



## CHANGES TO RECYCLING SERVICES

Lambeth Council have made changes to the recycling and refuse services that come into effect on 4 April 2011.

The changes are part of a waste strategy that has been in development for the last two years and is designed to further reduce the amount the borough throws away.

Residents have been informed of changes through posters and Estate Managers will be displaying the information on estate notice boards so that all residents are aware of the changes.

Some of the changes include the rescheduling of refuse service and providing rewards to residents who recycle through an incentive scheme.

Lambeth Council have also produced a booklet outlining the actions that residents are expected to take in dealing with personal waste, what and how residents can recycle and what to do with bulky waste.

The council spends over £15million each year on disposing of the borough's waste but recycling costs half the amount of disposing of rubbish. That is why it is vital for everyone to reduce and recycle waste as much as possible so that we can save money, maintain the quality of our services and help protect the environment.

For more information [www.lambeth.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/recycling)



## WERA UPDATE



WERA would like to advise residents that our meetings have now changed to every two months with immediate effect. We hope all residents will attend our next meeting, and we look forward to seeing you on Tuesday, 10th May 2011.

### WERA Meeting Dates 2011:

- Tuesday, 10th May 2011
- Tuesday, 12th July 2011
- Tuesday, 13th September 2011
- Tuesday, 8th November 2011
- Tuesday, 14th February 2012

All meetings are held from 7pm to 9pm, at The Weir Link, 33 Weir Road, London SW12 0NU.

## MAKING IT EASY TO PAY RENT



Lambeth Living and Lambeth Council have made it easier for residents to pay their rent or rent arrears.

Residents can now set up a Direct Debit by making just one phone call and they don't even have to complete a form.

It's a simple, secure, efficient way of paying rent and money that is saved can be reinvested into improving services.

Payments are made automatically and residents can choose to pay on either 6, 16 or 26 of the month.

Over 45,000 Lambeth residents now pay council tax by Direct Debit, so why not encourage residents to switch to the safe, smart and easy way to pay their rent?



For more information or to set-up a Direct Debit, please contact the Lambeth Service Centre on 020 7926 6000.



WERA would like to welcome Sgt Paul Graves, who is now leading the Thornton Safer Neighbourhood Team, and Inspector Alastair Pocock, who is in charge of the area's SNT's. We look forward to continuing to work closely with the SNT.

You can contact the SNT on 020 8721 2622, or on the mobile 07920 233 840, alternatively email Thornton.SNT@met.police.uk

# WEIR RESIDENTS NOW SAFER FOLLOWING FIRE SAFETY VISIT

Weir Estate received a fire safety visit from crews at Tooting Fire Station at the beginning of March. Many residents were given fire safety advice and had smoke alarms fitted free of charge during the fire safety day.

A team of fire-fighters and two fire appliances attended Weir Estate as part of a day organised by London Fire Brigade's Green Watch at Tooting Fire Station in conjunction with the Thornton Safer Neighbourhood Team and WERA.

Every property on Weir Estate along with others on Weir Road were visited during the event which offered free advice in preventing fires, and smoke alarms were installed, which can save lives in the crucial moments following a house fire. 31 properties of 167 properties had smoke alarms fitted and many others were given advice as LFB adopt a prevention approach to tackling housing estate fires.

Following previous high profile fires in other blocks of flats across London, such as the devastating fire at Lakanel House in Camberwell in 2009, where six people were killed.



Advice given as part of the visits to homes focused on reducing the risk of fire around the home and particularly areas such as overloading electrical sockets or leaving electrical items

switched on when they are not in use, leaving the cooking unattended, not disposing of cigarettes properly, portable heating too close to combustible materials (i.e. sofas and furnishings) and candles left unattended, not in correct holders or too close to combustibles; following a spate of fires in the area caused by such circumstances.

Green Watch Manager, Jackie McConochie said following the visit "Having advised residents on preventing fire we gave advice on how to escape a fire if residents are unlucky enough to experience one in their homes by planning and maintaining escape routes and testing and



maintaining their smoke alarms." Jackie added "As a result of our visit and the advice we were able to give, I'm confident that the residents of Weir Estate are now safer from the risk of fire."

PC Rob Wood from Thornton Safer Neighbourhood Team also attended to support the day and show an active presence as part of a collaboration to make the estate and community safer.

WERA's chair Dave McEvoy spoke of his delight at the visit and future prospects of working with the crew at Tooting Fire Station "This visit has proved successful in that more homes and residents can sleep soundly in their beds thanks to this community approach to fire safety by the exceptional team at LFB Tooting. The work of the fire brigade is outstanding and I am delighted that we have been able to establish a partnership with them. We are immensely grateful to LFB for arranging this event and the combined efforts of PC Wood from the SNT who came along to show a thriving partnership with WERA, something we now hope to be able to progress with LFB for the benefit of residents on Weir Estate."

Sadly more residents did not take up the free opportunity to receive advice and further smoke detection devices alongside the ones fitted during the major works carried out by Lambeth Living last year, though those residents who were unavailable or did not allow access during the days visit can call the LFB call centre on **08000 28 44 28 to make a free appointment**, or at **[www.london-fire.gov.uk](http://www.london-fire.gov.uk)**

# DESIGNERS APPOINTED TO GROW WEIR COMMUNITY GARDEN PLAN

**Weir Estate Residents Association has confirmed the chosen design for the new community garden on Weir Estate. The chosen design is by educational and environmental company, Touchwood Trees Ltd who will implement the residents association's new project.**

The association's executive committee have had to select a design which will transform the currently disused, wasted area in the south-west corner of the estate, by Anfield Close.

Touchwood Trees led by Karen Wydler, has been chosen for its commitment to encouraging education

and environmental credentials which will focus on getting residents involved unlike the other designs the association considered. Due to time restrictions and pressure from Lambeth Living bosses, a decision on who will carry out the work had to be taken in order to ensure it went ahead this year.

Touchwood Trees regenerate and transform public spaces both urban and rural, to create healthy and diverse environments that are creatively stimulating, educational and that function in providing habitat richness and aesthetic value.

They specialise in public and community artworks, combined with habitat creation and environmental education. They also specialise in producing wooden sculptures and furniture, murals and mosaics, landscaping and food gardens in towns, schools, hospitals and public parks, all features which will be incorporated into the Weir Estate community garden.

The design will have a cottage garden feel, and encourage involvement and enjoyment for all ages. The garden will have a mosaic as the central point of the flooring along with two other eye catching mosaics throughout the garden which will be pieced together as part of the community involvement aspect of the project.

WERA Chair Dave McEvoy announced the chosen design and designers after considering two other prospective designs. Dave explains "We have chosen Touchwood Trees as we believe they have the mantra we wish to see as the main focus of our exciting community garden. They have the involvement of residents at the heart from start to finish; we were very impressed with their ideas. They



have the added bonus in having a wealth of experience in engagement with communities, encouraging education and valuable knowledge and experience in the environmental aspects of implementing such a project, this is very important to us."

Dave added "We are delighted to be working with them and are very much looking forward to seeing their design come to life in the next few months."

Provisional works to prepare the area and erection of secure metal fencing will be carried out by an agreed contractor appointed through a tendering process, which is being carried out by Lambeth Living on behalf of the association. The area will still remain the property of Lambeth Housing, but will be managed by WERA once the garden is complete.

Karen Wydler said following the announcement "The Touchwood Trees team are really pleased to have been selected to work with Weir Estate resident's to create a beautiful community garden. It will be a great opportunity to open up this corner of the estate and make a unique resource for year-round use by all members of the community."

WERA, along with Touchwood trees are continuing to work with Lambeth Living's Landscape Architect to ensure that all aspects of the garden have little impact on nearby residents and those nearest the area have now been consulted and informed about the project, with no objections received.



An open day for all residents to see the designs and offer their views, as well as register their interest in getting involved once the works get underway will be held; once these

details are confirmed we will inform residents.

The garden will be a space of relaxation and growing of herbs and vegetables as well as focusing on education in horticulture. Local children will be encouraged to come along, and get involved too.

The garden is expected to bloom by the end of this summer.

You can see the chosen design and find out more about Touchwood Trees as well as the project by visiting our website, at [www.wera.org.uk](http://www.wera.org.uk)

# HOUSING BENEFIT IS CHANGING

Lambeth Council, Lambeth Living and United Residents Housing (URH) have joined forces to identify and help tenants who will lose out as part of Government changes to housing benefit from 1 April.



The joint campaign offers support and guidance to tenants who may struggle to pay their rent as a result of the changes to the benefit system.

The level of deduction from Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit hasn't changed for the past 10 years. As a result of the changes the amount of non-dependent deduction taken from both resident's Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit will be increasing every year until 2014.

This means some tenants will have to pay more towards their housing costs - including rent - from their income than they are used to.

This change will affect you if you claim housing benefit and have an adult son or daughter, a family member or friend living with you. The higher their income, the less Housing Benefit you will receive.

Lambeth Council, Lambeth Living and URH anticipate that over 1,000 residents will significantly lose out as result of the changes. Current tenants with three non-dependent adults at home, each with a gross income of less than £122 a week, stand to lose an additional £312 a year from their current housing benefit award and more than £85 a year from their current council tax benefit award.

Tenants with three non-dependant adults at home, each with a gross income of more than £387, stand to lose more than £2,000 a year, from their current housing benefit award and more than £250 a year from their current council tax benefit award.

The joint campaign will involve targeted letters, phone calls to residents, debt advice surgeries and drop in sessions to help residents identify and work through any financial problems before they get out of hand.

Chair of Lambeth Living, Keith Hill, said: "The joint campaign is all about reaching out to those who stand to lose out because of changes to the housing benefit system. We're here to help and we would urge concerned tenants to contact us before they fall into financial problems and put their home at risk."

**If you are concerned about these changes or need more information, please contact Lambeth Living's Central Income Team on 020 7926 6000 or Lambeth's Revenues & Benefits service on 0345 302 2312.**

## CHANGES AT LAMBETH LIVING

In the last WERA Bulletin, we reported the departure of Cathy Deplessis, Lambeth Living's Chief Executive. A new interim Chief Executive has been named as Neil Litherland.

Neil has a track record of achievement in local government and housing. As Deputy Chief Executive of Camden Council he played a key role as the north London borough became the highest rated council in the country.

Neil said: "I am looking forward to helping Lambeth Living improve services to tenants and leaseholders."

CLr Lib Peck, Lambeth Council's Cabinet Member for Housing and Thornton Ward councillor, added: "Neil has a track record in turning around organisations and the skills needed to build partnerships and improve key services."

Neil took up the post in mid-february for an initial six month period.



Lambeth Living have also completed a restructure which will see changes to the housing staff, and new contracts come into effect from 4th April, whereby Morrison's will be the principal contractor, and will use Pinnacle as a sub-contractor for cleaning and grounds maintenance.

Heating and boilers will be maintained by T Brown.

All the latest estate news and information, 24/7 at [www.wera.org.uk](http://www.wera.org.uk)

