



street TALK



RESIDENTS & TENANTS MAGAZINE ISSUE

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Fun at Foxhole

SUMMER 2011

At the Heart of the Community

Everyone lent a hand as Hensbarrow Court Residents' Association moved into their new community building. "It's a new home for a new residents' association and we are all very excited!" says Donna, who was recently elected as the association's first chairperson.

Donna works with children full time and is passionate about giving them the best start in life. "This is a fantastic opportunity for the whole community in Foxhole, not just for Ocean residents. We've been given this wonderful building where our children can play together safely and we can help them develop into adults with a sense of pride in their community."

The association had its first meeting at the beginning of June and is now planning an open day. "It really has been a team effort to get our association off the ground and we couldn't have done it without support from Ocean's Tenant Involvement Team or Paul our Neighbourhood Services Officer. A long term project like this needs a great deal of enthusiasm and we have bucket loads of that here!"

Ocean has recently built the third phase of homes at Hensbarrow Meadows in Foxhole. Michael Elliott, Manager of the Resident Involvement Team explains: "This is the first housing scheme where we have provided a purpose-built community flat. It is fully furnished and includes an office, kitchen, meeting room and even a BBQ area. We are just as excited about it as the residents. Our Team will continue to work hand in hand with the new association, which has already had a big impact on the neighbourhood."

If you and your neighbours are interested in setting up your own residents' association our Tenant Involvement Team is happy to help. Call Beverley, Lesley or Mike on 01726 874450 or email tenantinvolvement@oceanhousing.com and they can also send you our leaflet on resident associations.



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The Tenant Involvement Team help Foxhole residents move into their new community building



If you have any interesting stories to share with Street Talk readers, please let us know. You can call our Tenant and Resident Involvement Team on 01726 874450 or email tenantinvolvement@oceanhousing.com



Ground control

Last summer we improved the way we maintain our grounds and communal areas. We recently caught up with Brian, one of our forty tenant monitors, to see what he thought about this new service one year on. “Generally I’m pleased with the work carried out by Serco, the company Ocean employs to maintain its grounds. I always find the groundsmen very approachable. They are happy to take my comments on board and improve their service wherever possible.

“We all know that the weather has a few surprises up its sleeve and these can cause havoc to even the best planned maintenance schedule. So spare a thought for our groundsmen when soaring temperatures in April make the grass grow twice as quickly!”

Brian is keen that residents report any concerns they may have about grounds maintenance to their Neighbourhood Services Officer or the Customer Services Team by calling 01726 874450 or emailing customerservices@oceanhousing.com

“Obviously the seasons and weather have a large impact on their work and I always consider this when I fill out my monthly monitoring report. For example, it’s no good expecting the grass to be cut during the winter when it hardly grows. During these months the groundsmen are busy maintaining our pathways, drying areas and car parks.

“As monitors we inspect Serco’s work on your behalf and by and large we are satisfied with the results. But if you have any comments or a problem with how the grounds are maintained in your neighbourhood, please let Ocean know so they can look into it for you.”

More frequent grass cutting is part of the new service



Here is a guide showing you what grounds maintenance you can expect throughout the year.

Grass cutting	April to November	every two weeks, usually on a Monday or Tuesday with cutting earlier or later in the year if required
Shrubs & plants	November to May	specialist pruning and weeding
	June to October	monthly maintenance, usually on a Monday or Tuesday
Play areas	weekly inspections	includes any minor repairs and litter picking
Pathways, car parks & drying areas	March to May	specialist treatment for weeds, moss and algae
	April to June	clear weeds
	October to December	clear leaves

Clean sweep

Thanks to all of you living in flats who completed our questionnaire earlier in the year about how we clean the areas you share with other residents. The vast majority of you were keen to have an enhanced service and we started this in May.

We are also grateful to the 21 residents who volunteered to become cleaning monitors. They will be keeping an eye on the standard of cleaning on your behalf and reporting back to us on a monthly basis.

It is important you are happy with this improved cleaning service. If you have any concerns please let us know by contacting your Neighbourhood Services Officer or our Customer Services Team on 01726 874450 or by emailing customerservices@oceanhousing.com

Emailing is easy

Our Customer Services Team takes on average 1,800 calls a week. During peak times you may have difficulty getting through and find it easier to send an email.

Here are the email addresses for our key services:

Customer services	customerservices@oceanhousing.com
Resident & Tenant Involvement Team	tenantinvolvement@oceanhousing.com
Neighbourhood Services	neighbourhoodservices@oceanhousing.com
Independent Living Service	ils@oceanhousing.com
Anti Social Behaviour Officer	asb@oceanhousing.com

Call for tenant monitors

We always welcome new tenant monitors for our cleaning and grounds maintenance services.

If you are interested in helping out, please call the Tenant Involvement Team on 01726 874450 or email tenantinvolvement@oceanhousing.com

Toys for you

Children in St Blazey had days of fun over the Easter holidays thanks to a donation of 6,000 pieces of 'clit' toys from a local toy company.

Resident Clint says the children really let their imaginations go wild: "They were incredibly creative and came up with some really awesome ideas. The girls had fun building fairy tale characters and their own tribute to the royal wedding, while the boys chose aeroplanes and swords. At times we had more than thirty children playing together on bigger projects such as a twelve foot suspension bridge, with mums and dads helping."

The local residents' association, Hands Together, was very happy to let the children play in their community room and garden. Kathy from the Gardening Club believes it was a great success: "When we arrived in the morning the children were eagerly waiting for us to open. It certainly kept them off the streets during the long holidays and they weren't just glued to the television or video games."



■ The children have great fun creating this royal wedding tribute

Mum of four, Deborah, who has lived in Landreath for 17 years, says the toys brought together all the children from the different communities: "It has been about getting to know each other, sharing toys and realising that there are mums and dads who are prepared to give up their time. This has helped to break down barriers among both children and adults."

The good news is that you too can borrow these toys, perhaps for your community club or for a special event during the summer holidays. Just call Beverley or Lesley at the Resident and Tenant Involvement Team on 01726 874450.

A right Royal knees up



The residents of Poldark Gardens held their own little tea party to celebrate the Royal Wedding.

Daphne has lived in Poldark Gardens for 27 years and has never done anything like this before: "We had a darn good spread. Everyone brought something and Carole alone made twenty two pasties!"

Suzanne says they all had a wonderful time: "We sang along to Rule Britannia as well as some of the oldies like Roll out the Barrel and finished the evening with God Save the Queen."

The neighbours are now looking forward to Marge's 90th birthday. "It could be party time again with any luck!" says Daphne with a glint in her eye.

■ Pictured left to right: Daphne, Suzanne, Harold, Carole, Marge and Dot



A new flexible service for supporting people

Many people wish to live independent lives and just need a little help, perhaps due to their age or because of a health problem or disability.



■ pictured left to right: Jan, Janet, Scott, Judith, Geoff, Tracey and Heather

The way we have supported people has changed a great deal over the years. Traditionally every sheltered housing scheme had a warden who could be called out day or night. These days we have a team of five Independent Living Advisors who are based at Ocean offices and travel each day to customers in and around mid Cornwall.

Gina Cutler, Head of Neighbourhood Services, says the new Independent Living Service is already proving to be popular: "We are offering a very flexible service that is tailored to the individual needs of our customers. When we meet a new customer we discuss how we can help them to remain independent and living in their homes for as long as they wish."

For more information please call the Independent Living Service Team on 01726 874450 or email ils@oceanhousing.com



Top Boss Award for Ann-Marie

Pirate FM Radio invited listeners to nominate their local heros and our very own Ann-Marie Snell won the Boss of the Year Award.

"I was absolutely thrilled to be put forward by my work colleagues. It's good to know that I have the support of my team and that we value each others contribution and commitment."

Paul Wakefield-Smith works with Ann-Marie: "She is a fair but firm boss who has worked her way up to Manager of Neighbourhood Services. This gives her a real understanding of what residents need and how we can help. I wish we had more Ann-Maries in this World."

Talking point

In the first meeting of its kind more than thirty Ocean tenants and Board members came together in June to review our services and make plans for future improvements.

Tenant and Board members worked together in groups to discuss our main services, including repairs and maintenance, neighbourhood services, tenant involvement and customer services.

Resident Kathy Conbeer believes it was a really worthwhile event: "This evening showed that Ocean is serious about putting residents at the heart of what they do. It was good to be 'face to face' with Board members as they have the final say about many of our services. We discussed a whole range of issues with them and shared our views."

Tenant Board member, Liz Farrell, says the Board has a responsibility to make a real difference to people's lives and to provide the best possible services: "Residents are the best people to judge what we do and give us a nudge if there is anything we can do better. This was a very positive meeting with some great ideas that will no doubt improve our services for residents in the future."



Art works

Mum of three, Melanie, is an incredibly talented lady who juggles her love of music and art with bringing up her close knit family in Lostwithiel.

Last year Melanie decided to share her passion for music by forming the band Los'Samba which now plays regularly at carnivals, festivals and gigs throughout Cornwall. "Samba is based on Latin American rhythms and is very high energy," explains Melanie. "No matter how you are feeling – when you start playing it makes you dance and smile. It's a really fun way to exercise and anyone can join in – if you can count to four you can play samba – it's that easy!"

Melanie's son Zac now leads the band and daughter Hazel plays the drums. "People from all walks of life and of all ages play in our band. It's a great way to meet new friends and to go to festivals for free."

When Melanie is not playing her drums she is studying 3D design at Plymouth College of Art where she creates unique pieces from ceramics, metal and glass. She has almost saved up enough to buy her own kiln and is looking for a local workshop.

"It has been a long journey for me," says Melanie. "I am severely dyslexic and it has taken ten years of hard work, starting with Link into Learning courses and then studying "A" Levels at St Austell College. I feel it is now all coming together and I am looking for a sponsor to help



Melanie shows off her art

me turn my hobby into a full time career when my children are ready to leave home."

If you want to join Los'Samba, they play on Wednesdays, except for the first Wednesday of each month, at the Memorial Hall in Lerryn from 6.30 to 9 pm. The first taster session is free, then £ 2.50 per session. They also run weekend courses. For more information contact Rich on 01208 872963 or email him at rich@singsurf.org

In stitches



Barbara with two of her grandchildren, Jacob and Kiyu

Barbara has always loved knitting and making toys for children. "My Mum showed me different stitches when I was young and since then I've just picked it up from knitting books," explains Barbara. Now her own children are grown up she is always busy knitting for her three grandchildren, friends and family. Barbara also raffles her toys to raise money for the Over 50s Club at the Burrows Centre in St Blazey.

"I knit anything, from pirates and animals to dolls and well known fairy tale characters," says Barbara. "I'm always amazed how they find their way all over the country, with some even being sent abroad as presents. It can be hard to give them away, especially when they've taken a long time to do. But then you see the joy in people's faces and it makes it all worthwhile."

Barbara has kept up her knitting despite having a stroke three years ago. "Even when I am feeling poorly and I'm stuck in bed, I can still knit and it makes me forget my worries. Some of my friends feel lonely, but I don't because I get so involved in the knitting I just don't know where the time has gone – I really can recommend it!"

**A big thanks to Melanie and Barbara for sharing their hobbies with us.
To share your pastime with Street Talk readers just call the
Tenant Involvement Team on 01726 874450 or email tenantinvolvement@oceanhousing.com**



A safe alternative to door step lending

As a single mum with four children, Leanne admits that money can get a bit tight: “I go along fine and then something crops up that blows my budget right out of the water.”

In the past Leanne has borrowed from door step lenders: “They charged me such high interest rates that I won’t touch them again. I’ve also heard that they use extreme pressure if you miss a payment.”

Leanne has now opened a savings account with Cornish Community Banking to help her cope with any unexpected bills: “I pay an amount into my account weekly by standing order. It’s easy to save because I’m putting money away without giving it a second thought.”

Leanne’s saving paid off last year when she had to apply for a loan. “My car had been off the road for months because I simply could not afford the repairs. Thanks to my saving track record, I was given a loan at an extremely low interest rate.

“Three quarters of my weekly standing order goes towards my loan repayment and a quarter into my savings account. That’s what I like – you can pay off what you have borrowed and continue to save.”



Leanne keeps account of her money

How Cornish Community Banking works

Cornish Community Banking offers a real alternative to high street banks and doorstep lenders. It provides a range of services to help you save and access loans at reasonable rates.

As a Credit Union, it is owned and controlled by its customers who are called members. It offers a fair and responsible approach to banking and anyone living in Cornwall can open an account, even if they have had problems before.

Making saving simple

Members are encouraged to save regularly with a Savings Account and you can start saving with as little as £1 a week. This helps you to put money aside for when you need it, maybe to replace a washing machine or get your car through its MOT. Children can also join in by learning to save for their future with a special Young Saver Account.

Help when you need it

Cornish Community Banking offers a great range of loans. Members who have been saving for 13 weeks or more can apply for low rate loans based on their savings. New members can apply for Fast Track loans, which offer much cheaper rates than doorstep lenders.

Other services

Cornish Community Banking offers help for families. Alison is their family outreach worker. She can meet with you and your family to help with money matters and financial issues. Contact her on 0800 0556 873

Top Tip

Start saving your money with Cornish Community Banking now to pay for your winter heating.

Want to know more

- Call Cornish Community Banking on **0800 0556 873** or **01872 321366**
 - Send an email to mail@cornishcommunitybanking.co.uk
- Visit them in the One Stop Shop at the Council Offices, Penwinnick Road, St Austell, Monday 1 pm – 3 pm; Tuesday 12 noon – 2 pm; Thursday and Friday 11 am – 1 pm.
- View their website at www.cornishcommunitybanking.co.uk

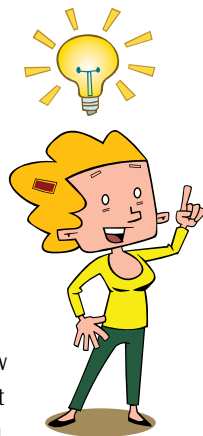
Prize for Bright Idea

Congratulations to Mrs Smith from St Austell who won £25 for the first Bright Idea. Mrs Smith said it would be handy if residents could request permission to carry out improvements to their home on line. Our Tenants and Residents Panel thought this was a great idea and we now have a form on the Ocean Housing website for residents to use.

If you have a Bright Idea about how we can improve our services, we want to hear from you. If your suggestion is adopted you will win a £25 voucher and the best 'Bright Idea of the Year' wins a top prize of £100.

You can send us your Bright Ideas by:

- Emailing tenantinvolvement@oceanhousing.com
- Sending your Bright Ideas in writing to Freepost RSES-LCCA-EJUU, Bright Ideas, Ocean Housing, Stennack House, St Austell PL25 3SW
- Completing the Bright Ideas form on line at www.oceanhousing.com



Less is more

As families grow up and children leave home, you can often find yourselves living in a home that is too big. When this happens, you may wish to move to smaller accommodation that is easier to maintain and cheaper to run, particularly in terms of rent, rates and heating costs.

We can offer financial help to tenants who downsize into more suitable accommodation. In some cases, we pay £500 towards removal and other costs for every bedroom that a tenant gives up.

It is also worth bearing in mind that the Government is proposing more changes to housing benefits, relating to the number of bedrooms you have and how many people live in your home. This may reduce the amount of benefit you receive, if you live in a property that has more bedrooms than you need and you are under pensionable age. In such cases, you would have to make up the difference to cover the full rent yourself.

If you are interested in downsizing, contact your Neighbourhood Services Officer by calling 01726 874450 or emailing neighbourhoodservices@oceanhousing.com and register on Cornwall Homechoice.



VIP treatment for Maurice



Ocean resident, Maurice, was the VIP guest as the foundation stone was laid for 31 new eco-friendly apartments in St Austell.

The new homes will replace the outdated sheltered housing at Prince Charles House, where Maurice's mother, Evelyn, was one of the first residents in the late 1950s. You can read about Maurice and some of his amusing stories from that time at www.princecharleshouse.com You can also follow our progress on site through a live webcam and catch up with news, photographs and videos.

Ocean Chief Executive, David Renwick, is delighted that the new homes will significantly improve the lives of elderly people: "We are setting new standards for housing and using green technologies to greatly reduce fuel bills for some of our most vulnerable residents. We are also working closely with local colleges to help develop skills in the building industry and create jobs right here in Cornwall."

Maurice with local Cornwall Councillor Steve Double and students from Cornwall College.



Lostwithiel's very own Ground Force

Pop up to Mount Pleasant Place in Lostwithiel any early evening and you will see a group of children having great fun creating their very own garden – with a little help from the grown-ups.

“This really is teamwork at its best,” enthuses Lynne. “It has pulled the whole community together – both young and old.”

Lynne’s determination and hard work has seen a redundant piece of land transformed into a gardening project for the whole community. “This area was a dumping ground before. I found out who owned the land and then got permission for us to transform it into a children’s garden. That was a couple of years ago and since then the local children have had a fabulous time, getting knee deep in soil. They’ve found out about gardening and nature, as well learning how to be patient – plants don’t just grow overnight!

Before moving to Lostwithiel Lynne had never had a garden in her life. “Thankfully one of my neighbours, John, is a professional gardener and he’s been on hand to give advice and help out.

“You are never finished with a garden and this year we are completely revamping it. Everyone has worked together to level off the area and thanks to a Treasure Chest grant from Ocean, we have just taken delivery of nine tonnes

of good quality topsoil. The children can now go ahead with the new planting and in a few months’ time our garden will once again be ablaze with colour.”

Heidi has lived at Mount Pleasant for 31 years and believes the garden has made a huge difference to the neighbourhood: “When the children get back from school they can’t wait to get out into the garden. And it’s good to see residents chatting on the bench donated by Ocean and enjoying the marvellous view down the valley – now that’s something money alone just can’t buy.”

If you want to know more about this project, we can put you in touch with Lynne. She is very happy to share her experiences and help other residents who may be considering a similar project in their own community.

Please call us if your neighbourhood is holding an event or planning a project that could benefit from Treasure Chest Funding.

Grants are available from £5 up to a maximum of £500 and all applications are considered by your Tenants and Residents Panel. You can reach Mike, Lesley or Beverley at the Tenant and Resident Involvement Team on 01726 874450 or email tenantinvolvement@oceanhousing.com

Team work with Lynne, Hannah, Geraldine, John, Harrison and Heidi



Large Print, Braille, Audio CD’s and alternative language versions of this document can be obtained from Ocean’s call centre on **01726 874450**