

# Our Vision for the Future

On Saturday 1st March 2008 WATMOS Board Members, TMO committee members and group employees came together at an event held at the Village Hotel to discuss the future direction and priorities of the WATMOS Group over the next five to ten years. The results of this process will help form the basis of a new strategic plan.



## These are some of the key issues that came up at the event:

- “Protecting what makes us different.”
- “Strengthening tenant leadership.”
- “Safeguarding local estate-based services.”
- “Developing new business and new services.”
- “Supporting our people.”
- “Giving rewards and Incentives for involvement.”
- “Working smarter not harder.”

Turn over the page for more information.

Keith, Kim, David and Giuseppe celebrate moving into their new home along with friends, family and colleagues from WATMOS and Burrowes Street TMO



## A New Home in Raleigh Street

Burrowes Street TMO is now letting the Group's first new development of ten two-bedroom flats in Raleigh Street, Birchills.

The first four residents are Keith, Kim, David and Giuseppe. The development was built in co-operation with Matrix Development Partnership.

## Contents

### Group News

- Repair review results
- Vision Event
- ASB Cases – Results
- Tenant Panel News
- Rent Statements on-line
- Terry Edis MBE
- Feedback winner

### Local News

- Avenues – Local children activities & Spring Fair
- Burrowes Street – Well-governed TMO & R Worrall charity bus event
- Delves – Delves United Charity cheque to scouts

## Protecting What Makes Us Different

We are committed to protecting the two most important things that make us different from other housing associations.

### 1. Tenant Leadership

We are a tenant-led organisation both at the Group level and at each TMO. To protect this we need to encourage new tenant leaders who are willing and able to take over when the current pioneers of WATMOS retire. We must also ensure that there are enough TMO committee members to maintain local tenant management and control.

### 2. Local Estate-Based Services

Most other housing associations have centralised their operations and tend to provide services using call-centres. We are committed to delivering local services through tenant management organisations that have an office and local staff within walking distance on every estate. We will work hard to protect this way of working so that TMO estates remain unique places to live.

## Developing New Business

We want to grow but we will only do this only in ways that are consistent with our values and ethos. Two main areas of growth have been identified:

### 1. Building News Homes

We are working with Matrix Development Partnership to establish a small programme of new build development over the next few years. Our priorities will be to build in our existing TMO areas and in particular in areas where we have lost properties through the Right to Buy.

### 2. Neighbourhood Management

We will explore the possibility of our TMOs becoming neighbourhood management organisations. This would involve taking over and co-ordinating all the most important local services within a neighbourhood. We think that local people know best when it comes to running local services.

### 3. New Community Services

We want to explore expanding our business into a range of new community services and activities. This might mean setting up co-operatives or social enterprises to do this. The bottom line is that, whatever we do must strengthen resident control, local tenant-management and the quality of life on our estates.



## Supporting Our People

People are the life blood of our organisation. We will be giving a high priority in the coming years to ensuring that both resident volunteers and Group employees get the support, advice, encouragement and direction they need to successfully undertake their duties and responsibilities.

## Giving Rewards and Incentives for Involvement

Because we depend on such a large number of resident volunteers to run our local TMOs we will be looking carefully at how people could be given incentives and rewards for getting involved.

## Working Smarter not Harder

Our volunteers and employees have busy lives and we need to ensure that their involvement in the organisation is both enjoyable and rewarding. One way of doing this is focusing on making roles less onerous and bureaucratic. This is a key challenge for us over the coming years.

## Consulting you on New Services

During the next year or so we will consult our tenants and residents about the sorts of new services and activities they would like to see us develop in their area. Your ideas will shape our future business development.

### Avenues TMO Spring Fair

Avenues TMO will be holding a Spring Fair on Saturday 12th April 2008 at St James Church Hall, Brownhills, starting at 1.00pm.

The TMO Committee would welcome bric-a-brac to sell or any unwanted gifts for the tombola and raffle.

# A Partnership for Improvement:

## Our New Approach to Repairs

**During the last eight months we have been undertaking a detailed review of our repairs services. Many of you will have been involved in this in some way.**

There have been focus groups, questionnaires, workshops and other events to help us analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the current service and decide how we want to organise repairs in future.

The process ended with a 'Challenge Event' held at WATMOS Board Room on 24th January 2008 where people who had been involved in the review were given an opportunity to look at the results and challenge the findings.

**They key decisions coming out of the repairs review are as follows:**

### **Build on the Existing Handyman Service**

You told us that the best feature of the current repairs service is the local TMO handyman service. We therefore aim to strengthen this service and extend it to TMOs where it doesn't currently operate.

### **Create a Long-Term Repairs Partnership**

We plan to set up a long-term 'open book' partnership with a repairs contractor that will cover the day-to-day repairs not undertaken by the TMO handyman service and all the majors works programmed for the next 5 years.

### **Improved Repairs Appointments**

We will work with the TMOs and the repairs partner to develop an enhanced appointment system. This will include considering evening and weekend appointments.

### **Improved Out of Hours Service**

We will work with the TMOs and the repairs partner to improve the quality and reliability of the out of hours repair service.

### **Improved Consistency**

In order to improve the consistency of the repairs service, we aim to guarantee minimum service standards across the Group whilst maintaining flexibility for each TMO to move beyond these standards in meeting the particular needs of their area.

Much of this work will be undertaken during the next 12 months so watch this space!





## Scouting in the Delves is grand!

**Delves United Charity has donated £1,000 to Delves Scouts to help them maintain and improve their building which requires a lot of work.**

Presenting the cheque, Delves East TMO Chair, Michael Greenfield said “we are committed to helping local groups and organisations improve facilities and activities for young people in the Delves area. We hope this money will enable Delves Scouts to go from strength to strength.”

## Watmos Chair Honoured!

The Chair of WATMOS Community Homes and Burrowes Street TMO, Terry Edis, has been awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours List.

This honour recognises Terry’s long-standing contribution to the community in Walsall and to the Tenant Management movement nationally. The nomination was made by the Housing Corporation and supported by NFTMOs, WATMOS and Burrowes Street TMO.

**Congratulations Terry on this much deserved recognition!**



Terry Edis MBE

“Creating strong communities through tenant management”

# Tenant Panel News

**The Tenant Panel have been trying some new ideas to try to increase membership.**

We have held evening meetings at Sandbank, Chuckery and Stafford Street but have decided to go back to lunch time meetings at the request of the tenants who have been attending.

Some of the things that the Tenant Panel are going to be organising over the next few months are a Fun Day in the Summer, a drawing or painting competition and a photograph competition. We are also hoping to arrange a 5 aside football tournament across the TMOs, with matches to be held at the Avenues TMO who have their own football park.

At the time of going to print, the Tenant Panel were arranging a Devonshire Tea Afternoon to be held at Burrowes Street TMO on the afternoon of 28th March. All tenants and residents were invited, including children, and there were plans for a quiz, face painting and music, as well as lots of cake eating! We'll tell you all about it in our next newsletter!

We would really like to see more tenants and residents involved, so we hope that you will come to future meetings and events. The next Tenant Panel meeting is going to be held on 25th April at 12.00pm in the WATMOS Board Room at 29 Stafford Street, Walsall. Please come along, we'd love to meet you!

Finally, we are re-naming the Tenant Panel. We have had some suggestions for the new name and we want you to vote on which one we should use. If you want to vote, please put a cross in the box of the one you want to vote for, cut out the slip below and hand it in to your TMO.



<b>WATMOS Interactive Group</b>	
<b>Resident Interaction</b>	
<b>Residents Action Group</b>	
<b>Tenant Involvement Group</b>	
<b>Welcome Invite</b>	
<b>Review Invite</b>	
<b>Tenants &amp; Others Invite</b>	

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Address</b>	

# Richard's Round England Bus Tour

**If you thought jumping on a bus during a marathon was cheating, think again!**

During February, Burrowes Street TMO resident and committee member Richard Worrall completed a round England bus tour to raise money for a number of charities and to promote a new national bus pass being introduced by the Government from 1st April 2008. The pass will be free for anyone over the age of 60 or for blind and disabled pass holders.

Richard said "free national bus travel has huge potential to enhance million's of people's quality of life: I want to help ensure everyone uses the opportunities it brings to the full."

Richard successfully completed his 1,200-mile clockwise tour around England by bus in just eleven days.

**The tour has raised money for the following five charities:**

- African Caribbean Leukaemia Trust
- Anthony Nolan Trust
- Gwalior Children's Hospital (Helping children in India)
- Midland International Aid Trust
- National Pensioners' Convention (Walsall Branch)



# Tacking Anti Social Behaviour – Watmos Gets Results!

**During the last few months we have had a number of important results in tacking the kind of anti social behaviour that make peoples' lives a misery. Here are a few examples.**

## **Drunken Behaviour – Anti Social Behaviour Orders**

On 8th February 2008, WATMOS obtained 2 interim ASBOs against the lodgers of a Burrowes Street TMO tenant. The ASBOs were made against a man and a woman living in Richards House, who are well known to the residents of Borough Street for causing problems when they are drunk. The male is excluded from the whole Burrowes Street estate and both are prohibited from:

- 1. Behaving in a manner likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress;**
- 2. Using or engaging in any abusive, insulting, offensive, threatening or intimidating language or behaviour in any public place in the Borough of Walsall;**
- 3. Causing a noise nuisance or screaming or inciting/encouraging others to do so anywhere in the Borough of Walsall;**
- 4. Being drunk in any public place in the Borough of Walsall;**
- 5. Urinating in a public place (except toilet facilities when properly used) in the Borough of Walsall.**

The ASBOs remain valid until the case returns to court for a full trial, when it is envisaged that full ASBOs will be obtained for minimum periods of 2 years.

If either individual breaches the terms of their ASBOs they can be arrested by the Police and imprisoned by the court.

## **Criminal Activity – Outright Possession Order**

The County Court made an Order for Possession against a Burrowes Street tenant on 21st February 2008. WATMOS instigated possession proceedings against the tenant due to a criminal conviction for cultivation of cannabis, allegations of domestic violence and because the tenant had breached his tenancy by keeping a dog in the property. The Judge said that the cultivation of cannabis was such a serious breach of the tenancy that he had no choice but to grant an Order for Possession. The tenant has until 6th March to vacate the property. An eviction will be applied for if he remains in the property after that date. This action sends out a stark warning to any of our tenants who think it is acceptable to use their property for criminal activity – such breaches of tenancy will be taken seriously and WATMOS will not hesitate to take legal action.

## **Messy Garden – Suspended Possession Order**

A tenant in the Delves almost lost their home in February when WATMOS

told the Court about their untidy garden. An eviction date had been set due to unpaid rent arrears and when the tenant applied to the Court to suspend the eviction, WATMOS showed the Court photos of the garden and asked for the eviction to go ahead. The Court was shocked by the state of the garden which had old toys and rubbish in it as well as the grass being really long.

The Court gave the tenant one last chance but made an Order that he must tidy the garden, clear it of all debris and mow the lawn, giving him a 2 week period to complete it. The tenant did tidy the garden but must now maintain it in that condition else WATMOS can go back to Court and tell the Judge the Order has been breached. If that happens, the tenant is likely to be evicted. Don't let the same happen to you – WATMOS and the TMOs will take action if you allow your garden to get into such a state that it is a breach of your tenancy.



# Gas Safety Checks

## – Taking our Responsibilities Seriously

**WATMOS has a legal obligation under the Health and Safety legislation to go into every tenant's home each year and service the gas installations and check that everything is safe.**

If this is not done the health, safety and life of the tenant and that of their neighbours is at risk. In December 2007, WATMOS obtained a Postponed Possession Order against a Delves tenant who wouldn't let WATMOS' contractors in to carry out the checks.

The Order gave the tenant a last chance to have the gas servicing done but they have still failed to do so. WATMOS has now applied for an eviction as a last resort. If you receive an appointment for your gas servicing and safety checks, please make sure you keep it!

**If you are unable to do so, you must let us know so that we can arrange another appointment. Failure to let our contractors in will result in legal action being taken against you and you are in danger of losing your home.**

## Shaping Our Future

### – Prize Draw

In the last issue we invited you to complete and return a short questionnaire about the organisation's future.

All the returned questionnaires were put into a prize draw and the winners were:

Miss Joan Baker & Miss Jessie Baker of Twin Crescents TMO

Joan and Jessie's prize as high street vouchers to the value of £30

## Good Governance at Burrowes Street TMO

**Burrowes Street TMO is one of three organisations that have been awarded the TMO Good Governance Kite Mark in a scheme to promote good practice amongst the country's tenant controlled housing organisations.**

The awards were presented by Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Iain Wright MP in a ceremony at Westminster on Monday. The organisations had all been through a process of self-assessment, action planning and external inspection before being awarded the Kite Mark by the National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations (NFTMO).

The Kite Mark scheme was launched last year and aims to help TMOs identify and deal with areas of weakness as well as recognising and celebrating good practice in the TMO sector.

NFTMO Deputy Chair Roy Read says that the Kite Mark scheme has been designed to fit the special characteristics of TMOs. "Most TMOs are small organisations relying on voluntary effort alongside a few paid staff. The Kite Mark scheme aims to apply proper standards of governance but not to impose too much bureaucracy or cost. We are in the business



of encouraging TMOs to take governance seriously because where TMOs do occasionally fail it is usually because basic rules of good governance have not been followed."

In presenting the awards Iain Wright said:

"Giving tenants opportunities to have a greater role in running their homes and neighbourhoods is a priority for government and I am pleased to see that Tenant Management Organisations are going from strength to strength with the support of the National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations. The Good Governance Kite Mark Awards are an important way of promoting and encouraging good practice in the sector and I'm sure that Haddonhall, Burrowes Street and Friday Hill will inspire other Tenant Management Organisations to aim for the highest standards."

# Coming Soon

## On-line Rent Statements

We are just completing the work required to give you access to rent account information on-line

We have established an 'On-Line Tenants Section' on the WATMOS website which over time will provide a range of on-line services. All you will need to do is register as a user and set up a password.

The on-line rent account service should be available within the next six weeks.



## Contact Details

You can find **WATMOS** at:  
29 Stafford Street  
Walsall  
WS2 8DG  
Tel: 01922 471910  
Fax: 01922 612967  
Or email us on  
info@watmos.org.uk

You can contact each of the TMOs as follows:

**The Avenues TMO**  
10/11 Second Avenue  
Brownhills  
WS8 6JA  
Tel: 01543 453659  
Email: avenues@watmos.org.uk

**Burrowes Street TMO**  
Burrowes Street  
Walsall  
WS2 8NN  
Tel: 01922 613292  
Fax: 01922 746949  
Email:  
burrowes@watmos.org.uk

**Chuckery TMO**  
2 Brookes House  
Tantarra Street  
Chuckery  
Walsall  
WS1 2HS  
Tel: 01922 644456  
Fax: 01922 640841  
Email:  
chuckery@watmos.org.uk

**Delves East TMO & Delves West TMO**  
West Bromwich Road  
Delves  
Walsall  
WS5 4NW  
Tel: 01922 720790  
Fax: 01922 638658  
Email: delves@watmos.org.uk

**Leamore TMO**  
1 Dover House  
Providence Close  
Leamore  
Walsall  
WS3 2AW  
Tel: 01922 493266  
Fax: 01922 400219  
Email: leamore@watmos.org.uk

**Sandbank TMO**  
1a Clarke House  
Bloxwich  
WS3 2HF  
Tel: 01922 400333  
Fax: 01922 400219  
Email:  
sandbank@watmos.org.uk

**Twin Crescents TMO**  
11 Grove Crescent  
Pelsall  
Walsall  
WS3 4NG  
Tel: 01922 682539  
Fax: 01922 682539  
Email:  
twincrescents@watmos.org.uk



"Creating strong communities through tenant management"