

Tenant VOICE



Meet our award winning
Gardeners
Pages 4 & 5

Check out our performance
Annual Report
Centre pages

Update
Welfare Reform
Page 3

Free events
What's On
Page 10

Blooming Marvellous!

Win an iPad Mini!
Competition on back cover



Issue 4
Autumn/Winter
2016

Produced in partnership with Winchester City Council Tenants



Winchester
City Council



Tenant Voice

Hello

Welcome to the latest issue of Tenant Voice. As usual we've packed the magazine full of useful advice and interesting news articles to help you get the most out of your housing service.

Don't forget you can now keep up to date with housing news by reading Tenant Voice online at:

www.winchester.gov.uk/tenantvoice

Going digital means we can save on printing costs whilst enabling you to access our news much faster. We'll still be making paper copies available in our sheltered schemes and in the Council's main reception, and you can still request to receive a copy through your letterbox if you'd prefer (295 residents have already signed up for a paper copy).

If you're already missing summertime now that autumn is here you'll welcome the colourful, sunny photos on pages 4 and 5 that were taken from our gardening competition. What a green fingered bunch of residents we have in Winchester! Well done to everyone who entered.

Check out page 11 for some top money saving tips to help your finances stretch further this Christmas and don't miss our welfare reforms update on page 3 to find out how your household budget is likely to be affected.

Finally, we would love to hear your neighbourhood news. Please get in touch with details of what's going on in your community. We can promote local activities and share your photos of neighbourhood events.

Best wishes
The Editorial Team

Trevor

Dee

Heather



Spare change for real change

You've probably seen the posters and maybe even dropped your spare change into one of the coloured collection boxes across the city, but what happens to all the donations?

Every penny is used by Winchester Churches Nightshelter and Trinity Winchester; two local charities that provide vital resources and support for anyone facing homelessness. People end up on the streets for all kinds of reasons and the two charities work to help rough sleepers get back on their feet again and rebuild their lives.

CAN YOU
SPARE
CHANGE
FOR...
REAL
CHANGE?

Please make a difference to homeless people...
...and help prevent street begging

Text REAL17 £2/£5/£10 to 70070*
Or donate at Winchester shops & pubs



The Mayor gave her support to the campaign by lending a hand in the kitchens of The Light of Bengal restaurant during a special lunch to feed the homeless during the month of Ramadan.

Home Sweet Home

Residents at Symonds Close in Weeke have enjoyed settling into Winchester's newest council homes this summer.

The 12 new houses and bungalows are modern, energy efficient and perfect for family living, with a communal green

area and plenty of car-free space for children to play safely outside. The £1.8 million development also includes an outside gym at Dean Park and a trim trail at St Mathews Field for everyone in the wider community to enjoy.

"My partner and I recently downsized from a family house. Although moving can feel like a stressful thing to do, it is most definitely worth it. It is such a positive thing that Winchester City Council are building new homes. Symonds Close properties are built to a high standard, we love our dormer bungalow and the location could not be better" Susie Moreau



Welfare Reform update

What does Pay to Stay mean for you?

We are still waiting for details from the government about how Pay to Stay will work and when it will start but if you and/or your partner or spouse collectively earn more than £31,000, your rent is set to rise (by 15 pence for every pound above this threshold).

We will keep you updated as we know more details, but if you are worried about paying your rent and making ends meet please talk to us in confidence on 01962 848 205.





Celebrating Gardening Greatness

Meet the winners of our gardening competition; tenants and leaseholders who prove that you don't need a big budget, a large garden or years of experience to create something extra-special.

They shared a total of £1850 worth of gardening vouchers for their efforts to create some of the district's best kept and most colourful gardens, balconies and vegetable patches. The competition was judged by tenants and Councillor Horrill.

Best Garden and Best Hanging Basket, Anthony Coates from Headborne Worthy

"Gardening is a great way to connect with my kids and teach them about growing their own food."

Once an overgrown mess, Anthony has transformed his garden into an oasis of colour for his whole family to enjoy. He's even created veg patches for his three young children to grow their own food and learn about composting.



Best Garden Runner-up, Paul & Sally Barker from Wickham

"It doesn't have to cost the earth; we pick up plants and pots at car boots and at the recycling centre. We have used the prize money to create a water feature."



Best Sheltered Scheme, Martin Pointer from Bishops Waltham

"I love working in the garden, it keeps me fit and healthy. The communal garden helps to bring people together and definitely supports the great sense of community we have here. We will be holding a community vote on how to spend the prize money."

Tony, Stella, Martin, Gill, Eve and Val receive the award from Councillor Horrill (centre)



**Best Novelty Container,
Michael and Iris Page
from Alresford**

"Gardening is for everyone, young and old, able bodied and disabled. You can be really inventive in the garden, we used an old barrel and pump as a planter!"



**Best Balcony, Mrs
Christine Richmond
from Alresford**

"It doesn't matter if you don't have a big space, you can still make a balcony and even a window box look bright and colourful."

**Best Veg Patch, Annie Miller
from Stanmore**

"I get so much pleasure from working in the garden and knowing that local people enjoy the fruit and veg I grow. Gardening is great exercise, a definite stress-reliever and it's certainly changed my life for the better!"



Thank you to everyone who entered, the standard of gardens was extremely high. Check out our next issue for a beginners guide to gardening and who knows you could be a winner next year?

Gardening is a great way to:

- Keep fit and active
- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Combat depression
- Improve your local neighbourhood
- Cut your grocery bills



Annual Report

A Summary of Housing Performance for the Year to March 2016



Cllr Caroline Horrill
Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

Our Annual Report shows you at a glance how we are performing and other interesting details including how we have invested into your homes and how we spend your rent money.

It's been a busy but successful year; we've built 44 new homes and started work on over 100 more (including an extra care scheme to enable more people to live independently), carried out 20,000 repairs, invested over £600k on the popular Estate Improvement programme and spent over £10 million on your homes. Plus, our debt and money advice has helped more tenants avoid getting into rent arrears.

The fact that resident satisfaction rates remain so high is testament to the hard work of our entire housing team. However, despite this good news there is still more work to be done and we need your help to develop our services and ensure all our tenants live in decent properties they feel proud to call home. Please get in touch if you would like to get involved in helping us to improve the services you and your neighbours receive (check out page 9 for details).

Maintaining your Homes

In 2015/16, the Council spent over £10 million maintaining and improving your homes.

Despite carrying out almost 30,000 repair jobs in the year, not all planned works were completed. Contracts for over £2m of roof replacement work were delayed and only awarded this summer, several months later than planned. However, the work will be completed this year and all Council homes will comply with the national Decent Homes standard.



New homes at New Queens Gate

Investing in Your Homes	Amount	Numbers
Day to day repairs	£2.503m	20,855 jobs
Preparing empty homes for re-letting	£655k	321 properties
External building/roofing works	£565k	414 jobs
Heating systems	£1.185m	847 jobs
Windows/doors	£476k	581 jobs
Kitchens and bathrooms	£1.871m	604 jobs
Disabled adaptations	£754k	330 jobs
Loft conversions	£224k	10 properties
Estate improvements	£609k	20 schemes



New homes at Symonds Close

General performance

	2015/16 Performance	National Average
Rent arrears (as a % of total rent due)	1.39	2.68%
Average time to complete a repair	5.5 days	10 days
Tenant satisfaction with Housing Services	89%	84.4%
Tenant satisfaction with their neighbourhood	90%	84.7%
Average re-let time for Council homes	10.6 days	26 days
Average cost per property of Housing Management	£349	£445
Average cost per property for repairs and voids	£662	£804

Allocations	
Households registered on HHC	2,293
% of households in Band 3 – medium priority	1,825
Average Band 3 wait time for 3 bed house	3 years 2 months

Lettings	
Lettings to tenants new to social housing	203
Lettings to existing tenants	160
Tenants assisted by Wise Move downsizing programme	50

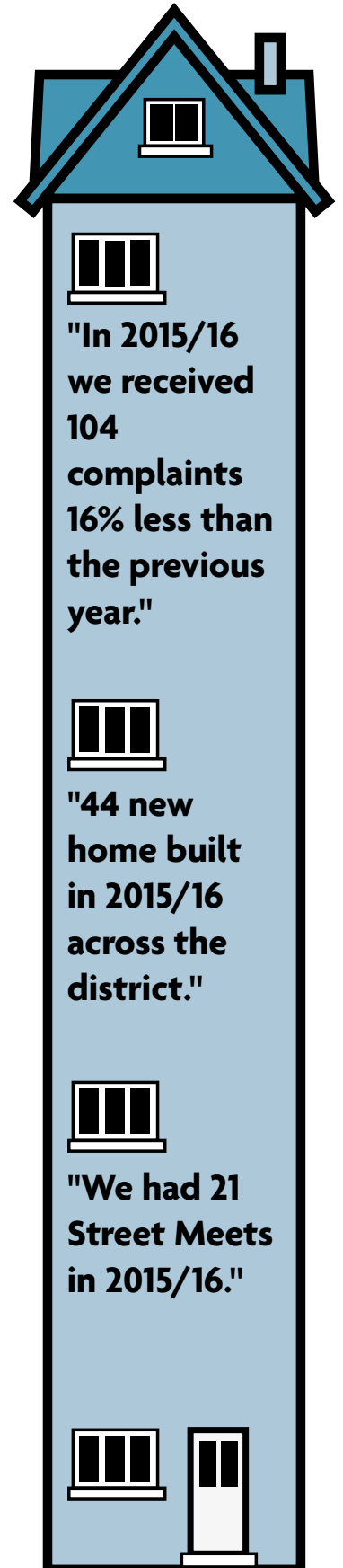
Evictions	
Tenants evicted as a result of rent arrears	3
Tenants evicted for other reasons	1

How is your rent spent?

In the last year, each £1 of rent you pay has been spent in the following areas:



Go to www.hampshirehomechoice.org.uk to view the Hampshire Home Choice Annual Report 2015 which provides more details about waiting lists and lettings.





Tenant Voice

Good news for sheltered tenants

Older residents living in our sheltered schemes have a double reason to celebrate - not only are we transforming communal lounges but we've just secured the continuation of the community alarm service, run by Chichester Careline.

Residents at Hyde Gate threw a special party recently (pictured) to say thank you to the Council for their new-look common room. We have already upgraded four common rooms and are due to redecorate and refurbish another three this year to transform sheltered schemes across Winchester.

From keep fit to coffee mornings

Talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer to find out what's on offer at your local communal room or call 01962 855 335.



Community alarm service



We're also celebrating a new era for our community alarm service, which will now be run by Chichester Careline. It means our 700 sheltered tenants can live independently at home knowing that help is on hand 24/7 if they activate the alarm intercom unit or pull-cord in their home.

For more details about Careline please call 01962 855 335 or visit

www.winchester.gov.uk/housing/older-persons-services

More affordable homes for Winchester

Work is under way at three projects in the centre of Winchester to create more affordable housing in the city centre by next summer.

At Victoria Court, off Andover Road, 18 apartments are being built for rent and shared ownership. Perfect for people who need a helping hand to get on the housing ladder and for those who are seeking to downsize from larger homes. You can register your interest via the Help to Buy South website at www.helptobuysouth.co.uk

At Chesil Street we are building an Extra Care scheme that will provide residents with extra support and facilities onsite enabling people to live independently in their own homes for longer. Please get in touch for more details (residents will need a personal care assessment as part of their application to rent or buy) email ChesilLodge@winchester.gov.uk or phone 01962 848 075.

And at Hillier Way in Abbots Barton, work is underway to build 13 homes providing a mix of flats, bungalows and family houses.



Chesil Street

Have your say

If you have an issue with the housing service or a suggestion on how it could be improved, there are lots of different opportunities for you to make your voice heard.

Both our Scrutiny and our Performance Review groups keep an eye on the Council to check we are delivering services that meet your needs and offer value for money.

"I've accessed great training opportunities including minute taking, first aid and food hygiene which have all enhanced my CV."

Victoria Smith
Member of Repairs & Maintenance
Performance Review Group

Recently tenants have looked into issues ranging from finance, gas boiler servicing and grounds maintenance services. They've made useful recommendations on how we can further improve services and the local environment, including the planting of new trees in Compton (pictured right).

"I have a voice and can ask questions and make suggestions. I look forward to meetings, conferences, workshops and events, which broaden my thinking and views."

Roy Cochran
Member of one of our Performance
Review Groups



Getting involved means you can improve the service for everyone and:

- Learn new skills
- Improve your CV
- Develop your self-confidence
- Meet new people

Tenants And Council Together



Make your voice heard.

Pop along to the TACT AGM on Tuesday 15

November at 7pm in Winchester Guildhall. Meet tenant reps, find out the benefits of getting involved and how you can make your voice heard.

"TACT really does give tenants a voice. We want to see lots of new faces and we've introduced evening as well as daytime meetings to enable more people to get involved." Monica Gill, Vice Chair of TACT

Check out TACT's latest initiatives and find out what's coming up on their facebook page at www.facebook.com/winchesterTACT

Young and old working together

Sheltered housing tenants enjoyed a special intergenerational afternoon tea party recently, organised by The University Of Winchester to bring old and young people together over tea and cake.

They enjoyed crafts, skittles and an old-fashioned singalong and plan to make it a regular event. If you would like to get involved please call or email (see back cover for contact details).



Award winning neighbours

Congratulations to Winchester tenants Monica Gill and Sue Down who both received 'Good Neighbour' Awards from Hampshire County Council recently. The two Community Champions were recognised for the work they do locally, representing their neighbours and organising activities and events that unite their community.



Tenant Voice

What's on?

New Clothes Sale

Tuesday 25 October, 10am

Clothes sale at Hyde Gate House. Open to all in sheltered housing. For more details contact Monica Gill on 07759 250 843.

South Coast Training, Southampton **FREE**

Saturday 29th October, 10 - 4pm

Join in workshops ranging from welfare reforms to housing law, and meet other council tenants. Contact the Tenant Involvement team to book your place.

TACT AGM

Tuesday 15th November, 7 - 9pm

Meet tenant reps and Council Officers. All tenants welcome. Refreshments provided and we can even arrange transport (check out page 9 for more details on TACT).

Christmas Shopping Trip to Brighton

Thursday 17 November

Organised by Monica Gill from Godson House, the Christmas shopping trip is open to all sheltered housing tenants and costs just £22.50. Call 07759 250 843 to book.

Christmas Light Switch On

Thursday 17th November

The Broadway, High Street. Join the excitement as the Winchester Christmas lights are switched on.

Christmas Lantern Procession

Friday 25 November

Winchester Cathedral

A magical procession of Christmas lanterns guaranteed to get you in the Christmas spirit.

Sheltered Housing Christmas Lunch

Friday 9th December, 11 - 2pm

Festive lunch just for our older tenants in sheltered housing. Invites to follow!

Scrutiny Social

Friday 16th December

Special event to thank the tenant reps for their work (see page 9 for details of our Scrutiny teams).

Community event listings

Let us know and we can promote it.

Free half term fun

Half Term Football Coaching **FREE**

Football coaching for 6-16 year olds Tuesday 25th – Friday 28th October at various locations across the district. Call 01962 848 329 or email: cdrummond@winchester.gov.uk

Step Back in Time **FREE**

Visit The Royal Hampshire Regiment Museum on Southgate Street and step back in time to uncover military history.

Under 8s Swim **FREE**

With an adult at River Park Leisure Centre



FREE parkrun every Saturday at 9am at North Walls Recreation Ground

FREE

Fancy learning a new skill?

We provide lots of training opportunities for tenants. Contact the Tenant Involvement team for details of upcoming training courses.



Get active!

parkrun

FREE

Pull on your trainers and join in the 5km parkrun every Saturday at 9am at North Walls Recreation Ground. www.parkrun.org.uk/winchester

4 to 14 year olds can join in the 2km Junior parkrun every Sunday at 9am at Winchester Sports Stadium Garrison Ground. www.parkrun.org.uk/winchester-juniors

Running Club

Weekly sessions to help improve your fitness levels and achieve your goals. Every Thursday 6.30pm, River Park Leisure Centre, £2 per person.

For more get active ideas:

www.winchester.gov.uk/activewinchester
01962 848 329

Health Walks

FREE

These hour-long health walks are a great way to get fit, meet new people and explore the local area. Walks take place every week right across the district. For more details visit: <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/activewinchester/active-lifestyles-scheme/health-walks/>

Just for Over 50s

Steady & Strong Classes promote balance and strength. Sessions are held at Harwood Place in Kings Worthy, Compton Scout Hut and River Park Leisure Centre, £3 per person.

Activities at River Park Leisure Centre

Active toddlers

FREE

Taster Sessions (until November) in all Pre-school Courses: Balanceability, Gyminis, Swiminis and Mini-trampoline.

Judo

FREE

Judo taster sessions Friday's at 6pm.

Badminton

Tuesday's 6-7pm open for all ages and abilities. £2 a session.

Football drop in

Friday night, just £1 a session. 5-6pm 10-13yrs and 6-7pm 13yrs+.

Remember don't be tempted to use a loan shark



Not only do they charge extortionate interest rates but they often use intimidation or violence to get their money. If you're worried how to make ends meet please talk to us for confidential money advice on

01962 848 205 or email housingincome@winchester.gov.uk

Dee's Corner

Everyone likes to save money, and with Christmas approaching it's a good time to stretch your pennies even further. Here are my top tips to save money online.

- Don't just save money, make money! Cashback sites give you back a percentage of the price you pay, on everything from groceries to insurance and broadband deals.
- Search online for coupons and discount codes before you do anything from booking a meal, visiting the cinema or ordering your online shopping.
- Use price comparison websites to score the best deals online. You can check the price of anything from shampoo to holidays.
- Ask for a refund if something you have bought is reduced the following day. Some companies including Amazon will refund you the difference if you notify them immediately.





Tenant Voice

Enter our photo competition and you could win an iPad Mini.



Simply find the piece of the photo somewhere inside this magazine and tell us which page it's on.

Email your answer along with your name, address and phone number to: tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk or post it to the following address:

Tenant Voice Competition, Freepost Plus RTLH-KXUA-SEEC, Tenant Involvement, Winchester, SO23 9ZT

Closing date for entries:
November 30, 2016



Rules: Entry is restricted to one entry per household please. Competition open to Winchester City Council tenants only. Winner will be chosen at random from all valid entries. Winners will be contacted via phone and may be published in our next newsletter. The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered in to. We will not pass on your details to any third party.

Fancy saving money on your energy bills?

We are offering all tenants a FREE home energy check that will help you stay warmer at home this winter AND save you money!

"I usually worry about heating bills over winter but now I know how to heat my home much more cost effectively. A quick Home Energy check has saved me a fortune!" Joan Downing, Winchester City Council tenant

- Cut your fuel bills
- Keep warm for less
- Switch to a cheaper energy tariff
- Receive free give-aways and free energy efficient light bulbs

Call 01962 217 844 or email andy.smale@winacc.org.uk



Tenant Ken Gore fits one of his free energy saving lightbulbs

Call Back Service



From viewing your refuse collection calendars to reporting repairs; you can access lots of Council services online or by phone.

www.winchester.gov.uk
01962 840 222

if we're busy request a call back and we will ring you back.

If you have any particular needs which affect how you are able to use or be involved in our services or how you would like to receive information for example translation, interpreters, Braille, audio tape, large print, sign language – please contact the Customer Service Centre either by telephone **01962 840 222** or by email customerservice@winchester.gov.uk

WinchesterTenants

@WinchesterCity

Freephone: 0800 716 987

Email: tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk

www.winchester.gov.uk/tenantvoice

Winchester City Council

Freepost Plus RTLH-KXUA-SEEC

Tenant Involvement

Winchester SO23 9ZT



Winchester
City Council