

PIONEER PRESS

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ISSUE 2

THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE TENANTS
OF WOMEN'S PIONEER HOUSING

CARE HOME CLOSES

A well intentioned change in council policies has had a very sad and unintended consequence for our residential care home. Head of housing **Christine Desborough** reports on the closure of our residential care home at Mary Smith Court

Our residential care home at Mary Smith Court opened in 1989, alongside a sheltered scheme. It was a small home but always popular despite a difficult layout. Residents were well cared for and we had many referrals, mainly from Kensington & Chelsea council's social services team and hospitals.

Policy shift

But thinking on care for older people has changed. Residential care is now seen as institutional, and instead town hall policy makers favour taking support services like home care to older people in their own homes, rather than ask them to move to a care home.

Kensington and Chelsea told us earlier this year it would no longer be referring residents to the home. Its decision was serious for us. It meant we would now always have some rooms empty so the home would run at a huge loss.

We consulted people we hoped might have good alternative ideas but found there was no way to keep the home going without a serious drain on our finances.



We were very sad to say goodbye to deputy manager Bethan Peacock (left) who is taking time to travel before deciding her next career move.

So after consulting residents, their relatives and others, our board very sadly decided the home would have to close.

We have found new homes for some residents locally, with some going to a nursing home. We hope to find good homes for the others soon. Very sadly, we have not been able to find alternative employment for staff, who will be redundant when the home closes in the next few weeks. We wish them well.

Our sheltered scheme at Mary Smith Court is staying but will no longer have staff working 24 hours a day. This is a big change so we are working with tenants to make sure it goes as smoothly as possible.

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Win £30 for your window box, patio or garden display - see page 3



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Tenants survey

Thank you to all of you who took part in this year's tenants survey, carried out by phone by independent researchers The Leadership Factor). We have back some early results, including a modest increase in satisfaction with our service. We'll be publishing the findings in full in the autumn *Pioneer Press*.

Garden party

Mary Flux Court, one of our sheltered schemes in Earl's Court, has been given a very welcome donation for garden improvements by relatives of a former resident. The £1,000 donation will pay for landscaping, plants and furniture – from properly certified sources.

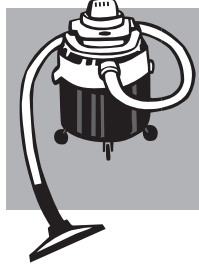
New look

April saw Mary Smith Court tenants welcome four neighbours from Dain Court to a celebration of their newly decorated lounge. The room is used for meetings, training classes and by community



groups and will soon be used to teach computer skills. Staff laid on a lovely buffet and the Christie de Freitas Quartet entertained guests with jazz classics. If funds allow, we hope to hold similar events at other sheltered schemes inviting others of you living nearby. If you live in one of our sheltered schemes and have an idea for an event, tell your scheme manager or call Marianne Duffield, our older persons services manager.

ESTATE SERVICES



Q: My caretaker/cleaner is on holiday. Will someone be covering their work while they're away?

A: If your caretaker or cleaner is on leave for less than a full working week we would not normally get someone in to do the cleaning as the extra cost would be added to your service charge.

We make an exception if we know there is a problem at a property, with pests perhaps or passers-by throwing rubbish into stairwells.

If your caretaker or cleaner goes on leave for more than five days we will provide a relief cleaner. We usually employ an outside contractor; booked once we know when your caretaker/cleaner wants time off.

Q: My caretaker/cleaner is off sick. Will we get a relief cleaner?

A: We look at each case individually. If they are likely to get better soon, we may not need to arrange relief cover. But if they are unwell for longer than a working week, or that seems likely, we will get someone in to do the cleaning.

Q: I've seen a mouse in my flat. When are you sending pest control round?

A: If you find mice, rats, cockroaches, pharaoh ants or other pests in your flat it is up to you to sort out the problem. You could buy traps or other remedies or, in the case of rodents, you could try blocking any

small holes with wire wool.

If you want to get a pest controller in, we can give you details of contractors we use and trust so you can get the best price for the job.

If you spot any pests in any parts of the house you share, please do call so we can get the problem treated.

Translated for our Spanish speaking tenants

Pregunta: He visto un ratón dentro de mi casa. ¿Cuándo me enviarán a un contratista de Control de Plagas (pest control)? El control de plagas que ocurra dentro de una vivienda individual es la responsabilidad del arrendatario. Los siguientes métodos ayudarán al arrendatario a remediar este problema por sí mismo: Trampas ratoneras que se pueden adquirir en ferreterías y el bloqueo de los pequeños agujeros con estropajo de aluminio (wire wool).

Women's Pioneer también le puede facilitar el nombre de los contratistas de Control de Plagas que mantenemos en nuestra lista, para que el inquilino pueda obtener sus propios presupuestos.

La Asociación no se puede involucrar en el tratamiento de plagas hasta que no haya evidencia de contaminación afectando a varios pisos o parte de las áreas comunes.

El coste del tratamiento plagas es parte de los gastos comunitarios y todos los ocupantes de la casa tendrían que pagar por este servicio; por lo cual es muy importante que lleve esto en cuenta cuando se ponga en contacto con la Asociación para informarnos, especialmente si el problema se relaciona solo con su vivienda.

ANNUAL REVIEW NOW AVAILABLE

Our 2008 annual review has just been published. A very warm thank you to all of you who contributed to the review. If any of you would like a copy of the report, please call Kim or Violet on ☎ 020 8749 7112.

PARKING UPDATE

New parking permits will be needed from 31 October if you use a parking space we provide at Archdale Court in Bloemfontein Avenue, Browning House in Wood Lane, Pioneer Way, Brook House in Gunnersbury Lane or at High Street, Harrow.

New enforcers

Our new contractor Nighthawk Security now enforces parking rules at all these addresses to make sure spaces are only being used by those of you with permits to park there.

All your permits expire on 31 October. We will be sending out reminders but this year will not renew permits automatically. If you want a new permit, please contact our corporate services team which now handles the permits. They will need to see your:

- car registration document (log book)
- car insurance certificate
- evidence that you have an up-to-date road tax disc.

If you have any queries about a parking permit please contact Violet Burrell or Kim Culhane, our corporate services administrators, on ☎ 020 8749 7112.

GARDEN COMPETITION

Win **£30** for your window box, patio or garden display - or nominate a gifted Women's Pioneer neighbour...

Have you or a neighbour turned a patio, garden or window sill into a lovely display of flowers or foliage? We're running a competition for the best display. The winner gets **£30** to tend their plants. Just call us and we'll come round to take a picture. The competition closes on **Tuesday 28 July**. To enter, or learn more, call our duty housing officer on ☎ **020 8749 7112**.

NB POTS AND PLANTS MUST NOT POSE A RISK TO NEIGHBOURS OR PROPERTY.

FINDING A NEW HOME

Do you **want to move** to a flat similar to the one you have now but in a different area or on a different floor? Sometimes that's all it takes to make people happier in their home

We have a long list of those of you wanting to move home. But it's very rare for a flat to fall empty that we can offer to those of you wanting a transfer. Only those with the highest priority are likely to get an offer.

Mutual exchange can be a way round this problem. It means finding another housing association or council tenant who has a flat where you want to live, and who wants to move to a flat like the one you have.

Finding a mutual exchange is not pain-free. It takes time and it can be frustrating if things don't go to plan. But several of our tenants moved last year through a mutual exchange and they are now happily settled in their new flats.

You normally have to do most of the legwork to get a mutual exchange. But we want to be helpful so we're more than willing to run your details through our computer system to look for other tenants wanting to move who might make a suitable swap for you.

If we find anyone who looks a likely bet, we will contact them to ask if they might be interested in a swap. If they say 'yes', we'll pass their details on to you so you can decide between you whether or not you want to exchange flats.

You can also use our website to find a mutual exchange and we can advertise your home in *Pioneer Press*, like we have for Karen (left). We can't promise we'll find an exchange for you, but we'll do our best. We'd also be very interested in hearing from any of you wanting a smaller flat.

www.womenspioneer.co.uk

MUTUAL EXCHANGE: LEAFY BECKENHAM, LARGER FLAT!



Fancy moving to a bigger flat in leafy Bromley? Broomleigh HA tenant Karen wants a one or two bedroom flat in west London. She is offering her three bedroom flat (pictured) on the second floor of a small block in a quiet road in Beckenham. It has a shared garden and is near shops and two train stations. She is looking to pay **£100** a week rent, but is flexible, and does not mind what floor or whether you have a garden or central heating. Call Karen on ☎ **07946 652 024** or call our housing management team.

EMERGENCY REPAIRS
OUT OF OFFICE HOURS

If you need an emergency repair when our office is closed please call the contractor below for the repair you need. An emergency is a problem that poses a risk of **personal injury, a health hazard or serious danger** to your belongings or our property.

General plumbing
EPM ☎ 020 8670 9232

Gas fire or boiler in your flat
Daynight ☎ 01425 623 954/
☎ 07860 234 899

Communal boiler for heating or hot water to the whole house
S and S Burners ☎ 020 8330 7992
Lifts Bardeck ☎ 020 8453 0200

Electricals MAC ☎ 020 7486 9075
If all the electricity in the house fails ring EDF on ☎ 0800 028 0247 or ☎ 0845 7444 555 if you live in **West Drayton**

Locks Barrs ☎ 07790 609 545
If you call Barrs because you have locked yourself out or lost your keys you will be charged.

General building problems
S Robbins ☎ 07739 469 400
If you suspect a **gas leak** please ring Transco on ☎ 0200 111 999

DURING OFFICE HOURS
CALL OUR REPAIRS
TEAM ☎ 020 8743 4422

SPANISH TRANSLATION

Estimados inquilinos de habla hispana. Mi nombre es Maria y esta nota es para comunicar a todo el inquilino hispanohablante y que tenga dificultad en comunicarse con nosotros en ingles, que se puede poner en contacto con nuestra oficina (☎ 020 8749 7112) y concertar una cita si necesitan mi ayuda como interprete en todo lo que se relacione con su vivienda en Women's Pioneer Housing.
atentamente, Maria Velázquez

SPRING CALENDAR – FREE ENTERTAINMENT

Book fair

Thurs/Friday 2-3 July

Brunei Gallery, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, WC1H 0XG. From 9.30am to 6pm

Durufle Requeim

Friday 3 July

Concert with choirs including the James Madison University Chorale and Madison Singers from the US performing motets, madrigals and spirituals. At St George's Bloomsbury, Bloomsbury Way, WC1A at 8pm

Pride London

Saturday 4 July

After the Pride London Parade, entertainment, speakers and music on the main stage in Trafalgar Square and across Soho. From 1pm -10pm
www.pridelondon.org

Community festival

Wednesday 8 July

At Kensington and Chelsea College Womington Centre. Music and dance, BBQ and drinks, arts end of year show, cookery demos, interactive painting and decorating, hair and beauty. Free – all welcome. From 6pm -9pm. At Kensington & Chelsea College, Womington Road, W10. ☎ 020 7573 3600

Urban Art 2009

Satur/Sunday 18-19 July

South London open air arts festival with 100+ artists exhibiting paintings, mixed media, print making and photography. At Josephine Avenue, Tulse Hill SW2. From 10am to 6pm

Lambeth Country Show

Satur/Sunday 18-19 July

Lambeth's biggest outdoor festival. Music, entertainment, arts and crafts, and trade stalls and horticulture. Hands-on activities for all ages with farmyard and exotic animals, brass bands, storytelling and a funfair. In Brockwell Park, Brixton SE24. From 11am to 7pm

BBC Proms

Sunday 26 July

Free family concert at the Royal Albert Hall, Kensington Gore, SW7. Starts 11am. 0845 401 5040.
www.bbc.co.uk/proms

Notting Hill Carnival

Sun/Monday 30-31 August

London's most colourful street carnival. Great music, great food and a great atmosphere. Dating back to 1964 the festival was started by local people, notably immigrants from Caribbean islands. All day, in streets in and around Notting Hill.
www.nottinghillcarnival.org.uk

Great river race

Saturday 5 September

Barges, canoes, rafts and dragon boats attempt the 22-mile course along the Thames. From London Docklands to Richmond, starts 11am. www.greatriverrace.co.uk

forum3 jobs/volunteers

Thurs/Friday 10-11 September

Look for a career or voluntary work in the charity/not-for-profit sectors. Seminars and workshops, CV advice zone and areas to talk to potential employers. Thurs 10am-6pm, Fri 10am to 5pm. At the Business Design Centre, Islington, NI.

London Thames Festival

Satur/Sunday 12-13 September

One of London's most spectacular events with music, art, street theatre and pyrotechnics along the Thames. From Victoria Embankment and the Southbank, from 12 noon to 10pm.
www.thamesfestival.org

Fashion exhibition

Ongoing at Victoria & Albert

Daily 10am-5:45pm, Fridays until 10pm. Fashionable dress from the 17th century on, influential designs from Europe's major fashion centres V&A Museum, South Kensington, Cromwell Road, London SW7