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THIS EDITION

MyTenancy	2
Open House	2
A sharper CHISEL	3
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Universal Credit	4
Change of Chair	4
Prize Draw	4

Annual General Meeting & Tenants Evening

Thursday 24
Sept. 7pm

Terrace Room,
The Library at
Deptford Lounge
9 Giffin St, Deptford
SE8 4RW
(same venue as last
year)

The evening will include a discussion about CHISEL's response to Right To Buy, Pay to Stay and Rent Reduction

TENANTS NEWSLETTER

Summer 2015

All change in social housing?



The government has recently announced plans for three major changes to social housing:

- ♦ rents to decrease by 1% each year, for four years
- ♦ extending the Right To Buy to housing association tenants
- ♦ "Pay to Stay": households in London with incomes over £40,000 to pay 80% of market rents; those with income over £50,000 to pay 100% of market rents.

These are huge changes, and there is still a lot of uncertainty. Legislation is needed to extend the Right To Buy and for aspects of Pay To Stay, and it is still too early to know exactly how these policies will be implemented.

Come to the AGM on 24 September to hear more details about these government plans, and to discuss CHISEL's response to them.

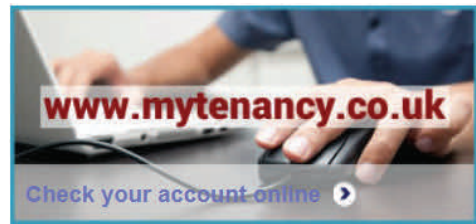
Fire risk! - make sure you have Contents Insurance

Over the last two years there have been three fires in CHISEL properties - CHISEL has property insurance, but none of the tenants involved had contents insurance, so their possessions were not covered. This can happen to anyone; one fire was caused by a faulty dishwasher. Very affordable contents insurance is available to social housing residents - call the office to request a pack, or go to

<http://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk/>

MyTenancy - what you think so far

Many CHISEL tenants are now using MyTenancy, our online system for checking your rent account and repairs progress. There's a link from the CHISEL website homepage, and you just need a username and password which CHISEL give to you.



Rosie Bradshaw, one of our Brighton tenants, tells about her experience of using MyTenancy:

Paper rent statements? Now only by request

CHISEL will now only send regular quarterly paper rent statements to tenants who request them.

Let the office know if you want to keep receiving paper statements every quarter.

You can still request a paper statement at any time. You will be sent one if you fall into arrears, and you can always go online and check your rent account using MyTenancy.

"I find MyTenancy useful for keeping an eye on my rent. It's very easy to use.

I use it once a month to check how much rent to pay, as I don't have a standing order or a direct debit. I can see my balance and manage my payments month by month. It is very useful to be able to see exactly how much I owe.

I also like having the direct link from MyTenancy to Allpay for making payments.

I haven't used it yet to check repair progress, as I have not had any repairs recently.

I am really happy not to receive quarterly rent statements, now I can check my rent account online."

Open House in self-build houses - on 20 September



Greenstreet Hill

Every year Open House weekend gives us a chance to see inside some of the most interesting buildings in our city, large and small. This year one of the themes is self-build, and a CHISEL house at Greenstreet Hill on Drakefell Rd in Telegraph Hill is opening. You can also visit one of the original 1980's Lewisham self-build sites at Walters Way, where the residents have made some amazing improvements to their houses over the last 30 years. This year Open House celebrates the work of the architect Walter Segal who developed this method of building; 2015 is the 30th anniversary of his death.

CHISEL were among the pioneers of the Segal System in social housing for rent, with 70 properties in 10 schemes across south east England, all built by the people who live in them. At least two schemes won awards: Nubia Way in Lewisham and Diggers in Brighton.

When: Sunday 20 Sept 2015, approx. 10-4

Where: 1 Greenstreet Hill, Drakefell Rd, SE14 5SR,
and
Walters Way, off Honor Oak Park, SE23 3LH

Full info from the Open House website in mid August, or buy their printed guide now. Visits are free!

See www.openhouselondon.org.uk



Walters Way

A sharper CHISEL - maintenance

CHISEL has formed an Operational Scrutiny Committee (OSC), to help improve the quality and value for money of our services, and make the organisation work better. The OSC currently consists of 5 tenants plus 2 Board members, both of whom are also tenants.



The Committee has met twice so far. It set up a working group which recommended changes in how CHISEL gets feedback from residents on day to day repairs. All these changes were accepted, and if you have had a repair done recently you will have been invited to comment on your satisfaction with it, using this new system. CHISEL is now getting much more feedback on repairs than before, which is really helpful - see the box on this page.

Next topic: our maintenance service as a whole. This is a big topic which will take some months to review. There is room for more residents to become involved:

- You don't need to become a Board Member to sit on the OSC, although you will be working closely with Board members.
- Any resident with a keen interest in how their housing association works and a commitment to improving its services for EVERYONE, can sit on the Committee and help determine the future of our homes.
- Residents not on the Committee can also be involved in specific projects on topics they have an interest in.

If you would like to know more about getting involved, please get in touch by emailing scrutiny@chisel.org.uk, or calling Mark Allan on 020 8692 5258 (Mon and Thurs).

Repair feedback - thanks for your help!

If you have had a repair done in the last 3 months, you will have seen that CHISEL now has a new system for getting feedback from tenants about responsive repairs. Tenants receive a feedback form with the repair order – when the job is complete the office reminds you by text to fill it out and send it back in a Freepost envelope.

You can also give **feedback online**, using the feedback form on **our website**, or in **MyTenancy**.

If you can't find your copy of the paper form, use the online methods, or ask the office to send a paper copy.

Your feedback is very important – it helps CHISEL manage our contractors to give you the best possible service. The replies tenants give are summarised and reported to CHISEL's Board every quarter - **your voice is heard**.

Three types of repairs

Responsive repairs:

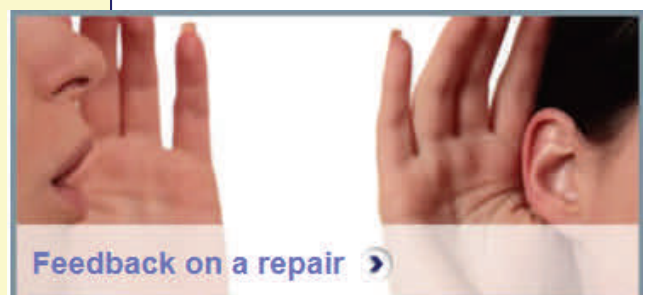
day-to-day jobs that need doing, usually reported by tenants.

Cyclical maintenance:

jobs that need to be done on a regular basis, usually about every 6 years, like external painting.

Planned Maintenance:

scheduled replacement of parts of the house – currently these are mainly replacements of kitchens, windows and bathrooms.



NOTICE BOARD

Be prepared for Universal Credit

All benefit claimants will move to Universal Credit over the next 4 years, starting in 2015 with new claims by single people.

- most people will be paid Universal Credit once a month direct to their chosen account
- you'll get a single payment for your household
- if your Universal Credit includes rent you'll need to pay this to your landlord yourself
- you'll be expected to make your claim online

Check whether you are ready: go to www.chisel.org.uk/tenants-information/universal-credit-and-welfare-reform/

Change of Chair

Long serving Board member and recent Chair, Jill Gettrup is moving away from London, so has retired as Chair. Vice-Chair David Eatwell stepped up. More about the Board in our annual report in September.



Prize Draw for being up to date with your rent

Twice a year we do a prize draw among the tenants who have a good recent rent record. The last winner was Dougal Brown, from Telegraph Hill, seen here with his cheque for £150.

Simply make sure your rent balance is clear for a minimum of 4 weeks before the date of the draw and you will be entered.

The next draw will be at the AGM on Sept 24, based on your rent record at September 20 - there is still time to have a clear account for 4 weeks.

Clear any arrears by mid-August to be in with a chance!



Chisel Opening Hours and Contacts

CHISEL's office is normally open Monday to Thursday 9-5pm (closed on Fridays)

You can call us on the following numbers:

For General Enquiries: 020 8692 5258 **To Report a Repair:** 020 8692 9294

For **emergency repairs** outside office hours call **020 8692 9294** and choose **option 2**

Non-urgent repairs 020 8692 9294 (option 1), email to repairs@chisel.org.uk
or use the website **Report a Repair** form (direct from the home page)

WHO'S WHO IN CHISEL:

Managing Director:	Pauline Goodfellow (3 days pw: various)	director@chisel.org.uk
Housing Manager	Clare Canning (4 days pw: Monday to Thursday)	housing@chisel.org.uk
Rents Officer	Flos Marriott (2 days pw: Tuesday & Thursday)	rents@chisel.org.uk
Maintenance Officer	Chris Hatcher (4 days pw: Monday to Thursday)	maintenance@chisel.org.uk
Co-ops & Tenants Officer	Mark Allan (2 days pw: Monday & Thursday)	involvement@chisel.org.uk
Finance Manager	Nigel Spice (interim) (2 days pw: Monday & Thursday)	financemanager@chisel.org.uk
Finance Officer	Shuk-Ling Hou (2 days pw: Wednesday & Thursday)	financeofficer@chisel.org.uk