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## Plant a pot!

Everyone had a wonderful time at this year's 'plant a pot' events at Cheatle Court and Sunset Close sheltered housing schemes.

All tenants were invited to join the activities taking place on each day, with residents getting stuck in with planting up pots. Luckily, the rain held off for both days, and thanks to the newly donated gazebo from the kind folks at Legionella & Fire Safety Lichfield we also had shade from the sun at Cheatle Court.

• Cheatle Court Tenants



A special mention goes to Neil at Cheatle Court who kindly helped pot up a number of planters to brighten up the communal gardens. A huge thank you also goes to Glen Currie and David Randle from Wates for their help and support over the two days. Wates also donated a beautiful apple tree to the residents at Cheatle Court that will be cherished by residents for years to come.



*'I was only able to attend for a short time but was happy with what I experienced',*

*'Very enjoyable day, looking forward to the next time and keeping me fit with all of the watering',*

*'Had a lovely morning, most enjoyable and looking forward to the next one' and*

*'Give a shout out to the best pots at all the sheltered housing schemes'.*

Cheatle Court tenants



*'Everything was perfect'*

*'Very enjoyable' and*

*'Enjoyed the afternoon very much'.*

Sunset close tenants

• Sunset Close Tenants



## Supported housing updates

In May, we welcomed a new full time team member into the supported housing team, Natasza.

Natasza got stuck in straight away helping us host a range of activities to improve engagement with residents. Over the summer, Fiona, Louise and Natasza organised a garden picnic for our residents to join. This gave everyone the opportunity to meet the team and have a chat. Our younger residents also helped plant flowers alongside Fiona, Louise and Natasza to brighten up our back garden in Ellerbeck.

A big thank you to Adie from the council's StreetScene team, who gifted us the flowers and made this activity possible.

Also, thanks go to Staffordshire County Council as we have recently received a donation of slow cooker's that will be distributed to our residents within supported housing.



## New high-rise soil vent work

In partnership with our housing contractor Wates, we've successfully completed a significant improvement programme to replace soil and ventilation pipes in the six town centre high rise blocks.

The £1.75 million investment for the programme replaced the original cast iron soil and ventilation pipes that had been in place since the original build back in the 1960s. The pipe work was rotten in places and had reached the stage where they needed replacing to avoid constant repairs and blockages.

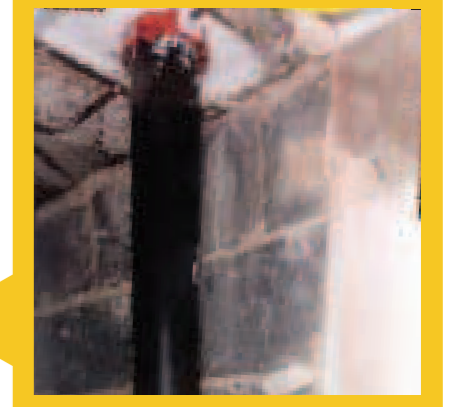
The project itself has been one of our most ambitious projects to date to avoid the possibility of a total failure of the system, meaning all flats being unable to flush anything out of the building causing waste backups and potential local sewage flooding.

More than 350 properties were affected and access to all was essential to the project success.

Wates, our principal contractor worked flawlessly alongside our wonderful residents to make sure the project was delivered with the least amount of disruption possible. Wates regularly carried out surveys around the works and the impact on resident. Their data shows around 97% satisfaction. Very impressive results.

Prior planning was key and resident meetings and consultations were set up to explain the key elements of the project and to plan around disruption. The high-rise social club was booked for the whole time of the works, and breakfast mornings, free tea and coffee and lunches were provided as well as afternoon prize bingo was laid on for any resident wanting to take respite from the works.

These works are one of the biggest projects we've undertaken in the past decade and come at a time when we're actively working to improve the town and delivering many town centre improvements.





## Paying your rent

Tamworth Borough Council tenants need to pay their rent weekly, in advance, on a Monday. Alternative arrangements can be made – such as fortnightly, four-weekly or monthly payments.

You can pay via Direct Debit, standing order, online, over the phone, or through various payment outlets across Tamworth displaying the Pay Point sign, such as newsagents, supermarkets and convenience stores.

A great way to set up payment is through your MyHousing account, where you can also view your rent balance, make payments, contact our team and manage various other aspects of your tenancy.

Create your MyHousing account by visiting <https://myhousing.tamworth.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard>.

### Payment options

- **Download Direct Debit form** – this saves us £20 per year in collection costs which can be used to improve your services
- **Pay online 24/7**
- Standing order – contact the income team on 01827 709514 or email [incometeam@tamworth.gov.uk](mailto:incometeam@tamworth.gov.uk) for more information
- Pay Point outlets – free service where payments are taken using your rent swipe card
- Telephone – call the automated payment service on 0345 2307 709

## Tamworth Advice Centre

The Tamworth Advice Centre (TAC) can help by checking that you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to and help you apply for them. They will help you in setting up a bank account, help you deal with debts and to learn to budget within your means. They can support with employment issues and with specialist debt advice such as bankruptcy, debt relief orders, breathing space applications and if you are being taken to court.

Tamworth  
Advice  
Centre  
DELIVERED BY CITIZENS ADVICE

### There are various ways to contact the TAC:

Online: **Quick instant Online Self-Referral Form**. We will then arrange for an advisor to call you.

Phone: For advice and booking appointments - (Free phone) 0808 278 7972, 10.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday (quoting you live in Tamworth)

Email: [tamworthadvice@citizensadvicemidmercia.org.uk](mailto:tamworthadvice@citizensadvicemidmercia.org.uk)

Website: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/mid-mercia](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/mid-mercia)

Your Tenancy Sustainment Officer (TSO) Tel 01827 709514 can refer you to the TAC. Once referred the TAC will contact you according to your preferred method of contact.

**Free, confidential advice. Whoever you are.**

### Universal Credit

To find out more about Universal Credit, including how to make a new claim for Universal Credit, direct payments of rent to the council, advanced payments or budgeting advance loans visit [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit) or Telephone 0800 328 5644, Text phone: 0800 328 1344.

Monday to Friday 08.00am - 6.00pm

## Rent free weeks

We split rent across the year to allow four rent-free weeks. Monthly Direct Debits take this into account.

### If you are struggling to pay your rent

We will always support any tenant who is struggling to pay their rent.

It's important to get in touch with us straight away if you need help, don't wait until you are behind with payments. Please don't ignore the problem, it won't go away and ignoring will only make it worse.

Our team is available to help and advise you if you are experiencing financial difficulties. There are many ways that we can either support or sign post you to other third-party organisations for help.

We remain committed to doing everything we can to help customers to sustain their tenancy. You can contact us via telephone on 01827 709514 or email: [IncomeTeam@tamworth.gov.uk](mailto:IncomeTeam@tamworth.gov.uk).

You may be entitled to claim benefits including Universal Credit, which may help cover the cost of part, or all your rent. Court action is a last resort which can often be avoided by working with us.



### IMPORTANT NEWS Rent Free Weeks for 2023-2024 are week commencing:

21 August 2023

18 December 2023

18 March 2024

25 March 2024

## Sheltered tenants handbook

We have recently reviewed all areas of the sheltered Tenants Handbook and have included information on how to comply with the fire regulations in relation to fire doors within individual dwellings or the communal parts of a scheme building.

Everyone living in sheltered accommodation has received the updated handbook.

The handbook provides information to aid and assist both existing and prospective tenants of sheltered housing. It contains all you need to know about sheltered housing. However, further information is also available on Tamworth Borough Council's website:

[www.tamworth.gov.uk/sheltered-housing](http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/sheltered-housing)



# Safeguarding

All organisations that work with or come into contact with children or vulnerable people should have safeguarding policies and procedures to ensure that every child, or adult regardless of their age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation, has a right to equal protection from harm.

Having in place good safeguarding policies and procedures means children and adults are safe from adults and other children who might pose a risk.

## What is safeguarding?

Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and adults to protect them from harm.

Safeguarding means:

- protecting from abuse and maltreatment
- preventing harm to health or development
- ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action to enable all children and young people to have the best outcomes.

### IF A CHILD IS AT RISK OF SIGNIFICANT HARM CONTACT:

#### Staffordshire Children's Advice and Support (SCAS)

Telephone: 0300 111 8007

8.30am – 5.00pm Monday to Thursday, 8.30am- 4.30pm Friday

or

**EDS (out of hours)** Tel No. 0345 604 2886

Or email: [eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:eds.team.manager@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Non-emergency – call Staffordshire Police on 101

We work to protect an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. We work with others to prevent and stop both the risks and experience of abuse or neglect, while at the same time making sure that the adult's wellbeing is promoted including, where appropriate, having regard to their views, wishes, feelings and beliefs in deciding on any action. This must recognise that adults sometimes have complex interpersonal relationships and may be ambivalent, unclear, or unrealistic about their personal circumstances.

A local authority must act when it has 'reasonable cause to suspect that an adult in its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there):

- has needs for care and support (whether or not the authority is meeting any of those needs),
- is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, and
- as a result of those needs is unable to protect himself or herself against the abuse or neglect or the risk of it.' (Care Act 2014, section 42)

So safeguarding is for people who, because of issues such as dementia, learning disability, mental ill-health, or substance abuse, have care and support needs that may make them more vulnerable to abuse or neglect.

How to respond if you think someone with care and support needs is being abused or neglected. Remember, suspicion is enough.

If it is an emergency and someone is seriously hurt, or the abuser is still with the adult, and they are in immediate danger ring the police on 999.

Telephone: 0345 604 2719 (Monday to Thursday 8:30am to 5pm, Fridays 8:30am to 4:30pm, excluding Bank Holidays) or 0345 604 2886 at any other time.

Do not worry if you are not sure, the person on the phone will help you to forward your concerns to the right team.

## Partnership against business crime in Staffordshire (PABCIS)

PABCIS is a long-standing partnership in Staffordshire that has grown out of Stoke on Trent city centre crime initiative over the last 30 years. It's an innovative concept in the world of combatting business crime and is at the forefront of the fight against crime and disorder affecting retail and night-time economy businesses in our town and city centres throughout Staffordshire including Tamworth.

Reliable radio links for business owners including shops and evening venues are particularly important. PABCIS requires a high-quality system that allows business owners across Staffordshire including Tamworth to alert others of potential issues in real time, including communication with our CCTV control room. Importantly, this system enabling business owners to be proactive and feel safe in their day-to-day work.

## Anti-social behaviour awareness week

The beginning of July was national ASB awareness week.

Our team from our community safety partnership joined up with external partners including the police to share best practice and to get out and about across the borough.

There were lots of activities, including a coffee morning at Marks & Spencer where PCSO Amber Allsop Alec Jewkes from Harmony and Claire Turner one of our Neighbourhood Impact Officers were talking to people about any ASB issues.

Nice 'good neighbour agreements' were issued throughout the week and with local police, our teams carried out extra visits to engage with residents and offer support and advice on different ASB issues. A very successful week getting the word out about ASB and how to tackle it.





# Fundamental changes to social housing regulation

Earlier this year the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) published 'reshaping consumer regulation and implementation plan'. This sets out the steps the regulator is taking to get ready for the landmark Social Housing Regulation Bill legislation.

The legislation will bring about one of the most fundamental changes to social housing regulation for over a decade. It sets new expectations on the services that landlords need to provide for their tenants, introduce regular consumer inspections of social landlords and gives the regulator stronger powers to hold landlords to account.

The regulator's implementation plan describes the progress it has already made in gearing up for new consumer regulation, and it expects to implement the new approach from April 2024.

The new approach includes inspecting all large social landlords against the new standards, including housing associations and local authorities, every four years. These inspections will build on the regulator's experience in carrying out its intensive and challenging in-depth assessments.

To prepare for new consumer regulation, the regulator has already:

- engaged with thousands of tenants across the country to understand the issues that matter most to them and used this feedback to inform the emerging plans.
- published the tenant satisfaction measures that landlords will need to collect.
- building the teams that will deliver new consumer regulation.
- set out the broad themes of the new consumer standards, which cover safety, quality, neighbourhood, transparency, engagement and accountability, and tenancies.

The next steps over the coming year include:

- consulting with tenants, landlords and other stakeholders on the consumer standards.
- developing the new approach for landlord inspections, including carrying out further engagement with tenants, landlords and other stakeholders.

Full details on these changes are available at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk).

At Tamworth Borough Council we're already preparing for these changes to make sure we are fully compliant with all new forthcoming standards – making sure tenants continue to receive a quality service, and homes that are safe and of a decent standard.



## NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

Address: Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffs, B79 7BZ

Phone: 01827 709 514

Email: [NeighbourhoodTeam@tamworth.gov.uk](mailto:NeighbourhoodTeam@tamworth.gov.uk)

Opening Hours:

Monday – Thursday: 8.45am - 5.10pm & Friday: 8.45am - 5.05pm

OFFICIAL



## Community Safety Flash

999 BSL

### Emergency Video Relay Service for Deaf people

- You can use 999 BSL app or website to call 999 to contact Fire, Police or Ambulance
- 999 BSL service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year
- Calls to 999 BSL are free of charge
- There is no need to register – just download the app [999BSL](https://www.999bsl.co.uk) or use website [www.999bsl.co.uk](http://www.999bsl.co.uk)
- You can only use this service if you have a real emergency
- The call will go to British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter first who will appear on the screen. The BSL interpreter will then call 999 and relay the conversation to you
- Keep your internet browser open whilst the call is in progress
- The app and website will try to track your location so emergency services can know where you are and reach you quickly. You can choose to share your location in the app settings.

For general enquiries email [info@999bsl.co.uk](mailto:info@999bsl.co.uk) or visit the website [www.999bsl.co.uk](http://www.999bsl.co.uk)

Please use the link for Fire Safety in the Home BSL DVD <http://bit.ly/1YZoCpH>

Staffordshire Fire & Rescue offer support & guidance through our Community Advice Team. For more information call 0800 0241 999 Monday to Friday 8am to 5pm or email [communityadviceteam@staffordshirefire.gov.uk](mailto:communityadviceteam@staffordshirefire.gov.uk)



[www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk)



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Fire and Rescue Service  
preventing • protecting • responding