



Camden Scheme Opened

Our latest development in Camden, North London, has had its official opening. (You may remember we reported on it in issue 8, in spring 2007.) Our staff and guests, Maureen Stables, the chair of CDS Co-operatives, and Lord Graham of Edmonton, our honorary life president, went there to see Councillor Chris Naylor from Camden Council cut the ribbon on the state-of-the-art development.

The scheme consists of 22 new homes and 19 refurbished street properties. It won the 'new dwellings' category of the 2007 Camden Building Quality awards for its excellent green credentials and level of resident consultation, and has been entered for this year's Civic Trust awards.

Cllr Naylor was extremely impressed by how closely the former residents have been involved – and how many have chosen to come back to their new flats.

'It makes a nice change from having been in an old Victorian street property for 22 years,' says Jennifer Palmer, one of the tenants, who moved back in a



Ribbon-cutting ceremony: (Front row, L-R) our executive director, David Rodgers, Maureen Stables, Cllr Naylor and Lord Graham of Edmonton

year ago. 'I am really beginning to appreciate my new home. It's nice to have an outdoor space and the energy-efficient building means there has been a huge reduction in my bills. It's great!'

CDS chair Maureen Stables says, 'We have been delighted with the constructive and positive working relationship we enjoyed with Camden Council on this project. We trust that this scheme will continue to provide a high-quality affordable mixed housing community for its residents.'

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What's our STATUS?

Every two years, like every other significant registered social land-lord in the country, CDS Co-operatives sends out survey forms to find out the views of the tenants, homeowners and members of its client co-operatives. This survey is known as the Standardised Tenant Satisfaction Survey, usually shortened to STATUS.

The survey consists of about 50 questions and covers a wide range of topics, including:

- the quality of the homes we manage
- repairs and maintenance
- contact arrangements
- housing services
- anti-social behaviour
- participation

- age, ethnicity and disability.

Why do we carry out a STATUS survey?

We carry out the survey because the Housing Corporation requires us to do so and because the results of the survey tell us what our tenants, homeowners and the tenant members of our client co-operatives think about the services we provide. This helps us make sure that our services are consistently of a high standard and also highlights any weaknesses.

Making STATUS relevant to co-op members

This year, CDS Co-operatives has customised the STATUS survey specifically to meet the needs of

housing co-operatives. In order to make sure our survey is of the highest possible standard we appointed Ipsos MORI, one of the UK's leading market research companies, to carry it out.

This year it is a postal survey, and Ipsos MORI sent a survey form to every household in September. You have until 21 November to return your form.

Bigger prizes!

Everyone returning their STATUS survey form has a chance to win a cash prize. This year, the first prize will be £250, while the two runners-up will get £100 and £50.

Help us improve: please return your STATUS form if you have not done so already.

International Visitors

CDS Co-operatives hosted a recent meeting of the housing board of the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), an independent body that represents co-operatives worldwide. While the board members were in London, we invited them to take a break and visit two of our local co-ops.

First stop was at Sanford Housing Co-operative in New Cross where the chair, Jim Noble, gave a presentation on the carbon-reduction measures that have cut emissions in their properties by 60%. Next was a quick trip to St George's Church in Camberwell, where the secretary, Peggy Olatunbosun, showed them the interesting features of this co-op built in the shell of a 19th-century church.



Sanford chair Jim Noble, second from right, explains the CO2 reduction project
We would like to thank both co-ops for their hospitality.

Survive the Crunch

Food prices are up. Inflation is up. Gas and electricity prices have risen sharply, and it is very likely that they will go up again. For the average household, the increase could be more than £400 a year. While we appreciate this is a difficult time, you must still make sure your rent is paid. If you do experience difficulty please contact our arrears team for advice.

There are also things you can do to cut your energy use. A few simple measures could save you hundreds of pounds.

- **Check your loft insulation**
Every property owned by CDS should have a minimum of 150mm (6 inches) of loft insulation. If you are a tenant of CDS and your home has not been insulated to this standard, please let us know.
- **Block draughts**
Draughts around poorly fitting windows and doors causes your home to lose heat and costs you money. Draught-proofing strips and brushes are cheap, effective and easy to fit.
- **Don't heat unused rooms**
Turning down the central thermostat just 1°C could cut your heating bills by up to 10%. Use the time-switch to turn the system off when you're out, or in bed at night; avoid heating empty rooms;

close curtains to keep the heat in, and keep windows and doors shut.

- **Fit low-energy light bulbs**
Compact florescent bulbs (CFLs) use only a quarter of the electricity of old-fashioned bulbs. They also last up to 10 times longer.
- **Replace your old fridge**
Old, inefficient fridges and freezers can waste lots of electricity. If your fridge is more than 10 years old, consider getting a new one.
- **Wash clothes at a lower temperature**
With modern washing powders you do not need to wash clothes at 60°C unless they are really dirty. Washing at 30°C uses around 40% less energy – and your clothes will last longer too.
- **Think before you use the tumble dryer**
Using a dryer every day is expensive. Worse, if the dryer is not vented properly, it could also be making your home damp – and that makes it more expensive to heat.

More information

For more energy-saving tips from the Energy Saving Trust, call 0800 512 012 or visit the website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Minster Kids' Club

Children at Minster Housing Co-operative, in the Isle of Sheppey, Swale, have no excuse for being bored, getting under their parents' feet or causing mischief in the holidays. The co-op now has a Kids' Club.

This offers sporting activities, such as rounders and five-a-side football, led by local coaches – including a Chelsea junior coach, who help children with football skills. Other activities include making Christmas cards, an Easter egg hunt and Halloween costumes.

Many of the parents on the estate also lend a hand – and they certainly don't just treat the club as an alternative crèche.

It's simple and easy to get a club off the ground, the co-op committee says. Minster formed a sub-committee to arrange activities during school holidays, and contributed a small amount of money to buy equipment. If you want to find out more please contact us and we will put you in touch with Minster HC.

Did you know?

Co-operatives across the UK reported a combined turnover of £27.4 billion in 2007, with profits before tax reaching £539 million.

Parking Victory for Delce Manor

Co-op members at Delce Manor in Rochester, Kent, are celebrating. After 10 years, their pleas for yellow lines on their estate to restrict parking, have been answered.

The co-op is sandwiched between two senior schools and was a favourite place for the sixth-formers to park their cars – often on the pavements – during the school day. This meant the residents found it hard to drive in and out of the estate. Construction workers on a new building development beside the co-op added to their parking problems.

Yellow lines painted in April 2008



before

made an immediate improvement.

'It's fantastic, people can now cross the road safely, and mothers with pushchairs can now use the pavements instead of pushing their buggies in the road,' says one tenant, Raine



after

Shrimpton. 'It's so quiet now.' Another resident, Samantha Milliner agrees: 'It's absolutely great, my drive isn't blocked any more. This should have happened a long time ago.'

Thanks to the committee for their hard work to make this happen.

CCH Conference 2008

The Confederation of Co-operative Housing (CCH), the national organisation for housing co-ops, held its 15th annual conference at Trafford Hall, Chester, in July. The theme was 'Voices – I hear voices!' to reflect the huge amount of interest the housing co-operative sector is currently getting from government.

Dame Pauline Green, chief executive of Co-operatives UK, opened the conference, which was attended by more than 70 people including four members from Senacre Housing Co-operative. Other CDS members attending were Jane Cameron (see 'CDS people') and Theresa



Paula Farrow

Lyons, a board member and secretary of Senacre, who are both on the CCH board. Jim Noble of Sanford Housing Co-operative led a workshop on the environmental changes made at their co-op in New Cross.

CDS board member Paula Farrow (pictured) gave an inspiring keynote speech on her 10 years as chair of Minster Housing Co-operative, and also ran several workshops. She says: 'It was an excellent conference which gave us brilliant opportunities to network with other co-ops.'

As well as workshops on good practice and skills issues for co-ops, topics discussed included the new National Tenant Voice (see opposite)

Did you know?

More than 239 million people in India are members of co-operatives.

Lawrence's Garden Tips

Autumn is one of the busiest periods in your garden calendar, says Lawrence Zollner of Bonham and Strathleven Housing Co-operative. There is a lot of work to be done in tidying and preparing for the next season.

Borders

Many annual plants are past their best now, so clear them away and compost them. If perennials are looking scruffy and untidy, pull off any dead leaves and flowers.

Lift and divide any perennials that have grown too large (use a fork to prise the plants apart). October is the ideal time to plant hardy perennials such as foxgloves and hollyhocks, to allow the roots time to get established before the winter sets in. It is also a great time to plant container-grown trees, climbers and shrubs.

Water plants well both before and after planting, and surround them



with garden compost, leaf mould or bark chippings to keep the moisture in.

Spring colour

Garden centres are now full of spring-flowering bulbs such as daffodils, crocus and iris. The healthiest bulbs will be firm and of a good size, with no signs of

rotting or damage. Plant them as soon as possible after buying them. Choose a sunny spot, and make a hole two to three times the height of the bulb, with some grit at the bottom to improve drainage, and make sure the growing point is facing upwards. Protect bulbs from squirrels with upturned hanging baskets or chicken wire.

National Tenant Voice

Social housing tenants could soon have real influence over the development of policy and the management of services nationally, regionally and locally. This is because the government has committed itself to ensuring that they have a voice.

The plan is to set up a tenant led and tenant driven organisation –

provisionally called the National Tenant Voice – to represent the interests of tenants.

A project group has been set up to consult tenant groups around the country. Most of the members of the project group are from tenants' organisations themselves. We are represented by the Confederation of

Co-operative Housing. Over the summer, the group published draft proposals, which can be seen on many websites including the Housing Corporation's – www.housingcorp.gov.uk If all goes to plan, the new organisation should be up and running next summer.

CDS People

John Frederick Davis

Born in Lewisham in January 1920, John Davis grew up in single rooms rented by his parents. He recalls how 'everyone looked out for each other, and how different it is now'. As a young man he lived in Catford, but it was in Ramsgate in 1948 that he met Joyce, the nurse he married 12 months later. They lived in a flat above the store where he worked, H&C Davis Builders Merchants (no relation). He also enjoyed doing relief work at other stores, his favourite being Gillingham. Opposite the shop was a retail co-op called South Suburban Co-op General Stores, where he would shop sometimes.



Due to the ill health of Joyce's parents, they eventually moved to Dartford to take over the running of the family confectionary shop, and stayed there until the lease on the shop expired in 1976. Unable to afford the new rent, they had to move out, and the council nominated them to Phoenix Place Housing Co-operative in Dartford. In 1997 they moved to Oakapple Housing Co-operative in

Maidstone, Kent, to be near their family. They had three children, John, Janet and Rosemary, seven grandchildren and to date seven great-grandchildren.

John was a very active member of both co-ops, and joined the CDS board of management in the mid 1970s as an independent member. He was later made an honorary vice president. After Joyce passed away, he carried on his involvement with the board until ill health forced him to retire – although he still likes to keep abreast of what's happening.

He says that through the co-op movement he 'had learnt a lot, met a lot of people and had a lot of laughs'. John's message to other co-ops is the joke-Latin motto 'Non illigitamus carborundum', which when roughly translated means 'never let them grind you down'.

Becoming Jane (Cameron)



Jane Cameron has been working at CDS Co-operatives since 1992.

I started off, as a secretary, in the development department. A couple of years later I was appointed as the executive director's personal assistant. I have now been working with David Rodgers for more than 13

years (unlucky for some!) and have thoroughly enjoyed it. My job varies from making appointments in David's diary to organising events at the House of Commons. I have also become a general council member of the Confederation of Co-operative Housing, the national body for housing co-ops.

Recently, CDS Co-operatives sponsored me to study marketing at London Metropolitan University. This was daunting for me initially, especially as some of the people in my class weren't even born when I took my last exam. I am

now halfway through my second year. I always wanted to do further education, and am amazed and excited that, once I have completed this year, I will have letters after my name, hurrah!

I now take on most of the public relations and corporate marketing jobs at CDS, and I am a member of the business development working party. It's great to be able to market the brilliant message of 'tenant empowerment' to the outside world and it shows how the education CDS has given me has empowered me. I would like to thank CDS for agreeing to sponsor me.

Welcome on board

Dr Andrew Sincock



Andrew, pictured, one of the two new members on our board of management, is a leaseholder from Hillbury Road Residents' Management Co-operative in Tooting and has been on our housing services sub-committee for over a year. Formerly working in cancer research, he is now retired and was co-opted onto our board in June.

David Morton



David, pictured, is an international manager in marketing, product management and business development, and comes to us with extensive experience of the Canadian co-operative housing movement. He is an individual member of CDS and was elected to one of the casual vacancies in February.

Shouket Mirza



CDS Co-operatives has a new co-operative support officer. Shouket has been employed to work from home managing the Milton Keynes co-ops and also Halcyon, Furbank and Greendale.

Shouket has more than 20 years' experience of working in housing management, housing advice, homelessness, supported housing and was a specialist officer for black and minority ethnic communities. He has also been involved in setting up tenants and residents associations. He is looking forward to working with tenants from CDS Co-operatives schemes and our client co-operatives.

Did you know?

Although many UK housing co-operatives are successful in their own terms, there are fewer than 700 of them, and they represent no more than 0.1% of the total housing stock.

Greatly missed



Werner 'Willie' Schmidt

It is with great sadness that we report the death of 80-year-old Werner Wilhelm Albert Schmidt, of Halcyon Housing Co-operative, as a result of a sudden serious fire in his home. 'Willie', as he was known to many, was a popular man in his community and shall be missed by all his friends and neighbours. He was a tenant of CDS Co-operatives for 30 years. The funeral was held on 29th July.

If you have any stories of interest please let us know and we may be able to feature them. Please contact the editor of the newsletter Chisanga Passwell on 020 7397 5737 or email chisanga.passwell@cds.coop

TO BE WON

(see page 2)

£250

£100

£50

Send back your status form!



Service check

By Maxine Ruddock, tenant auditor



The road shows are all over for this year. I was glad to take part and have the opportunity to visit different estates again. It was lovely to meet you all and have a chance to talk.

The road shows are an important part of the services that CDS Co-operatives provides to tenants. It's an opportunity to approach staff with concerns, comments, and criticisms or just for a chat! Personal, private or confidential conversations were also accommodated.

It was a shame that, because of the bad weather, we had to cancel the road shows at Halcyon and Furbank. Sorry,

folks. We will be there next year.

I continue, in my role as tenant auditor, to visit your estates, make phone calls to tenants and carry out surveys. If you know I am coming to your estate and you want to meet up, please let me know – I would be happy to visit you. That's my job! I am here to test services and feed positive and negative comments back to CDS Co-operatives.

One of the surveys I have done was to find out your views on the CDS conferences. Most people said they would like to attend but found the cost was too high. A report from the survey will be available soon.

I also attend the Housing Services Sub Committee meetings regularly, and I am on a review panel for Best Value for estate management services. I think I get a good insight into what is going on behind the scenes and I am always aware of the tenant's perspective and speak on your behalf.

In future I hope to visit some shared ownership homes, shadow other staff to see how they do their work, and carry out on-site surveys about maintenance. If you see me wandering around, please stop and have a word!

New Helpdesk Number

We have introduced a new number for contacting our Help Desk 03333 21 30 30. We have made this change as the cost of calling an "03" number is lower than the cost of calling 0845, particularly for people phoning from mobile phones.

The old 0845 number will continue to operate alongside this new number for the foreseeable future.

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

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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 **03333 21 30 30** Email **enquiries@cds.coop**