

NEWS



Solihull
Community Housing
Shaping our neighbourhoods

For tenants and leaseholders of Solihull Community Housing

Autumn 2023

**We have been out and about as our SCH
Big Conversation returns!**

Read more on page 3



Message from Fiona

Hello, and welcome to the latest edition of SCH News which I hope you will find full of interesting and useful information.

The cover photo is from one of our SCH Big Conversation events, enjoyed by ourselves and hundreds of tenants and leaseholders over the summer months. It was great to get the chance to chat with so many of our customers during our estate walkabouts and high rise drop-in events.

Events such as the SCH Big Conversation are very important to us. They provide us with an ideal opportunity to talk with customers in a relaxed environment.

The feedback customers provide us with helps us shape the delivery of future services. This means we can do so in a way that best meets our customers' needs.



Many people spoke about the Cost of Living crisis. We are of course aware of how difficult things are for some people. We have resources such as our Money Advice Team who can offer guidance and support to those who may need a helping hand.

The Big Conversation also enables us to learn more about where your priorities

lie. What is important to you, is also to us. By having those chats it enables us to focus more sharply on the things that matter most to you.

I have spoken before about the new regulations on social housing. These cover key areas such as customer engagement and customer complaints. I'm always keen to hear from customers so drop me a line if there is something you would like to share.

I'm delighted to be able to report that our sprinkler installation programme is now complete, bringing higher safety standards to thousands of high rise tenants.



Fiona Hughes
Chief Executive

Finally, I must congratulate our garden competition winners, the standard this year was very high and some of the gardens were beautiful. There are some pictures in this newsletter and more on our website which I hope you find time to view.

Best wishes

Fiona



Coming this Autumn!

On 21 September, our newly upgraded Solihull Home Options customer bidding portal will launch.

The new user-friendly portal will be:

- More secure as all users will need to create a password to enhance the security of their personal data
- Easier to use with less forms
- No more online 'Housing Wizard' to complete

- Linked to Google, to enable you to look at the facilities within the area when deciding to bid on a property
- New Build Schemes will be listed
- The bidding cycle will stay the same, so you can still bid on two properties from Wednesday – Tuesday each week.

If you have a pin number for an existing application, this will not change.

When the new system is live, please log in and check your contact details are up to date, including your current email address. This will allow us to send you an email if you forget your login details.



Have you registered on our Inclusive Services Register yet?

We are inclusive of all vulnerabilities and requirements, and we want to make sure our services are accessible to all our residents.

The Inclusive Services Register is a way for you to let us know about your personal needs, or any vulnerabilities that you may have, and how we can then best adapt our services to support you.

You can sign up to the Inclusive Services Register today by:

- completing an online form on our website
- through your My SCH Account portal, if registered

Don't worry, if you don't have online access, you can call us on **0121 717 1515** and ask for a paper version of the form to be sent to your home address.

Inclusive Services Register



Scan the QR code to read more on our Inclusive Services Register and signing up.



SCAN ME

Our SCH Big Conversation is back!



This summer, we have been out and about in your local area to meet you and talk about how you think we're doing.

By getting involved, it gives us the chance to respond to your concerns and improve our services for all residents, making your communities a better place to live.

Over the last three weeks we have:

Held 14 SCH Big Conversation sessions

Spoken to over 357 residents

Received 173 completed surveys

Key feedback from our sessions so far includes:

- ✓ Listening to your views and concerns, and acting on them
- ✓ Providing you with a good customer service
- ✓ Ensuring your home is always safe
- ✓ A good quality and timely repairs service

Things SCH does well:

- ✓ Handles repairs well
- ✓ Great first point of contact

Things SCH could do better

- ✓ Dealing with fly-tipping
- ✓ Monitoring of cleaning in communal areas



If you haven't yet joined us at one of our pop-up events or spotted us on a walkabout in your area, why not scan the QR code to complete our online survey.

■ Follow us on social media to find out when we will be in your neighbourhood.

Best in bloom!

We would like to thank everyone who took part in our gardening competition.

We are pleased to announce that our winners are:

Best Community/Shared Garden

- 1st - Kingsgate House
- 2nd - Longview, Castle Lane
- 3rd - Ryan Coleman

Most Improved Garden

- 1st - Alison Meredith
- 2nd - Andrew Ayres

Best Floral Display

- 1st - Win Palmer
- 2nd - Patricia Hoare
- 3rd - Sarah Walker

Best Mini Marvel

- 1st - Stephen Gibbs
- 2nd - Adam McDonough
- 3rd - Joshua Bagnall

Best Traditional Garden

- 1st - Ann Robinson
- 2nd - Grace Shelton
- 3rd - Merlie Barrett

Most Improved Garden, Alison Meredith



■ To see all the entry photos from this year's winners, please visit our website by scanning the QR code.

Colder months are on their way

As we start to move into the colder months, it is important that you know how to combat damp and mould from occurring in your property.

We have lots of useful information on our website

that will help you. Scan the QR code and find out more.

■ If you are concerned about mould in your home, please complete our online reporting form.



SCAN ME

Thinking of making a disrepair claim?

Did you know there are Claims Management Companies targeting social housing tenants about making a claim against their landlord for disrepair?

These companies are not what they seem and many operate through an illegal cold calling service and could put you at serious financial risk.

We are here to help!

It's really important to us that you are happy with the services we provide. We'll do everything we can to support you and look after your home, so you don't feel like you have to make a claim against us.

If you are unhappy with any part of our repairs service, please get in touch with us first by calling **0121 717 1515**.

For more information around disrepair claims, please scan the QR code to visit our website.



SCAN ME

Andy Street impressed by energy saving homes

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street paid a visit to Alston Road recently to view the energy saving measures installed on more than 60 properties.

Privately owned homes and those managed by SCH have benefited from external wall insulation (EWI) and loft insulation. The transformation has been achieved thanks to Government funding secured by Solihull Council, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), and SCH, and is being delivered by Sustainable Building Solutions.

The measures will improve ventilation, helping to reduce the likelihood of damp and mould. The improvement works have been funded by a combination of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund and the Sustainable Warmth Competition.

The West Midlands Mayor said: "In Solihull, over half of households on Alston Road are set to benefit from homes that are both warmer and cheaper to heat. This is proof of the power of taking a place-based approach to retrofit - hence the importance of our Net Zero Neighbourhoods initiative and why we will continue to press ahead with retrofit."

Council leader Ian Courts, added: "Getting the opportunity to visit homeowners and tenants on Alston Road has really brought home the benefits of making our homes more energy efficient. Speaking to the residents, their satisfaction with the scheme shone through as well as their anticipation of future savings on energy bills."



SCH Executive Director of Operations Darren Baggs with Solihull Council leader, Cllr Ian Courts, and West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street

E-Bike and E-Scooter Safety Tips



1

Don't block your exit with charging batteries or e-bike and e-scooters, if a fire breaks out this will prevent your safe exit.

3

Never leave your device charging unattended or when you're asleep

2

Make sure your battery and charger meet UK safety standards.

4

Let your battery cool before charging it and ensure you unplug it once charged.

SCAN ME



BUILDING SAFETY NEWS

Sprinkler installation project now complete



Our high rise customers are now able to enjoy a higher level of personal safety than ever before, thanks to the completion of our sprinkler installation programme.

It has taken just over two years for us to get to all 37 blocks, not helped by Covid working restrictions at times too.

Since the sprinklers have been installed they have been called into action on a couple of occasions. Thankfully these were relatively minor incidents, but the sprinklers were activated and responded in the way to which they were designed.

Thank you to all our high rise customers for their patience, support and understanding while the work took place. We really appreciate it.

Building safety never stops of course...

We have been carrying out a structural survey into all our properties and this work is ongoing. By doing this work, it will enable us to get to small problems before they become big ones.

Some of our blocks are also having work carried out to their external spandrel panels. This is to bring them into line with the very latest fire safety regulations.

Our Building Safety Team are working closely with affected residents while this work takes place.

Finally, it was great to hear so many residents keen to talk about building safety over the summer when we visited high rises as part of our SCH Big Conversation.

It's great to hear how seriously people treat this subject and how keen they are to learn more. All the feedback from these visits will be reviewed and actions put in place where we can see a need to do so.

Remember, if you ever have any building safety concerns about where you live, you can speak to your Building Safety Advocate, Estate Assistant or call us on **0121 717 1515**.



Annual gas safety check

We are legally bound to visit all our customers once a year to check their gas appliances. This is very important as it helps keep you and your neighbours safe.

If we contact you about making an appointment for your gas safety check, please respond as quickly as possible.

Gas Safety Week is in September and we will be promoting this on our website and social media channels.



Fire door inspections

All high rise blocks have fire safety doors. This includes the front door to tenants' flats. To make sure they remain compliant at all times, we carry out an annual check of the doors.

We need to check both the front and back of the door, so we will need to make an appointment with you. If you hear from us about this, please help us by booking a convenient timeslot for the visit as soon as possible.



Your chance to work with us

We now have a network of volunteer tenant Building Safety Advocates.

These volunteers help carry out simple safety checks in blocks and work with us to keep everyone safe.

Get in touch on **0121 717 1515** if you would like to join the team!



Fighting for a gas safe nation
11th-17th September 2023





Annual Report 2022/23

This report looks at our performance from April 2022 to March 2023. It highlights the services we provide to our tenants and leaseholders on behalf of Solihull Council.

Round-up of the year

9,902

Properties



9,703

Tenants



1,288

Leaseholders



4,630

Garages



2,829

Households on the housing register



268

Employees



50

Homes lost through Right to Buy



10

Shared ownership properties sold



Providing homes

58

Properties acquired

1,006

Households helped through prevention or relief from homelessness

2,708

Number of homeless approaches

1,246

Number of accepted homelessness duties



Managing homes

585

Homes re-let

26 days

Average time to re-let homes

£45,404,771.50

Rent collected

70.91%

Satisfaction with antisocial behaviour case handling

£ 1,994,022.61

Additional benefit awarded following help from our Money Advice Team

26

Evictions for arrears

356

New Antisocial behaviour cases reported



Looking after your home



36,212
Repairs completed

15,285
Appointments made

98.33%
Repairs completed on time

97.13%
Appointments kept

8,936
Gas servicing completions

153
New heating systems fitted

320
Properties receiving energy efficiency improvements

2,198
Electrical checks

92.84%
Satisfaction with responsive repairs service

C Average
Energy Performance Certificate of properties

Support services



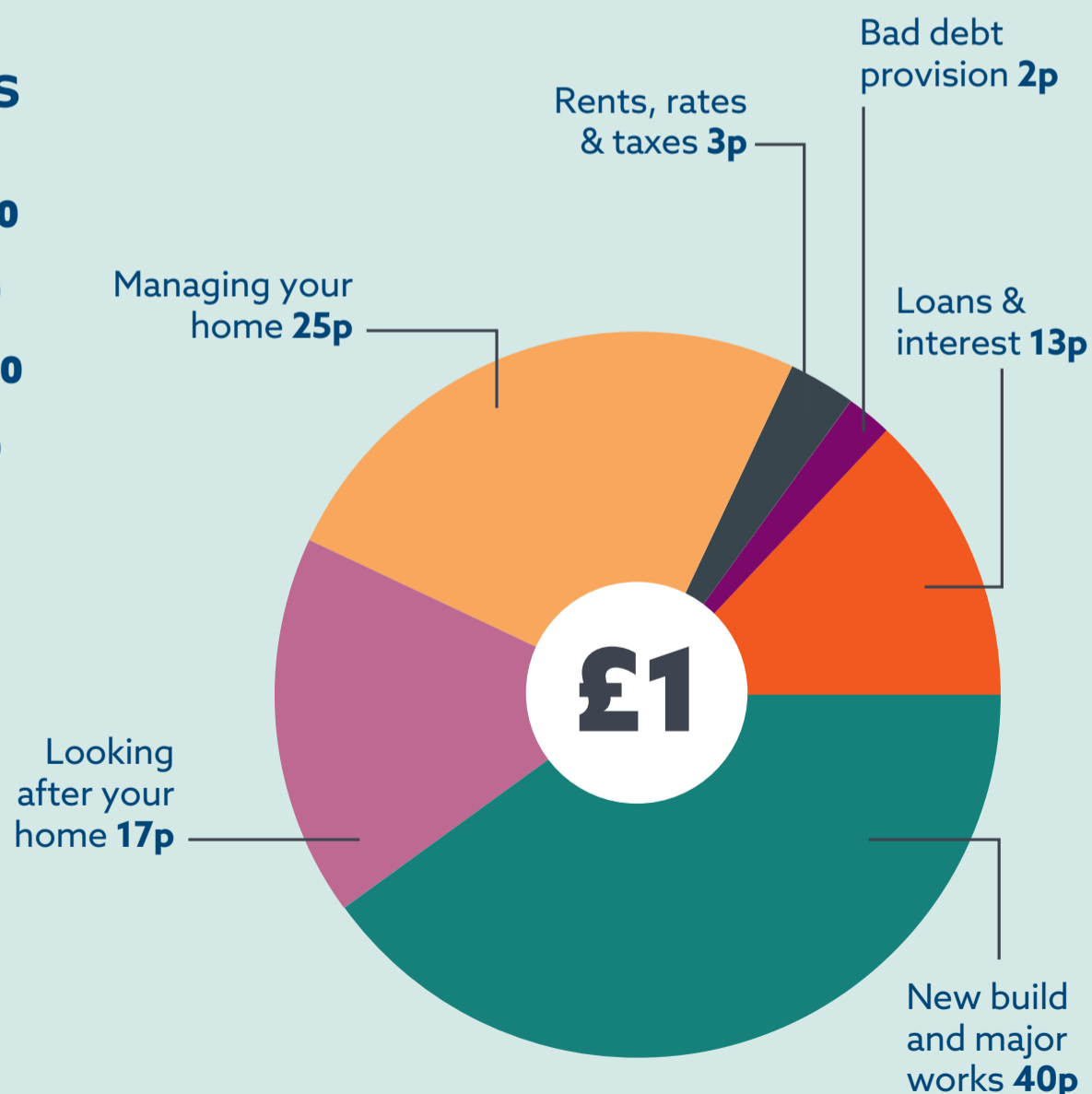
1,714
Minor adaptations completed

268
Major adaptations completed

1,895
Wellbeing service users

Where your money goes

New build and major works	£21,787,000
Looking after your home	£9,189,000
Managing your home	£13,809,000
Rents, rates & taxes	£1,469,000
Bad debt provision	£846,000
Loans & Interest	£7,095,000



Total spend
£54,195,000



Keeping in touch

286

Compliments received



364

Complaints received



742

Councillor/MP enquiries received



97.84%

Complaints resolved at stage one



122,285

Calls received



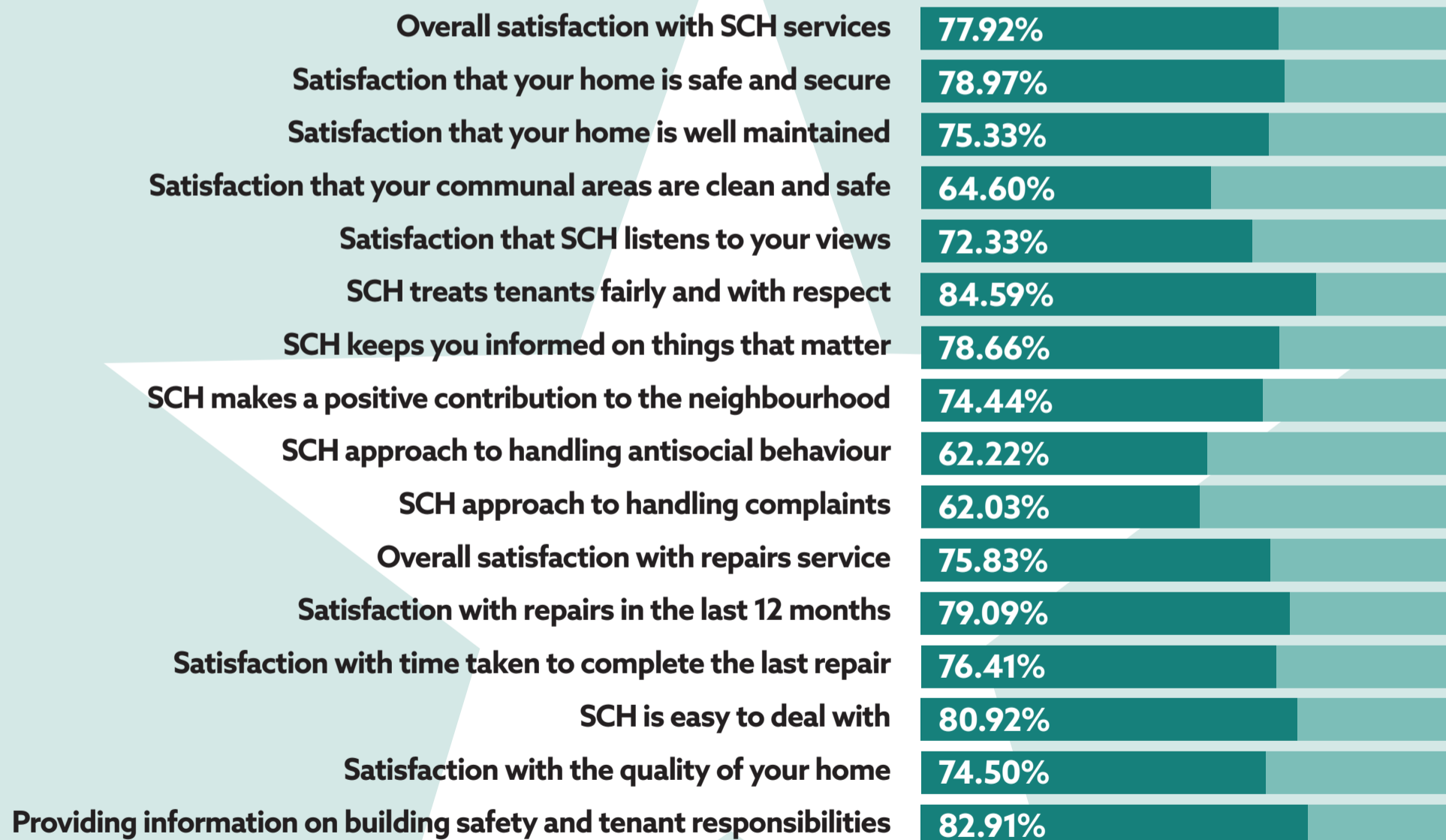
83.89%

Calls answered



Resident satisfaction survey

We phone a sample of residents on a quarterly basis 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.



Learning from Complaints

Complaints are an important part of any organisation's ability to be able to review what they do and make improvements. Whilst the purpose of making a complaint is to put something right for the individual, it is important for us to ensure we are learning from complaints, where our practices may have resulted in hardship or inconvenience for customers.



Learning

The types of learning we have identified recently include:

- wider publication of new government funding schemes for residents.
- recognising through our Complaint Audits that we need to carry out more internal training to staff around complaint handling and record keeping. We need to be able to recognise when customers are making a complaint without being explicit.

Reviewing practices

We have recently reviewed our Safe and Sound service practices and introduced a safe and well check for customers who activate their alarm system, which calls an ambulance. If the wait for the ambulance is likely to be longer than two hours, a duty staff member will attend the property to check the wellbeing of our customer to ensure they are comfortable and hydrated. Our contractor will make half hourly calls to the customer, ensuring they remain comfortable until the ambulance arrives.

Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman has instructed us to review our Complaints Policy process and Gas Safety Policy. We have reviewed our Gas Safety Policy and are making changes to how we deal with residents who fail to allow annual access for a gas safety check.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



Meeting your particular needs, whenever we can, is really important to us. That's because we want to treat you fairly and with respect.

You may be familiar with the terms that we often use - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. What we mean by this is:

- **Tailoring our services:** For example, if we know that you have mobility issues, our repairs team will wait a little longer than usual for you to answer the door when they come to your home.
- **Making our information readily available:** For example, if you tell us that you have eyesight problems or if someone cannot read and write, we can give you written information in larger print or have it read or explained to you.
- **Arranging support when you need it:** For example, if someone is housebound, we can arrange our specialist staff to visit you at home to make sure you are safe. We also provide aids such as grabrails, lever taps and other items so disabled residents can use their home safely and independently.

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



Supporting your pursuit of qualifications for work

Do you want access to accredited courses? The Council's Employment and Skills team can help.

The Digital Hub has supported more than 130 Solihull residents to improve their digital skills. Some of them have progressed onto accredited courses in fields with high demand for staff. This includes Cyber Security, Business Administration, and Customer Service. Recommendations on qualifications can also be provided, using the team's knowledge of what local employers are looking for in their workforce.



Testimonials from those who have taken advantage of the Digital Hub:

"I have learnt not only digital skills, but more importantly, I have learnt more about myself. It has helped me to grow as a person. Thank you for your help and support. It has been giving me strength each week."

"I now have the confidence to find work and use a computer. That was something that I had never thought I would be able to do before. Thank you so much for your kind help and patience."

Flexible drop-in sessions are available at Solihull Recruitment and Training Centre in Chelmsley Wood Shopping Centre. Give the team a call or email to learn more.

Address: 16-18 Maple Walk (Upper Mall), Chelmsley Wood Shopping Centre B37 5TS

Phone no: 0121 704 6869

Email: digitalhub@solihull.gov.uk

Drop-in sessions: Tuesday – Thursday
from 10:30am – 12:30pm
or 2:00pm – 4:00pm



Stay Connected

As regeneration activity in Kingshurst continues to ramp up, make sure you receive all the latest project updates using Solihull Council's Stay Connected email bulletin.



Head to solihull.gov.uk/stayconnected or scan the QR code and select 'Kingshurst Village Centre Regeneration' to sign up for regular updates.



Helping to shape Kingshurst Park

A very big thank you to everyone who took the time to give us feedback on the concept design of Kingshurst Park, whether you attended one of our local events, community drop-in sessions or completed the survey online.

We are now in the process of gathering all the feedback and speaking with the designers to take on board your ideas and suggestions.

Watch this space for more updates on Kingshurst Park and information on how you can get involved and have your say on upcoming local projects.



Keeping your community safe and clean

We are committed to making sure all our neighbourhoods are clean, tidy and safe places for everyone to live, but we need your help to achieve this.

Aerial Fly-tipping

If you live in one of our high or low-rise buildings, please do not throw any rubbish from your windows. This can be dangerous and pose a serious health and safety issue for anyone located within the grounds below, such as maintenance staff or members of the public.

Throwing rubbish or food containers out of the windows creates an unsightly mess and will also attract rats and other animals.

Under no circumstances should you be throwing cigarette butt ends out of your window as this is a serious fire risk.

Dog Fouling

As part of your Tenancy Agreement, you are responsible for the control of your own pets both in public and at home, as well as any pets visiting your home.

All dogs must:

- be kept under control at home
- always be on a lead when in public or communal areas
- never be allowed outside your property on their own

If you are caught letting your dog foul and not cleaning it up, you could be fined up to £1,000.

We thank you for your cooperation. Together we can keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe, and environmentally friendly.

■ If you have any information on who may be fly tipping, please call our Contact Centre on 0121 717 1515.



Is your home covered?

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions and personal belongings. Remember, you would be responsible for replacing your belongings, so it's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for.

We have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks who provide specialist Tenants Contents Insurance policies.

You could be covered for fire, lightning and smoke damage, riots, malicious damage, storms or floods, water and oil leaks, theft or attempted theft and much more.

This scheme was designed for Solihull Community Housing tenants, and premiums can be paid weekly alongside your rent.

For more information, please call us on **0121 717 1515** or visit our website by scanning the QR code.



Woodbrooke goes green



Two new garden planters have been donated to Woodbrooke House's community garden by Dodd Group, our official gas and electrical contractors.

The planters arrived empty and ready to be filled by residents with a variety of beautiful flowers and charming garden ornaments.

The generosity of our contractors was greatly appreciated by Woodbrooke residents. All were delighted to have something new to work on and continue brightening their wonderful outdoor space they have created together.

Did you know that gardening has so many benefits outside of the joy of simply enjoying the outdoors? It can improve things such as stress, self-esteem, immunity, heart health, mental health and more.

Gardening really is a labour of love that reaps benefits in all areas.



Engagement Officer, Mandy with Woodbrooke residents Dawn and Ian, and Dodd Group Project Supervisor, Martin.

Competition time!

Thank you to everyone who entered our wordsearch competition. Congratulations to our winner, Susan from Chelmsley Wood. 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 13 October.**

Enjoy the puzzle!



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

WIN A £25 VOUCHER

Words to find:

GOLDEN	LEAVES	ORANGE
CONKERS	FALLING	RED
SCARECROW	ACORNS	YELLOW
SQUIRREL	HARVEST	WELLINGTONS

Your name and address:

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Phone number:

Email address:

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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For live updates join us on social media.

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