

tenants voice

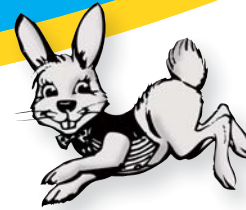
For tenants and leaseholders of Melton Borough Council

SPRING 2010
Issue

22



In Partnership with
Melton Borough Council



Senior Walks

The senior walks take place every Thursday. There are two types of walk which are indicated by heart levels. The one heart level walks average between 30 minutes to 1 hour on good surfaces and fairly flat routes with no stiles. The walks are always at Melton Country Park and are suitable to newcomers to walking. Meet at Melton Country Park visitor centre at the end of Wymondham Way at 1.30pm. The two heart level walks are up to 90 minutes covering a variety of paths, which maybe uphill and over stiles. Paths may be uneven or muddy in places, and appropriate footwear must be worn. Meet at Leicester Road Sports Ground at 1.30pm to travel to the destination. Both walks have front and back leaders so all walkers can find their own pace. For more information please contact us on **01664 502502** or email sports@melton.gov.uk

Voluntary Action Melton Gardening Project

The Voluntary Action Melton Gardening Project offers a gardening service for older people and or people with a disability who need help with their garden. Their team of trained, friendly volunteers will tidy gardens which are in need of hedge cutting, hoeing, weeding, shrub pruning and light digging. A risk assessment is carried out for all jobs requested and if it is suitable for the volunteers, a team of two or more will be allocated to the task. For further information on how the gardening project may benefit you please contact Will Andrew on **01664 481 777** or email gardening@voluntaryactionmelton.org.uk

Alternatively...

If you are looking for a volunteer opportunity then the gardening project may provide an ideal opportunity to either discover your love of the outside life or a new interest in horticulture.

Volunteers at the gardening project have benefitted from offering a service to people less fortunate than themselves by developing team working skills and making new friends. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please contact Joanna Burrows on **01664 485300**, email joanna@voluntaryactionmelton.org.uk or visit the Voluntary Action Melton website for further details www.voluntaryactionmelton.org.uk

FREE Swimming at Waterfield Leisure Pool

Everybody aged 16 and under and 60 and over is now entitled to swim for free at published public swimming sessions at Waterfield Leisure Pools as part of the government's free swimming programme. The scheme is part of a national campaign to promote swimming, general fitness, more active lifestyles and well-being. It is a cornerstone of the government's legacy action plan, which aims to make the most of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In Melton, the two year initiative is being delivered by Melton Borough Council in partnership with Everyone Active, who manage and operate Waterfield Leisure Pools on behalf of the Melton Borough Council.

To take up the free swim offer you must have a valid 'Everyone Active' card. The cards are free and are available from Waterfield Leisure Pools. You can also apply for an 'Everyone Active' card online by visiting the Everyone Active website. Anyone wishing to register for a card must bring ID (for example birth certificate, passport, driving license, etc).

GP Exercise Referral

The concept of exercise referral is so medical professionals can refer anybody who requires an introduction to exercise, including those patients who have been inactive for many years, those with specific health conditions and also patients who could just benefit from a healthier lifestyle to fitness facilities for safe and appropriate physical activity interventions.

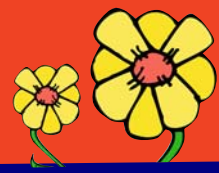
Patients are referred onto the scheme by their GP, practice nurse, physiotherapist or cardiac physiotherapist and are invited along for an exercise consultation with an exercise referral instructor. At this consultation the patient will receive individual advice and support from the exercise referral instructor to help them become more physically active. From there a suitable and safe exercise programme will then be designed in accordance with the patients abilities and needs. Sessions will be held at Waterfield Leisure Centre and The Cove Community Centre on Sysonby Street at a cost of £2 per session and will last for 10-12 weeks. For further information please contact Edward Gatheral, Active Lifestyle Referral Coordinator at Melton Borough Council, on **01664 502378**.



WHAT'S INSIDE

Three Resident Associations Speak, Tenant Fraud, Breakfast with the TFEC, borough events, competitions and much more...





Fairmead Residents Association

Hello all, as the Chair of the Fairmead Residents Association I would like to give you an update from Fairmead. The new Multi Use Games Area opening was held during February half term with Nottingham Forest football player Paul Anderson officially opening the MUGA.

During the year there have been a number of consultation meetings between Melton Borough Council and the residents of Fairmead regarding the regeneration of the area. There are currently no further updates to report, however a paper will be going to Community and Social Affairs in March to map the way forward. Residents will be kept informed and consulted every step of the way.

The Fairmead Resident Association continues to encourage residents to attend the meetings to act as a voice for the area so issues can be dealt with in joint partnership.

To finish on a high, the grounds maintenance on Fairmead has been very good thanks to the Environmental Services team and Verdant. The area has been cleaned, cleared of litter and the grass/shrubs areas maintained to a good level, which makes the area look well kept. The Fairmead Resident Association recently wrote to Verdant to thank their litter picker for the fantastic work carried out.

Best wishes and happy Easter...

Fiona Gray
Chair of Fairmead Residents Association



In this Edition of Tenants Voice we have included articles from three local resident associations which we hope will give you information about what they do for their communities. In our next edition we hope to extend this feature to include Asfordby and Bottesford. If any reader would like to contribute to a future edition please contact Sam Spencer, Resident Involvement Officer on 01664 502 481. Also, remember should you require T.F.E.C help please contact 01664 502373.

RAGE

What is RAGE? We are a group of residents who volunteer their time to work closely with the police and council to encourage the residents of Egerton Ward to be proactive in securing a safe, harmonious and pleasing to look at community to live in.

We provide regular meetings for the residents of the community to express their opinions and concerns and these are well attended by our services. We also put on bingo and quiz nights as well as other positive events such as an annual fete and a heavily subsidised trip to the seaside for just £1 per resident. We were the driving force in getting The Cove Centre built on Sysonby Street as well as providing lots of distraction events for our youth.

We are working alongside Melton Borough Council to provide a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) for West Avenue Green and we hope to be consulting the residents living in that area soon. We have recently highlighted the need for goal posts on Weaver Green and one has recently been provided and installed by Melton Borough Council. We have also been in contact with Sainsbury's regarding their plans to build a supermarket on the site of the old council offices and will continue to bring any resident's concerns to their attention.

To contact RAGE please call Tina Culley (Chair) on 854622, Karin Handley (Vice Chair) 850195, Trevor Moncrieff (Ward Councillor) on 562859 or Steve Dungworth (Ward Councillor) on 859492.

Shout4Residents

Hi, my name is Margaret Moore and as the Chair of the resident association I would like to provide you with an update of the South Melton Residents Association, mainly the new name change.

During the residents association meeting in February the committee and residents agreed to change the name of the association to 'Shout4Residents'. The new name complements the residents' newsletter which is called Shout! Shout4Residents is a resident association aimed at developing and improving the South Melton area by working in partnership with local residents.

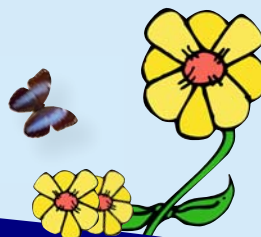
The old community centre hut has now been demolished which will make way for the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). The MUGA will provide a year round playing surface for young people to play sport and participate in team games. The planning application has been submitted so hopefully the installation will start fairly soon, watch that space!!

A recent survey with South Melton children in years 10 and 11 at King Edward VII School highlighted what the local young people would like to see in their area. From these results the Shout4Residents committee is working with local residents looking into potential funding opportunities for the South Melton area. Ideas include a new play area outside of The Edge, day trips such as paint balling and go karting and a youth shelter.

During recent meetings there have been several new resident attending, which is very encouraging. We want to know what residents want and need for their community in the area they live. We are always open to helpful suggestions which can be passed onto us via The Edge Community Centre or by contacting us by phone. We are also looking for new committee members and residents to get involved and make a difference in the area. Please contact me for further information on 01664 564 747.

Happy Easter...

Margaret Moore
Chair of Shout4Residents





Saving Gateway

What it is and who qualifies?

From 2010, there will be a new government supported cash saving scheme called the 'Saving Gateway'. It's for people of working age who are on lower incomes, and aims to help kick-start a saving habit. The government will add 50 pence for each £1 saved into Saving Gateway accounts. You will qualify for an account if you get certain benefits or tax credits.

WHO CAN GET THE NEW ACCOUNTS?

You will be able to open a Saving Gateway account if you get any of the following:

- Income support
- Jobseeker's allowance
- Incapacity benefit
- Employment support allowance
- Severe disablement allowance
- Tax credits — if you have an income below £16,040
- Carer's allowance (you must be in receipt of the allowance, not just have an underlying entitlement)

HOW THE ACCOUNTS WILL WORK

When the scheme launches in 2010, you will be sent a letter of invitation, an information booklet and a list of Saving Gateway providers by HMRC. You will be able to take your letter to any approved Saving Gateway provider and open your account.

You will then be able to save as much as you like into your account for two years, with a top limit of £25 a month. At the end of the two years the government will add a reward of 50 pence for each £1 you've saved.

Don't worry if £25 sounds too much — every £1 you save will earn you an extra 50 pence. And you will be able to withdraw your savings should you need to without affecting the government reward you have earned up to that point. Remember, you'll only be able to open one Saving Gateway account per lifetime, so make sure you open one at a time that's right for you.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

There will be more information about Saving Gateway accounts nearer to the launch in 2010, including who can get one, how to open one, and how it works.

You don't need to do anything else in the meantime. But it might be worth checking to see if you qualify for any of the benefits or tax credits mentioned above.

Events

THROUGHOUT THE BOROUGH

Here are just a few of the events happening in your area this year

APRIL

4 th to 18 th	Fun Fair	Play Close	12.00 onwards
5 th	Easter at Belvoir	Belvoir Castle	
20 th	British Pie Awards – TBC	St Mary's Church	
23 rd	St George's Day	Town Centre	
30 th	Vintage Classic Car & Bike Meet	Market Place	5.00pm-Dusk
24 th	St George's Day event	Market Place	10.00-4.00
25 th	East Mids Intl CiCLE Classic Race	Town Centre	From 2.30pm

MAY

2 nd & 3 rd	Leicestershire County Show	Airfield	8.00am-6.30pm
9 th	Macmillan Horse Ride	Belvoir Castle	
15 th & 16 th	Steam Festival & Family Show	Belvoir Castle	
21 st	French Market	Town Centre	8.00am-4.00pm
29 th	Belvoir Triathlon	Belvoir Castle	
31 st	Melton Show	Town Parks	10.00-Dusk
28 th	Vintage Classic Car & Bike Meet	Market Place	5.00pm-Dusk
30 th & 31 st	Napoleonic Wars	Belvoir Castle	

JUNE

18 th & 19 th	Stapleford Steam	Stapleford Park	9:00am-4.30pm
TBC	Grove Carnival	Market Place	11.00am-2.00pm
14 th	National Garden Scheme Open Day	Belvoir Castle	
21 st	National Garden Scheme Open Day	Belvoir Castle	
25 th	Vintage Classic Car & Bike Meet	Market Place	5.00pm-Dusk
27 th	Melton Mowbray Country Fair	Town Parks	10.00am-5.00pm

JULY

4 th	Pork Pie & Potholes CiCLE rides	Around Melton	From 9.30pm
22 nd	Melton By the Sea	Market Place	10.00-5.00pm
23 rd	Melton By the Sea	Market Place	10.00-5.00pm
30 th	Vintage Classic Car & Bike Meet	Market Place	5.00pm-Dusk
31 st	Festival	Belvoir Castle	TBC

AUGUST

1 st	Festival	Belvoir Castle	TBC
21 st	Firework Competition	Belvoir Castle	5.00pm onwards
27 th	Vintage Classic Car & Bike Meet	Market Place	5.00pm-Dusk
29 th & 30 th	Stapleford Miniature Railway Open Weekend	Stapleford Park	10.00am-4.30pm
TBC	Duck Race	Parks	
29 th	Family Fun Weekend	Belvoir Castle	TBC
30 th	Family Fun Weekend	Belvoir Castle	TBC

Please visit for further information www.meltonbusiness.co.uk or contact Melton Borough Council on **01664 502 502**.

New Dedicated Fathers Worker

George Simpson, previously Melton's Anti-Social Behaviour Officer, is now Sure Start children centre's dedicated Father Worker. George joins a team of 5 family outreach workers who are currently working across Melton in the Sure Start children's centres.

Melton are only the second area in the county to invest in this type of role, which will provide dedicated advice and support to fathers or male carers and also to promote the children centre programme.

Support can include the following: parenting advice, counselling, advice on debt/money matters, employment/training, information and guidance on child development, healthy eating, baby activities, stay and play session plus much more!

George can work with fathers/male carers who have a child in the household aged 5 years or under. Referral forms are available at the 3 Children Centre's, The Cove, The Edge & The Fairmead Centre.

For any more information please contact George on **01664 502 405** or alternatively email gsimpson@melton.gov.uk

Tenant Fraud

At a time of increasing demand for access to social housing it is estimated by the audit commission that at least 50,000 socially rented homes are occupied unlawfully. Melton Borough Council has joined a national campaign to help detect and prevent housing fraud.

WHAT IS HOUSING FRAUD?

There are different types of housing fraud; here are some of the most common:

UNLAWFUL SUBLETTING

When a tenant lets out their council or housing association home without the knowledge or permission of their landlord they are unlawfully subletting. They often continue to pay the rent for the property directly to their landlord, but charge the person they are subletting to a much higher rate. It is not fair to sublet and to profit from a property which could be given to someone in greater need.

OBTAINING HOUSING BY DECEPTION

When a person gets a council or housing association home by giving false information in their application, for example not telling the landlord they are renting another council or housing association property, they are committing housing fraud.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

We are working hard to track down housing cheats and ensure that homes are given to those who are the next in line.

Your help in reporting housing fraud is important because you can see what's going on in your neighbourhood.

- You might know that somebody has a home the landlord doesn't know about or has given false information in their housing application



- You might suspect someone of housing fraud having seen them collect rent from your neighbours
- You might be suspicious because the tenants of a property keep changing
- If you suspect someone is a housing cheat, let us know. It could make a real difference

£500 REWARD

If you provide information which leads to the council reclaiming a property, which has been unlawfully or falsely obtained, you may be entitled to a reward of up to £500.

Contact us on **0800 028 2196**, email us at housingfraud@melton.gov.uk or write to us at:

Housing Fraud Team, Melton Borough Council, Council Offices, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 1UT

Anything you tell us will be held in the strictest confidence. All reports can be made anonymously.





Easter Time Spot the Difference

(for young children)

Can you find the 6 differences?

£10 GIFT VOUCHER of choice for 1st prize
£5 GIFT VOUCHER of choice for 2nd prize

Send to address on back

You've got to be in it to win it so please remember to supply your name and address when sending entries. You can also hand over to any TFEC member, drop off at the community centres or bring along to one of your local resident association meetings.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Closing date for the spot the difference is **Friday 21st May 2010**, the winners will be drawn at the TFEC Informal meeting on **Monday 24th May 2010**.

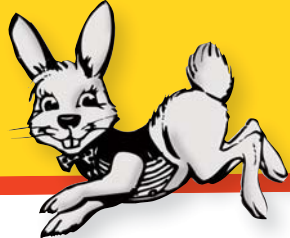
Breakfast with TFEC

TFEC recently visited MYST Lodge, in Melton Mowbray, to cook breakfast for the residents.

MYST Lodge was opened in 1994 by East Midlands Housing Association and provides 10 individual rooms of temporary accommodation with support for homeless people aged 16-25 years. The idea behind the TFEC visit was to meet the young residents and chomp over life as a council tenant. The residents asked TFEC members numerous questions about council housing and the process of how to apply for a council property. TFEC answered questions and gave an insight into being a council tenant including, the consequences of rent arrears and not taking care of their property. TFEC continue to engage with young people and are always on the look out for new young members to join the Tenants' Forum.

If you would like to know more please call Sam Spencer, Resident Involvement Officer on **01664 502 481**.





Performance Indicators

INDICATOR	TARGET	PERFORMANCE
Total number of council properties that have met the Decent Homes Standard	100%	99.6%
Percentage of non urgent responsive repair works completed on time	95%	95.6%
Percentage of urgent responsive repair works completed on time	100%	100%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the responsive repairs service they have received	95%	95.3%
Percentage of internal repairs carried out by appointment	90%	100%
Average time taken to re-let a council property when it becomes vacant	25 days	25.1 days
Proportion of rent collected	TBD	94.54%
Average time taken to make a homeless decision	33 days	8.7 days
Percentage of response made to a Category A Anti Social Behaviour on time	1 day	100%
Percentage of response made to a Category B Anti Social Behaviour on time	5 days	98%



Where's it all gone...?

These are some of MBC properties that have been vacated by previous tenants which have cost a considerable amount of money to repair/refurbish to bring them back to a condition which can be re-let.

This is money that should be spent on properties which need investment including, new roofs, rewires, new boilers, brickwork, re-pointing and the list goes on. This type of work needs continually attention due to the age of the properties, but instead the council have to spend money repairing houses that have been vandalised and trashed which is not fair to the majority of tenants who look after their homes and also spend their own money on their homes.



Inspector, Inspector, Inspector

TFEC members have been doing inspections of void properties for some considerable time.

We do this to improve the quality of workmanship and kitchens and bathrooms that go into the properties, including the interior finishes. We feel the time has arrived to offer you the tenants the opportunity to get involved and become a tenant inspector. Out of pocket expenses and training will be provided. If you are interested then call the Resident Involvement Officer, Sam Spencer, on **01664 502 481**,



Condensation and Mould Growth

Advice to Tenants

WHAT IS CONDENSATION?

Condensation is dampness occurring when air laden with water vapour cools on contact with a cold surface, you notice it when you see your breath on cold days or in the bathroom on mirrors or tile surfaces.

Condensation frequently occurs during cold weather and appears on cold surfaces and in areas of the dwelling where there is little movement of air.

Condensation is frequently found near or on windows, cold wall surfaces and in or behind cupboards or wardrobes. Also it often forms on north facing walls.

IS IT CONDENSATION OR RISING DAMP?

Signs of rising damp include a "tide-mark" on the wall above skirting boards, peeling wallpaper, mould growth and white, fluffy efflorescent salts which have been drawn out of the brickwork by the water.— If you suspect the problem is damp please report this to Melton Borough Council on 01664 502502. If the problem is rising damp then the best course of action will be taken to cure the problem, this could be repairing the external brickwork or injecting a new damp proof membrane.

Condensation on windows runs down and collects on the bottom rail and sill, often causing dark mould spots. Similar evidence of condensation can be seen on walls and ceilings, where large patches of green or black mould can appear. There are many ways in which condensation can be dealt with.

HOW TO MINIMISE CONDENSATION

1. Produce less moisture

Ordinary daily activities produce a lot of moisture often very quickly.

- Cover boiling pans and turn kettles off after use
- Avoid paraffin and portable gas heaters as these add moisture to the air in the dwelling
- Dry washing outdoors or in the bathroom with the door closed, window open or fan turned on
- Vent tumble dryers using proper vent kits or use a self-condensing type

2. Ventilate to remove moisture

- Keep a small window or trickle vent open when possible
- In particular, ventilate kitchens and bathrooms by opening windows when you are using them
- Prevent the damp air spreading by keeping kitchen and bathroom doors closed when the room is in use
- Open curtains for at least 4 or 5 hours each day, it allows moisture to get through any window vents
- Do not completely draught-proof windows especially in kitchens and bathrooms
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes; do not put too many things in them so preventing air circulation. Where possible put them on internal walls

3. Keep your home warm

- Heat your home at low levels for a long time rather than high levels for short periods; this will ensure that fewer cold surfaces form in the home. Heat the home even when there is no one there. Keep background heating on all the time during the winter months
- Heat using a dry heat source, for example gas central heating or electric storage heaters or a fitted gas fire. Do not use paraffin or portable gas heaters
- Insulation and sensible draught proofing will help to keep your home warm and will also cut fuel bills

4. Dealing with Mould Growth

- If mould starts to grow on walls, clean them with bleach or disinfectant
- Try to ensure that condensation does not occur on a regular basis
- Mould on washable surfaces can be removed with a fungicide solution readily available from stores
- Other items such as fabric materials can often be washed, although this may not always remove the mould staining

Some top tips:

- To prevent condensation on mirrors or windows rub a cloth with a small spot of washing up liquid over the surface, try this at home!
- Alternatively to prevent condensation on windows, cut a potato in half and rub across the surface then buff with a cloth

