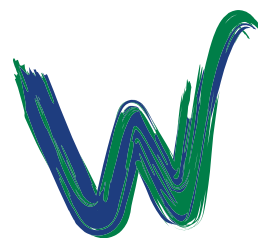


# Wythenshawe Life

[www.wchg.org.uk](http://www.wchg.org.uk)

Autumn  
/ Winter  
2015



Wythenshawe  
Community Housing Group



parkway  
green  
housing trust



Page  
2

**New Homes**  
Ready now/  
coming  
soon



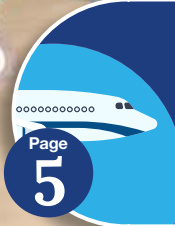
Page  
3

**STOP  
PRESS**  
- Budget



Page  
19

Garden  
Competition  
our winners



Page  
5

**ON YOUR  
MARKS  
...GET  
HIRED**

If you  
or anyone you know  
would like this publication  
**IN LARGE TYPE**  
or audio format please  
contact us on  
**0800 633 5500**  
**0300 111 0000**



**Inside**  
See our  
Annual Report  
  
plus Value for  
Money Summary

**Tenant  
Approved**

## New homes planned over the next 3 years

**WCHG has ambitious plans to provide more than 500 new homes between 2015 and 2018.**

A total of 300 of these are part of a £4.3m funding grant through the Homes and Communities Agency's Affordable Homes Programme as part of our membership of JV North (a consortium of 10 housing associations, mostly in the North West).

Three schemes have recently completed at The Haybarns on Hall Lane, Kingsgate and Moorcroft. There are five further developments currently under construction at Cotefield, Amberley Drive, Daine Avenue, Nestfield Road and Bideford Drive. There is also our Village 135 development which will add a further 135 homes.

We have many other projects in the pipeline and if all of these progress to completion another 296 homes will be added across Wythenshawe. So far, initial designs have been agreed with the planning authority for land in Greenwood Road, Cornishway, Yew Tree Lane and Selstead Road.

A public consultation exercise has been undertaken for a scheme at Bramcote Avenue and the Greenbrow Road scheme. Planning applications have been submitted for both.

WCHG Chief Executive and Chairman of JV North, Nigel Wilson said: "This is the next stage of the process to build hundreds of new, high quality homes across Wythenshawe as part of the HCA funding allocation."

In addition to providing new homes for affordable rent, reflecting demand for a range of tenure options, selected developments will offer homes for sale, market rent and shared ownership, presented under the Group's new 'Garden City Homes' branding.



*Chair of the WCHG Board Eddy Newman said, "This is fantastic news for Wythenshawe and will make a huge difference to the local area"*

## Brook Meadow - fast moving!



**Our Brook Meadow properties on Amberley Drive are attracting lots of interest, with the first reservation secured by Catherine Gerken and John Williamson who are keen to move back to the area.**

The couple had originally been interested in our shared ownership homes at The Haybarns, but they were sold so quickly they missed out. They were therefore delighted when the Brook Meadow development was launched by Garden City Homes, with homes for sale, shared ownership and market rent in Wythenshawe.

Catherine said: "We recently moved away from Wythenshawe but are really keen to move back to the area to be near family. We were interested in the homes at The Haybarns, but we were too late as they sold so quickly!"



## Pop in to Village 135 marketing suite opens

Our new sales and marketing suite for Village 135 is open by appointment. These homes are for people who:

- Are over 55
- Enjoy independent living in stylish surroundings
- May have need of care and support
- Live or have a local connection to south Manchester

Village 135 is at the junction of Hollyhedge Road and Brownley Road.

[www.village135.org.uk](http://www.village135.org.uk)



**Garden City Homes**, our new sales and marketing team, has opened a show home on the Brook Meadow development site. To book an appointment to find out more about our homes for sale, including **Village 135**, please contact our team on **0300 7777 177** or email [enquiries@gardencityhomes.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@gardencityhomes.org.uk)



# STOP PRESS

## EMERGENCY GOVERNMENT BUDGET



**The Government's announcement of a 1% rent reduction for all housing associations for each of the next four years starting from 1st April 2016 came as a surprise to everyone in housing. It removed the rent setting formula that each association used to write their 30 year financial business plan.**

The impact for the Group is that over the next four years we will receive £20.1million less in rental income. This income is used to invest in the services that the Group provides directly to our tenants, the wider community and new developments of much needed affordable homes across Wythenshawe.

Extensive discussions have taken place across the Group and throughout its governance structure to agree the best way to deliver the savings without impacting on the services that are offered to tenants. At the Group Board on the 28th September a package of measures was approved which will deliver £4m of savings during 2016/2017.

These savings have come from every service area and we have identified new ways of working to deliver the majority of the savings. However, it has also meant that redundancies have to be considered. The numbers of redundancies have been reduced by savings identified and the removal of 25 vacant posts from the structure, but a further 21 posts have been identified as 'at risk' of redundancy. We have put in place a strong support package for those staff impacted by this announcement and continue to work with them to ensure their future success.

Whilst we will be able to continue to provide the same level of service as previously, we will need to work in different ways to deliver this, therefore, following the closure of Bowland Road, which will support Manchester City Council's Early Help Hub, and after consultation we will be closing our Portway Office on the 23rd December. We have also taken feedback from the last tenants newsletter and will be reducing the number of newsletters that we send from four to two a year (Spring and Autumn 2016).

Making these changes enables the Group to remain financially strong and able to continue to deliver high performance services. It is regrettable that redundancies have had to be considered during this process; however it was the only way in which the Group could deliver the required level of savings. This, it must be stressed, is a necessary response to the commitments made by the Chancellor in his summer budget. Whilst recognising that tenants will benefit from the rent reduction we have to ensure that we can continue to manage our business from the reduced income received.

Yours,



**Nigel Wilson**  
Group Chief Executive  
of Wythenshawe  
Community Housing  
Group



**Eddy Newman**  
Chair of the Board  
of Wythenshawe  
Community Housing  
Group

If you would like a  
**Magnifying Strip**  
to help you read  
the newsletter,

## NEWS

...please contact the  
Communications team on  
**0300 111 0000** or email  
**communication@wchg.org.uk**

## Scooter check list

Growing numbers of people are using mobility scooters to help them stay independent and get out and about. They are not cheap to purchase or rent, so, before you make any decisions, please make sure of the following:



- ✓ Have you requested permission from your Housing Officer?
- ✓ Can you access your property?
- ✓ Will the scooter be stored in an area that enables you to leave the property in an emergency?
- ✓ Can you safely and securely leave your scooter outside your home?
- ✓ Will you be able to charge your scooter safely?

**We regret scooters cannot be stored or charged in communal areas and WCHG is not responsible for fitting ramps for scooters.**

In partnership with Manchester Equipment and Adaptation Partnership (MEAP) there are a number of ways we can help towards other aids and adaptations if a member of your household has a disability. This can vary from minor changes like grab or hand rails, or more major works like stair lifts or wet rooms. If you feel these might help, get in contact and ask for a referral and assessment to have an adaptation.

All major adaptations are means tested and, if eligible, will be provided by the Disabled Facilities Grant. Please note, you may need to contribute towards the cost of works.

# Free!

We can give you a hygrometer/thermometer to help you manage your heating and ventilation to reduce humidity in your home to prevent condensation. Speak to the surveyor when he visits and he can issue you with one.

## Cut condensation

Winter is coming. As people close their windows, the air flow in homes reduces and reports of condensation rise.

To prevent and reduce condensation in your home:

- keep the indoor temperature reasonably constant – around 15 degrees to provide a background heat and boost it to 18 to 20 degrees when needed. Warming up your home then cooling down creates condensation.
- avoid drying clothes indoors. If you use a drying rack put it in a room with the fan on and the door closed
- do not dry clothes on radiators
- do not block radiators with furniture or other items
- make sure your tumble dryer is correctly vented or any condensate is regularly emptied
- keep furniture away from walls – allow air to circulate behind furniture especially on colder external walls
- do not switch off any fans or ventilation units

Use this tick sheet to help reduce condensation

	YES	NO
<b>Do you have a fan in the bathroom?</b>		
Is it working?		
Is it being used?		
<b>Do you have a fan in the kitchen?</b>		
Is it working?		
Is it being used?		
<b>Do you use the trickle vents in the windows?</b>		
<b>Do you open windows?</b>		
<b>Do you use your central heating?</b>		
<b>Is your dryer vented externally – using the hose and a vent fitted through the wall?</b>		

If you answered **YES** to these questions and you still have a problem, contact us to book a surveyor to inspect your home.



## ON YOUR MARKS...GET HIRED

Would you like to work at one of the UK's largest airports that handles over 22 million passengers a year and employs more than 19,000 people?

If so, then take advantage of 'Get Ready to Get Hired' – an event dedicated to Wythenshawe residents (M22 and M23 postcodes), who would like to apply for one of the 2,500 jobs on offer when Manchester Airport holds its jobs fair in January 2016.

No previous experience or qualifications are necessary for these

opportunities but you can increase your chances of being offered a position by attending a special workshop event on 11 December at the Forum Centre.

There will be advice from local employers and information about working at the airport, along with document checks to ensure that

you meet the requirements for airport jobs. Workshops include CV preparation, how to present yourself, interview skills and travel advice.

Get Ready to Get Hired takes place between 11am and 5pm.

For further information please contact **Emma Molloy** or **Tom Cass** at **Wythenshawe Regeneration Team** on 0161 219 6465.

## Triumphant - everyone's a winner!

It's been and gone – in a whirl of activity, enthusiasm and general good cheer! This year's Wythenshawe Games proved every bit as inspiring as before. The Personal Best programme took place at the Lifestyle Centre over 10 weeks with 238 people signing up under the banner of "Get active and try something different this Summer." Between them they took part in 979 sessions and racked up 1073 hours of physical activity. The youngest participant was 15 and oldest was 89. See page 12 for more details of personal bests.

### WYTHENSHAW GAMES 2015

#### Throughout the Games:

- 9,551** took part in sport and physical activity
- 303** signed up for Teentakeover
- 58** participated in the 10km run
- 101** joined in the over 50s day
- 12** teams from as far afield as Leeds and Ellesmere Port took on the women's 5-a-side football tournament
- 8** teams played in the 5-a-side walking football tournament



#### FESTIVAL OF FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Nigel Wilson and Eddy Newman presenting medals to the volunteers who helped with the Games

Eddy Newman, Chair of the Group Board, said; **"I just want to say a huge thank you to all the volunteers who helped put on the Wythenshawe Together event, which was on the Saturday and Sunday of the Games. Their contribution to the success of the event is very much appreciated."**

### V4W gets active!

As part of our Volunteering for Wythenshawe (V4W) project, 28 staff volunteered at the Games in addition to at least seven who were there in their official capacities.

V4W has more than 3000 volunteer hours pledged from our staff. If you know a school or a community group which would benefit from added support, contact [volunteer@wchg.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@wchg.org.uk) or call 0161 946 7548.

## Warm home discounts



If you are eligible for Warm Home Discount Scheme 2015-16, you could get £140 off your electricity bill. The Warm Home Discount Scheme is a one-off discount off your electricity bill, usually paid between September and March.

The discount won't affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment. Check if you are eligible at [www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/eligibility) or call Warm Home Discount Scheme on 0345 603 9439.

You can also qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter. Your electricity supplier can tell you how you will get the discount if you're eligible.

If you qualify, you will get a letter before the 24 December 2015 telling you either:

- you don't have to apply – you will get the discount automatically
- to apply by 29 January 2016 – the letter will tell you why and how

If you don't get a letter, but believe you qualify because you claim the guarantee credit element of pension credit, contact the scheme on the details above.

No. 1

## Always pay your rent

**Don't let money worries stack up.**

Paying your rent should always be your number one priority. If you are struggling, contact our Financial Inclusion Team's Debt Advisors and they will be able to work with you to find practical solutions. Our Welfare Rights Officers will also be able to provide advice and support with benefit queries.

**Contact us to make an appointment.**

**Call 0800 633 5500 (from landline) or 0300 111 000 (mobile) or email [customerenquiries@wchg.org.uk](mailto:customerenquiries@wchg.org.uk)**

## Pension pot changes

Following pension reforms on 6 April, people approaching retirement have greater freedom over how they can use their pension pots.



They will be able to take a lump sum, take out an annuity or a mixture of both.

Pension Wise is a new Government service designed to help people make sense of their pension options, and empower them to make the right choices. Manchester Citizens Advice Bureau is delivering free face-to-face Pension Wise sessions. Guidance appointments are also available on the telephone, delivered by the Pensions Advisory Service.

To get the most out of an appointment you need details of your State Pension and your personal pension.

You can also get a forecast from the Future Pension Centre online at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk), by post or by calling 0345 300 0168. If you have lost details about your personal or workplace pension scheme the Pension Tracing Service on 0345 6002 537.

**To book a face-to-face appointment, call Manchester Pension Wise on 0161 830 2070. You can also get information and general guidance online at [www.pensionwise.gov.uk](http://www.pensionwise.gov.uk)**

## Waiting for Universal Credit?

A seven waiting days system was introduced for certain Universal Credit claimants from 3 August 2015. This means that some claimants will need to wait for 45 days for their first benefit payment.

Claimants can request a benefit transfer advance or a new claim advance payment which must be claimed at the same time as the interview at the Jobcentre or by calling the DWP contact centre immediately afterwards. Call the Universal Service Centre on 0345 6000723 for more information.



## First eviction for tenancy fraud

In our last issue, we reported we had been granted a possession order through the County Court for a property that had been fraudulently obtained by giving false information.

The eviction took place recently, despite several attempts by the tenant to appeal the possession order. We were also awarded costs.

**We will not tolerate tenancy fraud and will take action to combat it. Tenancy Fraud is a criminal offence – if you know or suspect someone of obtaining one of our properties by giving false information, please report this in confidence by telephoning 0300 111 0000 / 0800 633 5500 or email [info@wchg.org.uk](mailto:info@wchg.org.uk)**



## Condition counts

We are cracking down on properties that are in poor condition and not being looked after by the tenants.

In late 2014, we successfully evicted joint tenants from a flat in Newall Green after its poor property condition left it virtually uninhabitable. We are currently taking legal action in two other cases with hearings listed in the County Court in November 2015.

**It is a condition of your tenancy agreement that you keep your property in a good state of repair and do not cause damage or neglect. Should you apply for rehousing to another WCHG property, we will carry out a property inspection and if you are not maintaining your home to a good standard, you will not be offered another property.**

## Complaints accreditation

Our complaints service has received Housemark Accreditation – a nationally recognised standard – as a “very good complaints service, driven by an experienced and enthusiastic Customer Feedback Team”.



We wish to continually improve and tailor this service. To help us do so, we welcome your suggestions, particularly about what information you would like to see on our website, receptions and in this newsletter about the complaints and feedback we receive. Call the Customer Services team or e-mail [complaints&praise@wchg.org.uk](mailto:complaints&praise@wchg.org.uk).

**We have also achieved Housemark Accreditation for our Anti Social Behaviour policies. See our Community Safety page 8.**

## Your Neighbourhood Promise

Our first set of three-year Neighbourhood Plans was launched in June.







July saw us working with Sandilands and Newall Green Primary Schools to clean up some of our local areas with everyone rolling up their sleeves to get stuck in.

A full calendar of neighbourhood events will shortly be available to view on our website, so keep a look out for events in your area!

To get involved in any of the events please contact your Neighbourhood Housing Officer. You can view your Neighbourhood Promise and find details for your Neighbourhood Housing Officer on line.



### Our Year to Date performance to end of September 2015

-  Current Rents Arrears – 4.7%
-  Average time to relet a property – 19.31 days
-  % of repairs completed on time – 99.9%
-  % of repairs completed on first visit – 94.37%
-  Customer satisfaction with repairs – 96.55%
-  % of phone called answered in 30 seconds – 89.83%.



## News from the courts

- Excluded**  
 We went back to court following further breaches of an undertaking by joint tenants of a property involving domestic disputes. One of the joint tenants has agreed to be excluded from the property rather than run the risk of losing the home.
- Vacating property**  
 An application to commit a tenant to prison along with possession of their property was made to the court after an injunction was persistently breached by door slamming, dog barking and verbal abuse. The tenant was already subject to a possession order due to non-payment of rent. At court, the tenant agreed to vacate their property.
- Injunctions**  
 In June 2015, the ASB team secured two ex-parte Injunctions after a female resident attacked a neighbour's 16-year-old daughter in the street and a male visitor then threatened the father of the young girl. The male has been excluded from the area and the female has not breached her order.
- Sentenced**  
 Evidence provided to the court by the CCTV control room has led to the sentencing of three males for the theft of a motor vehicle.

If you are worried about ASB, you can request assistance or report an incident to the control room/Wardens by calling 0161 946 9501.

## ASB Performance 2014-15

**100%**  
Satisfaction with the ASB service

**206**  
ASB cases dealt with

**74**  
Average number of days to resolve a case

**14**  
Legal actions secured

## Housemark award for our ASB services



We have been awarded the prestigious Housemark ASB Accreditation after being assessed against seven ASB commitment areas and 44 building blocks within each of the commitment areas.

The accreditation demonstrates we:

- empower tenants
- demonstrate value for money
- meet tenants' expectations
- improve satisfaction levels
- recognise staff contribution



**Eddy Newman, Chair of the Board of WCHG, said:**  
*"The vast majority of our tenants and residents, and their neighbours, want to live peacefully in their homes and community. However, a very small minority of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour can sometimes make a misery of their neighbours' lives. This is why it is so important that Wythenshawe Community Housing Group has a robust and effective service combating ASB. In addition to the existing support from WCHG's tenants and Board, this accreditation adds external, expert recognition for WCHG's ASB service."*

**We also received Housemark Accreditation for our Complaints service. See Page 7 for more details.**

## CUTTING BURGLARY

We spent a month this summer working alongside Greater Manchester Police's Wythenshawe Neighbourhood Team to help local people reduce the risk of their homes being burgled.

Research showed that streets where there had already been a burglary were at greater risk of more burglaries since offenders were familiar with the layout, security and CCTV in the area.

Together, we visited 88 homes to offer security advice. At some WCHG properties repairs and maintenance were carried out to help improve security where required.

Greater Manchester Fire Brigade also visited 54 properties to carry out free fire risk assessments.

## Crucial Crew poses the questions on ASB

Around 700 children from primary schools across South Manchester took part in an interactive video and game focusing on Anti Social Behaviour during this year's Crucial Crew event.

The game was developed by two of our Neighbourhood Wardens. The six-day Crucial Crew event is held annually for Year Six pupils and this year was held at Manchester College, Northenden Campus with the theme of safety.

WCHG Neighbourhood Wardens and our Nuisance Team attended to launch the game which asks the pupils to make choices and to encourage discussions about the consequences of behaviour decisions.

Other organisations taking part included: British Transport Police talking about the dangers of rail tracks; Greater Manchester Police focussing on personal safety; Stagecoach on bus safety and Eclipse on drugs and alcohol.

## Safe Spots tackling domestic abuse

Wythenshawe Safe Spots are local venues where members of staff who have had basic awareness training in domestic abuse are able to signpost people towards agencies that can help.

The scheme was designed and set up by local people to challenge the way domestic abuse is dealt with in the area. Many of those involved in Safe Spots have themselves been victims of domestic abuse.

The long term goal of the Wythenshawe Safe Spots Group is to open a women's drop in centre.

Safe Spots has won influential support. Garry Shewan, Assistant Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, has agreed to create a mandatory training video to be shown to all police on domestic violence which will include stories from the Safe Spots group.

Derek Hewitt, Chief inspector of Wythenshawe, showed his support by representing Greater Manchester Police at a meeting set up and run by members of the Safe Spots Wythenshawe group.

The meeting charted the journey the Safe Spot women have been on and their achievements so far. Previously, the majority had no interest in politics and had not undertaken any public speaking. However, at the meeting five members spoke in front of the large crowd.

The Reverend Stephen Edwards said: "It was one of the most powerful, well presented and thoughtful presentations I have been to in a long time. A great sense of optimism and hope for everyone present and such positive, creative energy for the Wythenshawe community."

If you are a victim and need help, go to the police or drop in to the Safe Spots at the Civic Centre in the Forum, Smoothie Shop, MP's Office (above Wilkinsons), Co-op Travel, Metrolink Airport Link Office and all Sure Start Centres. You can follow the progress of the group on Twitter @wythsafespots



# Causing a Summer stir

Throughout summer our ever energetic Real Food team has been busy planting here, cooking there, creating recipes, offering tastings and advice everywhere!



Real Food Wythenshawe is a Big Lottery funded project managed by WCHG. Follow us at: [www.realfoodwythenshawe.com](http://www.realfoodwythenshawe.com); on twitter @realfoodteam or call the team on 0161 946 7554.

Real Food. Wythenshawe.

A huge thank you to more than 3000 people who voted for the Real Food Team in the National Lottery Awards Environment category. We were pipped at the post by the 360 Observatory Project, but the very fact that the Real Food team made the final seven is a huge endorsement of the tremendous work they have been doing across the region.

TV star and actor **John Barrowman** who presented the **National Lottery Awards** for the fifth time this year says:

*"The exceptionally selfless work carried out by National Lottery Awards finalists never fails to astound me. Their work deserves to be celebrated nationally; the community spirit, social cohesion and compassion. National Lottery players should swell with pride that £34 million of Lottery funding is raised every week for projects like these across the UK."*

## Back by popular demand!



The Real Food team were back at the RHS Tatton Flower Show this year, cooking up a storm and tantalising the taste buds of visitors in the Feast Demonstration Theatre with Pam Morgan and Rachel Harding cooking up their courgette and beetroot fritters!

**Loads of other tasty recipes are available on their website.**



# Toasting Fifty Shades of Green!



Dig the City – Manchester's summer garden festival – buzzed with gardens galore, street food and fashion, pop-up picnics and music with markets. As the pictures show, our Real Food team was right there in the thick of it and winning gold!

With their slogan of **'Grow it. Cook it. Eat it.'**, the team created an edible show and healthy cocktail bar to create smoothies and cocktails of Fifty Shades of Green. They won gold – an announcement made by TV personality and garden designer Diarmuid Gavin.

**Jacqueline Naraynsingh**, Real Food Programme Manager, said: *"This Gold Award from Dig the City is the icing on the cake and a brilliant end to our fantastic foodie summer!"*



## Edible Interchange!

With the launch of the fantastic new transport hub – the Wythenshawe Interchange – at the end of July, the Real Food Team has also launched their edible raised beds and planters.

This was a partnership led by Real Foods and supported by TfGM, Groundwork Manchester, MCC and The Forum Trust.

Jacqueline Naraynsingh said: "Our aim is to encourage people to eat healthily, so we thought we could grow edible plants at the interchange and then anyone on their way home from a hard day's work can help themselves to herbs to use for their tea!"

The Real Food team are already working with Haveley Hey Primary School and Crossacres Cultivators to look after the plants, but they are also looking for volunteers to form **'Friends of the Edible Interchange'** – so if you are interested, please get in touch with **Jacqueline on 0161 946 7554**.





**Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre**  
Portway (junction with Selstead Road), M22 1QW

Tel: 0161 436 0560

[www.WoodhouseParkLifestyleCentre.co.uk](http://www.WoodhouseParkLifestyleCentre.co.uk)

Follow us on twitter @WPLifestyleCent  
or Facebook Woodhouse Park Lifestyle Centre



## Diary Dates

Mon 14 Dec Carol concert  
15,16 17 Dec Christmas lunches,  
cost £10.95.

Contact us for details.



## Personal Bests all round!



There was a choice of 20 sports to cater for all ages and abilities for those taking part in the Wythenshawe Games Personal Best (PB) challenge.

Each participant was awarded a bronze medal for attending three sessions, silver for attending six, gold for 10 sessions and for those taking part in 11 sessions and more there were platinum medals. Check out the stats on page 5!

We were thrilled when six of the PB participants from the running programme went on to complete their first 5k run in the Wythenshawe Games Sizzler.

A new multi-sports project for adults with learning disabilities has since been set up in partnership with the charity Better Things. This has enabled people who haven't participated in sport before or for a long time to develop new skills.

## Keeping up your fitness

**Legs, Bums & Tums**

Mondays 5.30-6.30pm  
Only £3.00, why not come along?

**Zumba**

Tues and Thurs  
6.30-7.30pm

## A great offer!

Whether you are looking for somewhere to celebrate a wedding or a big event, for business meetings or for sports, we have a great deal on offer. Our fact files will tell you all you need to know. **Pick one up or contact us for more details.**



## Down at the mill



WOW Zone staff were joined by 16 young people on a summer photography project with Quarry Bank Mill to find out what life was like for people at the Mill.

They visited the Mill and learnt some of the techniques and principles required to take good photographs with handy tips from professional photographers including Andrew Butler, Megan Taylor and Jurgen De Witte, who commented on their blog and answered questions on Twitter.

Find examples of their work on the WOW Zone blog:  
[www.wowzonekids.wordpress.com](http://www.wowzonekids.wordpress.com)  
and on Twitter: @TheWOWZone1

More from the WOW Zone on page 15.

**Ready for Christmas!** Our **Christmas lunches** and **events** are very popular and get booked up quickly, so keep an eye on our *Facebook, Twitter* and *Website* for news.



**Benchill Community Centre**  
Benchill Road, Benchill, M22 8EJ

Tel: 0161 945 0879

[www.benchillcommunitycentre.co.uk](http://www.benchillcommunitycentre.co.uk)  
or [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/benchillcommunitycentre) benchillcommunitycentre

## New course launch -Talk English

If English is your second language come along and enrol for this free beginners course to improve your speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

The course will be held every  
Thursday 10am-12:30pm.



Manager Brenda  
wins National  
awards, *see page 15.*

## Fun for all

More than 2,500 people rolled up to  
take part in our Summer open day.

With free rides and inflatables, scarecrow making, face painting, delicious food, cakes, hula hoop workshops, a football tournament, DJ, entertainment, tombola, raffle and lots of other fun activities, there was plenty to do and a great day was had by all.



Thank you to everyone who supported us by volunteering, advertising the event, providing an activity/stall and donating prizes. For more pictures please visit our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/benchillcommunitycentre](https://www.facebook.com/benchillcommunitycentre).

## A CUPPA OF HELP

On 25 September we invited everyone to come along to the centre for a cuppa and a slice of cake to support Macmillan Cancer Support. Last year alone Macmillan raised £25 million and this year they are aiming to raise even more with your help! The coffee morning raised an impressive £116.88, thank you for your support and donations.



## Summer reflections

There was a chance to work with artists and puppeteers for those who took part in this year's fun-packed Summer Play Scheme.

Our local Police Constable Special Officers also got involved and there were trips to the Wythenshawe Games, Summer Sonic as well as bowling and the Crocky Trail.

Holiday Kitchen Project for local families, showed them how to prepare low cost, nutritional meals, how to get active and spend time together. The families worked with our trained Play Scheme staff and experienced different aspects of healthy eating by going shopping and fruit picking. These sessions took place twice a week for four weeks.



## WE'RE MAKING YOUR CENTRE EVEN BETTER

PROJECT  
COMPLETES LATE 2015

### WYTHENSHAW FORUM

We've got some exciting things in store for you with a gym refurbishment coming very soon. In partnership with Wythenshawe Forum Trust, we're making some exciting changes to your gym at Wythenshawe Forum.

- Redecoration of the current gym and new equipment throughout
- Extra stations
- A brand new free weights area downstairs

We will do our best to keep any disruption to a minimum for our members.

Find out more or become a member at [www.better.org.uk/forum](http://www.better.org.uk/forum)



In partnership with  
**MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL**

**FORUM**

**BETTER**  
the feel good place

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## Secondary School of the Year – win for MEA



**It was a fantastic win for MEA in the Manchester Evening News Manchester Schools Awards. Many congratulations from all at WCHG – proud sponsors of MEA.**

WCHG Chair, Eddy Newman, said: *"I would like to congratulate MEA on this justified award. The Academy has made tremendous progress over recent years under the strong and effective leadership of its Principal, James Eldon. The staff, the governing body, the parents – and most of all the students – should take great pride in their achievement."*



## So much to celebrate!

2014-15 was a fantastic year for MEA. On top of a glowing Ofsted report in the spring and the award for Secondary School of the Year at the MEN Schools Awards, see left, a Summer School for the new Year 7s was a huge success.

In August, MEA was celebrated by the Prime Minister in a speech and GCSE results once again confirmed their place as the most academic school in Wythenshawe with 50% A\*- C including English and maths.

2015-16 also got off to a fantastic start with the largest ever intake for Year 7 and a new uniform that has been a huge hit too.

Applications closed on the 31st October, if you require any further information about the Academy please get in touch on **0161 499 2726** or email **admin@meacad.org.uk**.



## High Flyers

Pupils from Saint Paul's Catholic High School visited the Thomas Cook Engineering Hangar at Manchester

Airport where they were able to learn more about the workings of the airport and the wealth of career opportunities.

The Year 7 pupils from the school's High Flyers programme, which has been designed to ensure

that the more able pupils reach their full potential, were given a guided tour of the engineering hangar and the opportunity to discuss the technology and engineering involved with the day-to-day running and maintenance of the planes.



## Healthy Cakes for Health Boss

Year 8 students at Manchester Health Academy baked "healthy" cakes for Simon Stevens, Chief Executive of NHS England, when he paid a visit to the Academy recently.



Helen Walker, Curriculum Leader for Health said: **"...it is fantastic to have the work that goes on here every day recognised by NHS England. The students were really keen to talk to Simon about what health means to them and were an absolute credit to the Academy."**



## Congratulations...

...to all our local schools for some fantastic exam results this year. There's too many to list, but here they are celebrating at Newall Green where they recorded the best results ever, up 17% on 2014.

## Don't miss - the Wonders of Wythenshawe

An amazing interactive mural is now on display at the Forum Library, showcasing local heritage – the Wonders of Wythenshawe.

The mural is based on the art work of around 80 local young people involved in the project run by the WOW Zone with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

A free book has also been published and sent out to Wythenshawe schools to be used in local history lessons.

"This has been an amazing project to be a part of. It has opened my eyes to our heritage and I've learnt so many new skills, like project management and film-making. It's been really interesting visiting places like Wythenshawe



Hall, speaking with people who are passionate about Wythenshawe's history and putting on events for other Young People," said Hayley, aged 17.

To find out more and to download the WOW Heritage App, go to [www.wondersofwythenshawe.com](http://www.wondersofwythenshawe.com)

For more details about the WOW Zone and its projects, contact Andy Jordan on 0161 436 0586 or call in at the Wythenshawe Lifestyle Centre Reception to pick up a free copy of the WOW Heritage book!

## Steering Young People away from crime



For the third year running, WCHG has worked with the Evolution Project to deter youths involved in anti-social or criminal behaviour from their current lifestyle before it is too late and they end up in prison.

Led by two ex-offenders, Craig Fletcher and Peter Atherton, it is a joint venture between the WCHG's Youth Team and Community Safety Team and gives participants the opportunity to give something back to the community.

This year, for instance, they cleared and planted gardens at the Enterprise Centre, helping participants gain skills, improving the neighbourhood and providing WCHG with great value for money.

As Craig explains; *"I want to dispel the myth that prison is a cool place where prisoners play video games, have pool tables and TV in their rooms. This programme is about debunking and de-glamorising some of these myths, and also about increasing their awareness of victims and the impact their behaviour has on their lives."*

The intensive programme culminated in a motivational walking trip up Moel Famau in North Wales – a life changing event for some.

PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE



## Brenda wins National awards

Congratulations to Brenda Grixti MBE, Manager at Benchill Community Centre, who won a Women in Housing Award, in the **Most Effective Project category in the Improving the Lives of Women or Communities Award.**



Eddy Newman, Group Chair of WCHG, said; "Brenda thoroughly deserves this award for all the things that she has done for Benchill and Wythenshawe. Congratulations on behalf of the Board and WCHG."

PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE\*\*\*PRESS RELEASE

## Calling all business entrepreneurs...



It's all go at the Enterprise Centre on Benchill Road with new Manager **Nathan Jack** and his team launching a programme to help Wythenshawe entrepreneurs kick start their business ideas.

*In The Making* enables participants to take part in workshops including sales and marketing, finance and business development before presenting their idea to a Business Angels panel with the possibility of gaining a small grant to get the idea off the ground. Contact the Enterprise Centre to find out more.



The Enterprise Centre, 34 Benchill Road, Benchill, M22 8LF  
T: 0161 945 0655 E: [enterprisecentre@wchg.org.uk](mailto:enterprisecentre@wchg.org.uk)

## Real Opportunities



The Enterprise Centre is now also home to our new Employment Coordinator, **Kendra Brown**.

Kendra will be working with residents and employers in the Wythenshawe area to increase employment and career prospects through the Real Opportunities programme and the Wythenshawe Talent Pool.

If you are looking to get into work, call into the centre to get a Real Opportunities form or fill in online at [www.wchg.org.uk/careers/wythenshawe-futures/real-opportunities/](http://www.wchg.org.uk/careers/wythenshawe-futures/real-opportunities/).

Employers wanting to recruit local talent should contact [Kendra.brown@wchg.org.uk](mailto:Kendra.brown@wchg.org.uk).



**Bideford Community Centre**  
Bideford Drive, Baguley, M23 0QH

email: [bidefordcommunitycentre@hotmail.com](mailto:bidefordcommunitycentre@hotmail.com),  
call the Centre on 0161 946 6386 or  
contact Kirsty Taylor, co-ordinator, 07871 351018



## Grand Days out

The Grand Day Out Over 55 Group has seen increasing numbers join their regular events at The Forum each Wednesday between 10am and 3pm. New members welcome! The Real Neighbours run this group in partnership with Manchester City Council. In August their 'Grand Day Out' was to Llandudno.

Volunteers continue to raise funds through cake stalls, raffles and donations to fund these events.

If you would like to get involved and become a Real Neighbour, contact **Lewis Crowther** on **07525 905030** or via email [lewis.crowther@wchg.org.uk](mailto:lewis.crowther@wchg.org.uk) for more information. **Go on, give us a call!**



*Wish you were here!*



## Real Neighbours clock up 3,000 hours



Our Real Neighbours Wythenshawe have been working around the clock this Summer, putting in over 3000 hours of support to the community.

Events included Wythenshawe Games, One World Wythenshawe, Manchester Day Parade and helping out when Johannesburg Gardens took residents on a trip to St Anne's.

A new craft group on Saturdays at the Forum Wythenshawe is led and run by one of our Real Neighbours Sheila Tate.

They even found time to respond to a call from the residents of Poyning Drive in Newall Green who needed help to host a street party which raised more than £500 for Cancer Research UK.

## BEING A VOLUNTEER!!!

Kirsty Taylor – a Real Neighbours volunteer – was so inspired by her experiences that she wrote a poem to sum them up. They included the following verses:

There were things on my estate  
that needed a different eye  
so I joined the local housing  
and gradually by and by

A whole new world opened up  
a volunteer now I would be  
so I called the Bideford Centre  
and they kindly welcomed me

The people were delightful  
and we all felt there was a need  
to entertain and educate  
to befriend and even feed

We put our heads together  
and ideas came flooding out  
of what we would like to achieve  
of what Bideford was all about

We organised the centre  
started groups and asked for grants  
fresh new paint on the inside  
and a garden full of plants

We've had awareness days with the police  
For we all have to live together  
And Armed Forces Days with a BBQ  
Despite the English weather...

Real Neighbours. Wythenshawe.

## Safeguarding

- let us know if you are concerned

WE TAKE SAFEGUARDING VERY SERIOUSLY.

Between March and June 2015, staff made 54 referrals to Designated Safeguarding Officers over concerns for vulnerable adults or children. All referrals are investigated to see if further support or referral to another service is needed.

We have recently reviewed our policy and procedures, and are carrying out refresher training for staff.

### We now have:

- a Group Board Safeguarding Champion
- a Safeguarding Working Group, that meets quarterly
- a group of Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)
- the majority of staff briefed about what to look for and how to make a safeguarding referral

If you have a concern about a child, young person or vulnerable adult who is in immediate danger or where a crime has been committed, **call 999 immediately.**



## Tops for contact

Our Contact Centre has been selected as a finalist in the North West's Best Contact Centre Team of the Year (under 50 seats) category with Lesley Cailey, Customer Services Manager, nominated for Best Contact Centre Manager of the Year.

Justine Carroll, WCHG's Customer Access Manager, said: *"To be selected as a finalist is a real honour and also testament to the great work that the team do."*



## Helping your communities

**Our panel meets regularly to discuss grant funding of up to £2,500 for local community projects.**

To be considered for the next Grants Panel, please download an application from our website or contact Pedro Odjidja from our Involvement Team on 0161 946 6315 or email [getinvolved@wchg.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@wchg.org.uk) to arrange a form to be posted to you.



## Are you covered?

**What would you do if your home caught fire and all your possessions were lost?**

So far this year four homes have been badly damaged by fires, and sadly three of the people involved had no home contents insurance in place.

After a fire we will repair your home, but we are not responsible for replacing the items within it. The cost of doing this should be covered by your own household insurance. If you don't have any, replacing your possessions will be very costly.

To find out more, contact us.



## Colourful about Cotefield

Congratulations to The Willows Primary School for their colourful hoarding designs. They were runners up in the national 'Ivor Goodsite' Hoarding Competition run by the Considerate Constructors Scheme. They were invited to submit artwork by United Living, WCHG's construction company on the Cotefield site in Wodehouse Park.



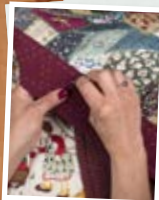
This fabulous sunflower measuring more than 10ft tall has been sent in by **Mary McCabe** of Royal Oak. Can you beat it?



## Hook up with the Sowing Club

West View ladies  
**Quilting & Craft**  
Group, West View  
Court

Every Wednesday  
12noon - 4pm  
New members  
welcome



## Proud to be part of Pride

WCHG were proud to take part and had a float in this years colourful Manchester Pride Event.



## History of Wythenshawe

Witenscawe (meaning Willow Copse) first appeared in the thirteenth century.

The boundaries were probably defined in the early Middle Ages, as the population grew. They were drawn along the brooks, Fairywell, Baguley and Gatley, which drained into the Mersey. The river's name also means boundary.

There was a division between Baguley which lay in the Bowden parish and Northenden and Etchells which lay in the Macclesfield Parish. The incorporation of the three civil parishes into Manchester became Wythenshawe.

## Christmas money saving tips

- ★ Set a budget
- ★ Try to save some money weekly now, however small
- ★ Don't use a weekly payment store or catalogues. Think local stores and markets to save £££s
- ★ Shop around for gas and electricity supply... you may be able to save
- ★ Set up TV licence and water bills on payment plans to avoid unexpected bills
- ★ Take out home contents insurance so Christmas gifts or food will be insured. *(Pick up an application pack for the WCHG Home contents scheme and compare prices with other insurers)*

**Remember: Always pay rent first.  
Contact your rent officer, if in difficulty.**

Call the WCHG Financial Inclusion team for advice on borrowing and paying bills.

## Join the Spud Club

The Spud Club has been launched at the Newlife Community Centre on the St Francis Church site on Greenbrow Road!



It is a partnership with Real Food Wythenshawe and Red Rose Forest and funded by National Lottery to transform the space into a vibrant community growing allotment that will allow local people to grow their own produce.

The first crop of potatoes planted earlier this year under the Real Life project is now ready, so please start to help yourself!

Contact Jason to see how you can get involved:  
07543 277345 or go to [www.newlifecentre.org.uk](http://www.newlifecentre.org.uk)

## Bingo Club - New members welcome!

Eyes down and look in at  
**7pm every Tuesday** in the  
community room at West  
View Court, West View Road  
in Northenden. Open to anyone  
in Wythenshawe and new  
members are very welcome!

Contact Robert on 0161 902 0096



## A journey of discovery

Our Tenant Committee members have taken part in a question and answer session with some of the top names in housing.

The session was part of 'Tenant Journey', an in-house training programme to provide them with the necessary tools, expertise and information to make informed decisions on behalf of all WCHG tenants.

The event included a high profile panel answering questions around hot housing topics. They included:

- David Taylor-Smith – Assistant Director Regulatory Operations, Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)



- Gareth Bevan – Policy Officer, National Housing Federation
- Robin Lawler – Chief Executive Officer, Northwards Housing and former Chartered Institute of Housing President
- Dean Slavin – WCHG Senior Housing Manager

**We have always provided training for our involved tenants, but bringing the course in house also meant great value for money!**

## Flourishing finalists

**Congratulations and a big thanks to all who entered our Gardens Competition.**

As always the standard was extremely high and it was a shame that not everyone could win. This year's winners will receive their trophies at the Tenants' Conference on 12 November 2015. The winners were:

**Best Garden:** Winner, **Barry Gouch**; Second, **Lucy Bayissa**

**Best Front Garden:** Winner, **Mr & Mrs G Higginson**; Second, **Mrs S Bradley**

**Best Communal Garden:** Winner, **Alf Morris Court**



## Tenants' Conference



**Tenants' Conference  
Wythenshawe  
Forum**

As we went to press, preparations were in hand for this year's 2015 Tenants Conference. The Tenants Conference will see the launch of the Groups new set of Customer Care Standards and Group Chief Executive Nigel Wilson sharing how the budget will affect our organisation.

Winners of the Community Awards will be shared in the next edition.



Eddy Newman, Group Chair of WCHG said, "We really value your opinions and contributions, the conference is your chance to put your views forward about what is important to you as a tenant."

## Recruiting NOW!

If you would like to help develop our service – we are recruiting volunteers NOW!

Whether you only have an hour to spare each month, or can attend a multitude of meetings, there are opportunities for everyone to join our team and let us know how we can improve. Training is given and it is a great way to meet other tenants and learn new skills.

**If you are interested, please contact us for a chat on 0161 946 6369 or email [getinvolved@wchg.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@wchg.org.uk)**

## Wythenshawe Community Housing Group Tenant and Resident Group Contacts

TA Group	Contact for group	Times	Location	Contact No.
Newall Green T & RA	Wyn Casey	Last Wed 2pm	Johannesburg Gardens Community Centre	0161 998 4970
Northern Moor T & RA	Fred Bates	First Mon 7.30pm	Rob's Café and Shakes, 105 Sale Road, Northern Moor, M23 0BU	07891 167309
Royal Oak Community Action Group	Gina Hall	Quarterly Last Tues 6pm	Royal Oak Comm Centre, Brookcot Road	0161 998 2146
Benchill TA	Sue Loose	Second Tues 7pm	Benchill Community Centre	0161 945 0684
Butcher Lane TARA	Kirsty Taylor	Last Thursday Bi Monthly 6.15pm	Wythenshawe FC Clubhouse	07871 351018
New Baguley TARA	Glen Kamara	First Wed 7pm	Hall Lane Resource Centre, Hall Lane	0161 286 0379
West View Court	Robert Mckenzie	Last Monday Bi Monthly	West View Court	0161 902 0006

**You are welcome to attend your local meeting!**

## Christmas opening hours

Our offices will be open during the Christmas break at the times indicated below:

	Contact Centre:	Offices:
24 December	8am - 4pm	9am - 1pm
25 December	CLOSED	CLOSED
28 December	CLOSED	CLOSED
29 December	8am - 6pm	9am - 5pm
30 December	8am - 6pm	9am - 5pm
31 December	8am - 4pm	9am - 1pm
1 January	CLOSED	CLOSED

In the case of an emergency outside these times you can call us on either of our telephone numbers and our out of hours service will handle your call.

## Please note that the PORTWAY OFFICE will be closing on 23<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2015

Please be advised that due to falling numbers of customers using this office, and the need to make efficiencies, this office will close from the Christmas close down on 23rd December. Our main office at Wythenshawe House is not far away, and we are able to offer all the services from this office.

If you want to pay rent, you can either come to Wythenshawe House or we can make arrangements for you to pay by Direct Debit, or at one of the Pay Point / Payzone outlets. The nearest one is Portway News & CH Bros Newagent.

## Contacting Us Made Easier

0800 633 5500

0300 111 0000

customerenquiries@wchg.org.uk



Part of



WCHG Head Office  
Wythenshawe House  
8 Poundswick Lane  
Wythenshawe  
Manchester  
M22 9TA

Parkway Green House  
460 Palatine Road  
Northenden  
M22 4DJ

[www.wchg.org.uk](http://www.wchg.org.uk)

## Introducing... Jacque Allen



Jacque is our new Director of Housing she has more than 20 years' experience of working in the housing sector, having started her career as a Housing Assistant in 1991. Since then, Jacque has enjoyed a varied housing career from specialising in homelessness, through to all housing management, neighbourhoods and tenant involvement activities.

Jacque became Head of Supported Housing in 2003 with a Manchester based stock transfer organisation and in 2010 became Director of Housing with a housing association in the East Midlands.

She says: "I am delighted to be joining Team Wythenshawe and am very much looking forward to leading WCHG's Housing Teams to ensure we continue to provide excellent and valued services by working in partnership with our customers and stakeholders."



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