

HOUSING MATTERS

YOUR SPRING 2023 EDITION

The magazine for
East Devon District Council
tenants and leaseholders

By post, email, online or audio cd
eastdevon.gov.uk/housingmatters



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Warm Hubs become Community Hubs as Winter turns to Spring



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The Garden Competition
returns in person this year



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All Welcome at Palmer House
Breakfast and Lunch Club



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The Big Conversation: Tell Us What
Resident Involvement Should Look Like

News | Information | Contact details | Articles from tenants

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, or household tip. Contact the Tenant Participation team.

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. *Housing Matters* is also available online at eastdevon.gov.uk/housing-matters.

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

Housing Matters is produced by Housing 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.

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.

If you enjoy reading and would like to join the Editorial Group, please contact Tenant Participation for more details.

CONTACT US

Tenant Participation

Phone: 01395 517453

Email: tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk

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

Keep up to date

Online: 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.

Our offices at Blackdown House, Honiton, and Exmouth Town Hall are open Monday to Thursday each week from 9am - 1pm.

You can also call our Customer Service Team on 01395 516551

The council continues to operate an appointment system for people to meet with officers and more details on how to do this can be found by visiting

www.eastdevon.gov.uk/contact-us

APOLOGIES

We would like to apologise for the following mistakes that appeared in the Winter Edition of *Housing Matters*

- The dates and venues for the Warm Hubs were listed in the article only, and not in the "What's On" section
- The "HALFF" logo should not have been reproduced on the recipe we shared. The logo and charity name "HALFF" is no longer in use; the charity is now known as Project Food.
- Some events had passed by the time the magazine landed on doorsteps. The delivery of the last issue was impacted by postal strikes.



Join other East Devon residents and download the free East Devon App from 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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WHAT'S ON

APRIL – AUGUST 2023

FIND OUT MORE

For more information on the housing events on these pages please contact Tenant Participation (see page 2). Please note dates, times and events are subject to change (correct at time of production). Contact Tenant Participation if you would like to check the details of an event.

 Panel and group meetings: if you would like to join any of these meetings as an observer in the first instance, please contact Tenant Participation (see bottom of page). Service Review Groups (SRGs) are a great way to have your say on the housing service.

 Outdoor events with the council's Countryside team: contact 01395 517557 for more information.
Additional 50% discount given to East Devon District Council tenants when booking

APR	21 FRI  Westcott Way Residents Association 1.30pm - 3pm Honiton	25 TUE  Recruitment and Selection Training Event for Involved Tenants 1.30 - 4 pm	25 TUE  Bluebell Walk at Holyford Woods 10am - 12pm £5 per person	25 TUE  Bluebell Walk at Holyford Woods 2pm - 4pm £5 per person
	28 FRI  Bluebell Walk at Knapp Copse 10am-12pm £5 per person	28 FRI  Bluebell Walk at Knapp Copse 2pm - 4pm £5 per person	MAY	9 TUE  Scrutiny Panel Meeting 10am - 12pm Honiton
JUN	8 THU  Resident Involvement Management Group (RIMG) 9am - 4pm Honiton	15 THU  Housing Review Board 10am - 12am, Honiton		19 MON  Designated Tenants Complaint Panel 2pm - 4pm, Honiton
	JUL	20 THU  Manor Road Residents Association 10am - 12pm Seaton	AUG	29 TUE  Resident Involvement Management Group 2pm - 4pm. Community Centre location TBC.

WHAT'S ON | community centres

A great way to make new friends

BIDMEAD, EXMOUTH

Stroke survivors group:

Mondays 12pm- 4pm Free friends and family welcome
Wednesdays 10:30am-12:30pm £5 Lunch

Littleham community Larder:

Wednesdays 3pm-5pm,
Thursday 9am-11pm. Friday 4pm-6pm

Littleham Chat 'n' Chill:

2nd Thursday of every month
11:30am – 2:30pm

BROADVIEW, BROADCLYST

Coffee Mornings:

Mondays 9am-12pm

Community Hub:

Wednesdays 10am – 2pm

BURNSIDE, EXMOUTH

Coffee Morning:

Fridays 10am-12pm

CHURCHILL COURT, LYMPSTONE

Community Hub:

Thursdays 11am – 3pm

CLAYTON HOUSE, EXMOUTH

Open door - Men's Shed:

Tuesdays, Wednesdays,
Thursdays 10am-4pm.
enquiries to: menshed@openoorexmouth.org.uk

DUNNING COURT

Coffee Mornings:

Last Friday of the month
10am-12pm

Friday 5th May:

Coronation Celebration call Sue on 07858688450 to book your place. Limited spaces available.

LYMEBOURNE, SIDMOUTH

Board games and card afternoons:

Tuesdays 2:30pm – 4pm

Community Hub:

Thursday 11am – 3pm

Christian Free Church:

Sundays 10:30am – 12:30pm

MILLWEY, AXMINSTER

Brownies:

Monday's Term time
6pm- 7:30pm

Community Hub:

Mondays 10am – 2pm

Bingo:

3rd Friday of every month
1pm – 4pm

MORGAN COURT, EXMOUTH

The Welcome Centre and lunch club:

Thursdays and Fridays
9:30am – 3:30pm

Crafts, exercise, games, free tea and coffee

Full day £38 (includes two course lunch), half day £28 (includes two-course lunch), lunch only £9. Contact Angela Boatwright on 07423041146.

PALMER HOUSE, EXMOUTH

Twilight Spiritual Service:

2nd Sunday of every month
6:30pm-9:30pm

Brixington Ladies Getaway club:

1st Wednesday of every at
2pm-5pm. £2 entry or £10 for the year

Carnival Club:

Last Thurs of each month 7pm - 9pm

Craft group:

Mondays 10am – 12pm

Breakfast club:

Tuesdays 9:30am - 11:30am

Lunch club:

Fridays 10am – 1:30pm

PARK CLOSE, WOODBURY

Afternoon tea:

Mondays 2pm-4pm

Quilting:

Every other Wednesday 10am – 12pm Starting 3rd May

Computer club:

Every other Wednesday
2pm-4pm Starting 3rd May

Bring your own craft afternoon:

Thursdays 2pm-4pm

Community Hub:

Fridays 10am – 4pm

RATCLIFF HOUSE, EXMOUTH

Community Hub:

Mondays 10am – 2pm

Coffee Morning:

Fridays 10am-12pm

Day trips from Burnside:

Contact Rodney on
07766887173 for more information and prices



Did you also know that you can hire community centres?
Contact booking coordinator on
01395 571696 or **01395 571756**.

HELLO

SUE SAUNDERS
Chairperson – Editorial Group

Hello everyone,

Let me begin by wishing you a happy 2023 and hoping that you had a very merry Christmas.

May I say, on behalf of all tenants, a huge thank you to the staff of East Devon District Council, for arranging the 'Warm Hubs'.

They have proved to be a real help for those struggling to cope with the rise in energy

prices and the cost of living in general. It's a great idea and something to be very proud of.

I don't know about you but I still can't get my brain around the fact that we now have a KING. How long do you think it will take us, to get used to singing GOD SAVE OUR KING? However long it takes, I'm sure we wish him a long and happy reign.

There are quite a few interesting and informative articles in this issue of the Housing Matters magazine. Something for everyone, we hope.

And don't forget to register to compete in the garden competition.

The theme of the puzzle page is King Charles' coronation. If you are considering holding a street party or some other event to mark the occasion then please take some photographs and send them to us for inclusion in the next issue of the magazine

Well I leave it there for now, the next time I write we will have a newly Crowned King.

Bye for now.

In Memory of Sylvia Martin

TRIBUTE
SUE SAUNDERS

I am sorry to report the recent death of Sylvia Martin.

As many of you will know, Sylvia was an involved Tenant for many years and Chair of the Scrutiny Panel from its inception in approximately 2010.

She was kind, intelligent, hard-working and a shining example of fair mindedness.

I know I can speak for everyone who worked alongside her and especially for members of the Scrutiny Panel, when I say she will be greatly missed.



For a Dear Friend

Jose Ireland, scrutiny member and friend

Sylvia was my friend for over eleven years. She was a clever and knowledgeable lady but she was also caring and funny. She was ever ready to help others who needed it. She will be sadly missed, especially by me. God bless you Sylvia and thank you. Love Jose.

An Irish blessing

Jim Kelleher, scrutiny member and friend

May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be always at your back.

And the sunshine warm upon your face,

Until we meet again, may the lord hold you in the palm of his hand.

YOUR COUNCIL

Planning for the future - EDDC Stock Condition Survey

What improvements are needed to your homes?

Since the beginning of August of last year East Devon District Council has been undertaking a Stock Condition Survey encompassing all of our properties. This totals over 4200 homes! If you are a resident in one of our homes, you may have already received a letter from us, if not you can look forward to receiving one in the coming months, with the project planning to run until the end of September 2023.

What is the Stock Condition Survey?

The Stock Condition survey collects information about the condition of our properties to understand repair needs, health and safety issues and provides an Energy Performance Certificate. The information collected will be analysed in detail and it will allow us to make informed decisions when it comes to planning future repairs and upgrades for your homes.

What happens on the day?

A Chartered Building Surveyor from our specialist consultants, Currie & Brown will attend your property at a pre-arranged time and will carry out a visual inspection of the condition of your home. This inspection will cover the entirety of your home including your doors, windows, walls, roofs and also your garden and loft if you have one. This will take around an hour to complete and

they will record important information on your homes condition and energy efficiency in their survey report. The surveyor may take photos of important components such as your boilers and radiators where appropriate. This report is then audited by Currie and Brown and sent over to us at EDDC.

What happens next?

Once your survey has been completed, any immediate repairs your property requires will be processed and actioned as a priority. This may require a visit from one of our own surveyors to confirm what work needs to be done. In the longer term, the data from the survey will be used to help us plan upgrades and repairs for our residents' homes.

We would like to thank all of our residents for their ongoing co-operation with the Stock Condition Survey, without your assistance, we would not be able to complete this project which is vital in providing the basis for our ongoing work to improve our residents homes.

If you have any questions about the Stock Condition Survey, please contact, Ollie Tollerfield, on 01395 517586 or email: stockcondition@eastdevon.gov.uk

The company used by EDDC are in this article. Please ignore any other cold calls offering help as these may be fraudulent. If in doubt please contact us.

Introducing the Communities team

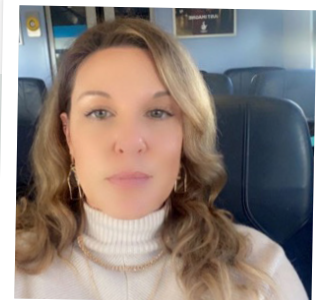
The Communities team has expanded and has some new faces.

Hi I'm Alex and I have recently become the interim manager of the Communities Team. One of the things I love about working in Communities is talking to people and getting to know them. I love hearing people's stories and seeing the world through different people's eyes.



Hallo, I'm Victoria and I've worked in the Communities Team for over a decade! I love the variety of my role and that basically my job is to help make people's lives better. When I'm not at work I enjoy walking my dogs and sea swimming.

Hi, I'm Rebecca Meakin I have been with the council for just over a year, where I started in Housing Allocations. I decided to join the Communities Team, so I can provide support to tenants, so they feel valued, empowered and involved.



I am Lucinda Cliff, I have been with EDDC for 10 years. I am a Devon girl and was born just outside Axminster, I love sewing, embroidery, reading and walking around our beautiful countryside. For me being part of a community is an essential part of my own wellbeing, feeling connected and not alone, leading to a more fulfilling life.

Hi, I'm Jackie. I've worked at East Devon for nearly 15 years now, firstly in the benefits team, then, more recently as a Mobile Support Officer, and I'm currently seconded to the Communities Team. I love meeting and getting to know people from all different backgrounds and walks of life, and I love the buzz you get from knowing you've helped someone, even if only in a very small way, to get through a difficult time, or solve a niggling problem.



Hey, I'm Jamie Clayden and new to the council and communities team having started in December 2022. I enjoy walking, cups of tea and socialising. For me the most important part about a community is the people within them and treating everyone as an individual.

Some recent examples of what the Communities team do

We are leading on The Big Conversation, which is a review of all the ways that we consult with, listen to and involve residents in the Housing Service – See article on Page 14.

Our team also help communities with projects in their area. Recently we have planted new hedges and wildflowers in Wiltshire close, which was requested by tenants.

We are continuing to receive food deliveries from FareShare and Exeter Food Action. Various food providers come to meet the van and collect food, and we take some to local families. This saves food that would otherwise be wasted and makes sure it goes to people who need it.

We assist tenants to start and run community activities and clubs, for example we've recently supported the peer support group "Littleham Chat 'n' Chill" to restart after Covid. We will also be working with tenants so they can host Big Lunch events for the Coronation.

We help establish Resident Association Groups, which in turn improve their communities. We help them to organise their meetings, and invite the right people within the council to join them when they have issues surrounding their housing that they need to discuss.

Over the winter the communities team have been running your local warm hubs and organising the various taster sessions and events happening there. Activities have included cooking demonstrations, Thai chi, and an artist workshop to name a few.

We are working hard to ensure that the tenant involvement groups that review the services provided by our Housing Teams get back up and running, following the disruption caused by the Covid pandemic.

We support tenants who are already running groups in their area e.g. with applying for funding for a new project, or finding volunteers to fulfil a key role in their group. For example recently we have started working with the Stroke Survivors Club.

How to report a repair

It is important that if you have a repair that is needed within your home, this is reported to us as soon as possible.

The quickest way to report a repair is via an email to our Housing Repair Team repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk. Alternatively you can call us on 01395 517458.

When you are advising us of a repair, please be sure to include the following:

- Your name
- Your property address
- As much detail about the repair as possible
- Any photos if you have these

Once we have received your repair, in most cases, it will be carried out within 28 days. If you are advising us of an emergency, we will attend in 4 hours to ensure that it is made safe and schedule further works with you, if required.

If you're reporting an emergency then you'll need to call us on: **8.30am to 5pm Monday - Friday (office hours): 01395 517458**
Out of Hours and Weekend's: 0330 678 2381

An emergency repair is any problem that could be a security risk or cause harm to you, another person or to your property.

All emergency repairs need to be reported by phone, using the contacts above.

Some examples of emergency

repairs are ones that:

- pose a health and safety risk, like flooding or an electrical hazard
- poses a security risk, like a problem with the main entrance to your property

Things that are NOT covered by the repairs service

You must carry out or arrange for the following jobs to be done yourself. You may need our permission to carry out some of these items. Please contact us for further information.

- All internal decoration
- Replacing keys when you have lost them or broken them in the lock (unless fair wear and tear) or where you have locked yourselves out
- Getting extra keys cut, including radiator keys
- Replacing broken or cracked glass (unless this is due to criminal damage and a police crime number is given)
- Fitting curtain rails, coat hooks or pelmets and draught proofing to doors or windows
- Fitting extra door or window locks without a recommendation from the police, unless these were inadequate in the first place
- Adjusting doors when you have fitted new floor coverings.
- Replacing light bulbs, fluorescent tubes or starters*
- Testing smoke detectors

(including any provided by us) or replacing batteries except for a communal system (Home Safeguard)

- Resetting electrical trip switches*
- Getting chimneys swept if used for wood or a coal fire
- Filling minor cracks or holes in walls and ceilings
- Clearing basins, sinks, baths or toilets which have become blocked due to misuse
- Replacing toilet seats and flush chains, and plugs and chains on baths, basins or sinks
- Replacing clothes lines or restringing rotary driers (unless in a shared area)
- Maintaining garden paths or patios (except those leading to front or back doors or provided specifically for an existing disabled tenant) and any other general garden features (unless in shared areas)
- Keeping gully grids and wall vents clear of leaves and rubbish
- Replacing TV aerials and sockets (except for communal aerials)
- Disconnecting or reconnecting appliances such as cookers or washing machines
- Installing extra electric sockets unless the number available is below the minimum standard
- Bleeding or venting central heating radiators.
- Fitting or replacing internal door latches, handles, chains

in your home

- or spy holes
- Repairing or replacing handles, catches or knobs on kitchen units
- Maintaining garden fencing (unless it is post and wire

fence provided by us).
*In exceptional circumstances we will arrange these repairs for extremely vulnerable tenants
If you have any questions or need advice on what is your responsibility, please do contact

our Housing Repair Team.
Should you need to enquire around whether you need permission to carry out works to your home, please email permission@eastdevon.gov.uk



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.

Estate Walkabouts

We want our residents to be proud of their homes and community. As part of our commitment to maintain the appearance and condition of our housing estates, the Estate Management team have been conducting a number of Estate walkabouts recently. This is to make sure our estates are well maintained.

The walkabouts - called estate inspections, have been carried out by our Estate Housing Officers and other stakeholders, such as local Councillors, involved tenants, and the Police.

The inspections are an essential part of keeping our housing estates clean, safe and well-maintained. They provide an opportunity to address any unreported issues promptly, such as communal maintenance and repairs, landscaping issues,

fly-tipping, abandoned/untaxed vehicles, littering and graffiti.

We have also been working alongside our Repairs service and Street Scene who look after grounds maintenance, landscaping, hedges and grassed areas to ensure that all communal areas are maintained to the required standard.

The inspections have also helped us to identify things that would benefit residents and improve the condition of our housing estates, such as renewing broken fencing and gates and cutting back overgrown hedges.

Following on from these inspections, the Estate Housing Officers have been producing action plans to document any areas of concern and are monitoring actions that have been raised to ensure they are completed as quickly as possible.

Cllr Hall joined our inspection on 28th February. He said ' Many thanks for an excellent and productive morning in Axminster'

We will post details of future estate inspections to residents in Housing Matters, on our Social Media accounts and on our website. Residents will be encouraged to raise any issues beforehand or are welcome to meet with their Estate Housing Officer on the day.

Please look out for the next estate inspection in your area.

If you would like to take part please get in touch. You can Email EstateManagement@eastdevon.gov.uk or call 01395 571755

Annual Visits to the Homes of all Tenants

East Devon District Council have recently approved the adoption of yearly tenancy visits to council-owned housing following a consultation with Involved Tenants and the Housing Leadership Team.

On 16th March 2023, the council's Housing Review Board approved the proposal for Landlord Services to make annual visits to general needs and sheltered housing properties. This is to ensure that its homes and tenancies are being proactively managed.

These visits will help the council to check the condition of its properties; arrange

unreported repairs, and ensure that the housing needs of tenants are being met. The early identification of unreported repairs or unauthorised alterations will also help the council reduce the turnaround time for re-letting properties and help save money on costly repairs.

In addition, these tenancy visits will help us to establish whether there are any tenancy related issues, such as unlawful sub-letting/tenancy fraud. At the same time, we will be able to identify any vulnerability or safeguarding issues that may exist, and offer support and

assistance if needed.

These visits will be carried out by Housing Officers and Mobile Support Officers and will take place at pre-arranged times. This will ensure that our tenants get the opportunity to discuss any housing-related issues face-to-face so that we can better understand their needs.

The programme of tenancy visits for all council properties will begin from May this year.

We are aiming to visit 100% of our tenants by the end of March 2024, and then to visit all its properties on a yearly cycle thereafter.

Damp and Mould

Many of you will have seen and have been shocked by the national news coverage and examples on social media, where people in social housing are living with severe dampness and mould in their homes. The response from the Regulator of Social Housing has been firm and decisive, with all local authorities ordered to review how we tackle damp and mould in our properties.

We agree with the regulator that just one of these shocking cases is too many, and we have reviewed our policy and procedure for tackling damp and mould in our properties. This procedure focuses not just on dealing with cases when we hear about them, but also prioritises working to prevent such cases developing in the first place. In addition to this review, we are also:

- providing training for our staff so that they can better understand what causes damp and mould and advise you on the best course of action should you experience damp and mould in your property
- working with our repairs contractor to recruit a specialist damp surveyor and ensure that works to solve damp and mould issues are prioritised
- reviewing our historic cases and identifying properties that are at high risk of damp and mould
- inspecting our void properties for any signs of Damp and Mould

Help us to help you

If you are experiencing any damp or mould in your property, please let us know as soon as possible. Apart from it being unsightly, it is not healthy, particularly if you have children or an underlying health condition such as asthma. It may also indicate that there are serious issues with your property that will need to be addressed quickly.

For very minor cases, you should be able to clean the walls using a suitable detergent. However, please contact the Housing Repairs team by emailing repairs@eastdevon.gov.uk, or by calling 01395 517458 first. Depending on where the damp is, it may be an indication of something more serious, such as a water leak, issues with your roof or rising damp.

Even if this is not the case, we will be able to advise you how to safely clean the mould away and provide you with an information leaflet that will give you useful tips on how to avoid mould developing in the future. We will also call you back in 3 months to see if the issue has been resolved. We've also produced a useful online guide on how to reduce condensation in your home.

If there is more significant mould then our repairs contractor, Ian Williams will come out and carry out a mould wash within 5 working days. We will also arrange for a damp survey to be carried out. This will enable us to see if there is an underlying reason why the mould is appearing. For example, there may be inadequate insulation in the walls or ceiling, or a ventilation system is not working. In some cases, the cause might be from penetrative or rising damp.

Further assistance

One way of reducing the risk of damp and mould from condensation is to make sure you are adequately heating your home. We are acutely aware however, that it can be very expensive to do this given the price of energy at the moment. If you are struggling with the cost of heating then you can apply for assistance from the EDDC Hardship fund. More information and an online application form can be found on our website. You can also email hardship@eastdevon.gov.uk or call the benefits team on 01395 571770



GET INVOLVED

The Big Conversation

We Want To Know What YOU Think

Do you feel that you are included, listened to, and informed about the way East Devon District Council runs its Housing Service?

The Communities Team already offer a variety of ways for you to get involved and have your say about the housing issues that directly affect you, and to find out about and be involved in the decisions and decision making processes that affect all tenants.

1. We facilitate and support several formal groups made up entirely of tenants, who are just like you. Each of these groups finds out about a particular area within Housing, such as the repairs service, estate management, or complaints. They hear about how well the service is performing, and are told about their plans for the future. They are asked for their opinions on those plans. They have the opportunity to affect decisions that are made, and to shape our policies. As these are formal groups, their meetings are run by a chair person, who is voted for by the other members, and is an EDDC tenant. Officers from the Communities Team are always present too. All tenants are welcome to join these groups. Just call the tenant

participation number at the bottom of the page if you are interested and would like to know more

Are we listening to what you tell us well enough?

2. We publish our magazine "Housing Matters", three times a year. The magazine is co-produced by tenants and officers, and through it we let you know what is happening in your communities and what different services within Housing have been up to.

Is the right information going out in the magazine and on Social Media?

3. Our Annual Tenants Conference, This is organised jointly by a group of tenants, and officers from the Communities Team. It is an upbeat event, where tenants and officers join together, enjoy a meal, and celebrate the achievements of those who work hard to improve

their communities. All tenants of EDDC are welcome to come along.

4. Activities that the Communities Team and the Mobile Support Officers run across the district. These provide opportunities for you to talk to officers face to face.

Are there enough events and activities in your area?

5. The Communities Team support tenants to run activities themselves in their communities. We are helping to re-establish Residents Associations, both old, and new, as well as supporting volunteers to run Community Hubs. Support is also being given to a variety of other tenant lead groups too.

6. We are also keeping you up to date through social media. You can follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter on [@EDDCHome_and_People](#)

What else could we do?



But is this enough? Are we offering enough opportunities for tenants to have their say on their Housing service?

We are speaking to tenants who are already involved in the Housing Service and those who aren't. We are speaking

to Councillors, and we are speaking to managers and frontline officers across Housing. We are finding out how other Housing Providers do things differently, and researching what government and expert bodies say is best practice.

We want to hear from you too, so please get in touch. Let us know what else we can do, call the Communities Team on 01395 517453 or email us on tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk

How to leave us a compliment, or make a complaint

Compliments

Like everyone else, we like to know when we have done something well. If you have received good service from our Housing Team, please tell us about it!

Let us know who has impressed you and how. You can call or Email Tenant Participation (details at bottom of page), or even write to us at the address on Page 2.

Complaints

We aim to provide an excellent service for all our tenants. However if we do make a mistake we will apologise and aim to put it right as quickly as possible.

If you remain dissatisfied with our response we have a formal complaints process you can use. Let us have details of your complaint. The Council's dedicated complaints team will log and investigate it according to our agreed procedure.

You can raise a complaint in any of the following ways:

- a) By phone **01395 517417**
- b) by email to complaints@eastdevon.gov.uk
- c) via our website (<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/customer-services/feedback-and-complaints/complaints/make-a-complaint/>) or;

- d) In writing to: Information and Complaints Officer, East Devon District Council, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathfield Industrial Estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ

If you still feel dissatisfied after the council has considered your complaint you can complain to the Housing Ombudsman. You can find out more information on the Housing Ombudsman here: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/. Complaints about Housing allocations and waiting lists can be referred to the Local Government Ombudsman. You can find out about them by visiting www.lgo.org.uk

Christmas Consultation Event

Held 21 December 2022

Just before Christmas, we held a consultation event which 21 tenants attended. The morning was an opportunity for tenants to hear about the work being done within the Housing Service, to ask questions and provide their views and feedback.

The agenda for the morning included the new Damp and Mould Policy and The Housing Service Plan.

The afternoon was a workshop to explore and discuss the range of ways that we currently enable tenants to be involved in and influence the decisions that get made about the services they receive and how their homes are managed.

Overview of the morning

Graham Baker, the Property & Assets Manager talked through the new policy for handling damp and mould issues within homes. You can see an overview of the policy on page 13 of this magazine. Managers then presented their achievements from the previous year, and their future plans for the coming year.

1. There are currently 5,000 households on the waiting list for social housing. Sadly the number of households facing homelessness is also on the rise, but we have made a successful bid for funding

allowing them to employ additional staff to help in this area.

2. A specialist consultancy firm have been engaged to visit every council home to carry out a stock condition survey. All properties should have been visited by the end of September 2023. Additional grant funding has been secured which will allow a further 50 properties to be upgraded with new insulation, doors and windows, new environmentally friendly heating systems, and solar panels.
3. We are providing lots of support to tenants who struggle financially to access budgeting advice, help with claiming benefits, and help with claiming additional financial support from emergency funds where needed.
4. We have been looking at all land owned by EDDC and have identified 11 sites where the building of new homes may be possible. Any new homes supplied by East Devon would be eco-friendly with low/zero cost heating costs and low/zero carbon emissions.
5. A review of pay and benefits was completed last year and has helped to address some of the recruitment issues we

have been facing, as more people are now applying for positions that are advertised.

Overview of the afternoon

After lunch the event turned its focus onto how tenants are currently able to get involved with the housing service, and a lively discussion was had, with everyone in the room contributing.

The aim of the discussion was to look at how well the current Tenant Participation groups work. The questions included whether the Terms of Reference were right for each group; whether each group gets the right information at the right time, and whether changes happen as a result of the work of the group.

The main focus of the Communities Team now is to get the Tenant Participation groups back up and running. They are also conducting a thorough review of how fit-for-purpose our current approach to Resident Involvement is; what Best Practice recommends, and what changes the new Social Housing White Paper will require going forward.

For a full version of the report of the meeting please contact tenant participation on the contact information at the bottom of this page.

JUST FOR FUN

CORONATION WORDSEARCH

How to enter: complete the word search, one of the words is missing!

Send entries telling us the missing word along with your name, address, age to Tenant Participation (details on page 2) by 21st May.

- | | |
|------------|-----------------|
| Abbey | Crown |
| Anointing | Flags |
| Archbishop | King |
| Bunting | Monarch |
| Ceremony | National Anthem |
| Choir | Orb |
| Coach | Pomp |
| Crowds | Procession |

Wordsearch Competition Winners from last edition

1st Prize - £100

Sheila Donald. Sheila has told us that she bought a camera with her winnings

Runners up - £50 each

Sue Wakely and Dayle Byers

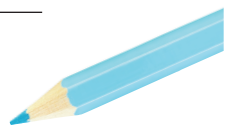
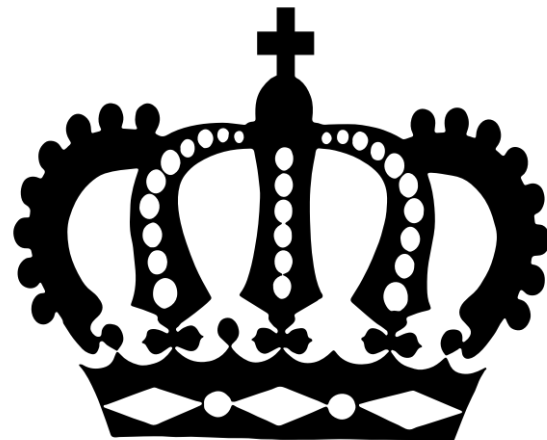
E B V U X D C Y N G K J G Q A
V R L C T R I S A R N U L T R
H O T U U O L V T D O I K F C
O M F P R W A U I C D V R C H
T Y K C E S E N O R H T G E B
J E G B H C W O N O Z F T Y I
C O A C H O S I A W X P E M S
X V Z O M Y I B L D H B M R H
Q L O K C B U R A S B T G O O
F B I R A N O A N A C M G M P
Q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

DESIGN A CROWN COMPETITION

In honour of our new King's Coronation we are asking you to design a crown. The crown should reflect the modern world and styles from 2023. Please send your entries, along with your name, age, and address to Tenant Participation (details on page 2) by 21 May.

The designs will be judged by an independent group. 1st prize is £30 and 2 runners up will receive £15

The name of the winner and a picture of their design will be printed in the next issue of Housing Matters.



✉ tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk

Spring 2023 HOUSING MATTERS

17

AT HOME

Green fingers at the ready as we announce details of the 2023 Tenant Garden Competition!

Whether you have a glorious garden, a productive veg patch or some pretty pots it's time to get planting for your chance to win a prize in our annual Tenant Garden Competition.

And we're very excited to tell you that judging will return to being in-person this year.

There are 10 categories for you to choose from and each category will have a gold, silver and bronze prize, with the overall winner receiving £100!

- The closing date for entries is Monday 26th June 2023
- The judging will take place in the week of 10th July 2023
- And the prize giving event will be at the Tenant's Conference in the Autumn.



Seed Swap

If you have seeds or cuttings to spare bring them along to the Tenant's Conference where we will be arranging a seed swap to help keep the cost of gardening down. It will also be a chance to chat to the other gardeners.

Top tips

If you have any tips for growing winning plants or vegetables we'd love to hear them so we can share in Housing Matters and on our social media.

Competition Categories

Which category best suits your garden? Tell us which category or categories you want your garden to be considered in when you get in touch with us*.

Best Overall Garden

- Best back garden – display of flowers or original feature
- Best front garden – display of flowers or best original feature
- Best nature garden – the garden that makes best use of recycled materials or encourages wildlife





**The judges may decide to move your garden to a different category if they feel it would get a better result.*

- Best vegetable garden – this could be in pots and tubs or a traditional setting
- Best garden designed and maintained by a tenant with a disability
- Containers and hanging baskets – including window boxes
- Communal and friends together – tenants working together to make the best of their communal space
- First time entrant – the most innovative and creative first time entry
- Young person’s garden – the best entry designed and maintained by someone under 16.

To enter the Garden Competition

Contact Tenant Participation by email or phone (details at the bottom of this page). You can also write to us at the address at the beginning of this magazine. Please make sure that you include the following information:

Your name and address, a contact number, and the category you would like to enter.

A chance to recycle

SUE DAWSON
Tenant

We all have pill packets in the house, surprising how many sometimes, but did you know that Superdrug stores are now taking empty pill packaging? This service is for the silver foil type of tablet packaging like the one pictured, not bottles or other forms of packaging.

Superdrug in Exmouth have confirmed that all the stores are running this scheme. All you have to do is save up your empty pill packages and when you next

pop into Honiton or Exmouth, in fact anywhere there is a Superdrug store, you just drop them off into a container usually behind the counter. Superdrug can then, somehow, recycle these packages!

It is amazing how many of these pill packages you can get, from headache pills to prescription drugs, and all these silver packs can be recycled by Superdrug.

So before you just put these things in the general bin, think Superdrug and recycle.

Rest Less - A Digital Community for the over 50s

Rest Less Events are FREE. Using your phone, tablet or laptop you can access their free courses through ZOOM.

Meet like-minded people and make friends.

Rest Less runs events every day of the month. You can partake in fitness, book club, arts and crafts, music, wellbeing, food, and travel to name but a few.

You can partake in 2 courses a month for free, or if you are blown away by their offering you can sign up for £4.99 a month.

ZOOM can be downloaded for free and is very easy to use. It could change your life and is great for your wellbeing and mental health. If you are lonely it is an ideal way to join a community and make friends.

Go take a look at restless.co.uk and explore the site.

Get Insured and Protect the Things You Love

Peace of mind this spring

As your Landlord, we are responsible for the building of your home. It is your responsibility to look after your home contents and personal belongings. These include your furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, and electrical items, and don't forget your jewellery, pictures and ornaments. So what does home contents insurance cover?

- Fire
- Theft
- Storm and flood damage
- Damage caused by water or oil leaks
- And much more

Crystal Insurance Scheme is available to all our tenants and leaseholders, with all residents being eligible to apply. 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. 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, damaged or stolen, so

home contents insurance can help provide peace of mind.

There are three ways to contact Crystal.

- 1 Call Crystal on 0345 450 7286
- 2 Request an application pack from EDDC Allocations team 01395 517469
- 3 Visit www.crystal-insurance.co.uk where you can also request someone to call you back

The Crystal Insurance Scheme is a product name arranged and

administered by Thistle Tenant Risks, a trading style of Thistle Insurance Services Limited. Thistle Insurance Services Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority FRN 310419. Registered in England under No. 00338645. Registered office: Rossington's Business Park, West Carr Road, Retford, Nottinghamshire, DN22 7SW. Thistle Insurance Services Limited is part of the PIB Group. For information about what we do with personal data please see our Privacy Policy at www.crystal-insurance.co.uk/Privacy-Policy





Handyperson Scheme

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

Our Handyperson service, 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 to do the job.

To be eligible for this scheme, you must be an EDDC tenant and meet at least **one** of the following criteria:

- a. Live in one of our sheltered housing properties
- b. Be included on our Individual Garden Maintenance Scheme
- c. Be 65 years or older
- d. Be disabled and in receipt of certain disability benefits

You can have up to 3 Handyperson visits per year.

Jobs the handyman could do

- Putting up pictures.
- Assembling small flat pack furniture items.
- Putting up a T.V. bracket and connecting the TV to, or adjusting the T.V. aerial.
- Putting up shelves, mirrors or clothes rails.
- Putting up blinds, curtain poles and curtains.
- Putting up towel rail and toilet holders or bathroom cabinets.

- Putting up coat and key hooks, or utensil holders on the wall.
- 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 still be able to help you, please ask.

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 handyperson service. This time cannot be built up or backdated.

The Handyperson 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 or glue.
- Carry a personal identification badge at all times.
- Carry out the agreed work only.

To find out more or make an appointment please contact our Housing Repair Line on 01395 517458

When you phone you will be asked what work you would like the handyperson to do and we will make a booking for the work to be carried out. Please note that the handyperson will not carry out any work that has not been requested beforehand.



RECIPE

LEMON AND OLIVE CHICKEN CASSEROLE

PIERRE GRAEBER HAS BEEN RUNNING EASY COOKING ON A BUDGET COOKERY DEMONSTRATIONS OVER THE WINTER AT THE WARM HUBS. HERE HE SHARES ONE OF HIS HEALTHY EATING RECIPES

warm hubs

INGREDIENTS (MAKES 4 PORTIONS)

- 400-500g chicken cut into chunks. Thighs are cheaper and juicier, but if you wish to use breasts you only need 3 for 4 portions.
- 2 un-waxed lemons, the juice and zest of 1, the other sliced.
- 2 brown onions, 1 finely chopped, 1 sliced.
- 2 garlic cloves finely chopped.
- 500ml of hot water.
- 1 tablespoon cornflour
- 1 tablespoon of chicken gravy granules, low salt.
- 1 bunch of flat leaved parsley, chopped.
- Black pepper
- Olive oil.

This will cost £1.35 a portion from Aldi, £1.95 a portion from Tesco.



METHOD

- In a large frying pan or saucepan, heat some olive oil and lightly brown the chopped onions and garlic. When they are soft, place them into a bowl.
- Using the same pan, fry the chicken pieces on a medium heat. When the pieces are lightly browned, return the chopped onions to the pan.
- Add the olives, the sliced onion and sliced lemon, and give it a good stir.
- Add the lemon zest, lemon juice, and cornflour and stir again.
- Add the gravy granules to 500ml of hot water and add this mix into the pan with the parsley.
- Cover and cook, stirring occasionally. After 20 minutes, check the chicken is cooked through – it should be juicy but not pink.

Serve with rice and veg of choice.

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

King Charles's Coronation

On 6th May we will be celebrating the coronation of King Charles III and his Queen Consort, Camila.

The palace have asked councils to be supportive of residents wishing to celebrate this momentous event. They have suggested street parties, or the Big Lunch on Sunday 7th May, or The Big Help Out on 8th May.

The Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities are invited to share food and fun together, will take place across the country on the same date. On Monday members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas.

The Communities team are keen to support our residents if they wish to take part in either activity. We can help with advice and planning, and also practical

items such as flyers, posters and bunting. We will be running a series of "Make Coronation Bunting" workshops in some of our community centres which can either be used on your own property or added together by residents to decorate a community space.

We will be holding Big Lunch events on some of our green spaces on the Sunday and Monday.

If you would like any further details of the workshops or events, or wish to discuss your own plans please contact Lucinda on 07816 533803, or lcliff@eastdevon.gov.uk



Palmer House Breakfast and Lunch Club

Sadie and Jo, EDDC tenants, have opened a Breakfast and Lunch Club at Palmer House Community Centre in Exmouth, providing a warm, safe space to enjoy great food and make new friends.

Following the pandemic and retirement, Jo and Sadie wanted to bring the community back together and came up with this fantastic idea, and with help from the MSO's they opened in October 2022.



For a minimum donation, you can enjoy a freshly cooked breakfast and/or Lunch, with proceeds going to Force.

Force Cancer Charity provides free support and information to anyone affected by cancer, at their centre in Exeter and local community hospitals.

Since opening last October, they have raised over £200 in donations.

On 16th December 23 residents enjoyed a fabulous 3 course Christmas lunch including drinks, mince pies, coffee and tea. The raffle (prizes donated by diners) raised a further £301.00

Breakfast is served every Tuesday morning 9.30- 11.30am

Lunch is served every Friday at 12, but feel to drop in for a cuppa earlier!



Please book in advance by contacting the Mobile Support Officers; Sarah, Frank, or Miranda on 01395 260368 or pop in and see Sadie and Jo on either of the service days to reserve your place.

Huge thanks to Sadie and Jo for all their incredibly hard work... always with a smile!

Vintage Day at Exmouth Festival 2023

Exmouth Town Council are planning to turn Manor Gardens into a big tea garden for the day on Monday 31st July.

The day will be a celebration of all things vintage, full of fabulous music from the 20s, 30s, 40s and 50s. There will be dance demonstrations, a vintage vehicle from World

of Country Life, and free craft activities, rounded off with a theatre show in the afternoon.

Afternoon tea on vintage crockery will be available from 1.30-4.30pm (advance table bookings & pre-payment at Bumble and Bee from July 1st - July 24th). Other food and drinks will also be available.

If you have a parent, grandparent, relative or friend who you think would enjoy it, please bring them along!

Further information will be available soon on www.exmouthfestival.co.uk

Warm Hubs become Community Hubs as Winter turns to Spring

warm hubs



Warm Hubs cooking

Since the beginning of November the Communities Team have been running Warm Hubs across the district. 10 centres were identified to become warm spaces as a response to the Cost of Living Crisis. Since then we have received over 220 visitors and served over 600 free hot meals, ranging from “All of your 5 a day” soup to Christmas Dinner and vegan Bolognese.

Visitors have been able to take advantage of the warm items available free of charge that we supply at the Hubs. We have given out over 600 blankets, along with hats, thick socks and gloves.

As well as food and comfort the Hubs have provided company and a social place for residents who may have lost touch since lockdown to meet. Many of our tenants and their neighbours live alone, so having a community space available weekly, allowing them to meet up and participate in a game of scrabble or a jigsaw, has been just as valuable as the warm socks and a mug of soup!

As part of the Winter Pressures Project we have also been hosting workshops and activities at the Warm Hubs. So far we have enjoyed Rug Ragging with recycled textiles, run by Alison Shelton Brown, a local textile artist. This dying craft was very much enjoyed by some of our ‘Hubbers’ who have taken it on as a new hobby.

We have had ‘Cooking on a Budget’ demonstrations showing how cheap, nutritious meals can be produced easily. The chef Pierre Graeber used to work for Project Food and has kindly allowed us to re-print one of his recipes in this magazine.

One tenant wrote the following poem to sum up how she feels about her Hub.

Our Warm Hub

*Is the place to go
That brings warmth and cheer and hope
Friendly with support who listens, understands
That a warm cuppa, biscuit is all you need to
turn that frown upside down
And to smile as a lot of us hasn't done that in a
long while.
No negative attitude but positive ones so no one
feels alone
They provide warm hats and gloves and fleecy
blankets
To keep out the cold and let us feel so warm
It gives us hope in times of struggle
So thank you warm hub for all the hope and
friendship you offer to every one of us*

Janet - Yonder Close Warm Hub regular

There have been Budgeting Workshops and visits from ECOE, the Exeter energy charity providing really useful hints for reducing your energy usage. One Small Step, the NHS healthy living charity, have visited with their dieting and stop-smoking tips. Two of the visitors to Millwey have signed up to their supported weight loss programme and have already lost over 10lbs a piece. Congratulations to them, and keep going!!

There have been seated Tai Chi sessions, allowing visitors to participate in a taster session to see if it's for them, and sing-a-longs with local musician Scott Phillips. In between all this activity there have been some hard times, visitors really struggling with increased costs and lower incomes, but the hubs have been a place to re-coup, get advice, a referral to somewhere who can help. A chance to connect with the local community, receive peer support, a hot meal and a break from what can seem a lonely struggle.



18 Tenants train to become Community Hub Volunteers



Ratcliffe Hub enjoyed Scott's musical performance

These words were written by one of our tenants to a researcher at Exeter University.

"Personally, I have found the Warm Hub to be a lifeline and an absolute godsend! I used to have a very good job, get paid well and have a very full life. After 18 years of ill health, I am no longer able to work full time. For most of Covid, I

was stuck in at home on my own, shielding due to being immunosuppressed, and I sadly lost my part time job working from home. I am very sociable but became very lonely, depressed and isolated. The weekly Warm Hubs have really helped me feel positive and happy again and I have made some very good friends."

We requested feedback from attendees and received 70 completed forms back. One of the questions we asked was “What would you like to see develop from the Warm Hubs when they close?”. 100% of respondents who answered this question said they wished the Hubs to continue. The Communities team decided that we would continue to facilitate 7 of the Warm Hubs to become Community Hubs, 3 led by trained volunteers and the other 4 led by officers with help from volunteers. We asked over 20 tenants to attend a training session on how to run the Hubs, 18 came and were trained in Health and Safety, Safeguarding and GDPR, amongst other things. These volunteers are now confident to run their Community Hubs.



Warm Hubs ragrug

If you would like to attend the Community Hubs they are on the following days -



Warm Hubs dominos

- Millwey Rise CC , Axminster - Mondays 10-2pm
- Ratcliffe House, Burnside, Exmouth - Mondays 10-2pm
- Broadview CC, Broadclyst - Wednesdays 10-4pm
- Yonder Close CC, Ottery St Mary - Thursday 10-1pm
- Churchill Court, Lypstone, Exmouth - Thursday 11-3pm
- Lymebourne CC, Lymebourne Park, Sidmouth - Thursday 10-4pm
- Park Close CC, Woodbury - Friday 10-4pm

Thank you to everyone who visited, to everyone who helped run a Hub, to everyone who came and led an activity and to all the staff who helped support this wonderful project.

For information on further activities and the work of the Communities Team please contact us on the email and phone number at the bottom of this page.

CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

PLEASE SEND US PHOTOS, POEMS OR STORIES.
THIS IS OUR REGULAR FEATURE, A GREAT AND QUICK WAY
FOR YOU TO GET INVOLVED.



Lizard - by John Harding

**HOW DO I SEND YOU MY PHOTOS,
POEMS OR STORIES?** Please send to
tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk



If sending photos, don't send images of people, as it makes getting their permission difficult. **Send us a digital photo:** email high resolution JPG images.

Summer

*Trees in leaf and flowers in bloom
Summer will be upon us very soon
Leaves rustle and sway in the breeze
The hum of bees, all these things please
Birds in flight, high on the wing
What a joyful sight they bring*

*Farmers are busy ploughing the field
Knowing the summer will bring a good
yield
Field mice scurry in and out of the corn
Gathering food for when their babies
are born*

*Children playing and dancing about
Having a good time there is no doubt
Mums and Dads sit and watch
them play*

*For a little while longer they can stay
But time passes quickly, so
homeward bound*

*Night time will come, leaving behind
not a sound*

Josie Ireland - tenant

**HOUSING
MATTERS**
SPRING 2023



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publication



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