed, a Tenant Involvement Agreement which details the various ways in which you can get involved.

The Agreement can be found on the council's website and at the council's community offices.

Several tenants have already joined some of the groups available and are working with council officers to monitor some of our contracts as well as looking at services provided and agreeing standards which should be met in the delivery of

these services.

Two members of the Tenant panel attended a training course on Tenant Scrutiny in Selby in November. A further training course is being held in January on Tenant Scrutiny and one in March on Anti-Social Behaviour - both are open to members of the Tenant Panel and Tenant Monitoring Group.

In developing our website we enlisted the help of a member of our Tenant Monitoring Group. We hope you find it useful and easy to use. Please let us know if there's something missing you

would like to see on there or if you have any problems finding what you are looking for.

Two members of our Tenant Panel Group work very closely with council officers in the Maintenance and Improvement Team, in the monitoring of external contracts. Gina Kirby is responsible for monitoring the Improvement Scheme contracts in partnership with the Council and John Beeney is responsible for monitoring the gas central heating and boilers contract in partnership with the Council.

Snow, ice and floods...

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Spot 10 differences in the pictures below and be entered into a prize draw to win £20 worth of vouchers

Competition Details

Closing Date 28th February 2011

Return the completed form to:

Richmond District Council,
Swale House,
Frenchgate,
Richmond,
DL10 4JE

Contestants details:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Rules:

One entry per household the winner will be chosen from entries received by the closing date. The judges decision is final. You do not need Richmond District Council Insurance to enter this competition.

Contents Insurance for Tenants

Are the contents of your home insured

If your home was burgled, caught fire or flooded, replacing everything would cost you a lot of money.

So why risk it?

You can give yourself peace of mind with an insurance policy designed specifically for Richmond District Council tenants. Premiums start from just £1.16 per week for a £9,000 sum insured (£0.75 per week for a £6,000 sum insured for tenants aged 60 or over). Payment can be made weekly, monthly or annually. There is also the option to extend your cover to include Accidental Damage, Personal Belongings, Hearing Aids and Wheelchairs. Cover is new for old and there is no excess in the event of a claim.



TC05124 | 07/10

Pick up an application form from your Local Housing Office

ROYAL & SUN ALLIANCE INSURANCE PLC, ST. MARK'S COURT, CHART WAY, HORSHAM, WEST SUSSEX RH12 1XL

If you would like to receive this newsletter in large print or an alternative language please contact the Housing Management Team on 01748 829100.

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow...

Words of a song you may recognise but they became very real in early December 2010 when we saw more snow fall in a very short time than had been seen before and temperatures fall to record low levels. Pretty on a Christmas card but for some of the more vulnerable can spell danger.

A tenant member of the Editorial Panel thought it appropriate to share with you some of the things that the council staff did to go that extra mile during this period. So here are a few of the things that council wardens did to help

our more vulnerable tenants:

- unable to get through for four weeks a mobile warden walked four miles in the snow to check on the elderly in one of our rural parishes
- emergency shopping supplies were delivered to the elderly by a number of wardens
- one warden collected a number of shopping lists and did a big 'shop on line' so that the much needed supplies could be bought and delivered to a number of elderly people
- over 200 telephone calls were made to outlying areas to check on the elderly and vulnerable

and let them know we were there if they needed us

- problems in getting medical prescriptions resulted in team work between wardens, GPs and Tescos - prescriptions were electronically sent to the pharmacy and then delivered to the elderly.

There's a saying which goes something like 'together we'll crack it'... well we might not be able to crack the ice but together we certainly worked to crack the problem the snow and ice brought to some of our more vulnerable tenants.

Customer Feedback

1 Did you find the information in Grapevine interesting and useful? Yes No

2 If no why not?

3 What information would you like to have in future editions?

4 Do you think the cost of printing this newsletter is value for money? Yes No

5 Would you like to see the installation of hardstandings/driveways included within the Improvement Programme? Yes No

6 Would you be interested in attending an evening meeting with representatives from Royal Sun Alliance to learn more about the Tenants Insurance Scheme? Yes No

Thank you for the time taken to complete this feedback
- return it to us in the prepaid envelope - your views really do matter.