

your HOMES matter

Winter
2024/25



Tenant garden competition winners announced - pages 6 & 7

Contractors continue on repairs to flood-hit council homes - pages 3

Welcome to Your Homes Matter, the magazine for tenants of Charnwood Borough Council. Your Homes Matter, or YHM as we sometimes call it, is distributed to tenants four times a year with your rent statement.

The aim is to keep you informed about any developments that affect you or your properties. It's also an opportunity to share news about and involving tenants and leaseholders. If you have a bit of news that you want to share, please send it to us using the email address below.

We very much want to work with tenants and leaseholders to create the best possible homes for people.

If you have any feedback on YHM please let us know.

To submit an article idea, picture or make a comment, please email communications@charnwood.gov.uk

Other ways to keep in touch with Council news:

Sign up to email alerts at www.charnwood.gov.uk/alerts

Follow the council on X/Twitter or Facebook

X/Twitter: @CharnwoodBC

Search **CharnwoodBC** on Facebook and like our page

For more information about housing issues, visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/housing

Alternatively, call **01509 634666**

Annual report for 2023-24

Landlord services are pleased to present our annual report for 2023-24, which sets out key information relating to:

- how well the service is performing
- how tenants feel about the services delivered
- what improvements have been made and are planned because of tenant feedback
- how rental income is spent.



Read the full report at www.charnwood.gov.uk/housingannualreport.

Flooding information

We have lots of flooding information and advice on our website. Visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/flooding.

If you would like any printouts of leaflets containing flooding advice and information, please contact the customer engagement team on involvement@charnwood.gov.uk or call 01509 634679 or 01509 634955.

As a reminder, multiple organisations and agencies are involved in preventing and responding to flooding incidents.

They include the Environment Agency, Leicestershire County Council as the local lead flood authority, district councils like Charnwood, emergency services, and the NHS.

Contractors continue on repairs to flood-hit council homes

Our contractors are continuing to work hard to repair the council homes damaged by flooding during Storm Henk in January this year, with the first homes ready for tenants to be move back into early in the new year.

We appreciate this is taking time, but the scale of the damage was quite significant. We have also had to work through insurance processes and complete procurement exercises before appointing contractors. The Council understands how upsetting this has been for the tenants affected, but we have offered support throughout the process and will continue to do so until all works are completed. Support so far has included:

- moving all affected tenants out to other accommodation
- weekly calls were made to all displaced tenants and twice weekly calls to vulnerable tenants after the flooding hit
- providing some tenants staying in hotels with three meals a day or reimbursing food costs
- offering to kennel pets early in the response
- completing a tenant needs survey help identify suitable longer term decant accommodation, including (amongst other things) adaptation requirements for disabled tenants, whether tenants needed to be somewhere to give or receive care, and whether they had pets.
- purchasing beds/bedding, cookers, fridges, curtains, and sofas for flood-affected tenants in decant accommodation
- offering a full removal service where needed
- arranging and paying for the disposal of flood damaged items.
- paying any costs relating to the property incurred by tenants during the flooding response e.g. additional electricity costs associated with heating and dehumidifiers.

In total, 38 council homes were damaged by flooding with most in Loughborough and some in Syston. As part of the repairs programme, we have brought in contractors to carry out surveys, specialist work to strip out and dry properties and then contractors Stepnell to carry out the repairs including plastering, installing new kitchens and bathrooms where needed, painting, installing carpets and replacing doors and windows. We have also stored tenants' belongings.

Rob Thorpe, site manager at Stepnell, said: "Our team at Stepnell is committed to delivering high-quality refurbishment projects that not only repair the damage but also improve the homes and lives of tenants. Working closely with Charnwood Borough Council and ensuring minimal disruption to residents has been a key priority for us. We're proud of the progress we've made and the positive feedback we've received so far, which reflects our dedication to excellence and the impact of our work on the local community."

The programme of work is scheduled to be completed by March 2025. As well as council homes, a number of other properties were flooded during Storm Henk.



Before



After

Three successful projects help to improve communities

Throughout October, Charnwood Borough Council's customer engagement team organised work events involving local tenants and volunteers from contractors of the council whose involvement is part of their commitment to help the local community (often referred to a 'social value'). This is an aspect where contractors who work with the council offer to help with local community projects.

Gardening at Warwick Court in Loughborough

On Monday, 7 October, local tenants from the Chapman Street Garden Association in Loughborough and volunteers from contractors Travis Perkins and CLC came together at Warwick Court in Loughborough. Residents there are trying to improve the area for the community by adding new plants and bulbs and sorting out the overgrown flower beds which were making it difficult to tend.



Gardening at Warwick Court

The team of volunteers cleared and dug over the flower beds, removed dead bushes and took away left over debris and litter. The edging around the green was also tidied up, and all flower beds were reshaped.

Improving Offranville Close in Thurmaston

On Thursday, 10 October, the customer engagement team organised a second work event involving local tenants from Offranville Close in Thurmaston and volunteers from contractors Jeakins Weir, Stepnells and The Bell Group.

Work included removing weeds and planting lots of new bulbs, both in the flower bed and around the trees. There was also a general clear up. Volunteers from contractors all contributed.

There is hope that in the spring the court will look a lot more colourful, especially if green-fingered tenants maintain the flower beds.



offranville Close in Thurmaston

Communal garden at Peel Drive in Loughborough

A small team of volunteers from contractor The Bell Group and the council's customer engagement and communities' teams cleared a piece of neglected piece of land on Friday, 25 October at Peel Drive on the Bell Foundry estate in Loughborough, as part of a communal garden development.

The land was once a washing area and has become neglected. The area was cleared, and dead bushes and debris was removed. There was a lot of rubble, concrete, bricks and blocks, as well as general household waste which was all removed from the area for disposal.

The day was a success, with the area being cleared of a massive amount of litter, debris and garden waste. The land is planned to become a community garden where residents can grow produce. Raised beds and two greenhouses are to be installed as well as the area being made secure with new fencing. The next phase can now begin.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers who helped on all three projects, from council tenants, community groups, contractors and council staff.

If you would like to get involved in community projects, or you have one that you would like to put forward, please contact the customer engagement team on involvement@charnwood.gov.uk or call 01509 634679 or 01509 634955.



Clearing up at Peel Drive in Loughborough



Great to see everyone pitching in to clear the space

outside tap fitted at Sorrel Court

The customer engagement team was contacted by residents at Sorrel Court in Mountsorrel to see if an outside tap could be fitted there.

One elderly resident tends to a lot of the front garden at the court, including lots of pots and was having to carry the water from her flat outside, which was becoming a considerable walk.

Contractor Jeakins Weir was happy to supply and fit the tap as part of its social value commitment, which sees contractors time committed to projects that are of value to council tenants.

Residents were grateful when the work was completed and the tenant who tends the garden said that it has made so much difference for her and made life much easier. Fellow residents thanked Jeakins Weir and the customer engagement team for the speed that the work was completed.



Happy tenants at Sorrel Court in Mountsorrel

14th annual garden competition crowns its winners

Tenants from across the borough are celebrating their awards following the annual garden competition, which saw over 40 entries across ten different categories, and showcased gardens of all shapes and sizes.

Special recognition awards were also handed out to a number of tenants for their long-term commitment to their gardens and their communities at large.

The gardens were judged by Councillors Jennifer Tillotson and Anne Gray for the second year in a row. Both were impressed by the stunning gardens on display and how the strong sense of community and pride shines through in each entry. High street vouchers were awarded to the winners and runners-up during the event at Loughborough Town Hall on Thursday, 12 September.

This year there was a twist to the awards event. Earlier in the year, a new competition was launched within Your Homes Matter. The creative competition asked for tenants of all ages to send in their best creative works – from photography, arts and crafts, creative writing and more.

With high street vouchers up for grabs to the winners, the competition received some fantastic entries, from paintings of the lily pond at Watermead County Park in Syston to poems and short stories.

The awards were handed out by the Mayor of Charnwood, Councillor Dr Julie Bradshaw MBE.

Councillor Colin Hamilton, lead member for planning and housing, judged the creative competition and attended the event. He said: "Thank you to all entrants of both competitions for taking part and sharing your talents and hard work with us. You should all feel proud of your achievements."



All the winners at the tenant garden competition awards presentation



Joy Braker



Beresford Court won best sheltered court



Kevin Curtis

Creative competition

Photography, arts and crafts (over 18 years)

First place – Joy Braker
Second place – Mike Clooney

Creative writing (over 18 years)

First place – Bernadette Gibson

Photography, arts and crafts (11-18 years)

First place – Finlay Davies

Photography, arts and crafts (under 10 years)

First place – Marley Maksymiw

Garden competition

Best House or Flat Garden

First place – Mr Mick Pipes
Second place – Mr Miles
Third place – Alexander Wallace

Best Pots and hanging baskets

First place – Sandra Rabjohns
Second place – Robert Kirk
Joint third place – Vera Zahan and Eddie McGovern

Best Community Garden

First place – Graham Barradell
Joint second place – Mrs Jeanette Harratt and Anthony Goddard
Joint third place – Chapman Street Garden Association and Freehold Street

Best Sheltered Court

First place – Beresford Court
Second place – Babington Court
Third place – Riversdale Court



Best Fruit and Vegetable/Edible Garden

First place – Dawn Twist
Second place – Corinne Stretton
Third place – Robert Kirk

Best Newcomer

First Place – Tina Salt (Rene)
Second place – Dawn Twist
Joint third place – David Clark and Catherine Mackley

Best Young Gardener

First place – Corinne Stretton

Best Flower Display

First place – Debbie Newton
Second place – Georgina Gebski
Third place – June Letten

Best Eco Garden

First place – Mr P Dews
Second place – Sarah Salmon
Third place – Riversdale Court, Birstall

Best use of small space

Derek Hay

Recognition Awards

Mick Pipes, George Hudson Bennett, Dorren Pryor, Carol Merryweather, Jenny Burton, Kevin Curtis, Mr and Mrs Reeves, June Bush (Thorpe Acre Community Association) and Jemma Kelly.

Tenant tales – Janice Wright

Janice Wright has been living in sheltered accommodation for 12 years and was kind enough to share her experience, including how she has engaged with the council.

“A new chapter in the story of my life started 12 years ago, when I received an offer of a place at Riversdale Court in Birstall from the council. The court has changed a lot since I moved in.

I was welcomed by the ladies and gents who were tenants at the time and I immediately started helping with the coffee mornings so I could get to know people and find out how living in sheltered accommodation works.

There aren't rules as such; it's mostly common sense and having respect for all the other residents. If you are ever in any doubt, there is always a warden available, and they are great at pointing you in the right direction.

After a while I started to manage the coffee mornings and joined the Senior Citizens' Forum (SCF) as a representative of the court. We charged a small fee to keep stocked up with tea, coffee, milk, cakes and biscuits, and to hire taxis for residents who wanted to go shopping at the nearby ASDA. This went down well with my fellow tenants and we started looking at other activities we could do. We saved up a bit of money and went on a boat trip and out for a meal after. Everyone had a fantastic time.

When Riversdale went through a major development – the building was converted into flats with extra accommodation added – residents had to move out to other courts around the borough. I moved to Babington Court in Rothley and helped with the coffee mornings there.

I ended up staying at Babington for two years but enjoyed being taken back to Riversdale to see the different stages of the revamp as a representative of the court. The move back was great; we worked closely with resident liaison team leader, Emily, and the council was very helpful with everything. Nothing was too much trouble.

Before too long we were organising more trips for tenants of the court, including boat trips, visits to Loughborough Market on Thursdays and more. We had a large Christmas tree donated by the builders and had a big party with the Mayor of Charnwood and council officials attending, and a shed was donated to the garden area by a councillor who attended the opening.

Since then, I have joined a few panels for the council, with the aim being to help them better understand the way tenants feel. I have also put a few tenant bids in to keep tenants happy, and organised parties with the community initiative fund.

Three years ago, I moved to another flat within the court and I love it. I am very happy about the way things are going. Nothing is perfect, but you can't expect everything to be as you want.”



Janice Wright



Riversdale Court in Birstall

Mental health and wellbeing support

If you need support for your mental health and wellbeing in Charnwood, there are many options:

Non-urgent: I need support for my mental health: Contact your GP Practice from 8am-6.30pm, Monday to Friday. Call 0330 094 5595 for VitaMinds (talking therapy service).

Urgent: I need help with my mental health now: Call the Mental Health Central Access Point Freephone 0808 800 3302, 24 hours a day seven days a week. Call NHS 111 for physical, medical and mental health issues.

Visit the Loughborough Wellbeing Centre, home of the Wellbeing Cafe Project. They provide a safe supportive space and run a range of activities to support people's mental health in Charnwood and beyond. They are located at Asha House, 63 Woodgate, Loughborough, LE11 2TZ. Contact them at 01509 606 370 or visit their website: www.thewellbeingcafe.org.

From 5-10pm every Friday, the Loughborough Wellbeing Centre runs a free neighbourhood mental health cafe, run by trained and supportive staff who are there to listen and provide the practical support you may need when you need it most.

Emergency: I have a physical health emergency: Call 999 if there is a physical threat to life.

Find more useful links, information and advice on the NHS website: www.leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/your-health/mental-health-wellbeing.



Important healthcare advice during cold weather

During spells of cold weather, we can all do our bit to help ease the pressure on our NHS health services.

You can do this by following the advice below:

Please only attend the emergency department for life-threatening illness or injury that cannot be treated elsewhere. This allows the emergency department to treat those who are the most seriously ill.

If you need care urgently but it's not life threatening, please call NHS 111 or use 111 online, where trained advisers can support you in getting care in the right place for your needs.

Think Pharmacy First. Pharmacists can help with many illnesses. They can give advice and treatments that don't need a prescription. Many can also give you prescription medicine for some conditions, so you don't need to see a GP. Find a pharmacy near you:

www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/how-pharmacies-can-help.

For more information on where to go for healthcare in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland, and tips on how to stay well this winter, visit the Get In The Know website:

<https://leicesterleicestershireandrutland.icb.nhs.uk/your-health/get-in-the-know/get-in-the-know-this-winter>.

Creating better homes

Charnwood Borough Council is on a journey to improve the quality of its council housing as it moves towards meeting the new standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

The regulator is responsible for improving social landlords, including local authorities like the Council and housing associations.

We are working hard towards meeting the new standards and below is an update on the progress we are making.

Ensuring tenants are informed and engaged in this process is important and we are also giving regular updates to the Housing Management Advisory Board and the Charnwood Housing Residents Forum as well as to councillors.

The Consumer Standards

The RSH has introduced a new set of consumer standards which means landlords will need to:

- ensure tenants are safe in their homes
- listen to tenants' complaints and respond promptly to put things right
- be accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect
- know more about the condition of every home and the needs of the people who live in them
- collect and use data effectively across a range of areas, including repairs

The four standards are Neighbourhood and Community Standard; Safety and Quality Standard; Tenancy Standard; and the Transparency, Influence and Accountability (including Tenant Satisfaction Measures).

Neighbourhood and Community Standard

We are continuing to develop a number of policies to improve our services for tenants in these areas including a Neighbourhood Policy which aims to create and maintain neighbourhoods where people want to live; a Domestic Abuse Policy which will set out how we will support tenants suffering from domestic abuse and a Communal Fire Safety Policy which will set out our approach to fire safety in shared areas.

Safety and Quality Standard

We are doing a lot of work in this area. We have commissioned Savills to undertake a stock condition survey of all council homes. They will assess the main elements in your home, including the roof, windows, external doors, kitchen, and bathroom and also look for any hazards.

Once complete, the survey will give us high quality information about council homes which will help identify issues and get them resolved and better plan for improvements.

We are also working with contractors to improve compliance rates with electrical, gas and fire safety checks on homes.

One area you can help us with is gaining access to homes. Safety in your home is our top priority and so



we really need you to give permission to carry out these checks when we ask you to do so.

We are increasing resources to help tackle damp and mould issues and improving the way we capture information and data so we can better analyse performance on repairs.

Tenancy Standard

This standard is about the allocation and letting of properties. As part of this, we are focussing on making repairs to empty properties and making them available to let again as soon as possible. We are seeing some positive improvements but know there is more work needed.

Transparency, Influence and Accountability (including Tenant Satisfaction Measures)

We are working on our tenant census to better understand tenants to help improve our services. We have commissioned a company to contact tenants to collect that information.

We are also continuing with our quarterly tenant satisfaction measures. We are pleased to see improved results in overall satisfaction measures in quarters one and two. We are working hard to continue that trend.

We are also looking at how we can involve tenants more in the scrutiny of our processes and services. We have the HMAB and CHRf already, but we are looking to build on these as part of a refreshed tenant engagement strategy.

We have also improved our response to complaints so more are being resolved at stage one before customers feel they need to escalate to stage two. This has followed some new processes and training for staff.

Mock inspection

As part of the new standards, the RSH will inspect all landlords. We do not know when Charnwood will be inspected but in preparation and as part of our journey to improve, we will be carrying out a mock inspection in the new year.

This will help clarify even further the areas where we need to improve and highlight areas where we are doing well.

Tenants involved in our existing groups like CHRf and HMAB are likely to be involved in the mock inspection.

We will continue to update you on progress around the standards and if you have any feedback please contact involvement@charnwood.gov.uk.



Members of the Charnwood Housing Residents' Forum

Set up a direct debit...

Just a reminder that you can now set up your direct debit online.

Visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/paybydirectdebit and click on 'online rent direct debit form', enter your details and simply choose whether you want to pay you rent weekly, every two weeks, every four weeks or monthly.

...and you could be a winner!

If you sign on for a direct debit and make 12 consecutive monthly rent / occupation charge payments (48 if weekly or 24 if fortnightly), you can win one of five prizes of £100.

Not paying by direct debit? No problem. Just call the housing income team on 01509 634666 with your bank details handy and we can set one up for you. Alternatively, you can download a direct debit mandate from the website at www.charnwood.gov.uk/how_to_pay_your_rent.

Longcliffe Road communal lounge host police surgery

Two officers from Charnwood Police attended a coffee morning with the local residents of Longcliffe Road communal lounge in Shepshed and wished to thank everyone who attended, including Boo the dog, who took quite a shine to one of the officers.

The visit was an opportunity for residents to meet officers, who were on hand to offer helpful advice and information about all areas of policing.

Residents of Longcliffe Road have worked hard to make the communal lounge a welcoming and inclusive place for people to come and visit.

There has been extensive work to the communal garden and coffee mornings have been well attended. Well done to everyone involved.



Boo was very happy to see PCSO Dash

Keep in the loop with council news

If you would like to keep updated with all the latest news from the council - including events, updates from the Active Charnwood team, business news, planning news and much more - subscribe to our email alerts at www.charnwood.gov.uk/alerts. As YHM is a quarterly magazine, the 'news for council tenants' topic will give you the most timely updates. Get subscribed and stay in the loop.

Meet council officers and fellow tenants at our networking events

The landlord services team hold networking events for council tenants and leaseholders throughout the year, where council tenants can meet officers, ask questions and find out more about the services available such as how to access advice on managing money and dealing with anti-social behaviour.

These events are open to anyone who is a council tenant or leaseholder and provides an opportunity for tenants to sign up for various services, groups, forums and events.

Tenant networking events will be published at www.charnwood.gov.uk/networking_event but here is a list of confirmed events for 2025:

The first networking event for tenants and leaseholders takes place at Shepshed Town Council offices on Tuesday, 11 March 2025 from 5-7pm.

Pop-up events are events where the customer engagement team put up their gazebo in a suitable area for tenants to attend and come speak with officers from the council and partner agencies. Here are a few that have been confirmed:

- **Thursday, 10 April at The Hut, Old Ashby Road, Loughborough, 10am until 12pm**
- **Thursday, 22 May at the Bell Foundry estate in Loughborough, 10am until 12pm. Near the Marios Tinenti Centre by the school**
- **Thursday, 19 June at Tuckers Road in Loughborough, 10am until 12pm**
- **Thursday, 10 July at Brook Street in Shepshed, 10am until 12pm**
- **Tuesday, 19 August at Offranville Close, Thurmaston, 10am until 12pm**

If you have any questions, please contact the customer engagement team on 01509 634955 or 01509 634679. Alternatively, you can email involvement@charnwood.gov.uk.

Have you visited My Charnwood?

My Charnwood is a great tool on the council's website. All you have to do is put in your postcode and choose your address from the dropdown. You will be taken to a webpage built specifically for your address. The webpage includes your bin collection days (so you know which days to put out your green and black bins - and your brown bin if you are a subscriber to the garden waste service).

You can also find out your Council representatives for your area of the borough, and much more useful information. Visit <http://mycharnwood.gov.uk> and find your address.



Great days out by coach and boat

In the summer, Thorpe Acre Community Centre invited the local community, including local tenants, to go on a coach trip Mablethorpe and take a boat trip down the River Soar with Peter Le Merchant Trust.

The trips were made possible with help from the council's community initiative fund, which helped contribute to the cost of the events so tickets could be sold at a reduced price and children could go for free.

Everyone said how much they enjoyed both events and how it brought the community together, with some people attending who otherwise would have been on their own.



Thorpe Acre Community Centre hosting another successful event

The coach and the boat trips were full capacity, and the group hopes to go on another adventure soon.

If you would like to apply for up to £250 funding to help with an event through the community initiative fund, please visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/cif or contact the customer engagement team on 01509 634955 or 01509 634679. Alternatively, you can email involvement@charnwood.gov.uk.

Tenant bids helping Babington Court look the part

As part of its social value commitment, contractor Travis Perkins has donated two cans of non-slip decking paint to residents at Babington Court. A social value aspect is built into all contracts with the council and is aimed to help locally with community projects and education.

Babington Court is a sheltered scheme and has had several successful tenant bids recently, which included installing a new shed and extending the decking area to make it big enough for all residents to enjoy. Travis Perkins has also donated a hose pipe and reel to make it easier for residents to tend the communal gardens and keep up their good work and dedication towards making the area enjoyable for all.

If you have a project that you may need help with then the customer engagement team are always willing to help, or if you would like to take advantage of the tenant bid scheme, visit the website at www.charnwood.gov.uk/tenant_bids.



Babington Court tenants with their new hose pipe

Music, movement and wellbeing at Fearon Hall

The customer engagement team helped Loughborough-based community centre Fearon Hall to secure funding for music, movement and wellbeing exercise classes through EEM, is a national procurement framework organisation. As part of the social value aspect of using the framework, EEM donates a share of its profits to organisations. After a successful application for funding, classes have started and feedback has been positive.

The group is diverse in gender, age, ethnicity and background. Members of the group are connecting well and have enjoyed various activities including park walks, coffee outings, outdoor cinema trips and other celebrations this year. They are also supporting each other in various ways, including one group member who is teaching English to someone from Hong Kong.

The class is fun and inclusive with a new playlist provided every six weeks. Participants can join in as they feel fit, and exercises can be done seated or with chair support.

The tutor has recently qualified as a 'move it or lose it' instructor and participants have reported improvements in mood, confidence, mobility and strength. The movements help with everyday life activities.

Visit Fearon Hall's website www.fearonhall.org.uk for further information. To find out more about the funding and how it can help your community please contact the customer engagement team.



Universal credit managed migration has started

Many of you will already be in receipt of universal credit. However, if you are still receiving a legacy benefit (e.g. tax credits, income support, ESA) you need to be aware of the move to 'managed migration'. This is the process of moving people who are still on legacy benefits to universal credit.

If you or your partner is of working age, this will affect you and when asked, you will be moved onto universal credit. Managed migration has already started and is planned to be completed by 2025 for those receiving tax credits.

When it is time for you to migrate to universal credit, you will receive a migration notice from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). If you do not apply within the set time limit given by the DWP, this will result in your legacy benefit awards being terminated.

If you need support making an application, you can either contact the DWP or our tenancy support team on 01509 634666 or email housing.income@charnwood.gov.uk.

You said, we did

we work hard to listen to our tenants and respond to their concerns and complaints.

Here are three recent actions we took following feedback from tenants.

You said: Debris was left behind at a property despite the repair's operative sweeping up afterwards.

We did: We conducted a final sweep with a magnet wand to remove any metallic objects and ensure the area had been left safe. All engineers have now been issued this new tool, following a recommendation from the health and safety team.

You said: Garage roofing repairs were taking too long owing to other garage occupiers not emptying garages for works to commence.

We did: We have amended the garage agreement so that clauses are now put into the agreement to allow council officers access to the garages when such works are planned to take place.

You said: Delays in works carried out by responsive repairs contractors.

We did: We will now be carrying out monthly meetings with our contractor to ensure this type of incident does not recur.

Your feedback is very important to us. We want to hear from you whether it is a comment or an observation about a service we provide, a compliment about something we have done well or a complaint about something that you are unhappy with.

We are committed to listening and acting on what we hear to continually improve the quality of the service we provide to our customers.

To view the council's complaints policy, visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/corporate_complaints_policy.



Spooky goings on at Beresford

Mobile warden Sandy Taylor hosted a special Halloween quiz at Beresford Court sheltered scheme in Shepshed. The residents decorated the lounge for the event and nibbles were provided for all. It was a great night, and a lot of fun was had.

Everyone at Beresford has been in great spirits since winning first prize in the 'Best Sheltered Court' category at the tenant garden competition awards presentation in September.



Get covered with home contents insurance

Have you thought about getting home contents insurance? There are two cover levels for you to decide from: Standard and Standard including accidental damage.

Most of your household goods and contents are insured when inside the home, including bikes and computer equipment. They are covered against loss or damage caused by specific events such as theft, fire and flood.

Also insured are lost or stolen keys, freezer contents, your own legal liability to the public, the cost of alternative accommodation and improvements you have made to your home such as fitted kitchens, bathrooms, wardrobes, laminate flooring, patio doors etc. (but not greenhouses or conservatories).

You also have the option to add cover for personal belongings, hearing aids, and wheelchairs / Mobility scooters for an additional premium. Find out more at www.charnwood.gov.uk/hci or call 01509 634666 for an application form.

Terms and conditions

The policy is underwritten by Aviva Insurance Limited. Aviva Insurance limited, Registered in Scotland Number 2116. Registered office: Pitheavlis, Perth PH2 0NH. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. FPTCI.2024.157.SD



Find out if you are eligible for Pension Credit

Pensioners are being urged to check to see if they are eligible for Pension Credit in order to secure this year's Winter Fuel Payment. The Government recently announced that the Winter Fuel Payment – worth up to £300 – is set to be means-tested and delivered to those on Pension Credit to ensure it is targeted towards those in most need.

Around 1.3 million households in England and Wales will continue to receive Winter Fuel Payments but the Government has launched a bid to boost take-up of Pension Credit to ensure low-income pensioners continue to get this help. Find out more at www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim.

online rent refunds

If you feel you are due a refund, you can now complete an online form to request for a refund. Visit www.charnwood.gov.uk/rent_refund. Please make sure you read the conditions before you apply. Full details can be found on the webpage. You will need to be aware of the conditions if you apply.

Dear Leaseholders

We hope you are all keeping well and had a great Christmas. Happy New Year to you all.

Most of the refunds for the certified summaries have been issued. If you haven't yet received yours and have requested it, please get in touch.

Please be aware for next year that we cannot hold bank details once we have processed your refund. We must process refunds manually, which means we are not allowed to store these details should they be needed next year. If you need a refund next year we will be asking for your details again.

We have received many gas safety certificates in the last few weeks. If you have not sent yours in or your electrical certificate (E.I.C.R), please do so. It is important for your safety and for the safety of other residents in your block that you have the required certification.

We have included an article on fire doors in this issue of Your Homes Matter. All leaseholders who need their front door to be a fire door will have been contacted by now. If you are one of those people, we recommend that you read this article.

Sarah and Trevor

Requests from the team

Gas safety certificates - We have recently requested a copy of your gas safety certificate. If you haven't already done so, would you please forward this to us via our email address or by post.

EICR certificates - We also requesting a copy of your electrical installation conditions report. If you haven't already done so, would you please forward this to us via our email address or by post.

Contact details - We have also asked you to complete a contact details form. This is very important to ensure that we are sending all correspondence to the current email address/postal address.

Certificates for change of circumstance - We should like to remind you that if you have a bereavement or change of name, in order for us to update our records and ensure that the information is held with the lease, we do require a copy of the death certificate/marriage certificate so that all information can be updated and to avoid any correspondence being sent out which may cause upset.

Using the website to find leaseholder information

Leaseholders can use the council's website for reporting a repair, finding information on your building's insurance, reporting a leak, reporting anti-social behaviour, reporting damp and mould and selling your flat back to the council.

To find the right page on the website, visit www.charnwood.gov.uk and add the required keywords into the large search box that reads: 'Search Charnwood.gov.uk'. For example, type 'buy back' to get information about selling your flat to the council or 'lease extension' for information about extending your lease.

Important fire door information

Thank you to all leaseholders who have had their front door either replaced or upgraded to make it compliant with fire regulations. It needs to be proven to hold back fire and smoke for 30 minutes, hence the description used of FD30S.

The council's contractor, Harmony, is involved in an exercise of carrying out a detailed survey of all tenants' and leaseholders' doors to ensure that they are fully compliant. This is happening on a block-by-block basis. As soon as your block has been surveyed by Harmony and tenants' doors have been replaced or upgraded where required we will be asking leaseholders to do the same. As soon as your block has been completed, we will have to issue you with a deadline by which you must make your door compliant and provide us with the required certification. The block needs to be made safe for all residents and if one door is not compliant it can endanger the whole block. It would be a great help if you make your door compliant before your block has been completed by Harmony.

In addition, inspectors are carrying out a visual check on doors and reporting their findings in the fire risk surveys that are regularly carried out. If your door is highlighted in the survey carried out on your block you will have to upgrade or replace your door as described in the survey. Again, we will have to issue you with a deadline to do this.

- If we have told you that you need to have a compliant front door then it is YOUR responsibility to ensure that it is compliant
- You do not need to use Harmony to survey, repair or replace your door but you must use a competent, qualified person
- We have produced an information sheet to help you. If you would like a copy, please contact us.

Remember that if you have someone in mind to survey, upgrade or replace your door, but you are not sure if they are qualified, please refer to the Information Sheet mentioned above, or contact us directly. If you use an unqualified person, the certification you produce may be rejected.

Contacting the leasehold team

The leasehold team comprises Trevor Banbrook and Sarah Taylor. Their contact details are:

Telephone: 01509 634575 Monday and Tuesday 9.30am to 4.30pm (Trevor). 01509 634830 Tuesday to Friday 9am to 3pm (Sarah). Email: leaseholders@charnwood.gov.uk.

Invoice payments Please check the back of the invoice or call 01509 634666 (9am-4pm Monday to Friday)

Payments enquiries income team: 01509 634817

Report a repair and/or anti-social behaviour: Please call our customer services team on 01509 634666 (out-of-office hours number for emergency repair work only - 0333 200 8811). You can report ASB at www.charnwood.gov.uk/asb and request a repair online at www.charnwood.gov.uk/repairs.

Request for buildings insurance schedule: Please email the insurance team at insurance@charnwood.gov.uk or call the customer service team on 01509 634666.



Winter fire safety at home

Making your home warm and cosy during the winter is important, but so is keeping safe. Here are a few ways to keep safe in the colder months:

Smoke/carbon monoxide alarms

You must test your smoke/heat detector(s) and carbon monoxide alarm (if you have a fixed combustion appliance) every week. If they are missing or do not work, you must contact us and we will fit a new one(s).

Smoke/heat detectors are fitted to all homes. There must be one on each floor. Hallways and stairwells are the most important areas. Some are battery, some are mains, but all should be tested at least once a week and batteries where required they should be changed twice a year.

Carbon Monoxide (Co) alarms must be placed near a source of combustion like a gas boiler/coal fire (Ovens are not included). Carbon monoxide is a colourless, poisonous, odourless, tasteless, flammable gas that is slightly less dense than air, and the sensor will detect the gas before it can cause illness. Common symptoms include headaches, dizziness, sickness, feeling weak, chest and muscle pain and shortness of breath. Co alarms are important for detecting the amount of carbon monoxide in the atmosphere and alerting us with an alarm, so it is important to test them weekly and replace batteries twice a year.

Candles - Always blow out candles if you are not in the room and especially at night-time if you are going to bed. A safer alternative are LED tealights, which you don't need to remember to blow out. If you must have candles, keep them away from anything flammable like curtains and anything else that can catch fire.

Cooking - Ovens/stoves should not be left unattended when cooking. Keep tea towels and napkins away as these can easily catch fire. A fire safety blanket in the kitchen is an important item to have.

Child safety - To keep you and your family safe at home this winter, never leave lighters and matches within reach of children. Know where fire blankets and extinguishers are in the house and how to use them and know how to quickly exit the house in case of emergency.

Electrics - Overloading sockets and running extra extension leads should be avoided as it can cause electric faults and fires, and anything rechargeable items should not be charged overnight. Faulty chargers are easy to spot at night. Always keep combustible materials away from chargers, sockets and leads.

Fireplace and chimney - Ensure a fire guard is in place, especially with children playing in the house. You should also consider having your chimney cleaned at least once a year.

Fire extinguisher and blanket - It is a good idea to have a fire extinguisher and blanket in the home and to familiarise yourself with how to use them. Fire extinguishers should be replaced every few years.

Outdoor lights - Ensure that the lights are suitable for the outdoors and do not use them indoors. Outdoor lights are insulated specially for the purpose of being outside and should not be used inside the home.

Smoke outdoors - If you do smoke it's advisable to do so outside. If you smoke indoors you can extinguish your cigarette by running it under a tap or put water in your ashtray to be certain it's out.

