

# Propertyview

Newsletter Issue 2, 2007

## HIP, HIP... Hurray?

Welcome to our second newsletter, which we hope will provide you with practical, topical information about moving home in the Woodley area.

The last few months have seen a few interesting developments in the housing market. Gordon Brown is moving towards more environmentally friendly housing, including the development of new eco-homes, there are new tax breaks for eco-homes and we will soon have the introduction of Energy Performance Certificates as part of the new Home Information Packs, and what controversy they've caused!

Wentworth's was all ready to roll with the new Home Information Packs in June, only to find they were delayed until August. For anyone that is thinking of putting their home on the market, Wentworths is fully prepared for the Home Information Packs and can offer you a full service which will guide you through the new legislation. The last quarter has seen a

gradual rise in interest rates, but it doesn't seem to be affecting the market too much. There is still a rise in house prices, albeit slightly slower than it has been and we are still seeing a strong demand for housing in the area.

In this newsletter, our financial guru talks about some of the good mortgage products which are still out there, so don't be put off moving because of current interest rates.

Getting on the housing ladder is still proving difficult for many, but this has led to a very strong lettings market. Wentworths has teamed up with Jon Hallett Ltd to provide a seamless letting service for both landlords and tenants. More details inside...



**Wentworths** has been operating since 2000 and is well-situated, being the only Estate Agent to be located within Woodley's bustling High Street. It provides Estate Agency services on a wide variety of properties, from starter homes to large estates in and around Woodley. It also offers mortgage advice, lettings, home information packs, removals services and overseas estate agency.

# Home Information Packs – What’s Happening!

Wentworths was fully prepared to provide a service for the new Home Information Packs (HIP) in June, only to find a last-minute political turnaround, which delayed them until August.

They now apply to homes with 3 bedrooms or more and there are likely to be a few more changes ahead for the Home Information Packs. We’ll try to keep you up-to-date with changes as they happen.

The main reason for the turnaround was due to a legal challenge from the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors regarding a lack of assessors for the compulsory Energy Efficiency Certificate.

It is the assessors’ role to evaluate homes for energy efficiency, giving each home an energy efficiency rating. While assessors are being recruited and trained, there will be a phased approach to the Home Information Packs, so at the moment, only properties with four or more bedrooms will need to produce a HIP.

Much of the information included in the Pack is information that would normally be provided by your solicitor, as part of the sale process.

For those of you that have moved already, you probably know that searches can take a long time and can reveal things about your property

which may affect the sale. By having the information up-front, potential buyers can make an informed decision before putting in a final offer and it is hoped it will speed up the conveyancing and reduce the number of sales collapsing or being renegotiated.

A new part of the Pack, which has not previously been compulsory, is the provision of an Energy Performance Certificate.

The Energy Performance Certificate aims to inform buyers and sellers about a home’s energy efficiency, using A to G ratings.

The certificates will also make recommendations for cost-effective improvements that can be made to help cut fuel bills and carbon emissions.

Sellers can also provide a Home Condition Report (optional), which contains information about the physical condition of a property. This can be used as a legal document and should be prepared by a Government approved Home Inspector.

Sellers who provide a Home Condition Report will have an early opportunity to carry out repair work on their home or obtain quotes before putting it on the market.

These reports can also be used by Lenders to inform their valuations, thereby reducing the need to repeat a site inspection at the buyer’s expense.

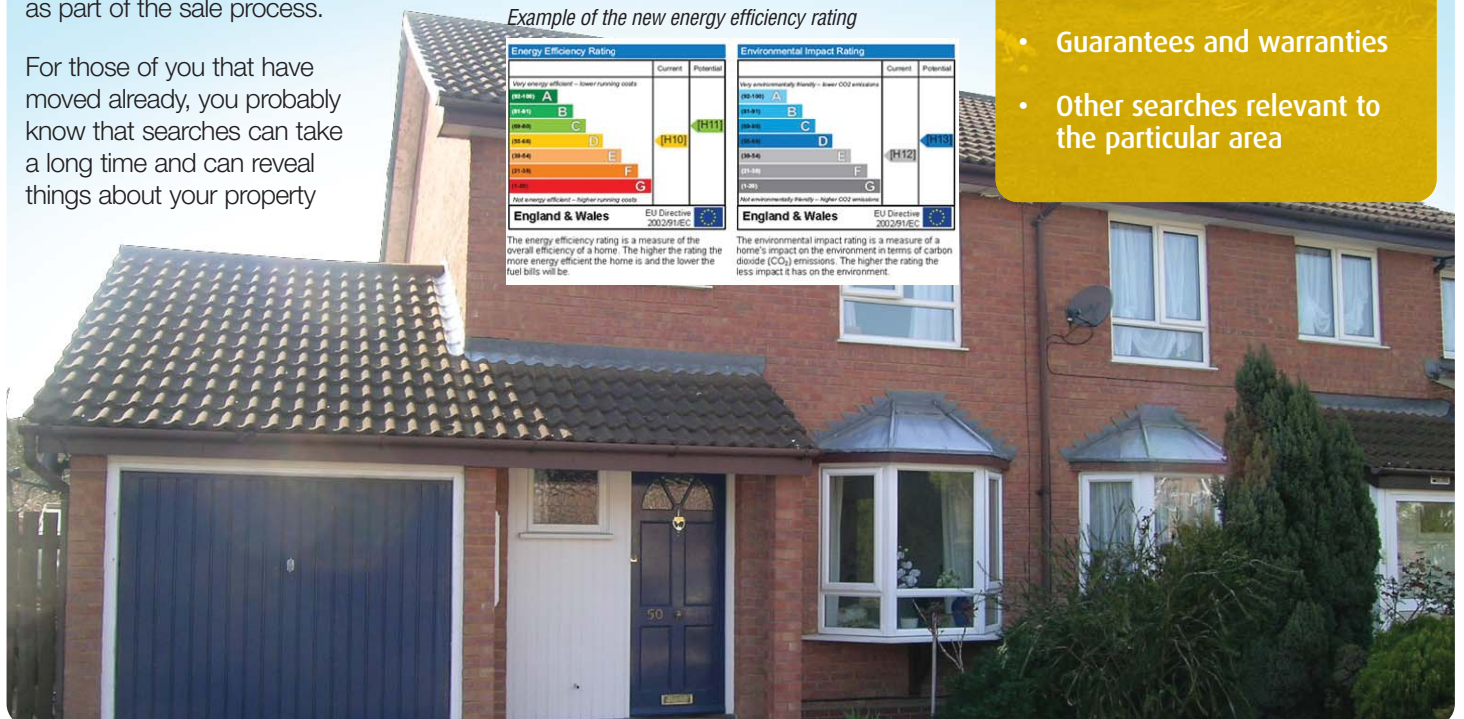
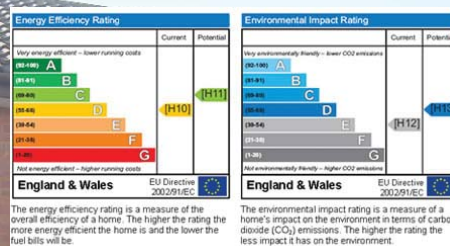
## What should be included in a Home Information (HIP) Pack?

- An Index
- A sale statement summarising the terms of the sale
- Evidence of title
- Standard searches such as local authority enquiries and drainage and water search
- An Energy Performance Certificate
- Any information relating to commonhold or lease, if appropriate

The pack can also optionally include:

- A Home Condition Report
- Guarantees and warranties
- Other searches relevant to the particular area

Example of the new energy efficiency rating



# Too Much Interest in the Housing Market

The hike in interest rates earlier in the year may have made you reconsider the prospect of moving, but don't let it put you off. There are some good deals around which could get you moving quicker than you thought and at the moment, interest rates seem to be stabilising, so now could be a very good time to plan your mortgage.

Robert Clark, of Barclay Clark Associates is Wentworths' resident independent mortgage advisor. He comments: "There are still some good deals if you look hard enough for them. If you are worried about further hikes, you might want to consider a fixed or capped rate, so that your mortgage payments don't go beyond what you can afford."

Alternatively, if you have a large amount of equity to invest and require a more flexible mortgage, some of the offset mortgages might suit you. If interest rates go up, your savings rate also goes up and this interest can be offset against your mortgage payment."

There are currently 7500 different mortgage schemes to choose from. Barclay Clark Associates' software covers every scheme on the market and its advisers will listen to your requirements and match the best mortgage deal for your future requirements.

If you want to discuss your mortgage options before putting your house on the market, please contact Rob Clark on **0118 927 2800**.



# Changed Opinion of Estate Agents

When Kim Seager moved to her two-bedroom, mid-terrace house, five years ago, her confidence in Estate Agents had been shattered. So, when she and her twelve year old son decided to move again, the prospect did not fill her with joy.

Kim chose Wentworths to help with the sale of her property and readily admits she was pleasantly surprised. She comments: "Wentworths is a down-to-earth team that actually delivers on its promises. They listened to what I wanted, understood my concerns, made sure that the valuation on the property was realistic and the marketing was spot on. Their approach seems to work well for both vendor and purchaser, they provide prospective purchasers with very relevant information, saving both vendor and purchaser time in unnecessary

viewings." Kim had a genuine offer on her property within two weeks of it going on the market.

During the home moving process, she also relied on Wentworths' mortgage adviser and removals service and is impressed with Wentworths' full-service approach. "It was evident that Wentworths' partnership companies have been fully vetted," says Kim. "They work very well together as a team, to provide a genuinely useful service."

Kim also bought her new three-bedroom end-terrace home from Wentworths. She says: "I never thought I'd say this about any Estate Agent, but I would seriously recommend Wentworths to anyone looking to buy or sell a home in the Woodley area."

## The Pro-file

Name: Tracy Why



Job Title: Sales Progression

**Areas of responsibility:** To develop property details, monitor the sales process, liaise with clients, solicitors and surveyors, advise clients about each stage of the sale process and invoicing

**Career progression:** Tracy has six years experience of working in Estate Agency within a sales support role. She previously worked for Estate Agents in Twyford and Bracknell, before moving to Wentworths in Woodley in October 2005

**Place of residence:** Lower Earley

**Likes:** Spending time with her son, holidays, gardening and chocolate

**Dislikes:** Exercise, sausages and pessimism

**Major achievements:** Bringing up her son as a single mum and becoming a home-owner



# Let Us Manage Your Rental Property



Stuart Bloomfield, Lettings Negotiator - Jon Hallett Ltd

Wentworths has teamed up with Jon Hallett Ltd, a well-established letting and property management company with more than 15 years experience in lettings around Reading and surrounding areas. It has a big portfolio of properties to rent and also has good links with a number of large companies which need to relocate staff.

Many of its clients live overseas, trusting Jon Hallett to deliver a professional property management service. Two representatives from Jon Hallett are located at Wentworths, Jon Hallett himself and his colleague Stuart Bloomfield, who has recently joined the company to work in the Woodley branch.

Jon Hallett has worked in the lettings mar-

ket since 1989 and established Jon Hallett Ltd in 1993. He is Managing Director, overseeing three letting divisions in Loddon Bridge Road, Kings Walk in Reading and Wentworths. He will be the main point of contact for people looking to rent out their property.

Stuart Bloomfield is responsible for matching prospective tenants with suitable properties and for progressing lettings negotiations. Jon Hallett comments: "Wentworths and Jon Hallett Lettings offer complementary services and our prime location within Woodley's busy high street makes it easier for landlords and tenants to drop in and see us."

## An Interview with Jon Hallett

It has been a time of change for Jon Hallett Ltd. The company had to move out of its central Reading location last year, due to flooding which destroyed the office and its equipment and the company has only recently moved back into a town centre location at 2 Kings Walk, Reading.

"Out of necessity, we centralised our operations in our Woodley head office and this proved to be a very successful move", says Jon. "I took advantage of this enforced restructuring to completely overhaul our systems and procedures, ensur-

ing a strong emphasis on fulfilling the needs of our customers". Information technology has been an integral part of the new infrastructure of Jon Hallett Ltd.

A new website, [www.jonhallett.com](http://www.jonhallett.com), enables applicants to effectively view properties online and for landlords, they can manage their rental account via a secure web facility. Our agents can also access information remotely, resulting in a higher level of responsiveness. To reflect new, more contemporary operations, Jon Hallett has been re-branded, with a fresh

look that reflects the positive changes that have been made to the company. "Our old purple and gold branding has changed to silver and black, reflecting a quality of service which far exceeds our competitors", says Jon.



## Rental Property of the Month -

Let within 48 hrs



Constable Close, Woodley Airfield - £1,250 per month

This property on the popular Airfield development is likely to be snatched up quickly. It is situated at the head of a no-through road and falls within Waingels College catchment. It has three bedrooms, one with en-suite, a mature 50' rear garden and also has the potential for further extension, subject to planning consents. Contact Wentworths for further details or visit [www.wentworthsproperties.co.uk](http://www.wentworthsproperties.co.uk)

Landlords, we need property for rental! This property on Constable Close, Woodley Airfield was let within 48 hours of instruction. A prospective tenant was desperately looking for a family home to rent in Woodley, particularly around the Airfield area. We have many other people looking for good quality rental property. Please get in touch, if you have a property to let.

Tel: 0118 979 1791. [www.jonhallett.com](http://www.jonhallett.com).