



# street TALK



RESIDENTS & TENANTS MAGAZINE ISSUE  
**35**  
AUTUMN 2011  
At the Heart of the Community

## Summer Fun at Prince Charles Park

The sun shone for Prince Charles Park Fun Day during the summer holidays. "It was great to see people of all ages coming together for a community day and making the most of the fabulous facilities we have at Prince Charles Park," says Andrea Lanxon, Treasurer and Event Organiser for the Poltair Residents' Association.

"There was so much for everyone to enjoy, from circus workshops and face painting to donkey carriage rides and even a Bungee Run. Just watching everyone's happy faces made all the hard work worthwhile. The day would not have been possible without the support of many local volunteers and organisations and we would like to thank you all for making the event such a success."



■ Rainbow the Clown brings some magic to the Fun Day

### contents

- At Your Service ■
- Great Wall Of China Challenge ■
- Here To Help ■
- Independent Living Service ■
- In The Driving Seat ■
- Junior Wardens Ready For Action ■
- Time Team ■
- Autumn Grounds Maintenance ■
- Don't Get Steamed Up ■
- Money Matters ■
- Grand Designs ■
- Keeping Safe ■
- A Good Catch ■

## New Look Street Talk

We hope you like the new look Street Talk. We have worked with the Resident Editorial Panel to make it easier to read, with larger text and a clearer layout. If you would like to receive Street Talk in large print, braille or on audio CD, please contact our customer services on 01726 874450 or email [customerservices@oceanhousing.com](mailto:customerservices@oceanhousing.com)



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](mailto:tenantinvolvement@oceanhousing.com)



# At your service

## You said ...

**You would like to be greeted by a member of staff when you visit our reception at Stennack House**

## We did ...

**During the winter we trialled full time reception cover. Your feedback was so positive that we are now recruiting a full time receptionist.**

Our Customer Services Team handles a staggering 90,000 incoming telephone calls a year, covering everything from repair requests to escaped pet snakes. "You never know what call is going to come through next and that's what we all like about the job," says Sandra, who has been a Customer Services Advisor at Ocean for six years.



■ The Customer Services Team

"Our first priority is always to help and for every customer to be satisfied with the service they receive by the end of their call. As with any organisation, sometimes things don't go according to plan and we are here to put things right for you. Even when an enquiry doesn't involve Ocean, we try to signpost customers in the right direction."

Sandra is part of a team of ten Customer Services Advisors who have recently been trained to handle more of your enquiries

first hand. "We all know how frustrating it can be to have your call transferred or to wait for someone to call you back, so we do our best to give you an immediate response."

You can rest assured that your conversation with our Customer Services Team is held in the strictest confidence and our advisors won't discuss your Ocean account with anyone whose name is not on your tenancy, unless you give us permission.

## Great Wall of China Challenge

Ocean takes its role in the community seriously and supports a range of charities and events. For a number of years we have been fundraising for Cornwall Hospice Care and this autumn our Chief Executive, David Renwick, is taking on the challenge of a sponsored trek of the Great Wall of China to raise more funds for this charity.



"I have an enormous respect for anyone who works in the caring sector. I particularly admire the skills and dedication of the Hospice staff and the very special care and support they provide for local people. I am delighted at this opportunity to raise much needed funds and that both our commercial companies, Ocean Services and Gilbert & Goode are sponsoring me."

# Here to help you . . .



Our Neighbourhood Services Team is here to provide support and advice so you get the best out of your home and your community. Your Neighbourhood Services Officer can give you guidance on a range of issues, from moving home to tackling anti-social behaviour and can also put you in touch with other organisations.

To make an appointment with your Neighbourhood Services Officer, either at our offices in St Austell or at your home, just call 01726 874450 or email [neighbourhoodservices@oceanhousing.com](mailto:neighbourhoodservices@oceanhousing.com)

You are also welcome to come to any of our surgeries. Here are the dates and times of the surgeries up until the end of this year and which member of our team will be there to help. You don't need an appointment, but you may have to wait a little while if it is busy.

<b>SURGERIES</b>	<b>When</b>
<b>Paul Wakefield-Smith</b> <b>St Dennis</b> Clay TAWC The Old School	10.30 am – 1 pm Second Wednesday in the month: 12 October, 9 November, 14 December
<b>St Columb Major</b> Children's Centre Opposite Police Station	10.30 am – 1 pm Third Wednesday in the month: 21 September, 19 October, 16 November, 21 December
<b>Foxhole</b> Community Flat 16 Phillimore Court	10.30 am – 1 pm Fourth Wednesday in the month: 28 September, 26 October, 23 November, 28 December
<b>Luke Dymond</b> <b>Newquay</b> One Stop Shop Marcus Hill	9.30 am – 12 noon Every Wednesday except the first Wednesday in a month
<b>Gill Barnard</b> <b>St Austell</b> Ocean Housing Stennack Road	10.30 – 1pm Every Wednesday

## New Manager for Independent Living Service



Gareth Fitzpatrick is the new Manager for Ocean's Independent Living Service. "I'm really excited to be part of such an excellent team, helping local people here in Cornwall to live independently in their own homes. I've had a great deal of experience working in supported housing prior to joining Ocean and I'm enjoying putting this to good use.

"I've already been out to meet some of our customers and everyone has been very welcoming. It is great to hear your views and ideas about how we can make our service even better."

If you, or someone you know, could benefit from some support from Ocean to live independently at home, please call the Independent Living Team on 01726 874450 or email [ils@oceanhousing.com](mailto:ils@oceanhousing.com)

# In the driving seat

Ocean resident, Dean Higgins, is very pleased to be behind the wheels of one of our cleaning vans: "Last summer I was out of work and was desperate to be given a chance. A work placement at Ocean made all the difference because I realised it would be easier to get a job if I could drive.

"I took driving lessons and passed my test earlier this year and then saw a permanent cleaning job advertised at Ocean. I really enjoy what I do - my colleagues are great, I meet lots of residents and I am putting my driving skills into practise. It's also good to return home each evening to my lovely family, having put in a full day's work."

Placements at Ocean are organised through a number of agencies including Working Links, Cornwall Works Plus and Response to Redundancy. To find out more ask your Neighbourhood Services Officer to put you in touch with these agencies.

■ Heidi and Dean with their cleaning machine



Eight young people from Foxhole became junior wardens for the summer holidays. They enjoyed events across the county, including a visit to Looe Lifeboat station, to building dens at the Eden Project and tours of both St Austell Fire and Police Stations.

Lesley Stevenson, Tenant Involvement Co-ordinator at Ocean, says it wasn't just about having fun: "We want to teach children how to be safe in the area they live, what to do in an emergency and how to avoid getting caught up in anti-social behaviour. As the junior wardens are all aged between 7 and 12 years old the best way for them to learn is by making it memorable.

Junior Warden Thomas said it was amazing at Eden: "It was such fun. We learnt lots of useful things about recycling

## Ready for action

and what happens if you don't recycle safely."

Donna Brown, Chair of the Hensbarrow Court Residents' Association and mum of three, is thrilled that her two sons were junior wardens. "Thomas, aged 11, loves

adventure and Ben, aged 10, likes anything messy - so they had a whale of a time. They also learnt a great deal about safety and who knows, the skills they gain as junior wardens could save someone's life one day."



# Time Team

Do you perhaps enjoy baking a cake, but hate decorating? Or maybe you love gardening, but find cleaning a real chore. Well the Cornwall Time Bank could be the answer for you.

“It is a great way of getting help with things you don’t like doing or can’t do and exchanging it for jobs you are happy to do,” explains Ann Burnett, a keen Time Bank member who works for Ocean Housing. “To be honest, in the beginning I wasn’t sure that I had any useful skills to swap, but we all have something to offer and often we don’t realise how much we can help each other.

“I’ve found the Time Bank an amazing thing to do and a great way of making new friends. I’ve baked cakes, mended fences and wrapped presents – all jobs I really enjoy. In exchange I’ve had my computer fixed, my clothes



■ Adam fixes Ann’s computer in return for cake

ironed and I’m about to have some jewellery mended. The Time Bank was especially useful earlier this year when I hurt my shoulder and a member helped me at home with the hoovering.”

Emily Hudson who runs the St Austell Time Bank, part of Volunteer Cornwall, says it’s about doing the kind of job that you would normally do for a neighbour or friend, but not get paid for: “While cooking, gardening and decorating are the most popular tasks, there is a great deal more to choose from. Our members have a huge variety of hobbies, from jam making to dog walking, and they use these to get other jobs done.”

Emily puts people in touch with each other, makes all the arrangements and keeps a record of the hours banked and exchanged. “An hour is swapped for an hour, whatever the job, as we believe everyone’s time is equally valuable. So for every hour you give, you earn an hour of some one else’s time.”

To find out more call Emily on 01726 76633, who can also put you in touch with other Time Banks in Cornwall.



## Autumn grounds maintenance

During the summer months the main work for our grounds maintenance contractors, Serco, is grass cutting. As autumn approaches this changes and we want you to know what to expect from the team.

They will be cleaning and maintaining pathways, drying areas and car park areas. Grass cutting will continue during September and October, and may even carry on through November, if required. Serco will also be clearing shrub beds and other planted areas

and inspecting trees, to make sure they are safe before the harsher winter weather arrives.

Ocean’s Tenant Monitors continue to inspect Serco’s work on your behalf and give us monthly feedback. If you would like to monitor the grounds maintenance in your neighbourhood please contact your Neighbourhood Services Officer on 01726 874450 or email [neighbourhoodservices@oceanhousing.com](mailto:neighbourhoodservices@oceanhousing.com)

# Money Matters

**You may be entitled to benefits even if you are working. A recent survey revealed that 85% of people who are on a low income don't realise that they could be claiming in-work benefits ... and you could be one of them!**



Jo is quids in thanks to our benefit check

“I thought I wasn't entitled to any help because I work full time,” explains Jo. “Like many people at the moment I'm struggling to pay my bills because everything is costing more. The Income Management Team looked at my finances and unbelievably found that I can claim £30 a week in housing benefit. This extra £120 a month will make a huge difference. It will help me keep up to date with my rent and to do something nice with the kids.”

Whatever your circumstances you can contact Ocean's Income Management Team and we can check you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to. “If you are in any doubt, just give them a call,” recommends Jo. “Filling out the form is enough to put anyone

off, but they worked through it with me and I now have all the information I need to take to the council's housing benefit section.”

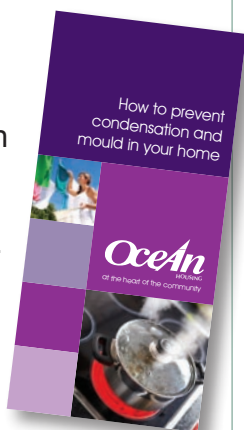
You can also check if you are missing out on benefits through the charitable service Turn2Us. This free and confidential service helps people access the money they are entitled to and their website has an easy-to-use benefits checker. If you don't have a computer, you are welcome to use the computer and internet facilities in our reception area at Stennack House in St Austell.

You can also contact our Income Management Team who are registered with Turn2Us to give you benefits information over the phone.

## Don't get steamed up

Condensation can be more of a problem in cold winter months and can quickly cause damp and mould patches to appear in your home. The good news is that there are easy steps you can take to prevent condensation. Simply reducing the amount of steam in your home, for example by using an extractor fan when cooking, can make a big difference. It is also important to keep your home well ventilated and at a constant temperature.

For our top tips on preventing condensation and getting rid of any existing mould, please call 01726 874450 or email [customerservices@oceanhousing.com](mailto:customerservices@oceanhousing.com) for a copy of our new leaflet. You can also view it on line at [www.oceanhousing.com](http://www.oceanhousing.com)



# Grand Designs

As an Ocean resident you are in the best position to give your views about how we design and build our homes and our Design Advisory Group (DAG) is now looking for new members. This is a chance to share your ideas on everything from the internal layout and colour schemes of future homes to gardens, parking and the overall plans for whole new developments.



Development Managers Ant and Jo reviewing designs

We have informal meetings with our architects four times a year, enabling you to discuss their drawings and plans, as well as consider feedback from people who have recently moved into our homes. Occasionally we also have site visits to new houses and developments.

“This is a genuine opportunity for you to shape the future design of our homes,” says Development Manager Jo Tully. “We are particularly interested in getting the views of young people and residents with families. We would also love to hear from you if you live in a new house and have ideas about how we could improve future developments.”

If you have difficulty attending weekday meetings we are also setting up ‘DAG Remote’. Members of this group will be emailed or posted designs for their comments and can choose whether they attend DAG meetings.

**If you are interested in joining DAG or DAG Remote please email [development@oceanhousing.com](mailto:development@oceanhousing.com) or phone Ann Burnett on 01726 874391.**

## Keeping you safe

With Autumn approaching we will all be turning on our heating. As with any appliances and machinery, a regular service does not give a 100% guarantee that there will never be a problem. If you believe your heating system is not working properly please don't try to fix it yourself, just give us a call on 01726 874450. You can also report your repair online at [www.oceanhousing.com](http://www.oceanhousing.com) or email [repairs@oceanhousing.com](mailto:repairs@oceanhousing.com)

Ocean resident Wendy says it gives her peace of mind to know that there is always an Ocean tradesman at the end of the phone who can fix anything that goes wrong: “If your pressure goes down – the boys at Ocean will know what to do!”

**If you smell gas or suspect there is a gas escape, you should immediately call The National Gas Emergency Service free on 0800 111 999.**





# A good catch for local couple



Local fisherman Matt, his wife Carla and daughter Erin are all thrilled to be living in their new home.

“When we saw the house for the first time we immediately decided that this is where we wanted to live,” says Carla. “We already know most of our neighbours as four are fishermen living here with their families and Erin goes to pre-school with some of the children. It just couldn’t be better.”

Matt and Carla previously had private rented accommodation in Mevagissey but it didn’t quite feel like home: “This is different, it feels like ours and for the first time we even have a garden for Erin to play in.”

The couple has been looking to buy a home since they were married but with the price of properties in the fishing village the finances just didn’t stack up, even though they both work. “We wanted to live in Mevagissey because Matt works his fishing boat out of the harbour and this is where

he was born and bred. The HomeBuy shared ownership scheme has made this possible.”

HomeBuy Manager Tina Oates is delighted that her team is helping hundreds of local couples like Matt and Carla to own their own home. “This scheme lets you buy a share of your property and pay Ocean a rent on the remaining share you do not own. Gradually, when and if you can afford it, you can buy further shares. In the majority of cases homeowners now have the opportunity to eventually own 100% of their property and this is proving very popular.”

Carla admits that purchasing any house can have its frustrations: “It’s not always plain sailing but the team at Ocean were without a doubt fantastic. They helped us through the whole process and worked closely with our mortgage advisor. They even understood when Matt would not exchange contracts on a Friday because fishermen believe it is bad luck to start anything on that day of the week!”

**Ocean has a wide range of properties for sale through the HomeBuy scheme from traditional family homes to contemporary apartments. For more information about the scheme and details of properties available please contact Tina or Sarah on 01726 874387**

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