

## We've moved!

Our new Head Office address is:  
Hall House, 9 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk,  
London SE11 5EE Tel: 020 7820 7930

## English Rural to invest £25 million in building rural homes

Over the next 3 years the government, via the Housing Corporation, will be investing around £8 billion in providing affordable homes. English Rural will continue to be key to ensuring that a portion of this money is used to build rural homes in the areas where we operate, working towards our aim of building around 100 new homes every year.



We expect to have a build programme in excess of £25 million over the next 3 year funding period.

Not all housing associations are able to access this money, but English Rural has been selected as a specialist housing provider, and invited to bid for grant.

In addition, we are also able to take part in the ongoing "market engagement" process with the Housing Corporation in order to request additional funding, and will be working with our partners to ensure new development projects are put forward throughout the 3 years.

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## Message from English Rural

At the time of writing this message, I have just completed my first two months as English Rural's Chief Executive. I could not fail to be impressed by the dedication of the staff and Board to the cause of affordable rural housing, and to the homes and services, we provide to residents and partners.

As a specialist service provider, we aim to understand the circumstances and needs of everyone living in, or working with rural communities, and then to reflect these requirements in our own contribution to rural life.

English Rural is currently improving some of our important but "behind the scenes" operations to keep up with our growth, and enable us to further develop services to residents and partners. These changes include a new finance facility with Barclays Bank and the election of two residents to the Board.

One of the more immediately visible illustrations of these developments is the new house style shown in this Bulletin which I hope you like.

Everyone at English Rural wishes all our current and prospective residents and partners a convivial Christmas and happiness in 2008 and beyond.



Adrian Maunder  
Chief Executive

# Stock Condition Survey

In order to build an accurate picture of the homes we own and manage we are undertaking a Stock Condition Survey at the start of 2008. A contractor is currently being appointed to carry out this work, and they may well be in touch with you to arrange access to your home.

The stock condition survey is designed to help us understand more about the condition of your home and

make sure that we set aside adequate financial provision to ensure that we maintain it at the standard expected.

The new survey will follow on from an earlier assessment carried out in 2003 and enable English Rural to update its maintenance programme for major repairs. This might include installing new kitchens, replacing doors, windows or other essential fixtures and fittings as they became worn out.

We would like to thank you for your co-operation in accommodating the contractor whilst they carry out the survey.

## Housing Policy

The Operations Team at English Rural have been busy reviewing a range of housing policies and procedures over the past 6 months, including; Resident Involvement and Consultation Policy, Arrears and Income Policy, Re-chargable Repairs Policy and Transfer and Mutual Exchange Policy.

We're planning to collate the new policy documents after the review process is complete in 2008 and circulate to all residents for information and reference, but if you are interested in finding out more beforehand, please feel free to request copies from us.

Those of you who are involved in the virtual online residents group will have already had the opportunity to inspect and comment on these policies as part of the review process. If you're interested in joining this group, and being part of our residents' sounding board then please let us know!

A further document currently being put together by English Rural is the new Disability Equality Action Plan, which is aimed at ensuring equality and consideration for disabled residents. If you have a disability and would like to have input into this new policy then we would be very pleased to hear from you. To find out more please contact Martin Collett on tel no. 020 7820 7938.

## English Rural reacts to anti-social behaviour

With anti-social behaviour continuing to make news headlines we're all aware of the problems that this can cause. Equally, we are being made aware of the new measures that have been introduced to help tackle the issue in today's social climate. To accommodate these reforms, and the rights of residents, English Rural has reviewed and updated its anti-social behaviour policy, setting out what residents can expect from us and how we will tackle this issue. For a full copy of the revised policy please contact your Housing Manager or Kathryn Watson on tel no. 020 7820 7930 or email [kathryn.watson@englishrural.org.uk](mailto:kathryn.watson@englishrural.org.uk).

## Resident Board Members

Resident interests are now represented at the highest level of English Rural, with 2 residents now being part of our Board of Management. This follows the successful selection of Christine Knight and Pauline Rose by residents in the election held during summer 2007.

Anyone wanting to get in touch with Christine or Pauline can contact them via English Rural's Head Office address.

## Something to Say?

Do you have something to share? An experience which

other residents would learn from or a handy tip that has made your life easier? Why not drop us a line and let us have your comments.



Canon John Brown, Vice Chairman of Housing Management, addresses guests at Losely Park



The Spinney, Headley



Guests assemble at Losely Park



Lisa Guy from Headley chats to Housing Manager Jo Passmore and Board Member Gay Martin



Umbrellas become essential as Board Members visit Albury

## 2007 AGM AND BOARD TOUR

This year's AGM was held in the beautiful setting of Losely Park, near Guildford in Surrey. About 60 guests joined us on the day for an event which heralded the arrival of English Rural's new Chief Executive, Adrian Maunders, and the departure of our founding and former Chief Executive Barry Humphreys. The organisation's Chairman, Viscountess Knollys led the tributes to Barry and his achievements over the preceding 14 years.

Other highlights from the day included an update on the resident involvement activities undertaken by English Rural over the previous year, including the recruitment of 2 residents to the Board of Management.

The day after the AGM saw staff and Board Members take to the road in order to visit developments and meet the residents from Headley, Albury, Peaslake and Bramley. Plans are already underway for next year's event, when we are hoping to return to Essex.

## Logo and style review!

As part of a general review of our organisation style we have reviewed the old erha logo and replaced it with the new English Rural one illustrated on the front of The Bulletin. The new logo has been designed to help identify English Rural Housing Association as one of the leading housing providers in rural communities.

## Service Charge review

Service charges for the 2008/09 period will be set early in 2008 and we'll be in contact with residents with details of the new charges payable from 1st April 2008. A full statement of accounts will be sent detailing expenditure for the 2007/08 period. Be sure to amend your payments accordingly in order to keep your rent account up to date!

## Rent review

Next year's rent increases will take effect from 1st April 2008. We'll be contacting all tenants with details of their new payments in the New Year. Once you've received these details don't forget to increase your payments or adjust your benefit claim accordingly.

If you experience problems paying your rent or arranging new payments then contact your Housing Manager or English Rural's Housing Services Co-ordinator, Kathryn Watson, on tel no. 020 7820 7930.

## Energy Efficiency

Our new developments continue to benefit from increased energy efficiency levels with English Rural continuing to use exciting new technologies in order to meet the environmental agenda.

Those of you who read about our Tatsfield development in the 2007 Annual Report will recall that a solar panel system had been used to heat the hot-water system, minimising reliance on electricity.

Photovoltaic technology is being trialled at our new Chiddingfold development in Surrey, to help ensure that at least 10% of the energy used by the new development

comes from renewable sources. Photovoltaic tiles work by transmitting energy produced by the sun's rays into electricity. The new homes at Chiddingfold are also the first time that we've used an innovative form of off-site manufacturing called Volumetric Construction. This means that rather than traditionally building the homes on-site, the majority of the construction work takes place in a factory and then components from the units are transported and assembled on-site. This has helped achieve greater efficiency savings and value for money, as well as minimising any adverse impact that the weather has on the build programme.

## Approved contractors

English Rural has a list of approved contractors who we work with, and we're currently updating this list to ensure that we continue to achieve value for money and offer an effective service to residents. Your feedback on contractors is essential, if you're a tenant then you'll be asked to comment after a repair job has been completed, likewise feedback on grounds maintenance and defects aftercare is also vital. You can make this feedback via the Satisfaction Survey, or by contacting English Rural directly.

It's important that we understand your views as a direct customer of contractor services.

## New loan arrangement

English Rural has renegotiated its borrowing capacity with Barclays bank and will now benefit from new loan facilities totalling £9 million. Part of this loan will be used to re-finance existing commitments at more competitive rates, with financial savings helping the association in its drive for efficiency.

## Need to change your Standing Order?

Anyone needing a new Standing Order should contact Kathryn Watson or your Housing Manager direct. Standing Orders are controlled by you and you should liaise with your bank when adjusting payments.



### We've moved!

Our Head Office has now moved.  
From Monday 10th December 2007 you can find us at:

English Rural Housing Association  
Hall House  
9 Graphite Square  
Vauxhall Walk  
London SE11 5EE

Make a note of our new telephone numbers too!  
**Tel 020 7820 7930**



## Christmas opening hours

**Our offices will be closed for Christmas  
From 5pm on Friday 21st December 2007  
To 9am on Wednesday 2nd January 2008**

# Out and about



TOP LEFT to RIGHT: English Rurals' homes at Salway Close, Chew Stoke; Housing Corporation Chairman, Peter Dixon, with English Rural's Chair, Viscountess Knollys, meeting residents at the opening of The Copse, Tatsfield, Surrey; The 13 affordable homes at The Copse, Tatsfield.  
BOTTOM LEFT to RIGHT: Shared ownership homes at Gibbs Field, Leigh, Kent; Getting into the swing of things at the official opening of The Copse, Tatsfield; English Rural resident Thomas Swain outside his home at Sandeman Way, Biddenden.

Over the next few months ERHA will be on site building around 60 homes in the following villages:

Thorpe le Soken (Essex)  
8 rented and 4 shared ownership

Chiddingfold (Surrey)  
3 rented and 1 shared ownership

Dunsfold (Surrey)  
4 rented and 4 shared ownership

Brabourne (Kent)  
8 rented and 3 shared ownership

Churchill (Somerset)  
6 rented and 6 shared ownership

Rolvenden (Kent)  
7 rented and 3 shared ownership

## Residents' Fora

As part of our ongoing involvement and engagement with residents, we'll be holding our 6 monthly residents' Fora at the start of next year. We'll be writing with further details nearer the time, dates and locations for the Fora are detailed below:

**29 January 2007**  
**South East – Kent**

**27 February 2007**  
**Eastern – Essex**

**25 March 2007**  
**South Central – Surrey**

If you're interested in finding out about the Fora or other involvement opportunities then please contact Martin Collett or Kathryn Watson on tel no. 020 7820 7930.

**DURING THE FIRST 12 MONTHS DEFECTS IN NEW HOMES SHOULD BE REPORTED ON TEL NO.**

**0845 601 5506**

(9am to 5pm Mon - Fri)

# NEW FACES

## **Adrian Maunders, Chief Executive**

Adrian joined English Rural in October as our new Chief Executive. His recruitment is at a crucial time, as we continue to develop and grow our operation, Adrian will help to ensure that our internal structure and governance abilities expand to meet the needs of residents and partners alike. Adrian's previous experience included working for both local and central government and as Group Operations Director for a stock transfer housing association (now the A2 group). This employment was predominantly in rural areas, with a particular focus on affordable housing.

## **Louise Davidson, Regional Development Manager**

Louise joins English Rural from North Somerset District Council where she worked to deliver the Council's strategic enabling functions. Having been brought up in rural Somerset the issue of

affordable housing in rural areas has always been one of the most important areas of the enabling role for Louise. She is currently establishing a South West office for English Rural at Purn House in Bleadon, which we hope to open and be functioning in the New Year.

## **English Rural Board of Management**

The last few months have seen some changes to our Board of Management with Christine Knight and Pauline Rose being elected by residents to sit-on the Board and the retirement of our Vice Chairman of Personnel, Brian Collins, who steps down at the end of 2007.

*Adrian Maunders, Chief Executive*



## **Christmas quiz!**

For this edition of the Bulletin we have introduced a new festive competition for you. The word puzzle below is simple, all you have to do is find as many words as possible from the one word below. The competition is split in to two sections, one for 16 year olds and under, the other for 17 years and older. Each winning entry will receive £25 of WH Smiths vouchers. Please send your entries to Ann Camuyag, Hall House, 9 Graphite Square, Vauxhall Walk, London SE11 5EE.

The winning entry from each category will be drawn out of the hat and the closing date for entries in Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2008. The competition is only open to residents living in an English Rural home and the judges decision in final.

For 16 years and below: Celebrations  
For 17 years and over: Decorations

## **CONTACTS NUMBERS**

### **Repairs Line**

(Tenants should report repairs and maintenance required to their property on the numbers below. The out of hours service should be used for emergencies only)

**0845 601 5506**  
**(9am to 5pm Mon - Fri)**

**0845 757 3842**  
**(out of hours)**

### **Head Office**

(Accounts, lettings, sales, rents, standing orders, permissions and other general enquiries)

**English Rural Housing Association**  
**Hall House**  
**9 Graphite Square**  
**Vauxhall Walk**  
**London SE11 5EE**  
**Tel: 020 7820 7930**  
**Fax: 020 7820 7931**

**Email: [info@englishrural.org.uk](mailto:info@englishrural.org.uk)**  
**[www.englishrural.org.uk](http://www.englishrural.org.uk)**

### **Housing Managers**

(Your dedicated housing managers)

**Chris Graves**  
**Tel: 02392 383993**  
**Jo Passmore**  
**Tel: 01304 841666**  
**Katie Maclean**  
**Tel: 01799 533491**