

# HOUSING MATTERS

The magazine for  
East Devon District Council  
tenants and leaseholders

YOUR SUMMER 2021 EDITION

By post, email, online or audio cd  
[eastdevon.gov.uk/housingmatters](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/housingmatters)



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## CONTRIBUTE: WE NEED TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS

*Housing Matters* is your magazine and keeping it relevant is only made possible with your help. We'd love to hear from you with your suggestions for articles. Send us a letter, article, photo,

## DO YOU NEED LARGE PRINT OR AN AUDIO OR EMAIL FORMAT?

Is this format best for you? We'd like you to get *Housing Matters* in a way that suits you. This magazine is available by post, audio and email.

If you'd prefer to receive the magazine digitally to your email address or in an audio format through the post, please contact Tenant Participation (details below). *Housing Matters* is also available online at [eastdevon.gov.uk/housing-matters](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/housing-matters).

## ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

*Housing Matters* is produced by East Devon District Council for tenants and leaseholders and is edited by tenants and council staff.

### Editorial Group

*Sue Saunders* is an Exmouth tenant who loves reading and writing poems and is the chairperson of the Editorial Group.

*Alan Thorpe* has lived in Exmouth for six years. He served in the Royal Navy for ten years and 25 years in the baking industry. Being involved in this group has given him a new lease of life and an insight on how the magazine is produced.

*Sue Williams* is an Exmouth tenant and former paralegal, soldier and nurse who loves photography, gardening, DIY and playing music. She has undertaken several council training sessions on housing and social studies.

*Yvonne White* lives in Sidmouth and is on the Lymebourne and Arcot Park Resident Association committee.

*Bev Anderson* is Tenant Participation Assistant at East Devon District Council.

## DATES TO GET INVOLVED BY

**By 17 Sep** | Chance to win £50 (page 14)

**By 30 Sep** | Your competition entry (page 19)

## CONTACT US

### Tenant Participation

Phone: 01395 517453

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

Write: East Devon District Council,  
Blackdown House, Border Road,  
Heathpark Industrial Estate, EX14 1EJ

### SWITCH youth group

Phone: 01395 516551 ext. 1691

Email: [switch@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:switch@eastdevon.gov.uk)

🐦 Twitter: @SWITCHEastdevon

📘 Facebook: SWITCHEastdevon

### Keep up to date

Online: [eastdevon.gov.uk/news](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/news)

🐦 Twitter: @eddchome\_people

📘 Facebook: eddchome&people

📷 Instagram: @eddchome\_people

### Do you have a comment, compliment or complaint?

If you'd like to tell us something about the housing service, contact Tenant Participation who will be happy to help you (contact details left).

### ⚠️ Coronavirus (Covid-19): our offices aren't open to the public at this time

Blackdown House in Honiton and Exmouth Town Hall aren't open to the public. Please refer to [eastdevon.gov.uk](http://eastdevon.gov.uk).

To request this information in an alternative format or language please phone 01395 517453 or email [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk) (we consider requests on an individual basis)



Join other East Devon residents and download the free East Devon App from [eastdevon.gov.uk/app](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/app)

Access council services on your smartphone, get councillor contact details, a recycling and waste collection reminder, and check local food hygiene ratings

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# HELLO

**SUE SAUNDERS**  
Exmouth Tenant

My name is Sue Saunders and I have recently taken over the role of Chairperson on the Housing Matters Editorial Group.

I'd like to begin by saying thank you to Ted Payne our previous Chairperson, for his hard work and leadership, he has helped to make the magazine a success and something of which, EDDC can be rightly proud.

I have been a tenant of East Devon council for 57 years and an involved tenant since 2006, with a bit of a gap in the middle. I have been involved in many ground breaking events surrounding the role of the tenant, including the management of our homes. However, it doesn't do to rest on our laurels, there is always room for improvement and who better than us, as tenants, to highlight where improvements are needed.

I believe this magazine is a vital link between tenant and council also tenant and tenant. The magazine is a credit to the group who produce it but we are always looking for new faces and new ideas to help influence future progress. Why not join us and make your voice heard by contacting Tenant Participation, see page 2 for details.

## OPPORTUNITY

### More tenants needed for 'landlord' role

**ALETHEA THOMPSON**  
Democratic Services Officer

Make a difference to your housing service – your board needs you! East Devon District Council's tenants and leaseholders are being given the opportunity to stand for selection to the Housing Review Board, the committee that oversees the Council's landlord functions.

This is a voluntary role and needs members who are fairly confident, can

say their piece in a constructive way, can work with others, understand services and priorities for tenants and who are willing to undertake some training to equip them more fully for this challenging and crucial role.

If you are interested or want to know more please call Democratic Services on 01395 517546 or email [athompson@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:athompson@eastdevon.gov.uk) for an application form.

## KEEPING YOUR PERSONAL DATA SAFE | AN EXPLANATION FROM THE COUNCIL

Any personal information which you provide will be held and used by East Devon District Council for the purpose of resident involvement.

Your information may be provided to a third party acting on our behalf. Your information may also be shared within East Devon

District Council for the purposes of carrying out our lawful functions. Otherwise your personal information will not be disclosed to anybody outside East Devon District Council without your permission, unless there is a lawful reason to do so for example, disclosure is necessary

for crime prevention or detection purposes.

Your information will be held securely and will not be retained for any longer than is necessary. There are a number of rights available to you in relation to our use of your personal information depending on the reason for processing.

Further details about our use of your personal information can be found in the relevant Privacy Notice which can be accessed at [eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2505620/landlord-services-administering-a-tenant-participation-and-involvement-scheme.pdf](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/2505620/landlord-services-administering-a-tenant-participation-and-involvement-scheme.pdf).

# YOUR COUNCIL

INFORMATION FOR YOU  
FROM EAST DEVON  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Major Refurbishment at Morgan Court

**SOPHIE DAVIES**  
Business and Customer  
Improvement Manager

### The Challenge

Morgan Court flats in Exmouth required a new roof covering, as the existing had reached the end of its useful life. At the same time the Team wanted to carry out some fire proofing and some asbestos removal work to all the balcony walkways. On top of all of this it was recognised that the block required some general tender loving care.

Morgan Court is a single block of sheltered housing with a total of 33 households. The block is four storeys high and is constructed of pre-cast concrete frame with brick work infill, constructed in the late 1960s as social housing.

### The Project

East Devon District Council carried out a tendering process and Fifields Construction were appointed as the successful building contractor to undertake and oversee the works on site over 16 weeks. The nature of the work required a full scaffold to be erected around the whole property and whilst this was unsightly for the tenants it did allow the contractors to go about their roofing work without using any of the communal walkways.

Asbestos removal was carried out to all the communal walkways which proved to be a



particularly difficult part of the work. None of the access routes could be closed off so the specialist sub-contractor, Shield Environmental, could only carry out a small section of work each day so that all the walkways could be left clear overnight. This meant that it took several weeks to remove the asbestos from each balcony walkway.

Some fire safety work was also carried out putting new fire doors and locks on the existing bin stores and upgrading communal cupboards.

The whole block had a face lift with a redecoration programme which included a new resin bonded capping to all the balcony walkways, redecoration of tenants balcony railings, removal of old rusted vehicle gates, upgrade of TV aerial booster equipment and a rewire of all tenants TV aerial sockets within each flat.

**Continued on next page →**

# YOUR COUNCIL

← Continued from previous page

The project was extremely well managed by Fifield Construction by both Shaun (Contract manager), Colin (on site manager) Christopher Haugh, our Programme Works Officer and Sophie Davies our Business and Customer Improvement Manager. Colin was important in keeping all the tenants informed of what was happening and by having him permanently on site at all times, he could help to quickly rectify any problems the tenants had. He also built up a relationship with the Mobile Support Officers which helped the project go smoothly.

## The Result

Fifield, alongside East Devon District Council overcame a number of challenges to complete the project, such as clearances of balconies, moving

and resetting aerials, ensuring access to all areas is clear and tidy.

Our Repair Advisors have carried out some 'post work' satisfaction with our residents at Morgan Court. The results are outstanding, Fifield ensured they went above and beyond to advise, assist and help tenants in any way they could to make the ongoing works to the blocks manageable for the tenants in their everyday life. One tenant advised "We will miss their lovely smiley faces now works have completed!"

The project was completed to schedule and at an excellent technical, as well as visual standard. Thank you Fifield Construction for your wonderful work and dedication to the project and our tenants, we look forward to working with you in the future. We would also like to thank our tenants for their patience and understanding as the works were taking place, a lovely result for all.

## Handyperson Scheme



### SOPHIE DAVIES

Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager

Simple changes to the home can make a huge difference to the health and wellbeing of our older and most vulnerable residents.

Our Handyperson scheme, provided by Ian Williams, helps people to stay living independently in their homes for longer. We can help with small jobs in the home which can improve people's quality of life.

The Handyperson scheme is a free service for council tenants, who only need to supply materials needed to do the job.

To be eligible tenants must be:

- A tenant 65 or over or
- Disabled or
- Living in an East Devon District Council supported housing

You can have up to three Handyperson visits per year.



## **JOBS THE HANDYPERSON COULD DO**

- Putting up pictures..
- Assembling small flat pack furniture items.
- Putting up a TV bracket and connecting TV to the aerial.
- Adjusting TV aerial.
- Putting up shelves.
- Putting up blinds.
- Putting up mirrors.
- Putting up clothes rails.
- Putting up towel rail and toilet holders.
- Putting up bathroom cabinets.
- Putting up utensil holders on the wall.
- Putting up curtain poles and curtains.
- Putting up coat and key hooks.
- Changing light bulbs.
- Bleeding radiators.
- Resetting trip switches.
- Moving furniture from one room to another.
- Refit kickboards.
- Oiling doors.
- Tightening up furniture and hinges.
- Shaving bottom of door after tenant has had new carpets.
- Taking off the door in readiness for tenants to have carpets and refitting them.
- Repairing a toilet seat and also renewing toilet seat.
- Putting up a shower curtain and shower screen.
- To attach shower head on the wall.
- Shower brackets.
- Putting up washing lines.
- Moving heavy plant pots and garden furniture.
- Putting up door numbers, door knockers and door bells.
- Putting together animal enclosures, for example hutches and cages.
- Tidying wires and boxing in.
- Plumbing in washing machine.
- Repainting rusty hand rails.
- Varnishing and water proofing fencing.
- Fitting door chains and door locks.
- Put up shelving in disused airing cupboards.



If you have any jobs that are not on the list, we may be able to facilitate this.

### **Conditions**

- Tenants must provide all the materials needed for the job, East Devon District Council and Ian Williams will not take any responsibility for the materials supplied.
- Tenants are allowed a maximum of three, one hour visits per year, for the handyerson scheme. This time cannot be built up or backdated.

The Handyerson will:

- Use carpet protection and cover furniture wherever required.
- Clear up any mess before they leave.
- Provide all tools needed to do the work.
- Where required, provide minor fixing materials for the works such as screws, glue, mastic.
- Carry a personal identification badge at all times.
- Carry out the agreed work only.

To find out more or make an appointment you should contact our Housing Repair service on 01395 517458.

When you phone you will be asked what work you would like the handyerson to do (please note, the handyerson will not carry out any work that has not been asked for beforehand) and we will tell you what day the handyerson will do the work.



*A working smoke alarm is a vital start when it comes to fire safety*

Fire safety adviser  
checking smoke alarm

equipment where needed. They will also advise on escape routes and what to do in the event of a fire.

## GUEST ARTICLE

# Be Aware of Fire

**STEVE FISHER**  
Crew Manager  
Devon and Somerset Fire Service

Have you or someone you care for had a home safety visit? Please contact us to get one booked in. Call 0800 0502 999 or email [firekills@dsfire.gov.uk](mailto:firekills@dsfire.gov.uk) or go online at [www.dsfire.gov.uk/homesafety](http://www.dsfire.gov.uk/homesafety).

### **Specially trained to work with older and vulnerable people**

The friendly fire safety advisers will come into your home and identify and assess any fire risks and provide fire safety

### **Free fire safety equipment**

A working smoke alarm is a vital start when it comes to fire safety. We will check and replace any alarms needed.

For people with additional needs or disabilities, we can provide more specialist kit, such as sensory loss alarms that come with a strobe light and vibrating pad. We can also supply fire retardant bedding, throws or blankets, carbon monoxide alarms, alarm testers and run-down timers.

PLEASE NOTE DURING COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS - Advice will be given over the telephone. You will be offered a face to face visit if there is a high priority or once restrictions are lifted.

The most common household appliances to catch fire are tumble dryers and washing machines which cause around 60 fires each year in Devon and Somerset.

We attend around 12 fires each year caused by dishwashers, and ten each year caused by fridges.



# A guide to Recharges

**SOPHIE DAVIES**

**Housing Business and Customer Improvement Manager**

We have created this article to advise you on our Recharge Policy and what you can do, to stay in control.

- What is a recharge?
- How do I know if I have a recharge?
- How do I avoid a recharge?
- How do I pay a recharge?
- The importance of content insurance
- Will this affect my rent?

## **Firstly, what are recharges?**

Recharges are invoices that the tenant is required to pay. Usually, they will result from a repair for which a tenant is responsible for under the conditions of the tenancy agreement. Typical instances of repairs being rechargeable include:

- Repair required through faulty goods, when the property fuse box may 'trip'
- Unauthorised alterations discovered at the end of a tenancy
- Damage beyond 'fair wear and tear'
- Internal and external damage to the property by the tenant or visitors

You are legally responsible through your tenancy agreement to take care of your home and ask permission for any alterations you may wish to make.

Where this is not done, it is unfair that the rents of tenants who do meet their tenancy obligations are paying for the very few who don't. Meaning that there is less money available for East Devon District Council

to do things like upgrade your kitchen or bathroom. This is why we recharge

## **How can I avoid a recharge?**

By always looking after your home and reporting any damage to our housing repair team, this will lower your chances of having any recharge costs. It is important that you report any damage, as an early repair can prevent further damage.

## **Will I be notified before I receive a recharge?**

We always try to give advance warning before sending a recharge invoice.

Firstly, through you reporting a repair. When this happens we will try to let you know if we think there is a possibility that the repair may be rechargeable and possibly give you the option of arranging the repair yourself if it is considered a 'tenant's responsibility'. For example if you call to report 'the electrics keep tripping' and you are unable to rectify this, then you would be recharged for the electrician's time. However it is not always possible to give prior notice about a recharge. A typical instance would be a blocked toilet where the cause is found to be something which should not have been flushed down the toilet, for example, baby wipes.

Another way is when you are leaving your home and we find that we would not be able to re-rent it without doing some work. We accept "fair wear and tear" but unapproved alterations, poor decoration, nicotine damage and not returning all keys and fobs which have been issued are all things we can recharge you for.

You will be sent a letter containing all the recharge information, such as work required and the cost of the invoice to you and how to pay.

## **Contents insurance**

East Devon District Council do not cover your contents as part of the tenancy agreement. It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for, in order to help you make an informed decision on whether you need one. We would always recommend having contents insurance, this will be discussed with you when you sign up to one of our tenancies.

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken or damaged so home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind should the worst happen.

## **Will a recharge affect my rent?**

Recharges are completely separate from rent.

If you are getting Housing Benefit this will not pay for recharges. All tenants are personally responsible for paying their own recharges. If you are having, or think you will have any difficulty in paying a recharge, you should speak to your Housing Repairs Officer.

Often you can pay your recharge by arrangement at no extra cost.

If you have any questions, please speak to Housing Repairs on 01395 517458 or email [repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk).



## Keeping You Safe in Your Home

Check your gas appliances before the winter

**MICHELLE DAVIDSON**  
Compliance and Cyclical Servicing Manager

### Gas Safety

As a landlord, we have a statutory duty to carry out an annual safety inspection of gas appliances, flues and associated pipework which we are responsible for. This includes gas central heating and fixed gas fires but not gas ovens. The safety inspection makes sure all the gas appliances in your home are safe and as part of this service the contractor will also test your smoke and carbon monoxide detector.

Liberty Gas will give you reasonable notice of when they will be attending however, if you are not going to be home at the scheduled time, please contact Liberty Gas directly on 0800 328 3455 to arrange a more convenient appointment.

If you don't allow Liberty Gas access to your home to carry out the annual safety inspection then you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement.

### Grenfell Tower Tragedy 14th June 2017

This year marks the four year anniversary of the Grenfell Tower tragedy where 72 people sadly lost their lives in the fire. The tragedy exposed serious failings across the whole system of building and management of high-rise homes.

Following the fire the Government took immediate steps to make residents safer, and asked Dame Judith Hackitt to carry out an independent review of building regulations and fire safety to understand the causes of the fire.

The review concluded that the whole system needed major reform and that residents' safety needed to be a greater priority during the entire life cycle of a building, from design and construction, through to the people living in their property.

New legislation will be coming into force to ensure residents feel safer in their homes and will have a greater say in shaping fire safety within their blocks of flats.

### Fire Safety

East Devon District Council is vigilant about all safety requirements including fire safety. Our fire safety contractor, FCS Live have been undertaking fire risk assessments on our behalf over the last couple of months in all our blocks of flats with communal areas.

Where possible, FCS Live have surveyed top floor flats to ensure the fire compartmentation within the block hasn't been compromised.

Since the completion of the previous fire risk assessments, we have been working on ensuring all properties and communal areas meet the highest fire safety standards and have carried out fire safety improvement works in our blocks of flats in Axminster, Seaton, Colyton, Honiton, parts of Sidmouth and Budleigh Salterton. This has included installing a new security system with intercom, to the main entrance doors. Work is due to commence shortly in Sidford, Sidbury, Exmouth and then surrounding areas.

### Fire Safety Advice for Residents

In an event of a fire, residents should famil-

amiliarise themselves with the advice given on notices located in the hallways, corridors or landings.

Do not store any possessions or cause obstructions in the communal areas. East Devon District Council has a zero tolerance policy on this and the policy is rigorously enforced. If you notice any items being stored in the communal areas report it to us by calling 01395 516551 and asking for the Estate Management team.

Electrical appliances such as washing machines, tumble driers and fridge freezers should not be placed or used in any areas outside of your own flat, including any outside storage cupboard. It is also important that you do not overload electrical sockets as this could cause it to overheat.

Ensure your smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms are working by testing them regularly. If you notice any faults with them call our Housing Repair teams on 01395 517458 immediately.

Ensure your personal front flat entrance door and closure is in proper working order by opening the door about halfway, letting go and allowing it to close by itself. If the door closes firmly onto the latch without sticking to the floor or the frame then it is working properly. If however it doesn't, please report it immediately to our Housing Repair team on 01395 517458 or email [repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk).

If there is any damage to your personal flat front entrance fire door, for example; the glass is broken, the door handle is falling off, the letter plate is loose or has fallen off or there are holes in the door then this must be reported immediately to the Housing Repair team, who will ensure the door is fixed.

If you have any concerns regarding fire safety in your home please contact our Compliance team on 01395 517458 or for further fire safety advice, contact Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue on 0800 05 02 999 or via their website [www.dsfire.gov.uk](http://www.dsfire.gov.uk).

## **Access to your Property**

The Property and Asset Team regularly carry out programmes of safety works and testing, including asbestos surveys, smoke detector testing, electrical testing and associated works to ensure your property is safe. As part of the conditions of your tenancy agreement you must allow our contractors reasonable access to carry out these works, however, despite this a number of tenants do not allow access to carry out these essential works or testing. May we please remind all tenants that these works or testing are essential and that you contact our Repair team on 01395 517458 or the designated contractor directly, if you have missed an appointment.

## **What is Legionella?**

Legionella is the name given to a group of bacteria that is found in almost all water sources, including rivers and lakes. It can also be found in soil, compost and mains water and can potentially thrive in domestic water systems.

Legionella can be harmful, if the conditions are right for the bacteria to multiply and if you inhale water droplets from a contaminated water system. Generally legionella bacteria exists naturally in low numbers in all water supplied to the home. With normal regular use this causes no problems. The risk occurs where bacteria can increase and multiply to dangerous levels.

## *Is Legionella harmful?*

Main risk areas in the home are shower heads, taps and even washing machine or dishwasher pipes. Legionella bacteria is more likely to grow between 20C and 45C and where there is sludge, scale and rust for the bacteria to feed on.

## *What can I do?*

Ensure all taps and showers are used at least once a week. If they are not used regularly

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or if you have been on holiday, run all your taps for a few minutes before using the water. You'll also need to run the water in your shower. Make sure the water doesn't spray or splash too much as this can create water droplets.

Keep taps and shower heads clean and free from lime scale, mould or algae growth. Brush the scale off with a nylon brush and wipe with a diluted bleach solution. You can also buy de-scaling solution from hardware shops.

Keep hot water on your boiler or hot water cylinders set to 60C or greater. Just beware of scalding!

Report any rust or unusual deposits flowing from water outlets to us on 01395 517458 or email [repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk).

## Asbestos

Asbestos is a naturally occurring toxic material known for its remarkable strength and resistance to heat. Manufacturers added asbestos to thousands of products to help with insulation and fireproofing. It was widely used from 1930 to the mid-1980s. It is commonly found in construction materials used to build many older homes and public buildings although banned now, such as cement, textured paint, spray on insulation and ceiling and floor tiles. Any houses built before the year 2000 may contain asbestos. However, identical properties may not contain the same materials.

### *What should you do if you think you have asbestos in your home?*

Do not touch it. If the material is in good condition and is not disturbed, the best option is usually to leave it in place. If you have any concerns or you think a material containing asbestos has been damaged or has been disturbed please report it to the Compliance team immediately on 01395 517458 or email [compliance@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:compliance@eastdevon.gov.uk).

### *What are the health risks?*

The risk to the tenants from asbestos in their home is low unless asbestos is disturbed during activities such as home improvements.

### *How do we manage asbestos in tenanted properties or blocks of flats?*

We are continuously obtaining in depth information about the presence and condition of asbestos within our properties. We have an asbestos management plan which can be found on our website [www.eastdevon.gov.uk](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk), which outlines how we deal with asbestos.

Asbestos surveys and inspections involve a visual inspection of the property or block the sampling of suspect materials. Before we carry out any work in your home or block we have to by law arrange for an additional detailed survey to be carried out each time we carry out refurbishment works, even if you have had a previous survey carried out. These type of intrusive surveys can entail sampling material by opening an area up, for example, removing a bath panel to inspect for any hidden materials. Once the results are received we will determine what action if any is needed. Asbestos only becomes dangerous if damaged or disturbed.

## For more information

East Devon District Council:  
[eastdevon.gov.uk](http://eastdevon.gov.uk)

Health and Safety Executive:  
[hse.gov.uk](http://hse.gov.uk)

Compliance or Repair teams  
(East Devon District Council):  
01395 517458 or email  
[repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
[compliance@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:compliance@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Emergency out of hours repairs:  
01395 516854

## DATES FOR THE DIARY

**Gas Safety Week**  
**13 to 19 September 2021**

**Fire Door Safety Week**  
**20 to 26 September 2021**



## GUEST ARTICLE

# Support with Energy Bills

**TALULAH KINGSTON**  
External Affairs Assistant  
Turn2us

With autumn and winter approaching, lots of people are worrying about the cost of heating their homes. If you are worried about your energy bills, there is support available to you.

Turn2us is a national charity that provides information and support to people struggling financially. We have a free, easy-to-use online benefits calculator which checks the amount of means-tested benefits you are entitled to.

We also have an online grants search, which invites you to tell us who your energy provider is, as some providers offer support for those who have fallen behind on energy payments.

If you are struggling to pay your energy bills, you may worry your energy will be cut off. This is always a last resort for energy providers, however it is essential you contact your provider straight away to find a solution. It is crucial that your energy provider is made aware of the risk to your household's wellbeing, should they cut off your supply.

### Available schemes

Energy companies have a warm home discount scheme, providing £140 off your energy bill over the winter.

The government provides a cold weather payment to people in receipt of certain benefits. This is available when temperatures in your area are below 0c for seven consecutive days between November and March.

If you are over pension age, there is a winter fuel payment, which is an annual tax free payment to help with heating costs. There have been some bugs with payment of this this year - if you think you should have got a payment and haven't, contact the winter fuel payments helpline on 0800 731 0160.

### Your energy supply and usage

Outside of financial support, consider switching providers, to ensure you're receiving the cheapest service. You might also find energy saving tips can help you keep your bills low.

For more information, or if you need help handling your energy debts, please contact Turn2us on 0808 802 2000, 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday or visit their website at [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk).

## Chance to Win £50

**ALEX HIGGINS**

**Community Development Officer**

The Community Development Team need your help. Could you share your insights about your local community?

Your responses will help shape our future work and every entrant will also be entered into a prize draw for £50 worth of vouchers of your choosing.

Please email your answers by Friday 17 September to these five questions to [communitydevelopment@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:communitydevelopment@eastdevon.gov.uk).

1. Are there local services, support groups or activities you do that you rely on or which make your life worthwhile?
2. Are there services or support you wish were available to you but aren't?
3. Do you have passions or hobbies that you would like to do more often?
4. Are you happy with the support available to you?
5. What is your address?

We will also anonymise and print some of your answers for different areas so you can see what other people say. Thank you for your help.

### RECIPE

## CHICKEN AND VEGETABLE STIR FRY WITH NOODLES



### METHOD

1. Combine the oil, garlic and ginger and chicken in a bowl and leave to marinate while you prepare the vegetables.
2. Heat a large frying pan or wok. Add the chicken and marinade and fry gently for 2-3 minutes, until the chicken is cooked through.
3. Add the vegetables and turn up the heat. Stir-fry for 4-5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add a little more oil if required to prevent sticking.
4. Cook the noodles as per the packet cooking instructions. Drain.
5. Pour the sweet and sour sauce mixture over the chicken and vegetables and stir while it thickens and coats the ingredients and is hot.
6. Serve with the noodles.

### INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp olive or rapeseed oil  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
2-3 cm ginger, grated or finely chopped  
200g/7oz boneless chicken thighs, chopped into small chunks  
A mixture of vegetables of your choice, such as:

- Carrot, cut into small sticks.
  - Green beans, trimmed.
  - Red/yellow/green pepper, cut into strips.
  - Mushrooms, sliced.
  - Bean sprouts
  - Green cabbage or curly kale, finely shredded
  - Onion, sliced
- Egg noodles

### For the Sweet and Sour Sauce (optional)

300ml / 10.5fl oz pineapple juice or apple juice  
2 tbsp tomato puree  
2 tbsp vinegar  
2 tsp soy sauce  
1 tbsp cornflour

**Mix all the sweet and sour sauce ingredients into a smooth paste**

# IN YOUR COMMUNITY

## New Recycling Storage at Dunning Court, Honiton

**JENNY NETHERWAY**  
Mobile Support Officer

Here at Dunning Court we have had fabulous new storage facility provided for both household waste and recycling materials.

For many years we had to manage with all the bins stored on a footpath in the courtyard, alongside the community center. This was not ideal as the recycle bins were a fire hazard and contravened fire regulations. They blocked the path for mobility scooters, wheelchairs and when we had strong winds, they would get blown around and their contents scattered all over the courtyard. Also, they were not very attractive to look at. It is a very different sight now as the photographs show.

Some residents from the flats now have to walk further to deposit their waste, but this is off-set by recycle boxes that are so much easier to manage and with no difficult lids to deal with.

A huge thank you to Steve Maclure (Recycling and Waste Officer) and all his team for organising and rigging it out, and to Phil Allen (Programmed Works Officer) and Ultim8 for its construction.



New bin storage facility



## Community Projects in Honiton

**SALLY HUTTER**  
Mobile Support Officer

During 2020 with Covid-19 restrictions in place, no community events were able to take place and so funds were available within the Community Initiative Fund.

Mobile Support Officers thought it would be beneficial for the tenants at Dunning Court and Westcott Way to have a picnic bench for the communal area. This would provide a much needed social area and hopefully have a positive impact on their wellbeing.

The benches were specifically chosen with wheelchair users in mind.

A two seater bench has been installed at Westcott Way to replace an old bench that was in disrepair.

The benches are made from recyclable material and are low maintenance.

Many thanks to Bev Anderson (Tenant Participation Assistant) and James Stoneman (StreetScene Team Leader) for their support and the StreetScene team Barry, Pete, Wayne and Darren, who made such a great job of installing the Westcott Way benches, it was much appreciated.



# Mental Health Conference 2021

**AARON CLARK**  
Community Development Officer

East Devon's virtual mental health conference took place on Wednesday 12 May and was well received and attended by professionals and groups from across the district. We were joined by Councillors Ian Hall and Tony Woodward who both showed real support and encouragement to the discussions that took place.

There were a number of service user updates from groups such as Parental Minds Community Interest Company and Open Arms East Devon, who gave important insight into the benefit and support they can offer young people, parents and vulnerable people with their mental wellbeing. Two fantastic guest speakers, Debbie Frances and Nicola Glassbrook, gave thorough

presentations on both young people and public mental health which were really helpful and full of vital content for all to take away.

Most evident was the desire and enthusiasm of all participants to engage with the information, learn from what has happened over the past 12 months and implement improvements and positive pathways into their individuals services and lines of work. The feeling of teamwork was present and it was a successful day in bringing likeminded people together to ensure we do everything we can to support those most in need, tenants and their families.

Using the positive feedback that has been returned, there are plans to look at a follow up second conference at the end of the year, where we will be able to hopefully run a more face to face events and continue building the mental health community in East Devon.

If anyone has any questions please get in touch with me via email at [aclark@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:aclark@eastdevon.gov.uk).

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## FROM OUR READERS

# You Are Never Too Old To Learn

**SANDRA WARD**  
Kilmington Tenant

In December last year, Bev Anderson (Tenant Participation Assistant) sent round to those who had expressed an interest in some of her courses on offer, details of free courses being hosted by Devon County Council. In fact, there were hundreds of courses for adults to do online. So if you were looking to pick up a new hobby or increase your

wellbeing or job prospects, Learn Devon, the adult learning and skills courses seem to have it covered.

I looked down the list of courses. Some were on art and craft, there were so many different ones, including courses making yourself more employable or learning a new language, the list is huge.

For some reason creative writing and poetry caught my eye. I went onto the web site, which

was easy and I registered. There is a telephone number if you prefer to speak to someone. They are very friendly and helpful. As luck would have it there was a place very soon on the next available course and I joined.

It was two hours a week on Zoom, which lasted for a month and there were nine other people on the course with me. We came from all over the county and it did help to break the monotony of being in lockdown. It really did. The tutor was so helpful. The two hours went in a flash and I was invited to either write something as an essay or a piece of poetry.

No, you didn't need to have qualifications. The exercises done



in Zoom helped you to get a story together though many wrote about themselves or something that had happened that week or that fitted the title. All we had to do was email it to our tutor. Some of us agreed to let others on the course read “our efforts”, but it was not compulsory. Some, wrote only a small amount, others wrote to the limit of 1000 words but it was up to you how much you wrote. The tutor read what you had written

and made comments back to you.

Nobody else saw those comments. I found them very constructive and she encouraged me so much.

So, this is just to urge anyone of whatever age and of whatever skill level, to go onto the site and have a look. Honestly, the phrase ‘you are never too old to learn’ is true. Just as an added bonus, when my granddaughter found out I was on a course she got

really chatty over the phone and told her friends. It can be difficult, when you get older to connect with the young but that worked. I sent her my four bits of writing, I think she was impressed.

So now when I hear someone saying they are bored or stuck in a hole with nothing to do I say, “contact Learn Devon by calling 0345 155 1014 or look them up online at [www.learndevon.co.uk](http://www.learndevon.co.uk), you won’t regret it”.



Completed craft projects

## My Lifetime Hobby

**AUDREY TIMS**  
Beer Tenant

I first learnt to knit at the age of ten, and was taught by my Mother. I also crochet, but can’t remember when or where I learnt.

I’ve always knitted and kept my children in cardigans and jumpers as they grew up, I’ve also knitted for my grandchildren and now my great-grandchildren.

I mainly knit and crochet baby and children’s knits, blankets, toys and anything else, apart from socks. I will give pretty much

anything a go, I’m still learning new things even now after 60 years of knitting and crocheting.

The majority of what I make is for friends and family, I sell whatever I make for myself, and reinvest the money in more wool to keep my hobby going. Anything that doesn’t get sold, goes to a friend who does charity shoeboxes for orphanages in Eastern Europe, where they have very little of what our children would take for granted, so I feel I’m doing my bit to help.

When Covid-19 started, I had

to go into a 12 week lockdown due to health issues and spent most of the year having to isolate, so being able to knit and sew was a godsend in that period. I think I knitted three times as much during 2020, I made around 50 items in total and I am still going.

I find knitting and crocheting a relaxing hobby and would say to anyone, if you can find out how to knit, do it. It gives me a sense of achievement when I can take a ball of wool and create something that someone will love to wear and it helps me relax as well.



## A Haven for Hedgehogs in Broadclyst

How to encourage hedgehogs in your garden

**PAT COOLING AND  
NAOMI TAYLOR**  
Broadclyst Tenants

We all know the importance of nature for improving our health and wellbeing, but over the past year and a half it has played an especially important role in so many of our lives. Due to Covid-19 and lockdown, we have spent large amounts of time confined to our homes and have taken more notice of the simple joys and pleasures in life that can be found in watching nature and nurturing wildlife.

In our case, it has given us the opportunity to spend more time with our growing group of local hedgehogs! We first noticed one or two cheeky little nocturnal visitors to our gardens several years ago and we started feeding them. We quickly fell in love with

their funny ways and cheeky nature. Fast forward to this year, and our group of hedgehogs is thriving, growing from two or three to around ten, with pregnant females due to give birth any time now. They nest in the secluded hedges of the communal gardens which join all our properties together and venture out each night into our small gardens to forage for food.

The hedgehog population has been in decline for the past 50 years for a number of reasons including the increasing landscaping of gardens with decking,



Hedgehog house

lack of connectivity between gardens and busier roads. Hedgehog numbers have dramatically reduced from 36.5million in the 1950s to around 1.5 million

in 2017. They are now listed as vulnerable on Britain's red list of mammals and they need all the help we can give them to survive.

Luckily, you can do very simple things to encourage hedgehogs in your garden, however small it may be (be prepared to get a bit obsessed about them), from making small holes in your fence for them to gain access, to leaving out dog or cat food (or hoggie biscuits) and water each night (NEVER leave out bread and milk, it will make them ill), to making a small corner of your garden into a wildlife haven with long grass, shrubs or lots of undergrowth to encourage nesting.

If you see a hedgehog in the day it is likely to be sick or injured, so needs to be referred to a vet or local rescue charity for advice and care. We found a young hedgehog in the daytime who was unable to move his back legs. We rushed "Harry" to Otter Vets in Sidmouth and they treated him with antibiotics. Over the next few weeks, we looked after Harry carefully and even started water therapy (a large tub full of warm water!) to try and strengthen his back legs. Sadly, he succumbed to what is known in hedgehog circles as Wobbly Leg Syndrome, a neurodegenerative disease.

So why not give it a go? Knowing you are doing your bit to help wildlife thrive and watching their nightly visits is so rewarding and much more entertaining than anything on the TV.

For more details visit the British Hedgehog Preservation Society: [www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk](http://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk). Hedgehog Street Wildlife Campaign: [www.hedgehogstreet.org/](http://www.hedgehogstreet.org/) hedgehog-in-my-garden. RSPB: [www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/homes-for-hedgehogs](http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/advice/gardening-for-wildlife/homes-for-hedgehogs). Wildlife Trust: [www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/actions/how-build-hedgehog-home).

## Lockdown Visit from Local Hedgehog



**SARAH ROUTLEY**  
Mobile Support Officer

Our sheltered tenant, Karen, has a menagerie of wildlife in her garden which has kept her smiling throughout lockdown. This is her very friendly hedgehog enjoying some play time with Esme the dog. Wildlife brings so much pleasure to our lives which, in the hustle and bustle of life, can go unnoticed. It has been so lovely seeing Karen's pictures. Keep them coming.

## Poem Paradise

**SIMONE SIBBALD**  
Sidford Tenant

Waking up to sweet bird song  
Everything is nice.  
Lovely neighbours do no wrong  
In sweet paradise.

# COMPETITIONS

£50 first prize, £25 runner-up prize

## FOR YOUNG PEOPLE CHRISTMAS POEM COMPETITION

Poems must be about what you look forward to during the Christmas period and the winners entries will be printed in the winter 2021 edition. Entrants must be under 18.

Send your entries to [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk) by the 30 September 2021 along with your name, address and age, if you need help, please ask an adult.

Win a £100 shopping voucher

## FOR ADULTS SUMMER 2021 WORD SEARCH

Email the missing word to [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk) by 30 September 2021 along with your name and address. See page 4 of Housing Matters about how we keep your personal data safe.

**Find these words:**

BALL	LIFEGUARDS	SEAGULLS
BARBEQUE	PHOTOGRAPH	SUN
BEACH	PICNIC	SWIMMING
BOAT	PLAYPARK	SWIMSUIT
CAMPING	SANDALS	TRAVEL
CANOE	SANDCASTLE	UMBRELLA
CRAB	SANITISER	VACATION
FACEMASK		ZOO
HAT	<b>Missing word:</b> _____	

S V E S A N I T I S E R A L H  
D A S H A Q F A C E M A S K C  
R C L T N T U H P L U C L C A  
A A A I H A M S A T J E E I M  
U T D U P O B R E S F L V N P  
G I N S A B R B Y A C J A C I  
E O A M R T E K L C G L R I N  
F N S I G P L H L D C U T P G  
I O B W O L L L A N I A L P G  
L I T S T A A M B A B S N L U  
T R A F O Y F N U S R Z E O S  
Z I H X H P K B E A C H Z P E  
Z A G J P A A G N I M M I W S  
D O P B A R B E Q U E X H W Y  
Q D O L I K O C W G L T S H I

# TENANTS' VIEWS



**SEND US YOUR PHOTOS**  
THIS IS OUR REGULAR PHOTO  
FEATURE, A GREAT AND QUICK  
WAY FOR YOU TO GET INVOLVED.

## HOW DO I SEND YOU MY PICTURES?

Please don't send images of people, as it makes getting their permission difficult. **Send us a digital photo:** email high resolution JPG images to [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk).

Hawkchurch sunset  
-Mr M Ward

