

HULL

HOUSING NEWS



Hull
City Council



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

Spring In this issue

Nev meets...	2
Ask Nic	3
Rent increases	3
Do it online	4 & 5
Energy rebate payment	6
Litter pickers	6
Spotlight on	
Bayswater Court	7
Garden competition	8

Housing growth programme gathers pace



Dane Park

Planning approval has recently been granted to build 99 modern new council homes on the former Dane Park school site. The development will provide a mix of one-, two-, three- and four-bedroom homes. Sustainability and energy efficiency are key drivers for this scheme. All the homes will be built to an enhanced 'fabric first' standard with increased insulation to exceed current industry requirements. This will help to reduce the amount of heat lost from homes and contribute to reducing carbon emissions, thereby helping the council to achieve its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030. Flood risk also remains a major priority and a robust drainage strategy has been agreed for the scheme. This will include sustainable features with landscaped areas for public

use, natural filter strips within the roads and also sections of permeable road to assist with the risk excess surface water on the site.

Accessibility is an important feature too with more than half the homes meeting a higher accessibility standard. For example, there will be doorways wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair and features such as lever handles on doors, all of which help people to live independently for longer and reduce the need for adaptations in the future.

Boothferry flats

Following a recent consultation with residents, it was agreed by the council's Cabinet to progress plans to demolish the existing high rise flats located off Torpoint Drive, Milport Drive and Woolwich Drive. In

preparation for the demolition of the flats, a dedicated team of Housing Liaison Officers will work closely with the residents to assist with relocation in the local area. This is now underway, and residents will be contacted individually. Design work will also start soon to look at various options for the new homes to be built on the site. The design process will be community-led to ensure that it responds to the local area, to improve both the public green spaces and meet housing needs for the future.

People living in flats at Henson Villas were also consulted about the future of their homes. The purpose of this process was to understand in more detail the views of our residents and the outcome will be reported shortly.

New meets

Jordan Barr, Specialist and Compliance Manager

What is the National Social Housing Safety and Compliance Campaign?

It focusses on safety and compliance at an operational, strategic, and cultural level in the social housing sector. Dame Judith Hackitt, who led the Grenfell enquiry, called for the social housing sector to act faster and address cultural safety. Whilst progress has been made to a wide range of safety matters, not just for high rise flats, an annual Safety and Compliance Week has been established to raise awareness and encourage people to report safety concerns and ensure that routine safety checks, such as gas servicing, are completed on time. The campaign's message is that real change stems from everyone taking responsibility to avert potential disasters.

Why is the council getting involved and what do you hope to achieve from it?

The council's goal is to achieve safer homes for everyone; therefore we fully endorse the campaign. Its 2022 message is "Challenge

for Safety", which is about empowering people to question potentially unsafe acts, cultures, or processes so that these can be addressed, and overall safety can be improved. Furthermore, by participating in the campaign we are also paying tribute to those involved with or affected by the Grenfell tragedy.

How can residents get involved?

The designated campaign week ran in March. Residents were able to get involved in interactive sessions organised by the campaign. We used the council's social media accounts, posters and other communications to motivate people too. Importantly, this campaign runs all year round with the "Challenge for Safety" theme encouraging residents to call out bad practices, worrying decisions or poor behaviour and create a culture where everybody feels comfortable in doing so.

What should residents be looking out for on safety?

Some may be obvious in terms of on-site work safety practices. Less conspicuous is cultural behaviour. A macho culture sometimes predominates which can mean safety procedures are overlooked. However in all circumstances if you're questioning safety, then



often you will be correct and therefore it is important to highlight the potential issue.

What's the best way of reporting a housing related safety concern?

A safety concern can be in the form of an imminent hazard, cultural or behavioural situation.

If you feel you've seen any of these activities, and feel comfortable in doing so, speak to whoever is involved with it to raise your concerns. Alternatively, you can go online at hullcc.gov.uk and report your concerns to the council.

The industry is facing its biggest challenge in terms of safety and compliance for many years, and meeting this challenge will benefit and reassure housing tenants nationwide. Tenant participation and involvement is fundamental in the process and will be embedded within the council's safety management system. In Hull, I have no doubt that, through the excellent working relationships we enjoy with our tenants, we will succeed in continuing to deliver exceptional safety standards.

Ask Nic

In every issue of Hull Housing News there is an opportunity to ask Nic Harne, Assistant Director for Neighbourhood and Housing Services a question. This time Ann is asking Nic “Why is it so difficult to get a smart meter fitted into a flat in a high-rise block?”

Nic says....

With the rising cost of living, we all need to keep an eye on the amount of money we spend on heating our homes, and having a smart meter is a good way of checking how much energy we are using.

When smart meters were first introduced high rise flats were not considered suitable for a smart meter by energy suppliers. This was because the gas and electricity meters in your flats may struggle to communicate with each other, or with the communications hub that sends your energy-use data to your energy supplier.

Recently there have been developments in smart meter technology thanks to a solution called “Alt HAN”, a hub which makes communication possible in signal blackspots.



Energy suppliers are set to start rolling out this new smart technology later this year, so it is worth getting in touch with your gas and/or electricity supplier to let them know you are interested in having it fitted. Having a smart meter isn't necessarily straight forward if you have Economy 7 heating, so you should also check with your supplier that your system will be compatible.

Rent increase

By now you will have received a letter telling you how much your rent will be increasing over the next financial year. For most people, it will be an rise of 3.1%, which is an average £2.69 more a week.

Through the Regulator for Social Housing the government sets the formula for how much rent can go up, and this is the Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus one per cent. Nobody likes payments going up. However, we have managed to set our increase below this calculation, and residents will still pay less than the market rent for similar properties in the private sector.

If you are having difficulties paying your rent, please get in touch with us as soon as you can because we may be able to help. For example, it's possible that we can offer debt counselling or restructure your payments.

A poster for Hull City Council tenants. At the top is a large, diverse group of stylized cartoon people. Below them, the text reads: "Hull City Council tenant? Struggling to pay your rent due to a reduction in income or rising costs?". Underneath, it says: "Seek support from your local housing team by visiting Hull.gov.uk/rentadvice". To the right of this text is an illustration of a hand holding a smartphone with a house icon and the words "RENT ADVICE" on the screen. At the bottom left, it says: "Contact us on hull.gov.uk 01482 300 300". At the bottom right, there are logos for "Hull City Council" and a "CORONAVIRUS TAKE CARE NOTICE ACTION" banner.



Quick

Easy

Convenient



Do it... online

My Housing Online

Make life so much easier ... manage your Hull City Council tenancy from anywhere, anytime of day or night, every day of the year to suit you. All you have to do is sign up to a My Housing Online account.

With an My Housing Online account you don't have to hang on for the call centre to answer. There are no more worries about making it down to the Wilson Centre or local office before they close.

From the comfort of your sofa, whilst on the move or wherever you can just pick up your smart phone or other digital device such as a tablet or PC and log on at any time of the day or night.

You can check your rent account; book and track a

repair; bid for a home on Homesearch and more. In fact, we are regularly introducing new online services so that communicating with us is as quick, easy and convenient as possible. What's more, it's a safe and secure network.

How to set up your account.

To create an account you must be current tenant or applying for a home via Homesearch. It takes just five simple steps to register:

1. Go onto the council's website hullcc.gov.uk and search 'Create an Account.'
2. To create a password, you need an email address, your rent account reference number or your Homesearch application number.
3. You'll receive a verification email. Use the link in the email within one hour to verify your email address and continue the registration process.
4. After that you'll be asked to enter either your rent account reference number or your Homesearch application number along with your personal details.
5. Then click to accept the terms and conditions and select 'Finish'. You'll receive a welcome email and now be able to login and use your account.

Watch the My Housing Online video which shows you how to set up your account and explains the benefits of going online. Search Google for "My Housing Online Hull" or go to www.hull.gov.uk/housing and follow the link to create your account.

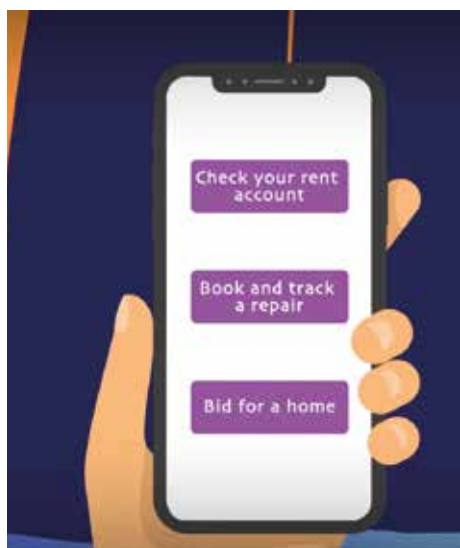
My Housing Online enthusiast Darren Milner says

“People shouldn’t be worried that using online payment methods are not safe. I for one wouldn’t be giving out my bank details to cover rent and Council Tax if I didn’t have the peace of mind that the system was safe and secure.

“I urge everyone to switch to online. It’s efficient and you save so much time and effort. Embrace the technology - assistance can always be found if you need a helping hand.”

Chris Rogers, who used My Housing Online to move home says,

“When we moved from Bransholme to Ings we found our new home through Homesearch online and completed most of the paperwork online too, which removed a lot of the stress usually associated with moving house.”



More than just My Housing Online

Going online has many more benefits than being able to access My Housing Online.

There are financial advantages too. You often find that you get better deals online. Retail outlets frequently make exclusive online offers where you can make substantial savings.

Connectivity with friends and family is another online benefit. You can have real time conversations and link up with friends.

Another benefit is access to entertainment. You need never miss out on TV programmes again or the movies you never got round to seeing. Plus, it’s a great source of information and a great learning tool.

Anne Hodges said,

“Being able to go online during the COVID-19 lockdowns was a lifesaver for me. None of my family live locally so I couldn’t form a bubble with them. So, being able to speak face to face online was brilliant. I would never have coped without it.”

Top tip

Create a strong and easy-to-remember password. Passwords with a combination of letters, numbers and symbols are generally harder for people to guess. It’s also a good idea to change your password three or four times

you should be your where other people can see it.

If you would like help to get online, ask a friend of family member to email tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk with your contact details.

BorrowBox and Libby

If you can’t get along to



your local library to borrow a book, you can still enjoy your favourite authors free of charge. BorrowBox offers a choice of more than 2,000 e-books and 800 audiobooks, and Libby is offering more magazines than ever, which are available in nine languages in addition to English. All you have to do is search online for BorrowBox and Libby and download their apps onto your smart phone, tablet, MP3 player or laptop and create an account by signing in with your library card and PIN. If you are unsure about how the apps work, check out BorrowBox and Libby at one of Hull’s libraries or go to hcandl.co.uk/libraries

Litter pickers take to Hull

Diane Benstead goes out regularly picking up litter in her street



Litter louts are lazy and loathsome! They blight our neighbourhoods and make them look uncared for and unsightly, as well as making them a health hazard which encourages rats and other vermin.

Thankfully, all around the city there are groups of residents who regularly spend time litter picking who help their patch look clean and tidy.

Last year, teams from Tenants' and Residents' Associations collected more than 1,600 bags of rubbish. Are you interested in joining our ever-growing army of litter pickers? We can provide you with gloves, picker and high-viz jacket, for free and arrange disposal of bags. You can do as much or as little as you like.

As well as helping to tidy up your local area, it's great opportunity to be out in the fresh air and get to know more people.

Sharon from Hutt Street Tenants' and Residents' Association (TARA) said, "I really enjoy it. There's a gang of you together and it's good fun – and good for you too! Also, you feel you are doing your bit for the community.

Get involved in a TARA?

Think having a Tenants' and Residents' Association (TARA) sounds good? Want to find out if there's one near you? If there isn't a local TARA, would you be interested in setting up your own?

Go to hullcc.gov.uk/housing/council-tenantsassociations-taras. We may be able to help you with the costs and practicalities of getting one up and running.

Energy rebate payments

If your home is in Council Tax bands A to D, you are eligible for a £150 rebate.

This is to help people with the rising costs of their energy bills. It will be paid from May 2022. It's a one-off cash payment, that doesn't have to be repaid. Households which receive 100 per cent Council

Tax reduction are still entitled to the rebate.

If you pay your Council Tax by direct debit you don't need to do anything because the council will have all the information it needs to make the payment directly into your bank account.

If you don't use a direct debit, there will be a form on the council's website from 4th April for none direct debit payers to provide their bank details in order to receive the payout. Whatever way you pay your Council Tax, and for other payments, to help

prevent scamming the council will never call you to take bank account details over the telephone.

Why not set up a direct debit to pay your Council Tax? It's an easy, quick and safe way to do business with the council. If you have already registered for a MyAccount, you can login to complete a direct debit mandate. If you haven't yet got a MyAccount, you can set one up at hull.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-account

Spotlight on Bayswater Court



The 16-storey Bayswater Court is a distinctive landmark on Ings and home to 90 households. Many people living there are actively involved in the Bayswater Court Tenants' and Residents' Association (TARA).

The hub of the TARA is the club room which hosts coffee mornings, crafting sessions, quizzes, indeed all types of get togethers. The garden too is a focal point for residents, some of whom lovingly tend the flower beds and were the very proud winners of the 2021 community garden of the year award presented by the Housing Service. It must be the only garden in the city with a bus stop! This is because the residents have made it dementia friendly. This familiar signpost can be reassuring to sufferers and being enclosed, they can enjoy the garden without any fear of wandering.

The garden assumed an even greater importance for Bayswater residents during the COVID-19 lockdowns. It meant there was the space for them to keep in touch. Socially distanced bingo sessions were eagerly awaited and highly competitive!

The huge mural painted by Wilberforce College students depicting landmarks in the city on the wall that abuts the garden reflects the close relationship residents have with the local college. Through the TARA, students have helped with gardening and visit residents who, in turn, get involved in activities at the college.

As well as social activities, the TARA is keen to offer learning and development opportunities to residents. Regular sessions are held in the club room to help residents get online and brush up their computer skills and recently, four people completed their food hygiene certificates which means they are now qualified to prepare food for the TARA's social events.

Bayswater Court TARA members are active participants on the Hull Tenants' Forum. On behalf of the Housing Service, they are currently piloting MSL TV project, which shows onscreen information in the communal lobby. It was thanks to a suggestion from the TARA that the emergency services now have PAC keys for all the blocks so that in

an emergency they have immediate access to the building without having to wait to be let in via the communal entrance.



Cath Hutty (89) is one of the longest-standing residents in Bayswater Court. She is also a pioneer of tenant involvement in the city, making sure that the tenants' voice is heard. Cath says, "I like to get things done! I like people and want them to have better opportunities and a better quality of life." When the flats were having a makeover back in the 1990s, she made sure tenants were consulted about the colour schemes. "It wasn't mind blowing," she says, "but it was important to us, and I'm pleased to say that the council listened" Since then, Cath has been at the heart of Bayswater's activities.

You said... We did...

You said

We would like to have a more environmentally friendly way of watering our communal gardens.

We did

Thanks to a donation of large water butts from the Living with Water project, residents living at blocks of flats with community gardens can store rainwater for their gardens. It's free, doesn't waste a precious resource and is much healthier for plants than tap water. Having a water butt also helps prevent flooding by collecting excess rainwater for later use.



Calling all GREEN FINGERED Tenants!

Be proud of your garden
and enter Hull City Council's
gardening competition.

Trophies for
Best Individual Garden
Best Communal Garden
Best ECO Garden
Best Container

To request an entry form email:
tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk
or call Tenant Participation on 01482 612 010
Closing date for entries is Friday 10 June 2022



Homesearch

For everything you need to know about bidding for a home Search on Google for Homesearch video Hull Council YouTube.

Tenant Forum Meetings

Date	Time	Speaker
12 April	10am – noon	Amy Grayson – General Advice Service Delivery Manager, Citizens Advice
19 May	1pm – 3	Steve Shirra – Business Insight and Quality Manager Geoff Bradley - Performance Manager Update on Housing Performance
22 June	10am – noon	Tom Evans - Partnerships and Development Manager, Neighbourhoods and Housing

All meetings take place in The Guildhall, Alfred Gelder Street, Hull, HU1 2AA. Social distancing will apply. Anyone interested in attending any of the above meetings or to gain further information, please email the Tenant Participation Team at tenant.resident@hullcc.gov.uk

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



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