

Home^{News}

A woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and dark jeans, is crouching in a garden. She is holding a green watering can and pouring water onto a planter box filled with purple and yellow flowers. The background is a lush garden with various plants and a wooden fence.

Is your garden or outdoor space looking good?

There's still time to send your entry into our
Acis in Bloom 2016 garden competition.

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Area Service Manager Taylor Gibson, Galatia Commercial Administrator Sophie Scott and Galatia Site Supervisor Ivan Middleton.

Getting Clean for the Queen



We joined forces with colleagues from Galatia in May to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday and give one Gainsborough neighbourhood a spring clean.

As part of the Clean for the Queen campaign, 23 people came together to tackle a clean-up operation at Trinity Court.

We spent the day tidying up, clearing gulleys, carrying out a litter pick and even had time to construct a new clothes drying area for the residents of the flats and introduced new borders and flower beds to a grassed area.

Overall, the team bagged up more than 30 sacks of rubbish.

Digging up history



Around a hundred bags of artefacts dating back to the fourteenth century have been found on one of our estates in what was the first ever archaeological dig of a post-World War Two council estate.

We joined forces with the University of Lincoln to uncover what lay underneath the Middlefield Lane estate in Gainsborough over two weekends in May.

More than 70 people took part in the digs, including local residents, volunteers, school children, cubs and beaver groups as well as the University's Ian Waites and Carenza Lewis – formerly of TV's Time Team.

Some 19 'pits' were dug in total, including two at Hillcrest School. Residents were helped to mark out and carefully dig one metre square plots of land before giving what they found to local children at the nearby Uphill Community Centre

where they washed the items and gave them to a pottery expert to help identify it.

Finds included pottery and clay pipes from centuries ago as well as building materials from when the estate was built in the 1960s. The more interesting discoveries went on display in London at the end of June.

Ian Waites said: "What a wonderful community Gainsborough has. Thank you to everyone on the estate, to the volunteers who helped with the digging and assisted families on the estate to dig. Thank you also to Acis and to Lucy Picksley and co at the Uphill Community Centre for endless mugs of tea and very nice unexpected chip butties.

"We had a great time just exploring the estate – for me, these estates are knocked far too easily for being bad places but they have an interesting history all of their own, and the dig proved this. If we helped residents to at least become aware of the fact that where they live has a meaningful history, and that the dig gave them a bit of a sense of pride and belonging, then I'll be happy. They can certainly be very proud of what they achieved – and it was a privilege for us at the University of Lincoln to work with them."

Check out our Facebook page to view the video.



Students go green

Green-fingered students from the Gainsborough Academy have helped to transform the communal areas at Pillared House and Newlands Court - our sheltered accommodation residencies.

The pupils joined up with us as part of the school's Compass project, after we were awarded funding to deliver our Growing Potential project from IGas.

The group of 11 to 15 year olds met with the residents to discuss what they wanted from their garden areas before setting about the transformation task. The young people filled large planters, each taking up to two tonnes of soil, before painting and treating the wood of each of them.

Students also finished off the garden by neatening off grass edges, cutting new borders and providing them with fresh soil for residents to add their own plants as and when they choose.

The refurbishment drew lots of positive feedback from residents, who said they were impressed by the students' attitude, commitment and enthusiasm.

The planters were provided by A Place To Call Our Own - an organisation supporting children and families with disabilities and learning difficulties.



Walkers kickstart fundraising drive

We have raised more than £2,500 for charity to kickstart an annual fundraising drive.

Along with our joint venture organisation Galatia everyone voted and chose the Teenage Cancer Trust as our charity of the year who we'll be supporting with fundraising activities and awareness raising until March 2017.

A group of 17 challenged themselves to a charity hike 1,085 metres up Mount Snowdon. The fundraising total stands at £2,541.50 but sponsorship money is still rolling in.



Is your garden or outdoor space looking good?

The Acis in Bloom 2016 competition deadline has been extended for a further two weeks to help you get your entries to us and pick up one of the prizes on offer.

Remember, there's lots of different categories for you to enter, and your space doesn't have to look like it's been made over by Alan Titchmarsh and his team. If it's clean, tidy and maybe a bit colourful, it might make its way onto our shortlist.

We're looking for:

- ❁ Best summer garden ❁ Best shared garden
- ❁ Best creative use of a small space ❁ Best vegetable plot
- ❁ Young gardener award (24 and under)

You can register by visiting our website or by completing the form and returning it to us at: Acis In Bloom, Freepost RTSH-THEK-SRRJ, Acis House, Bridge St, Gainsborough DN21 1GG.



ACIS

IN BLOOM

2016

ACIS IN BLOOM 2016 Registration form

Name:.....

Address:.....

Telephone:.....

Category/categories entered
(please tick)

- ☐ Best summer garden
- ☐ Best shared garden
- ☐ Best creative use of a small space
- ☐ Best vegetable plot
- ☐ Young gardener award
(24 and under)

**Register soon as the competition
will close at midnight on
Friday 29 July 2016.**

ARE YOU
ALWAYS STOPPING
FOR A BREATH?

THINKING OF YOU

Modern life makes it hard to be healthy. Without knowing it, by the time we reach our 40s and 50s many of us will have dramatically increased our chances of becoming ill later in life.

Whether we are eating the wrong things, drinking more alcohol than we should, continuing to smoke, or just not being active enough, all of these things add up.

We've teamed up with Public Health England to highlight some of the risks caused by modern lifestyles – and how we can hopefully reverse the trends.

These bad everyday habits and behaviours are responsible for around 40% of all deaths in England and cost the NHS more than £11 billion a year. These habits could make it harder to keep up with the kids in the park or mean that your favourite pair of jeans are a bit tighter. More seriously, they increase the risk of you developing conditions such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

- The direct cost to the NHS of obesity and people being overweight is estimated at £6.1bn
- Currently, around one in four adults are obese and it is estimated that by 2034 this will increase to one in three
- It is estimated that physical inactivity causes 17% of premature deaths
- Smoking is the biggest cause of preventable illness and premature death in England, accounting for almost 80,000 deaths a year

The clever folk at Public Health England have devised a simple online quiz to encourage people to reappraise their lifestyle choices, put themselves first and do something about their own health. It reminds people that it's never too late to improve their health - making small lifestyle changes such as eating well, drinking less alcohol, quitting smoking or being more active can double your chances of being healthy at 70 and beyond.

The 'How Are You' quiz helps to identify where you can make small changes, provides

JEANS GETTING A BIT TIGHT?

In our adult years, the lifestyle choices we make can dramatically increase our chances of becoming ill later in life.

Making small changes now can improve your health right away and double your chances of staying healthy as you get older. It's never too late to start.

What will you do this month to get back to a healthier you? Be part of the One You 4-Week Challenge and pledge today.

Download the Easy Made app to get you started.

**BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY
ONE YOU**

personalised recommendations and directs you to tools and advice created by experts to help you take action where it's most needed.

For more information and to take the quiz, search 'One You' online now.



Public Health
England

**BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY
ONE YOU**

Summer fun days



There is lot's of summer fun over the next few months.

The Gainsborough Uphill Community Centre will be holding a Family Fun Day on **Saturday 9 July 11am to 2pm.**

They'll be lots of fun on offer for all of the family including tombola, bouncy castle, crafts and bingo.

For further details contact our Community Engagement Coordinator Lucy Picksley 01427 675806 or email lucy.picksley@acisgroup.co.uk

Acis will be supporting a busy day of music, dance and film is also planned to keep you entertained on **Saturday 13 August** at the Everyones Festival at Manor Fields, Sheffield. They will also be some free and low cost activities and rides for the family.

To find out more visit **www.everyonesfestival.org.uk** for a full line up of the day.

A packed programme of music, dance and comedy that brings the movies to life is planned for the annual street party in Caistor.



They'll also be a treasure hunt around the market place and a fancy dress competition. Go along and join in the fun on **Saturday 9 July from 4pm to 10pm.**

Help for rural communities



Our partners Citizens Advice are offering special rural drop-in services across West Lindsey following funding from the Big Lottery Fund's Reaching Communities programme.

The service can help with money, benefits, housing or employment programmes and is on offer in Market Rasen, Caistor, Brookenby and Hemswell Cliff.

For up to date session times please visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/west-lindsey or call 03444 111 444

Awards recognition

We're delighted to pick up two awards recently for our work in the West Lindsey area.

First we picked up the Best Social or Affordable New Housing Development prize at West Lindsey District Council Building Awards along with our partner Gelder Group, before scooping the Community Engagement Award at the DN21 Awards.

In addition, we were also shortlisted in the West Lindsey District Council's Community Awards while our Tenant-Led Scrutiny Panel were a finalist in the TPAS Awards and one of our tenants, Sandra Harvey, was shortlisted for Tenant of the Year at the East Midlands Tenant Participation Forum.

Looking ahead, our finance team are also shortlisted for Finance Team of the Year at the upcoming Housing Association National Accountancy Awards.

It's been great to see our key projects like Gainsborough Uphill Community Centre and the Tenant Led Scrutiny Panel getting recognition especially the tenants who've helped us in delivering them.



Lucy Picksley, Community Engagement Coordinator, at the DN21 Awards.

A DECADE IN THE CITY

It's almost ten years since over 1,200 homes joined Acis after almost nine in ten Woodthorpe and Lower Manor residents said 'yes' to becoming Acis customers. In return from moving away from Sheffield City Council, we promised to spend millions improving their estates and bringing their homes up to scratch.

Over the next few years, we spent more than £25 million carrying out around 8,500 improvements including installing new kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors – the things that our customers said they wanted improving.

We spoke to three tenants about their experiences of going through the transition and the subsequent years.



Muriel's story

Muriel Northfield, 80, has been an Acis tenant in Sheffield for the full ten years. Living in a flat in the area of the city, she has nothing but praise for the Acis people she comes into contact with.

Having been in council accommodation prior to the stock transfer, she says moving over from being a council tenant to an Acis customer was a 'seamless' transition.

She said: "I had been in the building for about four years before Acis took over the property. I didn't really notice a difference when Acis first took over."

With years taking toll on her legs but liking the area she lived in, Muriel last year asked to be considered for a ground floor flat near where she was living. She said: "The flight of stairs was getting to me a little bit. Thirteen steps isn't great when your legs start to go. I could have hugged them when they told me the flat downstairs was available."

"I had been looking at other properties elsewhere in the area but this was perfect. It has the same layout as my old flat and with a few more features – I got a new set of appliances and a combi-boiler – and it is on the ground floor."



And now more improvements are in store for Muriel as part of the planned bathroom replacement programme. She said: "I'm now waiting for a wet room to be fitted as I can't get into the bath easily now. I asked Acis and they looked into it all for me. I thought I'd have to pay but they're sorting it for me. It's fantastic."

Originally from Sheffield, Muriel moved away to Sussex and Kent before returning to the steel city in the 1950s with her now late husband. She keeps herself busy by reading, doing codebreaker puzzles and some chair aerobics.

She added: "I love the area. There's a great community feel. We all know each other – whether we're Acis tenants or not. I haven't a bad word to say about Acis. If anything goes wrong – which it rarely does – they're really good about it and come and fix it as soon as they can. Everyone's really helpful and I feel safer than ever."

Rita's tale

Rita Harley is very happy with her flat, having had her first council house 50 years ago this year.

She said: "I was with the council when the changeover happened. When things change, you expect things to take time to settle down but I think it went quite smoothly. And since Acis has taken over, I've had new windows, new doors, a new central heating system and new wiring. They've just about rebuilt the property, bar the bricks.

"I also feel as though I can talk to Acis whenever anything crops up. They're very approachable. And now my daughter and son are with Acis as well so it can't be bad."

Russell's time

Sheffielder Russell Coughlin says there was a bit of trepidation in the air when we took control of the properties, but has no qualms over the service offered.

He said: "I wasn't worried, but going from the council to a provider most people hadn't heard of before was a bit different. I knew people who had gone through similar experiences so there was a bit of trepidation around.

"As a family, we've had no problems whatsoever. If a repair needs doing, it all goes quite smoothly and everyone is really helpful. The promise to refurbish our homes was kept quite quickly. The bits that Acis had fitted is still in and is working perfectly.

"I know people with other housing associations and they don't get the same service. It's understandable what with budgets these days, but I have no complaints about Acis."

**In our next issue
we look forward
to what's coming
up next for our
Sheffield residents.**

Estate inspection outcomes and actions



Estate inspections are a great way to get involved and take a look at our neighbourhoods, identify areas for improvement, and raise any concerns you may have.

All customers are invited to join us to check out the areas and suggest any ways of improving them.

Why not join us?

Sheffield

Lower Manor inspections

Third Friday of every month
10am start, meet at the Lidl supermarket, Alison Crescent.

Woodthorpe inspections

Second Friday of every month
10am start, meet at Nodder Road shops.

For more information about estate inspections in and around Sheffield please contact Neighbourhood Warden Rob Higgins on 01427 675784, or rob.higgins@acisgroup.co.uk.

Gainsborough/West Lindsey/Lincolnshire

Park Springs Estate, Gainsborough

Fourth Thursday of every month 10am start, meet up at Gainsborough Uphill Community Centre.

For information about estate inspections in Gainsborough and rural areas in West Lindsey and Lincolnshire please call Neighbourhood Warden Frankie Dawson on 01427 675812 or email frank.dawson@acisgroup.co.uk.

You can find the next estate inspection in your area in our estate inspection calendar on our website - go to acisgroup.co.uk/events.

What we've found on our recent inspections:

Woodthorpe and Lower Manor

One incident of building rubble left on driveway

Action: request clearance from Ground Control. Cleared within one week.

One incident fence and hedge damage

Action: request clearance from Ground Control. Cleared within one week.

Wath-upon-Dearne

One incident of overgrown garden

Action: tenant contacted.

Dinnington

Two incidents of overgrown grass

Action: grass cut back by Ground Control completed within one week.

One incident of fly-tipping in communal area

Action: clearance requested by Ground Control completed with one week.

Blocked gutters and loose paving slab identified at flats

Action: repairs reported, gutters cleared with Skyvac and paving slab rebbed within one month.

Park Springs, Gainsborough

One incident of untidy garden

Action: garden alert card issued to tenant and issue resolved.

One incident of untidy alley way

Action: clearance requested by Acis team. Alley way cleared in two weeks.



Popular new development

Tenants have started to move in to new affordable properties in Owston Ferry thanks to our development partnership.

The six new rented properties on Sandars Close in the North Lincolnshire village were completed in February, with residents moving in soon after.

The £750,000 development consisting six two-bedroom bungalows has been developed by us in partnership with North Lincolnshire Council and POD Development Consultancy with funding from the Homes and Communities Agency and the Council.

All six properties were quickly snapped up by those on the Home Choice Lincs register from the local area.

Acis Operations Director Paul Woollam said: "We pride ourselves on offering affordable homes in all kinds of locations. This new development means we are helping more people in rural Lincolnshire."

"We pride ourselves on offering affordable homes in all kinds of locations"

Councillor John Briggs, POD's Jayne Wilson, Acis Operations Director Paul Woollam and Councillor Ron Allcock.



Out and

with our Chief Executive, Greg Bacon



What attracted you to Acis?

I've worked at director level for too many years to remember and have always been 'second in command'. I've learnt an awful lot from all my previous managing directors or chief executives and feel that the time is right for me. I know most of the other large Lincolnshire registered providers quite well and I have always described Acis as being the more progressive of the bunch. The opportunity obviously excited me enough to put my hat in the ring and here I am.

What's the best thing about working in the housing sector?

From a work perspective, I'm not convinced the housing sector is any different to other sectors and I've had plenty of experience in the energy sector, hospitality and the leisure industry as well as in housing. The best thing in all of these sectors has to be the people you work with.

Looking back at your career, what are you most proud of?

My pride comes from what I have been able to achieve from fairly

This issue we talk to new Chief Executive Greg Bacon, who started with us in May. Here we find out a little bit more about him a few weeks in from his move from Shoreline Housing.

about...

humble beginnings. My parents were working class and I was the youngest of three siblings who grew up in a two bedroom house. I left school at 16 with some pretty mediocre exam results and wasn't blessed with a university education. It wasn't until after my first job that I decided what I wanted to do. I studied, at home and without support, for a good few years until I became a fully qualified accountant and picked up my first finance director's job. What I hope it shows is that ordinary people really can achieve extraordinary things by working hard and having that commitment to improve their own lives and, hopefully, the lives of others along the way. Most importantly of all, I believe that there is still more to come yet!

How are you settling in?

I can honestly say that it's been an exciting, busy and interesting few weeks.

"The best thing in all of these sectors has to be the people you work with"

Earlier in the year I came over for one day a week to observe things here so this has enabled me to hit the ground running and have an informed and immediate input into some of the key projects we've been looking at.

What have you been doing so far?

There's obviously been lots of meetings inside and outside of the organisation. We've been talking about what impact housing associations can have with the Greater Lincolnshire Combined Authority in helping with the planned delivery of around 25,000 new homes over the next five years.

We've also been looking at the impact of the government's proposed benefit cap, particularly on those in sheltered accommodation and those aged under 35 with no dependents. If you're in one of these groups and want to know more, then don't hesitate to contact us and we'll be able to help ensure that you are aware of the issues which the proposed changes might bring about.

I've also spent a lot of time at various team meetings to get a better understanding of what goes on across the organisation and have taken the opportunity to 'go back to the floor' with a number of our people to go out and visit customers in their

"What has impressed me most has firstly been the care and pride that many of our customers have for their homes"

homes as our teams have gone about their day to day roles. This has been really useful in helping to see, at first-hand, how we engage with customers and to identify some improvements which might help to make our services to our customers even better.

What has impressed me most has firstly been the care and pride that many of our customers have for their homes and secondly the professional attitude of our people in dealing with those customers but also in their knowledge and understanding of the homes and areas of where we work and the particular challenges posed.

One of the major projects that we have been reviewing is the future of how we deliver our repairs and maintenance services so I'm sure you'll hear more about this soon.



Andre's adventure

A young Gainsborough resident won the week-long adventure holiday up for grabs last year.

Andre Filipe da Silva Torres, one of our tenants, was one of 30 young people across the country chosen to take part in the residential in Wales.

The holiday was designed to help young people develop skills such as communication, teamwork and leadership, as well as improving resilience and determination and strengthening citizenship.

The holiday was organised by Wide Horizons our joint venture organisation Galatia's charity of the year. They spent six months raising thousands of pounds to provide young people with this fantastic opportunity.

During the fundraising drive, there were events including charity auctions, sponsored sporting events, charity raffles, dress down days and charity tuck shops.



Providing value for money

It's been a busy year on the value for money front. We've put in place a viable, long-term financial plan and identified key areas which we can work on in order to provide value for money to our customers.

Delivery of this plan is challenging, but the new environment the housing association sector has moved into naturally promotes value for money. As such, the buy-in of our people is strong and we are confident that we can meet the challenges we have been set.

Among our successes, last year we recruited an energy management officer to help deliver important customer benefits through a series of external grants for energy efficiency works to our homes. During the year we secured funding for installation of cavity wall insulation for 100 homes, and we also saved money for residents through provision of advice around switching energy suppliers.

We have expanded our investment in wider estate improvements, spending over £400,000 during last year on

measures to improve fencing, car parking and paving. Customers have told us that this is important to them, because better maintained and better looking estates can lead to an increased sense of pride in the local area.

As a result of the implementation of our value for money strategy, we better understand how our individual properties and customers drive cost – we're now much more able to provide the right support and services when they are needed.

Our new strategy aims to strengthen customer and stakeholder awareness of our value for money offering, develop financial management skills across the organisation, deliver further reductions to our overhead costs and develop analysis of our social impact through the work we do out on our estates.

We've got plenty of ideas on how to meet our ambitious targets, but if you have any thoughts feel free to get in touch with us through our normal channels. Your views are important to us.

Simon Hatchman,
Finance Director



How we're doing

We're committed to providing a good, value for money service to all our customers.

Feedback we get from you helps us shape our service and make improvements where we need to, so if you've experienced anything good or bad we want to know about it – please let us know. We understand that occasionally things do go wrong and we need to learn from these experiences. Our formal complaints procedure allows us to investigate in a fair and honest way and change things so we do better next time. You can get in touch with us using the details at the top of the page.

Just to let you know...
We've reviewed our performance indicators that will show you how we're performing. We'll start this in the next issue of Home News.



Beating our target



Below our target but within tolerance level



Not meeting our target or tolerance level



83.9%

Customers satisfied with the overall service provided

Target as at 31 March 2016: 86.3%



73.5%

Customers satisfied with the overall quality of their home

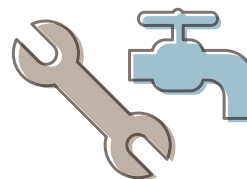
Target as at 31 March 2016: 83.6%



80.1%

Customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

Target as at 31 March 2016: 85.1%



93.7%

Customers satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service provided

Target as at 31 March 2016: 93.1%



79.2%

Customers satisfied with the final outcome of recent contact

Target as at 31 March 2016: 84.6%



93.1%

Customers satisfied with the outcome of an Antisocial behaviour case

Target as at 31 March 2016: 93%



74.5%

Customers satisfied that their views are being taken into account

Target as at 31 March 2016: 75%



99.1%

Customer Service Promises met

Target as at 31 March 2016: 100%



Just for fun!

Colouring

Can you add some colour to these friends having a summer picnic? Remember to stay within the lines.

Summer wordsearch

S	C	M	C	E	R	Y	U	S	I	P
U	Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	M	M	S
N	A	E	M	U	J	E	G	I	Y	E
G	S	R	J	P	A	N	A	E	S	E
L	E	C	E	D	I	S	A	E	S	U
A	S	E	C	M	C	N	S	S	G	C
S	S	C	M	A	U	T	G	I	D	E
S	E	I	L	F	R	E	T	T	U	B
E	W	S	I	O	G	I	A	P	G	R
S	E	S	H	P	I	C	N	I	C	A
P	M	S	S	I	T	I	A	F	C	B

Find and circle all of the hidden words.



SUNGLASSES
HOLIDAY
SHORTS
ICECREAM
JULY

SEASIDE
PICNIC
BUTTERFLIES
FUN
BARBECUE

SWIMMING
CAMPING



Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Telephone:.....

Please complete your details for a chance of winning a £20 voucher. Send your completed entry form to:
Marketing and Communications, Freepost RTSH-THEK-SRRJ, Acis, Acis House, Bridge Street, Gainsborough DN21 1GG. Closing date: 22 August 2016

Our lucky winners are...

Spring 2016 wordsearch
competition winner

Mrs M Blackstock from Market Rasen

Why not have a go at our summer wordsearch competition, it's free to enter and you could win £20 of shopping vouchers.

Satisfaction survey winner

Mr PR Bew from Gainsborough

We want to keep improving, our satisfaction survey cards help us to do this. If you get one complete it and return to us and you could win £50 in our quarterly draw.

