



**Chester & Blacon**

**Autumn 2008**



**Hello my name is Jenny McCracken,** one of two Community Housing Officers for the Chester & Blacon area.

I've worked for Muir Group since 2002 and have been in my current role since November 2003. I'd like to welcome you to your first Local Voice.

I will be carrying out scheme inspections over the coming weeks so please make a note of the date I'll be visiting your scheme, so please come out and join me identifying repairs and highlighting concerns that affect your scheme.

This newsletter aims to highlight a number of issues at a local level - I hope you find it useful and informative.

## Resident Involvement

If anyone wishes to form a residents group and requires any assistance to get things up and running I am more than happy to help.

At Easter this year a group of residents at Gosforth Place enjoyed creating spring containers and the children also took part in Easter Crafts and an Easter Egg hunt.

The activities were enjoyed by all and the container display improved the appeal of the communal gardens for weeks to come. This activity was funded by Friends of Muir Group.

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## Council Changes

On 1 April 2009, we will all be having a new council, replacing our Borough or City Councils, and Cheshire County Council. The new Council, Cheshire East and Cheshire West will be one tier, or unitary - just one council dealing with all the services that the two councils currently deal with. The idea is to simplify things.

So Chester City, Crewe and Nantwich, Ellesmere Port and Neston and Vale Royal Council, and the County Council will all cease to exist. Cheshire East and Cheshire West will deal with your Housing Benefit, your Council Tax, your waste disposal and collection, your children's school - to mention a few services. You will no doubt hear from the new Council in due course.

If you have a Parish Council or Town Council, they will not be affected by the changes.

## Getting Involved

You can influence the way that Muir Group operates and how we deliver our services to you. Maybe you have an idea or can use your personal experiences to help us to improve.

It really doesn't matter how much time you have available or what your experiences are, as we believe that everyone can make a valuable contribution just by getting a little more involved, and we have a wide range of ways to suit your time and commitment.

Some of these are, becoming a board member; attending our Task and Finish Groups; or becoming a member of our Think Tank.

Ask for a copy of our resident involvement fact sheet which tells you all about them.

You can also have an impact in your own local community by getting more involved with local issues or projects. Perhaps you have a great idea for a new project, want to start up a residents group or get the community together to solve a local problem. We can help to get you going, and support you as and when you need it.

For more information please contact your local Community Housing Officer or alternatively, you can speak to your local Community Engagement Officer. Beverley Price for the North & Northwest regions on 01925 790624/07717 300036 email: [beverley.price@muir.org.uk](mailto:beverley.price@muir.org.uk); or Jan Kaneen for the Southern region on 01480 492988/07717 300061 email [jan.kaneen@muir.org.uk](mailto:jan.kaneen@muir.org.uk).

## Appointments for Repairs

As part of our new partnership with our Responsive Maintenance Contractors, we have introduced an appointments system for non-emergency repairs to the inside of your home from the 16th September 2008.

When you report a repair to our Customer Service Team they will offer you an appointment, where applicable.

You can choose a morning, midday or afternoon slot for a specific day for the contractor to attend to complete your repair. Where it is not possible for you to be at home during normal working hours we will be able to offer a limited number of appointments for a Thursday evening or Saturday morning.

You can report a repair by calling the Customer Services Team on 01928 728000.

## Knock Knock, Who's There?

In 2009 we will be starting a programme of tenancy audits. A tenancy audit is a visit to you at home which allows you to talk to us about any issues that you have, as well as giving us the chance to make sure that our properties are being looked after and that all the tenancy conditions are being maintained.

If a member of our staff, or one of our contractors, does visit you at home, they will show you their identification card (ID).

You should always check the ID of anybody who calls on you at home and if you are unsure who they are and why they are visiting you, you should not let them in unless you are satisfied that it is safe to do so.

## Patch Plans

We are publishing Patch Plans for the start of the next financial year (April 2009). There will be a Patch Plan for each Community Housing Officer and they will cover all of the neighbourhoods managed by that Community Housing Officer.

Your Patch Plan will provide you with information on programmed works which are planned for the coming year, so you will be able to see if and when you will be getting any improvements such as kitchens and bathrooms or painting to communal and/or external areas. It will also tell you when we are coming to inspect your estate, so that you have the opportunity to come along on the inspection.

The Plan will also tell you other information about the patch, such as feedback from the estate inspections; improvements to estates; activities being arranged; opportunities for resident involvement and general news affecting you.

# Fly tipping

Please ensure that you do not dump rubbish in your neighbourhood. We increasingly have to collect and dispose of articles which have been dumped such as sofas, TVs, car parts, etc. Not only can these items be unsightly, but they can also be dangerous. It costs us, and ultimately you, to have such items removed and disposed of. Fly tipping is illegal and can lead to the local authority taking court action against those responsible.

Such action could result in a fine of up to £50,000 at Magistrates Court, or an unlimited fine at Crown Court, and/or a prison sentence of up to 5 years. If we identify any residents as being responsible for fly tipping, we will recharge them for any costs that we incur. We can also take action for breach of tenancy.

Chester City Council will collect and dispose of unwanted household items free of charge once a year for each household. So if you're in need of a clear out, contact Chester City Council and ask for bulk collections on 01244 324324.

Want not, waste not! You could always recycle your unwanted furniture by contacting the Blacon Community Trust. The Blacon furniture project aims to prevent re-usable items of furniture, household and electrical items needlessly filling local landfill sites and spoiling the local environment. They require good quality, re-usable items, and sell them on at really affordable prices from their local store in Blacon.

To arrange your own donations all you have to do is check the item is clean and reusable and call them on 01244 379293. They will ensure the item is suitable and arrange to collect it if it can be reused.

Or why not visit the store and pick up a bargain:

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10am - 4pm, Saturdays: 10am - 1pm

Blacon Furniture Project 16 The Parade, Blacon, Chester CH1 5HW

Tel: 01244 379293.

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## Noise Nuisance

If you are suffering from anti-social behaviour caused by noise nuisance, it is essential that you contact the Environmental Health Department at your local Council, as well as contacting us at Muir. You will be asked to complete diary sheets in order to supply evidence of the problems.

### FOMG, Who & What

Friends of Muir Group (FOMG) is a registered charity formed by Muir Group Housing Association in 2002. Its main purpose is to reflect Muir Group's commitment to investing in our communities.



Friends of Muir Group supports community projects and initiatives that benefit the communities in which Muir Group residents live. Friends of Muir has already made a positive difference to schemes, communities and neighbourhoods across our regions by providing funding to get projects off the ground and to keep them going.

Amongst the brilliant community projects that FoMG has given grants to this year are:

A gardening group for people with learning difficulties; National In Bloom Project; Community Adult Learning Days and Friendship Groups; Community Safety Days; Social Outings throughout the regions; school projects; play schemes; anti-bullying campaigns; community recycling.

Friends of Muir Group Board meets four times a year to make decisions on shaping the future of the charity and to approve grant applications. The next meeting is on the 9th December, all bids to reach Beverley Price by 26th November 2008. For further info or assistance call 01925 790624 or 07717 300036 email [beverley.price@muir.org.uk](mailto:beverley.price@muir.org.uk).

# Scheme Walkabouts

SCHEME	MEETING PLACE	DATE	TIME	HOUSING OFFICER
Gosforth Place - <b>Chester</b>	Outside block 7	13th Nov 2008	9.30am	Jenny McCracken
Heron Place - <b>Chester</b>	Front Car Park	14th Nov 2008	9.30am	Jenny McCracken
Byron Close (houses) - <b>Chester</b>	Grass verge by 47	20th Nov 2008	9.30am	Jenny McCracken
Byron Close (Clare, Caroline, Augusta flats) - <b>Chester</b>	Car park	20th Nov 2008	11am	Jenny McCracken
Kinnaird House - <b>Chester</b>	Car Park	21st Nov 2008	9.30am	Jenny McCracken
47 Egerton Street - <b>Chester</b>	Communal Hall	21st Nov 2008	11am	Jenny McCracken
46 Egerton Street - <b>Chester</b>	Communal Hall	21st Nov 2008	11.30am	Jenny McCracken
22 Egerton Street - <b>Chester</b>	Communal Hall	21st Nov 2008	12 noon-ish	Jenny McCracken
2 & 4 Queens Place - <b>Chester</b>	Car Park	21st Nov 2008	From 1.30pm	Jenny McCracken
3 Canalside, 3 & 15 Queens and Back Queens Street - <b>Chester</b>	Door Knock	21st Nov 2008	1.30pm	Jenny McCracken
Owen Close - <b>Blacon</b>	Car Park	27th Nov 2008	9.30am	Jenny McCracken
Maltbys, 103 Brook Street - <b>Chester</b>	Car Park	28th Nov 2008	9.30am	Jenny McCracken
93 Brook Street - <b>Chester</b>	Car Park	28th Nov 2008	10am-ish	Jenny McCracken
Cornwall House	Communal Hallway, ground floor	28th Nov 2008	11am-ish	Jenny McCracken

Please note that if your scheme is not included in this edition of the voice it will be advertised in the next edition. Alternatively, contact your CHO to arrange a home visit, residents meeting, or a scheme walk about. If an exact time is not listed against your scheme, please contact your Community Housing Officer for information on 01928 728000.



Language Line  
services

**Do you need help to read this? Please contact us**

Tel: 01928 728000 or Textphone: 01928 728066



Portuguese **Informações de feedback**  
Necessita de ajuda para ler isto?  
Entre em contacto connosco

Arabic **معلومات التغذية المرجعة**  
هل نحتاج إلى مساعدة لقراءة هذا؟ يرجى منك الاتصال بنا

Punjabi **ਪ੍ਰਤੀ-ਉੱਤਰ ਦੇਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ**  
ਕੀ ਇਹਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣ ਲਈ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਮਦਦ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ? ਵਿਰਧਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ।

Bengali **মূল্যায়ন সংক্রান্ত তথ্য**  
ইহা পড়তে আপনার কি সাহায্যের দরকার? দয়া করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন

Somali **Macluumaadka Talasinta**  
Ma u baahan tahay in lagaa kaalmeeyo akhrinta feylkan? Fadlan nala soo xiriir.

Chinese **回饋意見**  
閱讀本文時，您是否需要協助？請與我們聯繫

Urdu **تبصرے سے متعلق معلومات**  
اس کو پڑھنے میں کیا آپ کو مدد کی ضرورت ہے؟ برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Gujarati **મતિભાવ અંગેની માહિતી**  
શું તમને આ વાંચવામાં મદદની જરૂર છે? કૃપા કરી અમારો સંપર્ક સાધો

Welsh **Gwybodaeth atborth**  
Os arnoch chi angen cymorth i ddarllen hyn?  
Cysylltwch â ni

Polish **Informacja zwrotna**  
Potrzebujesz pomocy, aby to przeczytać?  
Skontaktuj się z nami.

