

NEW STYLE ID BADGE

From now on all RBH staff who call at your property should have a Braille strip on their RBH Identity Badge that identifies them as an employee of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, with a phone number so that you can double check their identity. If you are unsure at any time, please do not open the door.

PENSION UPDATE

Did you know there are some changes to pensions, particularly related to women's pensions. Ring 08457 31 32 for more information or to get a leaflet or see the website www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk. You can also get up to a dozen copies of the leaflet if you want to display them at community groups for example.

Bring your car in from the cold

Garages are available to rent in Middleton. Rent is £7.90 per week for council tenants and £9.09 for private residents. If you are a disabled badge holder there will be a 40% concession on the rent. If you are interested in renting a garage please phone 01706 927118 for further information.



এই দলিলাট (ডকুমেন্ট) হাউজিং ইকুয়ালিটি টিমের নিকট হইতে বড় হাপার অফিসে, ব্রেইল (অক্ষরের জন্য বিশেষভাবে নির্মিত) অক্ষরে, বাংলায়, উর্দুতে, ক্রাসেটে অথবা কম্পিউটার ডিস্কে (01706) 273791 নম্বরে ফোন করিয়া সংগ্রহ করিতে পারেন।

یہ دستاویز معلومات کیلئے ہے جو صرف بریل، سمفونیک اور ڈاؤن لوڈ ہونے والے آڈیو فائل کے ذریعے دستیاب کیا جاسکتا ہے۔
 اس سبب اگر آپ اس سے پہلے کوئی ای میل (01706) 273790 پر بھیجیں تو اس کے حاصل کرنے میں مدد ملے گی۔



If you have any comments or questions about this newsletter, please contact **Jane Howard, Communications Manager on 01706 273835, email: jane.howard@rbhousing.org.uk** or write to Jane at **Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, The Old Post Office, The Esplanade, Rochdale OL16 1AE**

This document is available on request in large print, Braille, Bangla, Urdu, audio tape or on computer disk from the Housing Equality Team on (01706) 273790 / 273791.

Useful Telephone Numbers

LEASEHOLD TEAM01706 273731/24	Lower Falinge01706 642220	Environmental Health
Rochdale Boroughwide Housing 0845 070 5170	Middleton01706 927120	eg Drains, Noise, Graffiti, Pollution0845 121 2975
24hr Repairs Call Centre0845 076 3636	Milnrow01706 342559	Social Services (office hours)01706 647474
Programmed Repairs Helpline0845 123 5627	Newbold01706 714460	(the Council switchboard will help you find the right Social services section you need)
Telephone Rent Payments01706 866180	For opening times please ring the office or check our website	Social Services (5pm-8.30pm+weekends)0845 121 2975
HomeChoice freephone0800 091 2248	www.rbhousing.org.uk/contact_us/area_offices.htm	Forced Marriage Helpline0800 5999 247
RBH Legal Team (ASBOs, nuisance)01706 273972	HELPFUL CONTACTS	(9.30am - 9pm - 7 days a week)
RBH Formal Complaints0845 123 5628	Council Tax0845 121 2970	
HOUSING OFFICES	Municipal Offices (Council Switchboard)01706 647474	
Cedar Avenue (Heywood)01706 364124	Refuse Collection and Recycling0845 226 1800	
Freehold01706 924063	Street Lighting/Highways0845 121 2979	
Kirkholt01706 354222	Street Cleansing0845 226 1800	WEB ADDRESSES
Littleborough01706 378221	Grounds Maintenance0845 226 1800	www.rbhousing.org.uk
		www.rochdalehomechoice.org.uk

Meet the Team



We have a small team working with our growing number of leaseholders in all four townships. We provide all the services you could possibly need as a leaseholder and can signpost you to other related RBH services such as what community groups are in your area and how to get involved, or our debt and benefit advisor if you are having any problems.

The two Leasehold officers pictured are: Sue Hoyle, on the left and Bev Mulholland, on the right.

Sue and Bev are always glad to help with any enquiries you may have and can be contacted on tel: **01706 273731/24**. If you would prefer to come down and see us, please call to make an appointment.

We need you

We want to make sure that this magazine is easy to read and provides useful interesting articles in a format you like. We would therefore like to set up an Editorial Panel of leaseholders who would meet every six months for about an hour and a half to discuss the content for the next issue.

Travel expenses to our offices in Rochdale and a buffet lunch would be provided.

Interested? Call the Leaseholder Team on **01706 273731** or **273724** to let them know and we will confirm the date of the first meeting of the new editorial panel as soon as we have it.

Welcome to your new Newsletter

Well here it is, our first Leaseholder Magazine, which we plan to send out to you every six months to keep you up to date with leaseholder news and information about our meetings and how you can get involved.

At our last forum, you said you wanted your own magazine like Tenants Talkback, so we have started the ball rolling with this.

What we haven't got though, is a nice catchy title, so if you have any ideas email the Editor, **Jane Howard** on jane.howard@rbhousing.org.uk or call her on **01706 273835** to put forward your suggestions. The suggestion chosen will receive £25 in High Street Shopping vouchers.

The winning name will also be featured on the next magazine.



Service Charges

What exactly are they? We often get this question, so we thought we would use the new magazine to let you have a short explanation.

Service charges are due annually. They are a contribution which leaseholders pay towards the overall running costs of the block of flats in which their home forms a part. Some of the things included in your service charge might be general maintenance and repairs to the building and any communal areas.

Depending on your particular situation, your payment could also cover caretaking, communal gas or electric supplies, concierge and grounds

maintenance and buildings insurance.

Service charges can be paid to RBH quarterly, monthly or as an annual lump sum payment, whichever suits you best.

The Leaseholder Team offer a variety of ways to pay service charges, including by direct debit straight from your account or by debit or credit card payments over the phone. Just contact them to make your own arrangements. Leaseholders who pay by direct debit or their annual charge in full as a lump sum will be eligible for a £10 reduction in the annual service charge, as this helps us keep our administration costs down.



Gas Servicing

We now offer you access to the same services that tenants receive for gas servicing at a very competitive rate.

It will probably be considerably cheaper than other companies who may contact you.

For more information on this, please contact the Leasehold Services Team on 01706 273731.



Satisfied with our services?

Here at RBH, we regularly send out surveys to all our customers, whether tenants or leaseholders, to check we are on the right track and providing the services you want to a good standard.

A satisfaction survey was sent out in April 2008 to all leaseholders. We had about 17% of those surveys back, so thank you to those who replied.

Although generally pleased with the relationship you have with us, one of your areas of concern seemed to be around general routine repairs and the time taken to carry them out. This information has been passed onto the relevant team and we hope you are already noticing an improvement. It is now nearly a year since the last survey, so we will shortly be sending out an updated one for 2009.

Don't forget, we need your views in order for us to improve and deliver a better service to you. As an added incentive, there is a prize of high street shopping vouchers to one lucky survey respondent, so it is worth replying as you could be our lucky winner in 2009. Postage to return any of our surveys is completely free.

What is a lease?



A lease is a legal agreement between the council and the leaseholder. It is a contract setting out the detailed conditions and responsibilities you have as a leaseholder and that the council have as the freeholder.

In particular, the lease describes the flat you have bought and includes a plan showing the flat plus any garden that is your responsibility.

If you have any questions concerning your own lease, or parts of it you don't understand, please give us a call on 01706 273731 or make an appointment to come down to the RBH offices in the Old Post Office, on the Esplanade in Rochdale and we will talk you through it.

Leaseholder Handbook

RBH are currently in the process of producing a fully up to date leaseholder handbook. This will be a comprehensive document for you, which should cover all frequently asked questions relating to being a leaseholder and what it means to be a leaseholder.

As soon as it is ready, we will send you your free copy. Please let us know whether you find it useful and any improvements we could make when it is reviewed in the future.



Get Involved

Leaseholder forums are currently held twice a year. These forums are informal meetings offering the chance for any leaseholders to come along and raise any concerns or issues you may have.

All leaseholders are notified in advance when the meetings are to be held. The last meeting was in November 2008 and was held at the Town Hall in Rochdale. The next meeting is due to be held in May and when a date and a venue are agreed, we will let all leaseholders know.

