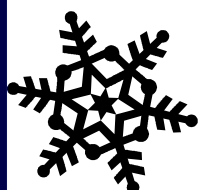




Working Together for a better future

Federation Newsletter

November/December 2011



In this issue...



Butterfield Court



West Midlands Police



5 Estates Project



West Midlands Fire Service



Charity Abseil



Chapel Street flats host West Midlands Fire Service training session

On Sunday 28 August Bodmin Court was the venue for a training session held by Brierley Hill fire station. This exercise was developed as a partnership between housing services and West Midlands Fire Service as part of our objective to ensure our homes are estates are safe places to live.

These safety scenarios are carried out to make sure that our communities are safe from fire in high rise buildings and to ensure that fire fighters are trained to a high standard.

On the day, the fire service arrived with many fire engines and tackled a pretend blaze in one of our empty properties. Cosmetic smoke was used to make the experience as real as possible for those being trained. Fire hoses were run up the stairs and onto the landings outside the flat as though tackling a 'real' fire.

We carry out regular inspections of our high and low rise blocks to ensure the communal areas are free of any fire hazards and are in a good state of repair. It is very important that communal areas, and in particular landings and staircases, as kept free of anything which could lead to possible harm to our tenants or their visitors. We take the safety of those residing in our blocks very seriously and will we consider enforcement action if these areas become a hazard. We would like to advise tenants who have motorised scooters/ wheelchairs, or who keep flower displays on the landings not to do so.

The West Midlands Fire Service can provide any tenant with a free fire safety check in their property. To book this simply call 0800 389 5525 or email contact.centre@wmfs.net

Many thanks go out to everyone living in the block and the surrounding area. The fire service has told us that exercise was very successful and that they would like to apologise for any inconvenience caused.

Tenants and residents training programme 2011/12

The participation development team, along with our colleagues at Dudley Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations (DFTRA) provide a wide range of training courses to help tenants and residents improve their skills and increase their knowledge.

These courses are diverse, ranging from basic first aid to managing your finances.

The leaflet is available online at www.dudley.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/tenant-participation/ or by telephoning 01384 815168

5 Estates Project ACT For Your Community Day

The 5 Estates Project are holding a Dudley Tenants and Residents Associations Conference entitled 'ACT for Your Community' on Wednesday 7th December 2011 from 10am to 3pm. There will be a variety of workshops and information will be available. This networking event will be held at Dudley College, the Dudley Road Campus in Brierley Hill DY5 1LQ (the old MOST centre).

The objectives of the day, organised by tenants, are to provide people with information and knowledge of different groups and cultures within the community, to help build strong commitment from communities to work with the 5 Estates Project and to encourage partnership work to resolve community tension and maximised community cohesion.



Warning regarding Energy Saving Bulbs



Energy saving bulbs have been around for a long time now, and most of us use them in our homes. You may or may not be aware that energy saving bulbs contain mercury. This means that if broken, they can cause serious danger if not handled in the correct way.

- If one breaks, everyone should leave the room for 15 minutes as if inhaled the mercury can cause migraine, disorientation, imbalances and other health problems.
- It causes many people with allergies severe skin conditions and other diseases just by touching the substance or inhaling it.
- It is very important not to use a vacuum cleaner to clean up the debris, as this would spread the contamination to other rooms in the house when using the vacuum cleaner again.
- The debris should be cleaned up with a normal broom or brush while wearing rubber gloves and be kept in a sealed bag and disposed right away from the house in a bin for hazardous materials.

Butterfield Court Update

Butterfield court TRA are pleased to update that the new carpets for the landings and tenants room have now been laid and everything looks fantastic. The carpets were paid for by the TRA and DFTRA through Aerial Money and Capital Bids with each contributing half of the monies.



Tenants Room, Butterfield Court



Corridor at Butterfield Court

Also, Butterfield Court TRA are holding their Christmas party again, this year it will be on Saturday 10th December at 7:00pm and all tenants are welcome. There will be prize bingo, a quiz and also a raffle. The committee hope that everyone who comes has a great time.



Charity Abseil Event a success



DFTRA Administrator Caroline Salter was one of over 250 people who took part in a charity abseil event at Dudley Castle.

The event, which took place on the Saturday and Sunday 5th and 6th November was held in order to raise money for the Stroke Association.

It is estimated that every year 150,000 people in the UK have a stroke. The money raised will go towards providing life-changing support for people affected by stroke, research, and raising awareness. For more information go to www.stroke.org.uk.

Overall an estimated £50,000 was raised, well done to everyone involved!

West Midlands Police Launch New Number

WEST Midlands Police, together with other police forces in the region, launched a new, non-emergency contact number for the public on Tuesday 08 November.

The new 101 number is being introduced to improve access to police, ease pressure on the 999 system and to help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

The 101 service is part of a national programme to improve access to the police and will give the public an easy way to get in touch with the police for calls that do not require an urgent response.

The system will work by redirecting people's calls, wherever they are in the country, to their nearest police force and is intended to be easier for people to remember.

Callers using the number will incur a flat rate charge of 15p no matter how long the call lasts and whether their call is made from a landline or mobile.

The 101 number should be used to report a crime or anti-social behaviour which does not need an emergency response. For example, it could be used to report a crime that has already happened, seek crime prevention advice or make police aware of local policing issues.

In an emergency, members of the public should continue to use 999.

The current central switchboard number 0345 113 5000 will continue to function.

Calls for 101 will be answered in the same way as the 0345 and 0845 numbers.

Neighbouring forces - West Mercia, Staffordshire and Warwickshire are also adopting the new number from today. The number has already been launched across southern England and parts of Wales and is set to be rolled out nationally by early next year.

As with 999, calls to 101 will be handled 24 hours a day, seven days a week by specially trained staff who can deal with enquiries.

For people who speak no or little English, they can also dial 101 where their call will be connected with an interpreter. Callers who have a hearing or speech impairment can use a textphone to call: 18001 101; or in an emergency: 18000.

Local policing Superintendent Andrew Shipman said: "The introduction of 101 is one of the biggest changes in the way people can contact the police since 999 was introduced in the 1940s.

"The quick and easy 101 number will help with a wide breadth of issues that don't require an immediate response and provides a universal, easy to remember 3-digit telephone number.

"The 101 number is also expected to reduce the number of inappropriate 999 calls enabling us to respond to genuine emergencies more effectively.

"We would remind the public that they should always continue to call 999 in an emergency - for example, when an immediate response is needed because a crime is happening, someone suspected of a crime is nearby, or someone is injured, being threatened or in danger."

Information from the Police

There has been a recent increase in the number of offences where elderly residents have fallen victim to distraction burglaries.

Offenders have used a variety of disguises to con their way into the homes of pensioners, including claiming to be from the 'Water Board' and a window cleaner calling for payment.

At this stage officers are unable to link offences, as different descriptions have been given and alternate distraction techniques have been used.

Officers continue to urge residents to never let any unexpected callers at their door into their homes without properly checking their identity.

The below advice has been issued to help combat bogus callers:

LOCK – Keep your front and back doors locked, even when you are at home.

STOP – before you answer, stop and think if you are expecting anyone. Check you have locked the back door and taken the key out. Look through the spy hole or window to see who it is.

CHAIN – If you decide to open the door, put the chain or door bar on first. Keep the bar or chain on while you are talking to the person on the doorstep.

CHECK – even if they have a pre-arranged appointment, check their identity card carefully. Close the door while you do this. If you are still unsure, look up a phone number in the phone book and ring to verify their identity. Do not use a phone number on the identity card, as this may be a fake. If you have any doubts, keep them out!

Anyone with information is urged to contact Wolverhampton Police on 0345 113 5000 or call the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Officers have issued the following safety advice:

- Check to see who is calling at your door by using the spy hole if you have one, or look through a front window.
- Always put the chain on before you open the door. (If you don't have a chain it's a good idea to get one - they don't cost much)
- Look at their clothing. Some official callers will have a uniform bearing their organisation's name or symbol.
- If you don't know the caller, ask to see their identity card. Check it carefully, and keep the chain on while you do this. Genuine callers won't mind if you close the door while you do this.
- Some public utility services (e.g. water, electricity, gas) operate a password system. Contact your local branch to find out more.
- If you're still not sure, ask the caller to come back later. You can then check their story by phoning the organisation or company they claim to represent. Look up the number in your own telephone directory. Don't rely on the telephone number on their card - it may be the number of a crook's partner.
- Bogus callers sometimes work in pairs. Beware of one distracting you while the other steals your property. The best practice is not to let them in.
- Ensure your back door is locked if you are answering the door to someone you don't know.
- Watch out for anyone who says they're in a hurry. Don't let them pressure you. If in doubt, call a neighbour or friend.
- If you have any suspicions at all, don't let them in.

If you're still not happy, phone the police - dial 999 - and tell them what's happened. And tell your neighbours.

If you wish to submit an article or piece of information, please let Caroline know and either send by post to: Dudley Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations, The Ground Floor Complex, Booth Court Lower Derry Street, Brierley Hill, Dudley, DY5 2SJ or email it to caroline@dfta.org.uk. You can also call on 01384 868 010.

Operation Team Work

How the 'Big Clean-up Group' made a big difference

On the 17th August 2011, the Big Clean-up Group participated in Operation Team work, an event organised by the Safe & Sound Partnership.

The event in Lye involved the 'Big Clean-up Group' organising skips, volunteers for the day and promotion of the event. We knocked on doors and spoke to local people about how they can get involved within their community – the added bonus was people had to chance to get rid of their rubbish in the skips we had provided! We had over 75 people come along and the day proved to be a huge success after a slow start.

We hope that other TRA's will think the 'Big Clean-up' is a good idea and encourage you to find out more about organising your own 'Big Clean-up'. You can find out more about this project by contacting Martin Smith on 01384 868010 or email: martin@dfta.org.uk or Emma Jones on 01384 815168 or email: emma.jones@dudley.gov.uk

Merry Christmas from all at DFTRA, and for everyone attending our Christmas awards evening, we hope you have a lovely night.

