Message from Martin
Martin Cartwright, Chairman, Leasehold Forum

May I start by wishing you all a belated Happy New Year.

I’m sure everyone will want to join me in wishing Lesley a happy retirement and to thank her for her work with the Forum.

Congratulations to Shaun on his new job. Shaun has already attended a Forum meeting.

Also welcome to Jan; we look forward to working with her. Finally, please take time to look at the revamped leaseholder webpage – page 3.

Message from Lesley
Lesley Roberts
Chief Executive of Wolverhampton Homes

This will be my last ever edition of Leaseholder News, as I prepare to retire from social housing. I’ve been at the helm of Wolverhampton Homes for ten years and in that time I have seen Leaseholders, championed by the Leasehold Forum, pave the way for major changes to leaseholder services, not lease the way we charge and invoice for repairs.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with leaseholders and the Home Sales and Leases team over the years.

I thank you for your support and wish you all the very best for the future.

Introducing our New Chief Executive, Shaun Aldis

Since Lesley Roberts announced in August that she would be retiring in the new year, we’ve been working tirelessly to find a worthy replacement.

We’re pleased to announce that after a long recruitment process, we found one in our very own Shaun Aldis, former Director of Operations.

Shaun said, “I am thrilled to have taken on this challenge and look forward to improving the services we offer. As we begin a new era, I will be working closely with the Board in leading Wolverhampton Homes toward a bright and positive future.”

Welcoming Jan Lycett

We would also like to formally introduce Jan Lycett, our new Director of Business Support. Jan has a wealth of knowledge and experience in housing and business, and has held a number of senior positions over the years.

She’s a very welcome edition to Wolverhampton Homes, where she’s already looking at new ways in which to engage our customers and improve our services.

Cover shot: Thanks to Kenneth Rooker and Marjorie Rooker

You’ll also find us on [Facebook] and [Twitter]
You will receive an invoice for your contribution towards our services and buildings insurance at the end of March.

The amount you are asked to pay will depend on your lease, where you live and on what type of property you live in.

It’s important to plan ahead. Have you thought about how you’re going to pay?

Though your service charge is due in full, we invite you to pay over 12 months or less if that’s easier for you. To set up a monthly payment plan, please get in touch with the Home Sales and Leases team at home.sales@wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk.

The best way to pay is Direct Debit. With a Direct Debit you can sit back and relax in the knowledge that your service charge is being paid on time.

RATHER PAY IN ONE GO? Do it online via our website at www.wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/leaseholders/service-charges
Over the last year our contractor, Wates Living Space, has been hard at work upgrading Merridale Court, including new roofing, new balconies, new lighting and improvements to the communal areas.

On the 3rd November, after 15 months of labour, the work was completed. A group of residents were invited to lay the final roof tile, marking the end of another of our major improvement projects.

Marjorie Rooker, Merridale Court leaseholder said:

“They’ve done a fantastic job. The workmen were really helpful throughout the project and were always open to answering our questions. They always tidied up after themselves and finished the work on time. We were delighted to be asked to lay the final roof tile. The improvements to the estate will benefit leaseholders and landlords for generations to come. Well done and thank you to everyone involved.”

Terry Steer, Merridale Court leaseholder and Leasehold Forum member said:

“The work has been carried out to a very high standard and represents good value for money. I would like to thank Wates, who have kept me informed and have welcomed leaseholders’ input from the start.”

Earlier this year we invited some of you to a focus group to discuss our HomeSafe Gas scheme. We wanted your views on how we may improve the service.

We found your views really useful. Your feedback helps shapes our services for the future and here’s how your views have helped shape HomeSafe Gas...

• Gas servicing appointments are no longer booked by the Repairs team. Instead they’re booked by the Leasehold Management team. Bookings are now faster and it allows the team to keep track of who has had a gas safety check.

• Thanks to a closer working relationship with our Building Solutions team, we now quote for follow-on repair and maintenance work within 14 days.

• We’ve developed reminders for outstanding invoices. This way leaseholders can keep track of what they owe and avoid any nasty letters at the end of the year.

• We’re doing more to promote our Handyman and Repairs services. We can help with more things than just gas.

Read more on page 5.
HANDBYMAN AND REPAIRS SERVICE
Benefit from our extensive expertise and let us do the work for you. We’re Wolverhampton’s largest landlord and manage in the region of 23,000 homes. Maintaining properties is what we’re good at. We can do:

- Carpentry jobs
- Asbestos management and removal works
- Aids and adaptations
- Painting and decorating
- Gas and electrical works
- Testing and certification
- Out of hours emergency repairs

We want to work with you. So, what are you waiting for?
Get in touch today for a quote at:
www.whomes.org.uk/repairs-for-you
or call 01902 550971.

HANDYMAN AND REPAIRS SERVICE

CCTV success
We’ve replaced the old white ‘shoebox’ cameras with new state of the art cameras on most of our high-rise estates, which have a 360 degree vision, can see further and give clearer images.

Our eagle-eyed Control Room Operators are always on the lookout for anything out of the ordinary. Last year, they came to the rescue of an elderly resident who had collapsed and they also helped a young child who had become lost and was wandering around an estate. These successes were only possible thanks to our CCTV system and the efforts of our Control Room Operators. We also have cameras in the lifts on all CCTV estates.

We’ve got our eye on you, but don’t worry… we’ve got your back.

Your concierge service
“On average, the Concierge Control Room deal with over 100,000 calls a year!”

Whether it be using the CCTV to spot fly-tipping and removing rubbish, dealing with emergencies outside of normal working hours, or just visiting residents to tell them what services are available – your concierge are always on hand to help and keep estates looking their best.

www.wolverhamptonhomes.org.uk/leaseholders
Residents in our high-rise blocks were understandably concerned following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in London.

Our high-rise blocks, including those with rain screen cladding, have been assessed following the incident and we’re pleased to confirm that they conform to the highest standards of fire safety.

What’s more, we’re working proactively to limit the risk of fire inside blocks. This includes the installation of fire safety doors to individual flats in any block with enclosed communal areas. We’ve made fantastic progress and with the help and cooperation of the leaseholder community, we’re pleased to tell you that all of those leaseholders in our high-rise blocks have now got a certified fire door or are waiting to have one fitted by our contractor.

We continue to work closely with West Midlands Fire Service and other partners to ensure the safety of residents throughout the city.

You can read more about fire safety on our website at www.whomes.org.uk/tower-block-fire-safety

FIRE SAFETY IN OUR HIGH-RISE BLOCKS

BRINGING HEATH TOWN INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

We’ve been working in close partnership with City of Wolverhampton Council to make major changes to the Heath Town estate.

The works are well underway and have already seen the demolition of parts of Hobgate Road and Chervil Rise, as well as new frontages to flats on Wednesfield Road and Lincoln Street. Residents at Heath Town have been kept updated throughout the project with regular newsletters.

The works at Heath Town will also see new cladding fitted to all blocks. Rest assured, this cladding is non-combustible and conforms to fire safety regulations.

Simon Bamfield, Head of Stock Investment for Wolverhampton Homes, said:
“The works at Heath Town represent a significant investment. Due to the extent of the work, we appreciate that the money leaseholders on the estate are being asked to contribute is very high. The council have therefore agreed to consider buying back affected properties. Each request will be considered on a case by case basis. If you live on Heath Town and are interested in selling your property, get in touch with the Leasehold Management team and we’ll be more than happy to talk you through your options.”
BEING THE BEST...

It’s important to us that we’re the very best that we can be and that the services we provide are right for you and represent value for money.

To be the best, it’s important that we are always looking for ways to improve our services and to help us do this, we occasionally meet with other Leasehold Management teams from across the country to compare services and share ideas.

Our Leasehold Management team did just this on the 29th November, when they were joined by other housing providers to discuss matters relevant to leaseholders.

Working closely with other organisations in this way ensures that we are continuously improving.

“Your Leasehold Management team are sad to have to inform you that Karen McGann, one of your Leasehold Management Officers, who many of you will know sadly passed away on the 17th November following a very brave 22 months battle against cancer.

Our thoughts are very much with Karen’s family at this time.”

Helen Bellingham, Head of Home Sales and Leases

YOUR LEASEHOLD FORUM

The Forum meets every couple of months to discuss issues relevant to all leaseholders. The Forum is made up of leaseholder representatives from across the city. Together, they champion your ideas and work to ensure that our services to you are the best they can be.

Find out more on our website at www.whomes.org.uk/leaseholders/get-involved

The Leasehold Forum meets on the following dates:

Wednesday 28th February 2018
Wednesday 2nd May 2018
Wednesday 4th July 2018
Wednesday 19th September 2018
Wednesday 12th December 2018
Quiz Time
Complete our quiz to win £20 in vouchers. Just send in your answers by 4th April 2018 to be entered into the draw or enter online at www.whomes.org.uk/LH-quiz

1. Who is our new Director of Business Support?

2. What’s the best way to pay your service charge?

3. On what date was the work at Merridale Court completed?

4. On average, the concierge control centre deal with how many calls per year?

5. On what date in July is the Leasehold Forum due to meet?

Your Feedback and Quiz Time entry
Tell us what you think about any of our services.

Name

Your Address

Postcode

Your telephone

Your email

Tick to help us save you money and receive this newsletter by email

Return to: Communications, Wolverhampton Homes, Chillington Fields Industrial Estate, Off Hickman Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV1 2BY