

# CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!

## Warwick Response Control is 20 years old!

“Control Centre” – does it conjure images of buttons, buzzers and high tech’ equipment? Well, you wouldn’t be far wrong!

It can be found at the end of a fairly normal road in Lillington, but behind that normal looking front door, it’s all about state of the art equipment and it’s seen more changes in technology over the past 20 years, than most!

But do you know what happens in the Control Centre?

It monitors and responds to the needs of some 4,000 users across the district, 24 hours a day. Customers are the elderly, vulnerable, people with learning difficulties, the homeless as well as victims of domestic violence. Staff provide support and information to help customers live independently and to stay in their own homes longer, but also give their relatives peace of mind, knowing that help is only a buzzer away.

Residents need a telephone land line and plug socket to connect the “lifeline” and can then wear a pendant style alarm button. When pressed an alarm call goes straight through to the control room where staff know instantly who is calling, where they live, medical details, where relatives can be contacted and even where a spare key is kept. All a big change from 20 years ago, when a ticket was printed off and the staff had to spend valuable time searching out information themselves.

These days, help can be organised much more quickly and accurately by the response team itself or by liaising with relevant family members or emergency services. Over 20 years, the phone system has become more sophisticated, the technology has progressed, but the staff commitment and loyalty to the job is the same as it ever was – in fact some of the staff have



Left to right: Sheila Field, Heather Brand, Heather Kettle, Janet Downie, Caroline Cameron, Joan Williams, Jane Robbins, Teresa Sadler, Rachel Rees, Graham McGonigle and Sylvia Heritage.

never left and have worked at the Control Centre for all its 20 years! Others have gone on to become customers, being looked after themselves by the response team they once worked for.

And they certainly have a few tales to tell! Of staff coming to work to help with the floods and not going home again for four days; racing up to Tesco in the middle of the night to buy baby milk after a mother had to flee her home in an emergency; and how a stray dog was cared for all night in the centre after it was injured in a domestic incident.

There is much to celebrate by the thousands of residents and families whose lives have been transformed by the “goings on” behind the front door of that suburban semi in Lillington!

## Lillington Youth unveil their Bench

A COMMUNITY bench created by young people from Lillington Youth Centre has just been installed at Crown Way shopping centre. It is the result of their hard work and dedication to the project for two years.

The 13 foot bench has been created by young people aged 11 – 19 from Lillington Community Action forum. They were all involved in the project which started as an idea at a public meeting some 2 years ago.

They took on the project and followed it through to its completion; consulting

with local residents, attending a neighbourhood watch meeting, holding a public meeting in the library and putting in bids to raise money for the project.

Funding and support for the project was received from the Arts Council, Warwickshire County Council’s Community Development Fund and the Youth Opportunities Fund.

The bench is aimed to reflect the closeness of the local community, so pictures of local residents were taken and then put onto the bench in cartoon format. Come and have a look!



Enjoying the newly unveiled bench.



## HomeChoice is Changing!

See inside for further details



## Welcome!

WE welcome Nicki Hughes, as our new editor of Home News. She works in the Printroom at Warwick District Council, and is responsible for Marketing and Advertising.



Nicki Hughes

Nicki says, "I've really enjoyed writing Home News this time, especially getting out and about and meeting so many new people who've helped me with the articles. I know Helen Ashbourne is a hard act to follow, but I hope you'll let me know what you think!"

If you would like to get involved in Home News and join our Tenants Panel, then we would love to hear from you - just get in touch with Fiona Walsh on 456447.

## Use your initiative and get funding

IF YOU and your neighbours have an idea to improve your neighbourhood, make it safer or more attractive, then you can apply to Housing and Property Services for funding to make it happen.

The Environmental Initiatives Fund is a pot of money that can be used to finance a number of local community projects each year.

You might be looking to improve lighting or bin stores in your neighbourhood, perhaps you want to landscape a disused area, or put new fencing up. There are so many ways you can improve your local community. However, the fund won't cover bids for; white goods or soft furnishings, street lighting, traffic calming measures, CCTV cameras or any project that is not on Warwick District Council's land.

What you will need to do is show us that you have your neighbours support. Your project cannot be for your own individual benefit so you will need a minimum of six other tenant or leaseholder households to support your application.

You will also need to think through how you will maintain your scheme and whether you will need to raise additional funds to achieve this as we can only pay a one off grant to start a project, not annual running or maintenance costs. Full terms and conditions will be sent out with your application form.

Call your Housing Officer on 01926 450000, who will be happy to talk through your ideas with you.

**Completed applications must be submitted before Friday 26 September 2008 to be considered for this fund.**

## All's Well for the Women of Lillington!

IF YOU are a woman living in the Lillington area and you have a few hours to spare each week, then why not pay a visit to the Lillington Community Centre?

The LINK Well Woman project, a partnership project between Link parent support and Lillington Children's Centre, is now up and running and has a whole programme of events and workshops.

Jayne Sweet, Project Co-ordinator, has worked tirelessly to co-ordinate the project. A questionnaire went out to find out which pastimes women were interested in trying, then qualified and experienced people were booked to share their skills and lead workshops. A crèche was laid on for the under 4's, and finally Jayne has raised the funding from Warwickshire County Council's Development Fund!

Currently a number of women are practising the joys of home cooking, cooking on a budget, trying out new recipes and then leaving armed with lots of ideas and tips to try out at home.

Jayne Sweet says, "The feedback has been fantastic! The women are enjoying learning something new, meeting new people and having a good laugh at the same time!"

The Well Woman project continues on Thursday mornings



Left to right: Janet Timperley, Louise Wainwright (Community Food Projects Officer - Action 21), Jayne Sweet (Project Co-ordinator) and Judy Steele (Community Food Projects Officer - Action 21), Abi Tugwood.

throughout the rest of the year, so there's sure to be something you fancy trying out. "Health and Fitness" runs from 17th July to 18th September, with the opportunity to learn Self-Defence, Tai Chi, Pilates, Yoga and for the more adventurous belly dancing and Street Dancing!

For Christmas, make your own table decorations, small gifts and jewellery in the "Craft and Creativity" workshops.

"I know it can be hard to go to a new place and try something different. You needn't worry though, we're a friendly lot here

and the emphasis is on just enjoying yourself", says Jayne, "And what have you got to lose? It's a great opportunity and it's all free!"

Whether you're a new Mum, a Grandparent or an Auntie, it really doesn't matter; you just need to be a woman!

If you would like to book onto the Well Woman Project or find out more about it, or perhaps you'd like to help out one week? Just give Jayne Sweet a call on 01926 337506 or 07849 712177 - she'll be delighted to hear from you.

## Sol has changed to ROK

SOL Construction Ltd, the company we use to carry out some of our responsive repair work has been taken over by Rok Group Plc. Gradually over the next few months you will notice new vehicles and work wear as they re-name everything with the Rok logo.

You will still see the same friendly faces; it's just the company name that has changed!



Gordon Garland and the new look vehicle.



## It'll never happen to me...

FLOODS, fires and electrical faults all spell trouble and can all have a devastating effect on your home and your life. You might lose your kitchen equipment, your sofa, or it could be worse, you could be left with nothing at all.

You can't usually predict a disaster and you never know what's round the corner, but you can

prepare yourself and your family for the worst by taking out insurance. Do not make the mistake of thinking someone else will do this for you, they won't! The Council insures your home against disaster, but not your contents - so if you lose everything and haven't got insurance, you will be left with the financial worry of replacing it all again.

It doesn't have to cost the earth - the Council's contents insurance policy starts at as little as 75 pence a week, if you spread the payments out and pay for it weekly, with your rent. It might never happen to you, and we hope it never does, but at least with some insurance you will be better prepared for what might be round the corner.

# HomeChoice is Changing

The HomeChoice Scheme which has been in place since November 2005 has been reviewed and is changing! The Council's choice based lettings scheme covers Council and Housing Association rented housing, Shared Ownership and other low cost housing schemes.

In a bid to ensure that the Scheme is still meeting the needs of applicants and tenants, the Council has carried out consultation with those on the Housing Register, tenants previously housed through the Scheme and with partner agencies and organisations. The results have been to introduce a number of changes to the Scheme which will ensure it meets revised Government Guidance.

## Changes to the Scheme

- 4 Bands instead of 2
- Points will no longer be used
- Quotas of advertised properties allocated to Bands 1, 2 and 3
- Local Connection introduced, to ensure local people are housed first

The number of Bands will increase from 2 to 4. An applicant's circumstances will be assessed according to their need, allowing them to be placed in the appropriate band, listed below:

**Band 1** – Very Urgent housing need

**Band 2** – Urgent housing need

**Band 3** – Non-Urgent need

**Band 4** – No current housing need

Quotas will be introduced to ensure that there is a greater spread of properties across the Bands to give people more choice for bidding.

**Band 1** – 50% of available properties

**Band 2** – 30% of available properties

**Band 3** – 20% of available properties

Existing Tenants seeking a transfer because of overcrowding or under occupancy will be placed in Band 2 and with the new quota system will have a 30% share of the properties to bid for.



## Bidding Guidelines

- Any applicant can bid for a property as long as they match the criteria in the advert. The advert will clearly state which Band will be able to bid for which property.
- Band 4 applicants will be able to bid, but will only be considered for properties that have no successful bids from the other 3 Bands.
- Properties will continue to be advertised on a fortnightly basis and applicants will still be able to place a maximum of five bids in each bidding cycle.
- Applicants will be permitted to bid for properties one bedroom in excess of their need, however, preference will be given to the applicant who has the greatest need for the size of the property.
- The changes will also require applicants to demonstrate a local connection for example, whether they are currently residing, working or have a family connection with Warwick district.
- Remember, bidding is an expression of interest being placed on a particular property and does not involve money.

## What Happens Now?

1. All existing and any new applicants will need to complete a new HomeChoice Application Form. The new forms request additional information which is why anyone currently on the Housing Register still needs to fill one in.
2. The new application forms will be sent out during July 2008, and need to be returned to the Council in August 2008. The return date and guidance will be provided with the form. **If completed forms are not returned on time, your application will be cancelled and you will be unable to bid.**
3. The forms will be re-registered during August 2008. Please note there will be no HomeChoice adverts between the 14th and 29th August 2008. The first advert under the new HomeChoice scheme will be on Thursday 4th September 2008.

If any new or existing applicant requires guidance or assistance with completing the new forms please contact the Housing Advice Team on 01926 456430, or call into the Council's Head Office at Riverside House, or your local Warwickshire Direct.

**WARWICK DISTRICT HOMECHOICE APPLICATION FORM**

Please complete in Black/Blue ink using block letters throughout.  
Please answer all questions.

**1. APPLICANT**

Title Mr/Mrs/Ms/Ms  
Surname (Family name)  
First name(s)  
Date of birth  
Current address  
National Insurance Number  
Contact address if different  
Postcode  
Home telephone number  
Work telephone number  
Mobile number  
Email address  
Are you, or have you been known by any other name? Please give details:

Partners: Bromford Living, Orbit, Servite Houses, Ashram, midland heart, echg, etc.



For more information contact the  
Housing Advice Team on 01926 456430