

Winter/Spring
**Tenants'
Voice**

A newsletter for and by Tenants



Cover image: Rose Court

FAREHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Welcome to the Winter/Spring edition of Tenants' Voice.

We have included information on various issues such as the new garden waste subscription service, how we are making our housing more energy efficient and lots of handy hints, tips and contact details.

Fareham in Bloom – Trafalgar Court

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Tenant Satisfaction Measures

The Government is collecting feedback on the introduction of proposed Tenant Satisfaction Measures from the Regulator of Social Housing. Please have your say and complete a short survey at:

https://online1.snapsurveys.com/RSH_TSM_Consultation

Ken Tomlinson:

We are sorry to report that Ken Tomlinson has sadly passed away. Ken will be fondly remembered by many as he was a well-known face in Portchester where he lived for many years.

Ken regularly attended the meetings of the Tenants' Forum and before that the TAP's meetings where he was Chair for some time. He also attended Borough Panel and joined in training events run for tenants in Southampton.

He will be missed by his many friends and by staff at Fareham Borough Council.



New homes in Fareham

The construction of a new Affordable Housing development, Rose Court, is now complete.

Utilising a former disused brownfield site, Rose Court comprises 18 one- and two-bedroom apartments, made available at a Social Rent (the most affordable of affordable homes). Located on the corner of Fareham Park Road and Highlands Road, these homes are now occupied by households from the Council's housing register.



New homes in Portchester

Works have now commenced at Fareham Housing's new Station Road development in Portchester.

Fareham Housing secured full planning consent to build 16 sheltered housing apartments for older residents on this site, which will be divided between 12 one-bedroom and four two-bedrooms apartments.

Ascia Construction Ltd is building the development and it is expected to take between 12 and 18 months to complete. Several of the flats will be initially occupied by tenants from the nearby Assheton Court, which is due to be redeveloped to provide a new older persons' affordable housing scheme which makes better use of this brownfield site.

The apartments will be let at an affordable rent for older persons on the Council's Housing Register and every care has been taken to ensure that the design provides comfort for residents.

Virtual Fareham in Bloom 2021

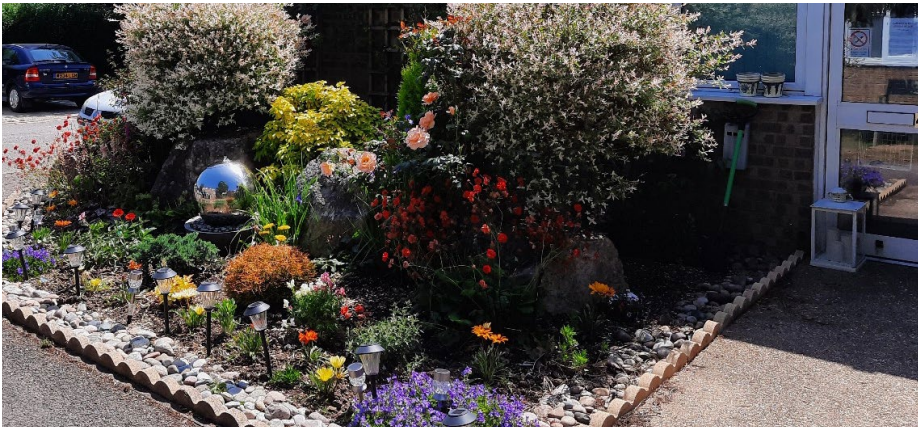


Barnfield Court

Fareham in Bloom 2021 winners announced

Thank you to all our tenants who took part in Fareham in Bloom. Tenant entries were received from Barnfield Court, Belvoir Close, Beverley Close, Birchen Close, Downing Court, Lincoln Close, Northmore Close and Trafalgar Court.

Jo Cobb entered a photo of Downing Court and was awarded the Community Floral Display award by the judges. Well done to Jo!



Lincoln Close



Winner

Downing Court



Northmore Close



Beverley Close

Clip & Collect



Sign up to our new garden waste subscription service!

From February 2022 the Council's new garden waste subscription service will commence. For a small annual fee, plus the one-off cost of a new brown lid wheelie bin, we will collect your garden waste every two weeks. No more messy garden waste sacks!



Choose from two bin sizes

140 litre wheelie bin

Annual subscription £50

One-off bin purchase £34

240 litre wheelie bin

Annual subscription £60

One-off bin purchase £36

Benefits of the new 'Clip and Collect' service

- Three times larger than current garden waste bags, dispose of more in one go!
- Keeps your waste contained so less messy
- Option to share with a neighbour
- By having your bin collected you are helping reduce carbon emissions - every bin collected is one less trip to the tip
- You can have up to five bins (subscription charges apply for each bin).

Subscribing is easy

you can find all the information and sign up online at www.fareham.gov.uk/gardenwaste or call 01329 236100 and ask one of our officers to sign you up over the phone.





Fareham Housing: Making our properties more energy efficient

As part of its Climate Change Action Plan, the Council has been looking at how to make the properties we own more energy efficient. We want to reduce our carbon footprint and also try and help drive down your energy costs.

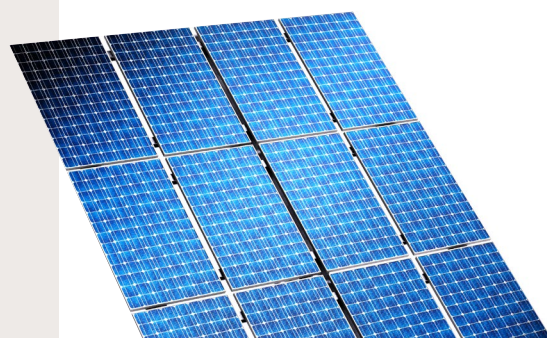
We have been doing this by:

- Consulting tenants from different parts of the Borough on their views on 'retrofitting'.
- Carrying out surveys on the properties we own to help us understand their condition.
- Being awarded funding for 'whole house retrofit' surveys on our flats. These are the most difficult types of properties to improve and a 'whole house retrofit' survey gives us detailed information on how we can make them greener and more efficient.
- Using the results of the surveys to see where we can make improvements.
- Being awarded funding for works to some of our homes so that we can improve the energy efficiency. We can do this through measures such as better insulation, and if possible, solar panels.
- Getting specialist advice on what energy efficient measures we should put in our new social housing developments.
- Looking out for upcoming Government funding so that we can roll out improvements to even more of our housing.



We will be continuing with these improvements in the coming years and hope to undertake greener works, where possible, to all our stock in the near future.

You can find out more information on how the Council are helping to mitigate climate change on the Council website: www.fareham.gov.uk/climatechange



A word about fraud

In the UK last year £8.4billion of taxpayer money was wasted due to fraudulent activity. Every year, Fareham Borough Council investigates around 1000 cases of fraud and housing fraud is a key area of concern.

Housing fraud is where an individual is allocated social housing, but no longer lives at the residence or even sublets it. If an individual applies for a discount to purchase their council home using misinformation, this is also classed as housing fraud.

Fareham Borough Council has a limited number of social housing properties which are available to let and, with a growing list of families, individuals, and older people in real need of accommodation this is simply not acceptable. For example:

34 households are waiting for 4-bedroom homes

140 households are waiting for 3-bedroom homes

135 households are waiting for 2-bedroom homes

250 households are waiting for 1-bedroom homes

120 older person households are waiting for homes in a Sheltered Housing scheme

98 households are currently living in temporary accommodation while they wait for a permanent home

24 single people are currently in emergency Bed & Breakfast accommodation

2 families are currently in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation



The Council needs your help to fight fraud, ensure that benefits and allowances are paid correctly and protect our housing stock, so that we can continue to provide homes to those in genuine need.

You, our tenants, may see and hear things which could be suspicious. You can report fraud in 3 ways:

Fraud Hotline: 01329 824667

Report a fraud online via our website: www.fareham.gov.uk

Email: investigations@fareham.gov.uk





Social prescribers

Social Prescribers have been introduced in a number of GP's surgeries across Fareham to support you in improving your health, your sense of wellness and independence. Topic they can help you with include:

- Befriending, counselling and support groups
- Volunteering, training and employment opportunities
- Accessing specialist services and support
- Opportunities for education and learning
- Leading a healthier and more active lifestyle
- Ways to develop skills and interests

To contact a Social Prescriber, contact your GP. They offer face to face appointments; phone consultations or they can visit in some cases.



Home Insurance

If a fire breaks out in your home, floodwater pours in, or a break-in occurs, have you considered how you will replace your possessions? Just because such events are rare, there is no reason not to guard against them happening. Spending a few pounds now could save you a lot of heartache in the future.

As your landlord, we don't cover the things inside your home, such as furniture, personal belongings and carpets. Therefore, we would like all our tenants and leaseholders to consider taking out contents insurance for their home or garage so you can replace your belongings should such an event happen.

Although Fareham Borough Council cannot recommend a particular insurer, there are several locally based companies who would be able to advise on the best option for you. You could also contact the company that you insure your car with as sometimes they offer special rates. Alternatively, check the internet for home contents insurance. Remember to carefully consider what an insurance policy would cover you for so you can decide if it's right for you.

Electrical Hazards



Damaged or loose sockets



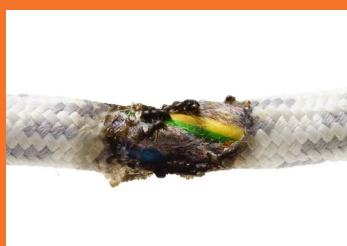
Overloading with extension cables



Liquid and electrics



Flickering lights



Scorch marks



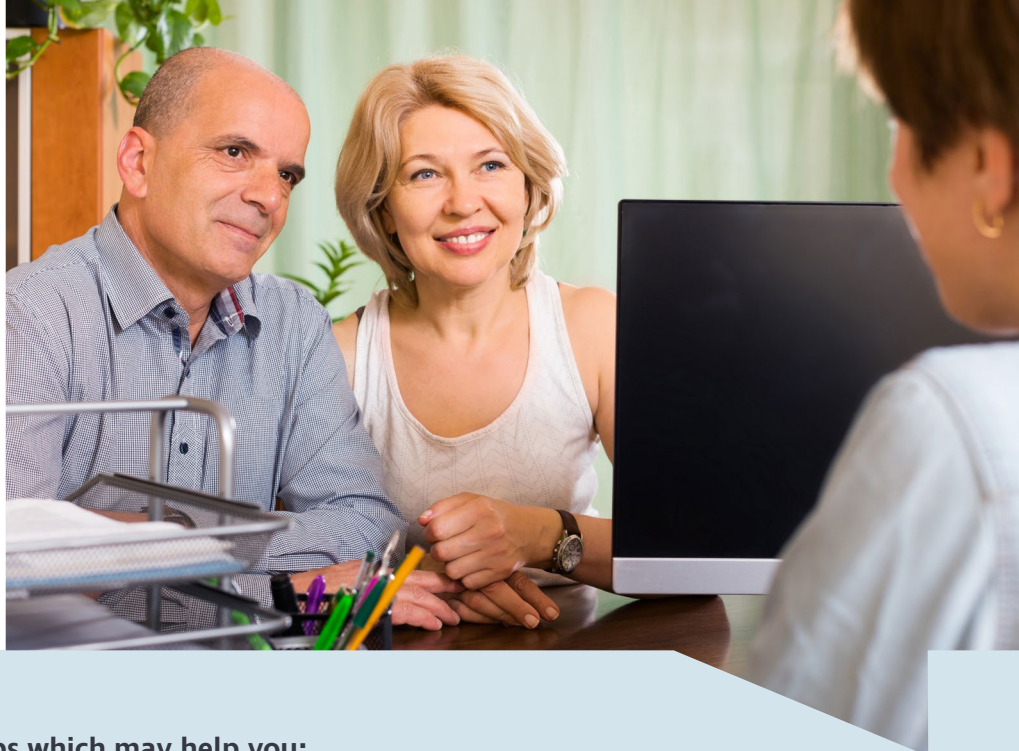
Loose or damaged wires

If you see any of these risks in your home please contact your Responsive Repairs team on **0800 141 2194**, **01329 236100** or **responsiverepairs@fareham.gov.uk**

See www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk or www.hantsfire.gov.uk

Debt and financial advice

The last few years have been particularly tough, and many people are struggling with money and debt as a result. If you are finding it difficult to pay your rent and other bills, please contact us for help and advice as soon as possible. We have our own Welfare Support Officer and we can also refer you to Citizens Advice.



Below are a few handy hints and tips which may help you:

Paying your rent is a priority as you could lose your home if you fall into arrears. If you are struggling to keep up your rent payments, talk to your Neighbourhood Officer straight away, as they are there to support you.

If you need to borrow money to replace essential household items for example, take care who you borrow money from and how much it will cost you to pay back. Talk to Citizen's Advice or check out the links on the next page before you take out any loans.

Set your heating and hot water to come on only when you need them to.

Move the sofas or other furniture so they are not blocking the heat from the radiators.

Close your curtains before it gets dark to keep heat in.

If you are struggling to pay your energy bills, contact your supplier as soon as possible as they can offer you different payment options and budgeting schemes to suit you.

If you are struggling with your water bills, Southern Water and Portsmouth Water are currently running schemes that may help you reduce the amount you pay. You can find contact details on the Useful Contacts on the back page of this publication.

If you have storage heaters, check with your energy supplier that you have the cheapest tariff. Also, you can adjust the settings to suit you and to help reduce costs.



Help with winter fuel costs

Hampshire County Council have funds available until 31 March 2022 to support the most vulnerable households across the County this winter with their fuel costs. Information about the scheme can be found at www.hants.gov.uk or email connect4communities@hants.gov.uk.

There is also lots of practical advice and help available from:

www.nationaldebtline.org or telephone 0808 808 4000

www.stepchange.org or telephone 0800 138 111

www.ageuk.org.uk or telephone 0800 678 1602

Struggling to pay rent

To contact our Welfare Support Officer or Duty Officer call 01329 824435. If you reach the answerphone service, please leave a short message with your name and phone number and we 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:

There are lots of different ways to pay your rent:

D Direct Debit: You can set up a Direct Debit over the phone with the Neighbourhood Team by calling 01329 236100. Alternatively, you can email: 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.



Useful contact details:

Responsive Repairs

0800 1412194 or 01329 236100

responsiverepairs@fareham.gov.uk

You can also visit 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 970 2512.

Hampshire County Council – Household Support Fund

connect4communities@hants.gov.uk

www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/connectforcommunities/

Portsmouth Water

023 9249 9666

www.portsmouthwater.co.uk/customer-services/problems-paying/

Southern Water

0800 027 0363

www.southernwater.co.uk/customer-and-community-grants/customer-hardship-fund



Citizens Advice Fareham

01329 223117 or 0808 2787968 for general advice.

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

Universal Credit online claims: 0800 330 3003.

Online scams: 0300 330 3003

Consumer problems: 0808 223 1133

Domestic Abuse:

If you or anyone you know is experiencing domestic abuse please call 033 0016 5112 at any time. You can also find advice at www.stopdomesticabuse.uk/covid19. You can also speak to Housing Options at Fareham Borough Council on 01329 824343. In an emergency, call the police on 999.

Samaritans:

Tel. 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org.uk

Solent Mind:

Provides a help-line for residents of Fareham and Gosport - 02380 179049.

Homeswapper:

If you want to move to another area or if your home is too large for you, Homeswapper may be able to help. To register, please go to www.homeswapper.co.uk

Leaseholder issues:

For any leaseholder issues, please contact Janine Hensman, Leasehold Management and Land Charges Officer on 01329 824499.

Tenant Involvement

For Tenant Involvement contact Jennie Larkin on 01329 824463 or email jlarkin@fareham.gov.uk. You can also call or text 07881 860284.

E-panel

Join the Council's E-panel to get involved with consultations and to have your say. Listening to your views is important to us and you can really make a difference to life in the Borough. You can join online at www.fareham.gov.uk/epanel.

