



## David Flindall

David has been involved with co-operatives for over 18 years as a member, supporter and worker. David has worked in housing for 15 years and in particular, he has worked at CDS co-operatives, as housing officer for over 11 years.

For nine of those years David worked at Sanford Housing Co-operative. Recently CDS co-operatives appointed David Flindall, for a short period, to take a prominent part in researching and writing up some of the policy documents mentioned in the Newsletter. Together with the senior management team and other members of staff, David has helped draft a lot of the policy documents.

## Improving services – your views wanted

CDS Co-operatives is working to improve the services to all tenants, client co-ops and other stakeholders – and we want your views.

We are looking at all the areas we work in to see where changes should be made. We are developing strategies to ensure that you begin to see improvements in the services we provide.

It is important that in developing such strategies we take account of the views of everyone involved. This includes our tenants, the tenant members of our client co-operatives, our staff - and of course our client co-operatives. You will find in this newsletter that we keep mentioning that we want to consult you - we really do want your views.

The key areas we are focusing on are:

- customer services standards
- tenant participation
- communication
- allocations policy and choice based lettings.

Inside you will find information about all four of these strategies. We want to make sure that these reflect your views as well. To help achieve this, we have included a questionnaire with this newsletter in which we are asking a range of questions to tenants only.

We hope that you will take the time to complete and return the questionnaire to us. Your response will ensure that your views are taken into account when we write the final policies. There is space at the end of the questionnaire for additional specific comments.

You can read these policies in full on our website [www.cds.coop](http://www.cds.coop). Click on the library section of the website and then click on the section headed 'Policy Development'.

Alternatively, please call the helpdesk on 0845 450 8545 and ask for a copy of the document you want and we will be happy to send it to you.

**This newsletter and other documents can be made available in other languages or in large print or audio tape. Please phone the helpdesk for more information on 0845 450 8545.**

এই ডকুমেন্ট অনুরোধে বাংলায় পাওয়া যায়।

## Got a view? Then Join our Panel

We want a permanent group of tenants from whom we can ask for views from time to time. We are now looking for volunteers who would be prepared to join tenant focus groups on various matters.

There will be no obligation to attend any specific session. If you join the panel, we will contact you about any planned meetings so you can be there if you are available and feel that it is an issue on which you would like to express an opinion.

CDS Co-operatives will pay any reasonable expenses you have in attending meetings.

If you are willing to be on the panel, please provide your contact details on the questionnaire.



**Maureen Staples**  
**Chair of the Board of  
Management**

## Corporate plan

“Our corporate plan is a document containing information which explains our purpose and vision. The corporate plan clarifies who we are, what our plans are, and how we are going to achieve our aims”.

### Our vision has two elements

Firstly, to provide quality, efficient and financially viable services to our tenants, leaseholders and to our client co-operatives and their members in ways that enables and supports resident control.

Secondly, to make a significant contribution to solving the housing crisis facing our nation by developing new homes controlled by residents through housing co-operatives and other forms of mutual tenure.

Our Board of Management is determined that CDS Co-operatives should realise this vision. To do so requires us to set the challenging business objectives for the coming three years. We have set ourselves goals to help us achieve our vision.

These business goals are:

- managing the business efficiently
- getting the service right
- growing the business
- providing improved education opportunities for co-op members
- respecting our people and developing their skills.

These goals are explained in detail in our corporate plan document. If you would like more information or a copy of our corporate plan please contact our helpdesk or visit our website.

# Getting in touch at Pearman Street

Vanessa Lindsay, membership secretary, who has been at Pearman Street Co-operative for the last eight years, is also responsible for the production of the co-op's monthly newsletter, Co-op Chat. She feels that it is important that the members are aware of events and current issues in the co-op.

The newsletter is a source of all sorts of information, exchange

of ideas and bric-a-brac. It has a simple but attractive layout and is easy to read.

In addition to the newsletter, Vanessa and her colleagues have redesigned some key documents such as the co-op rules, repair request and complaints forms. These have been made more attractive, clearer, and simpler to use.



**Vanessa Lindsay**  
*Membership Secretary*

## Open and honest – our aim in communication

Honest and open communication is crucial to the success of any organisation – and that is the focus for our communication strategy.

To achieve this we are developing ways of improving the quality of our communication.

Our strategy sets out the key principles and the action required. It covers communication with our client co-operatives, our tenants and the tenants of our client co-operatives, external stakeholders (such as other housing organisations and social landlords, contractors, local authorities and so on), and

internal communication with our staff and between departments.

It also means that we need to seek your views. We have made a commitment to doing this and we will set up tenant focus groups to help us achieve it.

We have also made a commitment to pay particular attention to tenants with special requirements such as those with difficulties in understanding English, those who may have reading difficulties, and those with visual or hearing impairments. We aim to provide information that is easy to understand.

We are committed to the idea of using plain English in all our written and verbal communication. We intend to test this by submitting key documents to the Plain English Campaign for a Crystal Mark award. This award shows that they are easy to understand.

## Quality of service – setting the standards

We intend to provide you with good quality services in all the areas we work in. We are introducing 'service standards' to ensure we provide that quality – and consistency.

These standards will help you and others who use our services to understand what you can expect from us when you communicate with us by

telephone, letter, fax, face to face contact at our office, through information we provide, our website or through your involvement

We want to know your views about these standards. So please complete the questionnaire enclosed in this newsletter and return it to us so we can consider adding your suggestions.

## It's your co-op – get involved, says Paula Farrow



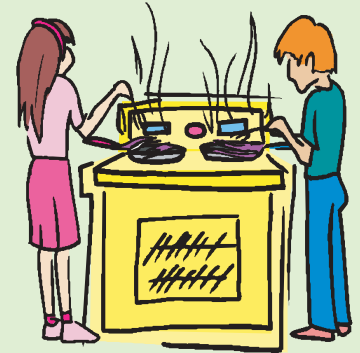
Paula Farrow of Minster Housing Co-operative believes that co-op housing is the best form of and is the future of social housing. Paula is active in her co-op and CDS co-operatives and wants to encourage other members to get involved.

She says that she knew little about co-ops or what it meant to live in a co-op when she joined in July 1996, but attended training seminars arranged by CDS Co-operatives. She soon became an active member and has been the chairperson of the co-op for some time.

Paula has organised and run training workshops for co-op members. She went on to university and obtained a degree in housing studies, and recently she has become a member of the board of management at CDS Co-operatives.

She is also involved in her local community and is a school governor and believes it is very important for co-op members to take on such roles. Paula wants to become involved in local politics as a councillor in order to contribute to the development of housing in Sheerness.

## New kitchens at Senacre



Members at Senacre Housing Co-operative in Maidstone are getting new kitchens at a cost of about £333,000.

When completed, as well as new kitchen units, members will have new vinyl flooring, redecorated walls, new tiling, new overhead lights, extractor fans, new electric sockets, and heat detectors.

The improvements and design were made by co-op members, and is funded from money saved in general reserves over the years.

Senacre Housing Co-operative has in the past renewed windows, central heating and doors. Future plans include replacing bathrooms. It is a good example of how a co-op can control and make decisions on improving living conditions.

## Providing 'Best Value'

To help provide a good quality service at affordable costs, we are starting a programme of 'Best Value' reviews. Best Value is a system of ensuring continuous improvement to achieve the best possible and most efficient services from any money spent.

The programme will start by looking at how we can achieve Best Value in repairs and maintenance, before being extended to other areas.

We would like to know from you what you feel and think should be taken into account in this approach. The consultation questionnaire has a section on Best Value.

Please let us know your views and make sure you return the questionnaire as soon as possible.

## Tenant participation – the emphasis is on you

CDS Co-operatives is also making improvements in the way we enable tenants to have a say and controlling of their own housing, and how they can influence decisions that affect them. This is our tenant participation strategy.

We have a long tradition of supporting residents' involvement. We will continue to build on our experience, and success, in creating tenant-controlled organisations.

We are aware that the way we establish tenant-controlled housing will vary between different tenants and communities. We already offer our residents a number of ways to get involved in the decision making process.

This strategy is intended to form the basis for broadening our approach to participation, and

involvement. We hope that this will widen the range and increase participation opportunities, for our existing tenants and leaseholders and help us in our work with new and existing tenant-controlled organisations.

We would like to see increased tenant involvement at different levels; at the level of estate, co-op committees, CDS Co-operatives board of management and its sub-committees. We want you to be at the centre of decision making at all levels. If you would like more information on this issue and how you can be involved please contact our helpdesk.

The enclosed questionnaire also asks for your views on tenant participation. Please complete the questionnaire and return it so we can incorporate your views into our tenant participation strategy.

## Around the Co-ops

We hope to give you news of social events and activities in some of the co-operatives we work with. If you have or are organising an event please let us know. This is one way of letting others know about what is going on in your co-op. It is also another way of sharing information. Someone may not have thought of your idea and may wish to use

your ideas for their co-op. So please give us your news.

Some of the social events which have taken place recently include co-op Christmas dinners, Children's Xmas parties, a lotto ticket for each tenant at Xmas, panto outing for the children and their parents, magic shows for the children, Halloween parties, and

lots more. With the summer coming soon there will be lots of ideas for events.

**We would also like to feature real stories about people and events from your co-ops. If you have an interesting story you would like to share with other readers please send it in to us and we will try to include it in the newsletter. You can send us your story by post, or by fax (020 7407 4697) or by email ([enquiries@cds.coop](mailto:enquiries@cds.coop)).**

# Allocation and lettings policy – choice and fairness

CDS Co-operatives has reviewed its allocations and lettings policy and is consulting you on these changes. If you would like a full copy of the policy please contact our helpdesk. The main changes are:

- **the points system** – we use a points system to determine priority between internal transfers and external applicants. The points for both will now be assessed on the same basis.
- **a waiting list** – for direct applications has now been introduced. CDS Co-operatives will accept applications for housing from the public in the following areas: Milton Keynes, Colchester, Welwyn Garden City, Hemel Hempstead and for St Georges Church Co-operative, in Southwark.
- **our visits** – we will ensure that a co-operative support officer visits you within six weeks of your moving into a new property.

We are also investigating the introduction of a choice-based lettings scheme. This scheme allows people applying for housing to have a greater say and make choices about the area they would like to live in, rather than simply having to move to the area where an available property is located. This is now common practice with some councils and other social landlords have adopted this way of dealing with allocations. CDS Co-operatives will be consulting you about how we could use this scheme to provide more availability and greater movement between tenants who need to move.

If you would like more information on this issue please contact Maria McCarron, our Housing Services Manager.

If you would like more information in your own language, please contact us at the address or telephone number shown on this document.

إذا رغبت في الحصول على المزيد من المعلومات بلغتك الأم، يرجى مراسلتنا على العنوان المذكور في هذه النشرة.

यदि आपका मूल भाषा या दूसरा स्थानि स्थल हम से बात करने के लिए सहायता चाहिए तो कृपया हमसे सहायता के लिए संपर्क करें।

如果你想要用你自己的语言获得更多的信息，请按照本文件所示的地址和我们取得联系。

જો આપને આપની પોતાની ભાષામાં વિશેષ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય તો આ દસ્તાવેજમાં જણાવેલ સરનામે અમારો સંપર્ક કરશો.

यदि आप अपनी भाषा में अधिक जानकारी चाहते हैं तो कृपया इस दस्तावेज में लिखे हुए पते पर हम से संपर्क करें।

日本語での詳しい情報は記載住所までご連絡下さい。

한국어로 된 정보가 더 필요하신 경우 이 문서에 있는 주소로 연락해 주십시오.

آرٹھنی لہذا زبان میں مزید معلومات حاصل کرنا چاہتے ہیں تو براہ کرم اس آدیسٹ آف ٹیکس ہونے پات سے رابطہ کریں۔

मेरे वरुणु आपकी वेले रिच उर सहायती सचीटी है, उं रिच बरवे रिच सहायता के रिचि पते के माडे तल संपर्क करें।

உங்கள் மொழியில் மேற்கொண்ட தகவல்களைப் பெறவிரும்பினால் கீழ்க்கண்ட இடப்பதிவுத்தகவல் தொடர்புக்குக் கீழ்க்கண்ட தகவல்களைப் தொடர்பு கொள்ளவும்.

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Information is also available in large print, braille and tape.

**CDS Co-operatives**

**3 Marshalsea Road**

**London SE1 1EP**

**Help Desk 0845 450 8545**

## WIN £50

Complete and return the survey questionnaire by 21st February and your name will be entered into our prize draw and you could win £50 worth of vouchers of your choice. The winner will be notified by phone on 1st March. So, hurry, complete and send the questionnaire back quickly.