

24/7 Access to Contact Centre

From the 2nd August we changed our main contact number to:

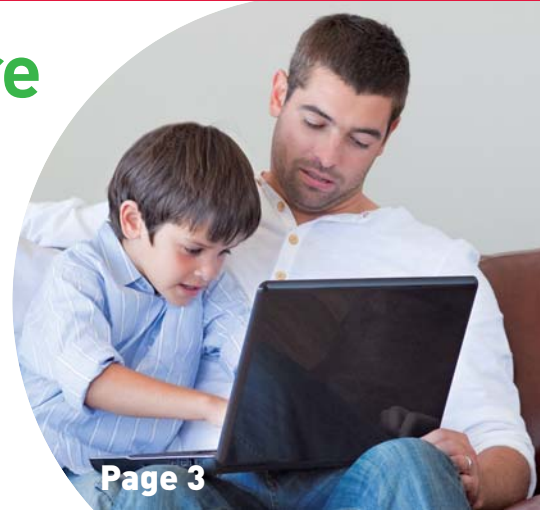
0800 028 4240

Calls are free from all UK landlines

Or

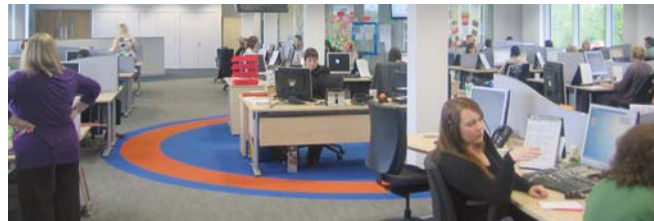
01772 667075

Calls from mobiles are charged at your usual tariff so will be free if you have free minutes and are within your allowance.



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FREE COMPUTERS



Above: The Contact Centre.

Left: Stewart Evans, a Cotman Contact Centre Agent.

The above number will be answered by a team of specially trained agents at the Customer Contact Centre. The Contact Centre is in Preston, and is manned 24 hours a day, all year round. We are confident that this move will offer our customers an enhanced more flexible service. The above contact numbers should be used for:

- Repair requests and queries
- Paying rent by debit or credit card
- Neighbourhood, housing and general queries

The Customer Contact Centre aims to answer 80% of calls within 20 seconds and is always looking at new ways of improving the service they deliver.

If you have any comments or feedback about the Customer Contact Centre then please email carole.mayor@placesforpeople.co.uk or ring the telephone number above and ask for Carole Mayor, Customer Contact Centre Manager.



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**COMMUNITY
FUN DAY**



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MISS NORWICH

Sheltered Housing Committee

The Sheltered Housing Committee has recently been established and is made up of customers from Ashby Court, Ashwell Court, Bullace Road/Middleton Crescent and Brewster Court. The Group meets on a monthly basis to discuss a range of policies, procedures and good practice ideas relating to the management of our Sheltered Housing Schemes.

Mike Hall, Chairman of the Committee, said "We are enjoying working together. We rotate the location of our meetings so we get to know all the schemes. We are currently looking at ways to market the service better."



Director's Foreword

I am very proud to write the foreword to an edition of Cotman News for the first time in my new capacity as Director of Neighbourhood and Support Services. Whilst newly appointed to this role, I've worked for the Association for 18 years so many customers will know me of old. I look forward to meeting and working with many more!

This edition of the newsletter focuses on Customer Involvement and Customer Service. We believe that the two go hand in hand; the services we deliver will be better with input from our customers. It is for this reason that we are currently reshaping the channels for involvement at Cotman. We want people to be able to give us their views in a way that suits their preference and lifestyle. That way, we hope we can ensure that our services meet your priorities and expectations.

Flexibility is an important part of good service and this is why I personally welcome the move to the Customer Contact Centre. Having visited the Centre a few months ago, I was impressed by the slick professionalism of the operation. Staff were welcoming, and pride themselves on delivering a consistently high standard of service to callers. Importantly, all our customers will now be able to contact us with queries and repairs at a time of day which suits them, weekends included.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter.

Best wishes

Jane Warnes

Director of Neighbourhood and Support Services
Cotman Housing Association



Cotman Customer Liaison Panel

By Paul Watkinson

Cotman Customer Liaison Panel Chairman and
Board of Management Tenant Representative

As you may remember the Residents Forum were working with the Places for People Area Community Liaison Panel to form an integrated Panel. This has now been achieved and we are named Cotman Customer Liaison Panel. Throughout the course of the meetings we have held, I have been voted Chairman, and John Taylor is Vice-Chairman. We also have a member, Jackie Martin, that represents us at national level, and regularly attends meetings in person or via video conference to ensure Cotman customers views are represented.

Recently, Jane Warnes, Director of Neighbourhood & Support Services, has carried out a survey regarding Customer Involvement. The results of this survey have now been analysed and show that many of you would like the opportunity to be involved. Following on from this and in consultation with the Group we will shortly be able to offer a range of involvement opportunities including:

- Cotman Customer Liaison Panel
- Cotman Home Ownership Forum
- Open Estate Meetings
- Sheltered Housing Committee
- Cotman Customer Liaison Wider Panel
- Customer Scrutiny Panel
- Resident Associations
- Youth Forum

If you are interested in any of the above please contact Jane Warnes on 01603 731699.

Tenant Services Authority

Customers of our rented properties will shortly receive a copy of our Customer Annual Report. This sets out our performance over the past year against a range of national standards set by the Tenant Services Authority (TSA).



The report considers how well we have done compared to other landlords and sets out our proposals for the delivery of locally tailored service offers in future. These have been developed following discussion with groups of customers and from the results of Satisfaction Surveys. We believe that the TSA approach will help us to ensure our services meet the high standards that customers rightly expect.

We hope you will find the Report interesting and informative. We have always reported on our performance to customers, but this is the first time we have done so in this new format. We'd love to hear your feedback and look forward to working with as many of you as possible on the Action Plan for local offers!

FREE COMPUTERS!

There is no catch. The Home Access Programme is a government scheme to help children get a computer if their family can't afford one.

How do you qualify for the scheme?

You need to answer yes to all four questions in Section 1 and at least one in Section 2.

SECTION 1 *Are you a parent or guardian responsible for and living with a child who:*

- Attends a state-maintained school in England or whose place is funded by an English local authority or the Department for Children, Schools and Families?
- Is in school years 3 to 9 (normally aged 7-14) ?
- Has a Statement of Special Educational Needs, or receives a Disability Living Allowance, or whose school/local authority representative can certify they have Assistive Technology needs?



SECTION 2 *Do you receive at least one of the following:*

- Free school meals?
- Income Support?
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance?
- Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, and have an income of less than £16,190?
- Guaranteed Pension Credit?
- Income Related Employment Support Allowance?
- Support under Part IV of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999?

If you think you may be eligible for a grant, please contact the Home Access Grant Helpline: 0333 200 1004 (Monday to Friday 8am-8pm, Saturday 9am-1pm) You will be given a basic eligibility check over the phone. If you are eligible, you will be sent an application pack. It will tell you everything you need to fill in the application form. It also includes a Freepost envelope for returning the form.

Customer Invo

19-26 M



Tea & Cake at Hoveton!

Customers at St Margaret's Gardens leapt at the chance to hold a launch event on Wednesday 19th May 2010 for what was to be a busy week at the Association. Located in the heart of the Norfolk Broads, this leasehold scheme for the elderly provided an idyllic setting for a good old-fashioned tea party which was thoroughly enjoyed by customers and staff alike. A number of new customers have recently snapped up homes at the development so it was a good opportunity to welcome them aboard as well as to admire the handiwork of the resident caretaker, who has erected a patio area to promote similar community gatherings. We're sure this will be the first of many!

Lowestoft Clear Up

Residents of Aldwyck Way and Aspinall Close were given the opportunity to have a clear out of their bulky items and garden waste. With thanks to our partners on the day, Norse Group and contractor David Neve, who cleared everything from concrete rubble to old bicycles to widescreen televisions! In total 17 van loads of bulky items were taken away. One resident said "It's been great, I don't have any transport, but as this was happening I've finally been able to clear my back garden, just in time for summer!"



Hanging Baskets Glory

Chestnut Court customers had great fun on the afternoon of Tuesday 25th May planting hanging baskets with each other, whilst local contractor Mobile Housewife placed the brackets for those residents who wanted them, outside their properties. Mobile Housewife not only donated their time but also provided some of the hanging baskets and plants. Lynne Sowersby, resident of Chestnut Court, said "I've been here 10 years, and this is the best thing we've ever done! It was a great day, lots of people came out, people we don't normally see, and everyone got planting. Two months on my basket is still there, and along with everyone else's is coming on beautifully. They have really brightened the Court up. I can't wait to see what we will do next year!!"

Involvement Week

May 2010

Community Fun Day

Despite the torrential weather on Saturday 29th May this year, over 200 people turned out for the first Bowthorpe & Costessey Community Fun Day, which was held in celebration of "Neighbours Day".

Miss Norwich (Salema Radford), opened the day, pictured left with Nigel Gardiner, Property Services Manager, Jane Warnes, Director of Neighbourhood & Support Services, and the Silhouette Majorettes.

Silhouette Majorettes and Bowthorpe Stagers provided entertainment both outside, and inside when the rains came! Twisted Fire provided a circus skills workshop along with a fire eating display.

There was free face-painting, t-shirt graffiti, and music from Future Projects, Boom Box.

We also provided stocks to give residents the opportunity to throw sponges at two members of Cotman's Management Team, Jane Warnes and fellow director Wayne Tatlow, both of whom were excellent sports. One customer chose to put their children in the stocks and throw sponges at them!



L-R back row: Nigel Gardiner, Miss Norwich, Jane Warnes. Front row: Silhouette Majorettes.



The fire-eating display.



Laura Stock, face painter, mid-face paint!



Photo on left: Wayne Tatlow, Gary Plumstead (Costessey Estate Superintendent) and Nigel Gardiner.



Photo on right: Mik Richardson, t-shirt graffiti artist.



Jane Warnes in the stocks!

Have you got a story to tell?

Is something happening in your community that you think might be of interest to other readers?

Are you organising an event in your neighbourhood?

If so, contact Amanda Marsh on 01603 731699 or office@cotman-housing.org.uk

Standards you can expect!

In January 2010, we launched our new customer service standards, which clearly set out the standards you can expect from us as a customer of Cotman Housing Association.

Within these there are clear standards with regards to the neighbourhoods where you live. Here are some of the local standards we pledge to adhere to:

Cleaning

We will vacuum carpeted areas weekly and prominently display a sheet so you know when areas were last cleaned. Surfaces such as banisters, handrails and skirting boards, walls and ceilings will be dusted or washed down weekly. Light fittings will be cleaned monthly, or, where required, more frequently.

Graffiti

We will remove offensive, racist or homophobic graffiti within one working day. Other graffiti will be removed within ten working days.

Estate Walkabouts

We will carry out estate walkabouts at least 4 times a year where areas have 40 or more properties in close proximity or once a year in other areas. We will publicise the details of estate walkabouts a minimum of 14 days before the event.

We will publicise the results of estate walkabouts within 28 days of the estate walkabout.

We already have a number of customers who regularly join us on the estate walkabouts, if you would like to get involved please contact your Neighbourhood Officer, who will provide you with further details.

Gas Servicing – Help us to help you be safe



We are legally responsible for making sure our rented and leasehold scheme for the elderly customers gas appliances such as boilers, gas piping and flues in your home are well maintained and safe. We do this through carrying out a gas safety check and service every 12 months.

It is important therefore that you allow us access to your home once a year to undertake these works. Failure to allow us access may lead to further action being taken to access your home.

DANGER SIGNS:

Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning



We all need to be aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning. The following signs indicate that something maybe wrong:

- Gas flames burning orange or yellow instead of blue
- Sooty stains on or near appliances
- Coal or wood fires that burn slowly or go out
- You or members of your family suffering from prolonged flu-like symptoms

Remember always leave permanent ventilation covers open and unobstructed.

You can also buy carbon monoxide detectors from most retail DIY stores and they cost approx £30.

If you require help or advice please contact the Property Services Team on 01603 731675.

thebigword
connecting words connecting worlds

Cotman has a new provider of Interpreting Services, thebigword.

They provide telephone interpreting, document translation, and face to face interpreting. For more information about how to use this service please contact the Customer Contact Centre on 0800 028 4240 or 01772 667075.

Tip off the fly tippers

Fly tipping and inappropriate disposal of rubbish on some of our schemes can be a major problem for residents and Neighbourhood Officers.

Rubbish dumping has a negative effect on a scheme's appearance and can attract scavengers such as rats. Also, once fly tipping starts rubbish can accumulate rapidly.

As soon as fly tipping is identified, Neighbourhood Officers will discuss the issue with customers on the scheme and advise on how best to utilise the local council's services, such as bulky waste removal and black box recycling. Officers can also help customers address issues that may restrict their ability to source help with rubbish removal, such as communication issues, so that they can meet their tenancy's obligations.

Local councils can assist us with monitoring fly tipping on schemes and impose fines where necessary. Additionally, Neighbourhood Officers can arrange for removal of the rubbish and recharge each customer a proportion of the cost if it is believed that rubbish has been dumped by residents. However, if a particular customer is responsible for the fly tipping then they will be recharged solely for its removal.



These are some of the measures that are currently used to reduce fly tipping on Cotman's schemes. The best way, however, to tackle this issue is for all customers to dispose of waste appropriately and to report problems as soon as possible. This way, customers and Neighbourhood Officers can work together to ensure that our neighbourhoods remain places that residents are proud of.

As an example of this good practice, on 2nd June this year, Cotman worked in partnership with South Norfolk Council and Saffron Housing Trust to deliver the first WEEE event in Costessey, WEEE stands for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment. Residents were given the opportunity to recycle their unwanted electrical goods and over a ton of unwanted electrical items was collected, including 26 televisions, 11 vacuum cleaners, and 12 video players.



Any questions?

Would you like to ask a question about anything to do with your home?

Please email us at:

office@cotman-housing.org.uk

or write to the address below and we will answer as many of your queries as possible in the next *Cotman News*.

Ask the Association,
Cotman Housing Association,
Cotman House, Bowthorpe Hall,
Bowthorpe Hall Road,
Norwich NR5 9AD

MANAGE MONEY WITH CONFIDENCE



A FREE fun course on how to get the best from your money

Come and learn about managing money by playing Snakes & Ladders!

Tuesday 28th September

10.30 am – 12.30 pm *with free lunch*

PLUS

£10 in a Credit Union Account for everyone who attends!

at Cotman House, Bowthorpe Hall

Interested? Call Amanda Marsh on 01603 731699

Call early to avoid disappointment, as limited spaces available

Salema Radford – winner of Miss Norwich 2010

You may already have read in the *Evening News* that the Miss Norwich title was this year won by Salema Radford of Costessey. What you may not know though is that Salema is the daughter of Ms Liana Radford, a Cotman resident for nearly 20 years in Costessey.

Salema's story is very impressive, she is currently studying medicine at Newcastle University having first won a scholarship to Norwich School. Salema says "I always knew that I wanted to go to university, and whilst my high school was ok they didn't seem to take me seriously especially when I said I wanted to study medicine, so I applied for a scholarship to Norwich School. I had to sit an exam which was a bit scary, but not as scary as the interview!"

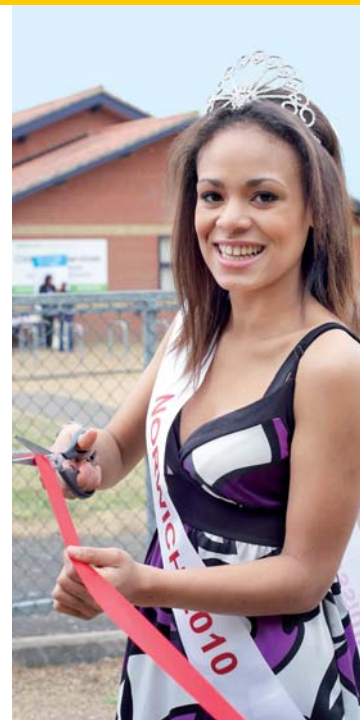
In 2008 Salema also entered the Prime Minister's Global Fellowship. The Fellowship sends 100 young people every July and August to Brazil, China or India to investigate issues of language, culture, education and global enterprise. The programme is split into three parts:

- Two weeks language and cultural immersion
- Two weeks in a local school and staying with a host family
- Two weeks as a guest of a global company (i.e. Cadbury, HSBC, Securicor)

Salema was one of 100 winners chosen from over 2000 applicants, securing her a fully funded trip to India for 6 weeks. For more information please visit www.globalfellowship.org.uk

Salema is also climbing Mount Kilimanjaro this year, to raise money for the Teenage Cancer Trust.

Salema's mum, Liana, says "I am so proud of Salema, she has always known what she wanted and she has worked hard to get there".



HomeSwapper is the UK's leading professional mutual exchange service which is used by social housing tenants looking to swap homes.

As part of the Places for People group we are now subscribed to this service, which allows our customers to register free of charge.

You can use this service by simply registering online at www.homeswapper.co.uk, and selecting Places for People as your landlord.

Searches are carried out everyday to find possible matches, which are then sent to the customer by email or text message.

For more information on this service please contact your Neighbourhood Officer or the Customer Services team on 01603 731699.

News Flash!



Mrs Joan Fordham of Hunstanton now thriving in Sunny Hunny thanks to her new interest in her garden.

She loves her home in Hunstanton and spends all her time watering her baskets – recycling water from her washing up bowls, baths and laundry to get this stunning effect. It was a bit of a dull day so the photos aren't brilliant. But as you can see in the back garden it is just a blaze of colour.

She has now joined the local gardening club and is already planning her winter displays and getting ready for next year.

