



Newsletter

Issue 3 April 2017

3 Solutions awarded new Repairs and Maintenance Contracts

We are delighted to announce that renovation and maintenance specialists, **3 Solutions**, have been awarded a five-year contract following the re-tendering of our repairs and maintenance service. **Full story - Page 2**



Telephone numbers:

From **Monday 3rd April 2017** the numbers to call for all your repairs and maintenance needs are as follows:-

Office Hours (9.00am to 5.00pm Monday to Thursday)
(9.00am to 4.30pm Friday):

White Horse Housing - 01380 850 916

Out of Hours (Emergency repairs only):

3 Solutions - 07798 641 950



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3 Solutions awarded new Repairs and Maintenance Contracts

We are delighted to announce that renovation and maintenance specialists, **3 Solutions**, have been awarded a five-year contract following the re-tendering of our repairs and maintenance service.

The Association advertised two new contracts - to start on the 3 April 2017 - to carry out the full repairs and maintenance service across our portfolio of 365 properties. The advert attracted 4 excellent tender proposals from locally based companies. Each one was assessed for overall price and quality and the contractors willingness to work in partnership with the Association to continually improve services over the lifetime of the contract.

The two contracts will cover all day-to-day repairs, empty property and planned works together with appliance servicing and electrical testing. The contract allows for two further extensions at the end of the initial five year period, if **3 Solutions** continue to meet the high standards the Association have set.

Steve Warran, Chief Executive at White Horse Housing said, *"**3 Solutions** submitted an excellent tender document, demonstrating expertise and professionalism across the full repairs and maintenance service. We now have a great opportunity to build a long-term relationship that is committed to providing a great service to our tenants and ensuring good value for money for the Association."*

Rich Watts, Director at **3 Solutions** added *"we are extremely pleased to have secured this five year contract with White Horse Housing. We are committed to providing great customer service and look forward to working with the Association and their tenants in the coming years."*

3 Solutions will be operating the contract from their base in Shepton Mallet. Their in-house, locally based multi-skilled team, and strong administration and support team at their local contact centre are well placed to deliver all of the Association's needs.

Steve Warran added, *"Customers are already experiencing a great service from **3 Solutions** since they took over the final few months of the previous day-to-day repairs contract. I am confident that this will improve further in April when they have full responsibility for all our repairs and maintenance needs."*

Some of the improvements tenants will notice include giving the Association the ability to book appointments with customers at their first point of contact, making appointments for all work, including external repairs, and seeking to increase the number of jobs that are completed at the first visit.

For further information please see the "Meet the Contractor" article on pages 3 & 4.





New Development Update

New Homes at Winterslow

Good progress continues to be made on the 5 apartments currently being built in Winterslow, near Salisbury. The final legal documents have been signed and regular site inspections are carried out by the Association's staff each month. It is expected that the new homes will be completed by July 2017.

The scheme includes 2 x 1 bedroom and 2 x 2 bedroom 'affordable rented' apartments and 1 x 2 bedroom 'shared ownership' apartment. All properties will be advertised either through the Homes4Wiltshire housing register, or in the case of the shared ownership apartment, the Help to Buy South website.

Homes for the Future

Corston: The Association has agreed to buy 4 x 2 bedroom 'shared ownership' cottages on a new development in Corston, just South of Malmesbury. The developer, Hills Homes, are expecting to start on site during 2017 and the new homes are expected to be completed by mid 2018.



New Site at Winterslow

Disposal of Stock

Over the past 12 months the Association has undertaken a full review of its properties to see if any of them are no longer viable as affordable housing. Being no longer viable means:-

1. *the property needs regular and expensive day-to-day repairs or,*
2. *it requires a significant amount of money spent to ensure it meets modern standards, or*
3. *is no longer located in a popular area and there is no demand, or*
4. *the design and layout no longer meets the required standards for affordable housing.*

Where a property meets one or more of the above reasons we undertake an options appraisal to see if we can use it for other types of housing. This could include converting it to shared ownership, demolition and re-build or simply converting it to smaller properties such as apartments.

In some cases the only option is to dispose of the property on the open market. So far we have marketed and sold 9 properties across Wiltshire and Somerset. These sales have realised over £1.6 million in capital receipts that we will use to re-invest in new modern homes, or by improving existing ones. Indeed, this money is now helping to fund 15 new homes across 4 rural communities - all of which will be completed in the next 12-15 months.

This process will continue over the coming years as and when properties become vacant. It makes sense to dispose of unviable properties and replace them with new, high quality housing in the areas of most need. It also saves on future repairs and maintenance costs and provides more money for improvements to our existing homes.

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Meet the



With the award of our repairs and maintenance contracts to local contractor, 3 Solutions, we would like to introduce you to the team that will be providing these services over the next 5 years.



Tony Guidi - Managing Director

Tony has over 40 years' experience within the construction and maintenance industry and has successfully procured numerous maintenance contracts over the past 18 years for a variety of customers of various sizes.



Rich Watts - Director

Rich joined 3 Solutions in 2011, overseeing the day to day running of the business and working closely with existing and potential clients. Rich has strong people and planning skills and provides clear instruction and guidance to ensure jobs are completed on time. Rich has previous experience working for local authorities including setting up a Council Customer Service Team. He then moved into the Commercial sector as a Planning Consultant before joining 3 Solutions.



Andy Cressy - Estimator

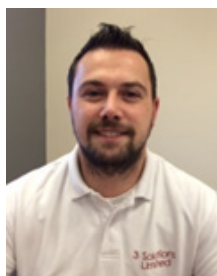
Andy joined 3 Solutions in 2013 and worked originally as a plumber and multi-skilled tradesman before working in the office as a surveyor and now an estimator. With a vast experience in all areas of plumbing Andy has worked on some prestigious sites in London including Mayfair, Knightbridge and Chelsea.



Luke Parfitt - Voids Manager/Surveyor

Luke started work at 3 Solutions as a carpenter and qualified after studying site carpentry at Bath College. Luke was later promoted into the office where he now runs the voids and day to day repairs jobs.

Luke's role involves organising labour and materials for each job as well as monitoring their progress and post inspections. He also manages the operatives on a day to day basis.



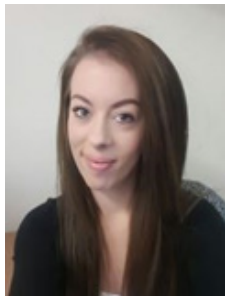
Nick Stoodley - Surveyor

Nick started working as a trainee multi-skilled tradesman in 2002 and completed his City and Guilds carpentry qualification. In 2010 he became one of the company's surveyors undertaking joint inspections and specifying what work is required. In 2014 Nick began managing projects for many of 3 Solutions private customers, house builders and letting agencies. He now manages 12 tradesmen, monitoring their standard of work and ensuring jobs are completed on time.



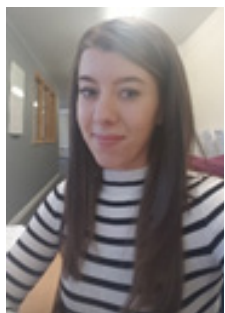
Carla Watts - Finance Manager

Carla has been with the business since it was formed and manages all financial matters for the business. This includes invoicing, payments to our suppliers and managing the company's pension scheme.



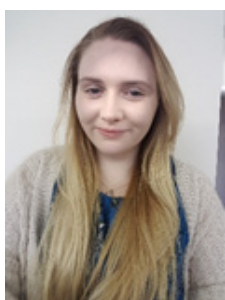
Melissa Cave - Office Manager

Melissa has been with the business since it was formed and has risen from office junior to her current position of Office Manager. Melissa has been pivotal in the implementation of the company's dynamic IT system. She has driven the development of the software and the remote working capability, which has in turn increased efficiencies and productivity within the company.



Bryony Vickery - Contracts Administrator

Bryony has worked for 3 Solutions for 4 years and is responsible for scheduling the diaries of 9 operatives who undertake plumbing, heating and electrical works. This covers minor repairs and major installations and ensuring all service certificates are completed by our operatives and provided to customers. She oversees and manages all the van stocks to ensure each operative carries a range of materials to help complete repairs at the first visit.



Katie Barber - Contracts Administrator

Katie is the newest member of the office team. She manages all of the jobs for the multi skilled operatives including the carpenters, decorators, roofers and ground workers. The types of jobs she arranges are anything from a door handle repair to larger projects such as house renovations, new replacement kitchens and roofing works.





Rent Arrears Update



The last quarter has once again been a busy one. The good news is that the rent arrears for our Wiltshire properties hit a year low of 0.6% during March. This is fantastic news and demonstrates our commitment to keeping arrears levels low. Our Somerset arrears also continue to fall and at the end of February, they were 2.52%, which compared to the April 2016 figure of 4.23%, is a reduction of more than a third.

The good news is that we have not carried out any further evictions for rent arrears, and in general those that are in arrears are addressing their debts. However, we have had to issue four Notice of Intention of Seeking Possessions, which although slightly higher than the last quarter, is still relatively low.

In December we returned to Court to ask for possession of one of our properties. Originally the Judge had adjourned the case giving the tenant an opportunity of dealing with the debt without a Possession Order in place. The outcome of the second hearing was that the Judge awarded us a suspended Possession Order, meaning the tenant has to pay a regular amount to avoid any further action, and possibly eviction.

We are facing further pressures as some of our tenants who are in receipt of Housing Benefit are now changing to a new benefit called Universal Credit. The implications of this is that the rent element of their benefit entitlement is paid directly to them and they in turn will have to arrange to pay us.

The Association has already contacted those tenants already in receipt of this new benefit, and to date we have successfully arranged for the rent to be paid. Once the remainder of those affected have changed over to Universal Credit the implications for us will of course increase, and leave us at risk of higher arrears. If future Welfare Reform changes affect you, including Universal Credit, please contact us at once and we will arrange to carry out a home visit and discuss options available for you to pay your rent.

The Association take arrears very seriously and pursues rent arrears strongly; however, we are here to help where we can, so if you wish to discuss your rent payments you can contact us on **01380 850916**. **Belinda, Sue and Tracy will be happy to help.**

Welfare Reform Update

Enclosed with this newsletter is a pull out fact sheet giving you more information on Welfare Reform and what you need to know if you are about to change over to Universal Credit.

We hope you find the information useful. If you would like further information, or you need to ask any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the office and speak with the Housing Team, who are always happy to help..

My Tenancy

In October the Association launched the 'My Tenancy' service, which enables all tenants to securely log onto their own personal records through our website and check their rent accounts, repairs history, personal details and much more.

We did experience a few technical problems right at the start with regards to tenants reporting a repair through this system, but these problems have now been resolved. If you did experience problems and not used this service because of this, please revisit 'My Tenancy' as we believe it is important our tenants have access to their personal information at all times.



Neighbourhood News

Barry Telling's Head Shave for Charity

After his wife Iris was diagnosed with secondary breast cancer, Barry Telling from Minety, decided to do a hair and beard shave to raise money for 'Second Hope'. Follow their story on www.justgiving.com/fundraising/secondshave



BEFORE



AFTER



BARRY & IRIS

Well done Barry for raising an amazing £3048.00 so far.
All the Staff of White Horse Housing would like to wish Barry & Iris all the very best.

Big Clean Up at Peasedown St. John

White Horse Housing would like to say a BIG thank you to Mr Fry of Peasedown St John for keeping an eye on the communal bin area and keeping it clean and tidy for everyone.



BEFORE



After clean up

Permissions

Can we please remind all tenants that if they would like to carry out any alteration works within their homes, that you first contact the repairs team so we can talk through these works with you. This includes things such as tiling, laminate flooring, and erecting outbuildings.

Resident Profile Forms

We are sending out resident profiling forms to all residents that have not yet completed one. Please do look out for them, complete and return them to us asap. The information given is confidential of course and is used to help us serve you better in terms of repairs, rent and any personal tenancy matters that might arise.

Neighbourhood Scheme Visits 2017/2018

6 Monthly	Date of Scheme Visit	Date of Scheme Visit
Burbage Collingbourne Milton Lilbourne Rushall North Newnton	09/05/2017	21/11/2017
Redlynch Whiteparish Winterslow	07/06/2017	09/11/2017
South Marston Wanborough Wroughton	02/05/2017	21/11/2017
Tilshead Codford Corsley	13/07/2017	17/01/2018
Annually	Date of Scheme Visit	
Heddington Bromham The Comptons	06/09/2017	
Upper Minety Hullavington Moors Cottages	13/08/2017	
Ogbourne St George Mildenhall	31/05/2017	
Luckington Castle Combe Kington Langley Colerne	20/06/2017	
Kilmington Edington	11/10/2017	
Reader Service If you would like any information on any of the items in this issue, Email: info@whitehorsehousing.co.uk . If you would like to join one of our Postal or Virtual Consultative Groups, Email: info@whitehorsehousing.co.uk		



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