

NEWS



Solihull
Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

For tenants and leaseholders of Solihull Community Housing

Autumn 2019



Saxon Open Day

More pictures inside

Message from Fiona

Welcome to your Autumn newsletter. I hope you have enjoyed the Summer!

We have been very busy meeting tenants and leaseholders. Our pop-up sessions around our high rises have been well attended.

The free ice cream, games and face-painting for children proved very popular! Thank you also to the fire service for joining us and offering important fire safety advice to residents. We have some pictures from these events on page 9.

This year also marks the centenary of the Addison Act, which first introduced council

housing to the nation at the end of the First World War. Lots of housing providers have been celebrating this landmark event and we joined in the fun with a 'Homes for Heroes' tea party in July. Thank you to everyone who came along, it was great to see so many of you. There are some pictures from the event on page 9.

The celebrations around the Addison Act also acted as a timely reminder about the nation's need to build even more affordable housing. We have a number of new build developments under way across the borough and we are always looking for opportunities to add to our housing stock.

We continue to expand our digital platforms so if you haven't visited our new website yet please take a look. I will be keen to hear what you think. We have also introduced 'My SCH Account' which enables you to check your rent account and report a repair (see page 4).

Finally, I am delighted to announce that for the very first time we have adopted a charity of the year. It is Solihull Life Opportunities (SoLO), an outstanding Solihull charity that supports people of all ages with learning difficulties. Our staff will be raising money



Fiona Hughes
Chief Executive

for SoLO throughout the next 12 months and we hope to share some of the fundraising activities with you both in the newsletter and on social media.

SoLO so good for our charity!

We are delighted to have adopted SoLO as our charity of the year.

SoLO is a wonderful local charity which provides a range of social and leisure opportunities for people of all ages with learning difficulties.

The charity supports young people through a programme of holiday activities and after school clubs.

Older children can take part in holiday activity schemes with a range of activities including swimming and ice skating.

SoLO also host artistic events involving music, dance and drama.

Adults enjoy the chance to develop key life skills through a range of social activities such as Wednesday's 'Waterloo Disco' and 'Funky Friday' disco nights.

SoLO also offers overnight stays providing relatives and carers with some respite.



A wide range of fundraisers help support the Chelmsley Wood-based charity, with the recent SoLO Fest a popular annual event.

During the next year we hope to raise as much money as possible for SoLO. We kicked things off with a cake sale and we'll let you know how we get on throughout the year.

Masons Way

We currently have a small number of bedsits available to rent at our supported housing scheme at Masons Way.

The scheme supports adults who meet the Care Act eligibility criteria – and have a learning disability – to live independently with the help of care and support staff.

Assessments are carried out with people wishing to move to Masons Way to ensure the scheme is right for them and is able to meet their assessed needs.

Masons Way is conveniently located in the south of the borough, close to Olton, and with good access to local services and amenities.

■ To find out more about the scheme please call us on 0121 717 1515. If you wish to be assessed to pursue a place at Masons Way please call Adult Care and Support at Solihull Connect on 0121 704 8007.

Have you seen our new look website?

Go online and check it out! Let us know what you think of it by emailing newsandviews@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk





Executive Director, Mark Pinnell, buries a time capsule with the help of children from Woodland Trails Day Nursery

Crowds turn out at Saxon



Children from a local nursery helped bury a time capsule to celebrate our new extra care living scheme, Saxon Court.

The time capsule was buried in the garden of Saxon Court at a celebration open day attended by residents and local people.

Children from the Woodland Trails Day Nursery popped drawings into the time capsule, along with letters and newspapers, to provide a snapshot of life in 2019.

Saxon residents and visitors enjoyed some great tunes from the Northern Star Community Arts Ukulele Band and local singer Reza.

Local dance troupe Synergy also performed a range of routines from Contemporary to Rock 'n' Roll.

Our Chief Executive, Fiona Hughes said: "It was fantastic that so many people attended the Saxon Court community open day. The day was enjoyed by everyone and I'm sure the time capsule will be a fascinating find when opened in 50 years!"





Have you signed up to My SCH Account?

We are pleased to announce that My SCH Account is now live!

My SCH Account is available for all of our tenants and leaseholders. It makes it easy for you to access our services 24/7, whenever and wherever is best for you.

The online service will allow you to:

- Report and check a repair
- Book/cancel a repair appointment
- View your rent account details
- See a breakdown of your current charges
- See your rent statement
- Make a payment

How to register

1. Go to www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk
2. Select 'My SCH Account'
3. Click 'Register for Service'
4. Enter your 14 digit tenancy reference number – you can find this on your rent letters or recent statement. If you can't find your number please call 0121 717 1515.
5. Fill in your name and surname

6. Click 'Next'
7. You will need to complete the following details:
 - Username – choose one you will remember
 - Email
 - Confirm email
 - Password – min 16 letters and 1 number
 - Reconfirm Password
8. Click 'Next'
9. You will get an on screen message to say that you have 'successfully registered'
10. An email will now be sent to the email address you have used to register
11. Please follow the instructions in the email. If the email doesn't appear please check your junk folder.
12. You will now be set up on My SCH Account and can enjoy our new online services.

■ If you need help with My SCH Account please email: myschaccount@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk



Jan Jackson
Chair of the
Scrutiny Panel

Hi everyone,

I hope you have all had a wonderful Summer. It has been a busy few months for Scrutiny as we continue testing and monitoring SCH services to see which work well or need improving.

Here are some examples we have been looking at:

- A tenant had their annual boiler service but after the service they began to have problems with the boiler. After reporting this to the Contact Centre twice, Dodds agreed there was a problem and the heating system needed replacing.

Before Dodds could start the work, SCH would need to measure up, complete an asbestos check and wait three weeks for the results. SCH carried this work out in two appointments which made the process much longer. The tenant also felt that they weren't kept well informed.

Scrutiny have suggested that the measure up appointment and asbestos check is carried out at the same time to speed the process up. We have also suggested that SCH keep tenants informed throughout the process to help things run smoother.

- Two tenants were stuck in a high rise lift and when it was reported they were given a four hour time slot. The lift company managed to get them out in just under an hour which was great. As a result of this incident, a fold down seat has been added to each lift in this over 50s block.

Finally, I would like to let you know that SCH has become a member of Tpas (Tenant. Participation Advisory Service). This is a great thing for tenants. Tpas put the tenants at the heart of all they do and Scrutiny are keen to carry this message forward. A number of Scrutiny members have attended Tpas training courses and this will help them deliver a more effective scrutiny service.

■ **If you have any comments for us please get in touch. Email us at newsandviews@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk or call us on 0121 717 1515.**

Annual report 2018/19

Welcome

This report looks at the performance of SCH from April 2018 to March 2019. It highlights the services we provide to 9,968 tenants and 1,239 leaseholders on behalf of Solihull Council.

The report sets out the key information about the services we deliver. The amount of money available to us to provide services continues to be reduced following the Government's decision to carry out rent reductions. We have managed to maintain service levels by carefully managing budgets and efficient procurement of contracts.

During our 'Join the Conversation' campaign staff went out on our estates to meet customers. You told us where we could improve. We hope that in the coming year you will see us begin to use some of your suggestions. We want to engage with more of our customers in the coming months to help us to improve our services.

9,968



Tenants

1,239



Leaseholders

4,832



Garages managed

6,741



Households on the housing register

260



Employees

97.22%



Rent collected

57



Homes lost through Right To Buy

699



Homes re-let

19 days



Average time to re-let homes

Providing homes



Solihull Council's allocation policy uses fixed term tenancies and regular tenancy reviews to ensure that homes are provided to those in genuine housing need. In 2018 the Homeless Reduction Act became law meaning SCH now work with people who are threatened with losing their home to try and prevent this happening.

- **130** Cases of preventing homelessness
- **287** Homeless acceptances
- **271** Cases of homelessness, provided with a home
- **65** New build homes
- **4** Properties acquired

Managing your home



Following the roll out of full service Universal Credit more tenants are affected by this change. SCH continues to work closely with tenants who have been affected to help them manage the transition and keep their homes.

- **97.22%** Rent collected
- **36** Evictions for arrears
- **19 days** Average time to re-let homes
- **80.63%** Satisfaction with antisocial behaviour case handling
- **£1,382,468.69** Additional benefit awarded following help from our Money Advice Team
- **1,197** Tenants switching to Universal Credit
- **1,139** Antisocial behaviour cases reported
- **699** Homes let

Looking after your home



Ensuring tenants remain safe in their home is of greatest importance to us. SCH ensure that every property with a gas supply has an annual service and that electricians are checked every five years. Regular fire safety inspections are carried out at properties with communal areas.

- **36,104** Responsive repairs completed
- **15,174** Appointments made
- **8,957** Gas servicing completions
- **63** Improvement works completed
- **87.50%** Satisfaction with responsive repairs service
- **98.72%** Repairs completed on time
- **96.32%** Appointments kept
- **159** New heating systems fitted
- **1,386** Electrical checks

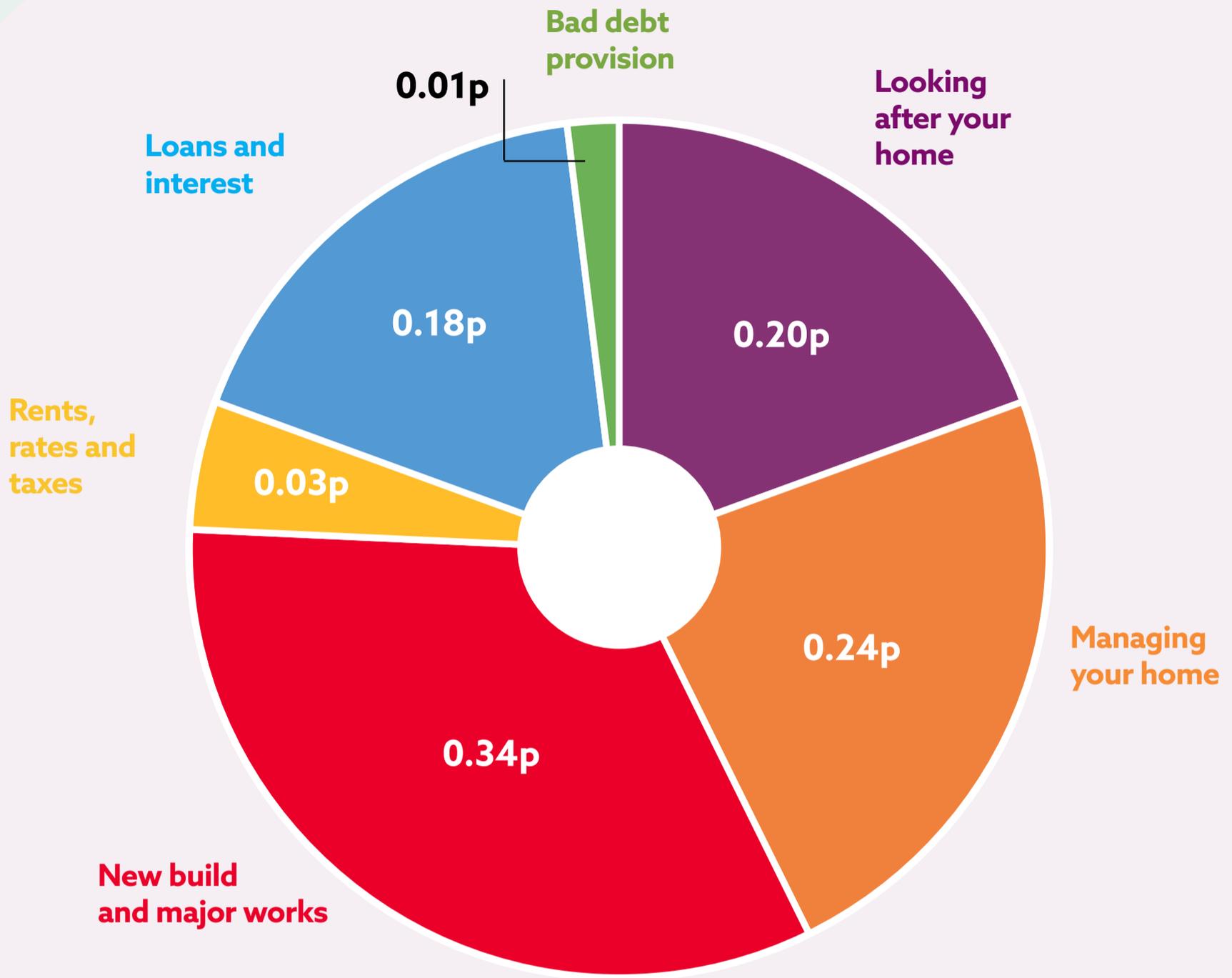
Support services



Today, more people live longer and want to remain independent in their own home. SCH want to help people achieve this so we provide an adaptations service which makes minor changes to homes and provide an alarm system which allows older and vulnerable people to call for assistance in an emergency.

- **1,501** Minor adaptations completed
- **2,282** Wellbeing service users
- **208** Major adaptations completed

Where your money goes



Total spend = £46,616,000

Keeping in touch

In 2018, SCH launched surveys in partnership with BMG so all tenants who received a repair, reported antisocial behaviour or moved into a new home have the opportunity to tell us about our services. Our online reporting tool 'Share Your Views' also allows SCH to get valuable feedback which is used to improve services.

371



Compliments received

344



Complaints received

97.61%



Complaints resolved at stage one

161,094



Calls received

91.11%



Calls answered

View from the Scrutiny Panel

The Scrutiny panel is a group of tenants and leaseholders who review our performance on a regular basis. The Scrutiny members give us a customer view on our policies and services.

The panel meets every three months to review performance. They will ask our managers to explain how services are delivered before they make recommendations.

In the last year Scrutiny has been working on Customer Journey Mapping. This means that whenever they have had to report a repair or use any other service delivered by us, they keep a record of the date, time, and contact with us.

This helps us to identify whether or not we are keeping our promises to customers.

This is very valuable information for us to be able to see how services are delivered from a customer perspective.

- If you would like to find out how to join the Scrutiny panel please call 0121 717 1515 or email info@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk

Having your say this year

I hope you have found this annual report interesting. It shows how we have invested your rent money over the past 12 months in maintaining and improving the quality of your homes while also developing new ones.

This report is reviewed by the SCH Board, our Scrutiny Committee and the senior management team to ensure that it presents all the information in a way that is both accurate and hopefully informative.

We are always keen to hear the views of our tenants, both in person, in print and online. Please send your comments to:

Richard Hyde,
Board Chair, Solihull
Community Housing,
Endeavour House,
Meriden Drive,
Solihull B37 6BX

or email info@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk

Contact us via our Facebook page, or complete a form on our website.

Richard Hyde, Board Chair, Solihull Community Housing



Richard Hyde
Board Chair

Our Summer round-up



Engagement officer Mandy, with tenants, at a special celebration of the Addison Act



We've had a jam-packed Summer and we thought we would share our highlights with you!

This year marks one hundred years since the first council house was built in the UK. To celebrate the centenary of the Addison Act we hosted a tea party for a large number of tenants. We invited ones who have been involved in engagement activities over the past few years.

Our tenants enjoyed a lovely afternoon tea, a performance from our local

Ukulele Band, music from singer Reza and a chance to think back to when they first moved into their council home.

To continue our celebrations we held pop up events at our high rises and welcomed tenants to come along. Tenants came along and spoke to us about safety in their home and the children enjoyed a free ice cream and

games. The fire service also joined us which was a real highlight!

Thank you to everyone who came to see us!

■ Follow the Engagement team on Twitter @Engagementsch



Are you registered on Home Options for a move?

If you are hoping for a move it is essential your details are correct on your application. It is your responsibility to review your housing application every year – whether your household circumstances have changed or not.

How to review your application

You will be prompted to review your application annually by the Home Options website.

Here's what you need to do:

- Click on 'Update your Housing Register Application'. You will need your login reference number and your 'memorable date'. Then review your application.

If you do not update your application we will send you a reminder letter. If you do not respond to the letter within

14 days – or review your application online – your application will be cancelled. You will then need to re-apply to the housing register.

How bidding and selection works

Some people think if you regularly bid and view properties it will increase your chance of getting to the top of the list. **This is incorrect.**

If you have an active application and are eligible to bid, your online account will show you which properties you can bid on.

Those selected to view a property are in the highest priority need. If several people are in the same band, priority will be given to the person who has been on the housing register for the longest.

The purpose of bidding is to choose a suitable property in the area you want to live in. If you see a property advertised that you are interested in please read the advert carefully before bidding.

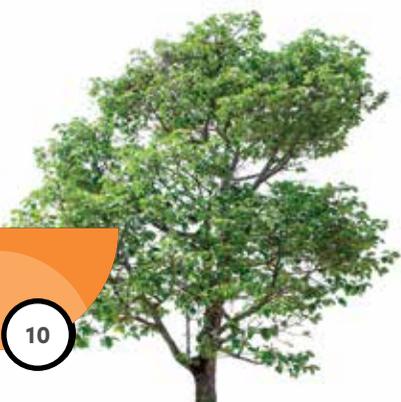
- If you need help bidding or updating your online application please call 0121 717 1515.



Rooting out the problem

We often receive reports of trees blocking light or affecting television reception. Unfortunately this is not an issue we can attend to. The Forestry Team are only able to respond to trees that are dangerous, dead or diseased.

A tree survey has been completed for all trees on housing land. Any non-urgent works that have been identified from the survey have been put on to a rolling five-year maintenance plan.



Helping you stay independent



Our Wellbeing Team offer a range of assistive technology to help you to live independently in your own home.

They are designed to keep you safe and give you and your loved ones peace of mind knowing that in an emergency help can be called on at any time.

The gadgets we have available are:

- Pendant alarm
- Falls detector

- Door exit sensors
- Smoke detector
- Bed occupancy sensors
- Flood detectors
- Pill dispenser

All gadgets are linked to a 24/7 monitoring centre. When an alarm is activated the centre will pick up the call and inform your responder.

For the gadgets to work they must be programmed into a unit. Usually this unit would need to be programmed into

a landline phone port but we now offer an alternative.

The Global System for Mobile communication (GSM) Unit connects to a mobile communications service. This is ideal for those who do not have a landline.

The unit works by an embedded roaming SIM card which picks up network connectivity like a mobile phone. This then calls through to the monitoring centre when the alarm is activated.

- For more information on our useful gadgets please email wellbeing@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk



We are proud to be supporting Fire Door Safety week on 23 – 29 September. The purpose of the campaign is to raise awareness about the importance of fire doors.

The purpose of a fire door is to keep you safe in your flat. If there is a fire in your flat or in a

communal area, fire doors will help to prevent the fire and smoke from travelling through the building.

To help us keep you and loved ones safe, please carry out these five simple tips:

- 1** Check the hinges. Make sure all the hinges are firmly fixed with no missing or broken screws.
- 2** Check the seals. Check the seals around the door are intact and not damaged.
- 3** Check the door closes properly. Open the door and let go. Check the door closes firmly by itself.
- 4** Keep the door closed. Make sure fire doors are not wedged open and keep them closed at night.
- 5** Report any problems. If you spot a faulty fire door do not ignore it. Please report it to us immediately. Your actions could save a life.

■ For more information about Fire Door Safety Week visit firedoorsafetyweek.co.uk



Report off-road bike nuisance

It's an offence to ride an off-road vehicle illegally in public spaces

Report off-road bikers in one of the following ways:

- Call the ASB hotline on 0121 717 1500 or the Police on 101 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 (anonymous)
- Email bikeissues@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk
- Online at: www.west-midlands.police.uk/your-options/illegal-road-bikes-and-mini-motos



Scooter advice

If you are thinking of buying a mobility scooter then it is very important that you first read our Mobility Scooter Policy.

We recognise the value that mobility scooters bring to people's lives.

But it is necessary for us to have a Mobility Scooter Policy to keep all of our customers safe at all times.

In particular there are issues around where mobility scooters are charged and stored.

Fire safety measures are of the upmost importance in our low rise and high rise buildings. Mobility scooters cannot be left on landings or in communal areas.

To ensure that mobility scooters are being stored safely we have introduced a registration scheme for all scooters used by tenants and leaseholders.

There are a number of things to consider if you are buying a mobility scooter and our Mobility Scooter Policy can help you make the right decision.

Please visit our website to view the policy.



Star Photo Competition

Thank you to everyone who entered and sent us pictures that capture Solihull at its very best.

Congratulations to our winner, Mr Bailey from Smith's Wood on the lovely picture of Barston Lake in Solihull. Your £25 voucher is in the post!

If you would like your picture in the next issue of the newsletter please enter. We're after some great images that show what a wonderful place Solihull is to live.

The photos can be taken with a camera or phone and can be taken anywhere in Solihull. Only one picture per person is allowed. Only SCH tenants and leaseholders can enter.



■ Please email your photos to info@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk
The closing date is Friday 25 October 2019.

To get in touch

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