

## North Warwickshire Borough Council Tenants' Newsletter

# Investment in Improvements

In January the Council, with its contractor, WATES started a range of essential remedial works at our flats at Abbey Green Court, Polesworth. The first job was to replace the leaking flat roof with a new pitched roof. The flats are also benefiting from new windows, wall insulation and replacement internal and external doors. The work programme is significant and will see a transformation of the blocks inside and outside with all residents benefitting from warmer homes and better fire safety arrangements.

Ensuring good health and safety arrangements and good communications with residents has been paramount to the success of the programme. Tenants have been asked for their feedback about the works so far and have been very complimentary. We would like to thank all residents for their co-operation.

## Welcome to your Summer Edition of Tenants Link

This newsletter is produced to provide you with information about the services provided by the Housing Division, engagement with your Borough Wide Tenants' Forum and good news stories. If you have any suggestions or good news stories for our next edition.

Please contact Julie Richardson

✉ [julierichardson@northwarks.gov.uk](mailto:julierichardson@northwarks.gov.uk)

I look forward to hearing from you.



Ongoing improvement work at Abbey Green Court, Polesworth.



# Investment in Improvements cont.

Over the last 18 months the Council has also been able to get back on track with other investments in its stock and your homes. This includes a kitchen improvement programme, providing new efficient heating systems and replacing fascia boards that are in disrepair. We have also pushed forward with ensuring compliance with electrical installations. We are aware that doing work in your home is disruptive. We can't do it without your co-operation. The maintenance team would like to thank you for your support to deliver these works.



Before

After photograph of property in Coleshill following external cladding, replacement fascia boards and guttering.



Guttering and fascia replacement at Springfields, Coleshill.



# Service Assurance

The services the Council provides for tenants are overseen by the Regulator for Social Housing nationally. Locally they are governed by Borough Councillors.

This year the Regulator has published new consumer standards. These state how the Council must provide its services for its tenants. The Council is expected to meet all of the standards. There is also a Code of Practice. There are four types of consumer standards:

- **Safety and Quality**
- **Transparency, Influence and Accountability**
- **Neighbourhood & Community**
- **Tenancy**

As part of their checks to ensure that the Council is performing well for its tenants the Government will be publishing key performance indicators from all social housing landlords in September 2024. The Regulator will use the information to assess the Council's performance and compare it with other landlords. In the meantime we have published our own performance information on our website and we are sharing some of them in this newsletter.

The Council is committed to providing good services for tenants and will be seeking ways to improve both its performance and satisfaction ratings. We welcome any comments or feedback that tenants have about our performance returns.

Performance Indicator	Outcome
Response Repair Delivered in Target Timescale	28 days Emergencies/ 24 hours
Gas safety checks	100% of annual services completed
Fire Risk Assessments	All complete

Tenant Satisfaction Survey Question	Satisfaction Outcome
Overall satisfaction with the housing service	81%
Satisfaction with repairs service	84%
Satisfaction with the time taken for the most recent repair	80%
Satisfied that the home is well maintained	79%
Satisfaction that the home is safe	81%
Satisfied that the landlord listens to tenants views and acts upon them	68%
Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	71%
Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	77%
Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	40%
Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	74%
Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood	64%
Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	47%

To address the feedback tenants have given we are focussing on changing how we deliver our repairs and maintenance service. We expect these changes to enable the team to be more responsive to tenant's request for repairs. We will also be acting to improve our approach to how we respond to reports of nuisance and anti-social behaviour.

To do this we will have the help of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum who are providing scrutiny of this service and will be talking directly to tenants about their experience.

To ensure we provide the services that you expect and meet your needs we want to hear from you. Please don't keep quiet if you have a concern or a good idea about how we can do better. Let us know what you think, email [housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk](mailto:housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk)

Our teams work hard to provide good services, but we know that we don't always get it right, so we welcome complaints as a way of learning and improving.

# Safe & Clean

The Tenancy Services and Neighbourhood Team provide services to ensure that our blocks of flats are safe and clean and that estates are well maintained. To do this they work closely with the Maintenance Team and the Council's Streetscape Service.

The Neighbourhood Wardens are proactive in their areas every day to provide cleaning and caretaking services for blocks of flats and communal rooms. They have good communication with local communities and provide essential health and safety checks.

The regular presence of our Wardens on our estates mean that

they are able to pick up issues quickly and address them. We also encourage tenants to let the team know if they have concerns so that we can resolve them.

To do our work well and keep flats safe and well maintained for all, we ask for all residents to help.

Fire safety means that we have to ensure that there are no obstructions or tripping hazards in common areas. This allows for clear access in and out of the building. Unwanted items should remain inside your flat until you can arrange for disposal, and we do not allow personal belongings in common areas.

You will recognise the team from their daily visits. Please do not hesitate to speak to them to support the important work they do on your behalf.



Neighbourhood Wardens Jane Heath, Marie Statham, Francine Agg, Bev Statham, Sue Crowley, Shani Jones, and Neighbourhoods & Tenant Involvement Officer Julie Richardson



# Borough Wide Tenants Forum News

The Borough Wide Tenants Forum invited tenants to their Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 8th May 2024. This is the 23rd Annual meeting of the Forum which has been serving the interest of tenants since 1999. Roger Price opened the meeting to give his fourth address as Forum Chair.

The guest speaker for the event was Susan Hartland-Smith from Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. Susan is Tame Valley Wetlands Manager working to protect and restore nature. Susan gave a very interesting presentation on the aims and projects being undertaken to address declining biodiversity in the UK and locally. Training and volunteering opportunities are provided so that local people can gain heritage conservation skills reconnecting local people with their landscape. There is also a program of events and activities that can be viewed on their website aimed at getting all ages involved <https://www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk>

We think it is important that tenants who were not able to attend the meeting know what was said by the Chair, so we have shared it as part of this newsletter.

'I would like to touch on some of the varied work undertaken throughout the year and to highlight the good work that has taken place.

One of the major ongoing projects is the reformed Tenant Led Scrutiny Panel, required by the Ombudsman. The first project is looking at repairs 'reporting a repair' before moving on to look at Anti-Social Behaviour. The Scrutiny Panel is led and chaired by one of our longest serving members.

## Our key achievements have been:

- Reviewing the Tenant Partnership Agreement to bring the document up to date. The Borough Wide Tenants Forum have helped by contributing to its content to ensure its clear, concise and user friendly.
- Reviewing information about the housing service on the Council's website to ensure it is clear, accurate and up to date.
- Contributing to an impact assessment to evaluate the outcome of tenant involvement and scrutiny activities.
- Considering and monitoring quarterly performance reports to make suggestions for improvement.

- Contributing to the Tenants Link newsletter promoting work of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum and good news stories.
- Input into an Annual Report which is made available on the website to inform tenants on the performance of Housing Services.
- Establish focus groups on Damp and Mould Policy, Complaints and Compliments and Anti-Social Behaviour/ Noise Complaints

We endeavour to help with the impact of the cost of living rises by reviewing the information provided to tenants of where they can find help and support. Other work includes a continued involvement into reviewing and monitoring of actions in the Climate Change Action Plan relevant to Housing and how it impacts and affects tenants.

Finally, I would like to thank all those for their continued efforts and contribution to the Borough Wide Tenants Forum, I look forward to working with you again this year in partnership with North Warwickshire Borough Council Officers and elected members.'

After these opening comments the election of officers for the Borough Wide Tenants Forum took place. Roger Price, Piccadilly, was re-elected as Chair and Percy Rooke, Hartshill, was elected as Vice Chair.



**Percy Rooke Vice Chair and Roger Price Chair of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum**

# Experienced and New



**New members to the Borough Wide Tenants Forum – Denise Baum-Pick, John Hinds and David Baldwin.**

After the AGM an informal social event allowed new members of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum to talk to tenants who have been part our engagement work for many years over a cuppa and sandwich. The Forum has recently welcomed 3 new members. These are Denise Baum-Pick from Grendon, David Baldwin from Polesworth, and John Hinds from Chapel End. Their contributions are already making a difference to the debates at Forum meetings about what services should be a focus for the Housing Division.



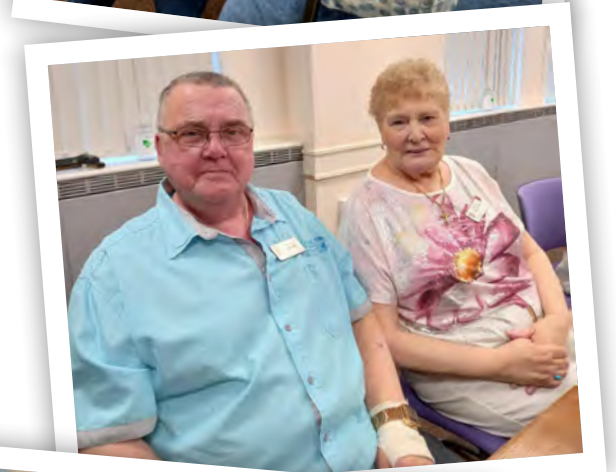
If you would like to be involved in the work of the Borough Wide Tenants Forum or for more information on tenant involvement.

**Email: [tenantparticipation@northwarks.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@northwarks.gov.uk)**

Tenants can join a local meeting or find out more about the Forum.

Local meetings give an opportunity to meet with tenants to get their views directly about our services and community issues. Look out for an invitation. Our venues are on our estates, and we very much welcome hearing firsthand what is important to tenants.

The Forum meets with officers regularly to talk about how we are providing our services and offer challenge to improve them. Detailed scrutiny is also offered by the Forum. This year they have started to seek information about tenant's experiences when reporting a repair. They have already talked to a group of tenants and are collating their feedback in order to give recommendations for change. The Forum has its sights on scrutinising our services to respond to tenant's complaints about nuisance and anti-social behaviour next.



# A Critical Cause

Residents have supported Kingsbury tenant Doreen Martin by helping to raise funds for a local charity. Doreen gives up her time to organise coffee mornings, bingo, and lunch clubs at Jubilee Court communal room.

Each year Doreen organises a charity event. All proceeds raised from raffles are donated to St Giles Hospice to help with care for in-patients and day patients. Care provided by St Giles helps to maintain independence and enhance the overall quality of life to their patients. A large percentage of care is delivered in the community offering care at home, it also gives emotional support for patients and their loved ones.

**If you have good news stories, fund raisers or social events to share with us in the next edition of Tenants Link, please contact 01827 719402.**



## Pete's Plot Gardening Tips



Hello again all you gardeners out there.

Having just flicked through the last Pete's Plot, I warned against walking on lawns or beds if they are very wet, well that turned out to be the understatement of the year. At the time of writing this 'early April' we are yet to have a full dry day. Assuming by the time this goes to print we will be getting our fair share of sunny warmth...good gardening!

At this time of year, the garden is going to look as colourful as it can be. To prolong flowering for as long as possible, the trick is to deadhead every other day. It sounds like a chore but will guarantee that the flowers will go on and on.

Now is an ideal time to take semi ripe cuttings. This means shrubs that have

this year's growth that has started to become woody at the base. Take shoots of green material with a 'spur' the woody part. Square off the base of the spur with a clean sharp knife and dip the spur in some hormone rooting powder and nip out the tip of the shoot. Place it in a gritty compost around the edge of the pot and keep it moist. You should see some growth in about 5 weeks or so. This method can be applied to just about any plant from Conifers to herbs such as Thyme or Sage.

Keep a check on tomato plants, the side shoots will need pricking out and water regularly to help against splitting fruits. It's a good idea to be clean and tidy around tomatoes, they are prone to viruses, and a good air flow will stave off fungal problems such as blight.

### Top tips

Remember as well as watering, to feed using a diluted general-purpose feed.

Enlist the help of friends or neighbours to look after your garden while your away on holiday so you don't return to a tangle of growth or a wasteland.

Keep thinking ahead for things like salad crops, bulbs for winter flowers and while everything is in flower, do you need to move a plant later in the season. Now is the time to make a note.

Happy Gardening  
**Pete**

# Competition Winner



## Congratulations

Thank you for taking part in our last competition.

The lucky winner is Linda Cart from Polesworth who received £25 in High Street Vouchers for her entry into the Word Search competition.

## How to contact us

You can contact us for a general enquiry in any of the following ways:

- ✉ [housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk](mailto:housingservices@northwarks.gov.uk)
- ☎ 01827 715341 between 8.30am and 5pm, Monday to Friday
- 🌐 [www.northwarks.gov.uk](http://www.northwarks.gov.uk)

### Write to:

North Warwickshire Borough Council,  
The Council House, South Street, Atherstone,  
Warwickshire CV9 1DE

### Visit:

The Council House between 9am and 5pm,  
Monday to Friday

### Opening Hours

Mon 9:00-12:30 & 13:30-17:00  
Tue 9:00-12:30 & 13:30-17:00  
Wed 10:00-12:30 & 13:30-17:00  
Thu 9:00-12:30 & 13:30-17:00  
Fri 9:00-12:30 & 13:30-17:00

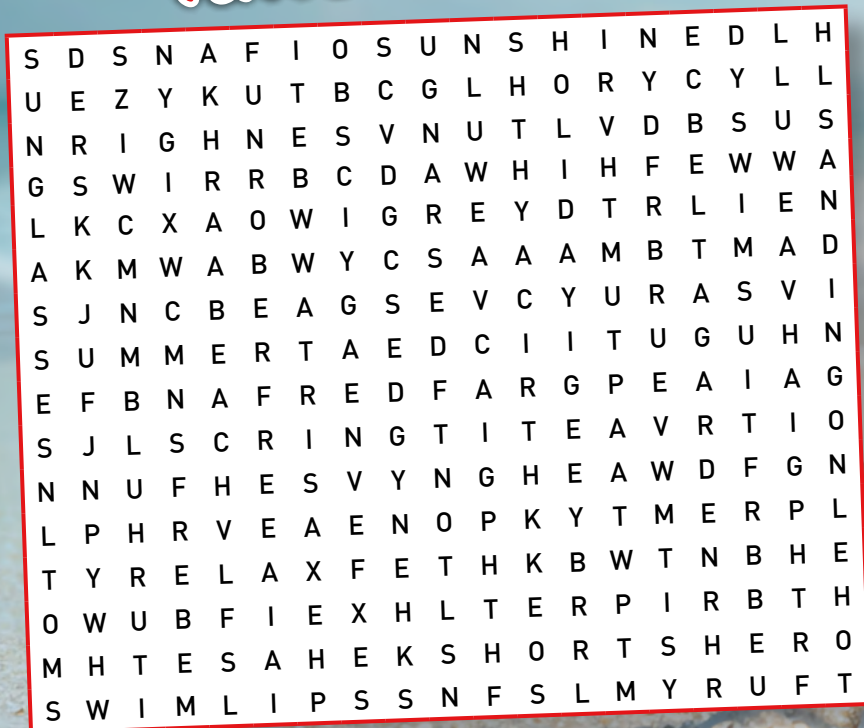
We currently offer a face-to-face service **by appointment only**. If you need to book a face-to-face appointment, please call our Customer Services team on (01827) 715341.

We also have social media channels people can contact us on.

**If you require a version of this document in large print, audiotape, or in another language, please contact us.**

# Competition Time **Summertime Word Search**

**FIND THE HIDDEN WORDS TO WIN £25 IN HIGH STREET VOUCHERS**



Please return the completed entry form to :

**Julie Richardson**  
The Council House, South Street,  
Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 1DE

Name .....

Address .....

Tel .....

- |         |           |            |
|---------|-----------|------------|
| SUMMER  | SWIM      | RELAX      |
| BEACH   | ICE CREAM | SUNGLASSES |
| HOT     | SUNSHINE  | SHORTS     |
| HOLIDAY | SAND      | SWIMSUIT   |

**All correct entries will be placed into a prize draw. Closing date Friday 7th September 2024**