

Tenants lead the way at bumper conference

Almost 120 people attended the bumper 2008 Annual Tenant Conference in May.

Hosted by tenants for tenants, this year's event was organised by the Tenant Participation Panel and held at the Holiday Inn at Wolverhampton Racecourse.

Six sessions were hosted at the conference:

Tenants Leading the Way - Patrick Clark from the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) focused on tenant involvement.

Involve the Time Bank - time banking is a new way of encouraging volunteering in the community, hosted by the Community Team.

Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing - rated as "excellent" by the Audit Commission, this session was an opportunity for us to meet tenants and staff from Kirklees.

See My Data - an interactive IT session was held to find out tenants' views about additional software which can be purchased and added to the BVT website.

The future of the tenant associations at BVT - hosted by members of a BVT steering Group, this session was an opportunity for tenants to have their say about the creation of a new group to represent all BVT tenants.

Funding available for tenants - hosted by BVT tenants, this included the successful DVD 'Being a Valued Tenant'.

Prior to the conference, tenants were asked to nominate people who had made a difference in our communities. The winners were chosen by the Tenant Participation Panel and were presented with their awards at the conference:



• Patrick Clark talks about tenant involvement

Young Person of the Year (Birmingham)

Robert Clements from Bournville. Despite having health problems, Robert has helped out with luncheon club, youth club, play schemes and other events.



• Robert receiving his award

- **The Young Person of the Year (Telford)** - Jason Evans from Hadley, who was nominated by a neighbour for being trustworthy, loyal and cheerful.

Tenant participation is key to BVT

Ben Jordan - Chair of the Tenant Project Funding Panel - gives a brief overview of what exactly this group does. "Tenant Project Funding was set up four years ago. It was intended to be a group run by tenants for tenants and now, in 2008, that goal still remains.

There are no officers involved with the decision-making of the Panel. Rather, it is solely tenants who decide what the £20,000 annual budget should be spent on.

The money goes towards a variety of wide-ranging projects. For example, last year a proportion of the budget went toward the building of a drying area in Alder Lane. Previous to this project, the tenants in these flats had no outside drying space for laundry. Another project was the creation of the DVD 'Being a Valued Tenant'. This was made to provide advice and

information to new BVT tenants.

Applicants should write in to the Panel with their suggestions for projects, which must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- It would improve the quality of life of BVT tenants
- It would reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- It would enhance the area

It is then up to the Tenant Project Funding Panel to determine whether the project is suitable and if money should be given to it. A minimum of three panel members, the secretary and the Chair must be present at a meeting which decides whether to donate money for a specific purpose.

For more information about Tenant Project Funding, please contact the Tenant Participation Team on 0121 415 6518.

Neighbour of the Year

Sue Hutchings from Selly Oak scooped this award - she was seen by others as always helpful and willing at every opportunity.



Joint Runners up for Neighbour of the Year

Margaret Neale from Bournville and Mr and Mrs Davies from Selly Oak.



• **Volunteer of the Year (Telford)** - Bill Walton from Brookside. Bill has worked tirelessly for the community during the past 40 years.

• **Volunteer of the Year (Birmingham)** - Ron Tidmarsh for making a difference for residents in Christopher Taylor Court.

More than 30 nominations were submitted for the awards. Partners at the event this year included TPAS, Shoosmiths, Pertemps, CommuniSave Credit Union, The Housing Corporation and Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing. Peter Roach, BVT Chief Executive, said: "All in all, this year's event was a success and great credit goes to our Tenant Participation Panel for organising it; the speakers and the people who organised and delivered the workshops; the BVT staff who gave up a Saturday to attend it; and not least the large number of tenants who did likewise. Special congratulations to all the award winners and we all look forward to next year's event."



Value added

BVT recently completed a Best Value review of Tenant Participation. This highlighted the need for the Trust to consider the future of its tenant associations.

The present structures simply aren't working and not all tenants are being represented. There are only two tenant associations meeting on a regular basis. Therefore, the review recommended that a new group should be created to represent the views of all tenants. Over the past few months we have been working closely with a group of tenants to develop this recommendation.

We have set up a Steering Group consisting of officers and tenants and, so far, three meetings have been held to discuss ideas for the new group. We also used the Annual Tenant Conference as an opportunity to gather views from a wider group of tenants and this has been taken into consideration by the Steering Group.

We are still in the early stages of developing our ideas. However, in the months ahead, we will be consulting with all tenants, holding a series of events and using a variety of methods to keep you informed about our progress in this area.

Architect Colin's career draws to a proud close

Colin Wright, Executive Director of Bournville Architects, retired on 9 May.

Colin served the Trust in a senior technical role for 25 years. He was first appointed as BVT's Estate Control and Project Architect in 1983. He took on the challenge of running Bournville Architects as its Executive Director 19 years ago. Over the years, Colin has seen BVT develop and evolve - he has witnessed the new housing developments at Bloomsbury and Shenley, as well as a significant number of projects in Telford, and the internal remodelling of St George's Court in Bournville.

Colin led Bournville Architects from very small beginnings to



• Colin Wright



• Ian Tipton

its current status as a reputable, medium-sized practice, which now has successful relationships with external clients in the health, care and education sectors. It fulfils this function alongside its commitment to delivering high-quality and distinctive design in the Trust's own new housing developments.

Over the years, Colin played a key role in the Trust's success. We all wish him a long and happy retirement.

Ian Tipton has succeeded Colin to become BVT's new Executive Director of Bournville Architects. Ian has worked as a project architect in a Birmingham-based practice and brings with him a wealth of experience and passion for first-class design.