

NEWS



Solihull
Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

For tenants and leaseholders of Solihull Community Housing

Autumn 2022



We joined the cheering crowds at Babbs Mill who welcomed the Queen's Baton Relay ahead of the Commonwealth Games
See Page 4

Message from Fiona

Hi everyone. There's really only one place for me to start my newsletter column this time, by saying wow, what a brilliant day we all shared at Babbs Mill when the Queen's Baton Relay was paraded through the streets of Kingshurst.

It really was incredible to see so many smiling faces, and the excitement as the baton came through the park made the hairs on the back of your neck stand up. Even the rain managed to hold off as the crowds cheered the baton through Babbs Mill. Take a look at some pictures from the event on Page 4.

Kingshurst is of course set for a whole new look in a year or so with the regeneration of the village centre, featuring new homes, shops and facilities for local people. It's great to see the community

events that have sprung up around this work and I'm delighted that SCH is playing such a key role in this.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new cleaning partner, Pinnacle. Many of you will know that Pinnacle provided all our cleaning services a few years ago. We're delighted to be able to work with them again.

As you know, we are continuing to do a considerable amount of work around our high rises, with a

particular focus on building safety. The ongoing installation of sprinklers is making real progress, but we also continue to share important safety messages. Thank you to our team of Building Safety Advocates (BSAs) and members of the SCHape panel for their hard work in supporting this.

I would also like to welcome our new Board members who I look forward to getting to know and working with in the months ahead. We are still looking to recruit one more Tenant Board Member,



Fiona Hughes
Chief Executive

please get in touch if you think you may fit the bill and to find out more.

Finally, I hope that our engaged customers who are able to attend our forthcoming tenant conference have an enjoyable and informative day.

Best wishes

Fiona



Keeping our nation gas safe

12th - 18th September 2022



Help us to keep you safe in your home

Throughout the summer we've been busy hosting drop-in sessions by our high rise buildings. This has been a great way to meet customers and discuss any issues or concerns they may have. You can read more about these on Page 5.

Building safety has been at the heart of the drop-ins. Customer wellbeing is our priority at all times. It was great to be able to discuss these important issues with our customers and hear their thoughts.

There are some simple things that you can do to help keep all our customers safe and well in their homes. Occasionally we need access to a property to carry out some simple safety checks or maintenance work – such as the annual gas service to homes with a connection.

It is essential that you allow us access to carry out this essential work. We have a legal duty to carry out things such as gas and electricity safety checks.

There have been some gas explosions recently that you may have seen on the news. This reminds us all about the importance of gas safety. So, please always respond to our letters and phone calls when we contact you about this work.

Thank you to our high rise residents who are helping keep our communal areas clear. As you know, we now operate a zero tolerance



policy about anything being left in stairwells and on landings.

This helps make sure nothing of a combustible nature is left around and also avoids the possibility of trip hazards.

This is an essential part of our fire safety management and we appreciate tenants' support in this matter.

Wherever you live, all communal areas should be kept clear and free of all personal items at all times.

Please remember to always treat our staff politely. We are here to support, help and advise but any signs of physical or verbal aggression will not be tolerated. Thank you.

Financial help is available

With the cost of living rising this year, the Government have promised payments to help individuals and families during this difficult time.

Below is some very important information on available Winter grants and support payments. Details of when they are likely to be paid and how you can apply have been provided.

Council Tax Rebate

Over 90% of eligible residents have now received their energy bill rebates from Solihull Council. **From 1 September** if you are eligible for the payment and have not submitted your application your £150 rebate will be credited to your council tax account.

Any details needed to complete the online applications form can be found in the letter that was sent to you at the end of April.

If you need a copy of your letter, please either send an email to energybillrebate@solihull.gov.uk quoting your full name and full address or contact SMBC by calling 0121 704 8066.

Please note you will not be able to submit an application from 1 September.

Low-income benefits and tax credits

How much are the grants?

£650 per household. This will be paid in two instalments of £326 and £324.

Who is eligible for support?

Households on the below benefits as of 25 May 2022 can receive the first instalment:

- Universal Credit*
- 5 Legacy Benefits including:
 - Income based Job Seekers

Allowance (JSA)

- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income support
- Working Tax Credits at least £26 per year*
- Child Tax Credits at least £26 per year*
- Pension Credit

*Only eligible if you were entitled to a benefit payment between 26 April and 25 May.

When and how will this grant be paid?

If you receive Universal Credit, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, and Income Support then the grant will be paid into your account with this payment.

Anyone who receives Pension Credit will automatically be paid the grant in two instalments. The first payment will be paid between 14 - 31 July, 2022. Then the second payment of £324 will be paid in Autumn 2022.

Those who receive Tax Credits only will receive the payments in the Autumn and Winter months.

Pensioner Cost of Living Payment

How much are the grants?

£300 per household.

Who is eligible for support?

Anyone over the State Pension age of 66+ between 19-25 September 2022. You must receive the Winter Fuel Payment.

When and how will this payment be processed?

This will be an automatic payment as a top up to your

Winter Fuel Payment in November or December.

For most pensioner households, this will be paid by direct debit.

Disability Cost of Living Payment

How much are the grants?

£150 per claimant.

Who is eligible for support?

Anyone on one of the following benefits since 25 May 2022:

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- Attendance Allowance (AA)
- Scottish Disability Benefits
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- War Pension Mobility Supplement

When and how will this payment be processed?

Paid automatically in September 2022.

Energy Bills Support Scheme

How much is the grant?

£400 per household.

Who is eligible for support?

Households with a domestic electricity meter.

When and how will this payment be processed?

This will be paid to your energy supplier over six months, starting October 2022.

Direct debits and credit customers will have the money added to their account. Pre-payment meter customers will have money applied to their meter or paid by a voucher.

Household Support Fund

How much are the grants?

Grants are discretionary.

Who is eligible for support?

Any of our tenants can apply for help with food, fuel and essential household items.

When and how will payments be processed?

Our SCH Money Advice Team have been helping to share these funds to our tenants since October 2021.

Awards are made once an assessment has been submitted.

Apply by calling our Contact Centre on 0121 717 1515.

Money Advice Team

Contact us by calling 0121 717 1515 or visit our online Money Advice form today.

<https://feedback.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk/money-advice-enquiry/>

For more information on the above please visit www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk



Kingshurst Parade

UPDATES

We've been working with the current shops and essential services in Kingshurst Parade to make sure they stay open throughout the regeneration works.

We're pleased to say the following services will remain open to the community during the construction period.

- Browns Pharmacy and Post Office
- Hadfield Opticians
- Kingshurst GP
- Library and community services
- Kingshurst Dental Surgery
- Co-Op (relocating soon)
- Hair Asylum (relocating soon)
- King Valley Chinese
- Greggs Outlet (Closing date to be confirmed)

The library has also become the central hub for the community. It's not only used for the library facilities but it's also a base for all community activities to happen.

There are many groups that meet there every week such as the Youth Club, Arts & Crafts, Mental Health Drop-in, Lifestyle Services (appointment only), Knitting Club, Book Club and Coffee Mornings.

The building has had a freshen up with facilities being refurbished. Why not pop in and see it for yourself!

Crowds welcome the baton relay!

Babbs Mill Park in Kingshurst was a hub of excitement on Tuesday 26 July as the Queen's Baton Relay passed through on its way to the Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

This was a once in a lifetime opportunity and our community event was a huge success. It was fantastic to see so many residents and local community partners come together and celebrate each Baton Bearer as they made their way through.

Seeing so many people come together for this event proves that Solihull is more than just bricks and mortar, we are a thriving community!

From supporting a Baton Bearer, to photo opportunities with 9-foot-tall tree men and the chance to join in with a range of sporting activities and fun, it was a day we will all remember for a very long time.

A very big thank you to those who attended and supported our community event.

We captured some great moments from the celebrations which we hope you will enjoy!



It's been a fun Summer!

Our Engagement team have been very busy out and about engaging with you at every opportunity.

Take a look at some of the activities we have been involved in over the last few months.



Estate walk abouts

Our Engagement and Neighbourhood Services Teams have been working in partnership with West Midlands Police to complete estate walk abouts around the borough.

This activity was to show our support towards Impact Week and our commitment to keeping our communities safe.



Queen's Baton Relay

On 26 July the Queen's Baton passed through Babbs Mill Park, Kingshurst on its way to the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham.

Our team hosted a very successful community event where roughly 500 residents and community partners came together to celebrate each Baton Bearer as they made their way through.

Lots of fun was had with sporting activities, bouncy castles for the little ones, free waffles and the chance to have your photo taken with 9-foot-tall tree men!

A big thank you to our amazing Kingshurst Engagement Officer Becki who worked very hard to organise and manage the whole event.

Welcoming Windows Project

The Welcoming Windows Project was part of the Commonwealth Games preparations which was a very fun opportunity for our residents to get involved.

High rise residents from a handful of buildings were able to design and create their very own window artwork to celebrate the Games.

Each design was made into large static cling prints and put up in selected windows to create a visual display for the Queen's Baton Relay route.

Our artist Nikki Bovis-Coulter, who was funded by SMBC, supported the project alongside our Engagement Team and Parrabola.

A huge thank you to all the residents who took the time to get involved in this project by creating a design and agreeing to have it displayed in your window.

Photos by Nicola Prestage, Tiger Features.



Your safety is our priority

This Summer, we launched our Building Safety drop-in sessions.

Over the last few months, our Engagement Team have been working hard to visit all 37 of our high rise buildings and Saxon Court.

The aim of these drop-in sessions was to see how often you would like to receive important building safety information from us about your building, and the best way you would like us to communicate this.

At each session residents were given some building safety information around the importance of fire safety and making sure you are aware of the 'stay put' policy.

We have also been listening to your general

concerns and having a chat whilst enjoying some free goodies, cakes, and a chance for you to take part in our £250 prize draw!

Now these sessions are complete, we are going to use the data we have collected to help us produce our new building safety agreements under the Building Safety Act.

Each block will have their own individual agreements produced, so it's great for us to hear from those who matter most, you!

A big thank you to all of you who have come down to see us and take part over the last few months.





Annual Report 2021/22

This report looks at our performance from April 2021 to March 2022. It highlights the services we provide to our tenants and leaseholders on behalf of Solihull Council.

Round-up of the year

9,720

Tenants



1,274

Leaseholders



4,644

Garages



2,625

Households on the housing register



280

Employees



53

Homes lost through Right to Buy



Providing homes

505

Cases of preventing homelessness

245

Homeless acceptances

22

New build homes

151

Cases of homelessness provided with a home

10

Properties acquired



Managing homes

734

Homes re-let

5

Evictions for arrears

36 days

Average time to re-let homes

851

Tenants switching to Universal Credit

97.95%

Rent collected

420

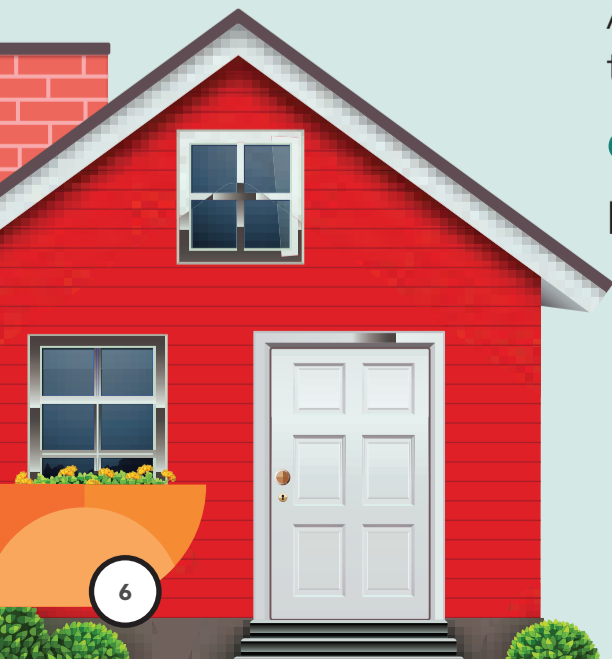
Antisocial behaviour reports

69.23%

Satisfaction with antisocial behaviour case handling

£1,110,861.93

Additional benefit awarded following help from our Money Advice Team



Looking after your home



34,399
Responsive repairs completed

13,543
Appointments made

99.14%
Repairs completed on time

98.99%
Appointments kept

9,097
Gas servicing completions

139
New heating systems fitted

330
Homes receiving improvement works

2,056
Electrical checks

90.01%
Satisfaction with response repairs service

Support services



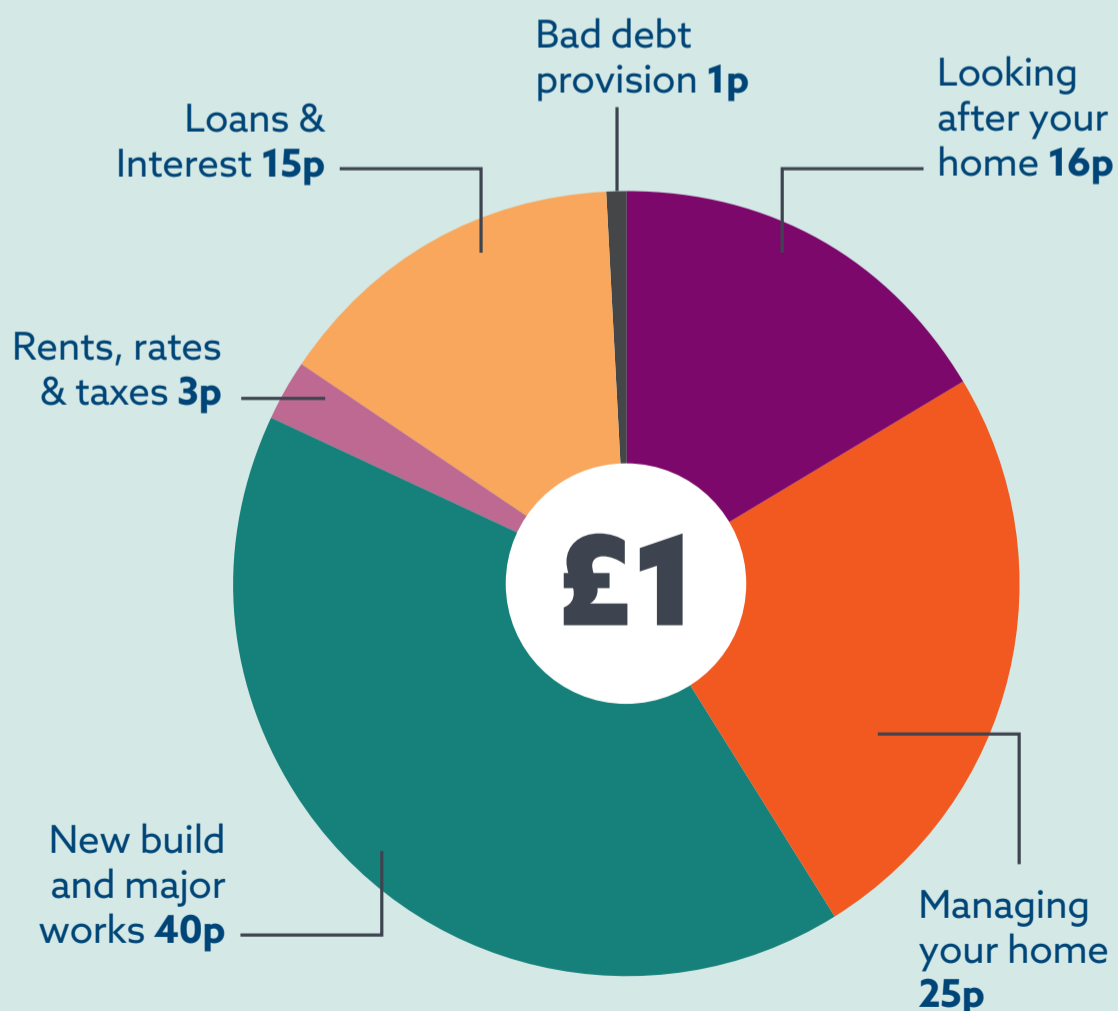
1,253
Minor adaptations completed

213
Major adaptations completed

1,988
Wellbeing service users

Where your money goes

Looking after your home	£8,754,000
Managing your home	£13,125,000
New build and major works	£21,568,000
Rents, rates & taxes	£1,404,000
Loans & Interest	£7,790,000
Bad debt provision	£298,000



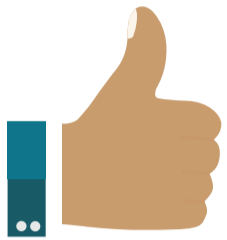
Total spend
£52,939,000



Keeping in touch

142

Compliments received



470

Complaints received



774

Councillor enquiries received



98.57%

Complaints resolved at stage one



135,505

Calls received



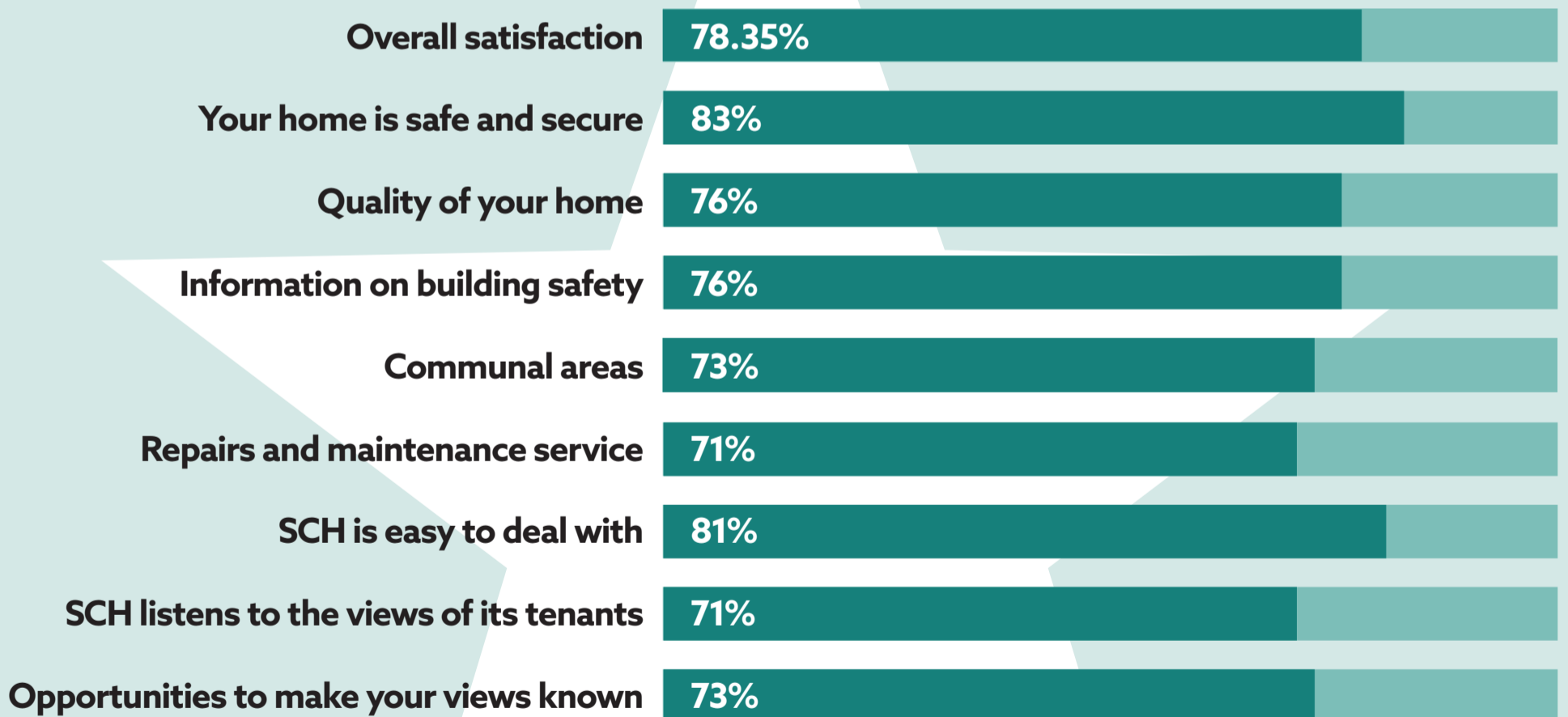
81.00%

Calls answered



Satisfaction STAR survey

We phone you at random throughout the year to ask you questions about your home, neighbourhood, and the services we provide. Here are the results from your feedback.



Take a look at our animated Annual report video for more information. You can view this on our website and social media pages.



Welcome to our Board!



Phil Hardy



Mark Thrasher



Gail Sleight



Bernie Donnelly

There are four new faces we would like to welcome to our Board.

Gail Sleight and Bernie Donnelly are both Solihull Council nominations. Gail is the Council Member for the Bickenhill ward and Bernie is the new Council Member for Kingshurst and Fordbridge.

Bernie has been involved with SCH for many years through a number of tenant engagement channels.

Also new to our Board are two new 'Independent' members, Mark Thrasher and Phil Hardy.

Our Board is made up of nine members, plus chair

Richard Hyde.

The Board is currently completed by Jenny Fletcher; April Halpin and Louise Tubbs (tenant members), Nigel Page (independent) and Dave Pinwell (council member).

We wish all our new Board members success in their role.

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion is very important to us.

Equality is about making sure everyone has the same chances and diversity is about valuing people as individuals and recognising their uniqueness and contributions.

Equality helps people to enjoy life more and get on with other people. Equality laws protect people from being discriminated against because of their characteristics such as disability, sex, ethnicity, colour, and faith.

We are passionate about equality, diversity, and inclusion. We will continue to:

- Employ diverse staff who have the right skills, knowledge, and attitudes to delivery services fairly and appropriately.

- Get to know you, our customers, better so that we can tailor our services whenever possible to support people who are vulnerable and disabled.
- Hear the diverse voice of customers to help us to improve, identify gaps in services and check that all customers are equally satisfied with our services and homes.
- Celebrate the diversity of our customers and the diverse communities of Solihull.

We are very keen to hear from you about what more we could do to put into practice our passion of treating people fairly and being inclusive. Please send your thoughts to newsandviews@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk



Keep updated with our complaints process

Complaints are a great way to get feedback. It helps us understand how we are doing and how our services are affecting you.

We are currently working on changes to our complaints policy and procedure to make sure we are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman code of guidance.

By 1 October we must share on our website self-assessments which outline how well we are following the guidance the Housing Ombudsman provides.

We will also be sharing how we are learning from complaints, along with our complaint's performance.

Check our website regularly for more information www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk



The best in bloom!

This year saw our SCH Gardening competition bloom into action once more.

We would like to thank everyone who got involved this year. You all did such an amazing job and made it very difficult for us to pick our winners.

We are pleased to announce that our winners for each category are:

Best Community/ Shared Garden

1st place - The residents of Longview

2nd place - Ryan Coleman

Most Improved Garden

1st place - Chloe Shaw

2nd place - Cara Hewins

3rd place - Sharon Freeman

Best Floral Display

1st place - Ann Robinson

2nd place - Winifred Palmer

3rd place - Carla Baker

Best Mini Marvel

1st place - Jade Baker

Best Traditional Garden

1st place - Merlie Barrett

2nd place - Diane Heaven

3rd place - Bernise Cotter



To see images of all our entries and winners, please visit our website www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk



LATEST NEWS AND UPDATES

Is your communal garden clear?

Please remember to keep your communal garden clear.

Leaving items such as plant pots, ornaments, children's toys and furniture in the communal garden could stop the grass from being cut.

The Council's ground maintenance contractor Idverde will not remove any items before they begin. Smaller items that are left in the garden could get damaged by the machines the crews use.

Please make sure your belongings do not get damaged by bringing them inside your home safely.

We will not be responsible for any damage that could be caused. Thank you for your understanding.



Remember to keep passageways clear

External alleyways should not be used to store any personal items. They should always be kept clear to allow for access or as a route of escape in an emergency such as a fire.

Any items stored in external alleyways may be removed, and SCH or SMBC will not accept any liability.

Pinnacle Group secure our cleaning contract

We recently appointed Pinnacle FM Ltd as our new cleaning contractor



Fiona Hughes with Managing Director at Pinnacle Group, Neil Fergus.

Pinnacle are responsible for the cleaning of:

- all 37 high rise and 560 low rises
- Saxon Court
- Endeavour House and our Asset Management Chapelhouse HUB
- SCH managed community centres
- the recently acquired Bromford sites.

We are very happy to have them join us to help keep our buildings hygienically safe and clean for all.

Do you need some additional support?

Whether you need help with getting food, information on staying safe or financial advice during these challenging times, Solihull Council's Here2Help page can help.

It is full of useful information and contact details you can access for additional support. Visit their website to find out more.



Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarms



On 1 October, The Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm (Amendment) Regulations 2022 will come into force



This means that



All properties must have at least one smoke alarm fitted on each floor of the residence.



Carbon Monoxide detectors must be fitted in every room with a fixed combustion appliance, excluding gas cookers.



We have a programme of works planned with our mechanical and electrical service contractors, Dodd Group.

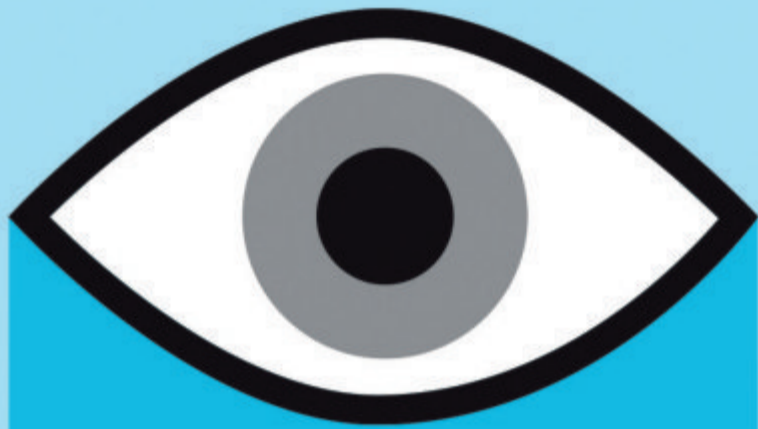
Dodd Group will manage the installation of smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in all eligible properties. They will contact all eligible residents directly to arrange a suitable installation date.



Scan me



If you have any further questions or concerns, please call us on 0121 717 1515



**SEE SOMETHING
SAY SOMETHING**



**Have you experienced
anti-social behaviour
on your bus journey?
Report it to us.**

**Text 'SeeSay' to 81018
with incident details.**

**In an emergency,
always dial 999.**



**This is a non-emergency service and lines are monitored between
9am-5pm Monday to Friday. Charges may apply.**

Dog Fouling

The Council's grounds maintenance contractor has seen a significant increase in dog fouling within communal grassed areas recently.

If you or your visitors own a pet, you are responsible for ensuring that you immediately clean up any mess left by these pets.

You can safely get rid of your dog's mess by using a 'poop scoop' (plastic shovel) and a bag. If there isn't a dog mess bin nearby, wait until you get back home to put it in the bin or rubbish chute.



Please keep your dog on a lead in communal areas

It's a breach of your Tenancy Agreement to allow dogs to roam freely.

Your Tenancy Agreement states that:

- The control of your pets and any pets visiting your home are your responsibility.
- Dogs must be kept under control and on a lead when in public areas. They must never be allowed outside of your property on their own - this includes communal balconies and stairwells.

Thank you for your co-operation.

More ways to pay your rent

You can now make rent payments using the Payzone system.

We've teamed up with them to give you a wider choice of how and where you can pay your rent. You can now pay your bill in many stores such as Tesco Express, Nisa, Londis and Costcutter.



Aids & Adaptations Policy

We have been working hard to develop a new Adaptations Policy to support our vulnerable tenants to live comfortable, independent lives in their own homes.

The plan is for the assistance offered to our tenants to never to be less than that available under the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) which is currently a fund for private households.

Moving forward, the new policy will help us to give a clear, focused service to our tenants. This will reflect on best practice

as outlined in the 2022 DFG Guidance and Foundations Best Practice Guide for Housing Association Adaptations.

What have we have done so far?

Interactive workshops have taken place with residents and stakeholders to help us shape the policy and ensure it meets the needs of our tenants.

We currently spend over £2.8 million in adaptations a year to support private and tenanted properties. £1.3 million of this is

invested into Solihull Council stock adaptations. These adaptations can be anything from a hand rail to a bathroom or bedroom extension.

What's next?

The next step will be for the policy to be put forward for full approval by SCH's Executive Directors and Solihull Council. Once approved, we will develop a new guidance for tenants based on the policy and update our website.

Competition time!

Thank you to everyone who entered our wordsearch competition. Congratulations to our winner, Dylan. Your £25 voucher is in the post!

For a chance to win a £25 voucher you must complete our Autumn-themed wordsearch. Only one entry per person is allowed. You must be an SCH tenant or leaseholder to enter. Cut out and send your entry, with your name and address to:

Freepost RLSS-UEBA-RTUZ, Solihull Community Housing, Endeavour House, Meriden Drive, Solihull B37 6BX

Or take a picture of your entry and email it to newsandviews@solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk

Closing date: Friday 14 October. **Enjoy the puzzle!**

Your name and address:

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Phone number:

Email address:

X	O	R	F	M	Y	S	D	C	P	I	N	E	C	O	N	E	C	O	O	L	B
G	N	H	S	E	U	C	C	Y	H	S	R	N	R	A	I	N	C	O	A	T	L
F	K	T	V	A	I	J	Z	V	D	A	F	U	I	B	I	Y	T	K	S	C	W
F	T	H	A	N	K	S	G	I	V	I	N	G	Y	U	V	Y	W	S	U	H	Q
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S	Q	C	T	N	L	T	E	L	Z	L	G	C	O	I	D	Z	E	U	L	N	R

WIN A £25 VOUCHER

Words to find:

- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| PUMPKIN | OCTOBER |
| ACORN | PINE |
| SQUIRREL | HARVEST |
| HAYSTACK | YELLOW |
| COOL | LEAF |
| SEASON | SEPTEMBER |
| HALLOWEEN | NOVEMBER |
| ORANGE | APPLE |
| CHESTNUTS | CORN |
| SQUASH | CHANGE |
| RAINCOAT | |

To get in touch

Freeport RLSS-UEBA-RTUZ
Solihull Community Housing
Endeavour House
Meriden Drive
Solihull B37 6BX

Phone: 0121 717 1515

Typetalk: 18001 0121 717 1515

Text: 07781 474 722

Website: www.solihullcommunityhousing.org.uk
Visit the contact us page on our website to complete an online form with details of your enquiry



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