

Home Ground

The community magazine for residents
of Hyde Southbank Homes

Happy
holidays!

Happy
Amharic!

Ferriados
Felizes!



Welcome to Home Ground

Home Ground
Issue 1
December 2003

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The views published in Home Ground do not necessarily represent the views of Home Ground.

Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of Home Ground, a new community magazine for residents of Hyde Southbank Homes, produced by residents of Hyde Southbank Homes.

Home Ground is packed with news and views about our area, our groups, our community. I hope that reading it inspires you to get involved in one of the many local projects working hard to make Stockwell an even better place to live.

Home Ground is your magazine and we want to hear from you. If you have any news, views or ideas for future issues or have any comments on articles in this issue of Home Ground get in touch.

Send your comments, views to

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Getting involved

Standfirst – Local community helps bring about change

It's the turn of Larkhall and Stockwell to reap the benefits of major funding. £12 million will be put into improving the area over the next few years. Half will come from European funding called Stockwell Urban II and the rest from Lambeth Council and other partners. It's planned to make the area a better, safer place to live and work, and residents are being encouraged to get involved in the decision making process. Lambeth Council has appointed Planet Earth Chartered Landscape Architects to carry out a Community Participation Programme to encourage local input.

A series of events and activities have been run over the last four months to reach different parts of the community. There's been a party in Larkhall Park, a youth film workshop and computer training. An exhibition of the final projects, and videos of the consultation process, will be held in the Stockwell Community Centre in January 2004.

So far a number of projects have been identified. Larkhall Park will be improved, as will the public area along Wandsworth Road. The disused Rising Sun pub will be put to new use and a competition aimed at finding out how local groups could utilise it was launched in November. The competition is open to all local community groups and the winning entry/entries will have their ideas developed into formal proposals.

More details can be found online and residents can have their say as well as updating themselves on progress.

For more details of the project visit claudia@planet-earth.co.uk or contact Claudia Lopez on 020 7729 8630.

To register your views visit www.stockwellurban2.org.uk/regenerate/index.asp

To enter the Rising Sun pub competition get an entry form from Gideon Taylor on 020 7926 0169 or GTaylor@lambeth.gov.uk

New centre offers help

The Stockwell Refugee Women's Centre, set up by the Stockwell Partnership, opened its doors this October. The Centre will provide a space for all women from Stockwell's large refugee and asylum seeker population to meet up and socialise.

From mid December, the Centre will be open every Tuesday afternoon for women to drop-in. Guest speakers such as nutritionists, midwives and speech and language therapists will be invited to participate. Other activities, suggested at the launch, such as ESOL (English as a Second Language) and sewing classes will also eventually be available.

In the longer term, it's hoped the Centre will continue to develop and start a fundraising drive to expand the services even further.

For more information contact Radia Ahmed on 020 7820 9888 or Diib Jama 020 7738 6372.



From revolt to rebirth

Tenants of Stockwell Gardens West Estate (SGEW) decided it was time to act when new parking arrangements were introduced onto their estate by Hyde Southbank Homes without proper consultation.

They organised a successful campaign challenging the parking arrangements and in the process formed a newly elected tenants committee - Stockwell Gardens West Estate Tenants and Residents Association - SGWETRA.

The new Secretary for SGEWTRA, Rasheed Onile-ere, is delighted with the new relationship developing with Hyde Southbank Homes. He said, "The road to recognition has been tortuous but worth the efforts, because at long last we can safely say our voices are now being heard. Initially, the concerned tenants - who later metamorphosed into the bulk of the SGWETRA committee members - were seen as militant activists bent on derailing an already carefully packaged image. It is comforting to know that the HSH management now sees the committee as progressive and dynamic. The rebirth of SGEWTRA is truly a testimony to democracy in action."

SGEWTRA committee members now have representatives on Hyde Southbank Homes Board, Central Stockwell Neighbourhood Forum, Connecting Stockwell SRB Board, and all HSH tenant focus groups, for example, repairs, and tenant participation.

Now Rasheed says, "Those of us on the Committee can testify to all the hard work that goes on behind the scenes on behalf of all tenants and residents."

SGWETRA events and meeting dates are well publicised within the estate, thanks to assistance from committee members, but they would welcome further help from other tenants and residents.

For more information or to join SGEWTRA contact

The Secretary, SGEWTRA, 9 Bain House, Stockwell Gardens Estate West, London, SW9 9HA. Tel: 020 7737 5341, mob: 07956 309 149, email: onileere2000@yahoo.co.uk



Showcase your talents

We may be in the middle of winter but it's time again to think about summer. And in particular, next year's Stockwell Festival.

If you want to show off your talents, skills, or even culture, this is the event for you. Run over a weekend on 9/10/11 July, there will be a Funday in Larkhall Park, a street parade, market stalls, storytelling tent, and multi-faith activities in the 'Peace Space'.

You can take part as an individual. Maybe you're into dancing, singing or poetry. Or you could be a musician, costume maker, artist, crafts maker, juggler, acrobat, theatre performer, or storyteller. You might be a community group wanting to host its own event. The choice is yours, the sky's the limit.

These celebrations are for everyone in Stockwell so get in touch and join in.

If you interested contact: Justine Kenyon at Stockwell Partnership

020 7735 5051

justine@stockwell.org.uk



pic of drummers

OVAL BOOKSHOP

The Oval Bookshop is our local independent bookshop. It has kindly offered to give a 10% discount off all books, videos, cards and games to all Hyde Housing residents. Just show them this newsletter or cut out the voucher on page 11. The voucher is valid until Christmas Eve but don't leave shopping until the last minute.

The Oval Bookshop is a member of the Booksellers Association, and staff are committed to providing a good service to local residents. They currently stock:

- Thousands of books (over 5000 individual titles) including current bestsellers, classic and a wide range of children's titles.

Voices from the wards

Standfirst: The Annie McCall Heritage Project.

It closed in 1976 and now some of the women who gave birth at the Annie McCall Maternity Hospital are recording their memories for posterity as part of Lambeth's history.

Artist Adrian Palka of Stockwell Studios, which sits on the site of the former hospital, has produced a video and CD recordings of some of the mothers personal reminiscences. Several of the recordings were played as part of the Christmas Open Studios in December, and the entire works will be donated to the Lambeth Archives and Minet Gallery upon completion. Adrian's project was made possible by a Stockwell Community Grants award.

The studios also have a small archive of letters from women describing their experiences at the McCall, either working there or giving birth. Trevor Flynn, the studio's Arts Development Officer hopes to expand the archive. He says, "The personal stories these women tell us span four decades and are extremely moving (and occasionally funny) but also fascinating as living history. We would love to hear from other women who had their children here. "

Contact: Trevor Flynn 0208 969 1861 or May Anderson 0207 622 9991



- Greeting cards, some hand made by local artists
- Popular games for children and adults including: Scrabble, Jenga, Monopoly, Risk, Chess, Alpha Animals, Super Marble Run etc.
- Classic films including British, foreign language, Shakespeare etc.

The bookshop is at 28B Clapham Road (at the corner of Claylands Road about 100 metres from the Oval station). It is normally open 10am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday, 9am to 5:30pm on Saturday and 2pm to 5:30pm on Sunday but there will be opening longer hours in December. If you want to find out more just ring the shop free on 0800 389 0463.

It's changing rooms for local library

No longer will there be worn and stained carpet, peeling paintwork, and shabby lighting at South Lambeth Library. A six-week programme of renovation that started in early November will revamp the library. The main room will be painted, new lighting installed and new carpeting fitted. And in January, local students from Lambeth College will be painting the lobby area with materials paid for by Friends of Tate South Lambeth Library.

It was Friends who kicked off the renovation of the library three years ago by using community resources. They arranged for the repainting of the reading room by Lambeth College students, with funding from Clapham and Stockwell Town Centre Management.

With a smarter interior also comes an improved service. Over the past twelve months South Lambeth Library has increased its hours of opening and added to its traditional services of books for borrowing, newspapers for browsing, and space for study. Now there's free access to the Internet and word processing facilities, with printouts for a small fee. There are nine computer terminals available and one-hour slots can be booked over the phone.

From January 2004 the library will also offer music CDs and CD ROMs for hire at a small charge. And there will be a greater range of videos for hire.

The library runs special interest groups. There's a

weekly session for parents and toddlers, and monthly reading groups, including one for Portuguese families. In the new year it hopes to organise a teenage reading group and an over 50s club/reading group. All of these are free. So why not try something new for 2004. Just ask at the library or phone.

A box

Free and easy

Application forms, for free membership is available at the library. You need to show proof of name and address.

South Lambeth Library, address.....

Open five days a week:

Monday: 1-6pm

Wednesday: 10am – 6pm

Thursday: 10am – 8pm

Friday: 10am – 6pm

Saturday: 9am – 5pm

Enquiries:.....

To book one hour computer slots telephone 7926 0705.

Uncover Stockwell's history for the future

From time to time we all wonder what our area might have looked like in previous years. Now Home Ground is launching a new initiative to give you all a peek into the past and setting up a People's Archive of photographs of Stockwell.

Maybe you have an interesting box of old photographs gathering dust somewhere. What was Stockwell like when you moved here? Were you born here? Perhaps you were here when Herbert Morrison opened the Studley Estate in the 1950's. Maybe you took photographs of Stockwell during the war years or before. Or did you record the last historic flight of three Concordes over Stockwell this year?

If you have photographs of life, family, friends,



buildings, at home, or out and about, that make up Stockwell's past we'd like to see them. So help expose Stockwell's hidden history and send or bring in your photographs to:

Homeground, Stockwell Resource Centre, 1 Studley Road (behind the tube station)

Makeovers for community squares

Plans are afoot to revamp two valuable and underused community spaces in Stockwell. The Coffins and Pakington Triangle are getting a makeover with tree planting, landscaping and signage. And it's all thanks to Trees for London working with Hyde Southbank Homes.

Trees for London is an independent charity that works with local communities on tree planting and landscaping projects. It's their Tree-mendous Londoners project that will help improve these two areas in central Stockwell for community use, in consultation with local residents.

The Coffins is located just behind the small shopping precinct at Surridge Court. It links Paradise Road and the Studley Estate with Clapham Road. It's name comes from the coffin shaped beds that were created as a memorial on the former site of The Prince of Wales pub, which was bombed during the second world war killing many inside. Local residents want to highlight its history with a plaque and create a beautiful, clean, light space for passers by, or those wishing to take time out for contemplation.

Once the new designs have been agreed, landscaping and planting will take place with help from local school children and residents in late winter. Suggestions for the redesign so far include a memorial plaque, improved lighting, seating, new paving and planting. A final celebratory event will be held in late February or March when the planting takes place.

The Pakington Triangle is the space by Pakington House on the Stockwell Gardens West Estate next to the busy Clapham Road. It had become a scruffy paved area, with two mature false acacia trees and six empty tree pits. If all goes to plan it will be tidied up and the tree pits will be extended to provide places to plant new trees, shrubs and bulbs. Residents have already helped with some planting in the autumn.

Anyone interested in having a say in how the spaces shape up should head to Trees for London next consultation day on Thursday December 18th from 2pm outside The Cafe Nile, Surridge Court. The plans, so far, will be on display and there's free Christmas refreshments on offer. Who knows it could become a new community square?

For further information or to get involved in this project contact Trees for London on 020 7587 1320 or email info@treesforlondon.org.uk. Visit the website at www.treesforlondon.org.uk



Putting residents first

The Housing Corporation is working on a new tenant participation strategy that aims to make sure housing associations are responsive to residents' views and priorities.

Since last December, the Corporation has been reviewing its two existing strategies, 'Making Consumers Count' and 'Communities in Control', and consulting residents country-wide on what a new strategy should include.

Now residents are giving their views on a draft document that's been drawn up based on the comments received. And from that feedback a final strategy will be published.

One of the main issues is ensuring residents are continuously involved in the activities of their associations. In order to make this happen the Corporation is proposing imposing penalties on associations that fail to perform.

Another key point in the revised strategy focuses on how associations are developing their own involvement policies, and how they will monitor performance. To help them the Housing Corporation will produce information, toolkits and examples of good practice for associations.

Adrian Moran of the Housing Corporation, said, "By rolling the two existing tenant participation strategies into a single document, we can focus on ensuring policies are put into practice so tenants are involved in all aspects of an association's activities."

With a launch date early next year it's anticipated the new tenant involvement policy could be effective from April 2004.



Premiership beckons for local voluntary group

Many will already know of the Stockwell Partnership, the local community forum. But they may not be aware that the team has been nominated, and shortlisted, for the best community or partnership initiative at this year's London Planning Awards.

The Partnership is one of only four groups to reach the final stage. They're up against the Paddington Waterside Partnership, Transport for London Personal Safety project, and A Rocha Living Waterways. And it's the hard work and efforts of the group that has put them in the running for scooping this prize. Jointly run by the Mayor of London, London First and the Royal Town Planning Institute, the award recognizes outstanding planning achievements by individuals or organizations.

The Partnership is a charity that aims to encourage and help local people to join in the regeneration of their neighbourhood. This shortlisting, and potential award is, as

George Wright, director of the Stockwell Partnership, says, "a tribute to all the hard work that local people have put into the Partnership over the years, particularly the volunteers who sit on our management board and have given their time for free."

One of the Partnership's successes has been the work they've put in as a key partner to Lambeth Council, on the Stockwell Urban II Community Initiative – a £12 million regeneration programme, part-funded by the European Union.

It's exciting times for the Partnership. As Lucy Annan, Chair of the Partnership, says, "We knew we had been nominated for the award but never expected to reach the last four. Win or lose, we're really chuffed."

Stockwell Partnership General Meetings 2004

Venue:

Stockwell Community Resource Centre

1 Studley Road (just behind Stockwell Tube station)

Dates:

Meetings are held on Tuesdays from 6.30pm to 9.00pm on:

9th March

15th June

14th September

7th December

For more information about the Stockwell Partnership contact John McCay on 7735 5051.

Email - info@stockwell.org.uk

website - www.stockwell.org.uk

288 words

Stockwell services expanded

If you have queries about...then visit Maria.....who has returned to the Stockwell Partnership and is running advice surgeries. Homeground decided to find out some more about the Partnership's newest recruit and asked her about her background.

Q: Who are you?

Maria: I'm Maria.... and I was born at 3.00 pm on 16th March in St Dinis Hospital in Vila Real. I spent the next 17 years of my life living on a farm in the mountains of North Portugal tending the vines and herding livestock. I moved to Vila Real to attend college before emigration to London in 1997.

Q: What did you do when you arrived?

Maria: At first I worked as a cleaner improving my spoken English. I gained promotion to management, acquired a cat and some fish, and married Nando.

Q: Where did your career take you next?

Maria: I got a year's traineeship with Stockwell Partnership, then I worked for an international fabric design company in the Fulham Road.

Q: What brought you back to Stockwell?

Maria: I never left. I have lived in Stockwell since I arrived in England, but I have always enjoyed working with people and returned to Stockwell Partnership as an advice worker in November.

Q: When do your advice surgeries start?

Maria: They have already started. Why don't you call in and see how I can help you?

Contact details: Maria....., Stockwell Partnership, 157 South Lambeth Road. Opening hours: 10.00am to 1.00pm and from 2.00pm to 4.00pm (how many days?)



Money, money, money

It's good news for the Stockwell Community Grants Scheme. It's secured a £412,000 grant from the Stockwell United community initiative, doubling its money for funding Stockwell community projects. And the Grant Scheme has now been extended to March 2006 with the help of URBAN II European Community funding.

Funding over 60 projects since it started in 2001, the Scheme gives grants of up to £15,000 to community or voluntary groups. It supports projects that benefit people living and working in Stockwell, within the URBAN II area. Tenants and residents associations, youth clubs, arts projects, older people's groups, ethnic minority and cultural groups, faith groups and groups supporting women and people with disabilities are just some of those eligible to apply for funding. The grants can be for up to two years, with larger proposals requiring matching funds from other sources.

The Scheme, set up and part-funded by the Connecting Stockwell SRB regeneration programme, is managed by Hyde Plus. Many local groups have developed as a result of the scheme. And it's helped provide new services and events. These include the Stockwell Festival, coaching and kits for local Portuguese football teams, youth club provision, mother tongue teaching for the Tigrayan community, development workers, computers, a luncheon club for the Chinese community, activities for Lambeth pensioners, facilities and a worker for the Oasis Children's Venture, an after-school club, and music and arts workshops. The only limit, beyond cash, is the imagination.

Scott McKinven, of Hyde Plus, says, "It's proved extremely popular and an important source of funds to help community and voluntary groups undertake projects that local people need. I am delighted the scheme will continue."

For further information, and application forms, contact Mallia Young at Hyde Plus on 020 8297 7552 or mallia.young@hyde-housing.co.uk, or write to Hyde Plus, 181 Lewisham High Street, London SE13 6AA. Deadline for applications will be early February. The Community Grants Scheme will hold its next panel meeting in March 2004.

Apply now for thousands of pounds worth of grants

There's a total of £5 million in cash grants on offer across England and they're available until March 2004. So the message is don't delay and start applying

Community Training and Enabling (CTE) grants are available for a variety of projects such as helping people learn new skills, or developing their confidence to form their own tenants' group. The CTE grant programme, run by the Housing Corporation, enables tenants to become more involved in decisions about how their housing association is run, their homes managed, and their neighbourhood regenerated.

Ranging from £1,000 upwards the grants are available until March 2004, but groups of housing association tenants are being advised to apply straight away. Residents or housing workers can put in an application, and there's help, advice and support available, either by telephone, email or in person.

"CTE grants can really help transform communities and applying for them is easier than ever," commented Adrian Moran from the Housing Corporation. "A decision should be made in just a month so you can start making a real difference almost immediately. We are working with TPAS and other partners to ensure that advice and support, focused on residents' viewpoints, is available."

Applying for a CTE grant is simpler than ever and decisions are quick. Make a difference to your community today with CTE.

For more details about applying for a CTE grant contact the local Housing Corporation office or log onto www.ctegrants.org.uk

Local Housing Corporation Office - Waverley House, 7-12 Noel Street, London W1F 8BA – tel: 020 7292 4400, fax: 020 7292 4401 – email: london.info@housingcorp.gsx.gov.uk

Locals choose new contractor

When it came to picking a new grounds maintenance contractor, Hyde Southbank Homes welcomed members of central Stockwell's tenants and residents associations onto the selection panel. The choice they made was Spadework, a family run business established in 1981.

Spadework have an impressive background. They've carried out a number of high profile projects including work for the London Eye and the Thames Barrier and shown at the Chelsea Flower Show. Spadework have extensive experience in grounds and tree maintenance and are familiar with the demands of an inner city environment, with a track record of work on local authority and housing association works. They started work in Stockwell this December.

Spadework's highly qualified horticulturist and arborist, Carl Newman, and a full-time gardener, will be based on site. During the growing season they will be employing local labour to assist with grass-cutting and routine maintenance.

Trees are in for a boost as Spadework will carry out a full survey in the neighbourhood and create a 5 year maintenance programme. This will concentrate on maintaining the good health of our trees and ensure trees don't obscure CCTV cameras and communal lights. The programme will also make sure that work is immediately carried out where any tree is in a dangerous condition or is adversely affecting any building. Carl Newman will be co-ordinating the tree maintenance programme and under-taking the survey.

The final phase of the Regeneration programme in Stockwell is to focus on environmental

improvements. This is to include works to existing green areas, the up-grading of play-areas and the development of special areas of environmental interest. Spadework will provide positive in-put and ideas during the consultation phase and be involved in the long-term maintenance of the environmental works.

Estate Services manager Tony O' Connell commented, "Hyde Southbank Homes are looking forward to working with Spadework to create a new era of grounds and tree maintenance. The trees and green spaces will receive a high standard of care and enhance the enjoyment of the area for all residents."

340 words

If you would like any further information regarding the new contract or contractor please contact Tony O' Connell, Estate Services Manager on 020 7346 2512 or email tony.oconnell@hyde-housing.co.uk



Speak up for change

It's only when landlords know what the problems are from people living in their properties can they do anything about them. So at the end of last year the tenants association of Central Stockwell Street Properties - CSSPTRA – took the bull by the horns and decided to initiate a tenant and resident survey.

Over 340 questionnaires were sent out by CSSPTRA to all tenants and residents. They wanted to find out what people felt about the services provided by HSH, and what they thought of their tenant's association - CSSPTRA. Over 50 completed forms were returned. They revealed some major concerns.

In particular people felt the response to repair requests was very poor. And there was a general dissatisfaction with security issues and anti-social behaviour. Elderly and disabled residents who responded complained they often felt isolated and unable to easily pursue unresolved matters.

But on a brighter note there was a positive response to the idea of a tenant/resident association magazine. And research supports the feedback that a magazine is a good way of communicating. So, CSSPTRA has created and launched Home Ground, to make sure residents know what's going on in their neighbourhood, and give them the opportunity to comment. Add to that future tenant/resident surveys, new focus groups, and you could start seeing some positive changes.

A detailed copy of the survey analysis is available by writing to the editor at the Resource Centre.

Training & Education



Access to Jobs

Job search provided by Urban Recruitment on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Spanish/Portuguese speaker. Please call Urban Recruitment on 020 7498 2320 to arrange an appointment.

Careers Guidance

Advice & guidance in finding and securing the right career, training or job. Help with drawing up CVs and job search. Please call 020 7501 2501 to arrange an appointment.

Free Computer Training

CLAIT 1

Computers through Music

Desktop Publishing -

beginners

ESOL & IT

Internet for Older Persons

Interview Techniques with IT

IT without qualification

Slow Learners

Young Parents with Toddlers

Free English Classes

ESOL (English for Speakers of other Languages) for those with little or no English.

Improve your Written English for those who can speak English, but need help with their writing skills.

Preparation for Employment for those

looking to return to work.

Access to computer & internet

Weekdays from 9 to 10 am, 12 to 2 pm and 4 to 6 pm.

Leisure

Over 50's

Sequence Dancing – Mondays from 11 am to 1 pm

Yoga – Mondays from 2 to 4 pm

Painting & Drawing – Tuesdays from 12.30 to 3.30 pm

Internet for Older Persons – starting from the new year

Parents' and small children

Baby clinic – Mondays from 1.30 to 3 pm

Breakfast club – Mondays from 9.30 am to 12.30 pm

Yoga class – Tuesdays from 9.30 to 10.30 am

Portuguese lunch club – Wednesdays 12 to 3 pm

Children over 5

Karate classes – Fridays 6 – 7.30 pm & Saturdays 10.30 am to 12 pm

Open to everyone

Karate classes – Fridays 7.30 – 9 pm, Saturdays 10.30 am to 12 pm

Yoga classes – Wednesdays 5.30 to 7.30 pm

New exercise classes starting from January, please register your interest at the centre.

Advice

Labour Councillors - Cllr Pete Bowyer – third Saturday of the month 11 am to 12 pm, no appointment needed

Lib Dem Councillors – Cllr Anthony Bottrall, Cllr Marcus Meyer – every Wednesday 6.30 to 7.30 pm – no appointment needed

Local MP - Kate Hoey MP – second Monday of the month 6.30 to 7.30 pm, please call 020 7219 5989 to arrange an appointment

Benefits Advice – starting in the new year

Repairs Contract up for renewal

A.E. Williams five year contract for repairs and maintenance is almost up. Hyde Southbank Homes wants to review the current repairs service and want input from residents to see what ideas we have to improve on the current service.

Technical Services Manager - Edward Ehiorobo has set up a Responsive Repairs Focus Group to ensure that residents get the opportunity to give their views about how Hyde Southbank Homes maintains its properties and how the service could be made better.

The group has met twice so far but more meetings are scheduled for 2004. Edward would like to encourage feedback from as many residents as possible. If you would like to join the Focus Group or find out more you can contact Edward Ehiorobo on 020 7346 6518, email edward.ehiorobo@hyde-housing.co.uk

10% OFF

your next purchase at the Oval Bookshop

Offer applies to Hyde Housing residents only and is valid until 24 December 2003. It can be used on any item in stock including books, cards, videos or games. Terms and conditions apply.

Why not pop in and have a browse. Hot drinks including fresh coffee are available. Normal price is 80p but show this voucher and get your first introductory drink for 30p

What leaseholding means

The ownership of more than 2,300 properties was transferred to Hyde Southbank Homes (HSH) in 1999 and a five year estate renewal programme began. There's been a great deal of activity since and the programme is shortly coming to a close. So what are leaseholders responsibilities, and what part will they play in the future?



What leaseholders will pay

Leaseholders have slightly different responsibilities to tenants when it comes to repairs and maintenance of the properties they own. Leaseholders pay a monthly service charge, which covers the day-to-day running costs of the properties. This includes things like, communal cleaning, communal electricity, repairs and maintenance of communal parts such as lifts, lights, paths gardens, building insurance, ground rent, and for some, heating charges.

Major repairs are billed separately. All of the regeneration works come under this category and leaseholders will be receiving bills over the next 12 months.

Leaseholder rights and responsibilities

The rights and responsibilities of leaseholders are set out in the individual leases received when the property was purchased. These are often lengthy, difficult to understand, documents, and vary depending on the type of property owned.

HSH has published a leaseholders handbook. Sent to all owners it shows the basic rights and responsibilities such as paying service charges, paying a reasonable portion of major works, and maintaining the properties from the windows frames inwards.

We hope you enjoyed this first issue of Home Ground.

Home Ground is your magazine. It's your opportunity to voice opinions and tell us about your neighbourhood. Do you like living in Stockwell? Are there places, people, projects you would like to tell others about? We want to know about you. The next issue is out in March 2004 so you've got time to get writing, emailing or just drop in to the Resource Centre.

Talk to Home Ground, make it yours.

In return HSH is responsible for things such as structural repairs and maintenance, insuring the building for fire and storm damage, and consulting leaseholders before carrying out any major works to the building and/or services. A full list appears in the handbook which is a valuable tool to have.

Leaseholders involvement

Only by being involved can leaseholders, and tenants, really have their say. Many people have been concerned at the lack of consultation or participation to date. By being organised, and participating in consultation activities, residents can avoid the shock of having to pay for services and works they feel they haven't received.

The best forum is through the various Tenant and Residents Associations that exist (or in the case of Bellview Mansions being formed). A great deal can be achieved through these associations and HSH are obliged (by law) to involve residents.

Involvement and information is crucial. Without that residents may find they're picking up the tab for regeneration works in one lump sum rather than having the payments spread over a long period of time in the form of rent.

Leaseholders playing their part

Over the years the government has recognised leaseholders need to have their rights protected just as much as tenants. The new 2002 Leaseholders Reform Act gives leaseholders greater rights to decide their own destinies rather than having them dictated. They own the properties, it should be up to them how they are managed.

Leaseholders voice

HSH is our landlord and we need to make sure it works for us rather than the other way around. We are the customers, and as customers expect value for money, and a good quality of service. However it works both ways. Unless we tell HSH what we want how are they expected to know. Guess work and experience only go so far, the rest they need from us. As leaseholders we have an equal stake in making our community and environment a place that we love, rather than where we just live.

Contact HSH on 020 7346 6500 to find out if your property is already in a T&RA.