

Community Together: your College Bank and Lower Falinge newsletter

Text only edition, Autumn 2019

A message from Gareth Swarbrick, RBH Chief Executive

It gives me great pleasure to introduce our new-look community Newsletter. We hope that you'll take as much enjoyment from reading it as we did in pulling it together; hearing so many interesting stories from across the College Bank and Lower Falinge communities.

Although the clocks may have gone back, everything else in Rochdale town centre seems to be moving forwards at speed.

There are some really positive signs of change happening right across the borough, but we understand that some will be harder to work through than others. It is three years this November since we first reached out to residents to ask about a vision for the future of College Bank and Lower Falinge.

Throughout every stage of the journey since then, we've tried to support each of our residents to prepare for any changes that lie in store.

Our dedicated regeneration team is here to support everyone who needs to move as part of our proposals for the future of College Bank and Lower Falinge. Most of our residents will already recognise Syed and Michelle from their regular home visits, but you can find out a bit more about them and their work in this edition, along with feedback from some residents they've supported.

As a mutual housing provider, we're committed to always doing right by our residents, both now and into the future. That's why we have been working with the community on a Residents Deal, which spells out our firm commitments to everyone who will be affected by our regeneration proposals. We're now asking the local community to tell us what they are prepared to commit to, as part of this mutual deal.

Rochdale has long been known for its pioneering spirit and paving the way for the modern co-operative movement. Our New Pioneers programme wants to seize on this local spirit by building the skills and confidence to help local people reach new heights in life and work. Meet Daisy Silva, the programme's first ever Career Broker, to find out if New Pioneers might be right for you.

Rochdale's new look town centre is bringing opportunities for everyone and there are some really exciting events taking place over the next few months.

Finally, we want this newsletter to work for absolutely everyone. If you would prefer to receive this information in another language, or in any other format, please let us know – we'll do our best to make it work for you.

Meet Your...

Michelle and Syed head-up the RBH regeneration team on the ground and are passionate about supporting you to find a comfortable and convenient new home.

They can also refer you to support services if you need help with things like financial advice to make the most of your income, and if you need it, help with managing your benefits or putting together payment plans. You're likely to see Michelle and Syed out and about in College Bank and Lower Falinge speaking to residents, so please say hello and ask them any questions you may have. **They're here to help!**

Michelle and Syed are available to meet residents on the following days:

Tuesdays: 10am – 12noon

Please drop-in at the Falinge office; 234-236 Newstead, Lower Falinge, OL12 6RQ

Thursdays: 10am – 12noon

Please drop in at the TRA office in Town Mill Brow; Ground Floor, Town Mill Brow, OL12 6UE

You can also reach them by emailing towncentre.regen@rbh.org.uk or calling **0800 027 7769 (use option 7)**

Michelle says...

I kicked off my role as a Regeneration Project Manager back in June. I'm really enjoying working with residents and we've already accomplished so much. I have over 20 years' experience as a neighbourhood officer in Rochdale and was drawn to this role because it's such a progressive team.

This is a new opportunity for all residents across Lower Falinge and College Bank. We're a flexible team and aim to meet everyone face-to-face or however best suits them, listen to their needs and try to be as accommodating as possible. For example, through Rochdale HomeChoice, if you want to stay in the town centre you can or if you'd like to move somewhere a bit quieter, we can make that happen. You will be offered a like-for-like property and we'll discuss which type of home you'd like to live in - from bungalows, independent living schemes, to flats.

Syed says...

I've lived in Rochdale all of my life and I love this town, which is why I'm so keen to make a positive impact on the local community through my work. In the past, I think the town has suffered from a lack of investment, but there are some really positive signs that things are moving in the right direction. The town centre redevelopment is really starting to take shape – now that people can see buildings going up, it all feels more real.

Michelle and I are the main points of contact for people who will need to move as part of the regeneration proposals. We understand that most people didn't ask to be moved from their home - so we have to be there to support however we can.

It's important that we really get to know people, so that we fully understand what needs to be in place for them to feel comfortable and supported in their new home. Home isn't just about bricks and mortar, it's about having all the right ingredients for someone's life, all in one place.

Finding the right balance involves a lot of coordination with different teams within RBH, as well as partners and external agencies. We liaise very closely with our HomeChoice team, neighbourhood housing team and also with any external support providers that people might rely on day-in, day-out.

Wherever people want to move, whether that's staying in the town centre or moving further afield, we are determined to find the right move for everyone based on their needs and we're there with them every step of the way.

Community Feedback

"I can honestly say this is the best move I've ever made. This is a much better home, it's on the ground floor, has easy access for me and my adult sons. It's also much quieter as we're not near such a busy road. We're closer to the shops and the doctors, it's so convenient. Michelle and Syed were really helpful and answered all our questions."

-Anon

"We're both in our 60s and have moved from Falinge to Syke, it's more peaceful and green here. We lived in a ground floor flat for 10 years and now we're in a lovely bungalow, with more space, updated interiors and we look out across a big common.

"RBH has been with us every step of the way and helped with the move, which was a godsend, as a week before the big day I was in hospital. Michelle has been brilliant and helped us secure £750 as a decorating budget, so we decided to invest in lovely new carpets. This move has changed our lives for the better, that's us settled now!"

"The regeneration in Rochdale is great, it's about time we had some decent shops. Towns have got to be updated and we want to live somewhere modern."

-Anon

Residents' deal

As we progress with our exciting plans for College Bank and Lower Falinge – bringing a better quality, choice and mix of housing for current and future residents – we want everyone to feel confident in the service they can expect from us.

That's why we have been developing a Residents Deal, which will spell out the promises we will make to every single resident who will need support with finding a new home.

Last year, our independent advisor Helen Nicol held workshops with the College Bank and Lower Falinge community, to understand people's concerns and the assurances they wanted from us in finding a new home to meet their needs.

Since then, we have settled on a number of promises that we will make to every single resident affected by our proposals – and we're proud to say that we've been keeping them.

We're now hoping to bring together a new group of local residents, to help us develop the next stage of the Residents Deal over the coming weeks and months. We are looking for people who enjoy problem solving and are comfortable contributing to group discussions, but above all we need people who are passionate about where they live!

If that sounds like you and you'd like to help shape positive changes in your community, please get in touch with us at towncentre.regen@rbh.org.uk or call 0800 027 7769 (option 7)

Some of our key commitments to College Bank and Lower Falinge residents:

- Everyone who needs to move as part of our regeneration proposals will be offered a new home of the same size and type
- Anyone who wishes to stay within the town centre area will be able to do so
- Residents who need to move will have the same tenancy in their new home
- If you are an RBH tenant, your circumstances will not change

Delivering on our promises

Did you know...?

- 93% of residents said they were very satisfied with the amount of information they received from RBH
- 93% of residents said they received plenty of support during the rehousing process
- 87% of residents said they found it easy to contact RBH for help and support

“I was content where I was in Mitchell Hey, but I found out our block was being demolished so had to move. There’s no good moaning, once I looked into what RBH was offering me I realised it was actually better accommodation. Now I’ve got fitted carpets and it’s much warmer because it’s better insulated.”

“When I look back, Mitchell Hey was going downhill and it was right to be knocked down. It needed so much money spending on it, it wasn’t worth it. Some residents don’t seem to understand this.”

“The whole moving process only took two weeks, everyone was so organised. It was all explained upfront by Michelle and I had that feeling of confidence. I’ve got brand new neighbours and a lovely warm home in time for winter.”

-Anon

The New Pioneers Programme

IF YOU LIVE IN LOWER FALINGE OR COLLEGE BANK, NEW PIONEERS COULD HELP YOU.

As part of our ongoing commitment to the College Bank and Lower Falinge communities, we have been working in partnership with Rochdale Borough Council and the RSA, on a programme to help local people find new skills and better employment.

The New Pioneers programme is initially aimed at anyone over 18 who is either out-of-work or working part-time, living in College Bank or Lower Falinge (or has moved as part of the regeneration) and wants to improve their employment prospects or gain new skills to enhance their career.

The New Pioneers programme was first announced in 2018, at an event attended by Greater Manchester’s Mayor Andy Burnham, along with RBH, Rochdale Council and local business representatives. Since then it, has now taken a huge step forward, with the appointment of its first dedicated careers broker – Daisy Silva.

Daisy can help the New Pioneers develop their skills, make the most of their strengths, expand their comfort zones, and set new goals and priorities. It’s an intensive one-to-one approach and those on the programme are also encouraged to combine their individual strengths to support one another.

New Pioneers is especially keen to hear from you if you’re receiving either Employment & Support Allowance or Carer’s Allowance (the programme won’t affect any other support you may be receiving.) There’s also the potential to access flexible funding bursaries to support your individual career goals.

To find out how New Pioneers could help you, contact Daisy Silva on 07866 143 999 or daisy.silva2@rochdale.gov.uk

Meet Daisy Silva

I'm from Rio originally but England has been my home for the last 26 years. I've always been made to feel at home in Rochdale. The town centre has a small but really warm community in my experience. People here are always keen to help their neighbours and look out for one another. For example, in the first week of New Pioneers, I was introduced to a gentleman who very kindly offered to talk about the regeneration process and to show me around Lower Falinge and College Bank! This naturally led to a conversation about his own career and ambitions for the future.

I'm delighted that New Pioneers has helped him enrol onto a teacher training course at Bolton University and to support him in arranging his work placement teaching Maths with our local training centre. These are hopefully two steps on the way to finding him a role that he really loves.

New Pioneers isn't just about getting people into work. It's about giving people the skills to control their own destination – in everyday life as well as in the workplace. I work with people of all ages in College Bank and Lower Falinge, whether they're unemployed or in part time roles, to help them see the world and their own future in a more positive light. I can help people to become more optimistic and resilient, support them to create new positive habits and generally make healthier life choices – to make sure they can access the best opportunities available to them in the future.

What I enjoy most about New Pioneers is witnessing those special moments of insight – the 'light bulb moment' when someone realises they can do something new that will empower them to go forward in life. It's amazing to see people flourishing as they go along on their chosen path.

New Pioneers is a really flexible programme – I can work with people on their own terms, at a place and pace that works best for them. You can always call me or drop me an email to arrange an appointment that suits you.

For more information, or to arrange an appointment, contact Daisy Silva today on 07866 143 999 or daisy.silva2@rochdale.gov.uk

A new look Rochdale town centre

Rochdale town centre is going through a complete refresh.

Rochdale Borough Council's £250 million regeneration programme has already funded a new transport interchange, the Number One Riverside building, the award winning 'Revealing the Roch' project, improvements to Riverbank Market, and building the new Rochdale Leisure Centre.

All of this means Rochdale residents will benefit from brand new community spaces, cultural and health facilities, greater connections and improvements to the natural habitat.

These updates have been designed to bring the buzz back to the town centre and make residents feel proud to live in Rochdale once again. Transport upgrades will

make it easier to get around the town and will encourage shoppers to stay in the area and socialise.

Don't Miss - Dippy roaming into Rochdale

Number One Riverside, Rochdale, 10 February- 28 June 2020 – free.

Come along and meet the Natural History Museum's infamous dinosaur - Dippy the Diplodocus. He's hitting the road for the first time and Rochdale has been selected as one of just eight national venues to host him. A range of activities for visitors of all ages will be organised to coincide with Dippy's visit and will hopefully inspire future palaeontologists!

What's On

As the nights draw in, are you looking some fun, free community activities to get involved in? How about trying your hand at some of these?

Touchstones Family History drop-in sessions

Need help with your family tree and don't know where to start? Pop into our weekly drop-in sessions. Every Thursday: 2pm – 4.30pm.

Social Eating group at Falinge Mews: Over-50s Social Eating group from Circle

Come together for a chat and a bite to eat, just £2 for a main meal, with plenty of choice. Wednesdays: 10.30am – 12.30 pm. To book your place at a session, give Circle a call on 01706 751165

LOWER FALINGE: Community Base Place Team

Men of all ages are invited to join Heritage Hackers Club, aimed at learning new skills and helping those who feel isolated.

- Wednesdays: 12pm – 3pm
- Thursdays: 10am – 3pm
- Fridays : 10am – 3pm

Your News

Are you a budding writer or community ambassador for Rochdale? We're keen for College Bank and Lower Falinge residents to send us their news, events and suggestions - to help us shape this community newsletter's future.

Please do contact us at towncentre.regen@rbh.org.uk with any ideas for our next editions. Please contact us if you need any help reading our newsletter. We can

provide all of this information in a number of different languages, or if you're reading this online, Browsealoud can even translate and read the newsletter for you.

Drop in & see us

Remember that Michelle and Syed from the Regeneration Team are happy to meet you to talk through the moving process or to discuss new housing options on the following days:

- Tuesdays 10am – 12noon, Drop-in at the Falinge office
- Thursdays 10am – 12noon, Drop in at Townmill Brow

Email: towncentre.regen@rbh.org.uk or call our freephone number: 0800 027 7769 (use option 7).

Feedback & win prizes

We really want to hear what you think about the format of your College Bank and Lower Falinge newsletter. We've got a great prize on offer to one lucky person who lets us know their thoughts. How do you want to find out about updates in your community? Through the post, by email, face-to-face, or in some other way?

If you have any suggestions for a different way to do this or you are finding it difficult to access any information, please let us know!

Email us today at towncentre.regen@rbh.org.uk and we'll enter you into our prize draw. One lucky winner will then be chosen at random to receive a fantastic prize...

We can't wait to hear your comments!