

## New kitchens for old

When Lewisham Family Co-operative Association needed to replace 22 kitchens, it appointed CDS Co-operatives to apply for funding from the Housing Corporation, which we did successfully.

It is CDS Co-operatives's policy to actively involve the tenants in refurbishment works, so we held frequent meetings, wrote letters, sent out newsletters, made phone calls and visited the tenants to ensure that everyone was happy with what was planned.



Before and after photographs of one kitchen at Lewisham Family Co-op

We invited residents to a consultation event where they could see kitchen samples, meet

CDS Co-operatives's staff and discuss any concerns they had. Work started in July and was completed in November, on time and within the budget.

We enjoyed working with the Co-op, and hope that the tenants enjoyed the process too.

**See also page 2.**

## Season's greetings



The board of management and staff at CDS Co-operatives would like to wish you a peaceful and happy festive season.

**Our office will close at 5.30pm on Friday 21st December and re-open at 9am on Wednesday 2nd January 2008. During this period an emergency maintenance service will be operating.**

### In an emergency

If you normally report your repairs to a local maintenance

officer on your estate, then your co-op will inform you separately about any special arrangements for the holiday period. However, if you normally report repairs to the helpdesk at CDS Co-operatives, then you can phone **020 7397 5707**.

Please remember that we can only deal with emergency repairs. Non-emergency repairs will be dealt with when the offices re-open on 2nd January 2008.

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

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# Second to none!

**Nina Morris, has been a tenant of Lewisham Family Co-op for 13 years.**

Nina says: We are a self-help co-op, which means that all the residents are members, and we elect a committee from amongst ourselves. The committee, along with its members, is involved in key decisions on all aspects of housing management including allocating properties, finance and repairs.

With the help of CDS Co-operatives we got a grant from the Housing Corporation to renew kitchens in our properties. CDS Co-operatives, in particular Sherrelle Samuels, managed the programme and expertly guided us through the whole process, ensuring that we were involved from the start.

We were shown a selection of kitchen units, handles, worktops, wall tiles, taps and flooring to choose from. Later, we were each sent a plan of our own kitchen, confirming our choices. CDS Co-operatives wrote to me a few weeks before the work started which gave me time to clear everything out of the kitchen and arrange access for the workmen. They arrived promptly, with a fitter removing the old units and flooring, and an electrician moving sockets (and providing a few extra) fitting safety switches for appliances like the cooker, fridge/freezer, dishwasher etc.



The quality of the units and the standard of work was second to none – they even made some adjustments to the original plan to keep me happy! They cleaned up every day, leaving me with running water and cooking facilities, and completed all the work in one week.

I can honestly say that I was not looking forward to the disruption, but the whole experience was

made so much easier by CDS Co-operatives. They organised and supervised the work very closely, and kept us informed by letter, telephone, newsletter and a few personal visits.

Well done, CDS and Lewisham Family Co-op – a good example of successful partnership working.

We love our new kitchens – thank you!

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## Party time

Many people have parties during the festive season, and we hope that everyone enjoys themselves and has a good time. However, consideration for your neighbours is still important.

If you are planning a party, think about parking: do tell your visitors about the agreed parking arrangement or policy, and keep to it yourself.

Don't let noise levels get too loud, and quieten things down as it gets later. Make sure your

guests leave quietly. Remember, don't drink and drive.

If you are disturbed by excessive noise, you can report it to your local authority noise team, who will investigate and have powers to take action in certain cases.

And do send us photographs (digital) of any co-op or committee events – such as parties, dinners, trips out etc – which we can use in the next newsletter. Please email them to [chisanga.passwell@cds.coop](mailto:chisanga.passwell@cds.coop)

# CDS road shows



This summer we visited 4 estates as part of our tenant participation strategy: Greendale in Colchester, Normandy in Erith, Bradwell Common and Rutherford Gate in Milton Keynes.

The Energy Saving Trust joined the road shows and gave out free energy-saving light bulbs.

It was useful to meet the tenants and hear what they had to say. We found these visits very valuable and would like to do more next year. If anyone has any suggestions on how we could get more out of the visits, please contact Maria McCarron, housing services manager, on 020 7397 5700 or email [maria.mccarron@cds.coop](mailto:maria.mccarron@cds.coop)



# Digital TV switchover: aerial views

You probably know that the UK is switching to digital TV between now and 2012. This will give you access to many more TV channels and digital radio stations, but it means that your equipment may have to be upgraded or adapted to receive digital signals. If you provide your own external or internal aerial system, it is your responsibility to upgrade your TV equipment.

We consulted residents from two estates where we provide a

communal aerial system, paid for through service charges. They told us they did not want us to upgrade the aerial system and then charge them. They wanted to make their own arrangements. So we have decided to let all our residents do the same, and will not be upgrading communal aerials on our estates unless you tell us otherwise.

If you object to this proposal, or feel this will cause you hardship, please contact Maria McCarron,

housing services manager, on 020 7397 5700 or email [maria.mccarron@cds.coop](mailto:maria.mccarron@cds.coop).

**If you are a tenant member of an independent co-operative, your co-operative will make its own arrangements for upgrading the communal aerial. Please talk to your committee about their plans for this. For more information on digital switchover please visit [www.digitaluk.co.uk](http://www.digitaluk.co.uk) or phone 08456 505050.**

# CDS People

## Theresa Lyons



Theresa Lyons has lived at Senacre Housing Co-operative for nearly 13 years, and at different times she has been its chair, maintenance officer, secretary and lettings officer. She is also an active member of the CDS Co-operatives's board of management and vice chair of the housing services sub-committee. This year she became a council

member for the Confederation of Co-operatives Housing, an umbrella organisation for housing co-ops in the UK.

Theresa had a very happy childhood in the London Borough of Kensington. Although her parents belonged to the local Co-op shop, and there was a Co-op bank and a Co-op funeral parlour in the area, she did not know much about the co-operative movement until much later in her life.

After leaving her grammar school at Roehampton, which was run by the Sacred Heart nuns, she trained as a nurse at Hackney General Hospital, and eventually became a nursing sister in a French order of nuns. She lived in Bourges, a peaceful little town in France, for 28 years. In time, she became Mother Superior, but

came back to England to nurse her mum. When her mother died, leaving her with nowhere to live, a friend told her about CDS Co-operatives, and she was eventually housed by Senacre Housing Co-operative.

'I just wish more co-op members realised what a wonderful opportunity they have to be in control of their housing,' she says. "They can be involved by attending meetings, joining the committee or doing something for their community.'

Theresa now works at Maidstone General Hospital, and is a member of the Maidstone Choral Union Choir, which performs in different countries every year, as well as at Moat Hall in Maidstone and the Royal Albert Hall in London.

## Stephen Wood

Stephen Wood is the CDS Co-operatives's finance officer responsible for service charge accounts and estimates for our homeowners. He is also our IT administrator.

He is one of the longest serving employees of CDS Co-operatives, having joined in December 1985 as an accounts clerk, when the office was at Stockwell Road. In those days he was one of three people in the finance department,

out of a total of 15 employees (there are now more than 40).

Stephen was born in London. His family lived in Chelsea, in a big house with their own living room, kitchen and bedroom, but shared the bathroom with another family. It was a quiet residential street – not so many cars then! After being rehoused twice by the council, they moved in 1971 into their current accommodation, where Stephen lives with his wife, Lillian, their 14-year-old daughter, Emily, and his 87-year-old mother.



'Having bought my flat from the council, I am a leaseholder myself,' he says, 'and I am able to appreciate issues from both the landlord's and leaseholder's perspectives, which is useful in my job.'

# 12 days of christmas



## On the 1st day of Christmas

Check your Christmas tree lights conform to the British Standard (BS EN 60598). Always use an RCD on outdoor electrical equipment (safety device that can save lives by instantly switching off the power if there is a fault).



## On the 2nd day of Christmas

Arrange a home Fire Risk check. The Fire Brigade can come to your home to check for any fire risks and install smoke alarms.

## On the 3rd day of Christmas

Practice a fire escape plan. Make sure your family and visitors know what to do in an emergency, especially children.



## On the 4th day of Christmas

Decorations can burn easily. Don't attach them to lights or heaters and ensure that any elderly relatives or neighbours follow the same advice.

## On the 5th day of Christmas

Switch off electrical appliances when not in use, taking special care with Christmas lights. Always switch off and unplug Christmas lights before you go to bed.



## On the 6th day of Christmas

Celebrate safely this Christmas and New Year. The risk of accidents is greater after alcohol is consumed.



## On the 7th day of Christmas

Most fires start in the kitchen – never leave cooking unattended.

*Extract from Essex County Fire and Rescue Service  
(with permission)*

## On the 8th day of Christmas

Give your elderly relatives and neighbours a life-saving Christmas gift. Make sure that they have a working smoke alarm. If they are hard of hearing vibrating alarms may be available from the Fire Brigade.



## On the 9th day of Christmas

Make sure cigarettes are completely extinguished.



## On the 10th day of Christmas

Check the battery in your smoke alarm and use Christmas as a reminder to clean it and remove dust.



## On the 11th day of Christmas

Never place candles near your Christmas tree or furnishings.

## On the 12th day of Christmas

Check on elderly relatives and neighbours – make sure they are fire safe.

This document is available in other languages, large print, audio tape or Braille on request.

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CDS Co-operatives, FREEPOST SW140,  
LONDON SE1 1BP Telephone 0845 450 8545

## Don't be afraid to complain

If you are dissatisfied in any way with our services, you must let us know. Your complaints show us where we are falling down and what we need to do to rectify the problem.

Write to us at:

**3 Marshalsea Road, London SE1 1EP**

Telephone **0845 450 8545**

Email **enquiries@cds.coop**

# Welcome on board

## Jon Fitzmaurice

CDS Co-operatives has a new board member – Jon Fitzmaurice – who was co-opted as an expert member in September. He has been involved in social housing for 30 years and has a wealth of experience to share with us. He has held executive and non-executive positions with a number of housing associations, was chief

executive of the National Homeless Alliance, helped to establish several primary co-ops in Birmingham and chaired a secondary housing co-op. Most recently he was chair of Hyde Plus, Hyde Housing Group's regeneration arm. We would like to welcome Jon to our board.



## Michelle Hafee

CDS Co-operatives has a new co-operative support officer. Michelle Hafee will be responsible for Allnutt Mill, Senacre, Oast Wood, Oakapple, Westree Road and the four Dartford co-ops. She will be working from her home in the Medway, not far from the co-ops in Maidstone and Dartford.

She has worked in housing for about seven years, both with a non-registered social landlord (mhs homes group) and Medway Council, managing properties in the Medway towns. Before joining CDS Co-operatives, she was a traveller support worker for the Novas Group, working with the traveller and gypsy



## Greatly missed: Shirley Stillwell and Muriel Best

It is with great sadness that we are reporting that Shirley Stillwell of Swan Lane Housing Co-operative and Muriel Best of Whitworth Housing Co-operative recently passed away. Both were active members of their co-ops and popular within their communities. Shirley was a founder member of Swan Lane Housing Co-operative, and Muriel was married to Godfrey Best, a long-standing member of our board. The board of management and staff at CDS Co-operatives would like to offer their condolences to Shirley and Muriel's family and friends.

community in Bromley, Swanley and East Sussex.

Michelle has already visited all the co-ops in her patch to become familiar with the areas and the condition of the properties. She has also met a number of tenants and residents to hear what the main issues are in each co-op.

Michelle is looking forward to working with the co-ops.