

# CHAT

## Save on your energy bills

With the recently announced increases by British Gas and Npower, you can save yourself money by joining Energyextra - the new name for the Black Country Energy Services Club. The Club has been running for over four years and has 14,000 members.

Energyextra offers members an easy way to save money on their gas and

electricity bills, with Scottish Power as its fuel supply partner. The Club can offer you a guaranteed saving compared to the prices charged by British Gas and Npower.

### Why Not Find Out More

To find out how much you can save by joining, phone

**0800 027 0305**

**quoting Ref SDH9**

for a no obligation quote based on your circumstances.

### Free Advice

Cathy Kirby is new to the Energyextra team. Part of her job is

to visit tenants in their own homes to advise on the best use of heating systems, meters and energy bills.

She can also provide valuable

information to help reduce the amount of energy you use, and best of all her visit is completely free.

**If you would like to make an appointment, contact Cathy on 0121 561 3845.**



## Ways to pay your rent

There are several ways to pay your rent. One of the most convenient ways is by Direct Debit which pays your rent directly from your bank account to us.

Contact your Housing Officer who will provide you with a direct debit form and help you with filling it in.

Once this is set up you no longer have to worry about paying your rent – the money will be debited automatically.

If you have an Allpay Card you can pay in a number of ways :-

- Over the internet - logon to [www.allpay.net](http://www.allpay.net) and click on "Make a Payment". You will need

to have your payment card ready, along with a credit or debit card.

- Without leaving your home by ringing Allpay on 08702 436040 you can make a payment 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Again, you will need to have your payment card along with a credit or debit card.
- At places where you can use your Allpay card. Take the card and the rent in cash along to any:

Post Office  
Paypoint Outlet  
Payzone Outlet

Paypoint facilities can be found in many local shops and petrol stations, whilst Payzone facilities can be found in larger retail stores.

For more information about obtaining an Allpay card or any of these payment methods, ring us on 0121 561 1969.

## If you are arrears free then you could win £100

All arrears free tenants will be entered in to the annual draw to receive one of 50 prizes of £100. The draw will take place before Christmas and the lucky winners will be sent notification and a cheque shortly afterwards.

### Even more next year

The bad news is that this draw will not be taking place in 2005. The good news is that next years rent free tenants will be entered into a bigger and better prize draw. One lucky tenant who has kept a clear account will receive £1000. There are also a number of second and third prizes. Your Housing Officer will provide you with exact details of the new draw early in the New Year.

# HOUSEKEEPING

## What you should do if you are unhappy with our service

Good customer relations are important to us. We continually seek ways of improving services provided to our tenants and other customers. We welcome comments and feedback, both good and bad and use them to improve our service delivery. If you are unhappy with any aspect of the service provided please let your Housing Officer know as soon as possible so that we can attempt to put it right. Following this, if you are still dissatisfied, you have the right to make a formal complaint. Details of

the formal complaint procedure can be obtained by contacting us.

## Anti-Social Behaviour

Be warned, persistent Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) could cost you your tenancy!

We are very committed to ensuring our neighbourhoods are peaceful, safe and secure places to live. We recognise that anti-social behaviour can have a severe effect on the well-being of our customers and that we have a duty to take action to minimise it. Consequently to ensure that swift and effective action is taken we have developed a clear and fair ASB policy.

Our policy clearly states the legal implications and best practice of dealing with ASB.

We will take formal court action against tenants that persistently demonstrate ASB on grounds of nuisance (This will be subject to the conditions of our policy statement). Our full policy statement on ASB will be available on our website from the 30th December 2004.

## Rent Arrears

Please remember your priorities this Christmas! We sincerely want you all to have a great Christmas but not at the cost of you losing your home in the New Year! Please remember to pay your rent.



On Thursday 11th November 2004, a service was held in Doveton House led by the Rev. Peter Clarke and attended by over 35 residents and friends to commemorate Armistice Day.

Thanks to Judith Phillips, pianist, who so ably accompanied the hymn singing, and to Gilbert Bradney who organised this service, during which a two minute silence was observed.

Several of those who attended proudly wore their Campaign Medals and one guest was wearing her MBE.

The Great War ended with the signing of an Armistice at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month in 1918. Between two World Wars, a two minutes silence was observed and a service of remembrance was held at the Cenotaph and throughout Great Britain to remember the dead. At the end of the 2nd World War it was decided to hold a remembrance day on the nearest Sunday to November 11th to remember all those who had lost their lives in both Wars.

Picture courtesy of The Royal British Legion

## REACH Christmas Lunch

The first ever Christmas lunch for our supported tenants took place in December at a restaurant in Oldbury. The lunch provided an opportunity for all of our supported tenants to meet each other and to swap stories and information. For those of you who are still unfamiliar with REACH, this is the new name of Black Country Housing's Tenancy Support Service. If you would like any further information about the service then please contact us.

## Rents - how we compare with other local housing associations

### SANDWELL

Accord	63.91
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>67.47</b>
Bromford	59.28
Focus	65.12
Harden	56.87
Jephson	63.01
Jephson Homes	62.74

### DUDLEY

Accord	59.92
Asra	58.12
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>65.48</b>
Focus	63.82
Jephson Homes	63.01
Midland Area	70.45
Sanctuary	60.68
Servite	60.69
Trident	62.67
Waterloo	54.81

Regional Average £62.81/week

Three years ago, the Government introduced rent convergence. This will bring all housing association rents into line and Black Country Housing already complies. If you would like more information, please contact us.

**Service Review Draw**  
**Congratulations to**  
**Mrs. H. Durnall of Rowley**  
**Regis and Mr. T. Beard of**  
**West Bromwich who**  
**each won £50.**



134 High Street,  
 Blackheath,  
 West Midlands  
 B65 0EE  
 Tel 0121 561 1969  
 www.bcha.co.uk