



# Open Door

Winter 2010

For the tenants and leaseholders of Cambridge City Council



£43 million improvements, p.2



Your finances, p.7



Your environment, p.10



Festive season, p.13

Inside this issue: *Tips for a Christmas without overspending*

Visit: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/opendoor](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/opendoor)

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## Welcome

**Liz Bisset**, Director of Customer & Community Services

As I write this I can see Cambridge's first snow falling. Over the past five years we have been investing in your homes which means that, along with other improvements, many tenants will have had their heating systems upgraded. This should really make a difference to the warmth of your homes and reduce fuel bills.

As part of the Decent Homes programme we have spent £43 million over the past five years bringing your homes up to the Decent Homes Standard. This edition of Open Door tells you how we invested this money in your homes. About a third of your homes needed this work, and we expect to have completed all planned work on budget and on time by Christmas this year.

I know too that this time of year can be a strain on many people's finances. On page 5 we bring you a feature with tips and resources on how to keep your finances under control over the Christmas period. Those who are up to date with their rent payments also get two 'non-rent' weeks during the Christmas period, giving you an added bonus for keeping your rent account up to date. If you are in arrears these two 'non-rent' weeks give you the opportunity to pay off arrears and reduce your debt.

Christmas is a time when we put on extra events for residents to come and socialize with others. On page 12 you will find contact details for places where you will be welcome to celebrate the festive season with others. You are very welcome to come on your own, or with friends. There is no need to be alone over Christmas if you don't want to be.

Wishing you a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Liz

On the cover: Lights at Rose Crescent

## £43 million invested in your homes

### Biggest-ever investment in maintaining Council homes



**The Council has invested £43.2 million in improvements to tenants' homes since 2005.**

It is the largest maintenance programme ever done on Cambridge City Council homes. Where needed,

improvements included:

- Kitchen and bathroom replacements
- Electrical upgrades
- New high-efficiency gas boilers and heating
- Re-roofing of houses and blocks of flats
- Removal of asbestos and health and safety hazards
- Energy-efficiency upgrades for steel-frame homes

About a third of Council homes needed these improvements to bring them up to the Decent Homes standard required by government by 2010. Over the coming years

any homes that drop below the standard will also have the necessary improvements done to keep them up to the standard.

Tenants' satisfaction with the improvements has been high, averaging above 96%. And tenants' satisfaction with general repairs and maintenance has increased from 73% in 2006 to 79% in 2008, probably due in part to the Decent Homes work.

Your tenant representatives played a big role in helping to select the companies to do the work, namely

Apollo and City Services. They also acted as *Resident Inspectors*, independently scrutinising the quality of work done in tenants' homes. Tenant representatives played such a large part that their input was singled out for praise by the National Audit Office.

So watch out in the New Year for Open Door interviews with tenants in their own words showing how they are getting on with the improvements to their homes, and the ongoing work being done to keep all homes up to the standard.

## You said it...

### Your priorities for scrutiny by your resident reps

Thanks to everyone who returned last issue's survey, saying which services your resident representatives should prioritise for scrutiny.

Resident reps monitor services citywide, making sure you get value for money. Where there is a trend of a service consistently falling below the agreed standards, your resident representatives will have the power to get it

improved.

The survey results showed your order of priority for services to be scrutinised by residents:

1. Repairs
2. Tackling anti-social behaviour
3. Grounds maintenance
4. Cleaning of communal areas
5. Parking problems
6. Customer service at the Council's Customer Service Centre

7. Applying for housing
8. Sheltered accommodation
9. Housing officers supporting your tenancy on your estate
10. Resident involvement opportunities

Across 2011 each Open Door will show you how your resident representatives are scrutinising performance in your priority service-areas.

### Winner!

The lucky winner of the survey's £50 prize-draw was Tanya McTaggart. Keep a look out for more *Freepost* surveys in future issues of Open Door.



## Coming to you in March 2011

### Remember to fill in your Census form next Spring



are needed. Information is also used to plan hospitals and health care, road building and many other public services.

All the information you supply will be sent to the Office of National Statistics, which guarantees strict confidentiality. Your personal information will not be used for any purpose other than for the **Census**.

Don't miss your chance to help shape public services. In March 2011 you will be required to take part in the national **Census**. It takes place once every decade to record the number of people living in the country.

The information it captures about your household is used by organisations like Cambridge City Council to plan services so it's really important that you take part.

For example, what the **Census** says about the number of children in the country is used to decide how many schools



The **Census** questionnaire will arrive to you in the post in March 2011. You will recognise it clearly by the purple **Census** logo on the envelope (above,



left). When you receive your questionnaire all you need to do is answer questions about yourself and everyone in your household on 27 March 2011.

You will be given a pre-paid envelope to send it back for free, or you can complete the questionnaire online if you prefer. To find out more phone 01329-

444972 or visit online at [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk).

### Census jobs

Around 35,000 jobs are now being advertised for people to do paid work for the **Census**. If you who would like to earn some extra money, phone 0845-304-0960 to apply, or visit online at [www.censusjobs.gov.uk](http://www.censusjobs.gov.uk) to find out more.

# Your Home, Your Say

Your resident representatives working on your behalf

See [www.cambridge.gov.uk/yourhomeyoursay](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/yourhomeyoursay)



## Your housing service is one of very few in the country with tenants and leaseholders:

- on the *Board* that debates and votes on all the highest-level housing decisions
- having equal voting rights alongside councillors
- elected onto the *Board* every 4 years by all the Council's 8,300 tenants and leaseholders
- alternating as Chair, running half of the *Board's* meetings

Above are the 6 tenant and leaseholder representatives that you elected. Every 3 months they sit with councillors to debate and vote on the major decisions for the housing service. They have also been overseeing:

- over £30 million of housing business annually
- projects like the £43.2 million *Decent Homes* programme of improvements to tenants' homes

They are always keen to hear tenants' and leaseholders' viewpoints. You can contact them directly by:

- writing to any of them via the Open Door office (address on back cover of magazine)
- emailing them directly at: [HMBreps@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:HMBreps@cambridge.gov.uk)

## People's Millions for the Jubilee

As part of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in 2012, *The Jubilee People's Millions* will be making 60 awards of up to £60,000 for new projects that improve local places or the lives of people in the community. The public will have the final vote, so ideas need to capture the public imagination. Got an idea for your community group or neighbourhood? To enter, just complete an entry form at [www.peoplesmillions.org.uk](http://www.peoplesmillions.org.uk), phone 0845-0101112 or email [general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk](mailto:general.enquiries@biglotteryfund.org.uk) Phone the Open Door office at 01223-458323 if you'd like some advice or guidance on entering this national competition.

## Residents ensuring quality services & value for money

### Residents' *Housing Regulation Panel*...

- scrutinise the quality of housing services
- have the power to get any weak services improved
- feed information up to the resident representatives you elected onto the *Housing Management Board*
- are the *Board's* 'eyes and ears' on estates to ensure you get value for money at grassroots level



Archie Ferguson, *Residents' Panel*

They have been busy in monthly meetings:

- helping to organise the new **Communal Window Cleaning Contract**
- as a focus group conveying residents' priorities to the Council
- organising the **2011 Residents' Housing Tour** (see Open Door in spring 2011 to book your free place)
- defining their system for testing services in 2011

This is what is meant by housing regulation that is '**Resident-Led**'.

Watch this space for updates or phone the Open Door office at 01223-458323 to get involved yourself.

# Councillors and your housing

Did you know that your housing service is managed by the city councillors that you elect in local elections?



Because they are public services, all services delivered by the Council are run by committees of local politicians elected by you, the public, at local elections. They decide on all budgets, priorities, projects and policies. They oversee all the work of the Council's paid staff, who carry out the decisions made by these councillors elected by you, the public.



As you saw on the page opposite, the *Housing Management Board* is the committee of city councillors who manage your housing service. The *Lead Councillor for Housing* is Catherine Smart, councillor for the Romsey area. Across the year Open Door shows you the councillors who oversee your housing alongside your resident representatives on the *Housing Management Board*. These councillors are...



Andy Blackhurst, *Trumpington*, Liberal Democrats  
Simon Brierley, *King's Hedges*, Liberal Democrats  
Alan Levy, *Arbury*, Liberal Democrats  
Stuart Newbold, *Cherry Hinton*, Labour  
Ian Nimmo-Smith, *West Chesterton*,

Liberal Democrats (photo, top left) Adam Pogonowski, *Abbey*, Green Party (photo, middle left) Jean Swanson, *Queen Edith's*, Liberal Democrats (photo, bottom left) Mike Todd-Jones, *Arbury*, Labour Lucy Walker, *Petersfield*, Labour Tania Zmura, *Castle*, Liberal Democrats Tim Ward, *Arbury*, Liberal Democrats Margaret Wright, *Abbey*, Green Party

You can contact councillors via the Open Door office (details on back cover) or see their direct contact details online at: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/about-the-council/councillors](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/about-the-council/councillors)

Why not watch the **YouTube Video** by your resident representatives on the Council's website? In it they show you a *Board* meeting and explain how their role gives you a direct influence on Council decisions. **View it online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/yourhomeyoursay](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/yourhomeyoursay)**



## Performance - How are we doing?

Are you getting a good service? How well is your landlord performing?

With the help of your tenant and leaseholder representatives, the housing service is working hard on improving its performance further. Your resident representatives help to set targets for delivering the best possible service with the money available.

The **Annual Report for Tenants** enclosed with the summer 2010 issue of Open Door showed you how services performed against these targets, as well as how they compare to those of other social landlords. In Open Door we also give you regular snapshots of the performance information scrutinised by your resident representatives across the year.

If you have any questions about any of the information above or if you'd like to get involved in monitoring performance, just get in touch.

Phone the Resident Involvement office at 01223- 458325 or email: [yourhomeyoursay@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:yourhomeyoursay@cambridge.gov.uk)

### Your rent in 2009/'10...

**% of rent collected successfully:** over **98%**, the same as in the previous year (Compared to other social landlords, the Council's performance for collecting rent is above average)

**Saving per property because more of the rent was collected successfully: £8.91** per property

**% of tenants evicted for not paying rent: 0.25%**, down from 0.34% in previous year

**% of properties re-let during year: 7.95%**, up from 7.25% in previous year

**Properties available but not yet let** by end of year: **0.36%**, down from 1.26% in previous year (The fact that fewer properties stood vacant for less time meant an increase in the overall rent coming in, as you saw above)

# Help with your finances

If you have money worries or need financial advice, just phone 01223-458418 (north) or 01223-458302 (south)



## Christmas without money-worries

A simpler Christmas without excess spending

Since the recession, we all have had to learn better habits with our money. Whether we have a little or a lot coming in, the golden rule for avoiding stress and trouble is simply never to spend more than we can afford.

time, when aggressive advertising on the television and in shops can hike up the pressure and the temptation to spend more. But by not spending more than we have coming in, stress and worry fall away and we can emphasise the things that actually make people happier - and yet often cost nothing.

Why not sit down and plan a simpler Christmas without extra spending? Instead of focusing on purchases at the shops, why not make a list of ways to spend quality time doing things with friends, family or neighbours over the festive season?



It is a gift in itself to keep someone company for a while. You could give them your time, cook them a simple meal, take them out for a walk, listen to music together on the radio, or make them a small home-made gift or card... Most people value these things more than anything we can buy for them in shops.



We all have to ensure we keep up this approach even at Christmas

## Timebanks and credit unions

Help to ease your financial worries

If you contribute to the **TimeBank** some of the neighbourly activities just listed in the article on the left, then you can receive other people's skills and time in return for free! So what do you need done? A bit of gardening, DIY, lifts to the shops? Just phone David Boffey at 07757-103149 to find out what help and services you could give and receive for free at your local **TimeBank**.

**Credit Unions** are another non-profit, community-based organisation that can help keep your finances in order. You can start saving with them even if you have little spare cash. Then they can give you loans at a much cheaper interest-rate than most lenders. Just phone 01223-314664 to speak to one of your local **Credit Unions** today.

# Dealing with housing debt

The *Citizens Advice Bureau* is there to help Council residents with debt problems

Debt-advisors from the *Citizens Advice Bureau* are now available every Thursday morning at the Council's Customer Service Centre at Mandela House in Regent Street.

They are giving free, confidential advice to residents who may have fallen behind with rent or Council payments, or who are worried about losing their homes. Just phone 01223-457918 for an appointment.



This way, any tenant or local resident can get quick and easy advice about money problems.

Often debts can be managed by getting the right advice early on.

'We can often prevent people getting into more difficulties'

The *Citizens Advice Bureau* finds this makes a real difference to people getting into financial problems. They explain: 'We can do a full benefits check for people to find out if they qualify for any support they're not getting. If we do this at the start of debt problems, we can often prevent more difficulties.'

We also advise people not to borrow from 'doorstep lenders' who charge very high interest on loans. This often leads to a spiral of debt, ultimately resulting in homelessness. We can advise on how you can manage your debts and



take back control over your finances, setting you on the right track for the future.'

Anyone concerned about financial problems affecting their housing can:

- phone the *Citizens Advice Bureau* at 0844-

8487979, 2-4pm

- go in person to their drop-in service at 66, Devonshire Road, 9.30-1pm, Monday to Friday

- visit the *Citizens Advice Bureau* online at [www.cambridgecab.org.uk](http://www.cambridgecab.org.uk).

## Many ways to pay your rent...

Direct debit	Online	Phone	From your salary	In person
Just fill in a direct debit form, choosing whether you'd like to pay on the 1st, 15th or 26th of each month.	Use the Council's online payment service, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit <a href="http://www.cambridge.gov.uk">www.cambridge.gov.uk</a> and click <i>Make an online payment</i> on the home-page.	Phone 01223-457000 to pay with your debit or credit card.	Check whether your employer offers this service. If so, ask your housing office to send you a form.	Pop in to pay at the Council's Customer Service Centre in Regent Street, at your local housing office or at any Post Office.

## Where else to get free, confidential advice?

These agencies can give you a range of free, reliable advice on finances, debt, housing, legal issues or family law:

**UK Insolvency Helpline**  
Tel. 0800-074-6918 (for advice on debt)

**Cambridge Money Advice**  
Barnwell Church, Howard Road, Cambridge CB5 8QF  
Tel. 01223-727455 (for advice on budgeting, saving, spending and debt)

**At the Council**  
James Stephenson can advise on rent, benefits and finances, tel. 01223-458418 or 01223-458302



# Your Environment

Help make Cambridge a *Sustainable City*... Visit online at: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment-and-recycling](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/environment-and-recycling)

## Tenants' gardens win prizes

Communal gardens, hanging baskets, school gardens and more

This year's **Tenants' Garden Competition** was a great success again, featuring a variety of entries in lots of different categories. Tenants' big, small, new, and communal gardens were all on display. Categories included those for balconies, pots, hanging gardens and school gardens.



of gardeners had concentrated on growing their own vegetables. Some schools and gardeners had raised money for plants and equipment by selling their own produce.

One veg patch was so beautifully planted it looked like a flower garden. It was great to see gardeners growing their own produce, sharing seeds and cuttings, and recycling old containers.

The tallest sunflower remained a popular category, with only centimetres between the winner and the runner-up.

Winners received their



prizes at the annual **Residents' Day** event (featured in last edition of *Open Door*), where Councillor Catherine Smart was on hand to present the cash prizes and winners' certificates.

Planning for the **2011 Tenants' Garden Competition** is already underway, plus there are new gardening workshops for beginners

and enthusiasts. They will cover planting, growing and how to put together a winning hanging basket.

If you're interested in learning more about gardening or want to enter the 2011 competition, phone the Cambridge Federation at 01223-568318 or visit online at [www.cambridgefederation.com](http://www.cambridgefederation.com)



The judges commented: 'The gardens are always a pleasure to see and we are so impressed with the hard work that goes into them'.

In the current financial climate, your garden can be one of the first places to save you money - if you know how to use it! Increasing numbers

## The Big Litter Pick

Coldham's Common gets an autumn clean-up

A recent **Litter Pick** on Coldham's Common was a big success. Organised by the **Abbey Action** community group, it gave the Common a fine clean-up for autumn. The volunteers ensured that all the recyclable rubbish they gathered

got recycled. Working in pairs, one picked up recyclable items like bottles, cans and paper, while the other collected the unrecyclable waste.

The Council's Estate Champion Will Beavitt said: 'I was delighted

that it worked so well. Almost half of the 95 sacks of rubbish gathered were recycled.'

City Rangers lent a hand with their truck and the Nature Reserves Officer kept an eye on the new nature reserve at the

end of the Common.

The event was featured on the **Keep Britain Tidy** web page, where you can find out about more **Tidy Up** events coming soon. Visit online at [www.thebigtidyup.org](http://www.thebigtidyup.org)

## Clean up for Ditton Fields

Local residents *Clean Up* while enjoying a community day

The City Council, local residents and the churches of the Abbey area recently got together for a rewarding community day in Ditton Fields. The day was even featured in the *Cambridge News*!

The *Clean Up* was a chance for people to have a big clean-out, with free skips provided and help clearing gardens. There were even some odd jobs done for people who were struggling with DIY and maintenance.

### 3.9 tonnes of garden waste recycled!

Things as diverse as bits of wood, old bikes, batteries and clothing were all recycled, as well as garden waste. No less than 3.9 tonnes of garden waste was recycled, and a further 6.3 tonnes of general waste was collected! In all, a small mountain of rubbish - about 90

cubic metres - was collected and disposed of. Residents were extremely happy to see unwanted waste being dealt with appropriately.

### Activities and advice for all...

Stalls that were busy throughout the day included:

- the *Exchange Area* where people exchanged items they no longer needed
- *Recycling Advice* telling you everything you ever needed to know about recycling in the city
- activities for young people with the Council's *CHYPPS* Team and residents from Romsey Mill
- the Council's dog warden with advice on managing dogs in the area

'a really good day and a wonderful opportunity'



There was a strong feeling of community throughout the day. Local churches kindly ran a barbecue for all the volunteers and council staff involved. Rev Stuart Wood of Barnwell Baptist Church said:

'It was a really good day and a wonderful opportunity to show the church at its best

- serving the local community. To do so in partnership with the Council just adds to the buzz. It was really good to connect up the volunteers and local residents.'

If you'd like to organise a *Clean Up* day in your area, why not get in touch with your local housing officer?

## Your Christmas present for the planet: recycling!

Christmas can be a peak time of year for rubbish - but it's also your peak opportunity for recycling! You can get a real feel-good factor by recycling most Christmas waste at home now. It's simple, clean and takes just a moment. Use...

- **Your Blue Bin** for wrapping paper, flyers, cardboard packaging and Christmas cards
- **Your Green Bin** for all food waste, cooked or raw (wrapped in newspaper)
- **Charity shops** for all unwanted gifts and discarded items after Christmas

Many people use their *New Year Resolutions* to increase their household's recycling year on year. Just set yourself the goal of putting the least amount possible in your black bin every week as rubbish. Together the people of Cambridge are making a real difference, increasing recycling year on year.

And why not take it a step further by becoming a Community Recycling Champion? For just a little of your time you'll gain great experience and make a real difference to the planet. Just phone Mark Buckton at 01223-457673 or email [Mark.Buckton@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:Mark.Buckton@cambridge.gov.uk)



# Your Neighbourhoods

Working with residents to improve their communities. Visit online at:  
[www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/community-and-living](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/community-and-living)

## Evicted for anti-social behaviour

The Council responds quickly, firmly and proportionately

**You have told the Council that seeing anti-social behaviour tackled is a high priority for you as residents.**

Tenants were recently evicted from two different Council properties for anti-social behaviour. One was for rowdy, noisy and threatening behaviour, with the property also being used to store and exchange stolen goods. The other case involved a tenant using a Council property to make and distribute drugs.



Part of the Council's role as landlord is to ensure that the small minority of tenants who cause trouble are dealt with quickly, firmly and proportionately.

Most of the anti-social behaviour in Council properties tackled by the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team and housing officers consists of neighbour-noise, inappropriate parking and misuse of communal areas. They may not seem like serious issues to some, but for those

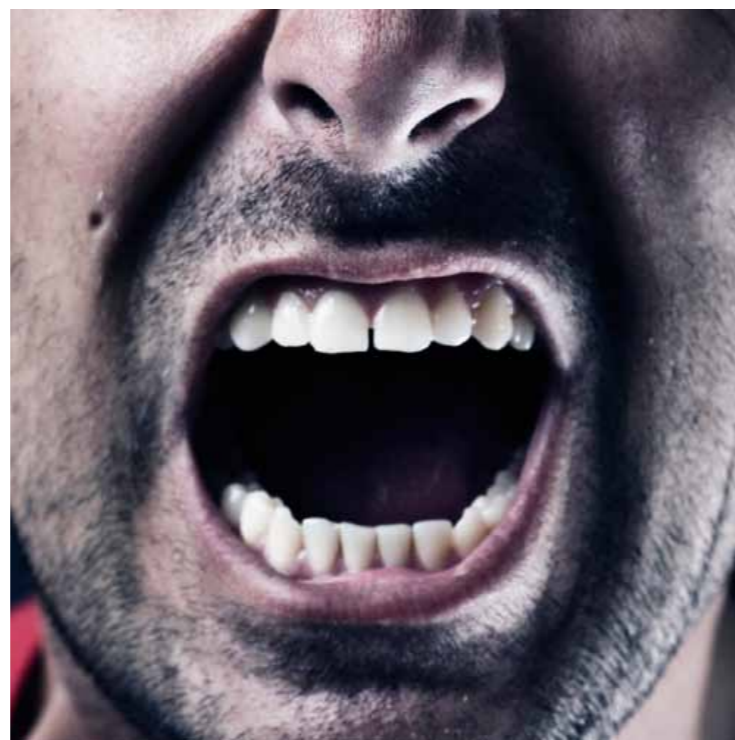
experiencing them, they can be very distressing.

The Council often deals with this sort of low-level anti-social behaviour by first sending warning letters or making home visits. Some culprits aren't even aware that their behaviour is upsetting other people, and a letter or visit often stops the problem.

More serious cases can take much longer to resolve. Some perpetrators deny they are behaving badly, or they make counter-allegations against neighbours which then also have to be investigated. In prolonged cases neighbours may have to keep formal records of the problem behaviours. Specialists like the police, environmental health officers or social services may have to become involved.

Sometimes a case is so serious or the perpetrator so uncooperative that the Council has no alternative but to go to Court and have them evicted. This is normally a last resort, but the Council will always seek to evict an offending tenant if it is the only way to protect the neighbourhood and community.

**'We are all very pleased that residents who**



**have suffered a lot of disruption can now get on with their lives'**

After the recent evictions Lynda Kilkelly, *Safer Communities* manager at the Council, said: 'No officer rejoices when someone is evicted. However, we are all very pleased that residents who have suffered a lot of disruption can now get on with their lives'. Andrew Latchem, manager of City



Homes North, adds: 'I am happy that two properties that were being misused will now be available for people in housing need'.

You don't have to put up with anti-social behaviour. Report it to:

City Homes North, tel. 01223-458440

City Homes South, tel. 0800-5872031

Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team, tel. 01223-457950

# Clearing snow and ice

Working together to manage winter weather in Cambridge



Last year we came close to a white Christmas. Weather experts say we may be in for more of the same this winter.

When the weather turns very cold it is the County Council's responsibility to grit major roads and footpaths.

City Council staff work with the County Council, helping them to clear snow and ice from pavements, footpaths and roads.

If Cambridge City Council staff can't go about their normal duties due to snow and ice, they

still play their part in keeping Cambridge safe by clearing snow and ice from:

- city centre car parks
- sheltered housing
- the crematorium and city cemeteries

### Advice on clearing snow and ice

Residents are often keen to help keep untreated pavements and pathways safe by clearing the snow and ice themselves. The Council encourages local residents to play their part in helping the community in this way.

### The law on clearing ice and snow from public areas

There is no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice from the pavement or pathways outside your house or other public space. If an accident subsequently happened there, it is

unlikely you would be sued as long as you:

- had used care and common sense
- had ensured you didn't leave the pavement or pathway clearly more dangerous than it was before

People using areas affected by snow and ice also have their own legal responsibility to be careful about their own personal safety too.

When snow and ice arrive in Cambridge, this is the number for road and pavement gritting at the County Council: 0345-045-5212

For more information phone Cambridge City Council at 01223-458282 or email the Council at [enquiries@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@cambridge.gov.uk)



### Tips for clearing snow and ice

The government has issued a **Snow Code** that gives advice on safely removing snow and ice from outside your property, pathways and public spaces.

- If snow is forecast, bring your shovel indoors to avoid crossing snow or ice to get it from a garden shed
- Start early - it is much easier to clear fresh, loose snow rather than ice that has been compacted by people walking on it
- Think about where you will put the shovelled snow so that you don't block paths or drainage channels
- Use a shovel with the widest blade available
- Clear a line down the middle of your path first, so you have a safe surface to walk on - then you

can shovel the snow from the centre to the sides

- Don't use hot water - this will melt the snow but will replace it with black ice, increasing the risk of injury

- Use the sun to your advantage: removing the top layer of snow allows the sun to melt any ice underneath, although you will need to cover any ice with salt to stop it refreezing overnight
- Use ordinary cooking salt, ash or sand to prevent ice forming (avoid spreading it on plants or grass)
- Be extra careful around any steps, kerbs or slopes
- Please remember to be a good neighbour by helping anyone who is unable to clear snow and ice from their own pathways

The full **Snow Code** is available by phoning the Council's Customer Service Centre at 01223-458282, or online at [www.directgov.gov.uk](http://www.directgov.gov.uk) by typing 'snow code' into the search box.

# Count Me In...

For a diverse and tolerant city where everyone has a stake in the community

## Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum

Providing racial equality services



Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum is an umbrella organisation bringing together the city's ethnic community groups. It provides services to groups and individuals on racial equality, anti-racism and cohesion with the wider community. The Forum promotes understanding between people from different ethnic backgrounds, helping all to play a meaningful part in Cambridge life. It offers a drop-in service and free computer use from Monday to Friday, 10am- 1pm. Two key projects it supports are:

- **Cambridge Racial Incident Support Project (CRISP)**, a free service giving advice, advocacy and support to individuals and families experiencing discrimination. Visit

online at [www.cecf.co.uk/crisp.html](http://www.cecf.co.uk/crisp.html)

- **Cambridge Refugee & Migrant Support**, giving advice and a drop-in service, Tues, Wed, Thurs, 10am-1pm. Visit online at [www.cecf.co.uk/crms.html](http://www.cecf.co.uk/crms.html)

To contact the Forum, just phone 01223-315877, email [cecfenquiries@cecf.co.uk](mailto:cecfenquiries@cecf.co.uk) or visit at 62-64 Victoria Road, Cambridge CB4 3DU.



### National increase in hate crimes

Police dealt with more than 50,000 'hate crimes' in the UK last year, over 12% more than in the previous year. They believe many more hate crimes still go

unreported. Last year's hate crimes included:

- 43,000 attacks on people just for their race
- 5,000 attacks on people just for their sexual orientation
- 2,000 attacks on people just for their religion
- 1,500 attacks on

### Needs of older ethnic minority people

Proportionally, the Council's sheltered accommodation is not used by the city's ethnic minority communities as much as by white British citizens. Over the past two years the Council's *Independent Living Service* has been exploring why this is. To find out more from older ethnic minority



residents, there has been a range of events for them such as presentations, coffee mornings, Resident Association meetings, charity dinners and Christmas celebrations. This outreach included:

- presentations to community groups, including the Pakistani and Indian communities
- setting up

presentations for the Polish and Chinese communities

- working closely with support groups such as *Action for Black & Minority Ethnic Communities Cambridgeshire* and *Cambridge Volunteers Service*, who both bring a valuable knowledge of the city's communities

The *Independent Living Service* presentations to community elders give useful information about the support services available to people over 60. They also explain **CareLine**, a community alarm service that gives any customer an emergency 24-hour response, 365 days a year. In these sessions, people from ethnic minorities have also been able to tell the Council:

- what their support needs are
- what would help them to come forward and use the Council's Independent Living Service
- what would make the service more attractive to the ethnic people who may need its support

For more information phone Tracey Hine at 01223-458002.

people just for their disability

If you or someone you know have any concerns about racial harassment, please phone the City Council's **Racial Harassment Service** at 01223-457967. (Outside office hours, phone the

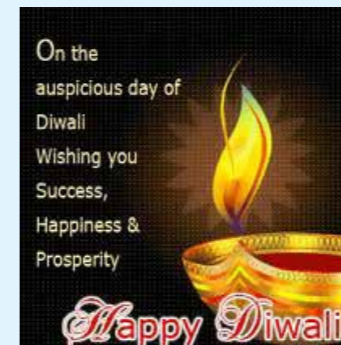
emergency number at 07973-883-261). The service is confidential and no action is taken without the victim's consent. It can also put you in touch with organisations offering counselling and support.

## The Spirit of Christmas

16 million people in Britain now describe themselves as having no religion. But for Britain's 6 million practising Christians, Christmas is a prayerful ritual rather than just a holiday season. Only 9% of people in Britain are practising Christians now but 71% still describe themselves as from a Christian background.

The Council marks the festive season by giving its tenants two 'non-rent' weeks, decorating the streets with lights and placing a giant Christmas tree for all to enjoy in the Market Square.

About 800 City Council tenants and leaseholders also celebrate other festivals of light in winter. For instance, Britain's



Greetings card for Diwali, the Hindu festival of light

2 million Muslims celebrate *Eid al-Adha*. The country's 800,000 Hindus celebrate *Diwali*, their own festival of light. Residents from Chinese backgrounds mark *Chinese New Year* with a loud and colourful festival. And long before Christianity, the mid-winter solstice was already a nature-based festival of light for the

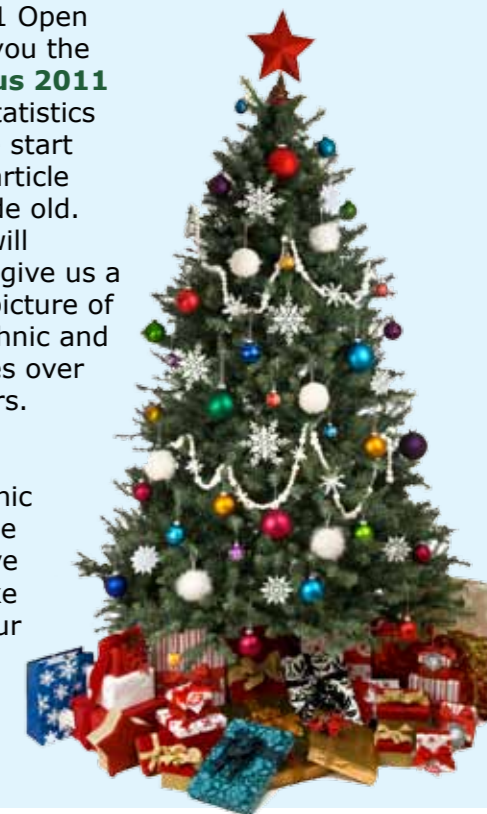
indigenous people of this island.

### So who will we be in 2011?

In summer 2011 Open Door will bring you the results of **Census 2011** (see page 2). Statistics like those at the start of this present article are now a decade old. **Census 2011** will update them to give us a more accurate picture of our country's ethnic and religious changes over the past 10 years.

So whether you are from an ethnic minority, practice a religion or have no religion, make sure to fill in your Census form so that your group will be accurately

counted and receive the recognition it fairly deserves in our society.



## Don't be lonely this Christmas

There are events that anyone can join in with

For many, Christmas can be a lonely, stressful time. If you feel like a bit of company, why not phone the Council's sheltered accommodation and join in with some of their celebrations? All ages are welcome - just phone 01223-314800 to book your place. Residents and staff will appreciate your company.



If you'd like to attend Christian ceremonies, most local churches will welcome you if you just turn up at their services. And most local community centres will also welcome you to non-religious activities over the holiday season.

The recession made it a hard year for many,

with less cash to spend and more worry about finances. So we could all heed the Samaritans' suggestions. Their advice is that we make this Christmas a different one. Step out of the rat-race and remind yourself and those around you that Christmas is above all a time to relax, unwind, and enjoy the simpler things in life. Take this opportunity to focus

more on relaxing at home together, and less on spending money on expensive gifts, meals or drinks.

Christmas doesn't have to be a big deal - if you want, you can also just treat it as an ordinary day. But if you feel unable to cope, you needn't be alone. Anyone can contact the Samaritans just to talk, by phoning 08457-909090. You could email them at [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org), or just drop in to see them at 4, Emmanuel Road, Cambridge CB1 1JW, around the corner from Drummer Street bus station. They will always make you welcome, every day of the year.

### A Christmas present...?



**Street Voices** are a music band of homeless and formerly homeless people in Cambridge (featured in last issue). They have just released a CD of songs written and performed by the group.

To hear them, visit their website at [www.streetvoices.org.uk](http://www.streetvoices.org.uk)

To buy their CD, just email [streetvoicescambridge@googlemail.com](mailto:streetvoicescambridge@googlemail.com)

# Sports and activities for all in 2011

## Activity opportunities for all

The Council supports sports, fitness and activity projects across the city. For information, phone the Sports Development service at 01223-457532 or visit online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/citysport](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/citysport)



You can find out even more in the new **CitySport** brochure,

available from January 2011. Pick one up in libraries, leisure centres or community centres. Phone the number above to request a copy, or download one online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/citysport](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/citysport)

### Health Walks

New citywide **Health Walks** will be starting in 2011. The walks will initially take place in Cherry Hinton, Trumpington, Abbey, Arbury, Chesterton and Kings Hedges. They'll be between 1 and 5 miles long, around areas of green space and natural beauty. To find a **Health Walk** near you, visit online at [www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.wfh.naturalengland.org.uk)

Why not become a volunteer leader for a **Health Walk**? You will receive training and be given everything you need to lead a safe and effective **Health Walk**. Just phone 01223-457532 or email [sportsdevelopment@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:sportsdevelopment@cambridge.gov.uk)

### Generation Games

Throughout 2011, there will also be a monthly programme of family sport, giving you new skills and fun activities for your family to enjoy. There will be climbing, golf, rounders, archery, tennis, badminton and table tennis, with more sessions to be announced.

### Forever Active

**Forever Active** offers exercise and sports sessions for the over-50s. All abilities are catered for, from chair-based sessions for those with mobility problems to dance, pilates, golf, and rowing for the more active. To get your copy of the **Forever Active** brochure, just phone the Sports Development Service at 01223-457532.

Or why not claim a voucher to attend one of the sessions for free? Just phone the number above and quote 'Open Door', or see the website [www.forever-active.org.uk](http://www.forever-active.org.uk)

Cambridge City Council

# Christmas & New Year opening hours



### Customer Service Centre, Mandela House

01223 457000  
You can call or visit the Customer Service Centre between the following hours:

December 24	8am – 2pm
December 25 to 28	closed
December 29 & 30	8am – 6pm
December 31	8am – 4pm
January 1 to 3	closed

### The Guildhall, City Homes Area Offices North and South

01223 457000	
December 24	9am – 2pm
December 25 to 28	closed
December 29*	9am – 5pm
December 30	9am – 5pm
December 31	9am – 4pm
January 1 to 3	closed

\*City Homes Area Offices 10am – 5pm

### Cemeteries and crematorium

01954 780681	
December 24	9am – 2pm
December 25 to 28	closed
December 29	9am – 5pm
December 30	9am – 5pm
December 31	9am – 4pm
January 1 to 3	closed

The Crematorium Garden and Book of Remembrance will be open daily from 9am to 5.30pm.

Newmarket Road Cemetery will be open daily throughout the Christmas and New Year period (vehicle access from 9am to 4pm only).

### Market

01223 457446	
December 24	normal opening
December 25 to 28	closed
December 29 to 31	normal opening
January 1	closed
January 2	normal opening
January 3	closed

### Shopmobility Grand Arcade

01223 457452	
December 24	10am – 2pm
December 25 to 28	closed
December 29 to 31	10am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2	closed
January 3	closed

### Shopmobility Grafton Centre

01223 461858	
December 24	10am – 4pm
December 25 to 28	closed
December 29 to 31	10am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2	closed
January 3	closed

### Tourist Information Centre

0871 226 8006	
(calls charged at lo-call rate)	
December 24	10am – 2pm
December 25 to 28	closed
December 29 to 31	10am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2	closed
January 3	11am – 3pm

### Abbey Pool and Gym

01223 213352	
December 24*	6.30am – 2pm
December 25 & 26	closed
December 27 to 28*	8am – 2pm
December 29 & 30*	8am – 8pm
December 31*	8am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2 to 3*	8am – 6pm

\*Opening times may change due to maintenance work, please contact pool directly.

### Parkside Pools

01223 446100	
December 24*	7am – 2pm
December 25 & 26	closed
December 27 & 28*	8am – 5.30pm
December 29 & 30*	7am – 4.30pm
December 31*	7am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2 & 3*	8am – 5.30pm

\*Opening times may change due to maintenance work, please contact pool directly.

### Kings Hedges Learner Pool

01223 353248	
December 24 to January 3	closed

### Cherry Hinton Village Centre

01223 576412	
December 24 to 28	closed
December 29 & 30	9am – 10pm
December 31	9am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2	2pm – 5pm
January 3	9am – 10pm

### Corn Exchange Box Office

01223 357851	
December 24	10am – 8pm
December 25	closed
December 26	12pm – 3pm
December 27 & 28	12pm – 8pm
December 29 & 30	10am – 8pm
December 31	10am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2	closed
January 3	closed

### Rubbish and recycling collections

01223 458282

Normal collection	Actual collection
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Fri	Dec 24	no change
Mon	Dec 27	Tues Dec 28
Tues	Dec 28	no change
Weds	Dec 29	no change
Thurs	Dec 30	no change
Fri	Dec 31	no change
Mon	Jan 3	Tues Jan 4
Tues	Jan 4	no change

Please make use of the recycling points across the city for any extra recycling.

Real Christmas trees can be recycled at Cherry Hinton Hall from December 26 to January 16, or cut up and put in your green bin.

### Recycling Centre at Milton

0345 045 5207	
December 24	9am – 1pm
December 25 & 26	closed
December 27 to 31	9am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2 & 3	9am – 4pm

### Homeless People

Out of hours emergency number  
01706 242818

### Emergency noise

01223 457457  
This service will be available each night from 7pm to 7am and also from 9am to 5pm on each Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday.

### Street Cleaning

01223 458282 during open office hours  
This service will operate daily from 6am to 8pm.

# Help getting around with Cambridge Dial-a-ride

Residents who are disabled or find it difficult to access public transport can get help from **Dial-A-Ride** for travelling around Cambridge.

Cambridge **Dial-A-Ride** is a charity supported by the City Council. It provides a personal transport service for

those with limited mobility, enabling them to get out and about easily. Fares start from £3.75 for a single journey and discounts are available for those with concessionary bus passes.

Helpful drivers pick up members from their homes and drive

them to places like doctors' or dentists' surgeries, hairdressers, supermarkets or the main shopping areas in Cambridge.

Many individuals already use the weekday travel service to visit day centres or meet community groups in and around the city.



To find out more phone **Cambridge Dial-A-Ride** at 01223-506335 or visit online at [www.cambridge.gov.uk/dial-a-ride](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/dial-a-ride)

# County Council to provide concessionary bus passes

From April 2011 the County Council will take on responsibility for providing concessionary bus passes for eligible residents in Cambridgeshire.

Residents who have a current bus pass will

not need to reapply, and existing bus passes remain valid until their expiry date.

Each district council, including Cambridge City Council, currently manages this service for its local residents and

this will continue until 31 March 2011.

Existing concessionary bus pass holders' information will be transferred to the County Council in order to continue the service. The data will be used only for

the purpose of continuing the concessionary bus pass scheme. All data will be kept confidential. For more information about concessionary bus passes, phone 01223-457200 or visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk/buspass](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/buspass)



## Useful Phone Numbers

### All general enquiries

01223-457000

(8am-6pm, Monday to Friday)

### Rents Freephone

North: 0800-731-5030

South: 0800-731-4878

### Repairs Freephone

North: 0800-731-4876 South: 0800-731-5274

Late appointments for repairs are now available on Tuesday and Thursday evenings until 6pm. Just ask when requesting your repair.

### Morrison (gas servicing)

0845-6500065

### Out of hours emergency repairs

01223-457457

### Anti-social behaviour team

01223-457950 or asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk

### Racial Harassment

01223-457967, or 07973-883261 out of hours

### Touch-tone phone payments

With debit card or credit card: 01223-457779

### Internet payments

www.cambridge.gov.uk

### Citizens' Advice Bureau

0844-8487979

### Cambridge Mediation Service

01223-302514

### Cambridge Federation of Tenants, Leaseholders and Residents

01223-568318

## Residents' Diary Dates

To influence your housing service, just come along

### Robert at Home

*Tenants influencing City Homes North*

Jan 18th, 2011, 2.30pm, Mansel Court

March 22nd, 2011, 2.30pm, Mansel Court

May 24th, 2011, 2.30pm, Mansel Court

July 20th, 2011, 2.30pm, Mansel Court

### Southside Partnership

*Tenants influencing City Homes South*

Dec 7th, 2010, 2.30pm, Mill Road Depot

Feb 1st, 2011, 2.30pm, Lichfield Training Room

April 12th, 2011, 2.30pm, Lichfield Training Room

June 21st, 2011, 2.30pm, Lichfield Training Room

### Robert at Home and Southside Partnership

*Tenants influencing City Homes*

Feb 23rd, 2011, 2.30pm, Lichfield Training Room

### Sheltered Scheme Residents' Association

*Influencing the Independent Living Service*

Dec 15th, 2010, 1.30 pm, Mansel Court

Jan 12th, 2011, 1.30 pm, Stanton House

Feb 9th, 2011, 1.30 pm, Ditton Court

March 9th, 2011, 1.30 pm, Talbot House

### Leaseholder Consultation Meetings

*Influencing the Leasehold Service*

Mon 10th Jan, 2011, 6.30pm, Meadows Community

Centre (A solicitor from LEASE, the Leasehold

Advisory Service, will be speaking so come along to

get **FREE, expert legal advice** on any aspect of your leasehold property.)

**Open Door** is also available in other languages, including those listed below. If you need an interpreter or would like this document translated, please ask at any Council Housing Reception.

You can now translate most of the Council's web pages yourself into most languages at the click of a button. Just visit [www.cambridge.gov.uk](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk) and use the button marked 'Google Translate'.

Jeśli potrzebują Państwo tłumacza lub chcieliby otrzymać bezpłatne tłumaczenie tego dokumentu, proszę poprosić w dowolnej recepcji do spraw mieszkaniowych.

আপনি যদি এই দলিলটি বিনামূল্যে অনুবাদ করতে চান, তাহলে হাউজিং-এর যে কোন অভ্যর্থনালয়ে খোঁজ নিন অথবা 01223-458325 নম্বরে ফোন করুন।

Eğer bir tercümana ihtiyacınız varsa veya bu dökümanın ücretsiz olarak tercüme edilmesini istiyorsanız, lütfen Ev İşlerine bakan Resepsiyonlardan birine başvurunuz.

如需使用口譯服務或索取本資料的免費譯本，請與任何一所房屋辦事處聯絡。

Si pour lire ce magazine vous avez besoin d'un interprète ou d'une traduction écrite, veuillez venir le demander à la réception du Conseil Municipal.

**Open Door** is also available in large print. Please phone 01223-458325.

Open Door is reviewed by a panel of residents before publication to ensure it continues to reflect tenants' and leaseholders' interests. Would you like to help produce Open Door? Just send your letters, articles or suggestions to:

Open Door, City Homes, 89 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, CB1 7BS  
Tel. 01223-458323, email: [yourhomeyoursay@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:yourhomeyoursay@cambridge.gov.uk)

**Open Door is available online at: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/opendoor](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/opendoor)**