

Useful things you should know...

Free directory enquiry number

If you need to find a telephone number there is a free directory enquiry number you can use, although you can only get one enquiry at time and have to listen to a short 'commercial' - the number is 0800 100 100.

You can also get free enquiries on the internet by going to :

www.11.com

www.thephonebook.bt.com

Don't get caught out!



We don't let any grass grow under our feet here at Matthew Court! Apart from all the fund raising we do not only for ourselves but for others too, we have just invested in LED wind up lanterns in readiness for next winter—just in case that power cut comes along.

We experienced power cuts a few years ago when residents were without power on and off over a full weekend, so we bought wind up torches, but they are now old and too heavy for residents to wind up with arthritic hands, so we managed to locate these lightweight LED wind up lanterns from Coopers of Stortford—we think they're amazing and of course there's no need to worry about batteries. They stand 10 ½" high and are 5" across, they retail at £19.99. and they're buy one get one free at the moment. We've given one to each of our members because without their support we wouldn't be able to do the things we do.

Cooper's contact details are below just in case any of our other tenants think it's a good idea too. Phone—01279 757100 www.coopersofstortford.co.uk or

Regards.

Elaine Witcomb

Resident Scheme Manager

Neighbour to Neighbour

Goodbye Jozef

Our brilliant Jozef who has been cleaning certain CAHA properties for the last couple of years will be leaving us in May to go home for about a year.

Those of us lucky enough to know him will miss him, and wish him all the best. Thanks for all your amazing work Jozef.

N11 Tenant

Please be more thoughtful of your neighbours

Please do not:

- Shake out your dirty throws, rugs etc from your windows above ground floor level because the dirt makes its way into the flats below
- Do not throw food out of the windows on any level
- Do not holler from windows

It is very unpleasant to have food, crumbs and other people's debris fall or float in through your window.

Editorial Board

Are you a creative thinker?

Could you contribute to our quarterly newsletter?

We are looking for people who have a few hours to spare once every 3 months to be involved with the editorial content of this newsletter. Have your say on items that you feel are relevant to you and would be beneficial to both CAHA staff and tenants. We are want articles to publish in the newsletter—from home recipes to home remedies, poems to pictures we would like all who are linked with Christian Action to help create a more tenant orientated newsletter. Contact Esmond on **01992 765 942.**



Talking Points

Newsletter 12—March 2008

Please don't Ignore Rent Arrears

**Pay your rent or you could
lose your**



Christian Action Housing's main source of income is the rent it charges. This money allows the Association to manage its homes and carry out repairs.

Tenants who find themselves in trouble with their rent should contact us as soon as things start to become difficult. There are a number of ways we can help, such as a referral to Debtsmart, our Money and Debt Advice Project in partnership with Enfield Citizens Advice Bureau, as well as advice on housing and welfare benefits.

Christian Action Housing will do what it can to help, but will take court action against tenants who continue to miss rent payments – whatever the reason. This can lead to court costs, a county court judgment and perhaps even eviction.

Although tenants often tell our Revenue Officers: *"You won't evict me"*, the unfortunate truth is that the Association does evict people. This year so far we have evicted 6 households for non payment of rent. Don't become part of this statistic – and remember that if you are evicted the local council has no responsibility to house you.

Please make sure you bring your rent account up to date by the end of March 2008 to be entered into a free £250 prize draw.

A reward for all tenants with a clear and fully paid up rent account

If you ensure that your rent account is fully paid and up to date by 31st March 2008, we will enter you into a free prize draw for £250 worth of vouchers of your choice.

Christian Action (Enfield) Housing Association Ltd

Benedict House, 61 Island Centre Way, Enfield, Middlesex EN3 6GS

Switchboard Tel: 01992 765900 Fax: 01992 765999 Maintenance Repairs Line: 01992 765990

Christian Action (Enfield) Housing Association Ltd, a charity incorporated as an Industrial Provident Society under their reference 23577R.

The objectives of this Association have been agreed by the Charity Commissioners as charitable objectives. Registered with the Housing Corporation (LH0676).

A member of the National Housing Federation.



Debt Smart



Would you like someone to talk to about existing debt problems?

Do you need advice about managing your money and dealing effectively with your creditors?

Maybe you have a benefits problem which you would like to discuss?

Debt Smart is a partnership between Citizens Advice Bureau and Christian Action Housing where you can get free confidential expert advice on all debt and money matters.

Contact the Housing Services Team on 01992 765900 to book an appointment.

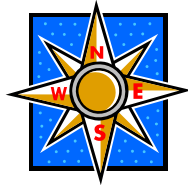
Rent Increases

Please note that your rent will increase from Monday 7th April 2008.

If you are claiming housing benefit you will need to inform them of your new rent, if you don't you could be liable for rent arrears if your claim is not changed to take account of the increase.

For those of who you pay by standing order, please make arrangements with your bank to change the amount you pay to us. If you pay by direct debit, we will be taking the necessary action to change the amount with your bank.

Compass Support Services



A Floating Support Service for General Needs Tenants

Compass can help you with:

- Managing debts and paying bills
- Settling into your new home
- Accessing community resources
- Developing budgeting, cooking & living skills
- Education, training and employment
- Applying for benefits
- Help with neighbour disputes
- Developing constructive relationships

Your Housing Officer can refer you to this service or you can access the service yourself by calling 01992 765900.

Safe Watch

Neighbourhood Wardens Scheme

Christian Action Housing, in partnership with Neighbourhood Solutions Limited, provide **Safe Watch** this is a Neighbourhood Warden Service for our tenants and residents.

Safe Watch Wardens will:

- ✓ Offer a reassuring uniformed presence
- ✓ Help us combat anti-social behaviour
- ✓ Operate outside normal office hours
- ✓ Liaise with Police and other local organisations

You can report Anti-Social Behaviour or contact Safe Watch via our 24 hour anti-social behaviour hotline on **01992 765942**

Safety Warning



There have been a couple of reports in the national and local press about water tanks collapsing causing scalds and injuries. These have been caused when the thermostat (the device which controls the temperature of the water) in the hot water cylinder or immersion heater has failed and the water boils over into the cold water tank in the roof and then either overflows the tank or causes the plastic sides of the tank to soften and collapse.

Christian Action Housing checks all the gas fired heating and hot water systems every year and replaces any defective or worn thermostats found, also many of our properties have combination boilers which do use hot water cylinders or store hot water.

However in view of the concern expressed in the press we thought we should keep all our residents fully informed.

Be careful with Hot Water

Though the hot water is regulated to a maximum of 67 deg Centigrade, this is hot enough to scald most people if they are exposed for more than a few seconds. Small children, the elderly and the disabled are particularly vulnerable to scalds because they may not be able to get out of very hot water quickly enough.

You can ask the Gas Service Engineer during the gas safety Inspection or when they come to service the boiler to turn down the thermostat on your hot water. If you are concerned because someone in your household is vulnerable, please ring the Repairs Line at Christian Action and we will arrange for an electrician or engineer to come and regulate the hot water temperature.

The warning signs :

- Very hot water and steam coming out of the taps.
The water coming from the hot water tap should not exceed 67 deg Centigrade at any time
- Hot water pouring out of the overflow warning pipe indicates that the hot water cylinder is boiling over
- The sound of bubbling and boiling noises from the boiler or hot water tank or cylinder
- Lots of steam in the loft

What you should do

- Turn off the immersion heater switch to the hot water cylinder or tank
- Turn off the hot water on your gas central heating programmer
- Call Christian Action Repairs hot line **01992 765990** advise us of your name and address and that the hot water is boiling over and you suspect that the thermostat has failed
- Keep the hot water switched off until such time as it has been checked by an electrician or gas engineer.

Meet the Housing Services Team

There have recently been some staff changes in the Housing Services

Rowena Ferro Neighbourhood Officer, has returned from maternity leave and is covering Enfield patch.



Gerry Francis-Smith is temporarily covering the handover and letting of our new project at Vincent House.



Debbie Hart is trainee Neighbourhood Officer covering Waltham Forest, Haringey & Barnet patches.



Jackie Hibbert, Performance Officer looks after the estates services contracts for all Boroughs.

Elisha Odumosu is covering the Revenue Officer role for Enfield following the departure of Kat Strange.



Terry Cyrille, Compass Floating Support Officer, works with tenants needing support in accessing community services or maintaining their tenancies.



Carla Delaney is Revenue Officer for Haringey, Waltham Forest and Barnet.



Ian Martin, Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services.

Linda Slight, Housing Finance Assistant deals with rents and service charges for all Boroughs.



Penny Grubb, Housing Services Manager.



Esmond Henry, is currently covering the Inclusion Officer role dealing with all aspects of anti-social behaviour and tenant involvement.



Andy Chamberlain, Team Leader.

Budget Consultation

Thank you to all the tenants who replied to our consultation about Christian Action's budget for 2008-2009, we received over 180 completed questionnaires.

Of those tenants answering each question, **51%** thought access to our repairs service had improved, **46%** thought it had stayed the same and **3%** thought it had got worse. **84%** of tenants told us that you wanted us to continue to employ additional staff to provide this service.

Other results were:

- **94%** of those who had used our Safewatch found it helpful
- **100%** of those who had used our Compass service found it helpful
- **87%** thought we should continue to fund these services
- **78%** said we should continue with our plans to purchase more larger homes



- **75%** of those who had used our Debtsmart service had found it helpful
- **87%** said we should continue the service.

A number of tenants said they didn't know about some of the above services, so we've included details in this newsletter.

More New Homes

Christian Action has been allocated almost £7 million grant by the Housing Corporation towards the cost of building more new affordable homes. These include the development of a new retirement housing scheme in Ponders End, the provision of extra care housing in Walthamstow and new flats for rent next to the historic Leyton Municipal Offices.

More news about these developments will be included in future newsletters.

Mark Hayes
Chief Executive

Tenants' Area Forums

We look forward to seeing as many CAHA tenants as possible at the Area Forums, refreshments are provided. Please call Esmond Henry if you need further information or directions on:
01992 765 942 or
esmondhenry@christianaction.org.uk

Enfield 1 **Monday 31 March, 7.00pm**
Christian Action Housing Association
Benedict House
61 Island Centre Way
Enfield EN3 6GS

Barnet **Wednesday 2 April, 7.00 pm**
Hydon Court
Friern Barnet Road
Friern Barnet, London N11 3EQ

Enfield 2 **Thursday 3 April, 7.00 pm**
Christian Action Housing Association
Bounces Road Community Hall
1 Foxglove Close,
Edmonton N9 8LX

Haringey **Monday 7 April, 7.00 pm**
Trinity African Methodist
Episcopal Zion Church
Gospatrick Road,
Tottenham N17
(behind Deyncourt Rd)

Waltham Forest **Weds 9 April, 7.00 pm**
EpiCentre
41 West Street
London E11 4LJ

Chip pan fires cause more injuries than any other house fires

Chip pan fires start when oil or fat overheats and catches fire or when oil or fat spills onto the cooker, because the pan has been filled too high. They can also start when wet chips are put in hot oil making it bubble up and overflow.

Here are some simple ways to make sure food is fried safely:

- Never fill the pan more than a third full
- Never leave the pan alone with the heat on – **not even for a few seconds**
- Dry chips before putting them in the pan
- Never put chips in if the oil has started smoking
- Turn off the heat and leave the oil to cool down, or it could catch fire
- If your chip pan catches fire do not move the pan
- Turn off the heat if it is safe to do so, but never lean over the pan to reach the controls

- NEVER throw water or use a fire extinguisher on the fire. If possible, drape a damp cloth or towel over the pan to smother the flames and then leave the pan to cool down for at least half an hour.
- If you cannot control the fire simply close the door to the room, get out, tell everybody else in the house to get out and call the Fire Service on 999—do not go back inside the house.

The best advice is to get rid of your chip pan and use a deep fat fryer instead, these are controlled by a thermostat and never let the oil or fat get too hot.

Chip pans are not the only cause of house fires, more than half of all accidental fires in the home start in the kitchen and nearly all involve the cooker.

Some tips on cooking safely:

- Never hang tea towels on the cooker



The results of a chip pan fire

- Make sure the cooker is turned off when you have finished using it
- Do not let leads from other appliances trail across the cooker
- Don't let fat and grease build up on the cooker, especially in the grill pan where it can easily catch fire
- Never leave children in the kitchen unsupervised.

The Fire Service can fit free smoke alarms to any home without one, phone 08000 28 44 28 for a Home Fire Visit in which an officer will give you free advice and fit a free smoke alarm if necessary.

Tenant census

We are still working on the tenant census, so those of you who have been visited and not responded, please contact your Neighbourhood Officer to update your details.

If you have not had a visit or phone call, you can expect a visit or phone call from the Housing Services team or Customer care team over the next few weeks.

The purpose of the census is to ensure we have up to date details of all our tenants and ensure that the services we offer meet their needs. It will also give you an opportunity to meet staff and give them your views about our services.

Mystery shoppers



Thank you to those of you who have volunteered to help us by becoming mystery shoppers.

We still need more volunteers, so if you are interested, please contact Esmond Henry on 01992 765942 for further information.

To those who have agreed to help us out, you will be contacted over the next few weeks to discuss how mystery shopping works and start shopping!

Participants will be rewarded for their time and assistance.

The vision ...



Vincent House

The reality ...



We are pleased to report that tenants have started moving into our latest development Vincent House, located on the corner of Nags Head Road. *Full report in next newsletter.*

parGAS wins the Gas Contract

Enfield based **parGAS** successfully won CAHA's new 3 star plus gas servicing contract which will start during April 2008. They will carry out the annual gas safety check to all of our properties with a gas supply and will also carry out the annual servicing and breakdown cover.

parGAS have been established in Enfield for 12 years and service and repair gas appliances in over 22,000 households throughout north and east London. Their customers include Circle Anglia and Family Mosaic, so they have extensive experience in working for housing associations.

The selection process followed the European Union Rules for tendering large contracts and tenant representatives Graham Higgins and Edna Griffith were on the tender evaluation panel which looked



Mike MacGibbon of parGAS pictured with Mark Hayes

in detail at the bids and the method statements of the four companies who made it to the shortlist. The panel put each of the contractors through a presentation and very tough question session. The panel visited the final two contractors in their offices to see if they actually delivered what they claimed. The tender was evaluated on quality and customer service as much as price.

parGas came through with flying colours, we were impressed with their commitment to customer service and up to the minute progress reporting on all jobs.

Residents will start to receive letters from **parGas** to arrange for their service and gas safety checks. We are aiming to move most of our servicing to the summer months so as to reduce the number of breakdowns in winter.