

Tenants Wanted!

Spring/Summer 2010

Help us spend the improvement budget

We've got £60,000 this year for the Neighbourhood Improvement Panel to spend on improvements proposed by council staff and residents from across the town.

The panel is currently looking for tenants from Pound Hill, Three Bridges and Southgate to join them. This is your opportunity to say how money is spent in Crawley and make a real difference. We are particularly interested in hearing from men and anyone under 45 as these groups are currently under represented on the panel.

Help make decisions

We're also looking for people to join the Forum, the main consultative

body who meet every month for about 2 hours in the evening. Among other duties, they approve / question any policy changes before they are presented to the council's Cabinet. We're particularly interested in hearing from people from Northgate, Maidenbower, Southgate and West Green, anyone under 35 and those from ethnic minority groups, as these are currently under represented.

Can't make a regular meeting

If you're unable to make a regular commitment there are other ways you can get involved. Our Editorial panel puts together the tenant newsletter 'Homelink' and has an open invite. Just register your interest and turn up when you can.



You can also attend your local neighbourhood inspection; the evening programme for this year has now started and you will receive an invite if there's one in your street. If you want to attend the inspections being held in your neighbourhood please contact your Neighbourhood Housing Manager.



Welcome to the first edition of the Crawley Homes Involving People (CHIP) newsletter

This newsletter should keep you up to speed on everything going on with our involved tenants.

You've already made the first step towards getting more involved by registering for CHIP; whether it's filling in a survey or chairing one of our panels, you can get involved as much or as little as you want.

Michelle Fitzgerald-Lees, Lisa Stone and Amber Hardy are your Resident Involvement Team; they're here to support you in all the resident involvement activities you want to take part in.

Remember – your services, your say.

Anti-social behaviour - a tenant's perspective

Members of the Anti-Social Behaviour Panel attended the 'Anti-Social Behaviour Workshop: a Tenant's Perspective' run by 'InSTEP' in Brighton on May 11.



John, Cary and Carolyn went along to make sure they know what's happening at a national level regarding the trends and legislation for anti-social behaviour. They can use this knowledge when considering cases and changes to policy on the panel.

They learnt about the legal remedies available, effective partnership working, good practice, victim support and the Respect Agenda that Crawley has already signed up to. They also looked at particular case studies and their outcomes.

Carolyn said: "Altogether an informative day, learning about good practice to get the first steps right to ensure a successful resolution for all".

'InSTEP' is an information service for tenants who also run training courses and conferences. More information can be found on their website www.instepservices.co.uk or call 0500844111.

Learning for you

A big thank you to everyone who filled in the Training Needs Questionnaire earlier this year. What you have told us will help us to put on the training sessions you want the way you want them.

This year, as well as group meetings, we'll be looking at using workbooks and online courses.

Keep your eyes open for the full programme due out in September.

If you'd like to know more about getting involved or you need help with understanding this document please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01293 483434 or email tenants.groups@crawley.gov.uk

Q&A

Meet Diann Carter - member of the Neighbourhood Improvement Panel

Q. How did you hear about the panel?

A. I'm a member of the Crawley Homes Forum and I heard other members talking about the Panel at one of our Forum meetings.

Q. What attracted you to join the panel?

A. With a panel budget of £60,000 for this year, I felt I would be able to have a real say in where our Crawley Homes money was being spent.

Q. What sort of decisions have you been involved in?

A. It's been so varied, we've discussed everything from a simple change of signage, only costing a small amount of our budget, to one improvement costing over £17,000.

Q. How do you feel about having a say in spending such large amounts of money?

A. It is a very responsible position to be in, great care has to be taken in ensuring that the money is spent wisely and gives real value to residents.

Q. What would you say to anyone who was thinking of getting involved?

A. Becoming a member of the Neighbourhood Improvement Panel lets you make a real difference to the lives of residents in Crawley by improving the surroundings where they live.



CBC tenant, Julie Wells, was delighted with her kitchen finished earlier this year.

Come and see my new kitchen!

Decent homes and repairs are hot topics for tenants. When the decent homes programme reached my area I was lucky enough to be asked to sit as a tenant representative for my area and attend the weekly site meetings.

These meetings are attended by officers, the contractors and tenants like me. We discuss issues relating to the day-to-day running of the project. I bring tenant feedback to the group and also provide a tenants eye view of what is going on. I let them know what tenants are thinking and feeling about the service they are receiving.

How do I get to know what's going on? Well that's the easy part! Repairs and decent homes are hot topics and people want to tell you about their experiences.

I talk to my neighbours and friends, and people who know what I do pass on experiences from their friends and family. It's good to talk to people proudly telling you about their new kitchen or bathroom. It's equally rewarding to help people by giving them contact details or taking the issue to the site meeting to find out what's going on and then bring the information back to the tenant.

All in all my involvement has given me the opportunity to have a real input into the way the service is delivered to tenants. I'm able to help shape the service but perhaps best of all it's enabled me to talk to tenants I wouldn't normally come into contact with, helping to create a far greater sense of community.

Cary Buckham
Repairs Panel



Speak up for council housing



ARCH Conference 2010

The Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) held their annual conference in Birmingham on May 13. More than 100 tenants, including two from Crawley, went along to speak up for council housing.

At the conference John Andrew and Raquel Kelvie, who are both tenants and members of the Crawley Homes Forum, were able to question members of the ARCH executive board and speakers from the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).

They also attended workshops on housing budgeting and systems thinking.

John and Raquel are also members of the ARCH national sub-group and give the views and opinions

of tenants in Crawley to the national board.

Raquel said: "All in all a worthwhile day, keeping us up to speed on National Issues and giving tenants a voice nationally."

ARCH has 54 member authorities responsible for half a million properties. Their members have chosen not to retain their stock as council housing. The event was hosted by Birmingham City Council, the largest stock retained authority in England.

The TSA recently became responsible for the regulation of council housing as well as housing associations.

CRAWLEY HOMES' TENANTS FESTIVAL AUGUST 10TH • QUEENS SQUARE • 11AM - 3PM

This year's tenant event has been renamed as the 'Tenant Festival' and the emphasis is on family fun!

- Enjoy food from around the world
- Enter prize draws
- Try out CABCAM - A real London minicab with a camera inside! Sit inside and give us your views
- DIY demonstrations and tips - try your hand at tiling and other trades
- Meet your contractors and our tenant representatives.
- See how your rent money has been spent over the last year!
- Arts and crafts and other kids activities - bring the whole family



ALL FREE!