

Tenants' Voice

SPRING 2021

A newsletter for and by Tenants and Leaseholders

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FAREHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Hello!

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Tenants' Voice. Included in this edition we have put together some information about helpful organisations as we recognise that people are struggling with the pressures of money worries and uncertainty about what the future holds.

Also inside, you can find out about the Government's recently published Social Housing White Paper which came about following the Grenfell fire in 2017. The Paper outlines what will be expected of landlords and what standards tenants can expect.

On page 4 there is an update on our plans to build more affordable housing in the Borough.

As always, we have some lovely stories from our residents to share with you too in this issue!

We hope that you will find the information in the newsletter useful and if you would like to see anything else included in the future please get in touch.

Take care,
Editorial Team



Fareham in Bloom

Due to the ongoing restrictions and uncertainty relating to COVID-19, it will once again not be possible to run Fareham in Bloom's Community Gardening Challenge as we have done in previous years.

Instead, it will be a virtual competition as it was last year. There will be six categories which you can enter by submitting a photograph of your gardens. More details will be published in due course so keep an eye on the Council's website and social media pages.



A welcome treat!

Residents at Trafalgar Court received a very welcome surprise at Christmas when they each received a food hamper from Sainsbury's. Mr and Mrs Hazzard (pictured with a Sainsbury's employee) said that the hampers "were a lovely surprise and such a good thing for Sainsbury's to do".



Barnfield Court is 30!

In January 2021, Barnfield Court celebrated its 30th birthday. Normally, residents would have met in the communal lounge for a celebration, but, due to the pandemic, this wasn't possible.

Linda Oakes, the Sheltered Housing Officer at Barnfield Court, recalls arriving there on 21st January 1991 and only having the company of the builders, as the first residents did not move in until February 1991.

The building was built on the old Wallisdean Junior School site which Linda attended little knowing that she would still be working there 50 years later! The view from some flats is still the same today as it was all those years ago.

Cllr Ernest Crouch opened the building on the 18th November 1991. The contractors, Herbert H. Drew, also came along and presented the residents with a gas barbecue for their communal garden area.

Residents have been promised a celebration later this year if restrictions are lifted and we will feature this in a future edition of the newsletter.



Fareham Housing: Providing More Affordable Homes

Despite some delays due to the pandemic, the Council has continued to make progress on some new Council home projects.

- In late summer 2020 five new Council homes were finished at Oak Tree Close (Park Gate) and all are now occupied.
- Earlier this year six flats at Rose Court (Highlands Road) were finished and 12 further flats will be finished before the summer (this includes two accessible flats).
- Work has started on 16 new sheltered flats in Portchester.
- Work has started on 11 new shared ownership homes at the forthcoming Capella Close development on Stubbington Lane.



Oak Tree Close

- Planning applications have been submitted or agreed on sites at the former Coldeast Scout Hut site (nine flats), Queens Road (two large family homes suitable for a disabled occupant) and Crossfell Walk (replacing two 'flyover' flats with a family home).
- Later this year the Council also hope to have submitted a planning application for the redevelopment of Assheton Court and to produce plans to redevelop Menin House. Both projects will replace poorer quality homes with a greater number of Council properties.



Capella Close

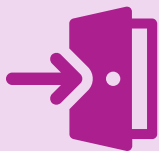


Fire safety in the home and in communal areas

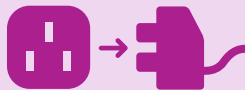
Hampshire Fire and Rescue service is still carrying out safety checks in the homes of vulnerable people if they feel that it is necessary.

Lots of clutter in your property can make it difficult to leave your home in the event of a fire. This is also an issue if items such as rubbish bags, pushchairs or bikes are left in communal areas, which could make it harder to evacuate if you need to.

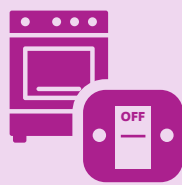
Hampshire Fire & Rescue Service recommends you should do the following before you go to bed:



Close downstairs doors to stop fire from spreading



Turn off and unplug electrical appliances
(unless designed to be left on like a freezer)



Check your cooker is turned off



Turn off washing machines or tumble dryers



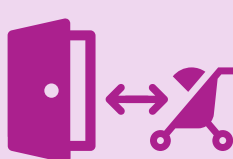
Turn off portable heaters and put up fire guards if you have an open fire



Put candles and cigarettes out



Make sure that you leave door and window keys where you can find them easily



Make sure that all exits from your home are clear



Keep your mobile phone near you and don't charge it overnight

Gas safety

It is still very important that annual gas inspections take place and Liberty Gas is continuing to carry out these inspections despite the pandemic.

During a gas inspection, Liberty Gas is committed to making sure that you are kept safe and they will call you before they visit to make sure that you are happy with the safety procedures that they will use. Engineers will wear masks and gloves and will wear enhanced PPE if you want them to and request it.

During the engineer's visit, please make sure that you keep a safe distance and that you open windows and internal doors and stay in another room while they are in your home. Engineers will use hand sanitiser and will clean any surfaces that they touch in order to protect both you and themselves. Any protective equipment that they use will be taken away by them.





The Social Housing White Paper

The 2020 Social Housing White Paper outlines the Government's plans for tenants, leaseholders and shared owners in social housing.

The Paper sets out what is expected from Social Housing Landlords and how this is to be achieved. It makes clear the standards social housing tenants, leaseholders and shared owners are entitled to expect from their landlords.

What will this mean for you as a tenant, leaseholder or shared owner? The Paper aims to:



Make people feel safe and secure in their homes



Make sure problems are sorted out quickly



Have complaints resolved and show clearly how this will be done



Give tenants, leaseholders and shared owners a voice, ensuring that they are listened to

If you want to know more about the Social Housing White Paper, please visit [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) or you can ask for a copy to be sent to you by contacting jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk / **01329 824463**.



Covid-19 update

At the time of publication, the Government has begun to relax the lockdown measures with the return of schools and the vaccination programme continuing to be rolled out. Current rules still need to be followed and include the wearing of face masks in certain areas, social distancing and sanitising your hands. It is known that one in three people have no symptoms, so, we all need to continue to take care and keep a two-metre distance from people not in our support bubble. Further information can be found on the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.



Green News: Decarbonisation project

The Council recently participated in a project to find out the best ways of upgrading their council homes to make them cosier and to lower the energy costs for residents.

This upgrading process is known as “retro-fitting” and can potentially involve several different measures such as loft insulation, wall insulation, new windows, a new heating system and controls, or even solar panels, depending on the needs of a home.

Tenants from different parts of the Borough were asked for their views. These views will help the Council decide on the approach it should take to retro-fitting.



Rubbish and recycling

A recent estate inspection at Redlands Lane showed that rubbish is being dumped in bin areas and other communal spaces with no thought to the risk of fire or the well-being of other residents. This is also a problem in other parts of the Borough.

If you have items that you want to dispose of, the household waste recycling centres are open and you can book an appointment through Hampshire County Council online or by phone. Please see our website for details.

Please also remember that with more cars at home now, everyone needs to park considerably so that refuse vehicles can get through. Please do not block access to bins.



Fly tipping

During lockdown, there has been a great increase in the amount of fly tipping both in housing areas and in the countryside. This has an impact on wildlife and is very expensive to remove. Over the last year, it has cost the Council over £20,000 to remove fly tipping.

If you see anyone fly tipping, please call the Council on **01329 236100** or call the Police on **101**. It is very helpful if you can get the registration number of any vehicle involved.



Litter picking

If you are interested in carrying out a litter pick where you live, the Council can provide a kit to help. The kit includes gloves, litter pickers and black bin bags. To find out more, please contact Jennie Larkin on **01329 824463**.

Window cleaning

Window cleaning in many of our blocks, including sheltered housing, took place in February 2021 and is due to take place again in May 2021.

Advice agencies and help

Community First

Community First is providing transport for people with mobility difficulties who are struggling to get to medical appointments including their Covid vaccinations.

To arrange transport, please call **01329 223151** or email **communitytransport.farehamgosport@cfirst.org.uk**

Fareham and Gosport Basics Bank

The Fareham and Gosport Basics Bank continue to provide much needed help to anyone struggling to pay for daily essentials such as food and toiletries. Some people are experiencing financial hardship because of the pandemic and the Basics Bank is there to help.

They are currently helping over a 100 people a week in both boroughs with their delivery service. To access the help available from the Basics Bank, you will need a referral from Fareham Borough Council or another agency such as Social Services, a health visitor, schools outreach worker or from your doctor.

Hampshire County Council helpline

If you need any other help at this time, please contact Hampshire County Council on **0333 3704000**.

Connect to Support Hampshire

The aim of this website is to help people to stay independent for longer by providing them with the resources to look after themselves, to stay safe and connected to their local community. For more details see the website

www.connecttosupporthampshire.org.uk



Are you on a low-income or struggling to make ends meet? Need help to make your money go further and reduce your food shopping bills?

Come and visit us at Waypoint Hub. For a £5 donation you can choose at least £15 worth of goods. You pick what you need just like when you do your weekly shopping.

We stock a range of fresh, frozen and general foods, along with household items and toiletries. Our stock is dependent on donations and what we get delivered from our suppliers.

**We are currently open:
Tuesdays 9am – 12noon
Fridays 9am – 12noon**

**A warm welcome
awaits you**



Waypoint Church 255 Hunts Pond Road, Fareham PO14 4PG
Email: help@waypointchurch.org.uk





Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice in Fareham is once again offering face to face appointments if you are in need of advice and support.

For general advice please call **01329 223117** or **08444 111 306**.

Web chat: **www.citizensadvice.org.uk** or **<https://public.citafareham.org/advice>**

Universal Credit on-line claims: **0800 144 8444**

Online scams: **0300 3303003**

Consumer problems: **0808 223 1133**

Domestic abuse

The Council continues to work with partners to provide support for victims of domestic abuse.

Stop Domestic Abuse continue to provide most of their services, including taking referrals, but most are being delivered in a different way. See website for details: **www.stopdomesticabuse.uk/covid-19**

Both refuges and the Stop Domestic Abuse Adviceline are available at any time, night or day. Simply call **033 0016 5112** and follow the answerphone instructions.

The Housing Options Team at Fareham Borough Council can be reached on **01329 824343**. In an emergency, call the police on **999**.

Samaritans

The Samaritans are there if you are having a difficult time or if you are worried about someone else. You can talk to someone on the phone by calling **116 123** or email **jo@samaritans.org.uk**.

"If you need someone to talk to, we listen. We won't judge or tell you what to do".

Solent Mind

Solent Mind offers a well-being service for residents of Fareham and Gosport. Currently services are being offered by phone; email or web chat. Contact **02380 179049** 8am until 8pm weekdays and 9am until 5pm at weekends.





Paying your rent

Many people are struggling to pay their bills at this time and it is very difficult for those who have lost their jobs or have a reduced income.

If you are struggling to pay your rent and other bills, please contact us as we have our own Welfare Support Officer who can give advice and we can also refer you to Citizens Advice for help.

To contact our Duty Officer service, you can call **01329 824435**. If you reach the answerphone service, please leave a short message with your name and phone number and the Duty Officer will call you back. Please do not leave unpaid rent and debts to build up, ask for help as soon as possible.

Ways to pay your rent

Direct Debit: You can set up a Direct Debit over the phone by calling **01329 824435** or by emailing **housing@fareham.gov.uk**

Online at **www.fareham.gov.uk** and look up Housing Rents

Telephone our automated service (available 24/7) on **0345 6066876**

Telephone/internet banking through your own bank. The Council's details are Fareham Borough Council BP Account. Account number **07020066** and the sort code is **52-41-32**. Please make sure that your rent account number is listed as the reference number so we can match the payment to your rent account.



Anti-Social Behaviour

Over the last year there has been an increase in the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour. Incidents of anti-social behaviour can be reported to your Neighbourhood Officer on **01329 824435** or to the **101** number for the Police. If there is danger to life, call **999**.



HAVE

SAY!

YOUR

Tenant Involvement

Although we are restricted by the rules due to the pandemic, the Council would still like tenants to have their say and to get involved.

Ways to get involved

- A group of tenants form the Editorial Panel that puts this newsletter together with Council officers and many of the photos are sent in by tenants.
- Estate Monitors report on the standard of cleaning and grounds maintenance where they live.
- Working with other Councils and Housing Associations in the area, we offer training to

tenants and we have regularly sent tenants for training for nearly twenty years. Whilst we cannot do this at the moment, we are looking to arrange another event as soon as we can.

- We regularly consult tenants on issues affecting them such as the use of communal lounges in sheltered housing.
- Tenants are being consulted at Assheton Court about the redevelopment of this scheme.

If you would like to find out more about how you can be involved, please contact Jennie Larkin on **01329 824463**.

Useful contacts

To request a repair to your home:

Phone **0800 1412 194** (free from landlines, some mobile networks may charge) or **01329 236100** (Monday to Friday 8:45 to 5:15) and ask for Responsive Repairs.

Email **responsiverepairs@fareham.gov.uk**

Website: **www.fareham.gov.uk/housing** and select the link for Repairs & Improvements.

For out of hours emergencies contact **0800 374 485**.

For gas leaks or if you suspect the presence of carbon monoxide contact **0800 111 999**.

For faults with a gas boiler and gas central heating contact our contractor Liberty Gas on **0800 9702512**.

Homeswapper

Is your home too large for you? Do you want to move to another area? If so, Homeswapper may be for you. To register, please go to **www.homeswapper.co.uk**

Leasehold Issues

To discuss service charges or any issues affecting leaseholders, please contact Janine Hensman, Leasehold Management and Land Charges Officer on **01329 824499**.



Bag it. Bin it... or get Fined!



The fine
for not
picking up
dog waste is
£100

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