

# Community Spirit

Community

The Sentinel Magazine with the Community at Heart

Spring 2011



p6

## Are you recession proof?

p10

Lucy's island dream comes true

p20

Calling all gardeners



# That's the spirit



Welcome to the Spring edition. I've been a Sentinel customer for over 12 years since my family, including our cat Poppy, were given a home by Hart Housing Association. Both children have since flown the nest, so in December 2009, I entered into a 3-way mutual exchange and now live in a lovely bungalow in Fleet.

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Lucy and Ronnie Povey.  
see P10 for more

My employment situation changed in March 2010, and I became more involved by joining the Sentinel Tenants' and Residents' Association and the Hart and District Neighbourhood Panel. I've also participated in a number of focus groups, workshops and training courses which have really helped to enhance my personal, as well as professional skills. More recently, I've become a member of the organising committee for our Residents Week summer activity programme SHARE, which promises to provide fun and entertainment for all residents and their families.

This edition is packed full of ways you can get involved, volunteering can give you new skills, you can transfer into paid employment see Helen's story on P8. There's top tips on finding free training on P9 and a chance to win £100 by completing the enclosed Reader Survey.

**Debbie Twinn**, Guest Editor.  
You can contact Debbie through STARA via **STARA@sentinelha.org.uk** or the Hart & District Neighbourhood Panel at **hart.neighbourhoodpanel@sentinelha.org.uk**

## Soapbox – say what you see

**We asked customers what they think of their newly built home.**

**Karen and Colin Stafford** – Bramley Green, Tadley  
So far, a quiet residential area, nice style rooms with adequate space and ample sockets and lights.

**Mrs T Donne** – Aldershot  
Airy and spacious, I like the bedroom and bathroom sizes.

**Mr JP Curd** – Basingstoke  
Lovely development, but no shops within walking distance.

**Sarah Cook** – Andover  
I like the layout and space but I would have liked a little balcony.

# Help us to help you

What would a future with less house building mean for those on local waiting lists?



## Why do we need to build more houses?

As the biggest landlord in North Hampshire, we're passionate about our work, and proud of what we've achieved in building better communities over the last decade. We welcome 1000 new households every year into our homes. Of these, about 500 homes are from re-letting existing properties and 500 from new homes. And yet, as fast as we do this, housing waiting lists – currently over 10,000 across our area – continue to grow because of the lack of affordable homes. This means we can't just stop building new homes now.

## So can't you just build more?

Yes, that's certainly our plan, but it's more than a numbers game. We also believe that new developments should be well-designed, appropriate for our area, meet the needs of local people and be sustainable. That's why we've completed the regeneration developments at Oakridge Village

and Popley Poets in Basingstoke, Pyestock near Farnborough, and Bishops Green near Newbury. Built in consultation with local people to make sure their aspirations are taken into account where ever possible, this type of redevelopment will be extremely hard to carry on with following the governments public spending cuts.

## What are you doing about it?

We're working on new ways of subsidising development so we can help reduce housing waiting lists and give as many people as possible a chance to live in a decent home, in an area they want to live in, with a rent that is as affordable as possible. Although there will be less government grant for building new homes, we owe it to our children not to lock them out of being able to have an affordable home in the future. Some people may think it's in their own interests to stop building so they can benefit from rising house prices, but If we don't build enough new homes now we could be ruining the future for the next generations.



## Anything we can do to help?

There's a risk that local objections to affordable homes could make it even more difficult for us to do our bit in the future, so we're asking you to help us make the case for more affordable homes wherever and whenever the issue comes up. That way, when your children are ready leave home there'll be a better chance of them finding somewhere suitable to live.

# Set the agenda:

Our repairs service went under the microscope recently when six resident inspectors from other housing associations checked us out. Over two days the inspectors interviewed staff, checked procedures using mystery shopping, spoke to customers by phone and face to face, and produced a feedback report telling us what we do well and where we can make improvements. Here's a summary of what they found.



## What we do well:

- Staff are enthusiastic, give good service and are helpful
- Phone calls are answered quickly and handled well
- Customers are told who they are talking to, so the service they receive feels personal
- Customers report a high satisfaction rate with the service they receive
- Customers are quickly offered an a.m. or p.m. appointment time, and a letter confirming this is printed off towards the end of the phone call
- Staff know if a customer is disabled, is vulnerable or has specific requests so the service can be tailored to meet their needs
- Customers can report a repair online.

## What we need to improve:

- Better communication with customers about delayed repairs. Customers would like to know how much longer they have to wait until their part is available
- Sentinel surveyors should inspect all repairs where there's a complaint about workmanship
- Increase the number of repairs that Sentinel surveyors check up on to ensure quality
- Make sure all customers know what standard of service to expect from our contractors.

## What happens next?

We've already started making changes to the service including:

- Chasing up parts and making new appointments with customers to get them fitted
- We've improved the way our surveyors deal with complaints about repairs
- Our surveyors now check the quality of more repair jobs
- Our Customer Deal includes details of our repairs standards which was published in the last edition of Spirit and can be found on our website.

We want our repairs service to be second to none and will still give you a call when your repair is completed to check how it was for you, that way we can keep getting better.



# Hints and tips...



With the freezing winter weather we had last year it's worth taking some precautions to avoid suffering damage to your home from frozen pipes. Here's a few top tips:

- Find your mains water stop valve and make sure you can turn it off and on. It will usually be somewhere on the ground floor of your home.
  - Leave your heating on while you're away from home. In severe weather you should leave your heating on day and night at your usual temperature setting, especially if you'll be away from home for any length of time.
  - Open your loft trap door. This lets warm air from other parts of the house to circulate in the loft, and will help stop pipes freezing.
- If you find your pipes have frozen.**
- Turn off the water at the main stop cock. If there is a stop valve fitted on the outlet pipe from the header tank, this should be turned off too.
  - Before you start to thaw the system, protect or remove anything which might be damaged by water running from the burst. Cover any electrical junction boxes and wiring to keep water off.
  - Thaw the pipe using a hairdryer or hot water bottle, never use a blow lamp or heat gun.
  - Open the tap closest to the frozen part of the pipe.
  - Begin thawing the pipe from the tap side of the frozen area, by warming it gently, and work back towards the header tank.

## What a bunch of rogues

We've heard that some rogue traders have been trying to pass themselves off as a member of Trading Standards, saying they are checking up on - rogue traders and then offering to put right any bad work they say they've identified.

Don't be fooled, Trading Standards would never do this. If you're unsure about anyone who knocks at your door always ask to see their ID, just like Sentinel staff, all trading standards staff always carry photographic identification.

For extra peace of mind you could have a Bogus Caller alarm fitted close to your front door.

This silently calls our CommuniCare service, where they can monitor and record any doorstep conversations you are worried about.

Call **01256 338800** to book a no-obligation consultation.



# Are you recession proof?

## It could happen to anyone

We're living in tough times, the price of food and fuel keep going up and unemployment is on the increase. At times like these making ends meet can be a real problem, so keeping on top of your finances is crucial. If you're struggling, the most important thing is to let the people you owe money to know what is happening. If you don't and you're unable to pay your bills you could end up in a real mess. That's what happened to Kevin\*, who rented one of our homes in Farnborough, Hampshire.

"I moved into my new flat in 2005, it was great, things were going really well. Then I got laid off and I couldn't pay my rent. Sentinel helped me apply for Housing Benefit to cover the rent while I looked for another job. Trouble was I had other debts too and each time I managed to find work the Housing Benefit stopped and I had to try and sort out my rent, and pay my other debts.

I'd been temping on and off for nearly a year and my debts were getting worse. In 2007 I was out of work again and decided the best thing to do was move back in with my mum and try and sort myself out.

Last year I got a letter from Sentinel saying I owed £390.90 in unpaid rent, I was really shocked as I hadn't lived in the flat for nearly three years. I phoned them and they told me they had traced me through Experian\*\* and I owed the money because I should have given one month's notice when I left the flat. I started paying £5 a week and if I don't have the money, I always let them know. I'm hoping to get back on the housing register once I've paid it all off."

If you're struggling to make ends meet give us a call, we can offer help and advice to help get you back on track.

\* We agreed to change his name for this article

\*\*Experian is a credit reference agency



## Don't let loan sharks sink their teeth in

Loan sharks are very friendly when you first meet them. When you need £100 to get the washing machine fixed quickly, they might be your only friend. They may even live on your estate and will be only too happy to help out. The trouble comes when you realise how much they want back and what they might do to you or your family if they don't get it. In most cases there is no quick and easy way out. The debt – and the threats – continue.

Loan sharking is illegal. You need a licence to lend money as a business. You can beat the loan sharks and put them out of business and Crimestoppers can help you. You don't need to tell them who you are, just tell them what you know. Call free on **0800 555 111**.

# Food for thought...

Food banks collect and distribute food to local residents who find themselves facing a financial crisis. Your Neighbourhood Co-ordinator can supply free Food Bank vouchers and details of where to find your nearest distribution centre.



For a copy of the new rent calendar give us a call or visit our website

# A sporting chance

Young people with disabilities and special needs can take part in free football training sessions with Learning Through Sport in Basingstoke.

Call **0230 328326** or email [learningthroughsport@ntlworld.com](mailto:learningthroughsport@ntlworld.com)



*Remember to stay on top of your rent and change your standing order payment when you get your rent increase letter.*

# Aiming high

Parent Voice is a free network across Hampshire for families of children with disabilities from birth to age 19. They're a mine of information, helping families access the services and support they need. Register now and you'll get a free quarterly newsletter, invitations to coffee mornings and other events, information and advice about support groups and local services.

Visit [www.parentvoice.info](http://www.parentvoice.info) or call **01256 472767**.

# Road to success

You won't get me  
I'm part of the union



**Basingstoke single mum Helen Eatwell walked into her local credit union to get a loan, and ended up working there. Now she's ready to kickstart a career.**



'on the job'. After starting last October, Helen's results are imminent. But even so, the opportunity has already changed her.

"It's built up my confidence, and I'd say to anyone thinking of this to go for it. Don't put it off until next week."

Helen's training was organised by Gist People Services, who say: "We provide high quality and flexible training and development to employers and residents local to the Basingstoke area. Qualifications range from literacy and numeracy to IT skills, management training and of course job-specific qualifications like the Business Administration NVQ that Helen completed. We would be happy to welcome new learners."

United Savings & Loans is Hampshire's main credit union, and is one of several alternatives to doorstep lending. Credit unions are non-profit making community banks, where anyone wanting to put a bit of money aside or take out a loan becomes a member.

Even just working one day a week, Helen has been processing applications for savings accounts and loans, and working alongside branch manager Tammy Hillman, helping customers get started. Anyone can join, either by phoning for an application form on **01256 869 589**, or visiting the local branch at Barbel Avenue, Basingstoke.

When a friend passed on a leaflet from United Savings & Loans credit union, mum-of-two Helen Eatwell was looking for a way to make ends meet. But after popping into the local branch, she found out about a training emplacement and signed up to work as an administrator.

"I am a single mum with two kids," says Helen of Abbey Road, Popley, "so going from doing nothing to this one day a week was challenging. It's not like a job really. I get on with everyone and it's a friendly place where people can come in and don't feel they're being interrogated. We get people from all walks of life."

Helen still manages to fit her workday around school hours, and nearly all the study for her NVQ level 2 in business and administration is completed

# More for free

We know it can be tough out there with so many people looking for work especially if you're not sure you have the skills they're asking for. There's loads of FREE training available if you know where to look. Here's just a few suggestions to get you started.

## **Basingstoke College of Technology**

Numeracy and Literacy.

[www.bcot.ac.uk/everyone/courses](http://www.bcot.ac.uk/everyone/courses)

## **Farnborough college of Technology**

Numeracy, Literacy and Apprenticeships.

[www.farn-ct.ac.uk](http://www.farn-ct.ac.uk)

## **Basingstoke consortium**

[www.basingstokeconsortium.com/about.html](http://www.basingstokeconsortium.com/about.html)

## **Key Training, Basingstoke**

[www.keytraining.co.uk/pages/home.asp](http://www.keytraining.co.uk/pages/home.asp)

Key Training work in partnership with Sentinel to provide our office based Apprenticeship programme for 16 – 24 year olds.

## **Gist People Services**

<http://gistpeople.com/>

## **Queen Mary's College, Basingstoke**

Step up' courses at Popley Fields Community Centre.

[www.qmc.ac.uk/adulteducation](http://www.qmc.ac.uk/adulteducation)

## **Other options available for young people:**

### **Waverley Training Services**

Providing Foundation learning and NVQs

[www.waverley.gov.uk/wts](http://www.waverley.gov.uk/wts)

### **Young peoples training**

[www.education.gov.uk/16to19](http://www.education.gov.uk/16to19)

### **Connexions**

[www.connexions-direct.com](http://www.connexions-direct.com)

We've made finding a garage even easier. Check out our new online booking form [www.sentinelha.org.uk/garage](http://www.sentinelha.org.uk/garage)



# facebook®

We're on facebook, the largest social network in the world, making it even easier to get involved and stay up to date. Our page features news, events, discussions, competitions, pictures, video and a reading room. We're also developing an online space for sharing information and interacting.

## **Don't miss out**

To stay up to date and join the conversation visit [www.facebook.com/sentinelha](http://www.facebook.com/sentinelha), and click "like" at the top of the page. Let us know what you think of the page and what you would find interesting or useful.

## **Getting online**

We know that home access to the Internet is growing, but if you don't have access at home you can get online in some community centres and libraries. If you're new to the Internet, [www.hants.gov.uk/computer-skills](http://www.hants.gov.uk/computer-skills) has practical advice about using the internet and details of local computer skills courses.

So don't be shy, come and join the conversation at [www.facebook.com/sentinelha](http://www.facebook.com/sentinelha).

# At home with...

## Lucy Povey

Lucy Povey is among the first of 200 new households moving into our flagship development at Popley Islands. Here she explains how it all went.



Lucy Povey couldn't believe what came up on the computer screen. Her bid on the home of her dreams had just been topped by someone with more housing points. Gutted, she resigned herself to starting another search for a new home after Christmas.

Then, just a few days before Christmas, she got a letter. The other bidder had taken a bigger house somewhere else, so Lucy was offered the new two-bedroom terrace on our new £40m Popley Islands development in Basingstoke.

"I know I'm very lucky," says the 21-year-old mum from nearby Oakridge, "I'd been on the waiting list for three and a half years, and thought I would get nowhere. It was a bit daunting, signing up for it, as I'd never been through it before. But it was fairly straightforward."

As we don't move people around over Christmas, Lucy picked up the keys in January. Surrounded by unpacked boxes while the carpet-fitters got to work, Lucy can't wait to settle in with three-year-old daughter Ronnie.

Lucy is one of the first residents to move into the regenerated area of Faroe Close and Maldive Road. The infamous maisonettes were bulldozed last April, and Lucy is one of more than 200 families, couples and individuals making up the new community.

The hi-spec homes feature built-in wardrobes, lots of indoor storage, and the houses are also equipped with sheds in secure back gardens. Once complete in 2013, there will also be a new parade of shops, a large open space 'kickabout' area, and well-lit paths linking up the various parts of the new development.

Obviously, on a largely empty site, there aren't too many neighbours yet, but Lucy says: "I know one of the girls opposite, who used to live in my close [in Oakridge]. And I'm close to my family too, which is important to me."

So what next for Lucy? With a new baby on the way, she's just happy to have moved into her dream home. "It's great. I feel like I've hit the jackpot."

If you're interested in moving to the new Popley Islands development, make sure you get on the housing waiting list and get bidding. More new homes will be available in May this year.

If you'd like to share your experience of your Sentinel home please get in touch.

Contact details are on the back page



# A clean sweep : Energy bills demand a re:think



You've told us that you want your local areas to be cleaner and problems fixed quicker, so we've been working behind the scenes to revamp our estate services.

Our three caretakers – Sid, Colin and Bob – have been given a wider role to manage the contractors we use to cut the grass, trim hedges, and tidy up communal gardens, stairwells and parking areas. The guys will also be wearing new uniforms and will have better signage on their vans so you can spot them more easily and report things that need sorting directly to them.

At the moment, we have various cleaning contractors working for us, which we're reviewing to ensure more consistent standards. We're testing different ways of how this should work, especially around cleaning shared areas in our apartment blocks and landscaped areas which provides the best value for money. Also, we're looking at how we get the best use of garages on our estates, and in some cases whether other forms of parking would be better.

This year, we're improving the outside look of hundreds of homes, and spending £400,000 on neighbourhood improvements. In some areas this can be tricky, as not all the areas belong to us. But to get over that, we've already teamed up with our council partners in Basingstoke for large-scale cleaning at Oakridge and Winklebury (see pages 12 and 16).

- We're pleased to announce our largest energy-saving project to date, which will help many of you make big savings on your energy bills.

## • What's all this then?

- We've launched Re:think – a £5m project to improve energy efficiency in homes where running costs are higher than normal. The work includes boiler upgrades to over 100 homes, solar photovoltaic panels for 300 homes and six of our sheltered schemes, plus loft insulation for 500 homes. We're also trialling some amazing new eco-boilers that generate electricity for you to use while heating your home.

## • That sounds like a big change

- Not really. You just carry on as normal and the technology does the work for you. The solar panels store electricity during the day which is then used in the home, cutting energy usage provided by power stations, and causing less damage to the environment. Already, we've fitted the six sheltered schemes with these, and our contractors will fit the rest over the next four months.

## • Blimey, you're serious then. What are the savings like?

- We have a good idea of which homes have the highest proportionate running costs, and are focusing on these first. The solar panels will save around £150 a year off a typical household electricity bill. We reckon the whole project will give an overall saving of around £140,000, and cut our carbon footprint by 2400 tonnes – way ahead of our target.

## • And will it make a big difference to the planet?

- Yes. All in all, the greenhouse gases we'll cut from this are equal to running 715 family cars for a year, or powering our Oakridge Towers sheltered scheme for 15 years.

# Oakridge area

South View, Limes Park, Old Basing,  
Crown Heights, Austen Court

Up my Street



## Yule Tide Teen Treat

Young people in Oakridge were treated to some festive fun thanks to Sentinel and the Basingstoke and Deane Community Development Team.

The Christmas themed event gave local youngsters a chance to shape the future of youth activities in the area. For more information about what's happening in

the area contact Julie Williams at Sentinel (see back page for details) or Sherrie Morgan Community Development Officer at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.

## All clear in Oakridge



Our staff teamed up with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to hit the streets last October to give parts of Oakridge a facelift. The hitsquad met at 9.30am every day at the Hall for All to run through their task list. Residents could drop in and get involved or point out work they'd like added to the list, using the suggestion box in the Hall. As well as the general clean up, we hired two skips to clear the streets of flytipping.

The team gave themselves 11 days to bring the area up to scratch. Once the work was complete, they got together again to decide how they could roll the work out across other areas in Basingstoke. It's still early days and we'll keep you posted.

## Home time in Alton



HomeBuy  
UK Government

Sentinel  
Homescope

The pretty market town of Alton is the setting for Chawton Park, offering a selection of 14 homes to part-buy part-rent, including 6 two bedroom apartments, 6 two bedroom houses or 2 three bedroom houses.

Also, we have 10 homes available to rent for 20% below private sector rents, although as a not-for-profit housing association, we'll have to check your eligibility. They are expected to be available from April, so call **01256 338800** to join our mailing list.

# Let there be light



When the streetlight near the Cameron's house in Oakridge stopped working they called in to report it. Most street lighting is owned and managed by Hampshire County Council, so we pointed them in their direction. After several phone calls it was revealed that the streetlight did in fact belong to us and is now up and working again. Don and Margaret were so pleased they sent in this photo and a message saying: "Many thanks for all your magnificent efforts and persistence in finally lighting up our lives. Maybe the picture should go in Sentinel's magazine with a caption "Where there is light faith begins".

**Mr Dunn from Oakridge Towers was the lucky winner of a luxury hamper supplied by us at the Oakridge Hall 4 All Christmas Party.**

## What's on...



### Wednesday 6 April

Sentinel Neighbourhood Area Panel meeting, Basingstoke office, 7pm

### Tuesday 26 April

Pride in your Place Walkabout, Crown Heights 11am  
STARA meeting, Basingstoke office, 6pm

### Wednesday 4 May

Sentinel Neighbourhood Area Panel meeting, Basingstoke office, 7pm

### Tuesday 24 May

STARA meeting, Fleet office, 6pm

### Wednesday 1 June

Sentinel Neighbourhood Area Panel meeting, Basingstoke office, 7pm

### Tuesday 28 June

Pride in your Place Walkabout, Crown Heights 11am  
STARA meeting, Basingstoke office, 6pm

### Wednesday 6 July

Sentinel Neighbourhood Area Panel meeting, Basingstoke office, 7pm

### Tuesday 26 July

STARA meeting, Fleet office, 6pm

### Wednesday 3 August

Sentinel Neighbourhood Area Panel meeting, Basingstoke office, 7pm

### Thursday 11 August

Pride in your place walkabout, Austen Court 10am – 12 noon

### Tuesday 23 August

Pride in your Place Walkabout, Crown Heights 11am  
STARA meeting, Basingstoke office, 6pm

# Popley area

Bramley, Sherfield on Loddon, Chineham

Up my Street

## Getting the Abbey habit



Our Abbey Court Extra Care residents in Popley were treated to a feast of festivities in the run up to Christmas. Scheme Manager Pauline Holland and her team organised festive treats including, carol concerts with the local Guides, Brownies and Rainbows and St Bede's School, crafty Christmas card making, Merton Infant School performing their Christmas show and Mike's Music was back by popular request. All topped off with Christmas lunches and festive teas. Thank you to everyone who helped make Christmas a special time at Abbey Court.



## New year, new home

We handed over the keys to the first new residents of the Popley Islands regeneration project at the beginning of the year (see page 10). It's just over a year since we started on site and work is progressing well. The second phase is well underway, and we've recently been able to agree the sale of the Barbican Public House so we've developed new plans for the fourth and final phase. If you're interested in moving to this new development make sure you get your name on the housing waiting list.



# It's good to talk

## Residents of the Marnel Park estate in Popley are getting together to set up a new Residents Association.

If you live in the area and are interested in joining email [marnelparkresidentgroup@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:marnelparkresidentgroup@hotmail.co.uk) or speak to Stephen Bate Community Development Officer, Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council or Richard Pilbeam at Sentinel.

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### Sunday 15 May

Popley Festival

### Tuesday 24 May

STARA meeting, Fleet office, 6pm

### Wednesday 1 June

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### Tuesday 28 June

STARA meeting, Basingstoke office, 6pm

### Wednesday 6 July

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### Wednesday 3 August

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### Tuesday 23 August

STARA meeting, Basingstoke office, 6pm



# Winklebury area

Andover, Tadley, Basingstoke Villages,  
Kempshott

Up my Street



## Hampton Court residents harvest new friendships

Sheltered residents in Winklebury were treated to a performance of children's songs as part of local Harvest Festival celebrations. Children from the nearby Castle Hill Pre-school also drew pictures and took food they had collected to residents of Hampton Court sheltered scheme as part of the Harvest Festival tradition. Denise Carlton-Sales, our Sheltered Scheme Manager said: "We run a coffee morning every Tuesday so residents can meet up and get together for a chat. They thoroughly enjoyed meeting the children and joining in with the singing, receiving the Harvest Festival food was an added bonus."

## Pamber Heath residents do their bit

Residents from Burney Bit in Pamber Heath have been supporting community work we carried out with the Probation Service last October. The team, who were clearing the area of overgrown plants and weeds, greatly appreciated the teas and coffees that were provided by local residents.

The Probation Service and Neighbourhood Team would like to thank these residents and look forward to joining forces again next year. If you've got ideas for improvements in your neighbourhood, get in touch with your neighbourhood team.



## Come home with us to Bishops Green



Located on the Hampshire/Berkshire border near Newbury, this development contains a mix of 12 two bedroom apartments, 7 two bedroom houses and for larger families, 13 three bedroom houses and 1 four bedroom house, all for part-buy part-rent. Prices start from £56,000\* based on a 40% share in a selected two bedroom apartment. Scheduled to be available from March 2011, contact the team now for an application pack on **01256 338800** or visit **www.bishopsgreen.co.uk**

\*Prices correct at time of going to print.

# Clean sweep for Winklebury Centre



Winklebury Centre became a whirlwind of activity as our staff teamed up with Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council to spruce up the outdoor area around the flats and shops. In the latest in a series of estate clean-ups, the 12-strong team spent three days cutting hedges, clearing gutters, steam-cleaning paths, fitting cigarette bins and repainting road markings.

The 'to do' list was put together using local feedback collected through estate walkabouts and neighbourhood surveys, and we're now investigating costs for more upgrade work.

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# Hart area

Fleet, Farnborough, Aldershot, Camberley, and surrounding areas

## Up my Street



### Hen House hamper happiness

The Hen House group, at Heathlands Court, worked hard over the winter months raising money for the group and sharing some Christmas spirit with the surrounding community. They raised £180 at district events like Fleet fireworks night serving hot drinks to staff, volunteers and the public. And braved the cold to hold two stalls at Fleet winter festivities. The stalls, a bottle tombola and a homemade craft

stall, raised an amazing £280. They used the money to spread a little Christmas cheer to local people and families with goodie hampers and children's gifts. The Hen House has been running for five years and get together every Wednesday over coffee and cake to learn new skills, support their peers and promote community spirit. The group's mantra is 'Help us, to help ourselves and our community'.



### Come home with us to Earlswood Park



Earlswood Park is located next to Notcutts Garden centre at Bagshot, Surrey, where these new Charles Church homes

are set within a large green landscape. Homes are available to part-buy part-rent, and include 2 one bedroom apartments, 16 two bedroom apartments, 15 two bedroom and 3 three bedroom houses. We're reserving now, and will be selling these throughout 2011. Also available is St Mary's Park set in the charming village of Hartley Wintney. Built by Barratt Homes this development offers 8 one bedroom apartments, 15 two bedroom and 5 three bedroom houses, all for part-buy part-rent. Call us now on **01256 338800** for an application pack.

### Wickham Court gets web-wise

Residents of our Wickham Court sheltered scheme in Fleet recently proved that older dogs can learn new skills by getting online with the help of students from nearby Court Moor school. Computer savvy students ran training sessions for scheme residents which proved so popular that 70% of them would like to carry on. The project was also shortlisted for a prestigious housing award.

# Peoples Millions



Fresh Start, a pioneering catering project run by Hart Neighbourhood Centre in partnership with us, beat off stiff competition to win the final of the People's Millions competition. The innovative project pitted against a primary school from Portsmouth, were filmed live for the ITV local news as they waited to hear the results.

Fresh Start is for people who are trying to find work. Every week they go to Rosefield Court in Hartley Wintney to prepare lunches for both residents and visitors under the watchful eye of expert chefs. Winning £50,000 means the project can provide hot meals to more of our sheltered residents, while also helping more young people gain useful work experience.

## What's on...



### Tuesday 5 April

Hart and Districts Neighbourhood Panel Meeting, Fleet office, 7pm

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### Tuesday 26 April

STARA meeting, Basingstoke office, 6pm

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### Tuesday 3 May

Hart and Districts Neighbourhood Panel Meeting, Fleet office, 7pm

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### Tuesday 24 May

STARA meeting, Fleet office, 6pm

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### Tuesday 7 June

Hart and Districts Neighbourhood Panel Meeting, Fleet office, 7pm

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### Tuesday 28 June

STARA meeting, Basingstoke office, 6pm

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### Tuesday 5 July

Hart and Districts Neighbourhood Panel Meeting, Fleet office, 7pm

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### Tuesday 26 July

STARA meeting, Fleet office, 6pm

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### Tuesday 2 August

Hart and Districts Neighbourhood Panel Meeting, Fleet office, 7pm

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### Tuesday 23 August

STARA meeting, Basingstoke office, 6pm

# Calling all gardeners

It's that time of year again, when all you green-fingered gardeners get to show off your handy work by entering our annual Gardening Competition.

This year entries will be judged on Monday 18 July 2011 and the tallest sunflowers entries will be measured on Thursday 28 July 2011. If you're not at home when the judges call, they will leave a card to let you know your entry has been judged.



## Fancy winning £100 of gardening vouchers?

If your garden's in a bit of a mess and you fancy giving it a makeover, take a photo before you do any work and a second photo afterwards. Send both photos to us by Friday 27 May 2011, and the Editorial Panel will judge the entries. The winning entry will win £100 of gardening vouchers.

**Send your entries to:**  
Spirit Editorial Panel,  
56 Kingsclere Road,  
Basingstoke, Hants,  
RG21 6XG or  
email [communications@sentinelha.org.uk](mailto:communications@sentinelha.org.uk)

## Prizes:

**£50**  
of vouchers for 1st

**£30**  
of vouchers for 2nd

**£15**  
of vouchers for 3rd

Please select the category or categories that you would like to enter and send to:  
Richard Pilbeam, 56 Kingsclere Road Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 6XG

The deadline for entries is: **Friday 24 June 2011**

Name:

---

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Address:

---

---

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Contact Number:

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**I would like to enter the following category/ies:**

- Best kept large/medium garden (more than 10m<sup>2</sup>)
- Best kept small garden (less than 10m<sup>2</sup>)
- Best kept planted container or window box
- Best kept communal garden
- Best kept vegetable garden or allotment
- Best kept planted container or window box
- Tallest sunflower

# Competition: Spot the difference

Have a look at the photographs below and see if you can spot the six differences, for your chance to win £50 of shopping vouchers.



Circle or highlight the six differences and send your entry to:

**Kim Drewery**

Sentinel Housing Association, 56 Kingsclere Road, Basingstoke, Hants, RG21 6XG

**By Friday 27 May 2011. The winning entry will be drawn by the magazine editorial panel.**

(Employees of Sentinel may enter but are not eligible to win).

Name:

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Address:

---

---

---

Contact Number:

---

## COMPETITION WINNER:

Congratulations to Mrs Janet Pilbeam of Hook, who wins a family day out at Paultons Park, for being closest to the ball in our last competition.



# Viewpoint

STAR LETTER  
**WINS**  
**£25**

## Dear Sentinel

Congratulations on the latest edition of Community Spirit and the insert, Sentinel Customer Deal. May I suggest that it is printed within the covers of the magazine at some time in the future as inserts tend to get lost over time.

Would be nice to see Community Spirit published for the four seasons, the Winter edition would obviously look back and forward for the season. (maybe too costly), but an effective communicator.

I'm also wondering why "What's on" is repeated four times in the magazine, especially as dates vary. Surely one accurate entry would suffice.

### Regards

*Joan Poulter, Fleet*

### Editors reply

Dear Joan, thank you for your comments. We'd like to know what other customers think, do you find "What's on" useful or repetitive and should we publish four times a year? Fill in the survey in the centre pages and let us know.

## Dear Sentinel

Rosefield Court Hartley Wintney. Coffee morning on a Friday and raffle, we have a chat about this and that. We don't always agree but life is like that you see. We have many things to be thankful for, bacon rolls and fish and chips, Christmas there is a treat. Tuesdays there is Bingo, Albert leading the game. None of this would happen you see without the helpers one and all, they do their bit to please and all play their part. We would miss our mornings I'm sure. Thank you is only a word, a big thank you from all of us.

**Mrs R Skrzypczak,  
Hartley Wintney**

## Dear Sentinel

I would like to thank you for sponsoring the Santa's Grotto at Rooksdown. My boys loved it, all three of them got lovely presents. Most places charge a fortune to get into a Santa's Grotto now, so we don't usually go as I have four children. It was a lovely Christmas atmosphere with the mince pies, mulled wine and all the snow outside and the best part for us adults – it was all free. I haven't been with a housing association before who puts on so much for the children. Once again, thank you very much to everyone involved in the Grotto.

**Liam and Aidan's Mum, Rooksdown, Basingstoke**

Please keep your comments coming and remember you could win £25 of shopping vouchers.

To be featured in the next edition please get in touch by Friday 27 May 2011. You can write to us at the Basingstoke office or email [communications@sentinelha.org.uk](mailto:communications@sentinelha.org.uk)

# In shape...

how well have we performed?

Performance Indicators	Actual to December	2010/11 Target	At a glance	Top 25% landlords
<b>Repairs</b>				
Tenants satisfied with quality of responsive repairs	82%	96%	☹️	83%
Emergency repairs completed in target (1 day)	99.7%	99.3%	😊	–
Urgent repairs completed in target (7 days)	98.1%	98.5%	☹️	–
Routine repairs completed in target (21 days)	97.5%	98.5%	☹️	–
<b>Re-letting empty properties</b>				
Average number of days to re-let an empty home	22	22	😊	27
<b>Rent collection</b>				
Current rent arrears	1.85%	2.7%	😊	2.0%
<b>Telephone Response</b>				
Calls waiting lost	8.3%	9%	😊	–
Average call waiting time in seconds	42	25	☹️	–
<b>Written Enquiries and Complaints</b>				
Letters responded to within 10 working days	98.5%	100%	☹️	–
Number of complaints received	639	–	–	–
Number of compliments received	240	–	–	–
Satisfaction with complaints process	87.9%	90%	☹️	71%
Satisfaction with complaints outcome	85.2%	85%	😊	69%
<b>Anti Social Behaviour</b>				
Satisfaction with ASB complaint process	78%	90%	☹️	87%
Satisfaction with ASB complaint outcome	86%	85%	😊	85%
<b>Refurbishment</b>				
Homes achieving Decent Homes Standard	100%	100%	😊	99.2%
Number of kitchens refurbished	126	122	😊	
Number of bathrooms refurbished	124	122	😊	
Customers satisfied with quality of work	97.9%	99%	☹️	

## Are we measuring up?

What other information on our services would you like to see?  
If you would like to have your say on the performance information we publish, please contact Damien Ward, Performance Manager on **01256 312878** or email **damien.ward@sentinelha.org.uk**





If you would like this document in another language or format, or if you require the services of an interpreter, please contact us.

#### Polish

Jeżeli chciałby Państwo otrzymać ten dokument w innym języku lub w innym formacie albo jeżeli potrzebna jest pomoc tłumacza, to prosimy o kontakt z nami.

#### Portuguese

Se gostaria de ter este documento noutra idioma ou formato, ou se necessita de um intérprete, contacte-nos.

#### Thai

หากท่านต้องการเอกสารนี้ในอีกภาษา หรือ รูปแบบอื่น หรือ หากท่านประสงค์จะใช้บริการของเรามี, กรุณาติดต่อเรา

#### Bengali

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান অথবা যদি আপনার একজন ইন্টারপ্রেটারের প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

#### Tamil

இந்த ஆவணம் வேறொரு மொழியிலோ அல்லது வேறு வடிவத்திலோ தேவை என்று நீங்கள் விரும்பினால், அல்லது உங்களுக்கு மொழிபெயர்ப்பாளரின் தேவை இருந்தால், தயவு செய்து எம்மைத் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்.



## Bank Holiday Office Closures

**Friday 22 April 2011**

Good Friday

**Monday 25 April 2011**

Easter Monday

**Friday 29 April 2011**

Royal Wedding

**Monday 2 May 2011**

Early Spring Holiday

**Monday 30 May 2011**

Spring Holiday

If you have an emergency repair to report, please ring **0800 195 5515** (from a landline) or **0300 666 5515** (from a mobile).

Alternatively, for non-emergency repairs, please use our on-line repairs reporting facility on:

**[www.sentinelha.org.uk](http://www.sentinelha.org.uk)**



**Basingstoke office:** 56 Kingsclere Road Basingstoke Hampshire RG21 6XG

**Fleet office:** 11 Church Road, Fleet Hampshire, GU51 3RH

Telephone **0800 195 5515** from a landline or **0300 666 5515** from your mobile

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**Sentinel**