

DOWN YOUR WAY

Your neighbourhood newsletter • SUMMER 2011



Working in partnership to keep neighbourhoods tidy

We are now working with Wiltshire Council in an effort to keep neighbourhoods clean and tidy. Wiltshire Council has a dedicated enforcement team who are able to investigate all types of fly tipping, rubbish dumping, bulk items, dog fouling and incorrect disposal of domestic waste. Everybody is affected by these actions as it has a detrimental effect on neighbourhoods.

Please join us and let's work together to keep our neighbourhoods clean and tidy!

- Fly tipping includes not putting your own rubbish in the correct waste container designated to your property.
- Don't leave rubbish bags next to the bin or place bulk items in the bins.
- It is the householder's responsibility to put the bins out for collection by 7am on designated bin day and to put away again by 6pm.
- If evidence of fly-tipping is discovered, the Wiltshire Council team is able to issue a 'section 46 notice' and thereafter impose fines of up to £100 for non compliance.



For more information please contact your housing officer using the details below or visit www.westlea.co.uk

Welcome

CALNE & LYNEHAM AREA
from your neighbourhood housing officers

My name is Melissa Shepherd and I'm one of the new housing officers for the area.

I'm often out and about in the area and I also conduct the estate walkabouts. You will find walkabout dates on the back page or you can visit www.westlea.co.uk

If you would like to confidentially discuss any housing matter, you can make an appointment for someone to visit you at home or you can come into the Westlea office. Please get in touch using the contact details below.

I am usually in the office on Wednesday to see visitors, you can also schedule an appointment. I do ask that you avoid the lunch time period.

You can also contact our colleagues in other teams on the following numbers or send a text to the housing team on 07768 733755.

Maintenance

☎ 01249 466100

Customer Accounts

☎ 01249 466120

There are no bylaws that restrict bonfires in the Wiltshire and Swindon Borough Council areas. If smoke from a bonfire is causing problems, we suggest you speak to whoever lit the bonfire. It is an offence under the Highways Act 1980 to light a fire near a road that may cause danger to road users. This needs to be brought to the attention of the police.

Remember most garden waste can be composted or taken to local recycling centres throughout the county.



Melissa Shepherd

☎ 01249 466154



Eva Partridge

☎ 01249 466181



Sian Criddle

☎ 01249 466151



✉ Write to your housing officer: Westlea Housing, Methuen Park, Chippenham SN14 0GU



News IN BRIEF

Joint tenancy

We receive a lot of letters and phone calls asking how to add a partner to a tenancy agreement or whether residents have to put them on at all.

You do have to keep Westlea informed of who is living at your address and if anybody new is moving into your property. You will also need to tell Wiltshire Council and discuss this with the customer accounts team if you receive benefits.

If you would like further advice please contact the housing team using the details on the front cover.

Are you running a business from home?

If you decide to start your own business and run it from home, you need to ask permission from Westlea first. All we need are the details of what you are doing; how it might affect your neighbours; and how many visitors (if any) will visit your home.

Westlea would not normally withhold permission unless it likely to have an impact on the neighbourhood. Please contact your housing officer for more information using the details on the front cover.



Updating your information

We are continuing to update our computer system to make sure we have your up-to-date details, and are sending out a questionnaire to those who have not already received one.

You may have been recently contacted by our market researchers for similar information, but unfortunately there are still some gaps. When you receive the form, please complete the form with as much information as possible and return it in the prepaid envelope.



Frequently asked questions

Why does Westlea need this information?

The information we hold helps us to give you the best possible service. For example, we created an Older Persons' and Disability Forum based on this information. In the future we may be able to form new groups or provide different types of services that will better suit an individual or a families needs.

I am not happy with sharing this information, what should I do?

In most cases there is an option for you to withhold information if you would rather not say. Please don't let it put you off completing

and returning the form.

When will we receive the questionnaire?

The questionnaire will be sent out very soon. Some areas have already received it.

What will happen once Westlea has received this information?

The information you provide will be updated on the computer system.

All completed questionnaires will go into a prize draw to win prizes! 1st prize £100 and two runner-up prizes of £50

Crisis loans

Crisis loans may be available if residents need financial help with an emergency or disaster. They are interest free and available to people aged 16 and over.

Since April 2011, new restrictions have been put in place. Crisis loans will not be available for items such as cookers and beds, but some help will be available for people following a disaster.

The rate paid for living expenses will be cut from 75% to 60% of benefit rates and a cap of three crisis loan awards for general living expenses in a rolling 12 month period has been introduced.

Phone JobCentre Plus for more information on 0800 032 7952 or visit www.dwp.gov.uk



Here is the feedback on action we have taken as a direct result of comments and requests from you. We are reporting back on issues just in your area.

On the **Lyneham** walkabout eight residents met with Sian to discuss concerns in the area. A resident from **St Michaels Close** asked for the fence to be repaired in the garage area. This was reported to maintenance and was repaired in June.

Last year a new resident in **Abberd Way** spoke to their housing officer on a walkabout about the condition of the communal garden and drying area. The resident was concerned that the drying area was not secure and untidy, and so it was not used by residents. Westlea replaced the chain link fence with a six foot close board fence and the grassed area was dug up and replaced with shingles. Our next task is to make the garden sheds more secure. Residents are happy with the improvements so far, but watch this space for further updates.

Distraction burglary

Distraction burglary is where a trick or distraction is used to gain access to a property to commit burglary. Here are some top tips to help you stay safe.

- If you're not sure who is at your door, don't open it. Check the callers identity card or phone the company they are reporting to be from.
- Telephone a neighbour or friend to come and check the callers identity before you open the door.
- Many services, including Westlea, provide password schemes you can sign up to. When callers knock at your door they should know the password if they are genuine.
- The 'Water Board' no longer exists, it is a phrase used only by bogus callers.
- Don't keep large quantities of cash at home, put it in the bank.
- Keep doors and windows locked and secure at all times.
- Ensure that if you do let somebody into your home, that you secure the door behind them. Distraction burglars often work in teams, where one will distract you, whilst others sneak in through the door.

Antisocial behaviour

Throughout summer antisocial behaviour increases due to better weather. BBQ's, bonfires and more children playing outside is often the cause.

If you are experiencing antisocial behaviour, we ask that you please speak to the person causing the nuisance to try and resolve any issues first.

If you would like more information, help, or details of services relating to antisocial behaviour issues please visit www.westlea.co.uk

You can also visit www.police.uk to see what crimes are being reported in your area.

There are
50
cases of antisocial
behaviour currently
under investigation
in your area!

find us on **facebook**

follow us **twitter**

Maintenance tip

If you smell gas in or around your property

- Turn off the gas supply at the meter
- Open all doors and windows
- Do not turn electricity on or off
- Do not smoke or use naked flames
- Call the 24 hour emergency line on 0800 111 999

Keeping safe and warm with gas appliances

- You should always keep your service appointment
- Never sleep in a room with a gas fire or back boiler
- Never block or cover vents, airbricks or outside flues

OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS

We get many calls to maintenance about repairs that are your responsibility. We do ask that you try to carry out checks before calling us. In each newsletter we will be giving handy tips about frequently requested repairs.

We are not able to answer queries about ongoing repairs or any housing, rent or non-repair related issues.

We operate an emergency out of hours service for repairs only. Please phone 0800 854 205 on evenings and weekends. This number should only be called for emergencies that can not wait until our business hours.

Neighbourhood
Walkabouts



Join your housing officer on one of our regular walkabouts. Dates and times for your area:

Wednesday 1 July – 10am
Meet Melissa Shepherd at Braemor Road

Wednesday 20 July – 10am
Meet Eva Partridge at Lammas Close, Hilmarton

Tuesday 26 July – 10am
Meet Sian Criddle at Redhills

Monday 5 September – 2pm
Meet Melissa Shepherd at Stokes Croft

Wednesday 7 September – 10am
Meet Eva Partridge at Park View Terrace

Monday 19 September – 2pm
Meet Melissa Shepherd at Norley Lane, Studley

Visit www.westlea.co.uk for more information.

Are you protected?

HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE

We all hope that bad things won't happen to us, however a recent fire in Goole highlighted, they do and the aftermath can be devastating.

Look around your home – your furniture, electrical items clothing and personal items – could you afford to replace these if there was a fire, flood or you were burgled? Insuring your personal belongings can give you the peace of mind that you would be able to replace your belongings if the unthinkable did happen. Westlea insures the buildings themselves but residents need to

arrange their own home contents cover for loss or damage to your household possessions.

We recommend that you shop around to get the best deal and look carefully at what you are insured against, as this varies significantly – the cheapest isn't always the best value, especially if there are a lot of restrictions around when and how you

can make a claim. Try price comparison websites, contact insurers or a broker. For more advice phone the Association of British Insurers on 020 7600 3333 or Age UK on 0800 169 6565. **Or find out about 'Home Contents Insurance – Just For You' by contacting the north housing team using the details on the cover.**



If you would like to have any part of this document explained or translated, or in a different format such as in larger print, braille, or on audio tape, contact Westlea on 01249 465465 to discuss your needs.