

new charter news

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Get gardening!

We're now inviting entries for our 2006 Garden Competition. If you are a tenant and have a garden to be proud of, we want to hear from you! We've great prizes for all categories and all it takes to enter is a photograph, along with our entry form. You'll find this on page 5 or you can pick up an entry form from any of our shops in Ashton, Denton, Hyde and Stalybridge. The closing date is June 16th (that's the day after England play Trinidad & Tobago in the World Cup!). Judging will take place shortly after when gardens should be at their best.



We're top of the League!

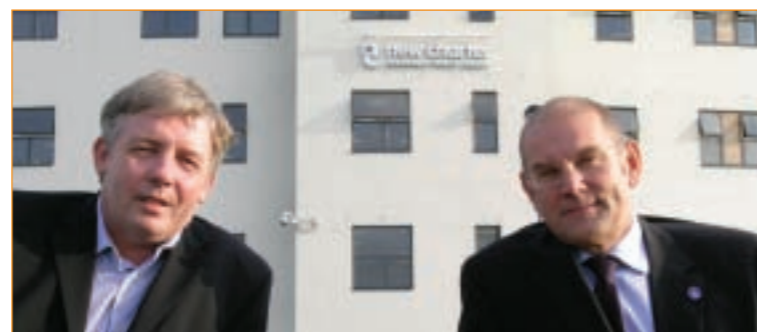
Your satisfaction with New Charter means we are now top of the league of large landlords.

An independent telephone survey of 1,000 tenants show a fantastic 89.7% of tenants are satisfied with our overall performance. Even more remarkably, 50% of you said you were 'very satisfied'— and that's DELIGHTED US!

Customers were also very pleased with the opportunities they have to participate in New Charter – 89% were happy, which is also the highest result countrywide.

The quality of repairs was a big hit with you, increasing again to 82%. This is a double success, as almost all repairs are done by our own New Charter Building Company.

You said you were really pleased with many of the improvements made to your homes. And almost half of you feel safer in your homes because of this investment. The improvements are clearly helping to create stable and sustainable communities, as less than 2% of tenants said they would like to move in the near future.



Chair of New Charter Housing Trust, Councillor Ged Cooney said: "When we formed New Charter, we planned to be the best. To get there in just six years is fantastic! Everyone who works for us has contributed to this success, and it's immensely pleasing to the Boards.

Group Chief Executive Ian Munro was also delighted – but not complacent. "It's getting harder to increase our ratings each year. But just because our results are the best in the country, there will be no letting up on our desire to improve even further," he said.

Worth taking? Worth marking!

Last year, almost 1900 households in Tameside were burgled. Don't be one of this year's. Your first line of defence has to be good locks on windows and doors, and we've tried to help you by speeding up our replacement programme.

The second line of defence is to deter would-be thieves by marking your property with your own postcode and house or flat number. Then, if your property is stolen, it will be much easier to trace, as it can be positively identified as yours.

Ultra violet (UV) markers are available from most good DIY stores and stationers at under £2. Burglars cannot see it, but if something marked is stolen, the police can identify it with a special ultra-violet lamp. UV marking fades and will need to be renewed every so often.

And the great news is that New Charter is giving away 1000 UV marker pens FREE to tenants who are *thancs!* cardholders. But when they're gone, they're gone!

Simply call into any of our shops with your card to collect a pen (one per household), and make it your priority to mark your valuables as soon as you get home. We'll give you a window sticker too.

And don't forget home contents insurance which should cover you in case of theft. We provide a top value policy in association with Norwich Union. Call us on 0161 331 2221 if you're interested.



One on 2

'Six of the best' conjures up uncomfortable memories for those of us who were at school before 1975. But it's also our way of marking our sixth birthday last month. We think we've had six good years, culminating with the verdicts of those that matter most – our tenants.

I wrote last issue we intended 2006 to be a year we delight even more customers. And our results from the telephone surveys tell us we are doing just that! We don't know your individual responses, but are delighted they combined to put us at the top of the English league table of large landlords. Thank you!

This issue has a football theme, with the World Cup just around the corner. There's special art competitions for younger readers, and more free goodies for *thancs!* cardholders.

One local football match took a lot of our attention recently. We had a film crew with us making a feature for the Chartered Institute of Housing. We needed to show what we were doing for younger people in our neighbourhoods. Waterloo v Mossley Juniors under-9's may not have Alan Hansen drooling, but we did prove New Charter can win everything with kids...

If you've an idea for a feature, please let me know and I'll do the best I can to include it.

David Rigby, Editor

newsletter@newcharter.co.uk 0161 331 2000
Cavendish 249, Cavendish Street, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 7AT



Open to all tenants

Why not come along to a Board meeting at New Charter? They usually last no more than 2 hours and are held at Cavendish 249 in Ashton, starting at 6pm. You are not able to speak, but you can watch how the Board works, and you will have a set of papers to follow the proceedings.

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

New Charter Housing (North) Ltd: Mon 8th May/Mon 3rd July
New Charter Housing (South) Ltd: Wed 10th May/Wed 5th July
New Charter Housing Trust Ltd: Tues 16th May

Academy update

We told you last issue of our Board's decision to sponsor a new school – an Academy – for Tameside. Let us bring you up to date.

Academies are a new type of school, drawing on the skills of sponsors and other supporters. Admissions follow the normal criteria – there is no selection of students.



The cost of sponsorship is £2 million, which is used to help build the school. The government contributes a further £22 million. Our application was sent to government last month and Ian Munro, our Group Chief Executive met the Prime Minister shortly afterwards. The New Charter Academy will

specialise in sport, with health and building construction important parts of the curriculum.

In Tameside, our involvement means a further £200 million of government cash has been unlocked for spending on ALL high schools in the borough.

Sponsorship of the Academy is an excellent opportunity for us to show what iN business for neighbourhoods can mean in this area. We believe raising achievement and ambitions of the young will help to complement our massive investment in your homes and neighbourhoods.

thancs! winners

Tenants who are *thancs!* cardholders are automatically entered into our quarterly prize draw. And three lucky customers will find shopping so much cheaper for those World Cup barbecues as their names were drawn from 8,000 customers who've enrolled in *thancs!*

Our lucky three prize winners are:

1st prize - £250 – Mr G. Turner, Mansfield Road, Mossley
2nd prize - £150 – Ms L. Wilson, Mardale Close, Stalybridge
3rd prize - £100 – Mrs M. Robinson, Thirlmere Avenue, Ashton

Our *thancs!* scheme provides a mixture of rewards for individuals and neighbourhoods. If you're not already a cardholder, you can apply by ringing us on 0161 331 2400.

Not happy?

We take all complaints about the way we deliver services seriously.

Complaints have dropped by 10% since last year. Even though we have high overall satisfaction with repairs, we are determined to do better.

We look at the reasons for any poor service, and have changed the way we work as a result. Your experience of investment works highlighted you much preferred our own Building Company to do the work. The Building Company now installs all the new kitchens and bathrooms.

Overall, the feedback we get is positive. We carry out over 50,000 day-to-day repairs, 14,000 gas services, spend around £25million on investment work and deal with nearly 1/2 million telephone calls and letters every year.

We do look at all areas of customer comment to try to ensure no one has a negative experience of New Charter.

Please let us know if you do have a problem with any of the services we provide. You can do this in several ways. Telephone us on 0161 331 2000 and ask for a Customer Liaison Officer; call at one of our shops and discuss with our staff; or by e-mail to contact@newcharter.co.uk

COMPLAINT TYPE	TOTAL 2004/5	TOTAL 2005/6
Repairs	177	102
Investment works	70	100
Customer care	60	80
Damage caused by New Charter	95	62
Fencing	17	37
Grounds maintenance	30	32
Environmental	19	25
Staff attitude	27	25
Lettings/housing needs	34	24
Response - slow or none	24	22
Anti-social behaviour	17	18
Allowance and payments	9	14
Policies of New Charter	14	14

New Charter + will be organising road shows with the tenant participation team over the next few months. We will introduce ourselves to resident associations and help to get more people involved and having their say in the ways neighbourhoods are run.

Last year we helped out with the Mossley mini Olympics. This year, we plan to help or join with more projects. Two interesting ones are the tool bank schemes due to open in Copley (Stalybridge) and Micklehurst (Mossley) that are designed to help residents hire gardening equipment affordably and locally.

We also have direct input into New Charter's policies and procedures at all stages from planning to publishing.

Members of New Charter + are available daily to give advice and support to our members. We will come and talk to groups about our aims, services and plans for the future, and help with any questions or problems your group may face.

You can find us in the tenants resource room on the ground floor of New Charter's headquarters on Cavendish Street, Ashton-under-Lyne tel: 0161 331 2333

email: newcharterplus@gmail.com

Bringing colour to the community

Changing behaviour is "Changing Rooms" in Tameside, thanks to an innovative project between the Youth Offending Team and New Charter.

The project gets young people to make amends for past unacceptable behaviour – reparation – which is part of the government's Respect programme.

The Youth Offending Team is working closely with us to supervise direct and indirect reparation between New Charter and young people who cause annoyance or who have been involved in criminal damage in or around our neighbourhoods.

The work to selected homes includes painting voids, graffiti removal, path clearance, gardening and grounds maintenance which benefits elderly or vulnerable tenants.

The young people involved learn valuable skills, as well as learning to work as part of a team. They receive feedback from tenants about their work which builds their self-esteem and develops ownership and respect for their neighbourhoods.

Tony Powell, New Charter's Director of Tenancy Services said: "We are trying this scheme as part of our Neighbourhood Regeneration work. Groups of youngsters are putting something back into their communities by decorating and cleaning some empty homes. The success of the trial means we will look to extend this scheme throughout Tameside soon."

Selection shock!

Thanks to all tenants who returned their questionnaires about tenant involvement which we sent out last November.

We offered a prize draw of £100 for all completed questionnaires. One lucky tenant was surprised to find his name drawn out of the hat as our winner.

Mr James Fowler of Shaw Street, Mottram is seen here on the left receiving his vouchers from Steve Hodson, Head of Neighbourhood at New Charter.



Gas Servicing

We have the responsibility for safety of gas appliances in your home. By law, we must gain entry to your property to carry out a Gas Safety Check every year. As usual, we will write to you a few weeks before the start date for your area. But this year we plan to call about a month earlier.

Your letter will tell you how to make an appointment for our service engineer to call. The calendar shows the month we are likely to be servicing in your town.

Mar 2006 Ashton	Apr 2006 Ashton	May 2006 Ashton	June 2006 Mossley
July 2006 Stalybridge	Aug 2006 Stalybridge	Sept 2006 Longendale and Hyde	Oct 2006 Hyde
Nov 2006 Dukinfield	Dec 2006 Denton	Jan 2007 Audenshaw and Droylsden	Feb 2007 Next servicing cycle starts...

If you need to speak to us about this, call 0161 331 2712.

GARDEN COMPETITION 2006 ENTRY FORM

Please tick which categories you want to enter

- Best garden by a *thancs* card holder
- Best Tenants' Association entry
- Best hanging basket, planter or window box
- Best sheltered housing scheme
- Best shared garden

There will be a Supreme Champion 2006 (Best tenant garden).

New Charter will also nominate entrants from the estate inspections done by our Neighbourhood Management Officers.

Name

Address

Phone

Entries with photo to:

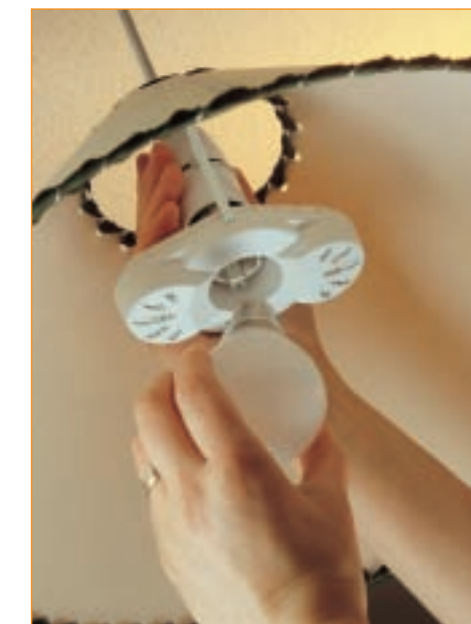
The Editor, New Charter News, Cavendish 249, Cavendish Street, Ashton-under-Lyne OL6 7AT **by June 16th 2006.**



Smoke Alarm Advice

Fitting a smoke alarm saves lives. For just a few pounds you can protect your households' lives with a smoke alarm and a regularly-tested battery.

This simple advice has been issued by fire prevention for many years, yet tragically lives are lost which could so easily have been saved.



When we rewire homes, we install a mains-operated smoke alarm which removes the need for battery renewal. We have also installed mains-operating detectors in all sheltered schemes.

Most fires in the home are caused by carelessness. A smoke detector will alert you to the danger and allow you to escape.

New Charter is offering 25 *thancs!* cardholders a new Fire Angel which you fit into an ordinary light pendant. These units are more expensive to buy but remove the need for regular battery renewal. Simply present your *thancs!* card at any of our four shops to get one – but once they're gone, they're gone.



Money matters

Welcome to the MiNT column. Each issue, we'll highlight some of the issues surrounding financial exclusion - and some of the solutions.

MiNT (Money Information Network Tameside) is a partnership comprising social landlords, including New Charter, Tameside MBC, Citizens Advice Bureau, SureStart and Groundwork Trust.

We work together to promote financial inclusion in Tameside. Financial exclusion can impose severe burdens on individuals and households, often reinforcing and deepening other aspects of social exclusion.

A bank account for example is a requirement for accessing many types of services and can bring benefits such as discounts for direct debit payments as well as having wages or salary paid into an account. MiNT can give good advice about opening bank accounts and encourage saving and affordable credit through Tameside Credit Union.

New Charter is already helping our customers. Did you know we provide:

- A Home Contents insurance scheme available to ALL our tenants. Our tenants will not be excluded because of where they live.
- Any cheques issued by New Charter to our tenants without bank accounts can be cashed at the main Post Office in Ashton-under-Lyne, WITHOUT being charged a fee.

MiNT has a website mintameside.org.uk where self-help information on benefits and money advice is available. Tameside libraries offer free internet access if you don't have a computer.

Dear Editor



Q. I'd like to move to Denton and know you can exchange homes, provided certain rules are met. But I work every day and can't get to any of your shops to see the Exchange list. How can you help me find the right result?

Mr F G, Mossley

A. Our tenants have the right to exchange their home with another tenant. The other tenant may be a tenant of New Charter, a Local Authority, or a Housing Association. We cannot refuse your request for an exchange without good reason, but you must have our permission before you move.

We now have our exchange register online, so you can look for your ideal home over the internet any time of day or night. Look under the Housing Services pages on our website www.newcharter.co.uk

Flushed with success

One New Charter tenant found talking tiles and toilets very rewarding as she won £100 in our latest survey.

We install over 1200 new bathrooms every year. We ask tenants whose homes we improve to complete a postal survey about their experiences and opinions ranging from adequate notice of our plans to the quality of fittings.

Belinda Jeffery, secretary of the New Charter + Tenants' Federation joined Group Director of Property Services Steve Nettleton to draw the winning response from the 350 received in the last nine months. Belinda pulled out Barbara Fletcher of Lockingate Street, Ashton-under-Lyne who chose Marks & Spencer vouchers for her prize.

Steve Nettleton said: "We work on large numbers of homes every year. To continually improve, we need to know what you think about our processes - 'how it was for you'. Offering a reward for return helps us get more postal responses than usual. The information we get back helps us change the way we do things for the benefit of tenants. As almost all our bathrooms are installed by our own Building Company, we can refine both client and contractor performance. We're already rated as England's no 1 large landlord, but we believe we can get even better."

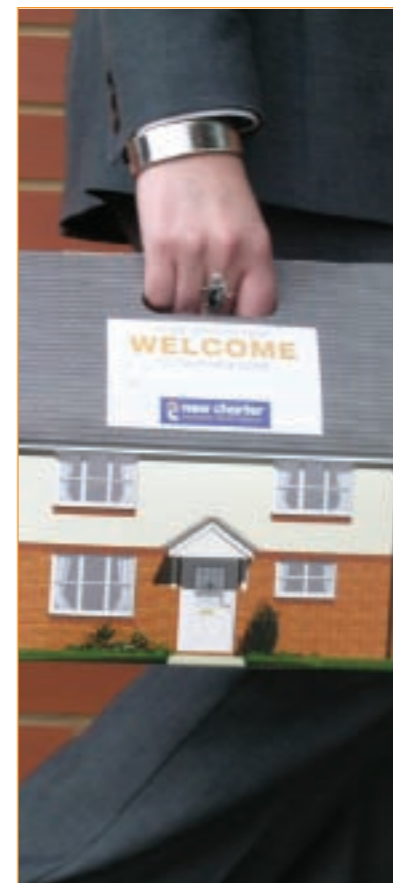


Homes to take away

You may have seen people carrying house shaped boxes around our neighbourhoods. They're our latest takeaway - a Welcome Pack of useful goodies for those important few days as you move into a new home.

As we ask tenants to sign their tenancy agreement, we present a box to them. This is part of our continual improvement, extending services and providing a welcome from us.

We've been able to do this for new tenants because of the income we get from switching fuel suppliers as homes become available for letting.



Performance update

Our latest performance statistics are from the end of February 2006, the most recent available as we went to press.

Rents - Collection Rate	Group
Our Target	99.25%
Our Performance	99.05%
Relets - Average no. of Days Taken to Let Homes	
Our Target	28 days
Our Performance	63 days
Relets - Homes Let Each Month	
Our Target	95 homes
Our Performance	114 homes
Repairs - Emergencies - % Within 4-Hour Response	
Our Target	95%
Our Performance	100%
Repairs - Urgents - % Within 7-Day Response	
Our Target	90%
Our Performance	100%
Repairs - Routine % Within 28-Day Response	
Our Target	90%
Our Performance	94.7%

New from us

Two housing projects in Dukinfield and Droylsden will cost us almost £2m, and we have attracted some grant from Tameside Council to improve the opportunities for the disabled.

At Chester Avenue in Dukinfield, Wigget Construction is building nine homes for rent on two adjacent pieces of land. These include three homes for disabled households. We expect to complete these by Christmas 2006.

Over in Droylsden, the same builder has started 14 homes including two for disabled households. The land is around Redesmere Close, Tattonmere Drive and Pickmere Close. Our start was delayed because of protracted planning issues and redesigns to avoid major underground services. But we now expect all homes will be occupied by March 2007.

100 years young!

The latest tenant to reach 100 is Mrs Annie Quinn of Gorse Hall, Dukinfield. Mrs Quinn, pictured here with her granddaughter Teresa O'Neill achieved the landmark in February and makes it a hattrick of Dukinfield tenants to get to this grand old age!

When asked her secret of long life, she replied, "nothing special really, I've been very fortunate that the good Lord has decided to keep me here."



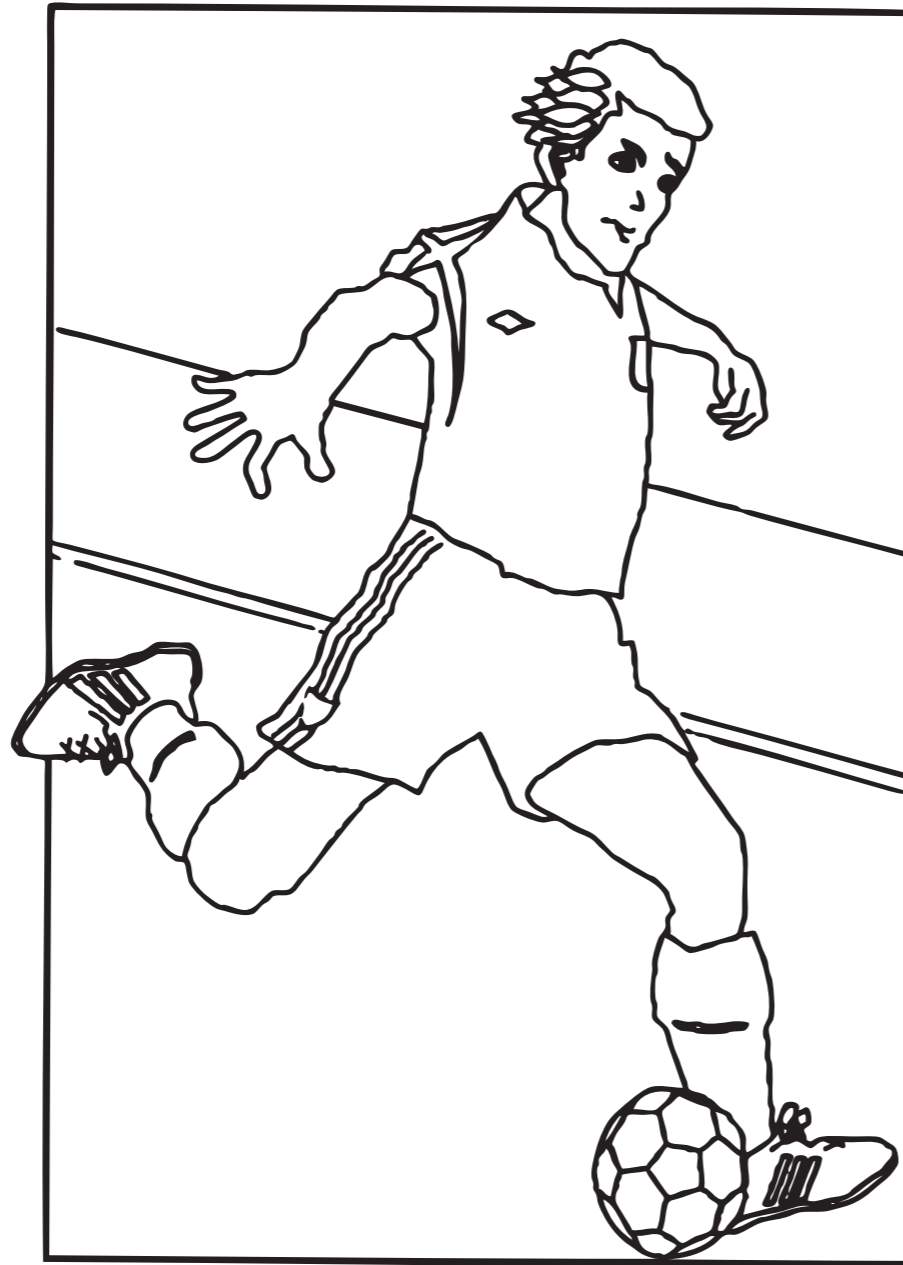


World Cup 2006 Colouring Contests

We've not one but two great World Cup colouring competitions. And we've got World Cup goodies as prizes! Our first is for children under 7 who live in New Charter homes. Simply colour in our picture.

Our second competition is for children between 7 and 13. We want you to create your own picture with a World Cup theme. Your picture can be in any material, but must be no bigger than A3 (the size of this newsletter opened out).

Send pictures to any of our shops or by post to the Editor, address on page 2. We need your picture with your name, address and age by 26th May 2006.



How to contact us

Our normal working hours are:

- Mon to Wed 8.30am to 5pm
- Thursday 8.30am to 4.30pm
- Friday 8.30am to 4pm

Please note our shops open at 9am Monday to Friday and are located at: 2 Henrietta Street, Ashton-under-Lyne; 9 Albert Street, Denton; 12 Clarendon Street, Hyde; 63 Grosvenor Street, Stalybridge.

Main Switchboard: 0161 331 2000
Reporting Repairs: 0161 331 2424

We are open for your repair calls from 8am until 6pm. You can also report repairs online at www.newcharter.co.uk

Lettings General Enquiries:
0161 331 2345

Out of hours emergency telephone calls:
0161 342 2222

General Tenancy Enquiries:
0161 331 2400



این خبرنامہ از طرف New Charter است، و برای اطلاع دادن به کلیہ مستاجریں در مورد فعالیتہای ما در ایشان ارسال میشود. می توانید از یک دوست یا خوشگوارند درخواست کنید کہ بہ شمارہ 0161 331 2131 بہ ما تلفن کنند، یا اینکه در صورتیکہ می توانید بہ ما اطلاع بدہید کہ بہ چہ زبانی صحبت میکنید، ما ترتیب زمین مترجم را خواہیم داد.

આખરિ નિઉ ઠાવિજિ બાક ઁ નિઉસાવરિજિ પેલાવણ અલ, આખરિજિ વાકાવકાવ સમ્પર્ક સાનિવજિ સુખજિ સવન સકલ સારાવિજિમજાક ઁવિ પાઁવણા ઠવાવજા. આખરિજિ વેલાવુ વાકાવજિ કથા વલન ઠાવ યમિ વામવણવક 0161 331 2131 વાવજિ વેલાવુ વકલ સાનવન વાવવા વેલાવન વુવુ-વલવો વાવવા વાવવોવ યમિ વામવણવક સાનવન, વાવજિ વામવજા વાવવવજિ સવન અવકલન વુલાવવોવજિ વાવજા વરાવવા.

આ વર્તમાન પવિજા અમારા નુ સારવરખાવો છે અને અમારલ વેલે વાવવને અમારો પ્રવુવિઓ વિષે જાણવારો આપવા વાવે મોડલવાઓ આવેવ છે. તમે તમારલ વિવ અમાવા સવને 0161 331 2131 નંબર પર અમાને ઢોલ ઠવા ઁવો અમાવા ઁમે વે વાવા મોવો ઠોમે તે અમાને વવવાવવો ઁવો અમે તમારલ વાવે વુલાવિવાઓ વવવવા ઁવોવુ.

یہ خبرنامہ (خبرنامہ) سے مستحقوں کی طرف سے ہے اور یہ تمام کرائے والوں کو جاری کر دیں گے۔ اگر آپ کے لیے کچھ چاہیے ہے۔ آپ اپنے کسی دوست یا خوشگوارند کو کہہ سکتے ہیں کہ وہ آپ کی طرف سے 0161 331 2131 پر ٹیلی فون کر کے بتا سکتے ہیں کہ ہمیں خبرنامے کا پتہ کون سا ہے۔ ہم آپ کے لیے ایک مترجم (ترجمان) کا بندھنا بھی سہا کرتے ہیں۔

Este informativo foi produzido pela New Charter e enviado a todos os arrendatários para mantê-los informados sobre nossas atividades. Você pode ligar no telefone 0161 331 2131, ou se informar-nos qual sua língua, podemos providenciar um intérprete.

Ce bulletin d'information diffusé par l'association « New Charter » est envoyé à tous les locataires pour les tenir au courant de nos activités. Vous pouvez demander à un ami ou un parent de nous téléphoner au 0161 331 2131, ou alors si vous indiquez quelle langue vous parlez, nous demanderons les services d'un interprète pour vous aider.