

In This Issue

Page 2
Inspectors are coming

Page 3
Our latest Performance

Page 4
No ID, no entry
Winter Gardening



New Year, New Homes!



The New Year resolution for some Audenshaw folk is to enjoy their brand new homes!

Thirteen lucky tenants in Audenshaw are looking forward to feeling warm and snug following their move to new homes just before Christmas.

The bungalows have been carefully designed with state-of-the-art energy efficient features and are set to receive the prestigious "Secure by Design" award. We have fully equipped a few of the homes for disabled households.

These are the first new homes built for New Charter. The bungalows are something to celebrate, so we invited tenants to an official opening last month. Even Santa turned up with household gifts for the new residents!

Proud tenants showed guests round their bungalows, which were built for New Charter by Richardson Projects of Rochdale. "I'm overjoyed

with the quality of my home, and the bungalow will make life so much easier for me", said one of the residents, Mrs Olwen Allcott.

Julie Hardman, Chair of New Charter Housing (South) marked the historic occasion by unveiling a blue plaque. Julie said, "New Charter was set up to refurbish the many homes transferred to us, which desperately needed investment. But we also recognise that we can build some new homes to provide the particular type of accommodation which is in short supply. Seeing the joy on our tenants' faces makes all our efforts worthwhile!"

New Charter has already started to build more new homes with a contract to construct 21 flats in the centre of Ashton-under-Lyne. These properties will replace flats due to be demolished to make way for the Metrolink. This will connect Manchester City Centre to Ashton-under-Lyne via the Commonwealth Games Stadium.

2002 - Was It You?

Have you and your neighbours thought about setting up a Residents Group? Our Tenant Participation team can assist you in getting started.

Over the last 12 months, six new residents groups formed, and we are delighted to help and support them. We welcome:

Ashton

Crossley Crescent Residents Association
Crowhill Tenants & Residents Association

Droylsden

Fairfield Estate Residents Association
Ashton Road Tenants & Residents Association

Dukinfield

Central Residents Action Group
Gorse Hall Tenants & Residents Association

Lift off for our website!

We've launched our website, which you can find at www.newcharter.co.uk. Some sections are still to be completed and work is continuing on these areas. We expect a fully completed site by the beginning of April 2003.

Why not log in and find what we have to offer? If you don't have a computer at home, access is available at Tameside libraries.

We'd love to hear from you! If you have any suggestions for improving our site, please e-mail our web manager, Saeid Zandi, at info@newcharter.co.uk.

Under 25?
See back
page



Thanks to you

Thanks to those of you who responded to our Investment Special in December. Many of you told us you supported the information on our draft investment plan.

We do value your comments which will be reported to our Boards before they decide on the plan. Our next edition of the newsletter will report back to you what they agreed.

Making a Statement

You will all have received a statement giving details of your rent payment history. This is a new service which you will get four times a year. For the first time this month, we have included garage rent statements. Please take a moment to check your details and get in touch with us if you have any queries.

Open to tenants

Why not come along to a Board meeting at New Charter? They usually last around 2 hours and are held at Newton Hall in Hyde.

Take a look at the following dates and if you can attend, or would like more information, please contact Bill Wilkinson on 0161 331 2000.

New Charter Housing (North) Limited
Monday 3rd March 6.00 p.m.

New Charter Housing (South) Limited
Wednesday 5th March 6.00 p.m.

New Charter Housing Trust Limited
Tuesday 11th March 6.00 p.m.



Providing local care for local people

New Charter has donated over £250 this Christmas to the Willow Wood Hospice in Ashton-under-Lyne. Most of the monies raised came from a staff Charity Christmas Quiz. The winners were a team from our Technical Services who showed they knew their Kylies as well as their kilowatts!

Groundbreaking Award



New Charter recently received an award in recognition of our investment into environmental regeneration to improve community safety. It was one of a number presented by Groundwork Tameside. Robin Bissell, Group Operations Director (South) is pictured receiving the award from the Mayor of Tameside, Councillor Pauline Harrison.

It is encouraging to be recognised for our efforts at this early stage in our development. We want our neighbourhoods to stay clean, safe and managed.

The Housing Inspectors are coming!

What is Inspection? How can tenants and leaseholders get involved?

Inspection is a way of making sure housing organisations continually improve the services they provide. Housing providers across the country deliver varying standards of services - some effective, some not so successful. The aim of the inspection is to ensure that we provide services to tenants and leaseholders.

The inspection that will take place in May 2003 will involve officers from the Audit Commission, the public body responsible for monitoring performance in the private sector, such as Councils. They are now also responsible for inspection of housing associations, a role that was carried out by the Housing Corporation. They will talk to a wide range of people - including staff, tenants and leaseholders.

One of the aims of an inspection is to enable the Audit Commission to see how well we provide the quality of services we provide, such as repairs or improvements.

During the inspection, the inspectors will seek your views using several methods:

- Phoning tenants and leaseholders
- Meeting with tenants and leaseholders
- Visiting people's homes
- Speaking to individual tenants and leaseholders
- Observing the way that we run our services
- Talking to tenant groups and tenants who are on the group's boards.

They will take account of local circumstances, including tenants' and leaseholders' views when selecting the methods they use.

In all cases, the inspectors treat your comments with sensitivity.

To provide the inspectors with a wide variety of choice of tenants and leaseholders to when they are on-site, we would welcome volunteers. These should be available to the inspectors or take part in focus groups.

If you would like to join in the inspection, please contact the Head of Business Development on Monday 23rd May between 10.00am and 4.00pm. Telephone 0161 331 2000.



After the visit, the inspectors will produce a report containing their recommendations. We will produce a report to the Audit Commission which will respond to the findings of the relevant channels. The Audit Commission will follow up on the recommendations that we complete.

The Listening Landlord

Last month, just over 1000 tenants were contacted by telephone by PH Research of Oldham. They were asked around 30 questions about New Charter, ranging from the overall satisfaction with our services to the experiences of the last repair completed by us.

Thanks to those of you who took part in this survey. We are now analysing the results which we will report to the Tenants Federation. We will feature these in a future edition of "New Charter News", but more importantly, will be able to use the information to improve our services.

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Investment Round Up

Across New Charter we are delivering the improvements to your homes. This edition features three estates currently being worked on.

At Stanley Square in Stalybridge, we are replacing flat roofs with traditional tiling, renewing all windows, replacing doors, repairing brickwork and concrete and will finish off with some environmental improvements. Mary Buckley, Secretary of the local residents group, said "the wait has been worthwhile. Neighbours are delighted at the transformation of our estate with much needed investment. Both New Charter and the contractor are working with us - we can't believe the difference!"

Along the valley at Dukinfield, the Central Residents Action Group has welcomed the door and window replacement programme on their estate. Over 360 homes will benefit, improving security and the double glazing will reduce tenants' heating bills. Our own Building Company are manufacturing and fitting the windows.

And over in Newton, Hyde, we've started a massive programme to upgrade central heating. Across Harbour Farm, we are installing modern boilers which tenants have appreciated. Connie O'Neill, Secretary of BOWS Residents Group, said "the existing heating was on its last legs. The work has come not a minute too soon. New Charter Building are getting it right for us".

It's not just these three areas which are getting the New Charter treatment. There's lots going on around the place - take a look.



Performance update

We monitor and report on our performance to our Boards and to the Tameside Tenants' & Residents' Federation. Our latest performance statistics are from the end of December 2002, the latest available as we went to press

	North	South
Rents - Collection rate		
Our Target	99.0%	99.0%
Our Performance	128.6%	129.3%
Relets - Average no. of days taken to let homes		
Our Target	28 days	28 days
Our Performance	54 days	41 days
Relets - Homes let to new tenants, monthly		
Our Target	50 homes	45 homes
Our Performance	72 homes	53 homes
Repairs - Emergencies - within 4 hour response		
Our Target	95%	95%
Our Performance	100%	100%
Repairs - Urgent - within 7 day response		
Our Target	90%	90%
Our Performance	100%	100%
Repairs - Routine - within 28 day response		
Our Target	90%	90%
Our Performance	99.6%	96.4%

You can see that we have reason to be proud of our performance. One area where the figures suggest a massive improvement is in rent collection. We do have an excellent record throughout the year. However, the leap is more to do with the two "rent free" weeks at Christmas than with any improvements we have made.

Our Customer Service Standards

- We will answer telephone calls within 10 seconds.
- We will answer routine letters within 5 working days. Where the matter cannot be resolved within 5 working days, an acknowledgement will be sent within 3 working days, with an indication of when a reply can be expected. This will be no longer than 10 working days.
- Appointments will be arranged within 5 working days.
- Visitors will be greeted courteously within 30 seconds of arrival at reception.
- Visitors will be advised the waiting times which should not exceed 5 minutes.

Lucky Winner!

We wrote to all tenants last October inviting you to take a regular part in our surveys of customers. Many of you replied and we placed all names in a draw.

Pictured is Mrs Ann Lees of Ashton receiving her £100 prize from David Rigby, Head of Business Development.



