

'SAFE AS HOUSES' TENANTS' WORKSHOP

Health and Safety 1/2 day workshop
Saturday 3 February 2007

Solon is running a half-day workshop for tenants, in partnership with five other housing associations that also work in Bristol and surrounding areas. The morning event will be held on Saturday 3 February 2007 and will start around 9.30am and finish with lunch at 1.00pm. It will be held at The Southville Centre in the Beaulley Room.

We are in the planning stages at the moment and we aim to look at health and safety in three main areas:

- > Tenancy
- > Neighbourhoods
- > Personal health and safety in the home

Guest speakers from the police crime prevention service and the fire service will be giving advice and informing residents what they can do to protect themselves.

At this stage it would be helpful to know roughly how many people are interested in coming, so please let Solon know. Reasonable transport and childcare costs will be covered and transport can be arranged.



If you would like to get involved contact:

Julie Sneddon Greaves
Resident Involvement and Communication Officer (RICO)
Solon South West Housing Association Ltd
1 Newfoundland Court
St Paul Street, Off Newfoundland Street
Bristol BS2 9AP
Tel: 0117 924 4071
Fax: 0117 924 8816
Email: julie_sneddongreaves@solonswha.co.uk

URGENT REPAIRS OVER THE HOLIDAY PERIOD

Solon's maintenance line will close at 1.00pm on Friday 22 December 2006. After this time you will need to call Solon's general number (0117 924 4071) for details of our emergency call-out.

Emergency call-out
0845 609 5413

Emergency call-out procedures will apply until 1 January 2007. The maintenance line will be open as usual on Tuesday 2 January.

Please note that out of hours attendance costs around £100 so before calling, please check your tenants' handbook for what is considered an emergency, as we may have to charge you for a call-out that is not essential.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OPENING

Friday 22 December	Open as normal
Monday 25 December	Closed
Tuesday 26 December	Closed
Wednesday 27 December	Open as normal
Thursday 28 December	Open as normal
Friday 29 December	Open as normal
Monday 1 January	Closed
Tuesday 2 January	Open as normal

 **MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND A HEALTHY AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR**
FROM EVERYONE AT SOLON

FREECYCLE (giving and getting things for free and helping the environment along the way)

Solon reports on a fair exchange network that's local and free



The Freecycle Network™ is made up of many individual groups across the globe. It is a grassroots, not-for-profit movement of people who give (and get) stuff for free within their own towns. Each local group is moderated by a local volunteer. Membership is free.

Started in May 2003 in the US, to help reduce landfill, the Network is now over here and provides individuals and not-for-profits with an electronic forum to 'recycle' unwanted belongings... proving that one person's waste can truly be another's treasure!

How does it work?

When you want to find a new home for something – whether a chair, fax machine, piano or old door – you simply send an e-mail offering it to members of your local Freecycle group. If you're looking for something yourself, you simply respond to a member's offer or put a 'wanted' ad on the network. After that, it's up to the giver to decide who receives the gift and to arrange a time for it to be collected. Everything posted must be free, legal, and appropriate for all ages.

It's a not-for-profit network

Non profit making organisations also benefit from the Freecycle Network. You can post the item or items you want to give away and specify that you wish them to go to a non-profit cause.

Who can use The Freecycle Network?

Think globally, recycle locally. The network is open to all communities and to all individuals who want to participate. Local volunteers moderate Freecycle groups – that's grassroots at its best!

Want to recycle your Christmas tree and cards? Your local council can advise on where to go See page 3 for details of your local council

HOW TO JOIN THE FREECYCLE NETWORK

(If you haven't got your own computer you can access one and set-up an email in your local library.)

- 1** Go to www.yahoo.com and click on 'groups' on the left hand side
- 2** At the top of the page it will say 'Sign in' and under it in smaller writing it says 'New user? Sign up'. Click on 'Sign up'.
- 3** Fill in all the boxes and press 'I Agree'. It now says 'Registration completed'. You now have a Yahoo! Groups account so you can join any Yahoo! Group you want.

If you already have a Yahoo! Group ID (you need a Yahoo! ID to join FreeCycle)

- 1** Type 'www.freecycle.org' into the address bar and press 'Go'. On the left-hand side of the page there is a list of place names. Click 'United Kingdom' and choose where you live from the list.
- 2** On the right hand side, click 'Join This Group!' Scroll down and fill in the boxes then click 'Join'. You have now joined The FreeCycle Network.

Follow instructions from here once you have joined

- 1** On Internet Explorer type in 'www.groups.yahoo.com/group/freecyclebristol'. At the top it will say 'New messages'. Click this.
- 2** There is now a list of things people are 'OFFERING' or 'WANTING'. If you see something you want (or have something you would like to give away) then click on the blue writing to select an item.
- 3** You can now see the person's whole message. If you want to reply to this message then click 'Reply' at the bottom of the screen. Now type in your message and click 'Send'.

Happy recycling!



Your RICO! Resident Involvement and Communications Officer Julie Sneddon Greaves, who joined Solon in September

Just call me RICO!

Hello, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Julie Sneddon Greaves and my (very long) job title is 'Resident Involvement and Communications Officer'. But please feel free to call me RICO.

I am returning to work in housing after a few years' working in other fields. In the past I have worked with young homeless people in Bristol and for many years in supported housing, hostels and in the community in London.

I started work at Solon in early September and spent several weeks shadowing colleagues. I visited our hostel in Bath, Rackfield House, and was kindly shown around by Chris Ashmore, the hostel manager. I also spent a morning with housing officer John Maken, visiting properties he manages in Shepton Mallet. Solon's managing surveyor, Ruth Berry, invited me on an inspection of contractors carrying out cyclical maintenance – routine upkeep on the outside of a property, including painting and roof repairs. Solon carries this out every five years or so.

Andy Creak, Solon's surveyor took me on a voids inspection. When a property becomes empty it is Andy's job to check the state of the property, to see whether it needs work to prepare for the new tenant.

I have spent a day with the Bristol City Council Resident Involvement Team, looking at how they work and what resources they have, and met many resident involvement workers in the South West region. As a lone worker I will be keeping in touch with them all to share information.

Meetings with workers and tenants from landlords around the South West, arranged by TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service), happen four times a year. Any tenants that wish to attend are very welcome.

The next Solon Resident Forum is on Monday 12 February at Solon's offices from 6.00pm until 8.00pm. Every resident is very welcome and I would like to encourage those who have not yet attended to come along! Childcare costs and transport will be paid and food and drink is provided. I very much look forward to meeting as many of you as possible on that evening.

Councils connected with Solon South West Housing Association

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

Council House
College Green
Bristol BS1 5TR
Tel: Main switchboard 0117 922 2000
Minicom: 0117 357 4444
Website: www.bristol-city.gov.uk

MENDIP DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices
Cannards Grave Road
Shepton Mallet
Somerset BA4 5BT
Tel: Customer Services 01749 648999
Email: customerservices@mendip.gov.uk
Minicom: 01749 341622
Fax: 01749 344050
Website: www.mendip.gov.uk

FOREST OF DEAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices
High Street
Coleford
Gloucester GL16 8HG
Tel: Main switchboard 01594 810000
Email: council@fdean.gov.uk
Minicom: 01594 812500
Website: www.fdean.gov.uk

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE COUNCIL

Kingswood Civic Centre
High Street
South Gloucestershire BS15 9TR
Tel: Main number 01454 868009
Minicom: 01454 868016
Fax: 01454 863855
Website: www.southglos.gov.uk

To contact me, please phone, email or write to:

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Fax: 0117 9248816
Email: julie_sneddongreaves@solonswha.co.uk





How important is the Solon maintenance service to you?

Our last survey showed that over 70% of residents contact us about maintenance issues at their homes. We are also aware that this is the thing that causes the most number of complaints.

If you are interested in joining a group of Solon residents to discuss how the maintenance service works and actively make a difference, then please contact us.

We plan to get together a few times a year to involve you in making sure we make things better.

The date for the first maintenance forum will be:

**Monday 5 March 2007
6:00pm – 8.00pm
St Paul's Learning and Family Centre
94 Grovenor Road
St Pauls
Bristol BS2 8XJ**

If you are unsure, why not phone up for a quick chat. If you don't want to come to a meeting, maybe you could give us your views in another way. We welcome all feedback.

Contact Julie Sneddon Greaves (RICO) - see page 3 for contact details.

Are you the next Delia or Gordon?

Solon Residents' Forum needs a caterer to provide a finger buffet for its regular meetings.

Solon would love to hear from any suitably qualified tenants.

Meetings are held every two months at different venues in Bristol.

Call Julie Sneddon Greaves (RICO) on 0117 916 7768 if you are interested.

Please note that public liability insurance is an essential requirement

PROFILE OF MEMBERS OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

Chair

Kate Orchard BA Hons, PGCE, Institute of Health Service Management
Assistant Director of Development, Avon Health Authority

Responsible for developing primary care, especially new health centres, in areas of high social need in Bristol, particularly in the inner city and South Bristol. Experience of managing capital projects and the provision of medical services for homeless and black and other minority ethnic people. (Joined the Board: 1997)

Vice Chair

Fred Semple BA (Hons) DMS
Operational Support Manager, Bristol City Council

Responsible for managing a range of technical and specialist functions including building surveyors, project managers and property valuers. He has a strong research background and 15 years experience in local authority housing. Formerly Regional Director at Knightstone Housing Association. (Joined the Board: 2002)

Vice Chair

Michelle Thomas BA (Hons) Housing
Corporate Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing
Regional Development Manager, Raglan Housing Association

Currently manages a small development team responsible for procuring new development opportunities in Somerset, Wiltshire and Berkshire, and undertakes liaison with Area Committees and Association's senior staff. Has 13 years' experience in affordable housing development, plus 4 years with a local authority housing department. Also worked as a Senior Consultant in a Housing Consultancy for 2 years, giving independent advice to tenants going through the LSVT process, as well as development consultancy work. (Joined the Board: 2006)

Chair of Audit & Finance Committee

Everest Maburo BA Fellow of Chartered Certified Accountants
Currently an Executive at PricewaterhouseCoopers

Responsible for the provision of auditing services to a portfolio of Registered Social Landlords, and for providing leadership to audit teams working in the housing sector. Has significant experience in the local authority sector and over 10 years' experience of auditing. (Joined the Board: 2004)

Tenant

Debbie Collard Bachelor of Humanities
Postgraduate Certificate in Film & Television

Has previously worked in arts/media, with experience of film production, including writing, researching, production management & photography, as well as market research. Also has experience of community arts work. (Joined the Board: 2001)

Tenant

Margaret Richardson
Associateship of the Library Association

Formerly a civil servant at the Ministry for Overseas Development, has 16 years' experience in the librarianship of housing management, valuation and estate management. Now undertakes part-time voluntary work at one of Bristol's city farms. (Joined the Board: 2003)

Robert Slade BSc(Hons) FCCA MBA

Previously Chief Executive of Radstock Co-operative, with responsibility for overall leadership of the business, including strategy and financial planning, human resources, development, servicing the Board, community issues and motivating and developing management. (Joined the Board: 2004)

Charlie Mosse BA (Hons) PG Diploma in Housing

Self-employed training consultant; Supporting People Service Development Officer, North Somerset Council (part time); UWE Student (part time)
Works part-time for North Somerset Council, as well as providing training, in the private sector, on customer service and health & safety. Has worked in social housing for 17 years, and has knowledge and experience which includes general needs and supporting housing, both for local authorities and housing associations. (Joined the Board: 2005)

If you would like to receive a copy of this newsletter by email then please let us know and we will send you a pdf. You will still receive a printed copy because the rent statements go out to all households and we haven't yet got a system to separate the two. Or you can access it via our website: www.solon@solonswha.co.uk



ANOTHER EASY WAY TO PAY

Did you know that you can now make rent or recharge payments over the phone?

Simply call

0870 770 0472

You will need your Allpay payment card and a debit card (including Solon and Electron). If you do not have an Allpay card then phone your Housing Officer who can arrange for one to be sent to you without delay.

Unfortunately, credit card payments will not be accepted.



*Temporary Tenancy Support Officer
Nina Simmonds.*

Tenancy Support Service

Are You in Need of Support & Advice?


Tenancy Support is a confidential service which provides advice and assistance to Solon tenants in a number of areas. These include debt management, budgeting, benefits and grants, accessing specialist support services and practical support around household management.

We have a full time Tenancy Support Officer who will meet with you on a regular basis in order to meet goals, which have been agreed with you. Nina Simmonds is temporarily covering the post – we are advertising in the new year for a full-time permanent position.

Leaflets providing further details about Tenancy Support are available in Solon's reception for you to take away. If you would prefer to talk to someone then please contact your housing officer.

Tenant Involvement Helpline

Did you know there is a free **Helpline and Information Service** available to help all social housing tenants looking for information and advice on tenant involvement in housing management?

The  Helpline and Information Service is available Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm on:

0500 844111

The Helpline can provide information on a variety of issues, including:

- Setting up and running tenants' groups
- Running premises and managing volunteers
- Producing newsletters, handbooks, business plans and other documents
- Identifying sources of funding and applying for grants
- Equal opportunities/Involving everyone
- Participation methods and structures
- Identifying good practice in tenant involvement

In fact, we can provide information on **all** aspects of tenant involvement in housing management.

If you have access to the internet, our web site: www.tpas.org.uk will give you an idea of the range of information we have available.

To contact us telephone the number above, or write to us at:

TPAS Information Team
5th Floor, Trafford House,
Chester Road, Manchester
M32 0RS

E-mail: info@tpas.org.uk

SORRY...

We would like to apologise if any of you have had difficulty getting to our offices recently.

Residents in Bristol will be aware that there are major redevelopments next to our office which have meant that traffic has been redirected and some of the pavements temporarily closed. Unfortunately, the work is set to continue for some months, but you should always be able to reach us. If you have any difficulties, please let us know.



**IF YOU NEED A LARGE PRINT VERSION OF THIS NEWSLETTER
OR A TRANSLATION PLEASE RING JULIE SNEDDON GREAVES
ON 0117 924 4071**