

Sheltered Tenants Prize Quiz

£20 1st prize , £15 2nd prize,
£10 3rd prize.

There are currently 18 Electoral
Wards in Exeter - Name 10.

Answers on a post card to the
FREE POST address shown below by 9
April 2010

To be drawn on 12 April 2010.

Prize Quiz Winners

The prize winners of the last
quiz are as follows: -

£20 First prize

Mrs Bissett - Bodley Close

£15 Second Prize

Mrs White - Rennes Hse

£10 Third Prize

Mrs Welham - Aldens Rd

On a lighter note

A pork pie walks into a pub, walks straight
up to the bar and says "Good afternoon
landlord, a pint of your finest ale please".
The landlord looks the pork pie up and
down and says "I'm terribly sorry - we
don't serve food here".

A man walks into a bar with a toy poodle
and asks the barman for a pint of beer,
The barman looks at the poodle and says
"Sorry sir but dogs aren't allowed in here
- only guide dogs"
The man says "This is a guide dog."
The barman says "Aren't guide dogs
usually Labradors or German Shepherds?"
The man answers "Well what have they
given me then?"

Freepost customer comments and compliments

Tell us about the Housing Service you
receive - good or bad.

Help us to identify areas where we can
improve the service we provide. If you have
any comments to make about the service
you receive or wish to express a view about
an article in this newsletter, why not write
in and let us know

You could even get your letter published
with a reply by the appropriate officer.

If you have any thoughts, ideas,
recommendations to make, about any aspect
of the housing service you receive, simply
jot it down and send it in to the Freepost
address shown - no need to use a stamp.

Freepost EX132,

Steve Deakin, Tenant Participation Officer,
Community and Environment Directorate,
Exeter City Council,

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone _____

I am happy to have my letter published:

(please circle) **YES / NO**

The points I would like to raise are:-

(continue on a separate sheet if necessary)



Exeter City Council

Exeter City Council
Sheltered Housing Forum

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If you need to contact
the housing services,
decide which section
your query will come
under and telephone the
appropriate number.

Rents: 265032

Estate Management:
265033

Repairs: 265031

CHATTERBOX

FOR CITY COUNCIL SHELTERED TENANTS Issue 16

Solomon Theatre Company show the way to keep scams and tricksters at bay!

Wednesday 16 September
2009 the Devon Tenant
Participation Group (DTPG)
held their annual Tenants
Conference.

The theme of this years
conference was crime and
crime prevention, in
particular, distraction
burglary and scams aimed at
vulnerable people.

The day was well attended
with around 100 tenants
from across Devon, 7 of who
were from Exeter.

The cost of attending the
conference (£75 per person)
meant that we had to limit
the number of people we
could invite. We therefore
invited only 7 members of
the Sheltered Housing
Forum, randomly drawn, at a
cost of £525.

The invites went out to
older tenants because that

was the target audience of
the performances.

The Soloman Theatre
Company performed two
interactive musical plays
which demonstrated how
easy it is to be caught out by
the various tactics adopted
by criminals in order to rob
and swindle vulnerable
people. They also
demonstrated that by taking
a few precautions and being
more aware and less
trusting, the upset and
trauma associated with
being a victim can be
avoided.

The first performance,
Trickster and Distraction
Burglary, was introduced by
Bob Bunney the Devon and
Cornwall Crime Reduction
Officer.

The second performance,

(Continued on page 2)

Solomon Theatre Company show the way to keep scams and tricksters at bay!

(Continued from page 1)

Scambuster, by Nicky May, a Devon County Council Trading Standards Officer.

Continued from front page.

'Trickster'

Whether it's rogue tarmac salesmen, fake reps from the water-board or callers from the local council, bogus callers come in many guises.

The educational musical "Trickster" successfully combats these criminals by raising awareness, reducing fear and empowering elderly community members. Based on a true story, a cast of three professional actors present this energetic and interactive live musical storytelling event.

George is an elderly gentleman who has become the victim of a

distraction burglar. Once a proud soldier, we follow George as he battles with being conned and beats the bogus callers. The 45-minute performance was supported using a multi-agency approach, linking Trading standards, the Police, community safety and Age concern groups.

'Scambuster'

Fake lotteries, boiler-house scams, psychic mailings, miracle health cures, fake holiday prizes, premium-rate promotions - these are all examples of scams highlighted by our play "scambuster".

Based on true stories, meet Sydney, the victim of a rogue tarmac tradesman and Mary, who thinks she's won the holiday of a lifetime... The same cast of three

professional actors present this energetic, live storytelling event with music from the 60's that is guaranteed to entertain, amuse and educate.

Developed in partnership with Trading standards, Police and community safety Officers, the key safety messages of "scambuster" come through loud and clear, highlighting unscrupulous traders offering their services for badly done and over-priced work and encouraging better reporting of scams.

Both of the scenarios used in the training demonstrate the need to be vigilant, check the callers identity and if in doubt - keep them out.

This is the message we have been trying to get across to sheltered tenants for many years now .

Make your experience count! Join the 'Real Time Team'

What will I have to do when I join? All you have to do is to fill in a detailed form every time you access a service from the housing or maintenance department as a tenant or leaseholder.

Why? Because we want to know what works well at Exeter and what could be improved.

Then what happens? All the information from

the forms will be gathered together and analysed by the Resident Auditor Team working with the Council and will highlight areas for improvement.



What's in it for me?

The results will be published regularly in the tenants and leaseholder newsletter 'Insight' and

all participants will be entered into a prize draw every month for £50 worth of High Street vouchers.

Will staff know I'm mystery shopping?

No! You will be given a personal ID number so nobody at the council apart from Tony and Steve will know the identity of the 'Real Time Team' members.



Remember

If you decide to apply, no one other than the TP team will have access to your records. It's important to keep your identity as a 'Real Time Team' member a secret. You will only be known by the special number that you are allocated when you apply, so mum's the word.

RTT - Not for Me!

Do you feel that the 'Real Time Team' is not for you but that you would like to get involved some other way?

At Exeter City Council, we feel that everyone should be given the opportunity to get involved and have their say in

housing service standards and provision.

There are a number of ways in which tenants and leaseholders of Exeter City Council can be involved. From the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee, Resident Auditor Team, Real Time Team, Survey Group, Telephone Survey Group, Sheltered Housing Forum, Returning the Repairs Satisfaction Survey or even by simply filling in the form on the back page.

How would you do it?

Do you have any ideas that will help us to deliver service improvements and/or economies?

It is often the people who are receiving a service who are best placed to see where improvements can be made. These improvements are sometimes so simple they are completely overlooked by those delivering the service.

At Exeter City Council we are constantly looking for ideas that will improve the service that we deliver to our tenants.

If you have ideas that will help us to delivery service improvements and/or economies we would love to hear from you. See back page for contact details.

Readers Letter

Having received the second edition of "Benefiting You" and reading an article on "Trimming Heating Bills" I thought it pretty important to reinforce this information by submitting an article for CHATTERBOX.

Trim Your Heating Bills

Pensioners, with this cold weather likely to continue it's really worth checking that you are receiving: -

Cold Weather Payments. If you receive Pension Credits or Income Support payments.

If forecast temperatures are zero or below for 7 days between 1 November and the 31 March you will receive an extra £25 a week towards your heating costs. This is good news as it is estimated that over the last 3 weeks the average heating bill has risen by £70.

Winter Fuel Payments. If you are 60 or over you can apply for this benefit. This will be £125 a year rising to £400 for older pensioners.

Call the Winter Fuel Helpline on 08459 151515 or get a claim form online at www.direct.gov.uk.

It's good to start the New Year by making sure that you are on the radar for these payments. We all need to keep warm as age thins our blood and we feel the cold. So lets all sort out these benefits if we are eligible

Hope this is helpful - Phil Cuttall (pensioner)

Home Contents Insurance

For a small weekly fee, which can be paid along with your rent, you can insure your home contents and protect your possessions. The payments are calculated over a 48 week period (as is your rent) so as with your rent you will receive a four week insurance free period every year where no payment is due

The minimum sum you can insure for is: -

£6,000 for anyone over 60 receiving state retirement pension, and

£9,000 for anyone not receiving state retirement pension.

The proposal form is simple, and easy to complete and can be obtained from Exeter City Council reception, your Estate Officer or you can call for an informal chat about the scheme on 265030.

PASSWORD SCHEME

In line with the other security measures Exeter City Council are promoting for sheltered tenants, this is a timely reminder to everyone that we do have a **PASSWORD SCHEME** in operation.

How does the scheme work?

The next time you contact the council, for a repair or when you want someone to call at your home, simply inform them of the 'password' you wish the person calling at your home to use.

The 'password' could be your maiden name, the name of your budgie, anything, just so long as it is something that **YOU** can remember.

When the worker arrives at your door, you must then ask them for the password, they will relay the password back to you.

IF THEY DO NOT KNOW THE PASSWORD **DO NOT** OPEN THE DOOR TO THEM - ITS AS SIMPLE AS THAT!

**REMEMBER - HELP US TO HELP YOU!
TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

Winter Fuel Payments

If you are aged 60 or over you may get a Winter Fuel Payment to help pay for keeping warm in winter. This can be between £125 and £400 depending on your situation. Find out if you are eligible for this payment and how to apply.

Are you eligible?

You may get a Winter Fuel Payment for winter 2009-10 if both the following apply:

you were aged 60 or over, on or before 27 September 2009

you lived in Great Britain or Northern Ireland on any day between 21-27 September 2009 (or, in some circumstances, in another EEA country or Switzerland)

You won't qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment if:

you were in hospital for more than 52 weeks previously, getting free treatment as an inpatient

you were in custody serving a court sentence

you were subject to immigration control and did not qualify for help from the Department for Work and Pensions

you lived in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home (and had done so for the previous 12 weeks or more) and you were on Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income-related Employment and Support Allowance

If you are unsure if you are eligible, you can call the Winter Fuel Payment helpline.

How to get your Winter Fuel Payment

You should automatically get the Winter Fuel Payment without applying if you're aged 60 or over by 27 September 2009, and either:

you got a Winter Fuel Payment last winter and you still meet the conditions for getting it

you got State Pension or another benefit except Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit during the week of 21-27 September 2009

If your partner is getting any of the following benefits then they will receive the Winter Fuel Payment:

Pension Credit

Income Support

income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

Employment and Support Allowance (income related)

If you think you qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment, then you will need to apply. This

Call the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline on 0845 9 15 15 15 or get a claim form online.

means you will need to apply if you don't claim benefits, don't get State Pension, or if the only benefits you get are Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit.

Get a claim form

The claim form for winter 2009/10 is now available:

You only need to claim once. After this you should automatically get Winter Fuel Payment each year as long as your circumstances do not change.

How much you can get

The amount of Winter Fuel Payment that you can get varies according to your personal situation.

Circumstances	Aged 60 to 79 on or before 27 September 2009	Aged 80 or over on or before 27 September 2009
You live alone or are the only person in the household who qualifies	£250	£400
You get Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance	£250	£400
You live with another qualifying individual	£125	£275 if you are the only person in the household who's aged 80 or over £200 if you and at least one other person are aged 80 or over
If your partner or civil partner gets Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance for you both	The payment will be made to the person who gets Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance	The payment will be made to the person who gets Pension Credit or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
If both of the following apply: you live in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home you don't get Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance	£125	£200
If both the following apply: you live in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home (and have done so for 12 weeks or more before the qualifying week) you get Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance	You don't qualify for Winter Fuel Payment	You don't qualify for Winter Fuel Payment
You did not get Pension Credit, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance or income related Employment and Support Allowance and there were other people in your household who were entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment	£125	£200

Claim for past winters

If you are eligible, you can claim Winter Fuel Payments for the years 1997/98 to 1999/2000. From 2000/01 time limits for claims were introduced.

This means that payments cannot be made for late claims for any of the years 2000/01 to 2007/08. Claims for these years had to be made by 30 March for the relevant winter, for example, a claim for winter 2007/08 had to be made by 30 March 2008.