

Haig Newsletter

SPRING 2013



**WE ARE DELIGHTED
TO ANNOUNCE HM THE QUEEN
HAS AGREED TO BE PATRON OF
HAIG HOUSING TRUST
SEE PAGE 12**

Haig's Annual Conference 2013

Haig's annual conference for tenants took place at the beginning of March at the Manchester Conference Centre

'Excellent again with a lot of hard work put in to make an enjoyable day'

The number of tenants attending is increasing year on year and we would like to encourage more to attend as the feedback from those who



Haig tenants and staff chat through issues raised at the conference. The conference is an ideal opportunity to meet people from other estates and other parts of the country, to share ideas and to feel part of the bigger Haig picture.

do suggests that it is an enjoyable and informative day. This year the programme included an update on the progress of the Coming Home fundraising campaign and the provision of housing for disabled and injured Service and ex-Service personnel; a detailed explanation of the Government's Welfare Reforms and the controversial 'Bedroom Tax' (see page 10); there were several opportunities for tenants to drive the discussions about the reforms, current estate services, future estate improvements, communication with the Trusts and commentary on the 'general picture'. We also had a lively and informative quiz. There was further information on the future of the two Haig Trusts, Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust, including the 'grand reveal' of the new logo as seen here (drum roll please!).

Some of the issues raised at the conference are looked at on pages 12 and 13.



STAFF NEWS

STAFF

Welcome – Lynne Horton joins the Trust as Housing Options Assistant dealing with housing applications and allocations.

Patrick Gascoigne took over from Ewart Shields at the end of last year as the Haig Housing Trust Agent in Scotland and says, *“I am absolutely delighted to be working for Haig Housing Trust, and, in these first few months I have hugely enjoyed meeting many Haig tenants in Edinburgh and Glasgow”*. Patrick served as a driver in the Royal Corps of Transport before attending the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and subsequently being commissioned into the Scots Guards. His service with the Scots Guards over the next thirty years took him all over the world and ended with an unusual appointment: Commandant of the Military Corrective Training Centre in Colchester (the ‘Glasshouse’). On leaving the Army Patrick worked for seven years as HR director of a large UK-wide manufacturing group.

Sorry to see you go – We will be losing two members of staff in the next few months; **Glenn Kay**, IT Support Officer leaves us in May for a complete career change – he is to be a paramedic. **Lynda Stevens**, Director of Corporate Services will be leaving the Trust at the end of July to concentrate on her other charitable commitments.



COMING HOME

Coming Home, Haig’s campaign to raise funds to provide specially adapted homes for wounded and disabled Service and ex-Service people, has enabled us to help many deserving beneficiaries. You can read about them at www.coming-home.org.uk/our_heroes. Some recent success stories include:

A Sgt who was shot in the head on patrol in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in 2011. His severe head injury means he will need a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Married with two children, their home simply wasn’t suitable for this brave man. We were able to help this family find a suitable bungalow under the Shared Ownership Scheme.

A Pte in the Gurkha Logistics Regiment, serving in Afghanistan in 2010, drove over a mine. Against all expectations, he survived but is now in a wheelchair with severely impaired mobility and unable to fully care for himself. HHT has purchased a property to rent to him and his family can take care of him. Extensive adaptations carried out to the property will ensure his life is as comfortable as possible.

A 21 year old Rifleman was on patrol in southern Afghanistan with 3 RIFLES when he was shot in the back. With internal injuries, nerve damage and 3 cardiac arrests, he is left with limited mobility, sporadic epileptic fits and PTSD. Following family breakdown and divorce, he now part owns a house with HHT and has ambitions to go to university. His long term goal is to own the house outright.



Getting the key of the door! A new life for a young Gurkha and his wife being handed the keys to their new home by David Barclay, Haig Case Worker.

In 2010 a young Lance Corporal, 1st Battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles, was on patrol in Helmand Province, when the Taliban opened fire on his patrol. He lost a leg at the knee, two fingers and suffered internal injuries as well as a broken shoulder and pelvis. HHT has taken a minority share in a house for him and has helped with the adaptations needed. The work includes widening doorways, converting an existing shower room into a wet room and the possible future conversion of the garage into a purpose-built fitness/physiotherapy room.

The campaign to raise money to provide accommodation such as these four people need, continues apace and recent fundraising and PR activity for Coming Home can be seen over the following four pages.

Did you see Coming Home on TV?

Knight Frank generously sponsored the Coming Home float in last year's Lord Mayor's Parade and, if you watched it on TV, you may have seen the exciting moment when Blue Peter's Helen Skelton clambered onto the float to do a live interview with Chris Cheffings, one of our beneficiaries who was taking part with his wife and two boys.



Coming Home has supporters of all ages



Chris Cheffings being interviewed by Helen Skelton



The Coming Home float as seen from the stands outside St Paul's Cathedral



Loaded Magazine LAFTAs

The British sense of humour has been recently voted as the trait we love most about being British. Loaded Magazine's LAFTAs award those who epitomise our comedy culture and have really stood out each year in British comedy. Some of Britain's top comedians helped us to raise awareness of the campaign and our logo was on prominent display for newspapers and television cameras to catch it. With thanks to Editor Ian Edmondson for his continued efforts to raise the profile of Coming Home.



Valentine Speed Dating No marriages yet but we are working on it!!

Coming Home's second Valentine Speed Dating event attracted 55 people to a happy evening in the heart of London's Covent Garden... just in time to get a date for Valentine's night whilst raising over £1,100 for our heroes



COMING HOME

Fireworks raise funds

Steve Palmer, Haig's Contracts and Compliance Manager, has been busy raising funds for Coming Home. He organises a team of collectors at the Carshalton Round Table Firework display which, this year, contributed over £1,000 to the Coming Home coffers. Thanks to Steve, his wife Carolyn, Phillip Johnson and Lisa Waterman – both Haig employees who braved the cold to shake collecting buckets.

Zero Peaks Challenge

Steve and Carolyn also showed that not everyone has to throw themselves out of things, or run up mountains or be in the peak of physical fitness to raise money for Coming Home. They walked the Zero Peaks Challenge; 28 miles along the entire length of the Royal Military Canal from Cliff End, near Hastings in East Sussex to Seabrook near Folkstone, in Kent.



Steve said, *"Walking along the quiet canal banks today it is easy to forget that this was once the scene of intense military activity. Now, much of the drama on the canal comes from the variety of wildlife that has made the canal its home. We survived the walk and have the blisters to prove it. Thank you to everyone who has sponsored us."*



Steve doing his bit for Coming Home

Cranleigh Big Band Dinner Dance

Another of Haig's employees also campaigns tirelessly for Coming Home. **Robert Wooldridge** organised a wonderful Big Band Dinner Dance at the beautiful surroundings of Cranleigh School in Surrey in February raising a fabulous £2,000 for Coming Home!

The Cranleigh School Big Band entertained guests dining in their new spectacular 16m high Emms Atrium – a fantastic venue in this prestigious school. Special guests of Coming Home were LCpl Martin Tye and his wife Clare, beneficiaries of the charity (pictured with CEO Maj General Peter Besgrove and his wife Eileen on the right and Jo Houghton, Coming Home Campaign Co-ordinator on the left).



With many thanks to Cranleigh School Bandmaster Bob Wilson and the members of the Big Band, Headmaster Guy Waller, Robert Wooldridge and all those who helped make this evening a success.

Conquering Kilimanjaro

John Ashmore, of JRM Property Services, one of Haig's contractors, with his team of intrepid climbers, succeeded in their quest to reach the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in East Africa at the end of January, raising over £2,500 for Coming Home.

At 19,340 feet Kilimanjaro is one of the highest peaks in the world. The four-man privately funded team travelled up the Lemosho Route and battled the physical challenge and the dreaded altitude sickness. They reached the top at 05.45 on 26th January. Unfortunately, one of their team was taken ill with malaria, but after a spell in hospital has now made a good recovery.



John and his fellow team members with their Kilimanjaro Guides on their way up.

This is an extraordinary achievement!! Before they left, John said *"What started out as a laugh, agreeing to go with my pal for his 50th birthday trip became a reality. I decided to raise funds for Haig Homes who provide accommodation for ex-Servicemen and Breakthrough for Breast Cancer in memory of a dear colleague who lost her brave battle with cancer recently"*

COMING HOME

Future Fundraising Activities

The Ascot Lawyers Coronation Ball on 29th June at Royal Ascot Racecourse



This is going to be an evening of patriotic celebration to mark HM The Queen's 60 years as our Sovereign and to raise funds for Coming Home. Taking place on Armed Forces Day, on the top floor of the prestigious triple-decked Ascot Marquee which has magnificent panoramic views overlooking the racecourse, this incredible evening has a Guard of Honour from the Household Calvary, a champagne cocktail reception, three course meal and charity auction with 'money can't buy' auction prizes.



Royal commentator and past 'Strictly Come Dancing' winner Chris Hollins is the evening Compere, with amazing entertainment throughout the evening led by the magnificent Band of the Blues and Royals and Britain's Got Talent winners Spelbound.

Dinner Dance on board Royal Yacht Britannia, 21st September

Hosted by Ascot Lawyers Foundation, the Royal Yacht Britannia Coronation Dinner Dance, set in the historic port of Edinburgh, will be a night to remember. 80 guests will be piped on board by the Queen's brow, previously reserved for the Royal Family and Heads of State, to enjoy a champagne reception whilst listening to the piano once played by Princess Diana. Following a captivating tour of the yacht, guests will enjoy a 4-course meal in the State Dining Room, with a harpist adding to the majesty of the occasion. Then up to the glazed Royal Deck to dance the night away to the delights of a white tuxedoed swing band.



Bunbury Celebrity Cricket Match and Dinner, 9th September



Celebrating the Best of British in the fantastic setting of the Honourable Artillery Company grounds, the famous Bunbury Cricket Team will be fielding a surprise star line-up against the Coming Home Team. Past team members include Eric Clapton, Andrew Flintoff, Darren Gough, Rory Bremner, Ian Botham and Viv Richards. After the day of cricket, guests will enjoy an evening reception in the Prince Consort Rooms with dinner and entertainment and after dinner speaker Geoff Miller the England Cricket Selector. There will also be an auction, including the incredible prize of a flight in one of the world's last surviving airworthy Lancaster Bombers.

COMING HOME

Wanderers against Royal Engineers rematch of the 1872 FA Challenge Cup Final

The FA Challenge Cup is the oldest and most prestigious football competition in the world and the first final between the Wanderers and the Royal Engineers was replayed on the 'hallowed turf' of the Kia Oval marking the 140th anniversary of the event.

The Royal Engineer team, losers in 1872, defeated the Wanderers by 7 goals to 1. Funds raised were given to Haig Housing Trust, the Royal British Legion and the Lambeth Tigers FC. The Royal Engineers received a fine reward, being presented with the oldest existing FA Cup by its owner, the Chairman of West Ham United David Gold (pictured).



360 Cycle Challenge

London 2012 Gold Medal Paralympian David Andrew Smith MBE is aiming to set off three years to the day after learning to walk again following a removal of a tumour on his spine, to cycle 24,000 km around the world. Read of his incredible story of fortitude at www.davidandrewsmith.net

Great North Run

We have some places available for the Great North Run. Join 56,000 runners for the world's biggest and most iconic half marathon on Sunday the 15th September, and raise money for the Coming Home campaign! The course is spectator-lined and covers 13.1 miles from Newcastle, across the imposing Tyne Bridge and onto the picturesque coastal finish in South Shields. We ask you to pledge to raise a minimum of £350.00. All the money raised will go directly towards housing our wounded heroes. If you want to run this amazing race, phone 020 8685 5787 or go to <http://www.haighousingtrust.org.uk/content/great-north-run-2013> to download an application form.

Hamish Allen and Kit Alexander are challenging themselves to a Triathlon they will never forget, whilst raising as much money as they can for the Coming Home campaign.

Capri to London in under 14 days. We are so excited for them, and will be supporting them every step of the way.

The challenge is

Stage 1 – swim 18 miles from Capri to Naples!

Stage 2 – aiming to start on the same day following the swim, they will cycle from Naples to London. A staggering distance of 1300 miles from the coastline of Naples up through passes as high as 2,436m in temperatures of 35 degrees, travelling on the 8th and 9th most dangerous roads in the world – the Grimssel Pass and the Saint Gothard Pass.

Then ... if that wasn't enough,

Stage 3 – is a full 26.2 mile marathon around the Royal Parks in London! The finish line will be the magnificent Horse Guards parade, where family, friends, supporters and some of our injured soldiers will be there ready to welcome them back.

Aiming to raise £15,000 you can support them through their Just Giving page <http://www.justgiving.com/2013theitalianjob>

The boys said *"We wanted to replicate the idea of Service men and women coming home from abroad after being injured. That was when we decided we wanted to begin our challenge abroad and then work back towards the UK (Coming Home). We wanted to complete a multi-discipline event which would physically put our bodies to the test; this led to an endurance triathlon."*



Defence Discount Service – Privilege Card

The Defence Privilege Card gives members of the Armed Forces community discounts both online and on the high street. The Membership Card is a physical card that members and ex-members of the Armed Forces can take into stores, restaurants and venues in order to obtain a discount.



This has been introduced by the Defence Discount Service which is an important element in the Armed Forces Covenant across the UK. The Covenant recognises that the whole nation has a moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families, and it establishes how they should expect to be treated.

Who is eligible?

The Defence Discount Service and its Privilege card is available to:

- Serving Armed Forces
- Reserve Forces
- Veterans
- Service Family Members
- MOD Civil Servants
- Cadet Forces (over 16)
- NATO Personnel serving in the UK

What does the card cost?

£4.99 and lasts for 5 years

What stores are involved?

Well known retailers such as KFC, Iceland, Vue Cinemas, VisionExpress, Vodaphone and many others.

How to I apply?

You can sign up online at www.defencediscountservice.co.uk

KEEP SAFE

In the last newsletter, we reported the sad story of one of our tenants being conned by a bogus caller. Remember, if someone you are not expecting calls on you:

- DO NOT GIVE MONEY TO UNSOLICITED CALLERS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES
- CHECK ALL ID VERY CAREFULLY – PHONE THE ORGANISATION HAVING GOT THE NUMBER FROM THE TELEPHONE BOOK OR INTERNET NOT FROM THEIR ID CARD
- ASK A NEIGHBOUR OR RELATIVE TO COME TO YOUR HOME IF SOMEONE IS DETERMINED TO COME IN
- PHONE HAIG TO CHECK WHETHER ANY WORK IS SCHEDULED

Key Safes

A key safe is a secure metal box where you can store keys outside your home. People you trust can open the safe using a unique combination number. It can be used by care staff, family and friends who visit regularly, so that you don't have to answer the door. It is useful if you forget or lose your keys. It also means that, in case of an accident or sudden illness, people will still be able to get in if you need help. There are many different types of key safes but only Supra UK sell police-approved models. 01905 770333 www.keysafe.co.uk. These cost in the region of £50 delivered.

A word of caution. One of our tenants in Southend had their key safe prised off the wall and, later, was burgled by people using the keys to gain entry to the property.

IF YOUR KEY SAFE HAS BEEN TAMPERED WITH OR REMOVED, CHANGE YOUR LOCKS IMMEDIATELY AND INFORM THE POLICE.

Phone safety

NEVER give your PIN number out over the phone.

Remember: Your bank or the police will never ask you for your PIN number nor will they ever ask for your bank card and definitely won't send a courier to pick up a bank card from you. Don't give either your PIN number or your bank card to anybody.

Internet Safety

Never give bank details by clicking a link on an email. The way to work out whether an email is legitimate is to look at the name the email has come from – it may look like your bank but unless it starts the email with Dear Mr or Mrs Your Name or doesn't have the last four digits of your bank card, it is almost certainly a scam.

If you have been a victim of crime, call the police on 101

Marking the Centenary of the start of the First World War

Three key remembrance dates will mark the centenary of World War One.

The 'people's commemoration' dates are:

- August 4, 2014 – the centenary of the day Britain entered the war
- July 1, 2016 – 100 years after the Battle of the Somme
- November 11, 2018 – the anniversary of the day the guns fell silent after four years of war

The First World War Galleries at the Imperial War Museum are currently undergoing a £35m refurbishment as part of the commemoration. If you want to keep track of what is going on, www.1914.org will highlight centenary events and resources from across the globe.

New Armed Forces Champion

Lord Ashcroft became the Special representative for Veterans' Transition in November last year. He will review the advice and support package currently in place for personnel leaving the Armed Forces. His work will champion the cause of Servicemen and women making the transition into civilian life.



Volunteer Mentors wanted

Volunteering charity TimeBank is looking for volunteer mentors in Birmingham and London to expand its Shoulder to Shoulder project. This is a scheme to support ex-Service personnel who are recovering from mental health problems resulting from traumas and injuries received during active service. Mentors don't need any special experience, just time, patience and an understanding of the issues are most important. For more info go to www.timebank.org.uk/shoulder-to-shoulder



Mental Health support in the Midlands

Mental health support is available in the Midlands specifically for ex-military personnel. Contact Sarah Dilley on 07500 984890, email to: sarah.dilley@lpft.nhs.uk or visit www.lpft.nhs.uk

Armed Forces Day – June 29th



www.armedforcesday.org.uk/news/2012_news_features/nottingham_hosting_a.aspx

The City of Nottingham, with its proud military heritage, has been chosen to host the Armed Forces Day national event in 2013. Celebrations on Saturday 29th June will honour the Armed Forces past and present. To find out more go to www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk

There will be events all around the country and for Haig, there is no exception. Two fundraising events for Coming Home are taking place on Armed Forces Day; the magnificent Coronation Ball at Ascot racecourse and the first night of a musical The Prodigal in Coventry.

Are you doing anything on Armed Forces Day? – send us your pictures for the next newsletter.

Royal School Hampstead Trust – educational grants for dependants of Servicemen and Women

The Royal School Hampstead Trust can make grants to children and young people who have a father, mother or grandparent who is currently serving or has served in the British Armed Services, including the TA or Reserves and whose parents/guardians are living on low incomes. Preference is given to those studying courses likely to lead to improved employment prospects. Applicants must be:

- Studying at a school, college or university, and/or
- In need of support to meet physical, emotional or mental health needs to enhance their learning.

Awards are subject to means testing, and for Academic Year 2013/14 are a maximum of:

- School fees up to the age of 18: 100%
- University fees from year 2 only: 75%
- Further Education Fees: 50%

If you are interested in applying for a grant the closing dates are as follows:
School – 1st May 2013 University – 1st June 2013

For any further information on this wonderful opportunity, please go to www.rsitrust.com



Help for Heroes Recovery Centres; Support for Life

If you are or know of anyone who is wounded, injured or sick, the Help for Heroes Recovery Centres are here to help, for life.

The Recovery Centres are a nationwide support network to offer that next stage after clinical treatment e.g. Headley Court, whether people are returning to duty, preparing to leave the military or are now veterans on the road to recovery.



The well-equipped gym at the Phoenix centre at Tedworth House Recovery Centre

The centres offer world-class state of the art facilities, free and confidential advice from dedicated staff, Battle Back activities, education and retraining, camaraderie and friendship and wellbeing support. They welcome both serving and veteran members of the Armed Forces. All of the Recovery Centres are tri-service and welcome members of the Territorial Army.

Visit the H4H website for more information at: <http://www.helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support/visit-a-recovery-centre/>, or telephone 01980 844200 or email : reception@h4h-tedworthhouse.org.uk

WELFARE REFORM

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 is part of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review which is designed to reduce the annual welfare bill of £21bn to £18bn by 2014.

The reforms target mainly working age benefit claimants in England and Wales although it is likely that similar reforms will be in place in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Tenants in Scotland will receive additional information in due course. Haig's Chief Executive, Peter Besgrove, has written to all of Haig's tenants explaining the Welfare reforms and outlining any impact it may have.

To summarise the Government's Welfare Reforms (not an easy task as they are huge so please refer to your letter)

Why is the Government introducing this?

The Government aims to encourage people to move away from being reliant on benefits and into work. The reform of the benefit system aims to make it less complicated, fairer, more affordable and better able to tackle poverty, worklessness and welfare dependency.

What is involved?

Universal Credit will be the new single payment for people who are looking for work or for those on a low income. This will simplify the benefits system by bringing together a range of working-age benefits into a single streamlined payment. Universal Credit claimants will be better off in work (including irregular part-time work) than not working.

The new Universal Credit system aims to:

- improve incentive to work
- smooth the transition into and out of work
- be simpler and easier to understand than the existing system
- reduce poverty among people on low incomes
- cut back on fraud and error
- be more cost effective to run

The Universal Credit payment will:

- be managed online (help for those without access to the internet will be available)
- be limited to a total benefit entitlement: £350 pw (single) and £500 pw (couple). This doesn't include non cash benefits such as free school meals
- paid direct to the recipient four weeks (to be confirmed) in arrears. The recipient will then be responsible for paying out as appropriate for eg, rent to meet their obligations. All

recipients will need a bank account.

- include a 'bedroom tax' – a reduction in benefit payable for people living in social housing homes which are bigger than they need (who under-occupy). A bedroom is classed as a 'bedroom' whether it is double or single.

The Universal Credit system will replace:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits
- Housing Benefit

When is this happening?

Universal Credit will go live nationally in October 2013. From April 2013 a 'pathfinder' programme will start in Tameside, Oldham, Wigan and Warrington.

New claimants will be able to make claims for Universal Credit from October 2013, while claims for existing benefits and credits will be gradually phased out. From April 2014, all new claims will be for Universal Credit.

Existing claimants will move onto Universal Credit in line with a phased approach expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

What does this mean for Haig tenants?

These changes are quite complicated but aim, in the end, to simplify the system. If you have difficulty in understanding the implications for you, please contact your Housing Manager. Your local DWP Housing Office also has fact sheets available to help explain all of this.

We have carried out an analysis and identified that a small proportion of Haig households will be detrimentally affected by these changes. We are taking a proactive approach to deal with any problems. The Haig Income Team and Housing Managers are reviewing individual cases and affected households will be contacted. The effect on households will vary, dependent on individual circumstances; some may suffer a sharp and substantial reduction in income, others a slower reduction over time.

If you have any worries, please contact Haig's Income team or your Housing Manager, we are here to help.

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OTHER BENEFITS?

The following benefits are changing:

- Disability Living Allowance will be replaced by Personal Independence Payment from 2013
- Council Tax Benefit will be abolished in April 2013 and replaced by a system of localised support
- Pension Credit will be amended from October 2014 to include help with eligible rent and dependent children
- Social Fund is also being reformed to introduce new local assistance.

Do you need help with getting back into work?

Remploy's Armed Forces
& Veterans Service

07765 893 910

veterans@remploy.co.uk

www.remploy.co.uk/veterans

Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance

As Haig is considered to be a Private Landlord, Haig tenants are no longer eligible for Housing Benefit (HB) but may be eligible to apply for Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for help with the cost of rent

Are you still a legitimate beneficiary of the Charity

Feedback from a previous STATUS survey (Tenants Satisfaction Survey) and the Haig conferences, suggests that tenants do not think it is fair for people to live in Haig properties who are no longer true beneficiaries under the terms of the Trust Deed.

This could include a divorced or separated spouse whose children have grown up and are no longer of an age to be considered to be dependants of a Service person or a family member, with a legal right to do so, who has succeeded to a tenancy and is not an ex-Service person.

Where we find such a situation exists, Trustees have said that the charitable benefit of a low rent, decorations allowances and Less Aabled Assistance should be withdrawn. Furthermore the Tenant and their family will not be transferred to another property.

We are of course talking to anyone who finds themselves in this situation and are helping them to make any necessary adjustments to their life. If you think you might be affected in this way you should contact your Housing Manager.

Some people who have found themselves in this situation have recognised that they are depriving a Service family of a home and have taken the honourable approach and moved out of their home to enable it to be re-let to a proper beneficiary.

Social Fund Scheme in Scotland

From 1 April 2013, changes to the Social Fund scheme mean that Crisis Loans for Living Expenses and Community Care Grants will stop. In their place will be a new scheme called the Scottish Welfare Fund. It will be delivered by local Councils and will provide two types of grant:

- Crisis Grants
Providing you with a safety net in the event of a disaster or emergency
- Community Care Grants
Helping you to leave care and live independently, or to continue living independently.

For further information and how to apply, please contact your Local Council.

Rent Increase Notices

At this time of the year a large number of tenants will have received their annual Rent Increase Notice. Please note that these are legal notices and should be kept in a safe place along with your original tenancy agreement. If you are claiming Local Housing Allowance (LHA) the Local Authority's Benefit Department will need to see this notice before considering any re-application for LHA.

HOUSING SERVICES

Issues Raised by Attendees at the Conference

The Haig Conference provides an ideal opportunity for tenants from around the country to share with each other their experiences of the services Haig provides. For part of the day, groups of tenants, who may not have met each other before, discussed and compared their experiences under general headings such as estate improvements, general issues, services etc. The collective issues and enquiries were then discussed in an open forum. Any individual with an issue specific to them or their house or estate, was encouraged to fill in a form and their question is later answered, by letter, by the relevant member of staff. Some of the general subjects discussed will be of interest to many people as follows here and on page 13 for those relevant to the Property Services:

Parking

Parking can be a source of great irritation and is the most regular cause of complaint and friction between neighbours on an estate. The problem arises because the majority of our estates were built at a time when car ownership was very rare and therefore parking provision was not included in the design. Fast forward to the present and, in line with many other streets or estates in the country, parking has become a problem. Most of our homes are designed for families and now there maybe multiple car owners per house. The Trust does recognise the problem and has taken steps to address this. Before a decision can be reached as to whether the Trust can provide additional car parking, we have to take into account the following:

- 1) can the estate support additional car parking
- 2) following consultation, is there full tenant agreement with any proposals
- 3) is funding available
- 4) do other involved organisations agree ie local authorities' planning departments

Communication

Use of Email

We regularly consider the use of email. Whilst it might reduce postage costs, there is no guarantee that the use of email when contacting tenants would be effective. People change emails, mail boxes get full and not everyone checks their emails regularly and may miss important information. For the time being, the Trust will continue to use letters for the majority of communication.

Volunteer Estate Monitors (VEMs)

We are delighted that, at each conference we have held, people have put themselves forward to be Volunteer Estate Monitors – this year was no exception and we now have five further people considering taking on the role.

The VEM IS:

The person on the estate who has volunteered to check that various services put in place by the Trust and other organisations (local authorities etc) are being carried out, such as grounds maintenance contracts and refuse collection.

The VEM IS NOT:

The estate representative

The only person who can contact the Trust – any tenant can contact the trust even if it is concerning a communal problem or repair needed

HM The Queen Graciously agrees to be Patron of Haig Housing

When Haig Homes and Haig Housing Trust are combined, the main charity details will be those of Haig Housing Trust. Haig Homes will still exist but will not be active. The new Trust will operate under the name Haig Housing. We are delighted, therefore, to announce that Her Majesty The Queen has honoured us by agreeing to continue as Patron of Haig Housing. It is a very great honour of which we are very proud.



Out of Hours Emergency Number

The Out of Hours Emergency Number
has changed to

020 8685 5797

Please do NOT contact
any of our contractors direct
for any out of hours emergency

Issues Raised at the Conference

The issues raised and discussed at the conference which relate to the Haig's Property Services were as follows:

Notice of contractors coming onto Haig estates

Some concerns were raised that when there is communal work being carried out on an estate, there is no notice. It has been decided that the VEM will be notified about forthcoming communal work.

Estate Improvements

If there are improvements you think could be made to your estate, please let your Housing Manager know in the first instance and then the issue can be looked at in greater detail and, if needed, can be worked into a future programme. Improvements could include, for example, lighting, spyholes and parking. Once the data is collected, we will evaluate and assess the need accordingly.



Letters about repair work arriving after work is done

This can sometimes happen when the repair work is categorised as an emergency or urgent, or, sometimes, when IT systems fail. The process of raising the order for the work to be done and the contractors response can work faster than the Royal Mail – it is as simple as that!

Works Order Questionnaire £25 Prize

Please keep returning your completed questionnaires in after any works have been carried out at your home. We monitor the results, contractors' performance and how we handle repairs/works requests. If the work has not been finished, rather than fill in the questionnaire, please contact the Repairs Team to discuss it. Any returned questionnaire is put into a monthly draw and the person whose name is drawn will receive £25. Recent winners include:

Mr C Kemp, Jersey
Mr F Smith, Morden
Mrs M Hart, Swansea

War Memorial Refurbishment

Repairs Manager, Lisa Waterman, manages the refurbishment of War Memorials and other commemorative plaques and stones on Haig estates around the country. Here are some examples of the work that has been carried out on a memorial to Kathleen Purcell, Lady Weaver, at Ashted. The work has been done by Minster Stone Memorials based in Wimborne, Dorset.

Before



After



The “Not Forgotten” Association Entertainment

The “Not Forgotten Association has continued to treat Haig tenants to various outings.

Graeme Somerville and Mrs Brown from Haslemere went to the Christmas Party at St James’s Palace. He said, *“It was strange to be inside James’s Palace; when I was serving in the Scots Guards, I used to be on guard outside. We had a great time at ‘Jimmy’s’, as we used to call it. I renewed some old acquaintances and met new people too. We had a great day.”*



Graeme Somerville with one of the many celebrity guests, Esther Rantzen, at St James’s Palace

A group of Haig tenants had lunch at the Holiday Inn in Solihull. Mrs Clayton wrote to say:

“We had a super time the meal was great and the entertainment brilliant. We sat by some lovely people and have made new friends.”

Summer Garden Party at Buckingham Palace

20 Haig guests are invited

Each year, The “Not Forgotten” Association, invites Haig guests to enjoy a wonderful day at Buckingham Palace at a Garden Party. This year it is on Tuesday 2nd July. If you would like to have your name put in a draw for one of these spaces – please phone 020 8685 5781 giving your name address, whether you will be accompanied by a carer and whether you use a wheelchair. Alternatively, fill in the slip enclosed with this newsletter and send it in. The deadline for replies is very tight, please check the details on the enclosed information.



Lionel is serenaded at close quarters at a Not Forgotten Association concert

The late Mrs Pauline Rice

Mrs Pauline Rice, who used to live in Haig Place Morden, passed away in October last year. We were very touched that her family and friends donated almost £900 to Haig’s Coming Home Appeal. She was a lovely lady and will be missed. Her husband, Cyril, used to keep their garden full of flowers. He used to say, when he was in his late 80s, that he did the garden ‘because the old people like to see it!’



Looking for a Penpal?

This lovely lady, Glenda, would like to write to one of Haig’s tenants as a penpal. She feels that society owes our Servicemen and woman a great debt and would like to cheer someone up if they feel a bit lonely and would like to correspond with her. If you’d like to write to her, please send your details to Anna MacLeod at Haig Homes in the first instance. She lives in Stoke on Trent.



Haig Homes for Hedgehogs – Act now to save Mrs Tiggywinkle!

Some Haig tenants are very keen to help save hedgehogs. Not many people are aware that the gardener's friend, the hedgehog, is in peril. In the 1950's their numbers were thought to be about 30 million in the UK; now shockingly it is estimated there are only around 700,000 in England.

What can we do?

Make gardens more hedgehog friendly

Work together with neighbours to create ideal hedgehog habitat on your estate. Hedgehogs travel around one mile every night through our gardens in their quest to find enough food and a mate. Help them do this by making holes in or under your garden fences for them to pass through. The gap need only be around 15cm in diameter and so should not affect your pets' safety.

Leave a messy patch in a shady undisturbed area of your garden for hedgehogs to nest there; to



hibernate in or to rear their young. You can also either buy or make them a home. If making one, remember to include an interior tunnel or dividing wall to prevent predators such as badgers or foxes from getting to the hedgehog with their paws. Remember - without access into your garden, a hedgehog won't use your hedgehog home, no matter how lovely it is!

Slug pellets kill hedgehogs

Leave food out for them

The hedgehog's natural diet mainly consists of slugs, ground beetles, caterpillars and worms. During cold or dry periods, these become much scarcer. Leave out a shallow dish of water and food, such as:

- Meat-based dog or cat food
- Unsalted chopped or crushed peanuts
- Sunflower hearts
- Dried meal worms
- Dried fruit



Hedgehogs are lactose intolerant so do not give them milk.

Nice Letters from Tenants

We are always delighted to receive nice comments from tenants. As we all know, it is easier to complain than congratulate and so the 'bouquets' are appreciated along with the 'brickbats'.

A new tenant wrote, *"We are both so grateful all of the fantastic people at Haig Homes with whom we have had contact with over the last few weeks, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you personally for all that you have done for us so a very BIG Thank you from the two of us! I didn't think I would ever be in a situation such as this where all my dignity and pride felt tarnished, I'm sure you understand. However, it is extremely comforting to know that soldiers have a network of charities and really Good People to help them when they are in time of need."*

Another reader made this unprompted comment about the newsletter and other publications

"I just wanted to say how much I have enjoyed reading the Autumn Haig Newsletter. Although I haven't done anything exciting at the moment that I can write about, I really enjoy reading about other tenants, in particular the Coming Home campaign."

In my job I have to produce a weekly bulletin and a termly newspaper - usually the only time anyone comments to me about them is if they think I have written something incorrectly so I appreciate the time and hard work involved in compiling publications. Thank you once again and if I have anything exciting to report be assured I will be in touch!"

HAIG'S BRAINTEASER

This time the Brain Teaser is a Suduko ... with a difference! Instead of numbers, the fields are filled with Haig related information. You will find the name **Field Marshal Earl Douglas Haig** is whose memory Haig Homes was founded: the Royal Artillery and Royal Corps of Engineers' nicknames – **Gunner** and **Sapper** – to acknowledge the two largest affiliated groups of homes in the Trust, and the **Navy** and **RAF** to demonstrate the fact that we are a Tri-service charity. This works the same way as a conventional Suduko – put one of each word highlighted in red into each box of 9 squares and also make sure that each line (both horizontal and vertical) contains each of the words too.

Send your completed grid to Anna MacLeod, Haig Housing Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden SM4 5NS and be in with a chance to win £25.

	Marshal	Gunner		Douglas			Haig	RAF
				Field	Marshal			
			Sapper			Marshal		
		Field		Marshal				Haig
					Sapper	Douglas		
Navy	RAF	Haig						
Gunner			Haig				Sapper	
Sapper								
	Douglas		Gunner			Navy	Earl	

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER

Is there something in it for you?

If you feel that this newsletter doesn't include anything from your estate....don't complain ... send something in. Let us know of your celebrations, anniversaries or commemorations in your area. Do you have a 'social group' or is there anything you want to say about your estate? Or do you want to know more about the history of your estate for example?

If you need translations of any Haig information, or need a translator for any verbal communication with Haig Homes, please make contact with our Head Office to arrange this. You can contact the office by telephoning 020 8685 5777 or by writing to: Haig Homes, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS.

If you need copies of any Haig information in
LARGE PRINT or BRAILLE,
please contact

HAIG HOMES, ALBAN DOBSON HOUSE, GREEN LANE, MORDEN,
SURREY SM4 5NS or telephone 020 8685 5777



Remember our new Out of Hours Emergency Number 020 8685 5797

This newsletter is printed using recycled paper.

Do you want to comment on or contribute to the newsletter? If so, contact Anna MacLeod, Haig Homes Newsletter Editor, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS. 020 8685 5777 fax 020 8685 5778 email anna@haighomes.org.uk **Deadline for contributions 30 September 2013**

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