

# Village Letter Box

# Nice one Cyril



## Best value begins to address concerns



Dear Tenants,

Many thanks to all those of you who completed a tenant satisfaction survey in 2003. You told us the main problems were litter, vandalism, graffiti and abandoned cars.

Over the last year the Trust have carried out a 'Best Value' review of estate management and Trust officers and residents have come together to look at how they can tackle these problems in Birmingham and Telford.

The review compared the way the Trust deals with issues with the way other housing associations do. We held focus groups to hear residents' views

and in order to identify problems, we carried out successful inspections of the Estate.

We are in the process of coming up with ideas for tackling the problems and improving Estate standards, and we will share these with you in future editions of Outlook.

Many thanks to all those who got involved in the Best Value review. If you would like to get involved in future reviews please contact our Tenant Participation Officer, Zoey Stanton or me, Becci Jones on

**0121-415 6516**

Dear Editor,

I was very pleased to read in the Autumn edition of Outlook that 'tenant participation is at the heart of BVT' (page 4) - also that, at last, attention is to be given to the 'provision of community facilities in the Jervoise Drive area of the Hole Farm estate' (page 7).

I cast my mind back to the early 1980s when my wife Betty and I lived in Windmill Close. In those days, admittedly for a short time, BVT placed all matters relating to tenants in the hands of a residents committee composed predominantly of owner-occupiers. Clearly at that time, tenant participation was not 'at the heart of BVT'.

I, and others, struggled to gain the Trust's acceptance of tenants being able to participate and it is good to see things moving in that direction. Having said that, I wonder if the Trustees have the courage to admit tenants to seats on the board. That would be the ultimate in tenant participation and is the case in many other housing associations, some with similar histories to BVT.

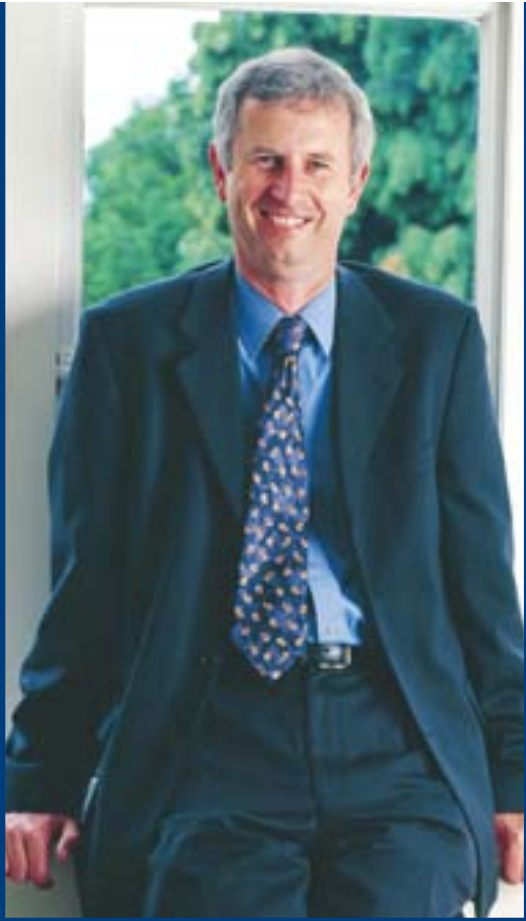
As far as the Jervoise Drive area and the lack of community facilities are concerned, I recall the Hole Farm & Priory Tenants Association, which despite the lack of a community meeting place organised successful children's parties and November 5th bonfires. Had the association had a meeting place on the Estate I am sure it would have been much more effective. I welcome the intention of BVT to address this much-needed facility.

I sincerely hope that BVT tenants will support their tenants associations as desired by the BVT Chief Executive and take up all opportunities to participate in the management of BVT.

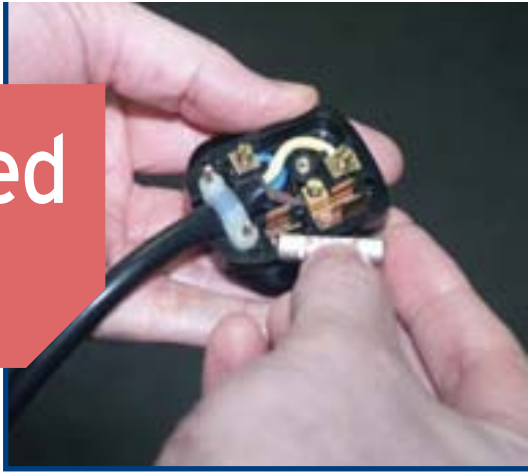
On a personal note, it is now over a year since I ceased to be the Housing Services representative for Woodlands Tenants Association and readers may be curious as to why I resigned. I changed landlords, so I was no longer eligible to represent BVT tenants.

*Cyril Bezant*

Queen Mother Court, Bournville



# Are you wired for safety?



Made law through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, from January 2005 domestic electrical installations will come within the scope of the Building Regulations.

All new domestic electrical installations, as well as specific alterations and additions to current installations will have to be inspected and comply with strict electrical safety performance standards.

BVT already ensures that the electrical installations within its properties are repaired and tested in line with the safety and performance standards applicable to the work carried out. However, on occasions, the Trust has found work carried out by DIY people, including additional electrical sockets and new lighting circuits installed incorrectly and without the correct certification stating the installation has been tested and is safe.

The Trust will not permit any electrical work to tenanted properties

unless an approved electrician who holds either NICEIC or ECA status carries out the work and that the work complies with the latest edition of the IEE Regulations.

The table below gives examples of what you can and cannot do yourself within the home. If tenants are in doubt about permissions, please contact BVT Maintenance Services on the repairs free phone 0800 387 765 and a representative from the maintenance team will be happy to help.

CAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change light bulbs</li> <li>• Change fuses on plug tops</li> <li>• Reset switch to consumer units</li> </ul>
CAN'T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Install additional sockets</li> <li>• Install additional lighting circuits</li> <li>• Change light fitting</li> </ul>

# Litter pick

In a letter to BVT Chief Executive, Peter Roach, Patricia Bennett of Oak Farm Road, Bournville, wrote:

Dear Mr. Roach,

Several residents of Oak Farm Road are prepared to take part in a "litter pick" in the road and Rowheath Park on Saturday 13th November at 10.30am.

I understand from Margaret Wright that her colleague Wilma Allen told her that BVT are willing to match the number of volunteers that Oak Farm Residents Association involve. This is a wonderful offer and one that would greatly assist us as I have just observed a pile of rubbish by the pond in Rowheath. I suspect this is from people who fish. Can BVT help us?

BVT took up Patricia's offer and three members of the Trust staff - including Peter Roach - joined her, equipped with gloves and tools, to help the environment with a litter pick at Oak Farm Road.

Many Bournville residents are long-leaseholders, and it's important you understand the difference between having a lease from the Trust, and owning the freehold of your property.

If you'd like free advice on your rights, how to buy your freehold, or what happens if your lease runs out, you can contact government-funded independent advisors LEASE at 70-74 City Road, London EC1Y 2BJ, by calling 020 7490 9580, or e-mailing [info@lease-advice.org](mailto:info@lease-advice.org)

# Leaseholders look here

