

homing in

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing

Winter 2012



Enid Pheasey and friends enjoy the new patio area at Park Royal - paid for through the Estate Development Budget. Find out how it could help your community on page 8.

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Volunteers needed for the new Tenant Scrutiny Panel
City Assembly is best yet!
Still time to bid for Estate Development Budget
Free training to make a difference on your estate



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

Rounding off a good year

Welcome to the winter 2012 issue of Homing In, which includes our 2011/12 annual report. Following your feedback, this year's report is in a shorter, more accessible format and focuses on the information you've told us you want. I'd like to thank all the tenants who helped us with the report and we hope you find the new format easier to read.



Councillor Liz Wakefield

In the new year we'll be setting up the Tenant Scrutiny Panel - another way to make sure we're delivering the services you want. We're looking for tenants and leaseholders to sit on the panel - read more on page 2. On page 6, you can read about the City Assembly held in November. Thanks to everyone who helped out and came along for making it such a success. The event just gets bigger and better.

This year, we've introduced the new housing inclusion service, which includes Learning &

Participation Officers. The team are here to help tenants access educational, training and volunteering opportunities - find out more on page 7.

On page 8, you can find out about the Estate Development Budget and read about tenants who have used it to help their local community and environment. There is still time to apply for funding if you have an idea for your area.

Next year, the government is introducing major changes to the benefit system which will affect a lot of residents.

If you think the changes could affect you, please read the information on page 4. There's also a feature on page 5 on money issues by our Financial Inclusion Team, who are here to help you with advice, guidance and support. You'll also find a guide to recycling and refuse collection changes over the Christmas & New year period. I wish you all a Happy New Year!

Liz Wakefield
Chair of the Housing Committee

1000 get online this year!

Our easy-to-use customer online service is now being used by over a 1000 of you since going live last year!

As well as being able to keep track of your rent and other housing accounts, you can offer a repayment plan if you get behind with your rent. There are also handy links to pay by debit or credit card for all council services.

- To pay online visit <https://ww2.brighton-hove.gov.uk>
- To find out more about the housing customer online system visit www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/tenants-online

Your new single number for customer services



**01273
293030**

The number for all your tenancy and general housing enquiries is now 01273 293030. The individual housing office numbers will be shut off in January 2013.

The number for repairs hotline is still 0800 052 6140

You can also contact the Customer Services Team by email at housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk or write to them at the Housing Centre, Unit 1, Fairway Trading Estate, Eastergate Road, Brighton, BN2 4QE.

Make your priorities, our priority

The Scrutiny Team visit the City Assembly



We're now looking for volunteer tenants and leaseholders to sit on the new Tenant Scrutiny Panel. The panel will investigate different aspects of the housing service and look at how we can improve them. Recommendations will be presented to councillors and

senior housing management, and the panel will then check whether these improvements are being made.

Being a panel member is an opportunity to take part and make a difference to your housing services. It will also give you access to free training and help you learn new skills.

Interested?

Come along to one of our tenant scrutiny information sessions on Tuesday 8 January, 7pm to 8.30pm at Palace Place, 62-63 Old Steine or Wednesday 9 January, 11am to 12.30pm at Hove Town Hall

Or you can register your interest by:

- completing our online form at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/tenantscrutiny
- emailing us at scrutiny@brighton-hove.gov.uk
- writing to us at Scrutiny Team, Room 128, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove, BN3 2RS
- Calling us on 01273 291084

The deadline is 14 January 2013.

Whether you want to be a panel member or not we would like to hear your ideas for tenant scrutiny.

You can also follow tenant scrutiny on twitter @BHScrutiny and find us at twitter.com/BHScrutiny

Join us on The Level

The £2.2 million project to transform The Level will combine the best of its original design with contemporary facilities.

The council's parks service would like to talk with resident associations and community groups to find out how to get the most out of the restored park. They can visit your group to discuss ideas and give a talk on the history of The Level. You can also go along to The Level Memory Day at the Phoenix Gallery on Friday 8 February 2013.

If you're interested, please contact Fiona Stokes, Parks Projects Team on 01273 294737 or email parksprojects@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

For more information visit www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/joinusonthelvel.

The restoration is being funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Big Lottery Fund 'Parks for People' programme.

Sylvan Hall resident, Michael Bairstow, said: "A short walk



for Sylvan Hall residents, but for some of us an exciting journey into past times. The Rose Walk, fountain, bridges and pergolas of our childhood will be a delightful experience, and a haven, to rest and refresh in the restored café."

Benefit changes

How will they affect you?

The government is introducing a number of changes to benefits next year.

If you receive any benefits, you are likely to be affected by at least one of the changes. In most cases, the amount of benefit you receive will be reduced.

Staff from across the council have been contacting the residents likely to be most affected to make sure they know about the changes and offer advice on their options.

If you think this could affect you, please make sure you read all the information you receive from the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) or the council so you can plan for the changes.

The main changes to benefits are:

Housing Benefit spare bedroom rules (from April 2013)

The government is introducing a 'size criteria' limiting how many bedrooms 'working-age' people (anyone aged under 61 on 1 April 2013) in council or housing association homes will receive benefit for.

From April, any working-age tenant will have their Housing Benefit cut by 14% for one spare bedroom or 25% for two or more. In Brighton & Hove, this could mean tenants with two or more spare bedrooms losing over £20 a week. For more information, go to www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/hbchanges

Council Tax Benefit (from April 2013)

The government is abolishing Council Tax Benefit and asking councils to introduce a local support system to replace it. There is also a reduction in the grant for the benefit of about 10%, meaning a shortfall of at least £2.5 million to help low income households in Brighton & Hove.

We consulted with residents and advice agencies on our draft proposals earlier in the year and the final decision is being made by councillors.

It's possible that most households, apart from pensioners, will need to pay something towards

Council Tax from April. Bills giving details of what every household will need to pay will go out in March 2013.

Benefit Cap (from April 2013)

A maximum total benefit entitlement of £500 a week for couples or single parents with children, and £350 a week for single people is being introduced. The amount includes the benefit you get to help pay your rent. Only a few people are affected in council housing, but if you're worried, you can use the benefit cap calculator at www.gov.uk/benefit-cap

Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants (from April 2013)

The government is abolishing Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants and asking councils to set up replacement schemes. In Brighton & Hove, the budget for 2012/13 is approximately 40% less than what was claimed in the city in 2010/11.

We consulted with residents and advice agencies on our draft proposals earlier in the year and the final decision is being made by councillors.

Disability Living Allowance (from April 2013)

The government is replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with Personal Independence Payments (PIP). After June next year, people aged between 16 and 64 receiving DLA will be asked to submit a new application for PIP. If you don't respond, your benefit could stop.

Universal Credit (from October 2013)

From October 2013, the government will be replacing a range of working-age benefits with a single streamlined payment known as Universal Credit for new claimants. Existing claims will be transferred at a later date.



For the latest information on the welfare reforms, go to www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/benefit-changes

Put rent at the top of your Christmas list!

RENT! tree,
tinsel, turkey,
treats...

It's all too easy to put off payments at this time of year, only to find yourself struggling to clear your arrears in the new year.

You can avoid this worry by choosing to pay by direct debit. It's so easy - our Rent Accounting Team can arrange for payments to be debited from your bank or building society every month. You will be fully protected and can stop any time if you need to. The same applies if you prefer to pay by standing order, except you need to contact your bank or building society yourself to make the arrangements. To find out more, call us on 01273 293065 or email rentaccounting@brighton-hove.gov.uk

You can also make your payments:

- Online with a debit card using our secure server at <https://ww2.brighton-hove.gov.uk>
- By calling our 24-hour automated payment line on 01273 291908 to pay by debit card.
- By calling our Housing Customer Services Team on 01273 293030.
- By PayPoint card at some housing offices and PayPoint outlets. To order a PayPoint card call 01273 293065.

If you are having difficulty paying your rent or are worried about debt, call the Housing Income Management Team on 01273 293224 as soon as possible. They are there to help and the earlier you contact them, the easier it will be. Their opening times are Monday to Thursday 8.30am to 5.30pm and Friday 9am to 5pm.

Every year around 20 council tenants in Brighton & Hove lose their homes for not paying their rent. Hundreds more are taken to court to recover money they owe, which results in court costs and increases their debt. We don't want to prosecute or evict, so please contact us before your debts mount up so we can help you.

All the information you need on paying your rent is available at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/rent

You can also sign up to the customer online system to get 24/7 access to your rent and other housing accounts - go to www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/tenants-online

Avoid the sharks

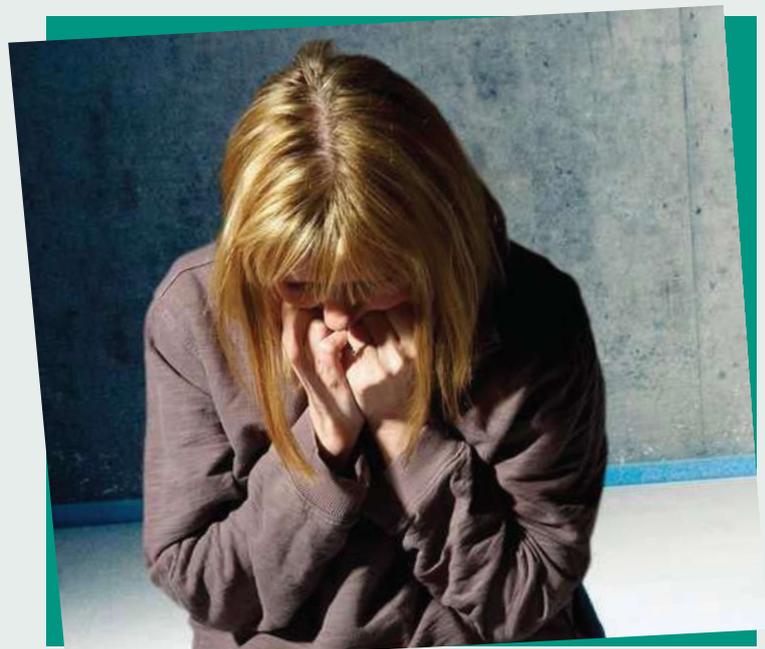
Christmas makes rich pickings for loan sharks. These illegal lenders act like your best friend, and it may seem hard to resist the cash up front, but steer clear of them at all costs. What may seem like a small loan to tide you over for Christmas could end up costing you dearly for years – and not just financially. Just read the papers to see how others have suffered from intimidation, violence and worse when unable to make the expensive repayments.

Money lenders have to be licensed with the Office of Fair Trading. You can check on the consumer credit register at www.oft.gov.uk

If you are struggling, contact the council's Financial Inclusion Team. We are working with MACS (Money Advice and Community Support Service) who can offer free advice and support to help you take control of your debt.

Contact Holly Robertson on 01273 293177 or Kate Riseborough on 01273 293173 or email HousingInclusionTeam@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Do everyone a favour - report a loan shark this Christmas. Call the 24/7 confidential hotline 0300 555 2222.



City Assembly is spot on



Once again, the City Assembly welcomed a top turn out, with most seats taken in Hove Centre's main hall. November's theme was social and financial inclusion, with informative sessions on the government's changes to benefits and the role of the new Tenant Scrutiny committee.

Alison Gray, Chair of the Clarendon & Ellen Tenants Association explained how to improve your estate with a combination of resources. The Community Pay Back team are available to carry out the work and the Estate Development Budget, (see page 8), is there for the funding.

Harriet, from Community Toy helps Justin make his toy (find our more about Community Toy at www.ExploringSense.co.uk); Harry Freeman helps tweet assembly news.

Alison, who has also spoken about their success at a recent probation conference, said: "Residents were shocked with the amount of rubbish in the common ways, not helped by the state of the storage areas. I knew resources were scarce, so I looked at what other tenants had achieved and contacted Ray Freeman (Chair of Bristol Estate Residents Association). It was the best thing I did. I presented a wish list at the next area panel and we won our £2,000 bid! This has paid for newly painted garages and locker stores, a garden make-over and a deep clean of public walkways and storage areas."

Alison's advice and enthusiasm was well received, and it is hoped that many more tenant and resident associations will follow her and Ray Freeman's examples to improve life on their estates by requesting help from the Resident Involvement Team.

The new Learning & Participation Team introduced themselves (see

page 7) and put out a call to develop a 'Skills Bank' of tenants who would like to use their skills to help others in the community. Many tenants have stopped work through poor health, redundancy or retirement and don't want to lose touch with their particular expertise. This would be a wonderful opportunity for people to refresh their skills, build self esteem and help their communities.

A new session called 'information hub' gave tenants the chance to find out about welfare reform, money advice, tenant participation opportunities and Community Pay Back, as well as information from Mears, the Tenant Disability Network and the council's Tenant Scrutiny team. Interactive and taster sessions were available for tenants to see the benefits of online banking and resident training courses, and there were activities for children of all ages.

To keep up-to-date with resident involvement, go to www.facebook.com/tenantandleaseholder and 'like' our page.



Chris Kift, Chair of the City Assembly

Learning new skills for you

The Housing Inclusion Team has appointed two Learning & Participation Officers, Teresa Jabbi and Niall Robinson to support tenants and leaseholders of all ages into education, work and training.

Teresa and Niall have a wealth of information at their fingertips about all sorts of courses, workshops, peer mentoring programmes, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities in the city.

Teresa said: "We work with you one to one to find out exactly what help you need, be it confidence building, learning new skills, or finding new routes into employment. We can match you up with free community training providers in your area. We also offer help with literacy and numeracy, computer skills, job search and CV writing."

Niall continued: "An important part of our work centres on help and advice for those affected by the government changes to benefit entitlements. We are here to offer support and help with all your questions and any form filling."

Learning new skills for your community

Being more involved with the running of your estate is an ideal way to learn new skills while helping your local community. Our team has developed the following opportunities with The Bridge and Portslade Adult Learning Centre.

- **Learning Champion – help others with reading, writing and maths**
- **Money Mentor – offer budgeting advice and support**
- **Loan Shark Advocate – advise against illegal lenders and suggest suitable alternatives**
- **Resident Assessor or Inspector for 'Rate Your Estate'**
- **Energy Advisor – help others save on their energy bills**



For more information about the service or to book an appointment please contact Teresa or Niall on 01273 293178/293718 or email them at HousingInclusionTeam@brighton-hove.gov.uk

The Bridge has recently moved to a new centre with more space and facilities. Get online at their free wi-fi internet café, which provides a quiet area for study and friendly staff to lend a helping hand. The Bridge offers a range of courses, advice, guidance and volunteering opportunities. Contact them at:

The Bridge Community Education Centre

Lucraft Road, Brighton BN2 4PN
www.thebridgebrighton.com
01273 687053

email: hello@bridgecommunity.org.uk



PACA runs a variety of further education and personal development courses in Boundary Road, Foredown Tower, Chalky Road and Portslade High Street, and over the next year will be expanding and improving to meet demand. There is free internet use, learning support and advisors to help you find the best direction for your future. Contact them at:

Adult Learning at PACA

High Street, Portslade,
Brighton BN41 2PG
01273 422632
email: comed@paca.uk.com
web: www.portslade.org



Still time to bid for EDB

Last year, tenants from Portslade successfully bid for £10,000 from the Estate Development Budget (EDB) to spend on community projects. The new Resident Involvement Team have been going door to door to find out how residents would like to see the money best spent on the local community.

Pat Liddell, Resident Involvement Officer for Portslade, said: "We've had lots of suggestions. Everyone has been so enthusiastic, especially because this is their decision." If you live in South Portslade, there is still time to contact us with your ideas.



Resident Involvement Officer, Pat Liddell, busy visiting residents in South Portslade

It could be your turn next!

The Estate Development Budget can be used for any project that improves your shared environment, outside or in, and to bring your local community closer together.

Park Royal residents created a landscaped patio area for all to enjoy. Chair of the residents association, Enid Pheasey, said: "We are a sociable crowd and wanted somewhere pleasant to sit and chat. Bidding for the money was very straightforward and the council were very helpful - it really is worth it!"

Debbie Williams, Chair of Theobald House Residents Association, said "EDB paid for our patio area to be decorated with a range of planters and protected with attractive fencing, and inside we have a completely refurbished communal lounge and foyer. I would recommend the EDB to anyone who wants to make a difference. It works wonders!"



Enid Pheasey and friends enjoy the new patio



Gordon Stanford and Delia Hills from Mears with Debbie Williams in the new communal lounge

And EDB is open to everyone...

Celia Steer was delighted to learn that she didn't need to belong to a residents association to bid for EDB funding. She said: "I spoke to our neighbours to get their ideas and we put in two bids, both of which were successful! Now our shared hallway has been completely redecorated and we'll



be bringing the overgrown garden back to use in the spring. I'm thrilled to bits!"

The deadline for bids to the EDB is 18 January 2012.

If you have an idea for a project for your area, just contact your local resident association or the Resident Involvement Team on 01273 293021. They will work with you to help develop your idea into a reality.



Sonny, Mr Dee and Dan busy bringing an empty property in Whitehawk back to use.

Just the job!

Apprentice carpenter Sonny Smith and plumber Dan Harber, both aged 20, started full-time employment with Mears in September. They both completed two years 'on-the-job' training with day

release at City College where they studied and passed NVQ Level 3 qualifications in their respective trades.

Sonny, who is Brighton born, said: "My apprenticeship gave me such excellent

practical experience and I always had such good mentors and tutors to guide me. I've enjoyed every minute and now I can carry on and work my way up. I'm so pleased that Mears gave a chance."

Dan, from Shoreham, said: "I am delighted that I have been taken on. I really like working as part of the team and in this environment. I feel I am really helping. The tenants are always so friendly, offering us cups of tea! No day is the same."

Mr Dee, who supervises all the apprentices, said: "Of course it's marvellous to be able to offer full-time employment to Sonny and Dan - they've both put in 100% and are talented at their work, but it's also so encouraging to know that all our apprentices from the 2010 intake have now found work in their chosen profession."

High priority

Last year Mears staff installed over 750 condensing boilers to improve heating and reduce fuel poverty. Residents at high rises, Nettleton Court & Dudeny Lodge will soon feel the benefit of their new communal boiler, replacement windows and protective outside covering, all of which will be completed next year.

In Whitehawk, sheltered housing residents living in the 32 flats at Walter May House will also enjoy a new boiler and new solar panels to follow, which will help to reduce heating bills, especially as all radiators will be fitted with adjustable controls.

Further up the hill in North Whitehawk, the refurbishment continues. Residents of all high rise blocks can look forward to replacement windows and patio doors, a complete repaint of outside walls and a programme of planned repairs. Swallow and Falcon Court will be the first blocks to receive the new windows, followed by Kingfisher, Heron and Kestrel.

Mears Staff Rob, Sandra and Liz demonstrate the new windows. You can see them for yourself at Falcon Court - just contact Gary Forey on 07887 676 568 or call into the site office at Falcon Court to make an appointment.



Room to grow

Julie and Graham and their four children love their two bedroom home in Coldean. Rather than move to a bigger house elsewhere, they tried to reorganise the space to cope with the overcrowding, but as the children grew, it became more and more difficult. Just as the family was reaching breaking point, Graham heard about the council's new extension scheme. Graham said: "We applied immediately and within a few weeks had been accepted. The extension was finished this January.

Julie said: "Now we have real quality of life, I hadn't realised

just what a struggle it had been. We are so happy here, the school is great, the community is full of friends and we could never enjoy such glorious views of the countryside anywhere else."

The Decent Homes extension scheme has allowed ten families to stay in their homes this year. The scheme will continue for another two years, extending 30 family homes in total. Julie and Graham decorated with their own choice of paint and carpets, which they paid for themselves. To save money, they cleverly used carpet off-cuts for the stairs.



Thank you Mears...

Staff, parents and their families, said a special thank you to Mears for regularly helping out with plumbing, electrical, carpentry and general DIY problems at short notice at Ronald MacDonald House.

The house provides free accommodation to families with children being treated at the Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital and the Trevor Mann Baby Unit at the Royal Sussex County Hospital, a specialist department for the care of premature and sick newborn babies.



Congratulations & apologies



Well done to those talented gardeners of Hampshire & Malthouse Courts Residents Association! All their hard work creating a beautiful garden for everyone to enjoy has won them first prize for the second year running in the Best Community Garden section of City in Bloom this year.

We're very sorry for the misprint in the photo caption for the flowers at Hampshire Court in the summer issue of Homing In.

Fancy digging in?

Spike and Ron have been volunteering at the Coldean Community Allotment for the past three years, and could use your help!. Spike, busy turning over the soil for replanting, said: "It's great to be out in the fresh air, getting healthy exercise, and putting something back. Everything here is recycled – down to the wood used for building the raised beds, and of course, all our produce is organic."

Ron, who started the allotment project in 2009, said: "There is something special about working on the allotment with other like-minded people. It's very therapeutic!"

Steve Andrews, Community Trust Development Worker for Coldean, helped Ron and Spike with the allotment project and now benefits from fresh veggies to supply the Community Café at New Larchwood. Steve said: "Thanks to the allotment, we have had some really hearty soups on the menu - it's so good when community projects literally feed into one another!"

The Coldean Community Allotment is looking for volunteers. If you fancy helping out, please call Steve Andrews on 01273 676416.



Ron and Spike turning the soil

Fun for all ages!

Allotments provide fun and fresh air for all ages! Pumpkin carving, seed planting and Halloween games proved very popular at the Portslade Community Allotment open day this October.

Lorette Mackie, of the Trust for Developing Communities, said: "We run the 'Foreganics' Group here every Friday, encouraging children and adults to get close to nature. Everything we grow is organic and pesticide free – which is why it tastes so great!"

Sussex Wildlife Trust's Huw Morgan, agreed: Community allotments are the perfect way to value the countryside on our doorstep, rekindling our appreciation of seasonal produce while helping to preserve our natural habitat."

If you live in the Portslade area and would like to join in, please contact Lorette Mackie, Community Development Worker for the Trust for Developing Communities on 01273 430176.

Ellie Goodes, Honor MacPhee-Goodes (top), and Oliver Jones (bottom) enjoying Halloween fun at the allotments!



What a LifeLine!

Sometimes we can become very isolated later in life and forget that there are still a lot of friends to be made and fun to be had. 'LifeLines' can help to remind you. Led by volunteers, the project offers support, activities and training to older people in Craven Vale, Turner, Kemp Town and Queens Park.

Helen Bashford of LifeLines said: "Our motto is 'Age and experience making a difference'. Our volunteers are over 50, mainly retired, and enjoy keeping up their skills, especially computing. We have opened up the internet to so many grateful people who are now back in touch with friends and family across the world by email, face book and Skype. We also offer one to one support with our 'Activity Partner Scheme' to get people out and about, and run a very popular and practical 'Health Link Project' where volunteers accompany people to medical appointments. Often it's just that bit of reassurance and support that makes life so much better."

Lifelines has over 100 volunteers citywide and runs almost as many activities! 'Rollers and Strollers' starts again in March with accompanied trips to Queens Park, and for



Debbie Williams and Mary Green have a go at the Lifelines taster at City Assembly

the winter there are four thriving knitting groups, a trip down memory lane with the Reminiscence groups, a chance to brush up on your painting with the art group, and a monthly tea dance at Patching Lodge on Edward Street, where most of the groups meet.

For their full list of activities or to find out about volunteering, call Lifelines on 01273 688117, email lifelines@csv.org.uk or visit their website at www.lifelinesbrightonhove.org.uk

Volunteers receive training, out of pocket expenses, and ongoing support, as well as enjoy new friends, new horizons, and a lot of fun!

Lifelines is funded by the council, the Lottery and the NHS.

A problem shared...

A new support group called CATT (Children and Adults Talking Together) will be running free sessions in the new year for local families and individuals affected by someone else's drug or alcohol misuse. The Brighton Oasis Project is running the programme, which offers support and provides a safe space for parents or carers to get together and talk about their situation, while their children take part in their own group activities.

Programme co-ordinator Tania Soley said: "If someone in the family is misusing drugs or alcohol, it will have a massive impact on the people they live with or are close to.

"We aim to offer practical support for children and adults living in that situation."

This project, part of Communities and Families Tackling Addiction (CAFTA), is funded by the



European Union Interreg IVA 2 Mers Seas Zeeen cross-border co-operation programme 2007-2013.

For more information, contact Tania at the Brighton Oasis Project on 01273 696970, email info@brightonoasisproject.co.uk or go to www.brightonoasisproject.co.uk.

New text service put to the test

Edna Winton is one of 73 residents at Somerset Point to trial the 'Text Anywhere' alert system. It's designed to keep residents up to date with social and resident activities, as well as provide practical information and bring peace of mind, especially to the housebound. "I think it's a great idea," said 80 year old Edna, who has been a resident for eight years. "I feel very safe here, and the scheme managers do all they can, but they have busy jobs and if this system helps them it helps us too!"

Edna added: "I receive texts when a fire drill is going to happen, or when a residents' meeting is coming up, all sorts



Edna demonstrates how the system works

of useful information that keeps me involved and makes me feel secure. I hope we can keep it!"

The system runs through a secure website and can send messages to both mobile and landline phones and may be introduced throughout the city's sheltered housing. Results of the trial will be published in the spring issue of Homing In.

BOCCIA

Fun and sociable with a little friendly competition!

Come along and join us for an enjoyable game of boules (all seated using light weight equipment) and some tea and biscuits afterwards.

**Every Monday
1pm - 2.30pm**

**The Manor Gym,
Manor Road,
Whitehawk, BN5 5EA**

£1 per session

The venue is fully accessible.

For more information contact Active for Life on 01273 293545 or visit www.activeforlife.org.uk

Mobility scooter storage

Mobility scooters can take up valuable space, but keeping them in communal hallways or on landings is not an option as they block fire escape routes. We realise many residents rely on their scooters to maintain an independent life, so we are working on how we can store them safely and conveniently.

The Tenant Disability Workshop has been looking into the issue with the council and resident associations across the city to identify potential sites for conversion or building new stores. Alison Gray, of the Tenant Disability Network, said: "We are

encouraging people to draw on our expert advice and speak to as many scooter users as they can. Each housing scheme and every situation is different - one size doesn't fit all in this case."

The results of the work are already being seen, with two new bespoke storage units opening at Clarke Court in Hove and Leach Court in Brighton, with more stores planned across the city.

If you are facing problems with your mobility, contact Access Point on 01273 295555 for an assessment on what mobility aids are available to you.



Alison Gray speaking at the City Assembly

Bitter experience!

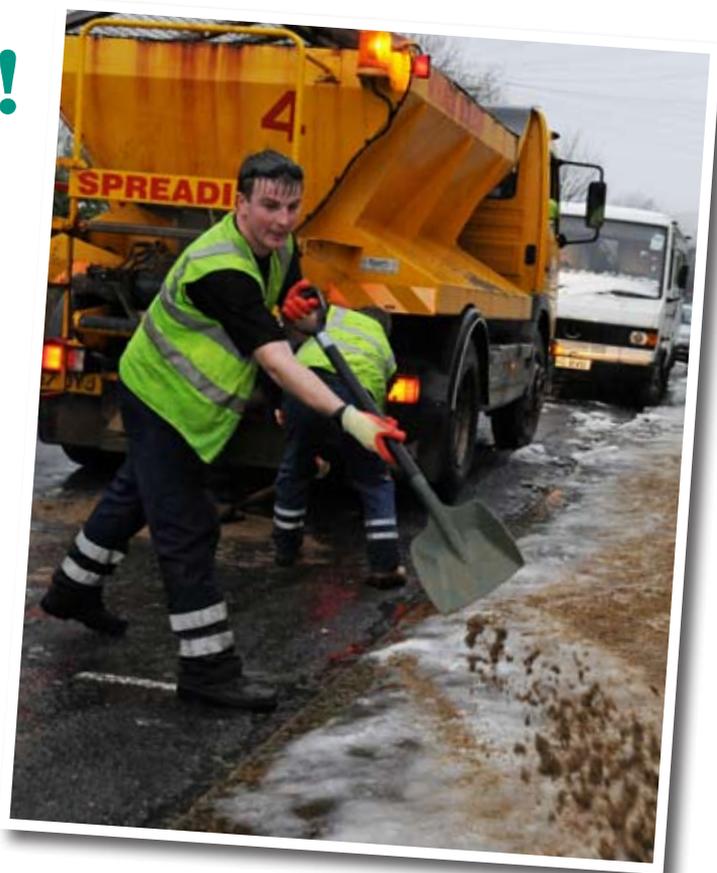
We have all learned from experience how treacherous the winter weather can be and the council has been working on a severe weather plan ensuring we are well prepared to help you in the months ahead.

1,000 tonnes of salt and 300 tonnes of grit has been delivered in preparation for gritting, with a contingency store of a further 500. Our fleet of gritting lorries are constantly on standby and this year we have a new 4X4 vehicle to help keep main roads open during the snow and ice.

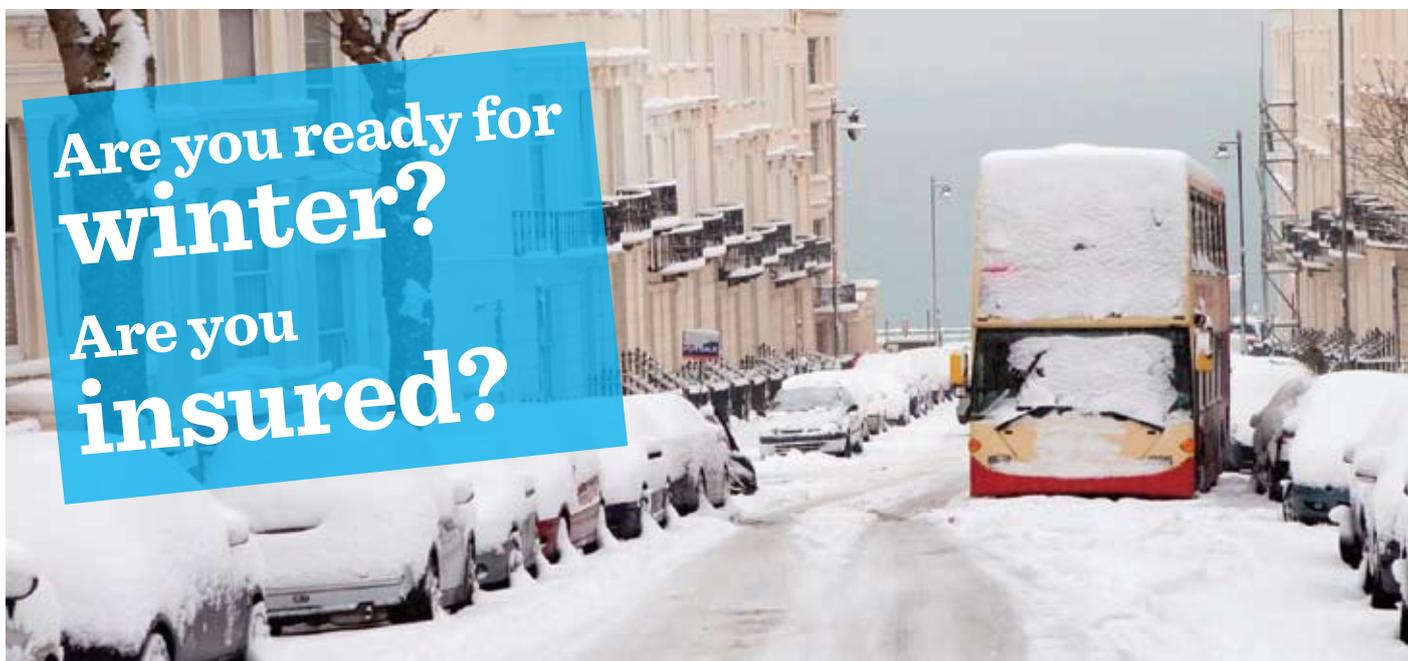
The council grits all the major roads and bus routes, but we are unable to stretch our resources to every road. However, we are doing our best to ensure that you have a ready supply of salt and grit mix to clear your pathways and pavements.

There are over 400 grit bins for residents, which will always be replenished during snow.

We are also calling for volunteers to help vulnerable or elderly residents during a cold snap. If you are willing and able to help, please email icanhelp@brighton-hove.gov.uk. For more information please visit www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/snow



If you feel that you will need extra support during a cold snap, please contact us on 01273 293030. If it does snow, we will be out visiting as many vulnerable people as we can.



Are you ready for winter?

Are you insured?

Contents insurance for tenants & leaseholders of Brighton & Hove City Council

Protect yourself against damage caused by burst pipes and other household risks this winter from as little as 95p a week for tenants aged under 60, and just 64p a week for tenants aged 60 and over.

Contact 01273 293303 or email rentaccounting@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Festive

recycling and refuse collection dates 2012

Normal collection

Monday	24 December
Tuesday	25 December
Wednesday	26 December
Thursday	27 December
Friday	28 December

Holiday collection

Monday	24 December
Thursday	27 December
Friday	28 December
Saturday	29 December
Monday	31 December

Monday	31 December
Tuesday	01 January
Wednesday	02 January
Thursday	03 January
Friday	04 January

Wednesday	02 January
Thursday	03 January
Friday	04 January
Saturday	05 January
Monday	07 January

Monday	07 January
Tuesday	08 January
Wednesday	09 January
Thursday	10 January
Friday	11 January

Tuesday	08 January
Wednesday	09 January
Thursday	10 January
Friday	11 January
Saturday	12 January

Normal collections resume week beginning Monday 14 January

Online services

Visit the council housing website at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/council-housing

Pay online at ww2.brighton-hove.gov.uk

Go to or register for the Housing Customer online system at <https://housingcos.brighton-hove.gov.uk>

Information about Money Matters, Tax and Benefits www.direct.gov.uk/en/MoneyTaxAndBenefits

Homemove website www.homemove.org.uk

Check out all housing online services at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/housingdoitnow

Useful contacts

Housing Customer Services

housing.customerservices@brighton-hove.gov.uk
01273 293030

Housing Benefits

housing.benefits@brighton-hove.gov.uk
01273 292000

Housing Income Management Team

housing.incomemanagement@brighton-hove.gov.uk
01273 293224

Repairs Helpdesk

BHCC.repairs@mearsgroup.co.uk
0800 052 6140

Rise (Charity supporting those suffering Domestic Abuse)

www.riseuk.org.uk
01273 622822

Carelink Plus Alarm Service

CareLinkPlus@brighton-hove.gov.uk
01273 673105

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/brightonhovecab
0845 1203710

Tenant Disability Network

email: tdnbhcc@yahoo.co.uk
01273 936934

Noise Nuisance

www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/noise
01273 292929 or
01273 292229 for out of hours emergencies)

Council & Tenant Meetings

Housing Management Consultative Sub-committee meetings:

Tuesday 18 December 2012 at 3pm
Tuesday 12 February 2013 at 3pm

Housing Committee meetings:

Wednesday 16 January 2013 at 4pm
Wednesday 6 March 2013 at 4pm

All meetings will be held in the Council Chamber, Hove Town Hall.

All council meetings are open to the public – and you can submit public questions.

The agenda and minutes will be available on the council website www.brighton-hove.gov.uk

If you have any comments or items, e-mail homingin@brighton-hove.gov.uk, call 01273 291496 or write to Homing In, Communications Team, Room G10, Kings House, Grand Avenue, Hove BN3 2LS. Homing In is produced by Brighton & Hove City Council's communications team and the Tenant Editorial Board.

Save paper and get Homing In online

Email housingcos@brighton-hove.gov.uk to stop receiving a paper copy of Homing In and we'll e-mail you when it is available on our website.

Translations

Translation? Tick this box and take to any council office.

ترجمة؟ ضع علامة في المربع وخذها إلى مكتب البلدية. Arabic

অনুবাদ? বক্সে টিক চিহ্ন দিয়ে কাউন্সিল অফিসে নিয়ে যান। Bengali

需要翻譯? 請在這方格內加劃, 並送回任何市議會的辦事處。Cantonese

ترجمه؟ لطفاً این مربع را علامتگذاری نموده و آن را به هر یک از دفاتر شهرداری ارائه نمایید. Farsi

Traduction? Veuillez cocher la case et apporter au council. French

需要翻译? 请在这方格内划勾, 并送回任何市议会的办事处。Mandarin

Tłumaczenie? Zaznacz to okienko i zwróć do któregośkolwiek biur samorządu lokalnego (council office). Polish

Tradução? Coloque um visto na quadrícula e leve a uma qualquer repartição de poder local (council office). Portuguese

Tercümesi için kareyi işaretleyiniz ve bir semt belediye bürosuna veriniz Turkish

other (please state)

This can also be made available in large print, Braille, or on CD or audio tape