

# HULL

## HOUSING NEWS



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

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# MyHousing

More and more people who needed to access our services have chosen to do so by logging into our online portal My Housing Online. In fact, nearly 15,000 people are now registered.

However, we want to provide a much better online experience, so shortly our current portal will be replaced with a new app – MyHousing. It offers more functions and will be easier to use. You can log in with a PC, or tablet, and MyHousing works really well on your smartphone.

MyHousing brings so many benefits. It connects you to a single point of contact, so you don't have to find your way around the website or use a search engine to find what you want. You can access it from any digital device. It's so much more than a tool for reporting repairs and tracking progress or checking your rent account. It's more engaging because as the app develops, 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. Since the app offers two-way communication, we will be able to get important information to you quicker than by traditional channels. Also, it will 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 fewer calls means waiting times decrease.

Throughout the development of MyHousing, we have worked closely with tenants, listening to how you believe that the app will benefit you and housing

services alike. Nev Allison, Chair of the Tenants' Forum said, "With more than half the city's tenants having signed up to My Housing Online, we know that there is an appetite for digital services. I've no doubt that MyHousing is the way forward to improve the delivery of housing services and will contribute to better communication between the council and its residents." Look out for information about the change from My Housing Online to MyHousing being posted on the council's website



Hull City Council Housing is on Facebook. ['Like'](#) our page and discover more information



## Chat with the Chair

**A quarter of the year has gone already, and so far 2023 is proving to be a very busy year for the Tenants' Forum, and there are lots of exciting challenges still to come.**

A new Building Safety Act has been passed by Parliament, following the dreadful Grenfell tragedy. It establishes new regulations for the design, construction and maintenance of buildings (see page 5). There are more regulations yet to be published, and our Multi-storey Living Group will continue its excellent work alongside the council on how we comply with them.

Such has been the popularity of My Housing Online, that it's being expanded and improved to enable us to have more effective contact with the Neighbourhoods and Housing Service (see front page). It is being launched as MyHousing, and the Forum will assist with switching from My Housing Online and signing up to MyHousing.

Digital is the way forward, and the Tenant Participation (TP) Team has appointed Theo Farrer as our first TP Officer with specific responsibility for digital communications. Theo will be helping us get our messages out to your smartphones, social media and emails, and inviting you to communicate with us in the same way. Not everyone wants or is available to attend meetings, so digital communication is the ideal solution for more people to have their say about their housing services. Also, for people who have difficulties with digital technology, Theo can signpost you to help and support that is available.

We live in a fantastic city, and we can help keep it great by letting the council know about our aspirations and how we want Hull to develop in the future. The council is currently consulting on a community strategy (see page 3) and wants our views. With 23,500 council households in Hull, we are a very important audience, so I hope as many of you as possible will complete

and return the questionnaire online at [www.yoursayhull.gov.uk](http://www.yoursayhull.gov.uk). Or, you can complete a paper copy at all customer service centres, libraries and other locations.

All the tenants who get involved with developments such as MyHousing, building safety, the community strategy and others are all volunteers. Participating in tenant activities is fun, interesting and can give you a real sense of achievement. It's not all about attending meetings, because they're not everyone's cup of tea. There are lots of ways you can be involved. Interested? Have a look at the Tenant Participation team information on the council's website, where you'll also find the TP team's contact details.

Well, I've run out of space in this issue, and there's still more exciting things on the 2023 agenda. I'll pick up on those in the next Hull Housing News.

**Nev**

## Energy saving tips

The increase in energy prices coupled with the overall cost of living rises we are experiencing is affecting all of us. Consequently, it has never been more important to see how we can save money on our bills. It's not always easy when money is tight, so in this issue of Hull Housing News we have a few money-saving energy "Top Tips".

The tips are from the Energy Saving Trust. Where costs are given, these are based on an average three-bedroom semi-detached house with gas heating, and calculated in line with the October 2022 energy price cap.

# Have your say on Hull's future

Have your say now on a survey that will help shape the future of Hull. Everyone is invited to have their say on what things are like right now, and their hopes for the next 10 years. The responses will be used to develop a Community Strategy for Hull, which will help shape local plans and priorities for the next decade.

The online survey is live now, with support to complete it available in libraries and the council's Customer Service Centres (CSCs). Questions focus on three key themes – My Life, My Street, My City – and people will be asked how they feel about Hull, what is most important to them, what works well, what needs to improve and what they would like the city to be known for.

**LET'S TALK ABOUT HULL'S FUTURE**  
Join the conversation today.

[www.yoursay.hull.gov.uk](http://www.yoursay.hull.gov.uk)  
#HullCommunityStrategy

If you don't have online access visit any customer service centre or library and a member of staff will help you.

**my Life Street City**  
Hull: Our Community Strategy

**Hull City Council**  
working in partnership

Over the coming weeks, there will also be opportunities to collect paper questionnaires from locations around the city.

**Visit: [www.yoursay.hull.gov.uk](http://www.yoursay.hull.gov.uk) to take part.**

## Energy saving tips



Most home energy costs are spent on heating. By just turning your thermostat down by one degree and operating it on a timer so that the heating is off when your home is unoccupied, you can save approximately £145 a year.



## Winter warmth community activities

**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.**

Voluntary organisations such as charities, faith groups, residents' associations and community groups were invited to bid for money. Projects set up included warm clothing banks, coffee mornings, exercise sessions, food pantries, and providing items such as electric blankets and throws, slow cookers, air fryers and much more. Funding was provided by Hull City Council and generous donations from local businesses, including £50,000 from Fortem, which installs energy-saving measures in homes, and £33,000 from regeneration specialists Efficiency North.

Three of our Tenants' and Residents' Associations (TARAs) - Bayswater Court, Charterhouse and Oakington - submitted successful bids.

### Bayswater Court

Bayswater Court residents, many of whom are elderly, single people, were consulted by the TARA about the type of help they needed. Chair Jean Stephenson, of Bayswater Court TARA, said, "Ensuring they could get a hot meal with minimum spending on their electricity bills was a priority. Therefore, air fryers or slow cookers were distributed to some residents. Heated throws were popular with residents too".

### Charterhouse

Charterhouse covers an area of 270 homes. Kerry Jones, Chair of Charterhouse TARA

said, "Items to help people keep warm were top of the list for residents. Thanks to the grant, we were able to distribute duvets and pillows, and draught excluders, as well as slow cookers."

### Oakington

The Oakington TARA identified 50 households locally that would face a significant hardship because the cost-of-living crisis. "Keeping warm yet minimising heating costs was crucial," said Christine Eatherstone Chair of Oakington TARA. "The money awarded enabled the TARA to buy slippers for both adults and children, draught excluders for doors, blankets and/or duvets. Slow cookers were also distributed so that people could prepare a hot meal using as little power as possible".

## Energy saving tips



Close your curtains and blinds at night to minimise warm air escaping through the window. Also open them during the day, especially on sunny days to let the warmth and sunlight in.

# Building Safety

**We all residents, housing officers, repairs teams and even visitors to our homes – have a part to play in keeping our properties as safe as possible.**

Since the dreadful tower block tragedy in London in 2017, 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.

## Energy saving tips



If you have a smart meter, you can monitor your energy use hourly and check which appliance consumes the most so you can consider ways of cutting down.

## Damp and mould

**Most homes are affected by condensation one way or another, especially in the colder, wetter winter months.**

Sometimes the problem is due to another reason, such as a leaking pipe. or a particular type of property that is more prone to damp than others. Whatever the reason, if you find damp and mould in your home, report it to us as soon as possible so we can find out why it is there and resolve the problem.

Working alongside KWL, we have developed an action plan to help us adopt the zero-tolerance approach recommended by the Housing Ombudsman. This includes council staff looking for tell-tale signs of damp and mould when

they make routine visits to your home and updating the advice leaflets and other information we provide.

If you think your home may have a damp problem, don't delay. Contact the council - you can send an email anytime of the day to [info@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:info@hullcc.gov.uk) or you can phone 01482 300 300. Since this is a new repair request you can phone us 24/7. Please note that if you want to talk to us about an existing repair, you need to ring during our normal business hours Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday - 9.30am to 4.30pm, Wednesday 10.30am to 4.30pm.



# Borrow – don't buy!

Have you been up to Greenwood Avenue and visited Hull's Library of Stuff? It's near to Hall Road roundabout.

The Library of Stuff is a not-for-profit-organisation that lends an amazing collection of items. People can join for £1 and then pay a small fee to borrow an item, or they can have an annual membership for £80 and no charge per item. All you then do is choose your item online, reserve it, collect it, pay any fee required. Then use it for a week before returning it. There's an amazing choice from gardening, DIY, household cleaning to hobby equipment, cooking and technology. You name it, they've got it! You can see the full catalogue at <https://borrow.libraryofstuff.co.uk/>



## Energy saving tips



By switching off appliances on standby you can save up to £65 a year. Most appliances can be turned off at the plug without upsetting their settings.

# The King's Coronation



Saturday 8 May will see King Charles, crowned as our reigning monarch. Hull will be marking the occasion and a full timetable of events will be posted on the council's website [hull.gov.uk](http://hull.gov.uk) and search "King's Coronation".

A number of roads will be closed in the city to make way for street parties and other celebratory activities. How are you marking the event? Is your TARA or street having a party? Why not tell us what you are doing and/or post photos on our Facebook page: Hull City Council Housing.



## Energy saving tips



Swap one bath a week for a four minutes' shower and you'll save around £20 a year.

# Farewell and thank you, Nic

**In March, we said farewell to Nic Harne, Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing.**

Nic has worked for the housing team for the last 16 years, since joining as a planning assistant to becoming head of service. He was hugely popular with tenants, staff and elected members alike. His contribution to the innovative land and planning strategies was immense, resulting in the housing transformation we've seen in the city over the last few years, and which enabled Hull to be ahead of government targets for building new social housing. We send Nic all our best wishes for his new career at North Yorkshire Council. Hull City Council is currently recruiting his successor.



## Energy saving tips



Turn off lights when not using them and when you leave the room to save around £25 a year.

# The Key to Our Future

**Every four years, we publish a compact between councillors, officers and tenants.**

This is an agreement about how tenants can get involved and have their say about how the housing service is run. It is also refreshed annually to take account of any changes and developments that may influence tenant participation plans.

In February, the 2023 – 2027 compact “The Key to our Future” was signed by: Nev Allison, Chair of the Tenants’ Forum; Cllr Jan Loft, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homelessness, and Nic Harne, Assistant Director for Neighbourhoods and Housing.



## Energy saving tips



Avoid overfilling your kettle. If you boil only the water you need, you can save about £13 a year.

# 2023 garden competition.

Spring has sprung, and the gardens are alive again! This means it's time to consider entering the 2023 garden competition.

Of course, it's not just tenants' individual gardens which are eligible for entry. We are looking for communal gardens (such as around blocks of flats), containers and eco gardens too. There are trophies for winners from east, west and north Hull, as well as for the citywide winners.

Entries for this year's competition are now open and close on 2 June.

Entry forms are available by emailing [tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk), telephoning 01482 612 010.



## Energy saving tips



Using your washing machine differently can help save you money. If you use the 30-degree cycle rather than higher temperatures and also reduce using your machine by just one run a week, the annual saving is around £34.

## Tenant Forum Meetings

Date	Time	Guest Speaker / Agenda
17 April	10am – 12noon	Living with Water Community Coordinator
16 May	1 – 3pm	Operations Manager Neighbourhoods and Housing

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](mailto:tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk) or phone (01482) 612 010.

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