



In Partnership with  
Melton Borough Council



## A note from the Chairman

Once again I have the pleasure of reporting to the tenants on TFEC activities during the past year. This year I want to talk to you about the measures we have taken to engage with you. To that end, we have been active in doing visits and introducing ourselves to you on the door step.

We have held a series of roadshows where we had afforded to us, very kindly, the Jeakins Weir caravan and their representatives and operatives who did on occasions put repairs right on the spot. We also had Councillors and Council Officers with us so they saw first hand some outstanding improvements and some defects.

These visits went North and South of Melton and we have also been to most of the villages in the borough. These tours allow us to engage with lots of different tenants and all doorstep questionnaires and comments made were or will be reported back to the Council Officers for action. Some of which have already been acted upon.

We have inserted a 'Have Your Say...' section in this newsletter for tenants to feedback news and views on what they feel should go in the Tenants' Voice Newsletter. TFEC also now have a direct phone number dedicated to them for tenants to contact TFEC representatives for discussions, advice and action. The number is **01664 502 373**.

We have given some of our grant to help the Springfield Residents Association buy a new Bingo machine, which all the community make use of and enjoy. TFEC have also become the proud sponsors of The Mowbray Rangers under 10's Panther Football Team and the Tenant's Forum logo is printed on their shirts. It is hoped this will raise the profile of the Tenant's Forum and the Executive Committee, and also encourage involvement from younger sectors of our community.

Every TFEC representative now carries with them business cards to hand out to tenants when visiting them and have ID cards to identify themselves to tenants when on official business.

As a group we are doing everything possible to keep tenants informed and engaged and TFEC have indeed managed to speak with many tenants on a one to one basis over the past few months.

As well as the extra activities we have carried out during the past few months TFEC continue to take part in Task Group meetings and Forums with Council Officers and Councillors, discussing many aspects of housing matters that relate to the management of your homes.

Ideas for the future include visiting energy efficient homes owned by Rockingham Forest Housing Association and driving forward the idea of energy efficient heating in Melton Borough Council properties.

We are always looking for new members to join the committee, if you are interested let any member know or speak to Sam Spencer, the Resident Involvement Officer on 01664 502 481.

I hope you all enjoy reading your Tenants' Voice Newsletter and wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year...

*Best Wishes*

**John Skerritt**

**Chair of Tenants Forum Executive**



### Christmas Events 2009

Special Classic Car & Bike Meet & 'Blokies Shopping Day'

**Sunday 20th December 2009.** Melton Town Centre

**FREE** Gift wrapping service, markets & entertainment

Christmas Eve Market - 8.00am to 2.00pm Melton Town centre

**FREE PARKING** in LONG STAY car parks (Scalford Road, Nottingham Road & Thorpe Road)

**FREE PARKING** on every Friday leading up to Christmas from Friday 27th November 2009 until Christmas Eve in all LONG STAY car parks (Scalford Road, Nottingham Road & Thorpe Road)

### Melton Borough Council Christmas Opening Times

Melton Borough Council will be closed from **Friday 25th December 2009** and will re-open on **Monday 4th January 2010**.

If you have an emergency during this time please contact the 'out of hours' number on **01664 481000**.

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## Article from Chief Executive

As tenants are aware the Council has been working with TFEC to manage the pressures on our Housing Maintenance and Repairs budgets. The last financial year resulted in a very large number of void properties, many with large repair bills and increased demand for certain repairs. We managed that at the end of the year and topped up the Working Balance for this year.

We were grateful to TFEC for their support sent to the Council early this year, complimenting Council Officers on how they had dealt with the problem. Now we have found that the voids continued to increase in number and costs and some Health and Safety work was found to be needed. This again has given more pressures on spending.

Councillors have looked very carefully at this and have given extra money, £538,000, to help pay these extra costs. Councillors have also said that the Decent Homes Standard must be met to keep this promise to tenants.

But this does not mean the budgets do not need to be looked at carefully through the year. This is happening across the Council and we will keep the focus on this. We need to be as efficient and effective as we can in doing the work. We will continue to work with TFEC and get their views to help best sort out the problems.

We hope to be able to report positive news in the next edition, including the news that the Council has reached the Decent Homes Standard in 2009.

**Lynn Aisbett**  
Chief Executive



## Repairs and Maintenance


The repairs and maintenance team are always looking for ways to improve the service you receive and part of this is to get the right contractor to the right job first time. However, recently a number of appointments are being missed or cancelled whilst the workman is at the door.

Melton Borough Council incurs costs for wasted journeys like this and as a result of this tenants can be re-charged for this type of wasted journey.

In order to prevent this wasted time please only arrange a repair if you are prepared for the works that may be required, and ensure that an appropriate time is agreed with the contractor in advance so they can gain access.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

**Natalie James**  
Repairs and Maintenance Team



# Avoid the Christmas Debt Hangover...

It's coming, we don't want to admit it; we're pretending that it's still months away but it's December already and you know how it goes: you open your first Christmas card and as quick as you can say "James Bond on TV again!," you're carving the Christmas turkey, and then Bam! All of a sudden it's January. (Note that the older you are, the faster this chain of events occurs!!!!). That's right, Christmas is coming, and more specifically: Christmas shopping, Christmas travelling, and Christmas entertaining. Anything Christmas-related that costs money.



These top tips may help you avoid the debt pitfalls in the build up to Christmas...

- Pay your regular bills first. Rent, utilities, food, debts and loans, etc., must take priority
- Watch out for expensive warranties and insurance premiums. Consider whether these are worth the money. Remember consumer regulations automatically require goods to be of satisfactory quality, durable, and fit for purpose
- Some providers offer interest free credit which may seem like a good idea but you need to be careful to pay the full amount before the free credit period expires. If you are even 1 day late you may have to pay interest on the total cost
- What seems like a good deal can have hidden costs. For example, minimum payments or a 'payment holiday' can result in substantially larger total payments
- Be vigilant when considering store cards. These may seem convenient but some charge interest of 30% per year or more
- If you can afford to pay for goods outright, don't be persuaded to take out credit unless it really does work out cheaper or better fits your financial plans
- Every now and again take time to do a quick 'financial health check'. Write down your income (monthly or weekly) and everything you need to spend money on over the same period. Make sure you are able to make ends meet and are not using credit to 'rob Peter to pay Paul'
- If you think your finances may be getting out of control, seek help from an appropriately qualified independent agency such as *Melton Citizens Advice Bureau, 9 Burton Street, Melton Mowbray Leicestershire, LE13 1AE, Tel: 01664 484050*

## Melton Borough Council and the Library Team Up

Since the fire to the Council Offices in May 2008 and the restriction on public access to the council offices, there has been no face to face service close to the town centre. Although the service provided through the children's centres has been hugely successful, Melton Borough Council has identified that a number of vulnerable, older residents living in and around the town centre have been struggling to access face to face services.

With this in mind, Melton Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council are pleased to announce that they have teamed

up to provide a face to face service from Melton Library on Wilton Road. The library already delivered the bio bags and radar keys services on behalf of the Council. This has been extended to include waste management queries, photocopying of evidential documents, postal service and general non-confidential enquiries. A member of Melton Borough Council's Customer Services team will be available Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm, no appointment necessary. For any further information, please call Customer Services on 01664 502 502.

# Tours of the Borough

The Tenants Forum Executive Committee carried out a tour of South of the Borough on 30th July 2009. The tour was attended by 9 TFEC members along with officers from MBC and Jeakins Weir. The tour was successful and TFEC got to talk to lots of different tenants.



Picture of TFEC members and Council Officers during the South Tour of the Borough

The group had a short questionnaire with them to prompt some responses whilst they carried out some door-knocking in the area. We got to speak to over 20 tenants during the day and out of those 85% said they read the Tenants Voice Newsletter and thought it was good. 75% stated they were happy with the repairs service and 90% stated they were happy with the overall housing service they receive from Melton Borough Council.

The overall perception from TFEC is that the properties are in very good condition and members commented that to those tenants we got to talk to, who were generally happy with the service they receive.

In October we carried out a North Tour of the Borough taking in lots of places including Waltham, Eaton and Stathern. Although we did pick up issues in the areas, the standard of the properties was still very high.



Properties at Burgins Lane, Waltham.

## Local Environmental Champions

If you would like to report an environmental issue including, littering, fly tipping, dog fouling, graffiti and abandon vehicles, please contact the relevant CHAMPION;

- Egerton ward - Amanda Hume – Tel: 01664 502 499
- South Melton ward – Gerald Royston – Tel: 01664 502 324
- Fairmead ward – Amanda Hume & Alan Parr – Tel: 01664 502 499

## Dates for your **DIARY**

The Tenant's Forum meetings for 2010 are:

**Monday 1st February**

**Tuesday 6th April**

**Monday 7th June**

**Monday 2nd August**

**Monday 6th September AGM**

**Monday 4th October**

**Monday 6th December**

Please note that all the meetings start at 5.30pm and are held at the resource room at Gretton Court, Melton Mowbray, unless otherwise stated. Please check the forum on [www.meltononline.gov.uk](http://www.meltononline.gov.uk) for up to date details. The Tenant's Forum meetings are open for all Melton Borough Council tenants to attend with an agenda item set for questions from tenants.

Travel can be arranged for the meeting on request – please contact the Resident Involvement Officer on 01664 502481 to arrange this.

# Here we go, Here we go, Here we go!

TFEC have wanted to sponsor a youth team for sometime now and have recently become the proud sponsors of The Mowbray Rangers, Under 10's Panthers Football Team. TFEC hope the sponsorship will engage tenants who can be harder to reach.

The Panthers started the 2009/2010 season in strong form, pouncing to 3 victories out of 3, scoring 22 goals!! TFEC would like to wish the team success for the remainder of the season and hope they continue in their free scoring start to the season. The squad are currently looking for a defensive midfield player to strengthen the team, if anyone is interested in becoming a Panther then contact Paul Rutherford on 01664 434584... *Come on the Panthers!!*



Fraser Rutherford, Adam Lomas and Ben Bridger show off their new kit with the team mascot – a black panther!

## Full House! 3 88 42 5



TFEC Secretary, Barbara Norman, playing bingo with Springfield Residents Association members.

TFEC recently gave some of their grant money to Springfield Residents Association to purchase a bingo machine. The bingo machine has been extremely popular with 20+ residents attending two weekly sessions on Tuesday and Friday evenings. Residents alternate the bingo calling and they have the chance of winning £1 for a line and £2 for a full house.

## Have Your Say...

Tenant's Voice is **YOUR** newsletter and we need your news and views on what you think should go in the newsletter. If you know of something that is happening in your area, have ideas for articles to go in the next issue in Spring 2010 then please contact a member of TFEC on **01664 502373**.





## The hazards of Parking on Pavements



Obstructions on pavements can be in many forms and can cause a hazard to pedestrians, people with buggies and particularly to those with disabilities. It can also damage the fabric of the pavement. Pavements which are uneven or damaged can cause a person to lose their balance or trip. Repeated parking on pavements can also cause the pavement to collapse, causing costly repairs to you as tax payers!

You can help us to keep the highway safe by reporting the location of uneven or damaged pavements on the Freephone Roadline number: **0800 62 62 03**.

Serious obstruction and obstructive parking on pavements should be reported to the Police on **0116 222 2222**.

If there are parking restrictions (usually yellow lines) next to the pavement the incident should be reported to the Leicestershire County Council Customer Service Centre (Highways and Streetlighting) on **0116 305 0001**.

## Your Tenant participation Agreement

TFEC have been working hard to produce the new Tenants Participation agreement 2009-2012.

This agreement (compact) establishes the commitment that Melton Borough Council, tenants and councillors have in ensuring that YOU, the tenants, have a say in how your housing is managed.

Harry Rai, Head of Social and Economic Development says,

*"To deliver services that meet tenants' needs and aspirations means having good mechanisms in place for meaningful engagement. This agreement highlights the opportunity available to tenants to influence the way the housing service is provided to them."*

A copy of this agreement is being sent out to all tenants and there is a feedback page which you can send back to Melton Borough Council with your views. We welcome your feedback on this agreement and its contents.

If you require the booklet in another format (larger font, audio or Braille) then please contact the Resident Involvement Officer on **01664 502481**.



*John Skerritt, TFEC Chair, Harrinder Rai, Head of Social and Economic Development and Pam Posnett, Chair Community and Social Affairs sign the Tenant Participation Agreement 2009-2012 at the TFEC AGM in September 2009.*

# Housing Revenue Account

The Housing Revenue Account is a separate account which details income and expenditure relating to the provision of Council owned housing.

	2008/09 Original Estimate	2008/09 Year End Position
<b>INCOME</b>		
Rents	£5,620,000	£5,576,000
Other Income	£459,000	£474,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>£6,079,000</b>	<b>£6,050,000</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Repairs & Maintenance	£1,734,000	£1,880,000
Supervision & Management Costs	£1,419,000	£1,278,000
Subsidy Payable to Central Government	£1,502,000	£1,502,000
Other Costs	£1,511,000	£1,631,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>£6,166,000</b>	<b>£6,291,000</b>
<b>Surplus(-)/Deficit in Year</b>	<b>£87,000</b>	<b>£241,000</b>

There was an amount of reserves used in the year to finance an acceleration of the Decent Homes Standard to Council Housing, this largely explains the increase in expenditure when comparing the original estimate to the year end actual position.

The Council owned the following types and numbers of Council owned dwellings at 31 March 2009:

Houses	901
Bungalows	284
Flats & Maisonettes	716
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,901</b>

There were no properties sold under the Government's Right to Buy Scheme during the 2008/09 financial year.



## Town Centre Residents Car Parking

Further to resident complaints, enforcement of resident only parking is being considered in Chapel Street, New Street, Bentley Street, Granby House, Rutland Street and St Johns Court car parks. Leaflets have been created to place on non resident and non visitor cars windscreens to inform enforcement is currently being considered. The above car parks are not for general use by the public and non residents and non visitors are asked to observe resident notices on the road surfaces and on the displayed signs.



# Her name was RIO...

TFEC would like to wish Natalie James the best of luck during her secondment as Team Leader in Repairs and Maintenance. Natalie has done a tremendous job as the Resident Involvement Officer (RIO) and we hope to see her back soon!! TFEC would like to welcome back Sam Spencer, who will be covering Natalie during her secondment. Sam has previously covered the position so it is nice to welcome back a familiar face...



## Issue 20 Winners

Previous garden wordsearch competition winners are; *(All 3 live in Melton Mowbray)*

- 1st - **Helen Walker** - prize **£25** high street voucher of choice
- 2nd - **Mr K Wright** - prize **£15** high street voucher of choice
- 3rd - **Mrs J E Holmes** - prize **£10** high street voucher of choice

Previous garden picture competition winners are; *(Both live in Melton Mowbray)*

- 1st - **Margaret Exton** - prize **£20** high street voucher of choice. Margaret Exton's little oasis is enjoyed by many tenants in the communal garden area and also lots of passers by.
- 2nd - **Mrs Thora Gibson** - prize **£10** high street voucher of choice

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in another language, Braille or audio cassette please contact Melton Borough Council on **01664 502502**.

## Wordsearch

Find all the words listed here in the grid of letters and you could be the winner of high street vouchers of your choice. **1st Prize £25 - 2nd Prize £15 - 3rd Prize £10.**

Send correct entries to: Sam Spencer, Resident Involvement Officer, Melton Borough Council, Council Offices, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 0UL

P	Y	Q	S	N	G	O	F	R	A	S	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C	X
O	F	M	J	O	E	E	R	T	A	R	K	Y	F	W	U	P	K	C	R	M
P	T	O	S	Z	Y	F	D	C	V	E	V	O	F	K	S	G	Y	V	D	I
P	Q	R	M	N	V	Q	K	U	H	K	Y	S	P	K	O	T	G	V	P	N
E	J	Z	L	D	O	K	T	O	C	C	C	W	R	H	N	H	Y	G	F	C
R	Q	R	N	A	P	I	L	B	F	A	E	X	E	F	R	C	N	S	Q	E
S	P	Q	L	N	K	L	T	I	L	R	X	D	S	N	R	F	A	D	P	P
T	S	W	B	I	Y	N	C	A	F	C	Z	P	E	M	Y	T	R	R	O	I
S	E	L	E	U	A	F	G	Z	R	A	V	L	N	N	C	P	Q	A	Q	E
K	E	C	E	A	G	T	G	N	P	O	I	D	T	N	F	L	P	C	D	S
N	O	D	A	G	E	Z	K	N	I	K	C	R	S	E	A	N	F	A	O	Y
I	T	J	G	L	N	S	W	C	I	D	G	E	Y	N	W	M	O	C	H	Z
R	E	C	I	I	P	A	A	H	O	F	D	K	D	L	P	S	W	O	I	K
D	L	W	B	S	F	E	R	N	O	C	F	U	R	K	I	F	T	O	V	A
E	T	A	J	H	T	T	R	M	T	G	T	U	P	K	V	G	H	U	N	U
V	S	P	B	M	L	O	T	I	U	A	M	I	T	T	H	Y	H	S	N	S
I	I	A	R	Y	M	O	C	A	F	D	C	A	U	S	N	T	A	T	V	H
T	M	R	U	K	N	K	H	K	G	P	E	L	N	R	A	V	X	P	S	G
S	S	T	U	W	M	B	D	X	I	S	N	Q	A	A	F	L	U	W	Y	Y
E	R	Y	I	D	W	D	P	M	T	N	I	L	T	U	Y	E	A	S	C	W
F	E	K	A	C	S	A	M	X	O	Q	G	Y	S	Z	S	O	M	J	X	A

- angel
- gift tags
- presents
- cards
- happy new year
- pudding
- Christmas
- hogmanay
- santa claus
- crackers
- holly
- snowman
- decorations
- mince pies
- stocking
- fairy lights
- mistletoe
- stuffing
- festive drinks
- nuts
- tree
- fireplace
- party
- xmas cake
- fruit cocktail
- poppers

Remember - you've got to be in it to win it so please remember to supply your name and address when sending in your entries.

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Closing date for wordsearch **Friday 29th January 2010**, the winners will be drawn at the TFEC Formal meeting on Monday 1st February 2010.

