

TARAs with premises Open Times

Athersley TARA

26 Mansfield Road Monday 13.00-15.00
Tel: 294430 Friday 13.00-15.00

Bolton TARA

Prospect Road CC Tuesday 10.00-12.00
Tel: 01709.880490 Thursday 12.00-14.00

California TARA

21 Windhill Drive 1st Saturday 1 0.00-11.30
Tel: 380823 Wednesday 1 9.00-21.30
Sunday 19.00-21.30

Grimethorpe TARA

145 Brierley Road Monday 16.30-20.00
Tel: 714759 Wednesday 16.30-20.00

Gt & L Houghton TARA

25 John Street Tuesday 10.00-12.00
Tel: 340233

Honeywell TARA

174 Honeywell St Tuesday 13.00-15.00
Tel: 07906152957

Royston TARA

The Grove 1st Friday 10.00-12.00
Tel: 700768

Smithies TARA

48 Belmont Ave By Appointment
Tel: 07952587049

Upperwood TARA

3 Verona Rise Opening shortly
Tel: 758788

Worborough Common TARA

39 Highstone Road Tuesday 11.00-14.00
Tel: 245232

TARA Contacts

BEECA [Russian speaking group]
Tel: 07742641083

Platts Common TARA
Tel: 07940266554

Blacker Hill TARA
Tel: 741489

Roebuck Street
Tel: 752512

Carlton TARA
Tel: 07792411869

St Peters AEG
Tel: 745304

Hillside TARA
Tel: 201854

Summer Lane TARA
Tel: 201854

Kendray TARA
Tel: 212190

Thurnscoe TARA
Tel: 01709.891384

Kexbrough TARA
Tel: 201854

Wilson Street TARA
Tel: 201854

New Lodge TARA
Tel: 289484

Wombwell Main TARA
Tel: 210730

Rechargeable Repairs

Berneslai Homes carry out repairs where damage has occurred through normal wear and tear. We think you will agree that if damage has been caused by a tenant or their family or visitor, then it is only fair that the cost of putting things right should be the tenant's responsibility. This is what we call a rechargeable repair. We will do the work, but the costs will be billed to the tenant.

If the damage is caused by criminal activity we will not charge for the cost of these repairs, as long as you have reported it to the police and you give us a crime reference number.

Many tenants believe that the Council automatically insure their furniture, belongings and decorations against fire, theft, vandalism or water damage such as burst pipes. This is not the case. Unfortunately some tenants only realise this after the damage has been done, so we recommend that you insure your belongings with a contents insurance policy.

The Welfare Rights Service

Since 1974 the Welfare Rights Service has been helping people in Barnsley to claim the benefits from the social security system to which they are entitled. The reasons for claiming benefits can include retirement, ill health, disability, low earnings, caring responsibilities, bereavement, redundancy or accidents at work. The help provided can include many things such as the explanation of decisions made, explaining what is available, how to claim, when to claim, what to do if something goes wrong and, if needed, representation at appeal hearings.

In 2004 the Welfare Rights service, along with the Fairer charging Team, helped local residents claim an extra £4 million in benefits. If you think that the service could help you please contact them.

Contact details

- Call into Wellington House, Wellington Street, Barnsley
- Telephone for an appointment at one of the area based advice sessions
- Telephone 01226 775656
- Telephone the freephone advice line on 0800 91503339

Are you looking to move?

Not high enough on the housing register to get an offer of a new home?
Looking to find a 'swap' with another council or housing association tenant?
Berneslai Homes and moveUK may have the answer.

Berneslai Homes have arranged with moveUK, a government service, to offer you Homeswap.

Homeswap is the UK's largest database of council and housing association tenants who want to swap their home.

Who can apply?

If you are living in permanent, self-contained accommodation and renting from a council or housing association, you can register on Homeswap. Tenants of private landlords, homeowners or people living in shared ownership properties cannot use this service. Important: both partners in any exchange must have the permission of each landlord to move. If you do not get your landlord's permission to move, you could lose your tenancy.

How do I apply?

- You can apply by:
- Contacting moveUK direct by telephone to register your application on 0845 606 6161
 - Registering on-line at www.homes.org.uk and within two working days your registration will be activated in order for you to use the site to look for exchanges, which will be updated on a daily basis.
 - You can also print off an application form from www.homes.org.uk and complete this manually and return it to moveUK direct, any Barneslai Connects Office or The Property Shop.

What happens next?

When you register for Homeswap with moveUK you will receive regular updates of potential swap partners when available by post every six weeks.

In addition to this every month moveUK produces a Homeswap list of people wishing to move into your area. These lists are available at Barneslai Connects Offices and Berneslai Homes Property Shop.

If moveUK send you details of possible swap partners, you need to contact these people yourself. Telephone them or write to them giving details of your property.

What happens when I find someone to swap with?

Contact any Barneslai Connects Office and request a mutual exchange form. Your swap partner should do the same. The completed mutual exchange forms should be returned to any Barneslai Connects office. Berneslai Homes staff will then arrange to carry out a home visit and will advise you shortly afterwards whether you can swap.

For more information
Telephone: 01226 787333



Berneslai Homes Limited is a company controlled by
Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council.
A Company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales,
number 4548803.
Registered Office: Springfield House, Springfield Street, Barnsley, S70 6HH

OPEN house

Information provided by Berneslai Homes

SPRING EDITION MARCH 2006

A good service that's getting better

That's what the Government's Audit Commission has told us in their recent inspection.

Alison Brown an Audit Commission senior manager, said:

"Berneslai Homes is delivering a good quality housing management service, whilst also carrying out large scale improvements to its homes"

On a scale from zero to three stars the Government's Audit Commission has awarded us two stars. Even better news for you is that they also say the service is likely to get even better.

We were praised for making sure you get good value for money, for our good lettings, tenancy and estate management services, and for our improving rent and repairs service. We were also praised for our strong track record of improving the things that matter most to you like our decent homes programme.

Councillor John Parkinson, Chair of Berneslai Homes said:

"This is great news for Berneslai Homes, our customers and our staff. We want to improve the

things that really matter to you and we are very pleased with this judgement. We are proud that over the last two years we have not only improved our services, but have also made fantastic progress in bringing homes across the borough up to decent homes standard. We are confident that we will bring all our homes up to this standard by the government 2010 deadline"

The Audit Commission, as well as giving praise, also advises companies where improvements need to be made to the service.

Tim Harris, Berneslai Homes Chief Executive says: "What's great is that the recommendations made by the Audit Commission did not come as a shock to us. As part of our ongoing reviews, we had already identified the main areas of our service that need improvement and had already got plans in place. So I am confident that you will soon see improvements take shape. We are placing a big emphasis on improving services to our elderly tenants, especially those living in sheltered housing." [continued on page 2](#)

Summer Lane TARA official launch

Summer Lane Tenants and Residents Association (TARA) held their official launch on Saturday 28th January in the Summer Lane community centre.

The event was opened by the Mayor and Mayoress, councillor Joe Hayward and Pauline Haigh. The TARA had been assisted in their formation by Berneslai Homes staff and local councillors. Raffle prizes were donated by Barnsley



Federation of Tenants and Residents Association, the Chinese laundry, the local bakery and people living in the area.

If anyone wants to know more about the

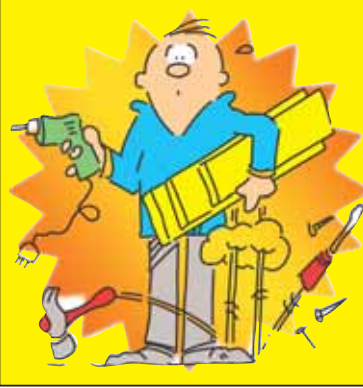
organisation or is keen to become a member please contact their chair, Philip Brown, on 01226 249245 or Community Development on 01226 774379 or Barnsley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association on 01226 201854.

What's Inside!

- You & your money
- Leasehold news
- Prize draw winners



- Eric's tips for tenants



**BERNESLAI
HOMES**

A good service that's getting better

continued from front page

Here are some of the recommendations made by the inspectors, which we are already taking action on.

- Make sure all of our offices, community buildings and communal areas meet Disability Discrimination Act standards.

Most of the Barnsley Connects offices have already been improved with plans to complete all of them by the summer of this year. We have completed assessments at estate offices, community centres and sheltered housing and are finalising plans to ensure that these premises are brought up to standard.

- Collect and use information about customers to ensure that we are delivering the service fairly. We are collecting information about our customers' needs and access requirement – we already have 8,000 records. We will continue to collect this information and use it to ensure we deliver the service in a way that best suits you.

- Improve the way we deliver supported housing services.

We know that our sheltered and supported housing services need overhauling and we have done lots of work over the last few years considering different ways of improving the

service. We will be continuing to involve existing elderly and sheltered housing customers to agree these plans and implement them.

The inspectors were also positive about some of the new initiatives we have developed over the last two years. They made a special mention of the work being done in Worsborough, where, working with the local school, we are supporting a Junior Impact Team of youngsters who help promote good behaviour and community involvement in the area.

The inspectors were equally impressed by our approach to tackling environmental issues and made special mention of our environmentally friendly district heating scheme at our town centre multi storey flats.

They were impressed that we are sharing good housing and tenancy management skills in Thurnscoe. We now have staff working on Thurnscoe's large ex-coal board estate, the aim being to improve property and environmental conditions, reduce crime and generally bring empty properties back into use.

The Audit Commission also thought we were genuinely dedicated to involving and consulting you and had a good track record of supporting your local Tenants and Residents Associations across the borough. They also recognised that we are trying to get more people involved,

particularly those from hard to reach or minority groups.

Barry McGowan, Chairman of Barnsley Federation of Tenants and Residents says:

"We are pleased with the result – it's a credit to Berneslai Homes who work hard with the Federation and people in Barnsley, making sure that as many people as possible are involved in shaping the service."

Barnsley Council is also happy with the way we manage its properties.

Councillor Bill Newman, Cabinet Spokesperson, Environment commented:

"Over the last three years Berneslai Homes has made good progress in improving Council Homes, and the management of Council Homes, but we recognise that further work is required, and we shall continue to work hard over the next few years, to make further service improvements" We believe that we are a modern, forward thinking company, and we are determined that things will just keep getting better for you. If you want to see a full copy of the report, it is on our website www.berneslaihomes.co.uk. Or, if you have any views, comments or questions about the inspection please contact Sarah Barnes, Customer Services Manager on 01226 772721.

Christmas Prize Draw Winner



2

Berneslai Homes held its first prize draw for our customers in December. The competition was open to everyone who had a clear rent account in the run up to the festive season, and was the chance to win a fantastic Cannon Hall farm hamper.

The draw was held in the week before Christmas and the winner was Mrs Moore from Kexborough (pictured left receiving her prize from Eric Steer, Impact Team Leader and Gareth Roebuck, Senior Rents and Leasehold Officer)

Tim Harris, Chief Executive of Berneslai Homes said: "We feel that this is a good way of recognising the vast majority of our tenants who make sure they pay their rent on time. The idea of being rewarded for doing something so simple really seemed to catch the public's imagination and we hope to repeat this again in the future."

Name the dolls

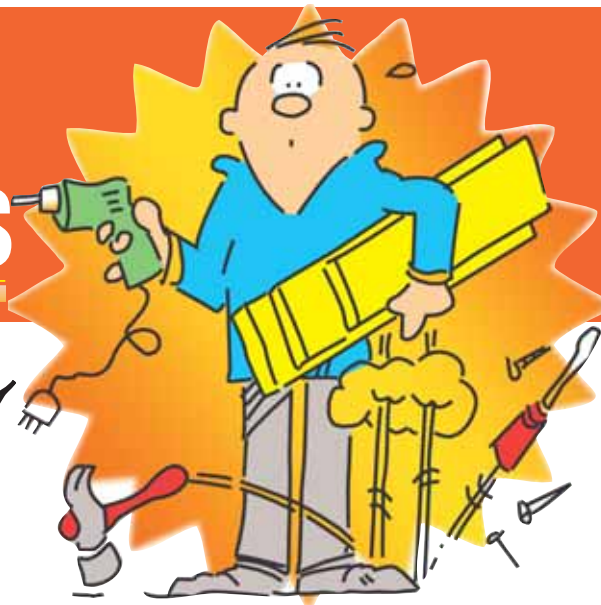
You may remember that in the December edition of Open House we ran a competition to name the two dolls which had been presented to Berneslai Homes by the Russian Speaking Community.

The winner of the competition who will receive the £50 prize is Mrs Fletcher from the Wakefield Road area of Barnsley. Mrs Fletcher came up with the names of 'Hansel and Gretel'. We had a wonderful response with quite a lot of names being put forward. A number of people did come up with the same names but Mrs Fletcher was the first name to be 'pulled out of the hat'.

Many thanks to everyone who sent in entries.



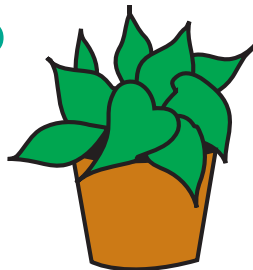
Eric's tips for tenants



Laying a patio

Although we are still in the depths of winter, its not too early to start thinking about your spring project for your garden.

How about creating a seating area for those hot summer evenings.



One of the easiest and most practical ways of doing so is by laying a patio constructed of flagstones.

A patio is a useful feature to any garden with a variety of suitable paving available in all colours, shapes and sizes.

A little care is required when siting and constructing. A sunny position is most favoured, usually near to the house.

Draw a plan to calculate how many flagstones will be required. Your local builder's merchant will be able to advise and should have a good selection. He will also arrange delivery.

After deciding on position, size and colour of flagstones you are ready to go.

Good patios need good foundations.

Begin by marking out the site, with pegs and builders line, allowing a slight fall for drainage. The depth should be the thickness of the flagstone plus 1.5 inch thickness of concrete plus 4 inch for hard-core. The base should be compacted using a "compactor" you can hire these from your local hire shop.

The flagstones can be laid on mortar mix 1-part cement, 5- parts sharp sand. Use a trowel to spread mortar to a uniform thickness. Place flagstone and tamp gently with a rubber mallet until level, continue with the next allowing 0.25inch gap and check with a spirit level. Continue until complete. After allowing mortar to set, usually two or three days, fill the joints with an almost dry mortar mix, keeping off the flagstone surface to avoid staining.

Patio Planters and Containers

An easy way to brighten up your patio or any part of your garden is by planting in containers. They can also be used to conceal unsightly drain covers. A tub placed near the front door can make a fragrant and colourful welcome.

Almost any plant can be put in a container but avoid using very tall ones also plants that require boggy conditions should not be put in containers.

A huge variety of container are sold by garden centres, in all shapes and sizes, made in Terracotta, Aluminium, Zinc, Teak, Softwood, Concrete, and Plastic.

Almost anything can be used or adapted to hold plants, even old chimney pots look effective. Old coal scuttles, sinks, or cattle troughs can be utilised and have become very fashionable. Oak barrels sawn in half make excellent patio planters.

Select containers to suit your plants, for instance Alpines thrive in a shallow tray or trough. Plants such as small shrubs and dwarf conifers require deeper tubs.

Plan where you want to place your containers on the patio, once they are filled with soil and plants, they become very heavy to move. Remember space is required all around for watering and tending the plants.

When planting containers, begin by placing broken crocks over the drainage holes, then add drainage material, to about a quarter of the containers depth, coarse gravel or larger stone can be used.

Next add the planting material, potting compost is best, but good garden soil is an alternative, mixed first with peat and then fertiliser.

With a trowel begin planting, put the tallest plants in the centre of the tub first and continue placing smaller plants around until filled.

When your tubs and containers are filled remember to add a high potash fertiliser weekly to feed your plants and keep them in good condition. Also water frequently, even if it rains, still use the hose at least two or three times a week to prevent drying out. Always water in the evening or early morning and do not over water.

Finally also don't forget that permissions may be required for your patio.

Please contact your local Housing Impact Officer who will be pleased to advise you on how to apply.



Your comments (good or bad) help improve the service – so please talk to us!

Sarah Barnes, our Customer Services Manager and her Customer Services Team spend their time using your feedback to resolve your problems, share good practice or pass on your compliments to colleagues. She has 3 staff working with her, Lynne Horton, Complaints Investigating Officer, and Carolyn Bramley and Caroline Lappage, Customer Services Officers. Between them they have lots of experience and even more commitment to make things better for you.

Complaints - Loved or loathed?

Not long after becoming Customer Services Manager, Sarah remembers a colleague asking her how she and her team stayed so positive dealing with complaints day in day out. You might think her response strange:

"Complaints are gifts! We might not always like the gift, but the thought counts. And if we take a positive look at the complaint and see things from the customer's views we will get the best gift of all – ideas on how to make things better" Over the last few years our complaints service has continued to improve and was praised in the recent housing inspection but Sarah wants to encourage more feedback.

"Last year my team dealt with 235 stage 1 and 41 stage 2 formal complaints. All of them were investigated, responded to and considered for any service improvements. We also recorded 45 customer compliments. This information is great but we think there are many customers out there who keep satisfaction and ideas to themselves or who only share their gripes with friends and family. We have over 20,000 tenancies, and every year we complete over 60,000 day to day repairs, let over 1,500 homes, and do much much more. So there must be much more positive and negative feedback from you. We can only put

things right, share good practice or continually improve our services if you tell us the things that matter to you."

Here are some of the good things you said about Berneslai Homes staff recently:

- "The two workmen who came to do the guttering this morning did a good job and were two of the nicest, kind and well-mannered men that have visited."

- "Many thanks for the service provided to me during the Decent Homes work. The Capital Projects Officer handled my situation in a polite but fair manner. At the time I was stressed with the all the work going on, but he put my mind at rest."

- "I just wanted to thank you very much for all your help with the transfer. You have made things go so smoothly at such a stressful time. Both Dad and I really appreciate that."

- "The Impact Officer has treated everyone with respect and kept them fully informed with both honesty and understanding. He also responded whenever we contacted him and gave us 100% of his time."

- "We are very grateful for all the help you have given to our Tenants and Residents Association over many years. It has been good to know that you were always available to offer not only support, but also encouragement and involvement."

Here are some of the things we have changed as a result of your complaints:

- Developed a new policy on open plan fencing (awaiting approval by Barnsley Council).

- Developed guidance and delivered staff training on dealing with changes in tenancies.

So who do I contact if I have a compliment, complaint or suggestion?

In the first instance it's best to contact the office or team involved. They will take the details of your suggestion or compliment and pass it on to the Customer Services Team. Or if it's a complaint – they will try to help you straight away. You can phone on the following numbers.

- For repairs related issues on 01226 787878.

- For all other issues on 01226 775555.

If this person can't help you they will put you in contact with someone who can.

I've complained and I'm still unhappy?

We hope to resolve complaints after your first contact but if you are still not happy contact the Customer Services Team by phone on 01226 772720 or e-mail on housingcustomerservices@barnsley.gov.uk. They will make sure that you get a written response to your complaint within 15 working days of you making it.

What about the Local Government Ombudsman?

The Local Government Ombudsman is an independent, impartial and free service. The Ombudsmen can investigate complaints about how Berneslai Homes has done something. But they cannot question what we have done simply because you do not agree with it. They will only consider your complaint after you have given us a chance to deal with things first. So, save time and get the same result by contacting us first!



WARNING!

We've had reports that there has recently been an incident where a bogus caller gained entry to one of our tenant's properties.

Most people who come to your door will be genuine callers. But it's always best to make sure.

Lock, stop, chain, check

- Fitting a door chain or spyhole will help you check who the caller is.
- Keep your doors and windows locked.
- Before you open the door put the door

chain on if you have one.

- Make sure that your back door, if you have one, is locked so that no-one can sneak in.

Check the caller's identity. Genuine callers will not mind waiting outside while you contact their company. If you are in any doubt, don't let them in. Ask them to make an appointment to come back at another time. This will give you time to check things with their company.

Age Concern offer a free information line tel: 0800 00 99 66 if you need more advice.

Leasehold News

A leaseholder is a person who owns a flat within a block managed by Berneslai Homes. The Leaseholder Forum was established last year following the roadshows that took place to introduce the Leasehold Handbook. Around 15 leaseholder representatives from different schemes around the borough meet with Berneslai Homes staff on a regular basis to discuss ways that we can improve the leasehold management service. We will be using this forum to consult on any service improvements we are planning.

If you would like to become involved in this group, please contact Gareth Roebuck, Senior Rents and Leasehold Officer on 01226 772710, or Joan Gaines, Community Development Officer on 01226 774379.

Below are a few of the items we've covered over the past few weeks:

Gas Servicing and Repairs

As you probably know Berneslai Homes has to service the gas appliances of each of its properties on an annual basis. Several of the leaseholders expressed an interest in our contractors providing a similar service to them. Steve Wilson, our Asset Manager, promised to go away and work out a cost for both an annual service, and a repairs service. He advised the forum that it would be hard to provide a competitive price as we would be working on a much smaller scale than organisations such as British Gas. The prices quoted were:

For annual service - £75.67 + VAT per property

For repairs service - £80.83 + VAT per hour plus materials.

The Forum felt that this was expensive, and would be preferable for leaseholders to continue to source their own gas contractors.

Insurance

Obtaining adequate insurance cover seems to be a problem that is affecting leaseholders in Barnsley once they have purchased their flat and need to insure the interior of their home. We have asked the Council's insurance team to consider increasing the cover they provide and charging any additional cost in service charge, but this will take some time. In the meantime,

Berneslai Homes have been in touch with the British Insurance Brokers Association who have recommended an organisation called MCE who specialise in leasehold insurance. MCE can be contacted on 08709090996.

Insulation

Emma Noble from the Council's Home Energy Efficiency Team spoke to the last meeting. She advised us that grants are available, dependant upon a householder's circumstances, for works such as cavity wall insulation. If you have any concerns about how well your home is insulated, Emma can be contacted on 01226 772729.



A new vision for Athersley and New Lodge

Exciting times are ahead for Athersley and New Lodge as consultation continues on the regeneration vision for the area. Berneslai Homes are working with a team of consultants including EC Harris, Whitelaw Turkington and Watson Batty to support the community in the development of a vision for what has been identified as one of the most deprived communities in the Borough.



Initial consultation was held in December 2005 when members of the community were invited to share their views and aspirations for the area. The Regeneration Team at Berneslai Homes were encouraged by the level of support and input

provided by the community. Numerous options were suggested including improving the quality of housing and the local environment, tackling anti-social behaviour, re-development of community facilities and estate accessibility.

Further community consultation events were held in January 2006, and ideas developed including:-

- The development of new houses overlooking safe public open spaces and children's play areas
- A mix of demolition and refurbishment options for the non-traditional houses on New Lodge to provide a range of different house types
- Better access in and around the estates
- New health facility

Following the consultation events, draft plans for the future of the area were prepared by Berneslai Homes and the consultant team.

In order to maximise the regeneration benefit of the vision and to make sure the community have an important say in how the scheme is managed

and delivered, a neighbourhood management team is being set up.

A group has been established at New Lodge to keep residents informed about progress on developments in the area, and to give local people a regular opportunity to play a key part of the wider regeneration process. On 22nd February 2006, 30 people attended the first meeting. Further informal meetings are to be held at New Lodge Community centre. For further details and dates for the next meeting please contact Carol Brady on 732869.



BERNESLAI HOMES COMMUNITY CENTRES

Athersley/St Edwins
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 202174

Burton Grange
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 234476
Tel: 01226 732155

Cedar Crescent
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 290485

Cloughfields Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 747082

Darfield Road, Cudworth
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 780073

Wilthorpe and Redbrook
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 786765

Darfield
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 757111

Grimethorpe Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 712441

Houghton Road Community
Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01709 881643

Kexborough Community House
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 385064

Windhill Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 380823

Monk Bretton
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 234714

New Lodge Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 770444

Prospect Road
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01709 880490

Ward Green Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 295919

Worsbrough Bridge
Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 291325

4

Valley Community Centre
Management Committee
Tel: 01226 714544

You and your money

If you need to borrow money, it's really important to look at the different choices available before you sign up for a loan.

Take care – a loan that is easily available can often be expensive. Don't just think about whether you can afford the weekly repayment – ask how much you will have to pay in total and how many payments you have to make. Find out what would happen if you miss a payment.

Here are some choices:

Home Credit companies – they give cash loans or vouchers to spend in certain shops and collect repayments from your home. The weekly repayments are often quite low but, with long repayment periods, the total cost of the loan can be very high. So, for example, a loan of £500 repaid at £25 a week over 31 weeks may end up costing £775 (365.1% APR).

Hire purchase – again the weekly payments may seem affordable but the total cost can be high: "A fridge freezer was bought from a High Street shop. The appliance cost £351.11

to which a credit charge of £154.33 (29.9% APR) was added, also service cover insurance at £273.00 and damage liability insurance of £78.00. The total cost was £856.44. The customer had to pay 156 instalments of £5.49 per week".

Credit Unions are owned by their members and help them to save and borrow. They are friendly and approachable, and have no shareholders to pay. Loans are made to members at an interest rate of no more than 1% per month on the reducing balance (an APR of 12.68%). Plus there's free life insurance and no arrangement fees. If you borrow £500 over a year, you'll pay back less than £545. And since the credit union helps you to save regularly as well, when your loan is paid off your savings will have grown too.

Examples taken from research by Liverpool John Moores University

Interested in finding out more about your local credit union then? Contact Barnsley Credit Union Ltd, 22-24 Doncaster Road, Barnsley S70 1TH or call 01226 734945

What sort of service do you want?

only YOU can tell us

There are several articles in this edition of Open House which talk about the power of customer involvement. This article is no different, but read on because this request for involvement will help us shape the service that you want.

Over the last 3 years, we have made many improvements to the way we deliver the service, but the basic structure of our service is largely the same as it was. Things around us have changed. Customer choice and expectations, technology, business processes and so on have all moved on. With these changes in mind we need to ensure that we are still delivering an effective and best value service for the residents in Barnsley. We also need to ensure that our plans for the future are what our customers want. So over the next 12 months we will be completing a full review of our service. But we need your involvement.

Over the next few months we would like to recruit a panel of customers who are interested and willing to take part in consultation about the future of the service. We will be consulting in

many different ways – surveys, telephone interviews, mystery shopping, discussion forums and so on. The consultation won't be too time consuming and can be altered to meet your needs.

We need wide range of people representing the diversity of our customer base. We need:

- young and old people;
- new customers and old;
- tenants or tenants friends and family;
- leaseholders;
- owners on our estates.
- people with disabilities;
- people from minority backgrounds; and many more.

And, whatever form of consultation you are willing to become involved in we will make sure that we cover any of your out of pocket expenses.

So if you are interested in becoming involved or know someone who is, please contact Sarah Barnes, Customer Services Manager on 01226 772721

Prize Draw Winners



Thanks to everyone who completed and returned the prize draw questionnaire in the autumn edition of Open House. The winners were Mrs Wilkinson of Athersley South who won £100 and the runners up were Miss Robertshaw of Woolley Colliery and Mr Flemming of Wombwell, both winning £50.

The autumn edition talked about our plans for improvement in the future. The questionnaire asked you what you thought of these plans and Open House as a way of communicating with you. We also asked for feedback on the service we provide now.

This is what you told us.

- 92.2% of you found Open House interesting.
- 78.6% of you felt that our plans for improving the service would work.

- 42.9% of you felt you knew a lot about Berneslai Homes and our services.

Here's a sample of some of the comments you made.

- 'It's nice to keep tenants of Berneslai Homes up to date'.
- 'Open House tells me what has been done and what is going to be done'.
- 'Open House tells you where to enquire for help'.
- 'I am unhappy because my house hasn't been done up yet'.
- 'We are pleased with the improvements we had done when our homes were refurbished'.
- 'I only know what I read in your newsletter'.

Open House is our way of communicating with you and we will continue to keep you updated through this newsletter in the future.



Strategic and Area Board Meetings

You are welcome to attend the public parts of all Strategic and Area Board Meetings. All meetings will be held in the Board Room in Springfield House. They are as follows:

Strategic Board

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Thursday 13th April | 5pm |
| Thursday 25th May | 3pm |
| Thursday 6th July | 5pm |

North Area Board

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Wednesday 5th April | 5pm |
| Wednesday 3rd May | 5pm |
| Wednesday 31st May | 5pm |
| Wednesday 28th June | 5pm |

South Area Board

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Wednesday 12th April | 4pm |
| Wednesday 10th May | 4pm |
| Wednesday 7th June | 4pm |
| Wednesday 5th July | 4pm |

If you require further details please contact Diane Marfleet on 01226 772739.

Glen Haigh

Glen Haigh joined Barnsley Council's Social Services in an administration post via the Workshop programme run by Barnsley Light



Industries who have since changed their name to Moorland Plastics.

He has recently been successful in obtaining permanent employment with Berneslai Homes Asset Management Section

Glen's progression has been so impressive that he is now on his second secondment as an Impact Officer. This experience will hopefully put Glen in a good position to realise his ambition to take up a permanent Impact Officer post in the very near future.

Glen would like to thank all those that have supported him at both Moorland Plastics and Barnsley Council and to Berneslai Homes for their ongoing encouragement. Glen feels that his life prospects have been greatly improved.

In recognition of Glen and his peers success Moorland Plastics held a presentation day where the Mayor of Barnsley Joe Hayward presented

certificates of achievement. Tom Feeney received an award on behalf of Berneslai Homes for their support to Glen and the Workshop Programme.

For more information about Moorland Plastics contact www.moorlandplastics.co.uk

