

People FIRST

Issue No. 26

The magazine for the residents of Pickering and Ferens Homes



National acclaim for our team

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Do you want to join our Hull 2017 committee to share ideas of how we can contribute to the City of Culture 2017? Contact Rachael on (01482) 782287.

Catch up with the Chief Executive



Welcome to the latest edition of People First. It has been a busy and extremely successful start to the year and it is a pleasure to be able to tell you that Pickering and Ferens Homes has been nominated for a string of national awards. It is a testimony to the team's hard work to ensure our residents receive only the highest quality homes and services.

Since July last year the Government has made some big announcements in respect of the nation's Housing and Welfare Policies, which I'm sure many of you may have heard about in the news. We thought it would be useful to update you on how the main policy changes impact you as a Pickering and Ferens Homes resident.

Right to Buy

The Government has announced that they wish housing associations to offer their tenants the opportunity to buy either their own home or a suitable alternative, similar to the arrangements currently offered to council tenants. The

government has confirmed that as an almshouse charity, Pickering and Ferens Homes is excluded from this policy and is not required to offer its homes for sale.

Rent Reductions

In the July 2015 budget, the Chancellor announced that from 2016/17 all social housing providers, like councils and housing associations, must apply a 1% reduction to its rent charges year on year, for the next four years. This meant that many organisations could see a significant drop in their income and many housing associations lobbied the government about the problems this would cause in keeping housing projects open for business, particularly those that also offer support to vulnerable people.

In January 2016 the government announced that it would defer the rent reductions for one year to supported housing, including almshouse charities, until it had reviewed the impacts the policy would have.

Therefore Pickering and Ferens Homes has set rents as it has previously done, linked to inflation. Inflation is low at the moment and therefore at the February Board meeting our Board of Trustees agreed a recommendation from our

management team of a 0.9% increase in rents for 2016/17.

Local Housing Allowances

In late November 2015, as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the government announced that it wished to cap the housing benefit someone living in housing association properties received to the same level that private rented tenants would receive. This level is called the 'local housing allowance'.

This announcement was unexpected and has serious implications for both residents and organisations in low market value areas like Hull, the housing benefit allowance levels are often less than the rent due, leaving residents to fund the difference from their own income.

We are eagerly awaiting further information as to whether this policy will apply to Pickering and Ferens Homes and its residents. This creates uncertainty for all. We are lobbying politicians and the National Housing Federation to provide clarity. As it stands this policy would affect all new residents who are housing benefit claimants and join us from April 2016 and will come into effect from April 2018.

As always, we will keep you updated on any developments.

Best wishes,

Claire

Jim Davis, Senior Finance Manager and residents taking part in the Budget Roadshow



The path to national acclaim for PFH

Nothing quite beats the sweet smell of success, which is exactly what filled the air at Pickering and Ferens Homes when it was announced that the association had been shortlisted for not one, but two national awards.

Pickering and Ferens Homes is currently gearing up for the second and final rounds of the UK Housing Awards 2016 and the Almshouse Associations Patron's Award, which both took place in March.

The association is now one of five left in the running for the UK Housing Award in the Outstanding Approach to Tenant Involvement category for its Budget Roadshow, which provided the opportunity for residents to understand and make recommendations about how finances should be spent within the organisation.

Claire Warren, Chief Executive of Pickering and Ferens Homes, said: "I am thrilled that my team's fantastic work to involve residents has been recognised on a national scale.

"We work relentlessly to ensure all aspects of our organisation feels accessible to our residents. The response from the Budget Roadshow was phenomenal and we were able to gather extremely valuable feedback.

"Not only did this initiative give residents a greater understanding of how the budget is spent, but also allowed our Finance Team to understand residents' priorities and implement them in terms of our budget planning too."

Pickering and Ferens Homes is also hoping to get the royal seal of approval for its new Almshouse developments, in, east Hull, which were recently visited by the Patron's Award Committee. Once they have visited all shortlisted projects the Committee

will meet again to discuss any recommendations to be made to HRH The Prince of Wales for an award.

Claire added: "To win the prestigious Patron's Award would be a great honour for Pickering and Ferens Homes and the people behind the organisation.

"The properties were commended by David Orr, chief executive of the National Housing Federation, when he officially opened the development last year and a Patron's Award would really be the icing on the cake now."

The award shortlistings come hot on the heels of it being announced by the Homes and Communities Agency that Pickering and Ferens Homes had retained its highest assessment grade for governance and financial viability.

While we are yet to find out when the Patron's Award winners will be revealed, the UK Housing Awards front-runners will be revealed at a ceremony at the Lancaster London Hotel on 26th April.



John Holliday, Resident Trustee

Keeping residents up-to-date with our performance

(As at 31st January 2016)



Rent written off as a percentage due

0.17%



Current resident arrears

0.27%



94.8%

of all reactive repairs completed within target time

0.5%

Only of properties are vacant and available to let



An average re-let time for properties of 22.27 days

100.9%

of rent was collected out of all rent owed





Love out loud

To celebrate Valentine's Day this year, we invited sixth form students to return to Pickering and Ferens Homes to perform a series of live poetry readings.

Residents of Ada Holmes Circle enjoyed an anthology of classic poetry that celebrates love, read aloud by Wyke College students as part of a longstanding initiative

to tackle loneliness and isolation in later life.

With the partnership between the association and the Bricknell Avenue-based college in its third year, residents were delighted to see the students return.

Claire Warren, Chief Executive said: "We know that loneliness

and isolation is a real issue for some of our residents, especially for those who might not have someone to share sentimental dates in the calendar, such as Valentine's Day, with.

"We have seen enormous success with these types of events in the past, in particular live poetry readings which are firm favourites among our residents, as it encourages them to not only interact with other people within the community, but different generations too.

"I know the students have really enjoyed visiting our residents in the past and we are keen to work with them on many more events going forward."

Previous poetry readings by the English students have been based around the renowned work of Philip Larkin, including a famous collection Whitsun Weddings, produced in Hull.



In Company fosters companionship

An "In Company" session in action

When illness forced one kind-hearted resident out of her home of 39 years, she found it difficult adjusting to life in her new Pickering and Ferens Homes property. When her son-in-law's mother suggested she take up knitting to keep her occupied, she had no idea just how rewarding it would be.

Talented craftswoman Beryl Ransom has now lost count of the thousands of squares she has knitted that are then sewn together to make blankets which have gone to those in need all over the world, including Romania and most recently Nepal.

It takes 84-year-old Beryl, from Babbington Row, around an hour and half to knit one square and there are 25 needed to make just one blanket, but she says it's the rewarding feeling she gets that keeps her going.

"Knitting is my therapy," Beryl explains. "When you move from the area you've made a life in it's



Knitting for good

hard to adjust and knitting really helped me through the lonely days.

"It's heart-breaking to hear what some families go through in these countries and I find it extremely fulfilling and rewarding knowing that I am helping children and families who have nothing through my passion."

Mrs Ransom makes regular trips to Boyes, where she buys all the

wool herself, then the completed squares are sent to Pickering and Ferens Homes Crafternoon group, who are currently making blankets for families in Nepal as part of a national campaign.

If you would like to get involved in this project, please call the office on (01482) 223783 and ask for Lesley Craker.

When you can't get out as much as you used to it's easy to lose confidence in meeting new people, which is why Pickering and Ferens Homes is launching a popular befriending scheme thanks to a new partnership with Age UK.

We are delighted at Age UK's decision to partner with us on hosting a series of innovative sessions aimed at helping over-50s meet new people, build confidence and create friendships.

Age UK's "In Company" service will be launched at our Christopher Pickering Lodge sheltered scheme in March, and comes hot on the heels of our hugely successful Big Night Out-In initiative - aimed in particular at combating isolation in men by transforming our sheltered housing schemes into traditional pub scenes.

Kate-Marie Crowley, Service Plus Manager at Pickering and Ferens Homes, said: "It is

fantastic news that Age UK has chosen us as a base for these important sessions. With an ageing population, it is critical that as a housing provider specialising in later life we invest time and energy in supporting people to lead fulfilling lives.

"Not only will the sessions be open to our residents, but the wider community too, which will bring more activity into Christopher Pickering Lodge and be a great tool for tackling the loneliness and social isolation that our Resident Profiling work revealed many residents experience.

"This project is fantastic as we hope it will create new friendships that will continue long after the group sessions themselves."

Nationally, 49% of those aged 75 and above live alone. 17% of older people have less than weekly contact with family, friends and neighbours, while more than 1 in 10 have that contact less than once a month.

The current In Company sessions being run from Age UK Hull's Healthy Living Centre are extremely popular and are currently oversubscribed.

Grace Bailey, Befriending Coordinator of Age UK, said: "It's wonderful that we have been able to partner up with Pickering and Ferens Homes. By setting up a social group in Christopher Pickering Lodge we are hoping to reach out to people in the local community that we know we aren't currently reaching.

"The people that attend the two groups we already run say that they look forward to the group each week as it feels like a family. This is what we hope to develop in the community around Christopher Pickering Lodge."

For more information about attending the new In Company Sessions at Christopher Pickering Lodge, please call us on 01482 223783.



This is our past: Untold Hull

Rita Bartle, who took part in the Untold Hull sessions.

Memories are precious and some we want to never let go of. Thanks to a new project pioneered by Hull Culture and Leisure, memories belonging to some of our residents will live on forever.

Untold Hull will tell the story of the city, starting with the North Hull Estate, through its residents' memories, stories and personal photos over a 75 year time span from World War Two to the present, with a view to the future.

We were delighted when talented Hull playwright Rupert Creed approached Pickering and Ferens Homes to ask if he could spend some time getting to know our Ada Holmes Circle residents and audio record their recollections for the project.

“The bomb blew them both inside and into the bathtub, which she found very funny and it wasn't until she got older that she understood just how close she was to being killed.”

“It's been really enjoyable getting to know everyone at Ada Homes Circle,” says Rupert. “It's so interesting that these residents were born pre-World War 2, it's such an amazing resource to have and they were brilliant at recalling even their earliest memories.”

They spoke about everything from childhood to marriage, hobbies to childbirth, no stone was left unturned.

He added: “They have seen phenomenal changes to the area and it's wonderful to have this fascinating human insight that has lived through the history.

“To give you a snapshot of some of the memories shared, one lady recalled being stood on the doorstep with her father during the war when a bomb landed a couple of houses down.

“She said it blew them both inside and into the bathtub, which she found very funny and it wasn't until she got older that she understood just how close she was to being killed.”

Rupert said he was also astounded at the lack of knowledge women had, at the time, about reproduction. “One resident recalled giving birth and not even knowing how the baby came out,” Rupert added.

“They seemed very happy to talk about their courting days and I was also surprised at how forthcoming they were to talk about divorce, topics that might not have always been acceptable to discuss in the past.

“I must thank everyone at Ada Holmes for being so welcoming, forthcoming and open. It has been an absolute pleasure and I think they've enjoyed themselves just as much as I have.”

For more information, visit www.untoldhull.org



A previous session with Rupert Creed



Sustainability Steering Group: (L to R) Julie Hill, Dawn Wainman, Maxine Purling, Jo-Lewis Summerfield, Andy Mounser, Claire Bangs, Gavin Clark and Damien Blackburn

We're hitting the road

Pickering and Ferens Homes is about to take to the road demonstrating to residents exactly what we have on offer for them to get involved in and how much time they will need to invest in it.

Paula Kelly, Resident Services Director, said: “Being recognised on a national level for our outstanding approach to resident involvement proves we are excelling in that area. The difficulty is only in persuading more residents to take part.

“Time is precious and many residents fear that if they sign up to one of our committees, panels or working groups it will take up all of their free time and it puts them off joining.

“The aim of the Resident Involvement Roadshow is to demonstrate to residents what activities will best suit their lifestyle, which will hopefully encourage more people to sign up.”

One involvement initiative involves the appeal for resident green champions.

Empowering residents to live sustainably by equipping them with

the skills to be able to save energy and reduce their carbon footprint has always been high on the agenda for Pickering and Ferens Homes.

A sustainability strategy was developed by Jo-Lewis Summerfield, Development and Sustainability Manager, towards the end of last year that will allow the association to take a more proactive role in tackling climate change and fuel poverty.

More recently, a Sustainability Steering Group, made up of various Pickering and Ferens Homes team members, has been appointed who will meet regularly to discuss ideas and identify areas where improvements can be made.

“Through utilising a diverse group of people I can ensure that we are considering all aspects of sustainability and the things that are important to residents from recycling through to procurement of products and services,” Jo explains.

Over the last few years, Pickering and Ferens Homes has invested in a number of energy efficiency initiatives including providing cavity wall and loft insulation, installing energy efficient 'A' rated gas boilers and installing uPVC double glazing.

Jo added: “Sustainability is all about ensuring our behaviour doesn't have an adverse effect on other people, now or in the future.

“Yes we provide excellent homes that enhance life for elderly people, but now we need to respond to the challenges created by climate change and help to eradicate fuel poverty for our residents, as well as monitoring our carbon footprint and reducing the costs associated with running our organisation.”

Green Champions

As part of the Sustainability Strategy, Pickering and Ferens Homes is looking to get a number of residents involved in promoting being green and looking after the environment for future generations.

These volunteers will be known as Green Champions, which will involve an informal training day to enable them to offer other residents advice around fuel poverty, energy use in their home, understanding heating controls and keeping their homes comfortably warm.

The Green Champions will work closely with Pickering and Ferens Homes in ensuring that our residents are getting the most from their homes in terms of energy efficiency.

Grand designs for the golden age



New Builds Consultation (New Bridge Development)

As Pickering and Ferens Homes prepared to appoint a design contractor for 54 new purpose-built bungalows on the former site of David Lister School, people who live near the site, along with our current and future potential residents, were invited to share their views at a series of consultation workshops.

The events were facilitated by The Design Council on behalf of Pickering and Ferens Homes, with support from Hull Clinical Commissioning Group and the Humberside Fire and Rescue Service, who are developing an integrated care centre on the site.

Julia Wallace, Programme Leader at The Design Council, said: "Both consultations were really successful in gauging the opinion of people who the properties might affect.

"Naturally their views count above all else and we want to make sure the design of the new development reflects what people want in terms of community atmosphere, amenities and feeling safe and secure."

It was also fed back that local residents highlighted our reputation for building high quality homes that enhance later life and they were delighted to learn that Pickering and Ferens Homes were creating the development in their area.

Concerns were raised about the limited on-street parking and avoiding the creation of a 'rat run' between Rosmead Street and Rustenburg Street was also identified as another main priority.

Design preferences included parking designed so that you can see your car, raised flower beds and the most important

being a communal space as they feel it creates a family atmosphere.

United Living, one of the UK's leading providers of refurbished and new build living solutions, has since been appointed to produce the design and a target price.

They will work with the outcomes of the consultation exercises and build upon that to produce sketch diagrams, which we will then consult further to ensure everyone is completely satisfied before we go to planning.

Look out for a follow up on this project's next steps in the next edition of People First.



The Former David Lister School

A Fond Farewell to Pam

In April, Pickering and Ferens Homes waves a fond farewell to long serving team member Pam Stamp. She has enjoyed almost 11 years as the association's HR and Development Manager, which she says have flown by.

Prior to joining us, Pam worked as a HR Manager for a number of private companies, as well as Hull City Council and C&A, which many of our residents will no doubt remember.



Pam addressing the PFH team at one of our team conferences

"I have always enjoyed working with people and believe that this is where I use my skills best," Pam explains. "I have learned so much from my work experiences over the years and do value the professional and personal relationships I have built up, which I know will stand me in good stead in my retirement.

"I have enjoyed the variety of work that Pickering and Ferens Homes has offered me along with the opportunity to grow my skills and work with a really dedicated staff team who have always been supportive.

"My day can change in a matter of minutes depending on who's knocking on the door – that's the part I really enjoy.

"Of course we're going to stay in touch, but what I will miss most is the colleagues and friends I have made over the years and for that I am very thankful."

Pam has a number of hobbies that she hopes to spend more time on, including gardening, cooking and travelling, but she is also hoping to try out some new ones including flower arranging and some form of exercise (maybe).

We're sure you'll all join us in wishing Pam the best of luck for the future and thanking her for the valuable contribution she's made for over a decade, Pam will be sadly missed by all.

New Grounds Maintenance Contractor

Pickering and Ferens Homes is thrilled to announce Glendale Services as its new grounds maintenance contractor.

The UK's leading supplier of specialist green service solutions submitted the overall winning tender based on a 60% quality 40% price basis for three years with a possible extension of two further years.

They will be commencing the new contract on 1st April, working with the improved specification which was agreed after resident consultation last year.

Changes to the existing contract are: Grass Cutting – all communal grass and those who have opted in to have their garden maintained will receive a fortnightly cut with grass cuttings collected. Shrubs – all communal shrubs and those who have opted to have their garden maintained will receive two shrub prunes during the Spring/Summer.

Glendale will be arranging meet and greet sessions at various schemes to introduce themselves to residents and talk about their future plans for the contract.



Better connected for silver surfers

Getting online can be daunting, especially in later life, but since the launch of free WiFi in sheltered accommodation schemes, Pickering and Ferens Homes has had an overwhelming response from residents.

In light of Be Online Week, a nationwide campaign that aims to help people get online and improve their digital skills, KC recently visited each scheme to provide training to residents.

The turn-out was exceptional and our senior surfers were shown how to use our Resident Portal and navigate around our website to encourage them to log on, check their rent balance and view or report repairs.

"It's really encouraging to see how many residents actually have a tablet or laptop device and are extremely keen to use them," explains our IT Manager, Damien Blackburn.

"I believe that the introduction of free WiFi coupled with these events have brought people together to learn and help each other to develop new skills.

"Many of our residents have family living abroad and are keen to develop their skills in using social media and communication tools such as Skype."

Workshops carried out by KC have proved extremely popular with residents in the past. As well as providing reviews to ensure residents are properly connected to the internet and using it successfully, KC were also able to sign up several new users of the internet who wanted it installing in their flats.

A resident who previously didn't even have a phone line has now signed up for an internet connection, while another has even taken a new KC smartphone on contract.

But one resident who has really benefited from getting online is 89-year-old Eileen Dennet, the winner of a year's free supply of WiFi, courtesy of KC, at last year's annual Residents' Show.

She said: "I was thrilled when they announced me as the winner of the free WiFi.

"I often use my laptop, with my son's instructions, to browse Facebook and look at pictures of the children. I also use my email to send them little messages.

"I think the internet help sessions are really good and I'm looking forward to attending the next one as I sometimes forget how to do certain things, so it will be good to have a little refresher."

To find out when the next internet help sessions are being held please visit Pickering and Ferens Homes Facebook page, or call the office on (01482) 223783.



Sandra Gawthorpe Scheme Manager and resident of Humber View

Peace of mind thanks to new partnership



Mental health services for older people in Hull and the East Riding are about to become a lot more accessible thanks to a new partnership we have established.

The Let's Talk... Anxiety and Depression Services will soon be offered to our residents after research carried out by City Health Care Partnership CIC suggested its services are not reaching older people in Hull who may have low level mental health problems including anxiety, stress and depression that they can assist with.

We aim to deliver the assessment clinics from one of our five sheltered schemes, which will bring the service to the community where individuals may feel more at ease accessing them.

This new partnership comes shortly after a similar project undertaken by the mental health provider, which targeted students at the University of Hull, proved to be really successful.

Kate-Marie Crowley, Service Plus Manager of Pickering and Ferens Homes, said: "Improving access to mental health services for older people is extremely high on our agenda and we are pleased to be able to offer this level of help and support.

"We know that the risk factors for depression tend to increase as we get older - bereavement, poor physical health and loneliness can all lead to depression.

"It is important to prevent these problems in the first place, and the implementation of these new clinics will help us to respond to people's mental health problems at the earliest possible opportunity."

This announcement comes just after a new NHS report warns that four out of ten people in care homes are depressed and that most retirees do not seek any treatment at all for their mental health problems.

"Improving access to mental health services for older people is extremely high on our agenda"

Dawn Barnes, Operational Manager of Let's Talk at CHCP CIC, said: "We're delighted to have the chance to work in partnership with Pickering and Ferens Homes in providing mental health services for older people. This will enable us to improve access and reduce the stigma attached to mental health problems for our aging population."

"This partnership will enable us to improve access and reduce the stigma attached to mental health problems for our aging population"

Initially, it has been agreed that Let's Talk will host a clinic in one of our five sheltered schemes for half a day per week over a five week period, which will initially allow for three, 30-45 minute appointments to be booked in.

Although Pickering and Ferens Homes' residents will have priority over these appointment slots, if they are unfilled then they will be offered to the wider community.

To find out more information, please contact the office on (01482) 223783 or visit www.chcpic.org.uk.



Pickering and Ferens Homes is dedicated to transforming the health and quality of life of older people and one way we like to do that is through unique exercise and activity classes that improve physical mobility, social interaction and mental stimulation.

All five of our Scheme Managers are currently undertaking OOMPH! training, which stands for Our Organisation Makes People Happy. They are currently the UK's biggest and fastest growing network of exercise and activity instructors for older people.

We have recently found a resident fitness champion, Gail Prentice, who lives at Broadway Manor, to work alongside our scheme managers in empowering and encouraging other residents to get active.

Graham King, Scheme Manager at Broadway Manor, said: "This is exercise as you've never seen it before. They create a very fun,

party atmosphere to ensure participants actively look forward to the classes rather than seeing exercise as a burden.

"This increases frequent participation which can have a huge positive impact on their long term health and wellbeing. Their family and friends are guaranteed to love it too."

The focus on the OOPMH! training is familiar music, reminiscence-led imagery and sensory props, which are particularly effective for people with dementia.

To find out how you can get involved, please call us on (01482) 223783 and ask for Kate-Marie.



Back to work

Are you a keen story teller? Do you ever read a magazine and think I'd love to know what goes on behind the scenes to create this? What about the adverts that go inside them, would you love to be able to design your own?

Pickering and Ferens Homes' marketing and communications partner, Mercury, is offering residents the chance to spend a day with their experienced team to play an active role in the production of the next edition of our People First magazine. No prior experience is required – rest assured coffee and cake will be supplied to fuel your mind!



To find out more information about Mercury, please visit their website www.mercury-marketing.co.uk or to express your interest in attending one of the work experience days, please call the office on (01482) 223783.

The first session will be held on Wednesday, May 11. More dates will be added subject to expression of interest.

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We can provide this information on audio tape, large print or Braille and in minority languages. For more information please contact Pickering and Ferens Homes on (01482) 223783. www.pfh.org.uk