

## Winter Newsletter 2016

If you would like to contribute any tips or ideas they would be most welcome. We can be contacted at 155 Goldsworth Road, Woking, GU21 6LS. 01483 747 900 admin@greenoakha.org

## Staff changes



Greenoak has welcomed several new staff members during the last year:

**Karen Novell** joined us as Technical Services Manager following Stewart Brearley's retirement in in the Spring. She has overall responsibility for maintenance and improvements of our properties, and manages our Green Team. Karen is a Chartered Surveyor with over 30 years' experience in social housing.

**Bev Baker** our Maintenance and Office Administrator also joined us last year, and is your first point of call for repairs. She organises maintenance schedules and makes appointments for works to be carried out. She ensures the best use of resources and aims to get repairs done quickly and with the least amount of disruption for residents.

**Toby Evans** completed his carpentry apprenticeship earlier this year and is now a full time staff member. He has really shown

a flare for fitting kitchens, and has received great feedback from tenants about his workmanship.

**Wendy Goddard** started as part time Housing Administrator in October. She assists with housing administration and support services, and with the smooth running of the Housing Services Office.

**Harry Waites** began his apprenticeship with our DLO in September. Harry is studying level 2 carpentry NVQ and has fitted well into the team.

**Adi Nair** started a Finance apprenticeship with us in October and is working towards an accounting qualification. He is learning to use our systems and receives support with his studies from our finance staff.



## Christmas opening times

Our Head office and Housing Services office opening hours are as follows:

22 Dec Open 8:30am - 12:30pm

23 Dec Open 8:30am - 12:30pm

Closed 24 Dec to Tues 3 Jan

If you have a repair emergency during the holiday office closures:

**Sheltered schemes:** please contact the Call Centre using your pull cord

**Other properties:** call our emergency helpline on

**01295 660011**

## Board member changes

We have recently welcomed a new Chair to our Board.

**Paul Calland**, was elected as Greenoak's Chair in September. He is a retired Senior Executive with over 20 years' experience in social housing.

**Vicki March**, who has been on our Board for several years is now our Deputy Chair. She is an architect and sustainability consultant.

**Rowan Carstairs** was elected to the Board in October. He has extensive experience in both property and education, and is a consulting representative for The National Landlords Association.

# General news and updates

## News from our schemes

### Eastbourne



During September, the residents at Eastbourne were very pleased to welcome the Guide Dog Association to visit with Philby, a newly trained guide dog puppy. A very generous donation of £90 was raised by the residents for the Guide Dogs through their popular monthly coffee mornings and raffles.

The scheme's Christmas dinner was at the Prince Albert again this year, followed by drinks in the residents' lounge.

Glennys would like to thank everyone for their support and help during the past year and would like to wish everyone "A very Happy Christmas and a Healthy New Year!"

*Glennys Hanson, Scheme Manager*

## Housing News



The Welfare Reform and Work Act (2016) introduced some changes which took effect in the Autumn. This included lowering to the benefit cap levels to £20,000 a year for couples with or without children and lone parents and £13,410 for single people without children outside Greater London. They also included additional exemptions for recipients of Guardians Allowance, Carers' Allowance and Universal Credit claimants who receive payments towards Carers' costs.

For more information about the benefit cap changes please visit [www.Gov.UK/benefit-cap](http://www.Gov.UK/benefit-cap)

*James Devonshire, Housing Manager*

## General Housing Book Club

Our successful club provides reading books for children on some of our schemes. Orders have been made for Christmas so our younger residents can enjoy a book from us for the holidays.

If you are interested in being a designated Book Club Co-ordinator please contact Wendy or Ericka on 01483 747 900. You will be entitled to extra free books.

*Wendy Goddard, Housing and Support Assistant*

## Apollo and Scylla Place

Several of our residents at Apollo and Scylla Place are cyclists, so they are looking forward to a new bicycle store, which is on order and will be arriving soon.

*Stephanie Harris, Housing and Support Manager*

## Holmebury House

Residents at Holmebury House had a great Christmas party with a very good attendance. An excellent time was had by all with seasonal food and great musician, Dave Robson who played guitar and sang Christmas songs.

*Derek Stocker, Scheme Manager*

## Out-of-hours Emergency Service

All Emergency cover **other than for sheltered and retirement schemes** is provided by Panda Service & Maintenance. They can be contacted out of hours on:

**01295 660011**

This will provide a prompt and competent response for emergency repairs. Please only call this number for emergency repairs, and only when the housing office is closed after 4.30pm and before 8.30am, Monday to Friday and at weekends.

An emergency is: where there is a danger to health, a risk to the safety of residents or serious damage to the building. If you call this number for a repair that is not an emergency, you may be charged for the cost incurred.

*Karen Novell, Technical Services Manager*



# General news and updates

## Paying rent over the Christmas period

With all the pressures that Christmas brings, don't get behind with your rent. Residents can pay rent on-line using an Allpay card at any time over Christmas. This convenient service is free and completely secure. All you need to pay your rent on-line is a debit card, an Allpay card and access to the internet.

1. Go to [www.allpayments.net](http://www.allpayments.net) and enter your 19 digit number on the front of your Allpay card.
2. Set up a password for using the service.
3. Make a payment using your Debit Card.

It's that simple and means that you can make a payment 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without having to go to the Post Office or a PayPoint shop over the busy Christmas period. If you prefer to pay at the Post Office or at certain shops, you can still do this as before.

If you would like more information or require an Allpay card to start paying online please contact James Devonshire on 01483 768856.

## Download the Allpay Payment App



The Allpay app is a mobile application (App) available to download from the Apple App Store or Windows Phone store and Google Play enabling you to pay your bills from your Apple, Windows or Android smartphone. Just search for it in your application store, and download it. Once you have done this and logged in, all your details can be securely stored so you don't have to enter them every time. You can use this app to pay your rent and service charges.

Allpay's App:

- securely stores Payment Reference Numbers, bank details and payment amounts
- allows you to pay anytime, anywhere and offers Allpay Cashless customers a quick and easy way to top up their accounts
- is free to download, as Greenoak has signed up to Allpay's internet payments

Please keep your home and family safe. Christmas can be an expensive time but it is still essential that your rent is paid in full as well as making additional payments for any arrears you have. Rent arrears can lead to eviction, and If you do not pay your rent, your home may be at risk.

If you would like to discuss your rent account please call the Housing Services Office on 01483 768856

*James Devonshire, Housing Manager*

## Don't get into debt this Christmas

It is easy to get carried away in the run up to Christmas, but if money is tight, follow these top tips so you keep on top of your spending:

**Buy some presents after Christmas...** Wait until the Boxing Day sales and buy some presents then, you'll probably get a better deal!

**Budget...** Christmas can cost a fortune when you don't keep track of your spending, so this year, work out a budget for food, drink and decorations. Write it down, take it shopping with you and stick to it.

**Don't buy a bigger turkey than you need...** Don't spend more than you need to on a turkey unless you really will make the most of the leftovers.

## Stay safe online

- Credit cards are safer than debit cards for larger purchases (£100 plus) as these include legal protection in case of fraud or if your item doesn't turn up.
- Make sure the website is secure – look for a padlock icon in the bar by the address. The web address should begin with 'https://'.
- Don't enter any personal details when using an 'unsecured' wi-fi connection as other people may be able to see the information.
- Make sure your anti-virus software is up to date and that your firewall is turned on.

## Get flu safe!

Having a flu vaccination is the most effective way to avoid catching and spreading flu. Book an appointment at your Doctors' surgery and get the best possible protection. If you would like more information about whether you or someone else should have the vaccine, visit <http://www.nhs.uk>

# General news and updates

## Greenoak Community Focus Woking Volunteer Awards 2016

This second year Awards event celebrated over 10 years of Greenoak Community Focus' charitable work, and especially the incredible volunteers who provide so much needed support to people in Woking. It was a great competition with 25 entries for the Awards of 'Woking Volunteer of the Year' and 'Woking Young Volunteer of the Year' which were made online.

The Awards were presented at an 'Oscars' style ceremony at WWF's iconic Living Planet Centre. Each charity set up an exhibition illustrating their work and this also proved helpful for peer to peer networking. Attended by some 70 volunteers, there was loud cheering for the Winners and Runners up as they stepped up to receive their awards.

### The winner of Woking Volunteer of the Year was:

**Armindo Lago - AGE Concern, Woking** has been a volunteer 'friend' for over 8 years and is always happy to visit clients that Age Concern would otherwise find hard to place, either because of physical or mental conditions. For example, for nearly six years he 'befriended' a man in his 80s with no relatives who had suffered several strokes and was wheelchair bound with little use of his hands and arms. Armindo was very creative and he thought up versions of board games that the two of them could play together. He visited and supported him on his frequent hospital stays and kept the charity informed. Armindo is now a friend to



*Pictured above (from left to right): Runners up: Jon Andrews of Radio Wey, Ben Cheetham of Surrey Wheels for All, Martine Haryett on behalf of George Dixon of Woking and Sam Beare Hospices, Linda Coles of Send Family Link, Maria Lima of Liaise Women's Centre, Carol Perryer of Surrey Wheels for All, The Mayor of Woking Cllr Anne Murray, Lady Gill Baker Chair of GCF and Winner Armindo Lago of AGE Concern Woking.*

two further clients. He always helps out at Age Concern's bi-annual events, often arriving with a car full of excited clients he has picked up en route. He has an infectious smile and Age Concern knows they can call on him at any time for help.



*Pictured above are all entries (from left to right): Top Row - Rob Mills (GCF Board Member), Janet Sossick of Walk the Walk Worldwide, David Francis of 1st Knaphill Scout Group, Caroline Hughes of Second Thursday Club, Roy Clare of Holy Trinity & St Saviours Church, Tracey King of Sight for Surrey, George Hutchinson of York Road Project, Raj Chhetri of Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF), Tracie Benson of RSPCA Woking and Lady Gill Baker Chair of GCF. Bottom Row - Krisztina Koch of Hungarian School Woking, Greta Hughson of The Phoenix Cultural Centre, Jane Hulbert on behalf of John Sawyer of Cornerhouse, Doreen Paterson of Old Woking Community Centre, Sarah Williams of LinkAble Woking.*

### The Winner of Woking Young Volunteer of the Year was:

#### George Dixon - Woking and Sam Beare Hospices

George, aged 18, is an extraordinary and well deserving winner. He was himself initially supported by Tommy D (a bereavement support group for young people aged 12-18) and then later became a volunteer. He is a supportive lead member of the other young people attending, and is a charming and charismatic lead member of the group, showing great maturity and empathy especially with the younger members.

#### Runner Up - Ben Cheetham of Surrey Wheels for All.

Ben is the youngest member of the team at Surrey Wheels for All, part of a national charity called Cycling Projects. After cycling with the charity, Ben asked if he could continue by volunteering on Sunday afternoons. Lots of the children enjoy cycling with him and he has been very successful in helping those with learning difficulties move onto two wheels. He said that the look of achievement on child's face, and their parents when their child pedals for the first time, was very special.