



street TALK



TENANTS MAGAZINE ISSUE **22**
SPRING EDITION

Ocean launches £33 million investment programme for the next 5 years

contents

Ocean Launches Investment Programme

Audit Commission

Resources Centre Opens

Birthday Surprise

New Website

Money Talks

New Door Entries

Ocean's Stock

Checkmate

Western Challenge

Prize Draw Results

Can you Hear?

Home Insurance

In the next edition

Chair of Ocean Housing, Dawn Bassett, who is also a tenant of Ocean was delighted when, at a recent Board Meeting, the next 5 year programme of works to existing homes was approved. Dawn commented "in discussions with fellow tenants, we will continue to decide where to invest in our existing homes to increase comfort, safety and enjoyment for our tenants".

In the first of the five years we will spend approximately £7 million on a wide range of works such as window replacements, new kitchens, new bathrooms, new roofs and new central heating. For further details visit our website at www.oceanhousing.com or ask the call centre staff for details on 01726 874450.



Ocean is to be the subject of a week long study, from the 12th May, by the Audit Commission, an independent watchdog.

The Audit Commission work in partnership with Housing Associations. Their objective, when they visit Ocean, will be to carry out a service inspection, to recognise good service and promote excellence. They will also look for weaknesses with a view to helping us improve services for our residents.

Three key areas will be looked at by the inspectors, these are:

Asset Management (how we invest money in your home)

Income Management (rent collection, etc)

Tenancy and Estate Management (how we deal with residents and their homes)



A team of three, led by Mr Doug Furlong, will carry out the inspection. The team includes a tenant inspector, who no doubt will look very closely at the range and quality of services we provide. Following the inspection a report will be produced and published, sometime in August. We will publish the results in our summer edition of Street Talk and will post the full report on our website. We will also include a summary of the Audit Commission report in our Annual Report which is circulated to all our tenants in September.

At Ocean we see the inspection as a health check on how we are doing, and an opportunity to continue to improve value for money and services to residents.

If you require any additional information on the Audit Commission Inspection, please contact Mike Elliott, Head of Resident Involvement on 01726 874450.



Large Print, Braille and alternative language versions of this document can be obtained from Ocean's call centre on

01726 874450



tenants resources centre opens!

Mark Clare, Chair of Ocean Group comments "Stennack House, Ocean's main office, has always been a resource used by staff, tenants and other agencies. Residents and Tenants panel hold all their meetings in Stennack House and following the review of tenant and resident involvement last September/October, and the increased activity that would follow, an individual resource for tenants was almost certainly going to be needed and we are pleased a dedicated office has opened at Ocean". Bridget Burton, a member of the tenants/residents panel said "we regularly use the office and equipment but with increased



Tenants in Resources Centre celebrating with a hot cup of tea.

involvement we required new skills and access to equipment. The resources centre can be used by people who are involved with Ocean to access computers, have taster sessions on computers, hold meetings, discussion and review our activities". For further information, please contact Mike Elliott on 01726 874450.



Pictured above Bridget Burton cuts ribbon to open new Resources Centre

birthday surprise

The winners of the Winter Edition of Street Talk Competition included Mrs Dunn of Roche, who on the day the draw was made, was celebrating her birthday. The £50 voucher was an extra present that she hadn't expected. *Congratulations!*

**The winners were: 1st Prize of £100 – Mrs James from St Austell
2nd Prize of £50 – Mrs Dunne from Roche 3rd and 4th Prize – Mrs Phillips from Newquay and Mrs Powell of Fowey**

February 2008 saw new website launch!

As the world continues to change, one of the ways everyday life is changing is the use of computers. David Renwick, Group Chief Executive comments "that a key factor in the quality of services is how people contact us and the information we provide. Last year we received 180,000 emails into the office and approximately 100,000 telephone calls. With so many people using computers to access information, we have updated and expanded our website. If you, as a resident group, have an event you would like to publicise, you can use the site to get your message across.

If you don't have a computer, but you wish to have a look at the new site, then contact Mike Elliott, Head of Tenant and Resident Involvement on 01726 874450, who will be able to help!



money talks

If you are struggling with money problems, don't wait until you have a serious debt problem. There are many support agencies who are well trained to help, they can also advise on benefits you may be entitled to.

Some useful numbers are:

Citizen Advice Bureau	(01726) 63131
Citizen Advice Bureau (Newquay)	(01637) 871645
Housing Benefits	(01726) 223300
National Debt Line	0808 8084000
Cornwall Share (information and advice for young people)	0800 181033
SHELTER	0808 8004444
Community Legal Service Direct	0845 3454345

new door entry to improve security in flats

As part of Ocean's new investment programme, all flats with communal areas will, during 2008 and 2009, have security doors with door entry systems fitted.



Liz Farrell of Residents and Tenants Panel commented "we are delighted at this new programme that starts this year and is a top priority for Ocean". A number of tenants have asked for the door entry system to be fitted and we are sure tenants will be happier and feel safer in their homes once the work is completed. Once the doors and entry systems are fitted, the communal halls and staircases will all be decorated improving the appearance and access to our tenants homes. For further details, please see our website at www.oceanhousing.com or tel: 01726 874450.

key fact on Ocean's stock

- 57% of our homes are located in St Austell, Newquay and St Blazey
- 90% of the stock is more than 25 years old.
- 51% are houses, 14% are bungalows and 35% flats
- 322 homes have been specially adapted to disabled residents
- All our properties will meet the Governments decent homes standard by September 2010



checkmate

Ocean is a member of Checkmate, a club which measures and compares the performance and efficiency of Housing Associations repairs and maintenance services. This information is one way that anyone that has an interest in Ocean can see how well or badly we perform.

The results for the 2006/07 year have just been published, a few details of interest:-

- Emergency repairs completed on time – 99.4%
- Urgent repairs completed on time – 95.9%
- Routine repairs completed on time – 96.7%
- Vacant property re-let time – 1.65 weeks
- Appointments made and kept – 99%

Full details can be found on our website, a more detailed report will appear in the next edition of Street Talk.

welcome to Western Challenge

Welcome to the 162 tenants of Western Challenge who joined the Ocean Group during April on a lease arrangement. "A promises programme of repairs and maintenance will start on the properties almost immediately" said Scott Allen, Oceans Asset Manager.

■ Western Challenge tenants with their welcome packs





census survey prize draw

Over 1300 surveys were returned to Ocean which is a fantastic response. Thank you for the time and support, your responses will certainly influence the decision we take that affect your homes, the services we provide and the neighbourhoods where you live.

All the returns were placed in a hat and the draw was made on Thursday 20 March 2008 by Vicky Farrell, aged 8, from Newquay. Vicky, who was accompanied by her mum Liz, who recently gained her Housing Certificate at a training course run at Ocean in partnership with Cornwall College and the Chartered Institute of Housing.

32" Flat Screen TV - Mr Wallace, St Austell

15" Flat Screen TV - Miss T James, St Austell

15" Flat Screen TV - Mr & Mrs Lean, St Austell

iPod Classic - Mr Balsdon, St Austell

iPod Shuffle - Mrs Stephens, Biscovey

iPod Nano - Mr & Mrs Couch, St Austell

Hi Tech Kettle - Mrs Armstrong, St Blazey

£50 Tesco Vouchers - Miss Smith, St Blazey



can you hear the doorbell? can you hear your smoke alarm at night?

A key priority for Ocean has always been the need to ensure that residents are able to enjoy full use of their homes despite any disabilities which they may have.

Ocean has always funded minor adaptations of its homes and worked with local authorities to seek Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) support for major adaptations. A total of 322 homes (9.4%) are currently adapted and include many varied adaptations such as stairlifts, level access showers, ramped access and other specialist equipment including visual and audio devices to assist deaf or blind residents. If you are hard of hearing, we can fit a flashing light when someone presses your doorbell or a vibrating pad to go under your pillow to wake you if your smoke alarm were to ring and you are asleep in bed.

If you are interested in these services or require additional information regarding disabled adaptations please contact Scott Allen (Asset Manager) 01726 874450.

tenants home insurance - is your home covered?

If you have a disaster at home, who is going to pay to replace some of your belongings? Ocean makes sure that the 'building' is insured against all possible problems but we do not insure your belongings.



paid weekly. Ocean makes no money at all with this arrangement and you as a tenant pay only the cost of the insurance, with nobody else getting commission. We do



it as we all too often see families without contents insurance struggling to replace lost, broken or damaged belongings after an emergency, fire, accident or flood.

This means that, if the unthinkable happens, you could be left with no furniture and most of your personal possessions gone. Contents Insurance covers this but is something that people need to arrange themselves.

What we suggest is that you obtain quotes from the 'normal' insurance companies and compare the costs and benefits. Always go with the one that you think is the best value but the key is that you do get some contents insurance!

Ocean recognises that often insurance companies want payment in advance for the year, which can cause problems for our residents. In an effort to help, Ocean has negotiated an arrangement with our insurers, Norwich Union, for a contents insurance policy that can be

If you want more information, please contact our Call Centre on 01726 874450, who will be happy to help!

in the next edition of street talk lookout for

- How well did Ocean perform 2007/08, details on voids, rent collection, repairs etc including comparisons with other Housing Associations
- Feedback from The Audit Commission Inspection
- A report on the work of the Scrutiny Panel and the new Tenants and Residents Resources Centre at Stennack House
- What the recent Census Survey has told us.



Need to call us out of hours?
call **01872 224628** or **01872 222810**
To report a repair using your mobile phone, text repairs@oceanhousing.com (space) your message, including your name, address, phone number and repair details to 07766404142

