

# CDS Residents News



Issue 1 • July 2018



## Welcome

Hello! Welcome to our first online newsletter! If you prefer a printed copy please do let us know and we'll be happy to keep you updated in the best way for you. We will be sharing a residents newsletter on our website each quarter and we will let you know on your quarterly rent statements when this newsletter will be available online. The aim is to update you on any changes at CDS such as new staff members, as well as any wider sector changes which may impact you. This will also be a space to share stories of residents and communities we work with!

## Share your story

Have you got a story you'd like to include? We'd love to hear more about what you've been up to where you live and how we could support your community on any community projects. Let us know and we will share your news in our next newsletter. Send your story to [talktous@cds.coop](mailto:talktous@cds.coop)



## Universal Credit roll out

Universal Credit (UC) was first introduced to a small number of claimants in certain areas in 2013. Since then, it has been gradually rolled out across the country. When an area first starts taking UC claims, it only takes claims from a limited range of claimants with straightforward circumstances – this is known as the LIVE service. Since 2016, most LIVE service areas have developed to become FULL service areas, which means all new claimants will have to claim UC instead of income support, jobseeker's allowance, employment and support allowance, housing benefit, working tax credit or child tax credit. By December 2018, FULL service would have been rolled out to all areas where our residents live. If your circumstances have changed and you apply to receive benefits you will need to apply for UC.

## Welcoming a Welfare Advisor to CDS

We are delighted to announce we have recruited a part-time Welfare Advisor, Maureen Bello. Maureen joined the team at the start of July and will be helping both you and us prepare for the impact of UC when the full service is rolled out to all the areas where our residents live. She will also be supporting any residents needing advice with their application for a UC claim by carrying out home visits where necessary and providing advice on budgeting.

**Maureen says:** "For the last 7 years I have specialised in welfare benefits, working in various capacities. This includes specialist welfare

*benefit organisations, law centres and housing associations. I have developed specialist knowledge on all aspects of welfare benefits and welfare reform. Working both in and out of London, I have assisted tenants with universal credit matters and have developed various methods to help tenants and staff members cope with this new benefit. I intend to do the same at CDS and look forward to assisting residents and staff members with the transition to universal credit, in addition to providing support and advice on all other relevant matters with the aim of building confidence and maximising their benefits to ensure residents are not financially excluded".*

If you're worried about managing Universal Credit or just want to find out more, get in touch with Maureen via email: [Maureen.bello@cds.coop](mailto:Maureen.bello@cds.coop) or call 0203 096 7730. You can also visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau or Jobcentre.



## Leaseholder's corner

### Staffing update

In May, we sadly said goodbye to Claudius Hotobah-during, our Leasehold Advisor. We would like to thank Claudius for all his hard work at CDS. Until a permanent Leasehold Advisor could join us, we hired a temporary member of staff, Tunde Odukoya, who is experienced in the management of leasehold properties.

As I'm sure you are aware there has been some turnover of temporary staff in this post as, unfortunately, we had been previously unsuccessful in recruiting permanently to the role. However, we are delighted to inform you we have now recruited to the post and have welcomed Agnes to the team.

### Welcoming Agnes to the team

Agnes Marsden Jeeves joined the housing services team at the end of June. Agnes has been working at Metropolitan Housing Association and before that, she worked as a legal assistant in a law firm. Agnes will assist us in our commitment to improve the services provided to our leaseholders. She is eager to get stuck into her new role and looks forward to working with leaseholders and their communities.

You can contact Agnes on 020 3096 7782 or drop her an email at: [Agnes.Marsden.Jeeves@cds.coop](mailto:Agnes.Marsden.Jeeves@cds.coop)



## Welcome to residents at Shenley Church End

On the 15th June 2018, we officially became the landlord to Shenley Church End homes in Milton Keynes. Shenley Church End Co-op was originally developed by us in the early 1990s. It became independent in 1993 and had been a client of ours since. They have decided not to continue as a fully independent housing co-op, so they are now no longer one of our clients, but we will continue to have a relationship with us because they have chosen us to be their landlord.

### Goodbye from Dennis, Client relationship Officer



*"We would like to especially thank all tenant members and committee officers for all their hard work and commitment over the years. Shenley residents will now work with their housing officer, Annmarie Nwachukwu, and the rest of the housing services team at CDS and we look forward to providing residents with a great service going forward."*

### Meet Housing Officer, Annmarie



*"I have been working in Housing since 2007 and have been a housing officer for 5 years. I have managed a variety of properties in my time and each has given me the opportunity to broaden my knowledge and experience in housing and property management. I am looking forward to meeting you all over the next few months and more importantly, providing you with exceptional management to enable us to make Shenley Church End an even greater place to live!"*

If you have any questions for Annmarie you can email her: [annmarie.nwachukwu@cds.coop](mailto:annmarie.nwachukwu@cds.coop) or give her a call on: 020 3096 7773 or 07818 017828.

### Meet Income Collection Officer, Latoya



*"I have been working with CDS for just over 9 months. I have extensive experience in customer services & expertise in collections and look forward to working with the Shenley residents with any rent queries".*

Latoya's direct line is: 020 3096 7778 or give Latoya an email on: [latoya.grant@cds.coop](mailto:latoya.grant@cds.coop).

If you're a Shenley resident you should have received a welcome pack from Annmarie providing you with useful information about your tenancy, our service to you and what you can expect from us. If you any questions at all please do get in touch.



# Opening a new community space at Phoenix Place

On 20th April we officially launched the new community hub at Phoenix Place Dartford, our largest estate, with 271 properties. The Mayor Cllr Rosanna Currans, Lesley Chapman, Chair of the tenant's management co-op and Linda Wallace, Chief Executive at CDS unveiled the hub in an official ribbon cutting ceremony.

Thank you to all those who came and shared this occasion. The day was a celebration of all the hard work and collaboration of everyone involved in the process of developing a community hub for the residents at Phoenix Place.



Linda Wallace, Chief Executive at CDS said:

*"The hub will mean that our CDS team can be more regularly available to residents face to face, working closely with the residents' management committee and other community groups to improve services and opportunities for local people."*

Lesley Chapman, Chair of Tenants Management Co-op, said:

*"This is a valuable space which will bring a lot of opportunities for local people."*



With the hub now officially open the residents' committee, alongside support from CDS, have been working to develop a programme of events for local people. Since the opening the hub has held regular coffee mornings as well as MMA fitness classes for the community.

Housing Officer at Phoenix Place, Vivien, said:

*"I am confident the hub will aid in making the Phoenix Place community stronger. The recent boxing classes taking place in the hub have seen quite a few youth on the estate attend. This has raised awareness of the importance of keeping fit."*



There are many more activities in the pipeline over the coming months. Computer classes will shortly be starting at the hub and the committee are currently planning a summer event for Phoenix Place residents.

***We look forward to sharing more updates about what the residents at Phoenix Place are up to in the hub!***



# Community garden project at Shoot-up Hill

By Annmarie, Housing Officer

During my visit to the site, I like to check in with some of the residents to find out if there are any issues that need our attention, as well as to find out how they are personally. We had the pleasure of meeting one of the residents who has been working hard to create a fun, relaxing area in the communal gardens which she and her neighbours can enjoy. Although the work was still in progress, it was clear how much her hard work and dedication had paid off.

She told me what motivated this amazing gardening project:

*“My motivation was my health. I suffer from depression and it really impacted my life. One day, I came back from a holiday and I went out into the garden and noticed how overgrown it was and I thought that a spot of gardening might help me to feel better. Day by day, I noticed improvements in my health so I continued to work on the garden into what you see today. I look forward to sharing this area with the other neighbours and their family when it is complete so they too can enjoy it in the same way I do. When I am finished, I will invite you ...along to see what it looks like!”* Resident at Shoot-up Hill



## GDPR-respecting your privacy

In line with new data protection laws we have updated our privacy policy which is published on our website. You can find out how we respect your privacy and what data we collect at <https://www.cds.coop/privacy>.



## Fire Safety update

It is 1 year on since the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower. Housing associations are awaiting on actions from the inquiry and recommendations on any policy changes.

We would like to remind you about our policy for communal areas, which as a landlord we are legally obliged to ensure we are compliant with. Nothing should be kept in internal communal areas, as in the event of a fire any items left out would catch fire, cause an obstruction during an evacuation and be a hazard for fire fighters accessing the building in poor light and smoky conditions. Items such as door mats, bicycles, pushchairs, mobility scooters can't be kept in communal area for these reasons.

Our housing officers carry out monthly estate inspections to assess contractor performance (cleaning & gardening) as well as checking for fire safety compliance. Our policy requires that they remove and dispose of anything they find in communal areas. Please also remember that no fire doors can be wedged open. Leaving or wedging a fire door open means that the fire safety in that area is completely compromised. Please bear in mind this is for your own safety and the safety of your neighbours to stick to this policy.

If you ever have any queries or concerns about fire safety where you live we always want to know as soon as you are aware of an issue or feel concerned, no matter how small your concern may be. Please contact your housing officer with any queries or concerns.

## Noticeboards

We have recently carried out work to replace all the noticeboards across our schemes with lockable ones, which meet fire safety standards. We will use the boards to provide information that needs to be shared with residents. Residents can also use them for posting relevant information to the community. We will soon be making arrangements to make the key available to enable residents have access to the boards.

Our estate inspection dates will be posted on the notice boards shortly, so you know when you can expect us, can join us on an estate inspection or can arrange to meet with your housing officer.



## Improvements at Hauksbee Gardens



We are drawing near to the completion of the works carried out at Hauksbee Gardens in Milton Keynes. Since February 2018, we have been running a planned maintenance programme to install new windows and doors throughout the estate as well as carrying out general estate repairs such as repainting, replacing guttering, downpipes, soffits and fascias and fencing where necessary. We have invested just

over £500k across the 50 properties at Hauksbee Gardens. The work is due to finish in August and the project is currently running ahead of schedule.

The overall work has created a noticeable visual impact on the estate. A consultation was carried out with residents before the work was carried out and the community is really pleased with their new windows and doors. The experience

of the construction from Niblock builders has been a positive one with residents feeling good that they only noticed minimal disruption. The process was a smooth and efficient one and the site manager, Steve, has been a friendly, approachable figure responding to resident enquiries.

Housing officer, Annmarie worked closely with residents to ensure they were happy with the windows in their home, even making adjustments to the style to meet the specific personal needs of a resident.

*"The windows are great and it's so quiet with them being closed too! I can't wait to have a warmer house in winter and a lower heating bill!"-*

**Diane, Resident at Hauksbee Gardens**

Alongside the residents at Hauksbee, we are also eagerly looking forward to the works being complete and seeing the whole estate transformed upon completion!

# Your repairs service



Our busy repairs team work alongside our external contractors to fix any problems in your home. If you have a repair to report you can do so online on our website, via email or give the team a call!

## Meet Linda, Repairs Service Manager



Linda has worked for CDS for just over a year and manages the repairs team and gas servicing programme, as well as any work needed to improve health and safety for our residents on our properties.

## Gas Servicing

Our priority is always safety and, as your landlord, it is a legal requirement for us to carry out a gas safety check to any gas appliance in your home each year. We contact you by letter when your appointment is due so we can schedule an appointment time. We know it's not always a convenient time, so if you are unable to attend your gas appointment, please contact Viv to rearrange your appointment to a time which suits you. We always text you the day before to remind you of your appointment. If we aren't able gain access to a property to carry out the gas safety check, we will have to take legal action to ensure your property is safe.

Email: [viv.sweeney-collins@cds.coop](mailto:viv.sweeney-collins@cds.coop)  
Call Viv: 020 3096 7739.

## How do I report a repair?

Call us: 03333 21 30 30 Email the team: [helpdesk@cds.coop](mailto:helpdesk@cds.coop) or complete a form on our website: [www.cds.coop/for-residents/report-a-repair](http://www.cds.coop/for-residents/report-a-repair).

## Getting in touch out of hours...

You can always contact us to report an emergency repair. We run a 24/7 emergency service. Outside of office hours (9-5:30 Monday-Friday) when you call us you will be diverted to an external provider, Frontline, who cover the phones. The team at Frontline can arrange to make safe any emergency repairs you may have, as well as taking a message for any other repairs or enquiries to send to our team by 10am to action the next working day.

## Delivering good service...

Our team strive to work to our target response times, always prioritising emergency repairs. Between April and May 2018, 105 emergency orders were raised with 98% completed within target time of 24 hours.

### Urgent repairs

196 completed



### Routine repairs

196 completed



## How was your repair?

We always want to know how we can improve our service and we're listening to your feedback. Once you have had a repair completed, a member of our team will follow up with a phone call to find out what your experience was like. We then use your feedback to understand and learn how we can improve our service.

## Making contacting you easier

We are aiming for it to be easier and more convenient for us to contact you! Emailing you rather than calling means we don't interrupt your day and you can respond when you're ready. Going forward, we would like to email our residents more. Of course, there will be occasions when we need to speak with you quickly or a phone conversation is more useful but, on the whole, we would like to move toward email contact.

## We need you...

To make this happen we need you! If you would like us to be emailing you updates for your repairs, etc. then send us an email to our main inbox [TalkToUs@cds.coop](mailto:TalkToUs@cds.coop) and include "EMAIL PRIZE DRAW" in the subject box. You will then be entered into our prize draw with a chance to **win a £100 amazon voucher**. To be entered into the prize draw, you must send the email **by 20th August**.

## Next time

For latest news updates between now and the next newsletter check out our newsboard at [www.cds.coop/newsboard](http://www.cds.coop/newsboard) for latest updates!



## Getting in touch

- Call us:  03333 21 30 30 30
- Email us:  [talktous@cds.coop](mailto:talktous@cds.coop)
- Contact us online:  [www.cds.coop](http://www.cds.coop)

Join the conversation on social media:

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