

**Kent Residents Forum**  
**Singleton Environment Centre, Ashford**  
**11 November 2008**

Present: Canon John Brown (English Rural Board Member)  
 Jo Passmore (Regional Housing Manager)  
 Christine Knight (Resident Board Member)  
 Pauline Rose (Residents Board Member)  
 Kathryn Watson (Housing Services Manager)

In attendance: 5 residents from High Halden, Warehorne and Newchurch

	<b>Action</b>
1. Introductions	
2. KW gave an update on new housing management arrangements. None of the residents present had contacted the new repairs line yet but were given details on how to do this and who to speak to at head office. Tenants were encouraged to complete satisfaction slips when repairs had been carried out at their property as this enables English Rural to monitor the performance of contractors and ensure tenants are receiving a good service. KW confirmed that most repairs contractors would remain the same under the new arrangements and an additional day to day repairs contractor, BW May, had been taken on to cover the Kent area.	
3. Cyclical decorations had begun at Warehorne. Most of the painting had now been completed but concerns were raised as to why repairs to wood work were to be carried out after the painting rather than before. KW to discuss with Lifetime Construction to ensure that any further decorating is completed after the repairs are finished. Decorators had been very pleasant and approachable and seemed to have done a good job so far.	<b>KW</b>
4. Storage heaters – several residents raised concerns about storage heaters and how to make best economical use of them. Residents had varying experiences of their heaters, from the heat stored through the night not lasting the full day, no difference between min and max temperature settings and on the other hand that the heating system was very economical and efficient to run. Staff would look into carrying out some research to provide residents with further information and helpful tips on how to make best use of the storage heaters to suit their lifestyles.	<b>JP/KW</b>

<p>5. Stock Condition Survey – this had now been completed and inspections carried out at sample properties from all English Rural schemes. The result of the survey would be used to determine when major elements of the property would be due for replacement or updating and when external decorations would be carried at each scheme.</p>	
<p>6. Water softeners – Hard water is a common problem for those residents present. Immersion heaters in some properties needed to be replaced regularly which may be the result of hard water. Needs to be further investigated. Suggestions that water softeners be fitted to prevent problems of scaling in boilers and pipes. Varying experiences with water softeners. Further investigations needed but it was agreed that unlikely to make much difference.</p>	
<p>7. Queries relating to the design of houses were raised which would be passed on to the development team and taken into consideration on future developments, these included difficulties in having stop cocks located in the loft, french windows as the only rear exit to the property and kitchen/diners large enough to fit a dining table.</p>	<p><b>KW</b></p>
<p>8. Newchurch treatment plant – further problems with the treatment plant. Service contractor to be called to attend asap. A contract is in place for regular 6 monthly services and need to ensure that inspections are regularly maintained and monitored.</p>	<p><b>KW</b></p>
<p>9. Concerns were raised over safety catches on upstairs windows at High Halden. Windows don't open far enough to act as a fire escape. Properties have met necessary building regulations but comments to be passed to Development for future consideration.</p>	
<p>10. NHBC and buildings insurance – all English Rural properties covered by buildings insurance and either NHBC or Zurich 10 year structural cover. Clarification was given on what would be covered under these two policies. English Rural can provide shared owners with details of both should they need to make a claim. All residents are advised to take out contents insurance to cover their own personal belongings and furnishing within their property.</p>	
<p>11. Damp - Some residents had experienced problems with damp or condensation for no apparent reason. There is no general explanation of where condensation may occur or not always obvious why. Advice given to residents to keep air circulating through property and not to dry clothes on radiators etc.</p>	