



# Building and maintaining trust

National Housing Maintenance Forum  
Awards for Best Practice in Maintenance 2014

**Best In-house Maintenance Service Provider**



**Bournville**  
*Village Trust*

Creating Flourishing Communities since 1900

**Bournville Village Trust has been a proud believer in the concept of a Direct Labour Organisation since our inception in 1900.**

BPS circa 1920s building Hay Green Lane.



BPS circa 1930, starting on site building the Shenley part of the Estate.



As the vogue in our industry has come full circle several times between carrying out works in-house or contracting out, BVT has never lost sight of the unique benefits housing providers & its customers can benefit from, by having its own DLO.

For BVT, our DLO, known as Bournville Property care Services, (BPS) has become an integral & irreplaceable part of our organisation through continual review of what we do and subsequent improvement. What is truly innovative about BPS is how we continually ask, listen and learn about who our community are and tailor our services accordingly.

As the nature of our communities has diversified over time and the expectations on housing providers to improve the domestic standard of living has increased, having a DLO has given BVT the ability to adapt and respond to these challenges quickly and comprehensively. Moreover, all improvements to the service we have provided have been designed not just to suit the needs of the groups that make up our community, but on an individual level.

Examples of Bournville's unique architecture.



**What is innovative about the service provided?**

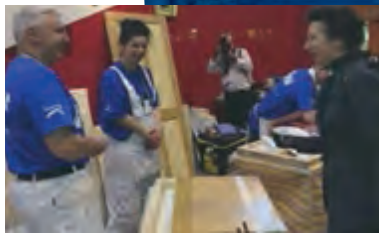


George Cadbury, founder of Bournville Village Trust.



## Winners of the CITB Apprentice Employer of the Year 2013

*William Burton of the CITB said 'Bournville has a long history of apprenticeship training in one form or another. Bournville have continued with George Cadbury's vision of training and innovation as they truly believe that their apprentices are the future of the company and they have over the years cultivated some brilliant talent. Not only are they keeping alive the historical methods of building and construction but they are also embracing the future and have recently constructed a whole estate of housing with modern, up to date technologies such as solar panning, etc. to reduce their carbon footprint. The apprentices are exposed to all methods of construction both new and old. Bournville also invest heavily in their apprentices in the form of on-going training for Asbestos Awareness, dealing with mental health issues, compulsory first aid. And now 8 managers and supervisors are being trained as ambassadors to go into schools and colleges to promote apprentices in the construction industry and the list just goes on!*



Princess Anne congratulates one of BPS' new apprentices.

## What are the benefits to the client, contractor, residents and the neighbourhood?



All operatives and supervisors wear branded clothing and carry ID at all times.

Having such a well established DLO has only been possible by retaining and developing the operatives who deliver the front line services every day. This process begins with BPS supporting significant commitment to a range of work experience placements for local schools (the uptake of which is in high demand!). BPS historically also seeks new young blood by annually appointing two apprentices for each major trade, and embarking them on an intensive programme imparting the skills and mindset they will need to become a master trades person, as well as how to adapt their approach to most benefit the customer in question. Furthermore, additional apprentices are appointed to specialist trades as business needs direct. On mutual agreement, apprentices are offered permanent placements once their

programme is complete.

Beyond these grass roots, BVT has historically demonstrated unwavering commitment to develop our operatives and promote from within into supervisory and management roles, ensuring the ongoing legacy of delivering a bespoke service to all members of our community. Evidence of this can be seen in the current management structure with 2 of the four senior managers being former BPS apprentices (Including the overall Maintenance Manager). Retaining staff within the DLO is crucial in developing cross generational relationships with our customers, as well as perpetuating the unique knowledge to BVT that has been accrued down the years. With some members of technical staff having spent their entire working life at BVT, the understanding of our unique housing stock & estate is quite simply not

possible to replicate from the private sector. With a significant proportion of our housing stock being in the region of 100 years old and the estate forming part of a historic conservation area, having a DLO with an appreciation of the importance of our heritage is crucial to meet the challenges of sympathetically conserving what is special about Bournville. Even more important than the understanding of our estate that our DLO has acquired, is the longstanding trust based relationship with households that our operatives develop and nurture over time. As most of our tenants tend not to move from BVT once established, many of our operatives get to know of our customers individual requirements and preferences, enabling maintenance works to be carried out with significantly less stress.

In recent years, BPS has embraced the movement toward direct resident involvement. With a strong tradition of involving residents in the decisions that affect the services provided by BVT, BPS has been instrumental in empowering residents to make decisions in the area of maintenance. With attendance at every maintenance tenant panel meeting, BPS is fully accountable to our customers and ensures that no changes are made to the service without consultation and approval from our tenant reps.



Consulting with our tenant reps.

## "BPS is fully accountable to our customers"

### BPS goes green

- Implementation of eco measures in the yard.
- Electric pool car for use by surveyors and inspectors.
- Dual fuel vans create significant savings.
- New mileage reduction strategy reduced mileage driven by vans by 20%.
- Rain water harvesting is maximised both at the yard and water butts are installed at every void.

The depth of this involvement began with the tenant maintenance panel ensuring that all communication from BPS was fit for purpose, and quickly moved on to areas of specification and sub contractor selection. BPS have now achieved such a level of resident involvement that it is now routine that our tenants choose all major suppliers of components, have 50% of the say when assessing which external contractors to appoint, ensure that there is ample choice for customers wherever possible, and even take an active role in assessing the relative performance of our DLO.

Part of the remit of the resident involvement strategy in the area of maintenance, is to source, trial and recommend technological advancements, with a view to incorporating successful products into standard specifications. Staff within BPS go to great lengths to support our tenant reps in assessing the merits of any potential improvements to our standards, including providing technical & regulatory input where required. Most recent examples of this can be seen in the "green" makeover of our modernisations programmes. It would be at odds with our philosophy for managers in *ivory towers* to dictate to our residents how they are to reduce their carbon foot print, but instead allow the community to tell us how they wish to address these issues. From the review of our electrical specifications intended to maximise energy conservation opportunities, to the overhaul of our plumbing specifications to dramatically reduce fresh water usage, BPS create the circumstances for our residents to tell us what works for them.



Clear advice and information for tenants can help with preventative maintenance.



We tailor services for those who are vulnerable or have special needs.



As part of National Apprenticeship Week 2013, BPS was invited to attend a training and recruitment event – held by the CITB at Bescot Stadium, Walsall – which set out to encourage young people from the black and ethnic community to consider apprenticeship options.

Nash Jassi, Apprentice Team Leader at Bournville PropertyCare Services said 'BPS has been recognised as an equal opportunities employer for a number of years and events such as Bescot help us to engage with a wider, more diverse audience'.



Christopher Taylor Court sheltered accommodation.

Having a DLO that is underpinned by a philanthropic philosophy bestowed by our founder George Cadbury, has ensured an entrenched approach toward ensuring that vulnerable members of our community are given a personalised service which ensures equality of opportunities and access to services. BVT is heavily invested in the concept of "supporting people" and has numerous diverse housing projects intended to assist those that may otherwise struggle to access services and take advantage of opportunities through no fault of their own. Such projects include vibrant sheltered accommodation, nursing homes, supported accommodation for young people leaving care, purpose built & converted fully adapted properties for people with mobility impairments and several mental health care homes with 24 hour care provided.

For the people who live in any of these homes, excellent service due to the BPS approach can quite simply significantly improve quality of life; when urgent repairs are quickly remedied, or when planned improvements delight the end user, the BPS approach is always listening, understanding, and accommodating. Our DLO carry out many different kinds of adaptation work for our Supported Housing Section at extremely competitive rates, enabling stretched budgets go much further in helping those who most need it. BVT Care Managers can always trust our operatives to have an understanding of the importance of dignity.

BPS is at the forefront of BVT 24 hours a day. With our own operatives providing out of hours on call cover 365 days a year, the personalised service doesn't stop at 5.00pm. Whether it is an urgent repair late at night, or a faulty emergency care alarm, our DLO gives BVT the ability to provide the benefits that come with knowing and understanding our residents, when they need it the very most.

# What were the financial costs and cashable benefits?

The Bournville locality is largely devolved from the local authority with regard to housing, and although BVT is the largest social landlord in the area, it is not the only. There are a number of other local, unique housing associations run by resident committees that look to BVT to provide contracted services in some areas, repairs and maintenance being the biggest. BPS has adapted to be able to provide a comprehensive repair service for our managed societies, further sharing the benefits of a strong community based approach whilst at the same time generating significant income. Local owner occupiers are also welcome to call upon the expertise of BPS, and are invited to attend home maintenance advisory sessions, delivered by BPS staff. Providing services that cross cut tenure, benefit the community as a whole thus improving the look of the estate overall, plus is an excellent opportunity to sell maintenance services to owner occupiers.

Growth into actively selling services to private cliental beyond our own housing stock has grown significantly in recent years and has ensured BPS continuing economic viability. Local clients have included the police force, probation services, several local churches, shops, farms, museums, and listed buildings. BPS has since established a strong local reputation for workmanship and private work alone last year brought an income to BVT of £180,000, which is pure surplus as there are no additional overheads required. All surplus generated by BPS is directly re-invested in BVT's housing

stock, allowing for additional improvements over and above the trust's annual planned maintenance programme.

Based in the maintenance yard in the heart of the Bournville conservation area, BPS maintains commitment to innovation in its approach to equipping its operatives for the job in hand. BVT has always invested significantly in it's DLO, even when other associations were winding theirs down. With excellent quality equipment & tools, BPS's depot has been established and refined over generations, now incorporating machine shop, plumber's workshop, multiple recycling compounds, electrical storage facility and well stocked stores.

BPS benefits from many years of working closely with client side surveyors in effective streamlining of specification components, simplifying impress stock holding requirements. BPS is currently undertaking a feasibility study (in conjunction with a working party of tenants) to assess whether electronic mobile working devices which monitor stock levels and include an appointments system, will be a cost beneficial innovation.

**Our gas fitters can earn healthy surpluses for BPS, installing heating systems for private clients.**







BPS keeps our tenants safe by personally ensuring gas safety checks and servicing are carried out.



Having the responsive repairs service managed by the DLO, maximises financial efficiency and minimises customer waiting time.

**"BPS has proven that with the right approach you can ensure a flourishing DLO will more than pay for itself."**

BPS has proven that with the right approach relatively high levels of investment can ensure a financially flourishing DLO that will more than pay for itself. In the last financial year BPS out turned an outstanding 26% surplus.

Building on this outstanding achievement BPS has implemented the biggest single change to the manner in which services are delivered. The introduction of Opti Time mobile working system has benefited all stakeholders involved.

- Reduction in costs resulting from automated materials ordering as jobs are completed
- Reduction in need to travel into the depot to pick up job sheets
- Extra work carried out in addition to current BPS budget
- Improved customer service
- Improved management information
- Greater environmental benefits, less paper used, less printing, less fuel and vehicle wear and tear
- Greater job satisfaction



BPS fitted 'trial' kitchens to allow tenant reps to decide which kitchen supplier to choose for BVT.



## How relevant is this as an example that might be followed by other organisations?

BPS ensures the strongest possible links of communication between client and contractor by sharing its offices with the landscapes division as well as the client maintenance function of BVT (asset management). Working so closely with the BVT client function has empowered each side of the business to begin offering truly ground breaking and innovative services in recent years. For example, since 2007, at the beginning of each planned maintenance programme year, tenants are offered the opportunity to attend a local exhibition where BPS have installed full sized exhibits of every component type used to modernise our homes. From entire working kitchens fitted, full sized central heating system mock ups, entire bathroom suite displays and much more, our tenants get to see every possible available option in full size before making their final choices. They also have the opportunity to meet the operatives who will be working in their home, sometimes for up to 4 weeks at a time, and begin to build some rapport.

BPS allowed their approach to work to be captured on film, for the benefit of our customers.



BPS provide all of the technical support to ensure our popular Maintenance Exhibition goes off without a hitch!

This opportunity provides residents with the reassurance they need to minimise stress of invasive improvement works.

Another big step forward in providing comprehensive information for our tenants experiencing major works, was the introduction of an interactive DVD. Filmed in BVT homes of the modernisations actually being carried out, BPS personally demonstrated to their audience that they were in good hands and most importantly, exactly how to get the very most benefit out of these upgrade works.



Satisfaction surveys are carried out on 100% of works completed.



Of course, BPS is consistently required to demonstrate its overall effectiveness in delivering its objectives. Carried out independently by our "Business Improvement Unit", BPS is measured against a number of key performance indicators in different ways. From official scrutiny by resident committees, to regular and diverse "mystery shopping" campaigns, overall customer satisfaction with the service provided by BPS remains in the upper quartile of the Housemark Benchmarking measure. In 2009 this even peaked at 100% satisfaction! Over the last five years the average score has been 99%. Our job completion times are consistently placed in the top 10% of the top quartile. Emergency responses in the last quarter were also recorded at 100%, urgent 99.4% and routine responses also at 99.2%.

BPS' performance has been outstanding in each category:

Emergency	100%
Urgent	99.7%
Routine	99.6%

### Emergency

We will respond and make the situation safe within 24 hours.

### Urgent

We will complete the repair within 3 days (not including weekends and bank holidays).

### Routine

We will complete the repair within either 14 or 28 days, or it will be put into a program of work.

**"99% of our customers rate our conduct and standard of workmanship as excellent."**



Benchmarking	Lower quartile	Median	Upper quartile	BPS
The percentage of repair jobs for which an appointment was both made and kept	94.4%	96.6%	98.5%	98.7%
The percentage of jobs completed at the time of the first visit to the property	70.3%	80.8%	91.0%	91%

BPS cannot claim to champion one flagship innovation that is the secret of its success. Instead, it is the sum of all of the "little innovations" done constantly, just by listening to our residents and acting on it, as recognised by the CIH on a national stage.



Bournville PropertyCare Services have earned their status as a “beacon organisation” in our sector. Ensuring the very best quality maintenance service for our housing stock and external clients is where our service starts. As has been detailed, BPS is an integral part of Bournville Village trust, and as a brand, stands alone in our customer’s minds as synonymous with quality and reliability.



## BPS beacon DLO



Having hosted representatives from leading Housing Associations across the country, BPS is always willing to share techniques and aspects of our service that have contributed to our success.

Ready to engage with our wider community in whichever way best suits our customers, working for BPS is challenging, rewarding and a whole lot of fun!

