

DOWN YOUR WAY

Your neighbourhood newsletter • SUMMER 2011



WestleaHousing

PART OF
GreenSquare

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

CORSHAM AREA
from your neighbourhood housing officers

My name is Esther Lim and I'm a new housing officer for part of 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 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 Tuesday 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.



Lynne Terry
☎ 01249 466189



Sarah Offord
☎ 01249 466128



Esther Lim
☎ 01249 466062



✉ 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.



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.

Ball games

As the weather gets better children are starting to play outside. Most children play without worrying their neighbours or causing damage, however we often receive complaints about ball games on the communal and garage areas.

We don't want to put up signs that say 'no ball games' however we may consider putting up a sign if cars and properties are being damaged and also near 55+ accommodation.

If your children play ball games in the vicinity of cars or homes please make sure a soft ball is used. If you have older children, please ask them to use nearby parks.

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.



Westlea has been working closely with residents in **Hungerdown Lane** to reduce antisocial behaviour. To reduce the problem, Westlea will be converting four one bedroom flats into two large three bedroom houses with gardens.

We are currently investigating and working closely with Wiltshire Council to resolve problems with dog fouling in the **Neeld Crescent** area. Please remember it is important that you report anybody that allows their dogs to foul and does not pick up, to either myself or any of the south housing team.

We are currently investigating reports of antisocial behaviour from children in the **Wessex Road** area.

Would you like to set up a Neighbourhood Watch?

Neighbourhood Watch is a great way to build better communities and we want to find people who are interested in starting up a team.

These are usually small groups of volunteer residents in the community. Some of the benefits are:

- getting to meet and know all your neighbours;
- building a closer and cohesive community;
- looking out for each other;
- being the first to know what is happening in the community; and
- being able to apply for grant funding to improve your area.



You and your neighbours will feel reassured and more relaxed knowing someone is looking out for their interests.

If you are interested in starting a team please contact your local police station or neighbourhood policing team. Alternatively contact Esther Lim on 01249 466062 for more information.

Neighbourhood policing teams are the part of your local force that specialise in working with residents to prevent crime.

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 **31** 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:

Monday 5 September – 10am
Meet Lynne Terry at Lypiatt Road, Corsham

Thursday 8 September – 2.30pm
Meet Sarah Offord at Priory Street, Corsham

Wednesday 14 September – 10am
Meet Sarah Offord at Bences Lane, Corsham

Tuesday 20 September – 10am
Meet Sarah Offord at Cross Keys, Corsham

Wednesday 19 October – 2.30pm
Meet Esther Lim at Westwood Road, Rudloe

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

Planned Maintenance

The following properties are due to receive the Planned Maintenance Service within the next three months. Our surveyors will be in contact to invite you to a meeting to discuss the planned maintenance process and to choose colours and look at the materials we will be using to carry out improvements.



Corsham: Arnolds Mead, Poynder Road, Dickens Avenue, and The Lagger.

Rudloe: Bankwater Road, Broadwood Avenue, Kings Lea Avenue, Southcroft Road, Northcroft Road, Leyland Road, Long Close Avenue, Priestley Wood Road, Toghill Crescent, Weir Hayes, Westwood Road, Sandy Lea Avenue, and Club Row.

We will visit your home to see what work is required, both inside and outside the property; this will help us to plan when we need to replace items

in your home. You can expect our surveyor to look at the following: inside – the kitchen; bathroom; ceilings in all the rooms; loft or attic; floors; stairs; heating and hot water systems; electrics; and doors. Outside – the roof; walls; garden; paths; boundary fences; gutters; and doors.

If your property is not listed and you would just like to find out more about Planned Maintenance then please feel free to contact Ken Neale on 01249 466125 or refer to our website www.westlea.co.uk.



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.