

# HELENA HEADLINES

Winter 2006



## Helena awarded two stars by the Audit Commission

This past 12 months has been an eventful time for Helena with our Inspection by the Audit Commission. I am delighted to report that we have been graded as a 2 star organisation with promising prospects for improvement.

The Inspectors were very impressed with many of the things we do here at Helena and also highlighted areas where we need to improve on. This feedback is very useful as we plan for the next phase in the company's life. Next July will be our 5th birthday. We hope we can continue to build on our fantastic achievements so far in creating and building, quality homes, quality services and quality communities.

Seasons Greetings to you all and I hope you have a happy and healthy 2007.

Rob Young, Chief Executive

## Residents Handbook shortlisted for prestigious award

Helena Housing's Residents Handbook has been short listed for a Plain English Award, meaning that the words we used were easy to understand and follow and we didn't include housing jargon. We will find out whether we have been successful in the middle of December. There were over a thousand entries and our guide has made the final five which is quite an achievement in itself.

The Residents Handbook is a detailed booklet for tenants containing all of the important information such as how to pay your rent, report a repairs and key telephone numbers. The editorial panel that meets to discuss Helena Headlines reviewed handbooks from other organisations and played a big part in the look and feel of the finished document. We will let you know whether the guide wins the top prize in the next edition of Helena Headlines. The Residents Handbook is being given to all new tenants. If you would like a copy yourself, get in touch with your neighbourhood office.



## CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS

Helena Housing's Neighbourhood Offices will close on Friday 22nd December at 1pm and will re open on Tuesday 2nd January 2007 at 09:00am.

Repairs Direct will also be closed between these dates.

If you have an emergency, you can call us 24 hours a day on 01744 637383.

## Special offer for Credit Union membership

We are now able to offer you a very special deal in conjunction with Partners Credit Union and Sutton (St Helens) Credit Union which makes membership even more attractive.

Up until the 31 January, 2007, both credit unions are offering free membership. It usually costs £2 to join but Helena Housing and the credit unions will each pay £1 so you can join for FREE!

In addition, for every member that joins, Helena Housing will credit the savings account with £5.00 to get you started. THIS OFFER IS EXCLUSIVELY FOR TENANTS OF HELENA HOUSING AND FUNDING IS LIMITED SO IT IS A FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS.

This means that if you become a member of either credit union by the end of January 2007 you will not have to pay the membership fee and will start with a £5.00 credit in your account.

To take advantage of this offer you simply need to contact either credit union to request a membership pack and tell them you are a Helena Housing tenant.

The details are as follows:

Partners Credit Union  
5 Westfield street  
St Helens  
Merseyside  
WA10 1QA

Sutton Credit Union  
36 Junction Lane  
St Helens  
Merseyside

Tel: 01744 818896

Tel: 01744 454773

Once you've joined the scheme there are several collection points across the town, in addition to the offices above, for you to make your payments.

Call one of the main numbers above for further details.

Please note:

THE NON-COLLECTABLE RENT  
WEEK IS W/C DECEMBER 25TH.  
HOWEVER IF YOU ARE IN ARREARS  
YOU STILL NEED TO PAY.

## Closure of payment counters

On December 1st the cash counters in our offices closed and payments over the counter are no longer accepted.

We have developed a range of alternative payment options giving all customers a wider range of places to pay their bills and at more convenient times of the day and week.

Here are the ways you can pay:

- By direct debit, paying straight from your bank account every week or month
- At any of the 27 post offices in St Helens using your payment card
- From the comfort of your home over the telephone using a debit or credit card - call 01744 636969
- Online, 24 hours a day at [www.helenahousing.co.uk](http://www.helenahousing.co.uk)

Very soon you will be able to pay at Payzone outlets in St Helens and Newton. We will let you know more details once the service is up and running.



If you don't have a payment card or would like to set up a direct debit, call us on 01744 675553 and let us do the rest.

For more information about ways to pay, visit our website or pick up a leaflet at one of our reception points.

# Open House at Helena 2006 - a great time was had by all!

This year's Open House at Helena event for residents was a huge success with over 500 people attending.

The day gave residents the opportunity to take part in some fun activities including glass painting, Christmas card making, flower arranging, Faberge egg making, manicures, alternative therapies and a tea dance for older people!

The children didn't miss out either as they took part in face painting and were treated to demonstrations from the Police's 'Under Water Search Unit' who let them have a ride on their boat. Also, St Helens Rugby team's physical challenges and the opportunity to have your photograph taken with the Super League Grand Final Trophy went down a treat.

Helena Housing staff were on hand to talk about our services and general issues.



Elderly residents enjoy the tea dance"

Residents who attended the conference were given a 'Passport to a Prize' booklet and were asked to get it stamped at each of the information stands. Hundreds completed their booklets and were entered into a prize draw for £250 worth of shopping vouchers. Helena Tenant Board Member Joe Andrews chose the winner, who was Mrs Bain, from Rainford.

Several other competitions were held during the day. The colouring competition was a huge success with a high standard of entries. Each winner received a £20 gift voucher plus a selection box.

The winners were:

- Caitlin Ainsworth (under 5's)
- Shona Dutton (Over 5's)
- Matthew Moore and Jane Wheelock (Over 10's)



Helena Housing's Lorraine Longworth and Steve Moore present Mrs Scott with her prize.

Our Property Services team, that organises the company's improvement programme, received many entries to their quiz. The winner of the twin portable DVD's, donated by contractor Casey was Mrs Scott from Blackbrook. The second prize, a £100 gift voucher, donated by Glendale, was won by Mrs Meadowcroft of Haydock. The third prize of a £50 gift voucher, donated by White Building Services, was won by Mr Hilditch of Rainhill.



Helena Housing's Neil Morris was on hand to give healthy eating tips.

We would like to extend a big thank you to all of the tenant volunteers who helped to meet and greet visitors, staff the reception desk and to encourage more people to become involved with Helena Housing.

Residents who attended the event thoroughly enjoyed the day. Comments received included "It was a wonderful day out, especially for the children", "I'd recommend all residents to attend - I had a great time" and "It was great, why can't we have one every week?!"

## Fantastic fun at Fingerpost Festival

A festival at Fingerpost saw a family day of fun and entertainment as Nanny Goat Park was turned into a carnival.



Helena's Rob Young and Michelle Aldcroft, FINTRA's Bette Yates and St.Helens Council Leader, Brian Spencer.

Fingerpost Tenants and Residents Association (FINTRA) organised the event, which was supported by Helena Housing. Despite the poor weather the event was very well attended by local residents who were joined by Council Leader Brian Spencer and Helena Housing's Chief Executive Rob Young.

The action packed day included face painting, food tasting, wall climbing, displays by birds of prey and a fun fair which the children loved.

Rob Young said, "I really enjoyed the day and congratulate FINTRA on their success. Events like this really show community spirit and improve partnership working. Helena Housing is committed to creating quality communities and the team at our Duke Street Office have been working closely with local residents on this project and others such as the clean up which was held in November."



Rachel Burns receiving her award at the ceremony

## Sutton Resident Honoured at National Awards

The Chairperson of the New Street Buddies, Rachel Burns, has just come second in a national 'Tenant of the Year' competition organised by Northern Housing magazine.

Rachel has lived on the New Street estate, Sutton, for almost three years and the contribution she has made to the community has been far reaching. Just over a week after she moved onto the estate in 2003, Rachel had joined forces with one of her neighbours and approached her neighbourhood officer about how to go about setting up a community group. Rachel was quick to observe the lack of community involvement and lack of facilities to engage young people on the estate.

Since then, the New Street Buddies have been able to raise money for youth and sport initiatives, carried out projects to reduce anti social behaviour, organised clean ups on the estate, supported vulnerable residents and even renovated an elderly pensioner's garden.

To contact the New Street Buddies, get in touch with Lisa Bennison, Helena's neighbourhood officer for New Street. You can call Lisa on 01744 671502.

## Blankets for Belarus

Residents from the sheltered scheme at O'Connell Close did their bit for charity when they produced knitted blankets to be sent to Belarus, a country badly affected by the Chernobyl disaster 20 years ago.

The scheme runs a knitting club on a Wednesday morning which is well attended by residents who decided that they could put their efforts to good use. In association with independent charity, Chernobyl Christian Care, the ladies spent their mornings preparing the blankets to be sent to the people of Belarus.

Irene Marsh, trustee of Chernobyl Christian Care, attended the group to be presented with the blankets. She said 'These blankets will be included in a shipment of items due to be sent to the southern region of Belarus. We are very grateful to all the ladies who took the time to help the charity.'



Residents proudly show off their handy work.

The group are looking to adopt Chernobyl Christian Care as their charity and hope to be able to offer further assistance in the future.

## START AN EXCITING I.T. CAREER AT HELENA HOUSING

- **Information Technology Apprentice (12 months)**  
Circa approx: £100



We are seeking an enthusiastic person, aged 16-19, to provide day to day Information Technology support for Helena Housing.

The successful candidate will support a range of equipment and services that will include, among other things, PC's, Servers, Communications, Desktop Applications and Telephony Equipment. You will be using a Helpdesk system to manage a range of support calls and will be guided in how to problem solve.

This is an opportunity to work and learn within a dynamic business team and gain valuable transferable skills. There will be opportunities to study towards relevant qualifications in IT including an NVQ Level 3 and/or ECDL. You will also have the chance to participate in other learning and development activities and gain real life experience whilst working for a leading employer in the area.

With a good standard of education and a natural aptitude for IT, you will be capable of working on your own initiative. Excellent communication and customer service skills are also key.

Helena Housing values diversity and encourages applications from all sections of the community, and will particularly welcome applications from residents

To apply:

- Download an application form from [www.helenahousing.co.uk](http://www.helenahousing.co.uk)
- Telephone 01744 667578
- Contact your local Connexions office or visit their website [www.connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk](http://www.connexions-gmerseyside.co.uk)

**Closing date: Friday 6th January 2007**

Did you know that we can arrange to have Helena Headlines printed in a different language, Braille, and in an audio format?

If you know someone that would benefit from this service then please call the Corporate Communications team on 01744 675708.

আপনি যদি Helena Housing - এর কোনো চিঠি, লিফলেট বা দস্তাবেজ কপি আপনার নিজের ভাষায় পেতে চান, অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন, আমরা তার ব্যবস্থা করব।

如果您需要 Helena Housing 的書函、宣傳冊頁或文件譯成您所使用的文字，請您與我們聯絡，我們將為您安排。

अगर आपको Helena Housing के किसी पत्र, लीफलेट या दस्तावेज की प्रतियां अपनी भाषा में चाहिए तो कृपया हमसे संपर्क करें और हम आपके लिए इसका इंतजाम कर सकते हैं।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ Helena Housing ਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਚਿੱਠੀ, ਲੀਫਲੈਟ ਜਾਂ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਾਪੀਆਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ, ਅਸੀਂ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਮ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

Kung kailangan mo ng kopya ng anumang liham, polyeto o dokumento ng Helena Housing na nasa iyong sariling wika ay mangyaring makipag-ugnayan sa amin at maaari naming magawan ng paraan ang kahilingan mo.

Helena Housing ان لوگوں کیلئے جو انگریزی بولتے یا پڑھتے نہیں ہیں خدمت ترجمہ کی پیشکش کرتی ہے۔ اگر آپ کو Helena Housing کے خط، لیفلٹ یا دستاویز کے نقلوں کی آپکی اپنی زبان میں ضرورت ہے تو مہربانی کر کے ہم سے رابطہ کریں اور ہم آپ کیلئے اسکا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں۔

Jeżeli potrzebują Państwo kopii pisma, ulotki czy innego dokumentu Helena Housing w swoim języku ojczystym - prosimy o kontakt, zorganizujemy to dla Państwa.

## CONTACTS

Merseyside Police	Non urgent calls 0151 709 6010
Crimestoppers	0800 555 111
NHS Direct	0845 4647
St Helens Council	General enquiries 01744 456789

For general enquiries about Helena Housing call:  
01744 675555 or email: [enquiries@helenahousing.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@helenahousing.co.uk)

### Neighbourhood Offices:

Derbyshire Hill	01744 677000
Moss Bank	01744 677050
Newton	01744 677900
Sutton Fold	01744 671400
Duke Street	01744 675667
Thatto Heath	01744 677125

To apply for a home to rent call Under One Roof  
on: 01744 636363; [www.under-one-roof.org.uk](http://www.under-one-roof.org.uk)


underoneroof



You can email non-emergency repairs to:  
[repairs@helenahousing.co.uk](mailto:repairs@helenahousing.co.uk); report them online  
at [www.helenahousing.co.uk](http://www.helenahousing.co.uk), or call:

RepairsDirect  
**01744 637383**



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