

Contents

National changes to housing finances	2
Elections coming up	3
Progress-report on your services	5
Residents monitor performance	6
Tackling anti-social behaviour	7
Help with your finances	8
Caring for your environment	9
<i>Count Me In</i> - Equality for all	10
Be prepared for winter	11
Opening hours in holiday season	14

On the cover: Jesus Green



Welcome

Liz Bisset,
Director of Customer
& Community
Services

Welcome to the winter edition of Open Door. From April 2012 major changes are taking place in the way housing services are financed. These are national changes for all Council Housing that will help us in our long term planning of how we fund our priorities, which are providing you with good day to day housing management support, repairing and maintaining our housing stock and building more affordable housing.

On page 2 we remind you about 'self-financing' - the change to the way your housing service will be financed from April 2011 onwards. You will also receive an individual letter explaining these important changes. In the meantime, feel free to contact us by phoning 01223-457822 if you have any further questions about self-financing after reading the article.

In this edition there is also a page of information showing how your housing service has performed in recent months. I am very aware that one of the most important issues for tenants is how we address anti-social behaviour. There is a feature on the range of things that the Council is doing to tackle anti-social behaviour on your estates, especially anti-social behaviour that targets vulnerable or disabled people.

As usual in our winter edition, there is an article suggesting how best to manage your finances and avoid debt over the Christmas season. We are predicted a cold winter. We are planning how best to deal with snow and ice, together with the County Council who are responsible for gritting. The last time we had a prolonged cold snap there was a lot in the media about what could and couldn't be done by individuals around their home. So in this edition there is a feature giving advice on how to deal with snow and ice around your home. At the back of the magazine you can see the opening hours for all Council services over the holiday period. And for anyone who doesn't want to be alone over the holidays, there are tips on places to go where you will always be welcome.

Wishing you a happy Christmas and a peaceful new year,

Liz Bisset

Paying your rent or service charge, and free advice on your finances

Direct debit	Just fill in a direct debit form, choosing whether you'd like to pay on the 1st, 15th or 26th of each month
Online	Use the Council's online payment service, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Visit www.cambridge.gov.uk and click <i>Make an online payment</i> on the home-page
Phone	Phone 01223-457000 to pay with your debit or credit card
From your salary	Check whether your employer offers this service - if so, just ask your housing office to send you a form
In person	Pop in to pay at the Council's Customer Service Centre in Regent Street, at your local housing offices at 171 Arbury Road or 89 Cherry Hinton Road, or at any Post Office
Leaseholders	Leaseholders can pay their service charge by direct debit, Leasehold Payment Card, post, online at www.allpayments.net , or by phoning 01223-457000

At the Council

James Stephenson will help and advise on rent, benefits and finances
Tel. 01223-458418 or 01223-458302

Cambridge Money Advice

Barnwell Church, Howard Road, Cambridge CB5 8QF
Tel. 01223-727455 for advice on budgetting, saving, spending and debt

Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB)

Drop-in service at 66 Devonshire Road, 9.30-1 pm, Monday to Friday or phone 0844-8487979, 2-4 pm. CAB are available Thursday mornings at the Council's Customer Service Centre in Regent Street, 9.30 am to 1 pm. Phone 01223-457918 for an appointment.

UK Insolvency Helpline

Tel. 0800-0746918 for advice on debt

Changes to housing funding

In November the Localism Bill became law, bringing changes to the way in which council housing is financed.

The new system, known as 'Self-Financing', will be compulsory for all councils from April 2012, and could bring financial advantages for Cambridge. For many years, the funding of council housing departments has been controlled at national level. The new system will free up housing services to manage their own finances.

What it means

Under the old system, all rent from council housing had to go to government, who gave back different 'allowances' to each council to help deliver their housing service. This benefited some, but disadvantaged Cambridge. Your housing service has been paying far more into the 'national pot' than it has received back (eg. this

year, about £13 million more).

The two biggest changes

Firstly, under the new system, all the rent paid by Cambridge City Council tenants will stay in Cambridge to fund your housing service, rather than going to the government's 'national pot' for redistribution to other councils.

Secondly, to become 'self-financing', every council will have to take out a loan, which represents a share of the national housing debt. Cambridge will be required to borrow around £220 million, making regular repayments on the loan instead of the payments it currently makes into the national pot.

Key points for the Council

- Any extra money staying in Cambridge under the new system

will help us deliver housing services and make improvements to your home

- Cambridge will no longer pay more into the national pot than it gets back. But if we spend beyond our means the housing service will have to find the additional money itself, rather than looking to the government for it.

- Our loan-repayments should go down over time in real terms, whereas under the old system the amount we pay into the national pot would probably go up each year. However, we could also have to make significantly higher repayments if interest rates rise dramatically.
- The business planning of the housing service will be guided by local priorities
- Over time, the Council hopes to have a small programme of newly built council homes, something that has not been possible for many years



The Council will keep you informed as more information emerges in the coming months. If you have any questions about this change, please do not hesitate to ask. We will be happy to explain in more detail. Just phone Julia Hovells at 01223-457822.

Key points for you

- Cambridge City Council will remain as your landlord
- Your rights as a tenant will not be affected by this change in funding arrangements
- There will be a clearer link between the rent you pay and the services we deliver locally

Your housing priorities for Cambridge

Your survey results tell us what you want

Many thanks to all those who returned last issue's Freepost survey, telling us your priorities for housing in Cambridge. Overall, your priorities were, in this order:

1. Affordability of housing
2. Quality of housing and surrounding environment
3. Energy efficiency in the home (eg. sufficient heating, cost of fuel bills, etc)
4. Location of where to live (eg. close to family, near to local facilities, etc)
5. Making homes safer (eg. fire alarms, security

- measures, etc)
6. Tackling anti-social behaviour
7. Sense of community and neighbourhood

As well as being your landlord, the Council's housing service also has a big role to play in overseeing the other aspects of the city's housing. So the Council regularly reviews its a Housing Strategy. The Strategy plans for and balances the city's housing needs - those of home-seekers, new housing developments, existing communities,

older and vulnerable residents and so on.

This survey's feedback on your priorities will directly influence the Housing Strategy, and through it the future of housing in Cambridge.

For more information on the Council's Housing Strategy, phone Bridget Keady at 01223-457962 or email housing.information@cambridge.gov.uk

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.

Councillors and residents oversee

Your elected representatives make decisions on your behalf

Catch up with them online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/yourhomeyoursay

Use your vote in February 2012!

Return your vote by Freepost to elect residents onto the *Board*

It's over to you: make sure you use your vote when it arrives in the post this February.

Every tenant and leaseholder will receive a voting pack with election statements from all the candidates, and the chance to select your chosen representatives. Just...

- tick your chosen tenant and leaseholder representatives
- drop your voting paper in a letterbox to return it for free by Freepost

Remember, the *Housing Management Board* votes on all the big decisions about your housing



Don't forget to vote in February's resident election

service. And the *Board's* five tenants and one leaseholder are elected by you every four years.

Recent issues of *Open Door* advertised these elections to put residents on the *Board*. The closing date was November 30th, and a range of

residents came forward as election candidates. To find out more about any aspect of the election or voting, just phone 01223-458323 or email yourhomeyoursay@cambridge.gov.uk

Meanwhile, the elected residents on the *Board* are always keen to hear tenants' and leaseholders' viewpoints. You can contact them via the *Open Door* office (address on back cover) or email them directly at: HMBreps@cambridge.gov.uk

At their meeting in September 2011, the *Housing Management Board* debated and voted

on topics including:

- What to do about rent arrears left by ex-tenants
- Water hygiene issues
- Self-financing changes to housing funding
- Options for an independent tenants' voice
- Extension of the Independent Living Service
- A 24-hour emergency alarm service
- The Council's telephone response service

For full minutes of the meeting, see online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/democracy or phone 01223-458323 to receive a paper copy.

Customers shape services

Why not come and share your views?

At these lively gatherings, tenants and leaseholders meet housing staff to discuss the things that matter most to you, the customer. Free transport is available and free refreshments are provided.

City Homes Customer Meetings

- Tues 24th January, 2.30pm, Mansel Court, Arbury Road
 - Tues 20th March, 2.30pm, Lichfield Training Room, Lichfield Road
- Sit down with Robert Hollingsworth, Head of City Homes, to address hands-on any concerns or suggestions you may

have about services at City Homes. To book free transport anytime up to the week before the meeting, just phone 01223-458323.

Leaseholders' Forum

- Thurs 26th January 2012, Meadows Community Centre
- This is a growing and vibrant forum where leaseholders citywide meet with each other and their leasehold staff. Share any concerns or suggestions about your leasehold services. Meet your elected leaseholder representative on the *Housing Management Board*, and hear about

the issues she has been addressing on leaseholders' behalf. To book free transport, just phone 01223-457834.

Sheltered Scheme Residents' Association

- Wed 11th January, 2pm, Stanton House
 - Wed 8th February, 2pm, School Court
 - Wed 14th March, 2pm, Ditton Court
- This is the citywide network that represents sheltered tenants across the Council's sheltered schemes. With free transport to and from your door, this meeting is a chance to:
- get out of the house



Customer gatherings shape your housing services

and meet like-minded sheltered tenants

- exchange any ideas or concerns about life in your sheltered accommodation
 - think together about the future and how you would like to influence the services you receive
- To book your free transport, just phone 01223-213377.



Councillors oversee your housing

Your housing service is managed by the city councillors elected by you in local elections



Your housing is a public service delivered by the City Council. This means it is run by the city councillors elected by you, the public, at local elections. They decide on all budgets, priorities and policies for your housing service.

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.

The Lead Councillor for Housing is Catherine Smart, councillor for the Romsey area. She is advised by the *Housing Management Board*, the committee of city councillors and elected

residents who oversee your housing service.

Choose your city councillor

In May 2012, as happens every year, one third of city councillor seats will be up for election. Make sure you use your vote, as the councillors you choose may end up running your housing service!

Voting video

Check out this [YouTube](#) video showing why you should always use your vote - both in your councillor elections and your elections for resident representatives.



Watch this short YouTube video about voting in Cambridge, at www.youtube.com/cambridgecitycouncil

The city councillors on your *Housing Management Board*

Andy Blackhurst, **Trumpington**, Liberal Democrats (pictured, top left)

Gerri Bird, East **Chesterton**, Labour

Kevin Blencowe, **Petersfield**, Labour (pictured, second from left)

Simon Brierley, **King's Hedges**, Liberal Democrats (pictured, centre)

George Pippas, **Queen Edith's**, Liberal Democrats

Adam Pogonowski, **Abbey**, Green Party (pictured, second from right)

Kevin Price, **King's Hedges**, Labour

Colin Rosenstiel, **Market**, Liberal Democrats (pictured, top right)

Roman Znajak, **East Chesterton**, Liberal Democrats

Sheila Stuart (Reserve), **Trumpington**, Liberal Democrats

Mike Todd-Jones (Reserve), **Arbury**, Labour

Margaret Wright (Reserve), **Abbey**, Green Party

Co-Regulation - residents monitoring

Your tenant and leaseholder representatives make sure that Council services are performing well.

Visit online at www.cambridge.gov.uk/yourhomeyoursay

How well is your landlord performing?

How your services performed from July to September '11

Green = above target

Orange = better than 3 months ago but still below target

Red = below target and worse than 3 months ago

In the table below, *Quarter 1* means April to June 2011, and *Quarter 2* means July to September 2011. For more information on performance, or to get involved in monitoring services, just contact Open Door anytime at the address on the back page.



Repairs where the target date for completing the repair was extended

Extended	Quarter 1: 5%	Quarter 2: 1.7%	Target: less than 7% (no target last year) *
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* Target started this year. The aim is to have the least possible extensions to completion of repairs.

Repairs completed within target time

Emergency	Quarter 1: 100%	Quarter 2: 99.3%	Target: 99% (target was 96% last year)
Urgent *	Quarter 1: 91%	Quarter 2: 99.3%	Target: 98% (82% last year)
Routine	Quarter 1: 96%	Quarter 2: 99.3%	Target: 98% (87% last year)

* A special team now deals with urgent repairs only - this has improved the response times on urgent repairs.

Customer phone calls resolved at first point of contact

Homelink	Quarter 1: 93%	Quarter 2: 84%	Target: 80% * (target was 80% last year)
Housing Management	Quarter 1: 83%	Quarter 2: 83.5%	Target: 80% (80% last year)
Repairs	Quarter 1: 92.5%	Quarter 2: 89.5%	Target: 80% (80% last year)

* Resolving calls at the first point of contact gives customers a better experience, as well as saving money.

Satisfaction with completed repairs

Satisfied *	Quarter 1: 93%	Quarter 2: 93%	Target: 95% (target was 93% last year)
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* This is an average based on the Satisfaction Slips returned by tenants who have received a repair.

Tenants paying their rent by Direct Debit

Direct Debit *	Quarter 1: 46.6%	Quarter 2: 47.6%	Target: 50% (target was 46.6% last year)
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* Direct debit is the most cost-effective way to collect money, leaving more funding for services to tenants.

Proportion of rent collected

Collected	Quarter 1: 98.24%	Quarter 2: 97.5%	Target: 98.6%* (target was 98.5% last year)
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* The target is for the year overall up to March 2012. Rent arrears are often higher up to Christmas, then reduce again in the new year. The Council will always apply for the eviction of consistent non-payers.

ing performance

performing to standard

Residents co-regulating services

Tenants and leaseholders inspecting their housing service

Twelve of your lead tenant and leaseholder representatives now hold regular *Performance Monitoring Sessions*. They examine the performance of your housing service over the previous months, and investigate any areas that may be causing customers concern.



Similar resident panels are at work around the country, as the government now requires tenants to be 'co-regulators' of the housing services they receive.

This is a direct result of the government's

Localism Bill, which calls for the public to get more involved in regulating and shaping the public services that matter to them.

These tenant panels are also making a valuable contribution in terms of the 'Big Society'. They are saving public money, through volunteers monitoring services instead of the paid, professional regulators who used to have this monitoring role.

Going a step further with the process of tenants co-regulating services, the government is now proposing to make it not just a recommendation but a legal requirement for all social landlords to:

- support and empower tenant regulating panels like those described above
- provide them with prompt information on how services are



Your resident representatives monitor the performance of your housing service and investigate any problem areas

performing and how much they cost

- publish an *Annual Report for Tenants* giving full detail on performance and costs of services, and comparing them openly with those of other social

landlords

Open Door will keep you informed as the national and local frameworks for residents' co-regulation evolve.

Enjoy vouchers in exchange for an hour of Mystery Shopping!

Just spend an hour or two checking the quality of service

You the customer are always the best judge of how good your housing services are. Are you sure they are up to the standard you expect? Why not test them out, and receive shopping vouchers in exchange for your time?

Mystery Shoppers are just residents who

arrange to phone, visit or email Council offices asking for a service, then record how well the Council handled their request.

Housing manager Frances Swann explains: 'You don't need any experience to be a Mystery Shopper - we explain what you need

to do. There's no big time commitment either. You could do it just as a one-off or more regularly - it's up to you. And you'll receive a reward of vouchers for your time.'

To find out more, just phone Frances at 01223-462255.



Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

Phone the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team at 01223-457950
or email asbsection@cambridge.gov.uk

The Council invests in tackling anti-social behaviour

Combating all forms of anti-social behaviour

The Council has made a big investment in combating anti-social behaviour. Teams like Streetscene, Environmental Health and the *Anti-Social Behaviour Team* tackle the problem together. There is still work to be done, but the positive results are definitely starting to show. In 2010/11...

- 100% of reports of serious anti-social behaviour were responded to within the target time of 24 hours
- 100% of serious noise nuisance reports were also responded to within 24 hours
- 95.8% of offensive graffiti reports were responded to within 24 hours

Basically, anti-social behaviour is anything that diminishes the quality of other people's lives and makes our communities less pleasant places to live. When behaviour is really bad the Council goes to court to get an eviction or some other legal penalty.

Use the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team

A quick and serious response from the authorities isn't always enough on its own. It is also vital that everyone in the community knows how to report anti-social



Anti-Social Behaviour can take many forms, but the Council's team is there to deal with all of them

behaviour in the first place. So over the past year the *Anti-Social*

Behaviour Team have:

- put articles like this in magazines and newsletters
- held neighbourhood events to raise awareness
- produced coasters and fridge magnets showing the phone numbers for reporting anti-social behaviour

Protecting vulnerable residents

A recent report by *Scope*, a charity for disabled people, showed that:

- disabled people are a lot more likely than

others to be victims of anti-social behaviour

- many disabled people and those with mental health problems who experience anti-social behaviour do not report it
- people with disabilities are more likely to be victimised repeatedly

So what is the Council doing about this? Following consultation with residents, anti-social behaviour involving vulnerable people has been given a higher priority.

Plans are in place to go out and talk to disabled people, their families, friends, carers and disability organisations so that everyone knows

that disabled people don't have to put up with anti-social behaviour. And the public are being encouraged to be good neighbours by letting the *Anti-Social Behaviour Team* know if they think a vulnerable person might be getting targeted. Remember, they would rather have many repeat reports than not have it reported at all.

Report it!

To report anti-social behaviour - whether it concerns you, a neighbour or your community - please phone the Council's *Anti-Social Behaviour Team* at 01223-457950 or email asb@cambridge.gov.uk.

If you have a problem with noise, please phone 01223-457890 (or 01223-457457 if the problem happens outside normal working hours).

To report littering, graffiti or other environmental anti-social behaviour, please phone 01223-458282. To report criminal activity please dial the new police number 101, or in an emergency dial 999.

You can pick up a fridge magnet or a coaster with the *Anti-Social Behaviour Team's* contact details from Mandela House, City Homes North or City Homes South.

Help with your finances

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

Christmas without money worries

Get a free financial health-check online

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.

We all have to ensure we keep up this approach even at Christmas time, when aggressive



advertising on the television and in shops

can hike up the pressure and the temptation to spend more.

Planning our spending can be easier said than done. That's why the *Money Advice Service* has created a free and easy online service that gives you a confidential 'health-check' to plan your spending. On the screen, you just answer some straightforward questions

about your money. The programme will then set out what you can do, in easy steps. It takes just 5-10 minutes, doesn't involve any paperwork and your answers are totally confidential.

To get started, just visit their website at: healthcheck.moneyadvice.org.uk (no 'www' needed in front of this web address)

Help dealing with debt

Citizens Advice Bureau can help you

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, 9.30 am to 1 pm.

'We can often prevent people getting into more difficulties'

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. The *Citizens Advice Bureau* find that early action can make a real difference to stop people getting deeper into financial problems.

CAB 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 can also:

- 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.

Credit unions & the *TimeBank*

Start saving even a very little spare cash with your local credit union, and they can give you loans at a much cheaper interest-rate than most lenders. Credit Unions are a non-profit, community-based alternative to banks. They can really help you keep your finances in order. Just phone 01223-314664 to speak to a local Credit Union today.

A *TimeBank* is where people exchange services and skills for free! So what do you need, and what can you offer? Gardening, DIY, a lift to the shops? Just phone David Boffey at 07757-103149 to see the help and services you could give and receive for free at your local *TimeBank*.

Caring for your environment

Get in touch with Estate Champion, Will Beavitt, for neighbourhood funding ideas. Phone 0800-587-2031 or email estate.champion@cambridge.gov.uk

Start preparing for the 2012 Garden Competition

Over £400 worth of prizes to be won

Start planning your entry now

Planning for the annual *Tenants' & Leaseholders' Garden Competition* is underway for July 2012.

This year, winners received a range of prizes worth over £400. Next year looks set to be bigger than ever, with new categories and extra prizes as well.

So why not enter? It's simple. To find out more about the *Tenants' & Leaseholders' Garden Competition*, just phone 01223-458323 or email yourhomeyoursay@cambridge.gov.uk



A 2011 winning garden at Walpole Road

Residents exchange seasonal gardening tips

Want to get your garden ready for next summer's competition? Open Door is now publishing gardening-tips from your fellow residents. So what needs doing in your garden at this time of year? Tenant Archie Ferguson, one of the competition judges this year, says:

'Now is the time to...

- cut back branches and dig up dead stems, leaving the soil to rest for the winter
- look in gardening catalogues for cheap 'plug plants' - tiny shoots you can grow in doors for a couple of months, then plant them in your garden in the spring

- get some free compost from the AmeyCespa (formerly Donarbon) Waste Management Park near Waterbeach, so you can mulch your garden
- grow herbs and small salad-leaves in boxes or pots on your indoor windowsills all winter

Why not borrow or lend a garden?

Maybe you'd like to do some growing but don't have a garden? Or you have some ground that you don't have time to cultivate, and would like someone else to get it growing productively?

Then check out *Landshare*, an independent land-sharing scheme launched by the TV series *River Cottage*. It's a scheme where people with land they don't use - however big or small - 'lend' it to someone who is keen to grow things.

(Growers can repay them with a small amount of produce.) For information see online at www.landshare.net View requests and offers for gardening-space in Cambridge on their webpage at www.landshare.net/search/cambridge

RePaint for a lot less

Community RePaint is a new nationwide scheme that collects unused leftover paint, redistributing it for free. Last year it:

- saved householders over £1.25 million in free paint
- gave 215,000 litres to community groups, charities and families on a low income



RePaint with the Dulux Dog at Market Square

In Cambridge, you can donate paint at:

- Milton Recycling Centre, tel. 01223 860674

You can collect paint at:

- Cambridge Re-Use, tel. 01223-576 535
- Cambridge Wood Works, Tel. 01223 870 048 (based outside of Cambridge but will deliver paint within the city)

For more information, just phone Will Rogowski at 0845-6027144, email development@ccornn.org.uk or see their webpages at www.ccornn.org.uk or www.cambridgereuse.org.uk

Count Me In!

Equality and diversity for the whole community

Equality and diversity in housing

Tenants attend conference on equality in social housing

Over 100 council tenants and housing association tenants met in Norwich recently for a free conference on equality and diversity in social housing, provided by the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Racial Inequality

Cambridge tenant Mustafa Ongan was there representing *Cambridge Ethnic Community*

Forum. He gave an overview of the *Forum's* work and the range of community services they provide for equality and human rights in Cambridge. Phone them at 01223-315877, email cecfenquiries@cecf.co.uk or visit 62 Victoria Road, CB4 3DU.

Financial Inequality

The majority of tenants attending the conference

were White British tenants, exploring their sense of feeling unequal not racially but financially, compared to the wealthier levels of British society. The main topic of the keynote speeches was concern about financial exclusion amidst decreasing benefits, decreasing services and rising employment.

Topics raised and

explored by tenants on the day included:

- the effects of financial and other inequalities on British society
- how they make it more difficult to promote neighbourliness and volunteering
- the effects of discrimination based on race, disability or sexuality
- the challenges involved in tackling prejudice

Winter Festivals

Winter marks a special time of year for many people

16 million people in Britain now describe themselves as having no religion. But for Britain's 6 million practising Christians, Christmas is a sacred 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.

Long before Christianity, the mid-winter solstice was also a nature-based festival of light for the indigenous people of this island. Their solstice festival celebrated light and fire amidst the darkness of midwinter.



Chinese New Year is on January 23rd 2012

Today about 800 City Council tenants and leaseholders from ethnic minorities celebrate other festivals of light in winter. Cambridge Muslims will be celebrating *Eid ul-Adha* at the Cambridge Mosque. Local Hindus will celebrate *Diwali*, their festival of light. And the Cambridge Chinese Community Centre will be helping to mark *Chinese New Year* on January 23rd with a loud and colourful festival.

Mozaik Turkiye

Mozaik Turkiye, entirely created and run by residents themselves, is one of Cambridge's most successful local networks for ethnic minorities.



It supports Cambridge residents with Turkish backgrounds, helping them to integrate into English society, build good relations with their neighbours and convey a positive image of the extensive Turkish community in Cambridge.

Recent activities have included:

- monthly evening meetings for the community
- running a residents' football team

- volunteer work helping the Council's housing service and working with other council tenants
- charity events and fundraising for disaster relief after the recent earthquake in Turkey

For more information about *Mozail Turkiye* or to get involved at any time, phone 07545-025985.

Do you have a community group or network that you'd like publicised in Open Door? Just contact the Open Door office (address on back cover) to tell us about your group.

Winter is here - be prepared!

See online at www.directgov.gov.uk for information on dealing with snow and ice

Clearing snow and ice

Managing the winter weather in Cambridge

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

On behalf of the County Council, the City Council also supplies bulk bags of grit of about half a tonne to residents' groups, while stocks last. Anyone wishing to assist in keeping public pavements clear of snow and ice, please phone 01223-458295 to arrange for one of these bags to be delivered.

Over 40% of Cambridgeshire's roads and most bus routes are salted when required. City Council staff work with the County Council, helping them to clear snow and ice from:

- city centre pavements, underpasses and cycle-routes
- 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. There is no law stopping you from clearing snow and ice from the pavement or pathways outside your house or



Be prepared - follow the advice on safely removing snow and ice from outside your property, pathways and public spaces

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

Remember that people using areas affected by snow and ice also have a 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

Some tips for clearing snow and ice

The government 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. Use a shovel with the widest blade available. Think about where you will put the shovelled snow so that you don't block paths or drainage channels. 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.

- Start early - it is much easier to clear fresh, loose snow rather than ice that has been compacted by people walking on it. 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.

Information is available by phoning the Council's Customer Service Centre at 01223-458282, or online at www.directgov.gov.uk by typing 'snow' into the search box.

Don't be lonely at Christmas

There are events that all can join

For many, Christmas can be a lonely, stressful time. The Samaritans see a rise of 24% in people needing their help over the Christmas period. They receive about 15,000 phone calls a day from the public around Christmas time.



Places to go

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. See the Council's website for community events that you'd be welcome to join in with, at: www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/community-and-living/local-communities/neighbourhood-events.en

The Samaritans' advice

The recession has 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 to:

- use Christmas as a chance to step out of the rat-race for a while
- remind yourself and those around you that Christmas is above all a time to relax, unwind, and enjoy the simpler things in life
- use it to focus more on relaxing, and less on spending money on expensive gifts, meals or drinks



Christmas can be a lonely time of year for some, but there is support available for people who need it

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, 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.

Alternatively, you can visit their website at www.samaritans.org, or email them at jo@samaritans.org, or write them a letter addressed to Chris, PO Box 9090, Stirling FK8 2SA. Every message they receive is responded to individually.

Repairing your drains

Who to contact when there's a problem

Since October 2011, *Anglian Water* now owns and maintains all dirty water drainage outlets that serve more than one property. For leaks or blockages on these drains, just phone

Anglian Water at 0800-145145.

Anglian Water will respond within 4 hours to reports of flooding from their drains, and within 12 hours to

reports of blockages. For more information, see their website at www.anglianwater.co.uk/household/wastewater-services/Private-sewers-and-lateral-drains.aspx

The City Council remains responsible for drains that serve only a single property. For any queries on these drains, please phone the Council at 01223-458231.

Good news for the 60-Plus project!

Helping people to live independently

Because of the great success of the *60-Plus* project, it has received some new funding to continue its good work with older people.

The project has already helped over 500 Cambridge residents to receive things like care packages, cleaning services, help with benefits, contact



from support staff and regular social lunches

at the Council's Mansel Court and Talbot House sheltered schemes.

Are you or someone you know over 60? If you have a need or want advice, no matter how big or small, just phone the Council's Independent Living Service at 01223-457641. One call is all it takes...

Stay Active

Sports and activities in and around Cambridge

Looking for fun family activities in February half-term? Come and have a go at a variety of different sporting activities such as badminton, archery and climbing. They will all be happening at

the Netherhall Sports Centre on Monday 13th February, 10am-4pm

Chance to dance

Cambridge City Council are also running a series of 'Get back into dance' sessions, starting in January 2012. There will be a variety of different dance styles on offer including Flamenco, Ball Room, Tango, Bollywood, Salsa and more.

For details of either the February sports event or the dance sessions,

just phone the Council's Sports Development service at 01223-457532.

Parkside Pool re-opens

Parkside Pool re-opens on Monday 2nd January 2012, after major improvements and refurbishment. So come along to see the great new facilities, get fitter and start your new year with a swim!



Maintenance work on homes

When is planned maintenance coming to your estate?

You asked *Open Door* to publish a list of the estates that will have planned maintenance work done over the coming months.

This will include work like fencing, trip hazards, uneven paving slabs and fixing other dangers such as old ponds that need to be filled in.

Such works started in July 2011 and will run until July 2012 in the following areas:

Perse Way
Barnwell Road
Atkins Close
Nicholson Way
Bermuda Terrace
Netherhall
Newtown
Teversham

For more info on planned works in your area, phone John Horwood at 01223-458231.

Residents' Diary Dates for 2012

To influence your housing service, just come along

City Homes Customer Meetings

Tenants influencing City Homes North and South
24th January, 2.30pm, Mansel Court
20th March, 2.30pm, Lichfield Training Room
22nd May, 2.30pm, Mansel Court
17th July, 2.30pm, Lichfield Training Room

Leaseholders' Forum

26th January, Room 3, The Meadows Community Centre, 1 St Catherines Road, Cambridge CB4 3XJ.

Sheltered Scheme Residents' Association

Influencing the Independent Living Service
11th January, 2pm, Stanton House
8th February, 2pm, School Court
14th March, 2pm, Ditton Court
11th April, 2pm, Whitefriars
9th May, 2pm, Mansell Court
13th June, 2pm, Lichfield Hall (Annual General Meeting)

Free transport is available for any of these meetings. just phone the numbers provided on page 3 of this edition.

Christmas & New Year opening hours



Customer Service Centre, Mandela House

01223 457000

You can call or visit the Customer Service Centre for a wide range of enquiries between the following hours:

December 23	8am – 4.30pm
December 24 to 27	closed
December 28 & 29	8am – 6pm
December 30	8am – 4.30pm
December 31	closed
January 1 to 2	closed

The Guildhall, City Homes Area Offices North and South

01223 457000

December 23	9am – 4.30pm
December 24 to 27	closed
December 28* & 29	9am – 5pm
December 30	9am – 4.30pm
December 31	closed
January 1 to 2	closed

*City Homes Area Offices 10am – 5pm

Abbey Pool and Gym

01223 213352

December 23	normal opening
December 24	6.30am – 2pm
December 25 & 26	closed
December 27	8am – 6pm
December 28 to 30	8am – 8pm
December 31	8am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2	8am – 6pm

Parkside Pools

01223 446100

December 23 to January 1	closed for refurbishment
January 2	8am – 5.30pm

Cherry Hinton Village Centre

01223 576412

December 24 to 28	closed
December 29	9am – 10pm
December 30	9am – 10pm
December 31	9am – 4pm
January 1 to 2	closed

King's Hedges Learner Pool

01223 353248

December 24 to January 2	closed
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Homeless people

Out of hours emergency number
01706 242818

Tourist Information Centre

0871 226 8006

(calls charged at lo-call rate)

December 23	10am – 4.30pm
December 24	10am – 2pm
December 25 to 27	closed
December 28 to 30	10am – 4pm
December 31	10am – 2pm
January 1 to 2	closed

Shopmobility Grand Arcade

01223 457452

December 23 to 24	10am – 4pm
December 25 to 27	closed
December 28 to 31	10am – 4pm
January 1 to 2	closed

Shopmobility Grafton Centre

01223 461858

December 23 to 24	10am – 4pm
December 25	closed
December 26	11am – 4pm
December 27 to 31	10am – 4pm
January 1	11am – 4pm
January 2	10am – 4pm

Cemeteries and Crematorium administration office

01954 780681

December 23	9am – 4.30pm
December 24 to 27	closed
December 28 & 29	9am – 5pm
December 30	9am – 4.30pm
December 31	closed
January 1 to 2	closed

The Columbaria and Book of Remembrance Rooms are open from 9am to 5.30pm daily.

The Crematorium Gardens of Remembrance and Huntingdon Road Cemetery are open 24 hours.

Newmarket Road Cemetery is open 24 hours (vehicle access 9am to 4pm only).

Street cleaning

01223 458282

This service will operate daily from 6am to 5pm.

Market

01223 457446

December 23 & 24	normal opening
December 25 to 27	closed
December 28 to 31	normal opening
January 1 to 2	closed

Corn Exchange Box Office

01223 357851

December 23	10am – 8pm
December 24	10am – 3pm
December 25	closed
December 26	1pm – 3pm
December 27	12 noon – 5.30pm
December 28	10am – 7.30pm
December 29	10am – 6pm
December 30	10am – 7.30pm
December 31	10am – 3pm
January 1 to 2	closed

Rubbish & recycling collections

01223 458282

www.cambridge.gov.uk/bins

Normal Collection	Actual Collection
Mon Dec 26	Tues Dec 27
Tues Dec 27	Wed Dec 28
Wed Dec 28	Thur Dec 29
Thur Dec 29	Fri Dec 30
Fri Dec 30	Sat Dec 31
Mon Jan 2	Tues Jan 3
Tues Jan 3	Wed Jan 4
Wed Jan 4	Thur Jan 5
Thur Jan 5	Fri Jan 6
Fri Jan 6	Sat Jan 7
Mon Jan 9	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 car park after Christmas up to January 20, or cut up and put in your green bin.

Recycling Centre at Milton

01223 860674

December 23	9am – 4pm
December 24	9am – 1pm
December 25 & 26	closed
December 27 to 31	9am – 4pm
January 1	closed
January 2	9am – 4pm

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.

Emergency housing repairs

01223 457457



Open Door can be made available in other languages, including those listed below. If you need an interpreter or would like this document translated, please enquire at any Council Reception.

You can now translate most of the Council's web pages into most languages for yourself at the click of a button. Just visit 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 01223-458323.

Open Door is co-produced with a *Residents' Editorial Panel*, to ensure it reflects tenants' and leaseholders' needs and 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

Open Door is printed on recycled paper and is available online at:
www.cambridge.gov.uk/opendoor



Useful Phone Numbers

All general Council enquiries

01223-457000

(8am-6pm, Monday to Friday)

Rents

North: **0800-731-5030**

South: **0800-731-4878**

Repairs

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

(Leaseholders should contact their own Gas Safe Registered contractor, but in an emergency may call **0800-111-999**)

Out of hours emergency repairs

01223-457457

Anti-social behaviour team

01223-457950 or email:

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**

Citizens' Advice Bureau

0844-8487979

Cambridge Mediation Service

01223-302514