

HULL

HOUSING NEWS



Developed for tenants, by tenants, working in partnership with Hull City Council

Autumn 2023 In this issue

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Gardens scoop awards

This year we had another bumper crop of entries for the Tenants' Garden Competition.

Even though 2023 hasn't been the best weather for gardeners, all our entries were colourful, well maintained and quite simply fabulous. This meant that our judges, kindly led again by gardening guru Jeannie

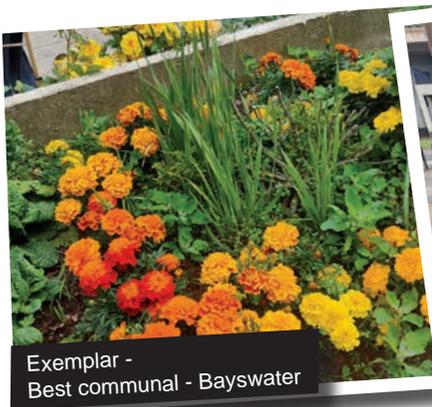
Fewster, had a very difficult task choosing the winners.

Jeannie said: "With weather ranging from drought to deluge, it took a lot of hard work to achieve the high standards our entrants demonstrated. The displays were innovative, bright, cheerful and used a wide variety of plants. Well done to everyone who took part."

Some of the winning entries are shown below and there is a full list on the council's website hull.gov.uk – search tenant participation/garden competition.

STOP PRESS...

You may well have heard or read in the national news about concerns around a particular type of concrete, reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in some schools. This concrete is lightweight as it contains lots of air bubbles whereby more commonly used concrete is heavy and dense. More recent media reports refer to this type of concrete being possibly found in other types of buildings such as houses. We are pleased to advise that council staff have been checking whether this type of concrete might be found in any of our homes. At this point this looks unlikely, but please be assured that any residents who live in a building that might be affected, and which needs further investigation, will be contacted immediately. If you have any concerns please contact the council by visiting www.hull.gov.uk or call 01482 300 300.



Exemplar - Best communal - Bayswater



Best Front Garden - Boulevard



Best Eco Garden - Cladshaw



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

With the cost-of-living crisis still biting, we've been looking at ways to help you reduce costs. See the top tips boxes

throughout this newsletter. If you have any top tips you'd like to share, please email them to: tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk

Hull City Council Housing is on Facebook. 'Like' our page and discover more information

A Chat with Cllr Paul Drake-Davis who took on responsibility for regeneration and housing following the local election in May.



How long have you lived in Hull?

I moved to Hull in 2011 with my wife and family. We moved up from Hounslow in west London so our children could be nearer to their grandparents who were living in Cottingham. My wife is from Hull but had never lived here as an adult. After leaving university in Newcastle she took up a job in London, where we met and got married.

What influenced you to become a councillor?

For me, it came about because I was interested in helping improve my new neighbourhood and I found myself sending lots of emails to my local councillor, Dave McCobb, who is now my ward colleague. If you want to help people and help improve your neighbourhood and city, then standing to become a councillor is the best way to do so.

As portfolio holder, what are your priorities for housing?

In the short term it's about improving the conditions for existing tenants, doing repairs quicker and better and continuing the work to

improve the turnaround of empty homes. In the longer term it's the elephant in the room - building more homes to increase the supply of affordable housing.

What do you see as your biggest challenge?

Building enough affordable housing to help address the massive housing shortage. There simply are not enough council owned homes to satisfy the demand, not just in Hull but nationwide.

Can we bank on your support for the Stop Social Housing Stigma campaign, which we will be launching in Hull later this year?

Yes of course, it will have my firm backing.

What are your some of your other personal interests?

I am a massive Brentford FC fan and try to attend as many games as possible with my football sidekick and eldest daughter. Come on you Bees!



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

Join store loyalty schemes such as ASDA Rewards, Iceland Bonus Card, Morrisons More, Tesco Clubcard and others to get great offers, money off vouchers and take advantage of all possible future savings.

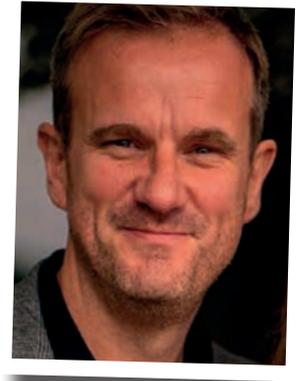
Welcome Mark

In July, we welcomed Mark Nearney as our new Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing.

Mark brings a wealth of housing experience having worked for both local authorities and other social landlords in a variety of roles across the country. Immediately prior to

coming to Hull, Mark worked for North East Lincolnshire Council as Assistant Director for Housing and Infrastructure.

In the next issue of Hull Housing News, we will meet Mark and chat about his role here in Hull, his aspirations and the challenges that lie ahead.



MyHousing App coming soon!



Over the next few months, you are sure to hear more about “MyHousing”, the brand new mobile phone based app which is due to replace the web based “My Housing Online” facility, which many of our tenants currently use.

The “MyHousing” app is part of the council’s wider initiative to improve its digital offer to residents, making it easier to keep in touch and access services. It connects to a single point of contact, so you don’t

waste time finding your way around the website or trying to use various search engines. The “MyHousing” app has the capacity to transform how you engage with us. Initially, it can be used for tracking your rent account, booking, and monitoring progress with a repair, and bidding on a property via Homesearch.

As the app develops, it will have the capacity to offer so much more. You’ll be able to provide feedback on our services, take part in consultations and surveys and we’ll be able to send you alerts and reminder messages as well as publish documents that you might wish to see.

The great advantage of the app is that you will be able to access it from anywhere and any time 24/7. Plus, it’s simple, safe, secure and efficient, and quicker and more convenient than traditional channels.

The “MyHousing” app will be available to download for your phone, tablet or other digital device later this year.

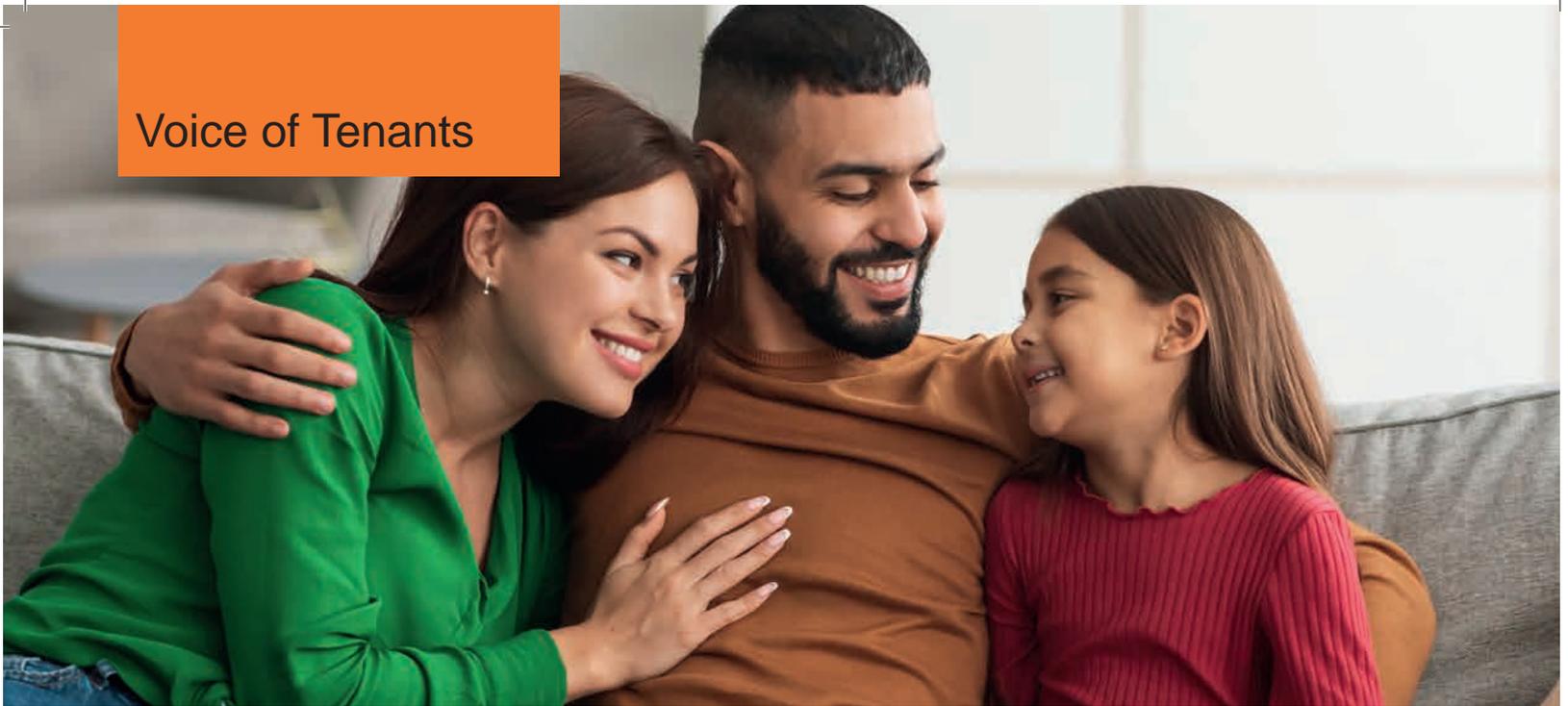
Since the app offers two-way communication, we will be able to get important information to you quicker than by traditional channels. It should also help reduce the number of calls to the council’s call centre. This is a huge advantage because it means that our call centre operators will be able to help deal with emergency requests quicker and more efficiently because less calls should mean waiting times decrease.

Before launching existing customers will receive emails from us that will explain what you need to do and those not currently registered will be able to register from later this year by visiting hull.gov.uk



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

Charity shops and websites like Vinted and Freecycle often offer quality items at low prices, and you are helping the planet by buying preloved goods.



Keeping you safe

Over the last couple of years, there have been major changes to building safety regulations, and there are more in the pipeline.

Keeping you safe in your homes is a top priority for the council, and in accordance with the new rules, we have worked with resident representatives to develop two new booklets. One covers fire safety in high rise buildings and the other damp and mould in homes. We hope that these booklets will empower you to be more involved in the safety of your homes and engage with us about how any improvements can be made.

National Social Housing Safety & Compliance Week

November 6 – 10 is National Social Housing Safety and Compliance Week, and with the theme “Together for Safety” it will spotlight the importance of landlords and their tenants working together to keep their homes and communities safe.

The council is fully behind “Together for Safety” and will be out and about in communities promoting the importance of safety in the home, such as reporting repairs which need doing, ensuring the annual gas safety check and household condition check are carried out and encouraging people to call-out unsafe practices.

Mark Nearney, the council’s Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing, said: “Significant progress has been made recently to improve safety standards in social housing and increasing professionalism in the sector. Residents safety and well-being are our top priorities. All our staff who come into your homes are asked to look out for and report anything which could be a health and safety risk and we want you to let us know about any concerns you may have and to challenge when you believe things could be done better.”

More details about how you can get involved in the campaign will follow shortly on social media, including the Hull City Council Housing Facebook page, and via the Tenants’ Forum.



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

Look out for the times that supermarkets reduce the price of their perishable foods many put yellow stickers on them.

Voice of Tenants

Be gas safe

In September, the council supported national Gas Safety Week which aims to raise awareness of the dangers of poorly maintained gas appliances. Faulty appliances can lead to potentially fatal carbon monoxide poisoning, gas leaks, fires and even explosions. For residents who rent from the council or any landlord in the city, it is a legal requirement that gas appliances are checked annually by a Gas Safe registered engineer.

You will receive a letter informing you when an engineer will call. If the appointment is inconvenient, you can rearrange it via the MyHousing app, or by telephoning the call centre on 01482 300 300. Most people welcome the engineers into their homes, yet some people are reluctant. Our residents' safety matters, so if people persistently refuse or we suspect imminent danger, we will go to court to gain entry, which incur costs to the tenant. Happily, these are extreme cases and last year the council scored a 100 per cent performance for carrying out gas safety checks.

This year, when our engineers carry out their annual gas appliance safety inspections, they will be fitting carbon monoxide detectors into your home. Carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal. You can't see carbon monoxide and it has no taste or smell, therefore the only way to check if you have an appliance which

is leaking carbon monoxide is to have a detector. They are discreet and will only take about 15 minutes to install.

Checking out your electricals

New building safety procedures from the Regulator for Social Housing instruct landlords to carry out checks to see that the electrical installations in your home are safe and not a fire risk. Just like the gas safety checks, these inspections are compulsory for all tenants and will be undertaken every five years. KWL, our contractor for this work, will test the circuits in your home and carry out any servicing or replacement work if any faults are found, so that you and visitors to your home will keep safe.

You will receive a letter notifying you when your home's electrical safety check will take place. If you can't make the date and don't have a neighbour or family member who could be available, please let us know and we will re-arrange the appointment to suit you. You can do this by telephoning the call centre on 01482 300 300.

Every year more than half of accidental house fires are caused by electrical faults. Your health and safety are our top priorities and it is important that

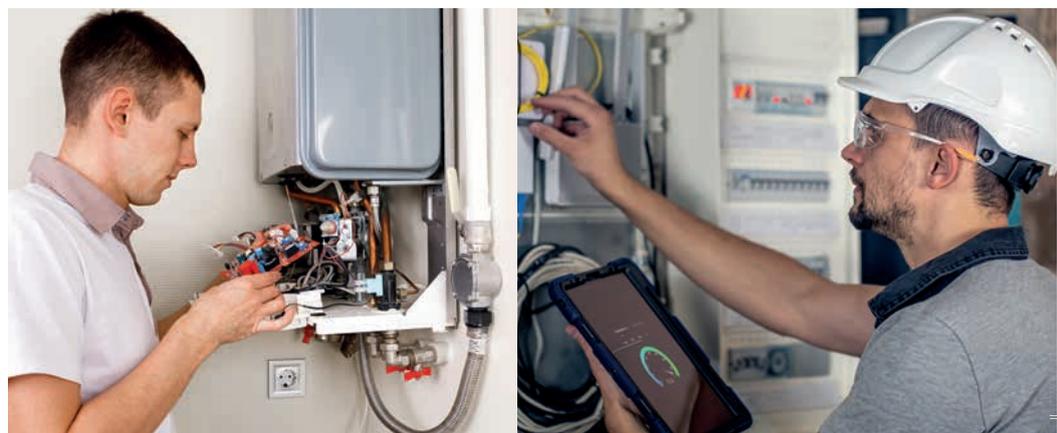
you let us into your home for the inspection. We don't want to resort to legal action to gain access. If we do, the costs for this and any new house keys required would be passed on to you.

Detectors and fires dampers

Other safety checks that we carry out include an annual inspection of fire detection and four-yearly inspection of fire dampers in applicable properties.

Housing Condition Surveys

These surveys are carried out to assess and programme repairs and maintenance regarding key external and internal aspects of your home. For example, roof, windows, heating, and ventilation repairs as well as your kitchen and bathroom. Surveyors are also experienced in identifying health and safety requirements, such as ensuring you have suitable fire protection and evacuation in place such as smoke alarms and escape windows. You will receive a letter, and surveyors may also call you to arrange a convenient date and time. All our surveyors carry Hull City Council identification badges.



Annual Report to tenants 2022 – 2023

Welcome to our annual report for April 2022 to March 2023

Our overall aim as a housing service continues to be “building great places together, putting residents first”. However, it was a challenging year for the council and many of our tenants due to the continued impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, as well as other national and global issues. The pandemic left us with a number of performance challenges, many of which we are still working through – more information is given on the following pages.

Our annual report to you is changing: After the end of the financial year, in July, we were notified of the details of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023; from April 2024 the Regulator of Social Housing plans to have in place a new set of standards for social landlords, like ourselves, to meet and we expect our annual report to change a little as a result.

Back to last year, one constant was our efforts working with the Customer Services Team, to try and limit call waiting times (the waiting time for those choosing to ring the council). Despite our efforts the average waiting time in 2022-23 was 11 mins, compared to almost 4 mins the previous year. A number of initiatives were pursued in order to minimise waiting times and every encouragement was given to tenants to use online means of contact where possible and this will continue.



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

Replace your old electrical white goods such as washing machines and fridges from the Dove House Re-Use superstore on Hessle Road, all of which are in working order and tested for safety. Plus, the proceeds from sales go to Dove House Hospice.

Did you know?

Between 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023

- We completed 625 Tenancy Audits
- Let 1,397 properties
- Undertook 1,423 adaptations
- Carried out 78,540 responsive repairs (inc. gas and heating)

Satisfaction with repairs was maintained, as illustrated by the following information:

Repairs	2021/22	2022/23	National Average
Tenant satisfaction with repairs	74.5%	74.0%	73.9%
Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	-	80.2%	75.8%
Non-emergency repairs completed within 20 days	-	75.8%	86.7%
Emergency repairs completed within 24 hours	-	96.8%	96.8%

We continued to do all we could to learn from complaints. Tenant satisfaction with this element of our service grew significantly as we introduced additional staff dedicated to this issue:

	2021/22	2022/23	National Average
Complaints received	908	754	-
Satisfaction with our approach to handling Housing complaints	33.1%	55.0%	56.1%

The trend of reducing supply of affordable housing continued during the year, due to a complex range of housing market issues at work within the city and more widely. In terms of the council's contribution to this, we had

370 properties empty but intended for letting at the end of the year, compared with 387 at the end of the previous year. However, it has been taking us longer to let our empty properties to those in housing need – a performance challenge we are working even harder to address in the current financial year.

As the largest landlord in the city by far, with 23,157 homes at the end of March 2023, providing safe, well maintained homes remains a priority for us. During the financial year a new Building Safety Act has been passed by Parliament, following the dreadful Grenfell tragedy in London a few years ago. The Act establishes new regulations for the design, construction, and maintenance of buildings. During the year we continued to work with the tenant-led Multi-storey Living Group to ensure we more than comply with these new requirements.

We take tenant safety extremely seriously, as indicated by the below information:

	2021/22	2022/23	National Average
Proportion of homes with a valid gas safety certificate	99.97%	99.99%	99.96%
Proportion of non-decent council homes	4.20%	3.52%	0.30%
Tenant satisfaction their home is well maintained and safe to live	78.8%	78.1%	-



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

Find the cheapest fuel prices near where you live by downloading an app such as PetrolPrices.

During the year we restructured our area-based housing teams to give them a functional focus. This should help us to deliver further increases in satisfaction with your neighbourhood:

	2021/22	2022/23	National Average
Tenant satisfaction with their neighbourhood as a place to live	75.3%	74.3%	80.3%
Tenant satisfaction that communal areas are kept clean and well maintained	62.8%	64.8%	68.7%
Tenant satisfaction with Anti Social Behaviour case handling	43.6%	50.4%	60.7%

As well as continuing to work through the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, councils up and down the country were asked to respond to the war in Ukraine by setting up local Homes for Ukraine schemes. Other national and global issues we all had to face included a developing cost of living crisis. As a social landlord we have offered advice and support to our tenants in every way we can, but inevitably rent arrears rose again, as they have in each of the last few years:

	2021/22	2022/23	National Average
Current Tenant Arrears	£2,708,219	£3,059,420	-
(as % of debit)	2.81%	3.09%	3.18%
% Customer contact received via digital channels	12.5%	13.1%	26.0%
Tenant satisfaction that we listen to their views and act upon them	56.4%	61.3%	64.4%
Tenant satisfaction with the overall Housing service	77.6%	77.3%	79.7%

Another important theme which arose during the year was around the dangers to health of damp and mould: our response included publishing advice to our tenants and providing extra training for our staff.

As the winter of 2022-23 approached the council worked with partners to plan a range of winter warmth initiatives, particularly in recognition of the ongoing cost of living crisis and the dangers to health of cold housing.



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

During school holiday periods check out the free activities for children and young people at healthyholidayshull.org. Activities are open to all children and frequently include free food.

Annual Report

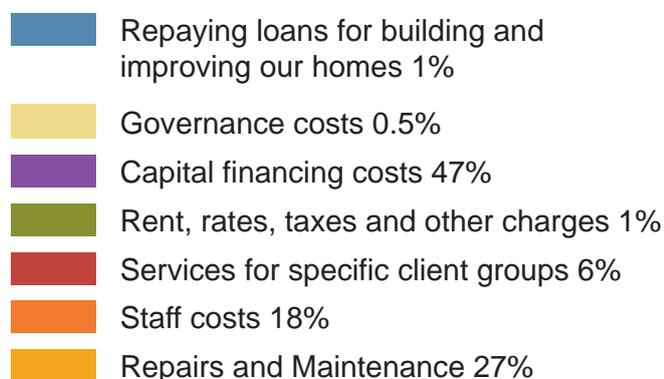
There was an amazing response to the Winter Warmth Community Grants scheme for projects designed to help residents stay warm and well over the winter. Five of our Tenants' and Residents Associations (TARAs) submitted successful bids, they were: Bayswater Court, Muswell Court, Charterhouse, Oakington and Great Thornton Street.

Since the tragic fire in London's Grenfell Tower in 2017, where 72 people were killed, the motto "safety first" has never been more important, and government and housing providers like the council have responded by adopting a new approach to building safety that is more proactive and more inclusive of tenants. Housing Tenancy Manager Sue Houlton, said: "We have had a very positive response to a

number of pop-ins we've held at the high-rise flats in recent weeks. We've been talking to residents about what the Act means to them and encouraging them to get involved in how the building is run, as well as providing them with information about how the council manages its buildings."

Lots of new legislation has been passed in the last 12 months that covers building safety, especially around fire and high-rise buildings, as detailed in the Building Safety Act 2022. Some legislation takes effect in the coming months, with deadlines to meet. However, there are still further developments to come, for example on electrical safety. We will keep you informed about these changes and how they will affect you and your home.

This is how we spent rent income last financial year:



Note: Figures are rounded to nearest 0.5%

Tenant satisfaction survey

Our latest tenant satisfaction survey will be delivered to households in early October by NWA, an external company.

We would very much appreciate your involvement in

ensuring that we continue to improve our neighbourhoods and housing services. You can do this by completing and returning your questionnaire if you are one of the randomly selected tenants to receive one. There will be an option to

do this online if you prefer.

All responses will be confidential and completely anonymous to officers analysing the results.

We will be reporting back on the results early next year.

News in brief

Proposed requirements from regulator going forward

Registered providers must provide tenants with information about:

- a) how they are performing in delivering landlord services and what actions they will take to improve performance where required
- b) how they have taken tenants' views into account to improve landlord services, information and communication
- c) how income is being spent.

We will include this type of information in future issues of Hull Housing News.

Thank you Fortem –

Craig Smith, Vice-Chair of the Bayswater Court Tenants and Residents Association, has been given a cheque for £500 from Fortem site manager Craig Cook.



Fortem is carrying out insulation work, to increase energy efficiency levels, to homes across Ings. Whilst this work is undertaken, Fortem will be using part of Bayswater's grounds for storage. Accepting the cheque, Craig Smith said: "We are delighted to be able to help, and thank Fortem for their generosity. We have already earmarked the money to be spent on more benches which will go in our award-winning communal garden."

Three housing blocks named after Headscarf Revolutionaries

Three blocks of flats on Porter Street, Hull were named after three Headscarf Revolutionaries in August.

The three blocks of flats have been named after the three Headscarf Revolutionaries, Yvonne Blenkinsop, Mary Denness and Christine Jensen MBE, whose trawler safety campaign in the 1960s saved thousands of lives.

The renamed flats sit alongside the already re-named Lil Bilocca House.

The four women fought hard for tougher laws and changed the fishing industry for good, and therefore it's only right their memory lives on, and they are given the recognition they rightly deserve. With overwhelming support from residents within the flats, the three housing blocks will continue to proudly honour the courageous women who never gave up their battle to make the fishing industry safer for fishermen in Hull and all over the country.

Three new plaques were unveiled at the naming ceremony attended by the families of the three women, along with Emma Hardy MP.

Hull City Council, in partnership with Hull Bullnose Heritage Group, engaged with local residents who were supportive of the scheme.

Could you be an Active Citizen?

Active Citizens is a social leadership training programme that brings together people with different beliefs and perspectives to learn from and share with each other.

The programme connects thousands of like-minded people who collectively want to make a fairer and more inclusive society. By participating in the programme, you will gain the skills, knowledge, and motivation you will need to bring social change in your community.

Participants will receive the tools and support needed to set up or adapt their own social action projects to tackle a social issue in their community.

If you are interested in taking part or just want some further information on the Active Citizens Programme please email: Active.Citizen@hullcc.gov.uk

Covid and flu vaccines

Don't miss out on your covid booster or flu vaccine! Free flu and covid vaccines are available this autumn and winter for people at greater risk.

Getting protected keeps you and those around you safe.

Those eligible for both jabs include include:

- People aged 65 and over
- Anyone under 65 in a clinical risk group

- People in long-stay residential care
- Frontline health and social care workers
- Close contacts of immunocompromised individuals (age 12+)
- Carers aged 16-64

Additional groups eligible for flu only, include:

- All children aged two or three on 31 August 2023



- Primary and secondary school children, from reception up to and including year 11
- Pregnant women and people

To check if you qualify and find out how to get your vaccines, visit [NHS.net](https://www.nhs.uk) and search 'covid booster' and 'flu vaccine', or speak to your GP surgery.

Just for fun Hull word search

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

To solve the puzzle, all you have to do is find the words listed below in the grid. Words can go in any direction, share letters, and cross over each other.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| COMMUNITY | MARITIME |
| CULTURE | MYTON |
| ENERGY | PARKS |
| FERENSWAY | PICKERING |
| FREEDOM | SAFETY |
| GARDENING | SUTTON |
| GREEN | TRAWLER |
| HUMBER | TRINITY |
| INSULATION | WILBERFORCE |
| LIVING | FUN |



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

Social media channels and websites such as Money Saving Expert, Skint Dad, and Cooking on a Bootstrap are good sources for advice on cutting costs.

Your views valued

The Regulator of Social Housing is reviewing the rules about homes and services tenants can expect from landlords when they live in social housing.

They are seeking views on possible new consumer standards which it will expect Hull City Council as your landlord to meet. These will ensure tenants live in safe, quality homes, have choice and protection, and you can hold landlords including the council to account.

The closing date for replies is October 17 2023

For more information or to have your say visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-the-consumer-standards>

We're here to help you this Autumn

#HullTogether

We'll support you with the **cost of living crisis**

Food
Fuel and Energy
Health
Money and Debt
Employment
Housing
And much more...

Hull
City Council
working in partnership

Visit: www.hull.gov.uk/costofliving
Email: costofliving@hullcc.gov.uk
Call: 01482 300 303

Hull Daily MAIL
HullLive



TOP TIPS TO HELP SAVE MONEY

Choose supermarkets' own range rather than the more expensive brands. Lots of the cheaper non branded options are often on the lower shelves rather than those at eye level.

Tenants Forum Meetings

Date	Time	Guest Speaker / Agenda
16 Oct	1pm – 3pm	Neighbourhood Nuisance Manager City Safe
17 Oct	10am – 12 noon	Housing Strategy Lead Neighbourhoods and Housing
21 Nov	10am – 12 noon	Housing Investment Team
22 Nov	10am – 12 noon	Business Partner Financial Planning
6 Dec	10am – 1pm	Thank you event

All Tenants' Forum meetings take place in The Guildhall, HU1 2AA. If you would like to attend, please let a member of the Tenants Participation Team know by emailing tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk or phone 01482 612 010.

This document can be made available in other formats (large print, audio, digital copy) and different languages. Email tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk