

**Thank you...** for reading; I know I will have struck a chord with many of you so I ask you just one special favour - if you can relate to any of the comments made in this month's special newsletter, please do take the time to complete the enclosed questionnaire which should take up no more than a few minutes of your time.

The questionnaire is important to the Roman Way Residents' Group and we would really appreciate its completion. By completing it, we will be better able to assess your level of support for the setting up of the TMO, whether you fully understand how the TMO will operate and affect you, and indeed *whether* you have any remaining queries or concerns. It will also give you the opportunity (either via the questionnaire itself, by face-to-face contact with a committee member or by attending a meeting of the Roman Way Residents' Group) to voice any queries or



concerns you may have about the setting up of the TMO or any other local issues you wish to raise, - but remember, any comments you make will remain confidential to the committee members if you so wish!

Why not come along to the next Residents' meeting'? - new attendees are always welcome and the venue and dates are always displayed on the four notice boards around the estate.

Together we CAN and WILL make our estate an even better place to live in! On behalf of the Residents' Group, thanks once again for listening and for your much anticipated support!"

**Mike Winkett**

(Non-Committee member of the Roman Way Residents' Group)



**Now see the enclosed questionnaire to have your say; we're waiting to hear from you!**

**Want More Information?**

If you would like any more information about any of the articles in this newsletter or to get involved with the Roman Way Residents' Group, you can contact us:

**By phone:** 0800 0234 807 (ask for Kate or Daphne)

**By e-mail:** romanwayresidentsgroup@msn.com

**By post:** RWRG, PO Box 13667, Birmingham, B16 6DU

# ROMAN WAY

RESIDENTS' GROUP

**Neighbourhood News** Summer '07

## Tenant Management Organisation Special

### "Thank you to everyone

who voted in the Test of Opinion earlier this year. There was a great response, with the majority of those council tenants voting, voting in favour of our going onto the next step in setting up a tenant management organisation for the neighbourhood. This is a special newsletter, written by a member of the Roman Way Residents' Group, Mike Winkett, to all of us here on the Roman Way Estate. Have a read; we think his enthusiasm is catching! We'll be sending a normal, all subjects, newsletter in the Autumn, so let us know if you want anything adding — you can always contact our advisers, Kate and Daphne, on the freephone Residents' Helpline Number: 0800 0234 807.



**Allan Bennett, Chair**

### Right to Manage Update

**Do you care about the declining appearance of our estate and the lack of more timely repairs to our properties? "Of course", you all say! Things are set to improve – read on!!**

"Hi - allow me to introduce myself. I'm Mike Winkett, a resident of Bullace Croft. Both I and the Roman Way Estate were in their infancy in 1967 when my family and I moved in. I was a mere fourteen-year-old lad and the estate itself was still only about two-thirds built when my family and half-a-dozen or so



others moved onto the completed parts of the estate, whilst the rest of it remained a muddy quagmire!

I've always enjoyed living here - it's relatively quiet and crime-free, my neighbours have always been friendly and supportive of each other and for the most part, the estate has retained its open-plan nature - something which has particularly endeared me to remaining here all these years. I believe these have been important factors in helping to set our estate apart from many

others and we residents should never take this for granted!

Now the estate is some 40 years old and although I still enjoy living here, I have noticed a certain decline in the estate's appearance over the past 5-10 years or so, some of this being due to poor under-investment by the local authority. This was the main reason I first decided to go along to a meeting of the Roman Way Estate Residents' Group. I wanted both to air my views to the group and also find out what they themselves were doing to improve matters.

I was pleasantly surprised to find that their committee (headed by Chairperson Allan Bennett) and non-committee members like myself were all equally passionate about restoring our estate to its former glory. The vehicle they have chosen for achieving this is the setting up of a TMO (Tenants Management Organisation).

TMO's take over certain responsibilities and



revenues previously controlled by the City Council. They are able for instance to control revenues and receive

grants from various sources which can be used to carry out repairs and maintenance on the estate. They are responsible for ensuring that rents are paid and any arrears collected, that properties are properly maintained to the correct standards, have a say in tenant selection, can deal

with any problematic residents, and so on. The City Council itself retains ownership of the tenants' properties, whilst the TMO controls the every-day maintenance of the estate and is

**"TMO's take over certain responsibilities and revenues previously controlled by the City Council."**

better able to prioritise both the spending of revenues and the dealing with issues of local concern to residents.

I have seen compelling evidence that TMO's do actually do what it says on the tin! Last year, our Residents' Group was given a slide-show presentation by the Burrowes Street TMO already set up in Walsall. This gave us a before-and-after glimpse of their estate. What a remarkable transformation their estate has undergone, following the setting up of their own local TMO! An actual visit to their estate by our own Residents' Group committee members convinced them that this was also the way forward for the Roman Way Estate!



I firmly believe that the future wellbeing and appearance of our estate, the dealing with issues of local concern - you could even argue residents' quality of life itself - will be in excellent hands once our own TMO is up-and-running. Why do I say this? It's quite simple to explain, really! TMO's are controlled and run by the very people who care most about where we live - the residents themselves! Because they are residents themselves, they have a vested interest in ensuring its success. They are better able to gauge the needs and aspirations of co-residents whom they represent.

Just compare this with what our Council has done (or hasn't done!) for us over the years - some residents have no doubt been trying to get repairs done to their properties (some may now have been done, but after much delay, others may still be waiting), but apart

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from that, take a look outside your window at the peeling paint below those rooflines which haven't been painted in over 40 years, look at those garage areas disgracefully allowed to fall into a state of disrepair with tall weeds and broken-up road surfaces and the lack of revenue due to unused garage spaces, look at the weeds growing in the roadside gutters, between numerous cracked paving slabs, the communal approaches to back gardens and in the washing/drying grounds areas and those unkempt gardens - I could go on and on!

Once up-and-running, our TMO will see a reversal of this distressing trend, with revenues put back into more timely repairs and maintenance, thus improving the lots of many residents, whilst the TMO will be better able than the Council in prioritising and addressing any issues of local concern to residents. However, they will continue to work with the Council, local police and other bodies in addressing such local issues as non-residents parking on our estate, poor TV reception due to the building of the new hospital, maintaining a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, etc.

The Residents' Group has achieved much already - as previous newsletters will testify and future editions of which I urge you all to read with interest as we keep you informed about our own progress towards the final setting-up stages of our TMO. In particular our Residents' Group has worked hard to mitigate the effects the building of the



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**"Together we CAN and WILL make our estate an even better place to live!"**

new hospital has had on local residents and has developed close relationships with the Birmingham New Hospitals Joint Venture, the local police, fire service, local councilors, housing officials, our MP and others.

Up until now, it has been stipulated that the funds we have been granted must be used primarily to cover the costs associated with the setting up of the TMO - things such as the training of the committee members, the purchasing of computer equipment and stationery, etc. However, a certain amount of funding has been used to tidy up the estate -

you will have noticed the litter bins, the occasional provision of skips for 'clean-up' days, the planting of bulbs and the provision of notice boards. Like many other residents this leaves me somewhat frustrated at times that we cannot do more at present, but I am spurred on by the fact that things will soon be much improved as the TMO approaches its final setting up stages.

Those who will be running the TMO have been undertaking extensive training and their competencies will all soon have been proven - it will soon be up to you, the tenants reading this newsletter, to decide in an up-coming crucial vote whether you wish to see the TMO formerly set up. You must decide whether you wish to leave the estate's destiny effectively left in the hands of the City Council or allow the TMO to take control over certain of their revenue and responsibilities. If you care about our estate's future, this will arguably be about the most important vote you will have made in a long time - so do use your vote and use it wisely!

