

Warwickshire Rural Life

The residents' newsletter for
Warwickshire Rural Housing Association
AUTUMN 2014
www.warwickshirerha.org.uk



Newsflash

To celebrate our 25th Anniversary we are organising a Christmas party on 5th December. Look out for your invitation in the post.

£2,500 for residents!

As part of our 25th anniversary celebrations, we're offering a bursary of £500 to five individuals who live in our homes across Warwickshire.

The bursaries will help local people in terms of their personal development, education, employment or how they contribute to their local community.

You can be any age to apply and the closing date is 31st October. Call **01530 278080** or email enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk for details.

• **Read the full story at www.warwickshirerha.org.uk**

Stay in credit

Following the recent changes to Housing Benefit and the forthcoming changes to Universal Credit, please remember that your rent account still needs to be in credit at all times. You may remember we wrote to you, when the changes were first announced, recommending that you pay an extra £3 - £5 per week to get ahead.



First class



Thank you to all residents who returned the telephone satisfaction survey. So, are you happy with how your calls are handled by our Customer Care Team? The answer is definitely 'yes'!

- 98% said your call was answered promptly.
- 98% said the advisor was friendly and helpful.
- 80% said the advisor was able to deal with your enquiry.

You said...

"Your customer service is 10/10."

"The team is very kind and helpful."

"I have always received fantastic service."

Let us in

We have some properties which were built before 2000 which may contain some asbestos. While residents needn't be concerned, it's important that we carry out an asbestos management survey to ensure everyone's safety.



It is vital that you allow us access to carry out this survey. If you fail to do so, we will take legal action to enter the property. Once the survey has been completed, the results will be shared with you and any health and safety concerns will be dealt with.

Valuable feedback

All residents who pay a service charge for garden maintenance were sent a survey in August. Thank you for your valuable feedback which highlighted some areas we need to improve.

The survey looked at issues such as how often visits are made, the cost of the service, and the standard of work. Several residents were keen to see more opportunities to get involved.

All your comments are now being used to develop an action plan so we can make changes to the service ready for 2015.

Keep it smoke free

The Association needs to ensure that our contractors work in a smoke free environment. If you've arranged an appointment for one of our contractors to visit, please don't smoke in your home during their visit or for the hour before the time they are due to arrive.

There must also be someone over the age of 16 at home to let them in.



Warm front

We've been trialing a new electric heating system which, unlike storage heaters, can give instant heat.

As initial feedback has been very good, we're now looking to extend the programme to other selected properties.

Don't burn it

While there are no laws against having a bonfire, there are laws for the nuisance they can cause.

Please think about how the smoke and ash will affect your neighbours, as well as the damage a fire can cause to your own property. Recycle garden rubbish, don't burn it, and never light a bonfire near a garden fence or shed.

Remember that when strong sunlight reflects off glass it can cause a fire, so if you're having a clear out, never leave unwanted mirrors or other glass items in your garden. Also avoid storing flammable liquids, such as petrol, in garden sheds.

SHARED OWNERS...

Get insured

If you have a query about your buildings insurance, please contact Sam Brown at Arthur J Gallagher & Co. on **0845 2187871** or email sam_brown@ajg.com Remember to arrange your own contents insurance.

Need a repair?

Shared owners have a full self repairing lease which means you are responsible for your own repairs.

Be gas safe

Make sure you stay safe by calling Wheldons on **01908 211127** to make an appointment to service your gas appliances each year. It costs £48 to carry out the safety check which is payable to the engineer when he attends.

What's new with you?

If anything changes – for example you've had a child, your partner has moved in, you've got a new mobile number or a new email address – please let us know! Simply call **01530 278080**.

Service standards

Personal Information about you or your family will only be kept on file, and/or disclosed to other agencies in line with Data Protection legislation.

Noticeboard

Branching out

If you have trees in your garden, please be aware that they are your responsibility to maintain unless they are causing a health and safety issue.



If you want to get them trimmed, just check first with your local authority that there isn't a tree preservation order in place which restricts the cutting of certain trees.

Why not try your local handyman service if you're over 50 or have a disability? Call **0116 299 2254**.

What a difference!

Winters will certainly be warmer for residents in Ivy Lane, Ettington, following the full refurbishment of their homes.

The six almshouses have had the heating upgraded with storage heaters replaced with oil filled radiators, and external and part internal insulation improved. The result is warmer homes, better energy efficiency and cheaper bills.

Resident, Jan Williams, says: "I am so impressed with the work. Everyone is overjoyed. The new heaters look amazing, especially as they mean next winter will actually be almost a pleasure to look forward to!"

www.warwickshirerha.org.uk

Check it out

The Winter months are fast approaching so don't forget to turn your heating on now to check that it's working properly before the cold spell starts.



Rubbish!

Residents in Alcester were talking rubbish during Rural Housing Week!

Housing Officers arranged for the Conway Estate to have a skip for a day and manned it while residents got rid of all their unwanted rubbish from their homes and gardens.



Need a translation?

If you need a copy of Rural Life newsletter in another language we will happily provide a translation for you. All you have to do is call the office on **01530 278080** with your request.

Warwickshire
Rural Life



REPAIRS REPORTING

To report a repair, please call the Customer Care Team on **01530 278080** and give us as much information about the repair as possible so we can pass this on to the contractor.



It may seem easier to tell your Housing Officer when you speak to them, but it will be dealt with more quickly if you report it direct to the Customer Care Team.

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