

Newsletter

Autumn 2015



Welcome to our Autumn 2015 Newsletter!



Our tenants panel recently met with us and provided some very useful comments on services we would like to review. Such as the way we manage our annual tenant liaison visits and how we can make sure Tenants keep appointments for the annual gas safety check and service. If you would like to comment on any of these areas or would like to make any other suggestions do get in touch with us on 0121 382 5105 or email bcha@bcivic.co.uk.

Upcoming Events

Join our tenant panel
call us on
0121 382 5105 or email
bcha@bcivic.co.uk
You don't have to attend
meetings as we can still
get your views over the
phone or via post

Visit our website at:
www.bcivic.co.uk

Tenant Liaison Visits 2015

Rashida and Jean our housing managers would like to thank everyone they have visited so far this year. We think it's very important to see our tenants at least once a year so we can help sort out any housing problems, rent payment matters and also check for repairs. If you need to speak to us before the visit you can get in touch with them on **0121 382 5105**.

Gas Safety Inspections 2015

Our contractor Status has been busy visiting all our homes to carry out the annual gas safety and service. Sometimes tenants don't keep appointments made and this makes our job very difficult. It's a legal requirement that we must carry-out an annual gas safety check on all gas heating boilers and fires in our homes and we must prove your appliances are safe for you to use.

If we can't get into your home we can take legal action but you can prevent this by making sure you allow access or by making an appointment when you are home.



Some important changes to benefits Affecting you in April 2016 & April 2017

During the July 2015 Budget there were some important changes which will affect families with children:

- In Housing Benefit, the Family premium will be withdrawn for new claims and new births from April 2016. The family element is a part of the housing benefit calculation and makes up around £20 per week
- Any existing claims made before April 2016 will definitely not be subject to this change. It is very important that existing claims for HB do not lapse, as any new claim loses the family premium. This means if you are asked to give extra information to housing benefits you need to make sure you do this on time and you provide everything you are asked for.
- Backdating of Housing Benefit awards will be limited to 4 weeks from **April 2016. So if your claim does stop you need to get your new form in quickly to make sure you do not lose out.**

Website Stats

We launched our new website in January this year and thought you might like to see some quick stats on what people have been accessing:

Between January 2015 -September 2015

- Number of visits/sessions on our website - 3,503
- Number of users 2,864
- Number of page views 8, 484
- Number of pages per visit 2.42
- Average session duration 1.47 minutes
- 80.9% were New Visitors and 19.1% Returning visitors
- Most popular pages: our Home page and how to find a home, we also had people look up About us and how to Contact us pages frequently.

We want to make sure our tenants can access information and that we get it right. If you would like to comment on any of the pages please contact us or click the feedback button on our website.

Money Saving tips for Autumn

Did you know that much of your water use at home contributes to your energy bill? Each household in the UK uses on average around 360 litres each day. But about 21% of a typical gas heated household's heating bill is from heating the water for showers, baths and hot water from the tap. This is on average about £140 a year.

Steps to saving money on your hot water bills

- Use less water and hot water in particular.
- Controls - make sure you have the right controls, and have them set correctly to give you enough hot water when you want it, and not when you don't.
- Fuel switching – gas is cheaper than electricity or oil, so consider switching if you can.

This Autumn you may want to consider some of our money saving tips:

- Cook large quantities of foods such as stews and casseroles and freeze what you do not use. This helps you save energy costs by only cooking once and keeping your freezer filled. It also allows you to buy cheaper in bulk and not throw away any unused food. Costly repeat visits to the supermarket can similarly be avoided.
- There's no need to buy expensive weed killer to see off those annoying weeds in footpaths – simple kitchen salt will do the trick. If it doesn't rain within 24 hours water it in.
- Running out of space at home? If there's something you haven't used for a while try selling it on-line. The money soon mounts up and you also benefit by getting extra storage space. Go to your favourite search engine and type in 'selling on-line' for a selection of available sites.
- Remove limescale without the need for chemicals by using half a cup of soda crystals mixed with 500ml of water. This is not suitable for lacquered taps and fittings.
- Before making a major purchase check out price comparison websites – you can save £££'s. This is also a great way to ensure you're getting the best deal on your energy bills. Either type 'price comparison' into your preferred search engine or check out Money Saving Expert www.moneysavingexpert

Useful Numbers

Gas emergencies please call: **07827 953900**

Any other emergency repairs please contact: **0121 554 2273**

Status Heating: **0121 369 0560**

