

# 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](http://www.westlea.co.uk)**



## Welcome

**TROWBRIDGE AREA**  
from your neighbourhood housing officer

.....

This newsletter is your local update on news from Westlea; we hope you will find it interesting! And if you have anything you would like to discuss with us as your neighbourhood housing officers, please get in touch using the contact details below. 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

**Cheryl Scratchley**  
☎ 01249 466132



## Being more neighbourly

Over the last few months there has been an increase in residents struggling to maintain their tenancies. Some vulnerable residents are living in poor conditions and have difficulty looking after themselves due to personal circumstances.

We are asking for communities to come together and let us know if you are worried about your neighbour. Things like overgrown gardens, excess rubbish in the garden or it could be that you have not seen or heard from your neighbour for some time.

**If you have concerns then please contact your housing officer so we can see whether they require help or assistance. Westlea has access to a wide range of services and can arrange a package of support if necessary.**





## 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.

There are no bylaws that restrict bonfires in the Wiltshire and Swindon Borough Council areas. If smoke from a bonfire is causing problems then 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.



### 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](http://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.

**We have let 64 properties on the new development in Melksham so far and we have had very positive feedback from the families moving in. They really like their gardens, garden sheds, nicely sized living space, carpets which we have gifted to residents and solar panels which help reduce electricity costs.**

## 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](http://www.westlea.co.uk)**

You can also visit [www.police.uk](http://www.police.uk) to see what crimes are being reported in your area.

There are **7** 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:**

Tuesday 27 September – 10am  
Meet Melissa Shepherd at **WESTBURY** – Criollo Court, Suffolk Road; then on to

**TROWBRIDGE** College Road, Longfield Road, Tudor Drive and Sleightholme Court

**BRADFORD-ON-AVON** Ashley Close, Baileys Barn and Poulton

**MELKSHAM** Chadwick Close, The Parade, Hendon Place, Hastings Road, Ferris Grove, Mills Road, Somerset Crescent and Devonshire Place

**Visit [www.westlea.co.uk](http://www.westlea.co.uk) for more information.**

# Vocation Quest



## Business development workshops

- 12 Oct 2011 at 2pm – Sales and communications
- 8 Feb 2011 at 2pm – Cash flow and debt management

## Workability workshops

- 25 May 2011 at 2pm – Communication
- 20 July 2011 at 2pm – Motivation
- 7 Sept 2011 at 2pm – Interview skills
- 4 Jan 2012 at 2pm – New and different ways to make money

## Skills workshops

- 7 Nov at 2pm – Sewing. Simple ways to make clothes last longer
- 9 Nov 2011 – Cooking. Skills and budgeting
- 30 Nov 2011 – Cooking Meals

All workshops are held at Westlea, Methuen Park, Chippenham, SN14 0GU.  
For further details please contact Lisa Wroe, Employment & Training Advisor 01249 466159.



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.