TENANT
VOICE

Make the most of Winchester’s stunning scenery on foot

Ideas for springtime strolls on page 4

WIN

a free family swim pass at Riverside Leisure Centre

See back page

Help to understand Universal Credit and get online
see pages 8 and 9

Produced in partnership with Winchester City Council tenants and leaseholders
Welcome...

Thanks to the warmer weather and spring flowers, Winchester is literally bursting into bloom at the moment. It’s a great time of year to explore the city and surrounding districts, so we’ve packed this issue of Tenant Voice with lots of ideas to help you get out and about to make the most of our beautiful region. Don’t forget to let us know your ideas for local walks or activities that we can share with readers in our next issue (please drop us a line using the contact details on the back cover). Thank you to everyone who returned the Tenant Information Form, please can you return the form if you haven’t already done so.

Tenants And Council Together

TACT update from Monica Gill

We formed TACT to provide a platform for tenants to work with the Council to help improve the housing service for everyone. I am the Chair, Sue Down is the Vice Chair and Michael Fawcitt looks after communications.

We hold TACT meetings regularly to discuss housing issues and suggest ways for the Council to improve services. TACT meetings are open to all tenants and leaseholders, and often speakers from the Council or other organisations are invited to give talks and presentations.

The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 22 May at 2pm in Chesil Lodge Extra Care scheme in the city centre. There will be presentations by staff from Trinity and Winchester Nightshelter and also the Council’s Sports Development team. If you would like a tour of Chesil Lodge before the meeting please arrive at 1.30pm.

For more details about TACT please get in touch on 07759 250 843 or email me at monicag70@talktalk.net.

Goodbye to Ken

Sadly, Ken Gore a tenant from Winnall who was a founder member of TACT, passed away in March. Ken also served on the Readers Panel and worked with the City Council to help improve services for all tenants. He will be sadly missed.

Housing news direct to your inbox

We are launching a digital housing newsletter so you can receive the latest information about your home and Housing Services direct to your inbox. If we don’t already have your email address make sure you register your email. To read the latest news visit www.winchester.gov.uk/tenant-news.

Simply register your council tenancy on www.winchester.gov.uk/mycouncilhouse email your contact details to housing@winchester.gov.uk or telephone 01962 848 400.

If you would like to receive a hard copy of Tenant Voice please email tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk or call 0800 716 987.

Meet the team

This issue of Tenant Voice was put together with the help of the following tenants: Joan Downing, Judith Steventon Baker, Monica Gill, Sheila Burns, Brian Pitts, Leon White, Vicky Smith, Joan Stevens, Pippa Cole, Sue Downs, Susan Rowlands, Ann Noble, Lin Mellish, and Monica Gill.

Welcome to spring!
Have a good idea to improve your estate?

Our Estate Improvements programme funds a range of projects to make your neighbourhood a better place to live. These range from extra parking to better lighting, new bike stores or play equipment, or improvements to communal gardens. If you have got an idea on how the funding could be used to improve your neighbourhood, contact the Housing Estates Team on 01962 848 207 or visit www.winchester.gov.uk/estateimprovements

DIY help

If you’re struggling with small DIY jobs at home we can help.

Our Handyperson Service is affordable and reliable and covers a wide range of jobs including unblocking pipes, hanging curtain rails and assembling flat pack furniture. The service is available to all council tenants across the district. Tenants over 60 and those living with a disability can benefit from a subsidised rate.

It costs just £18 an hour (£9.60 per hour if you receive benefits or are over 60). For more details or to book an appointment call 01962 848 455 or visit www.winchester.gov.uk/handyperson

Are you covered?

Could you afford to replace your possessions if you were a victim of burglary, or if a fire or flood damaged your home?

Contents insurance can cost as little as £10 a month and provides peace of mind in case of an emergency. You can also cover items you take away from home like phones, laptops, jewellery or bicycles. Compare prices and policies online or talk to your Housing Officer for advice.
Put your best foot forward!

Winchester and the surrounding districts are home to stunning scenery and beautiful countryside that look even more spectacular with spring flowers in bloom.

Make the most of the warmer weather by exploring the region on foot. Walking is a great way to keep fit and stay active whilst improving mental well-being, so a springtime stroll can do wonders for your health!

Join a walking group

We organise free, monthly guided health walks across the district where you can meet new people, get fit and feel great whilst exploring the local area. Get up, get out and get walking! Visit www.winchester.gov.uk/sport/active-lifestyles-scheme/health-walks or call 01962 848 493 for details.

Self guided tours

Pick up one of our free walking maps at the Tourist Information Centre at Winchester Guildhall.

My favourite walk...

“Walking is fun, free and great exercise whatever your age. This two and a half mile walk is suitable for pushchairs and wheelchair users so leave the hustle and bustle of the city behind and discover another side to Winchester.”

Lin, a tenant from Kings Worthy

With your back to The Guildhall turn left then turn right at M&S, cross the road and continue along Middle Brook Street towards North Walls. Cross at the pedestrian lights and continue along Park Avenue to enter the recreation ground.

Turn left, then immediately right and follow the path along the river to a footbridge on the left. Cross the river and continue with the tennis courts on the right. Turn right at the end of the tennis courts, then immediately left over the stream. Cross the car park access road and walk through the Hyde Abbey Gardens project until you see Saxon Road on the right. Walk along Saxon Road then turn into Nuns Road, then immediately left onto the footpath called Nuns Walk. At the crossroads turn right. Keep right, and with the Rugby Club on your left continue straight ahead. Go through the barrier back into the recreation ground then take a path to the left. You will see a bridge ahead of you, cross this and turn right, walking back to the recreation park entrance. Return back down Park Avenue to the pedestrian lights and turn left.

Continue past The Willow Tree pub and look for the entrance to the nature reserve just before the bridge. Follow the circular path around the edge of the nature reserve (dogs are not allowed). Exit the reserve, turning left to go over Durngate Bridge, then turn right crossing the road into Water Lane. Follow Water Lane to the end where it meets Bridge Street. Turn right and head back towards The Guildhall.

Other popular walking spots include Clanfield, Denmead, Micheldever Wood and Crab Wood, Sparsholt. If you have got a favourite walk to share with our readers please get in touch. Drop us a line at tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk
Hursley

The village of Hursley dates back to the 12th century, and has welcomed some historical figures over time, including Oliver Cromwell whose family once owned the Hursley estate.

When Cromwell died in 1658 and his son Richard was proclaimed Lord Protector, Hursley briefly became the country seat of the ruler of England!

Hursley House was built on the estate in 1721. Nowadays it is home to software company IBM, but it was a nursing home for officers in the First World War, and the development of the spitfire took place there in World War Two.

Modern day Hursley is a friendly village boasting two pubs, a school and a pre-school, a church, butchers, hairdressers and the Hursley Community Shop which residents recently saved from closure and are now operating with volunteers as a not for profit enterprise.

The village enjoys a fantastic community spirit and there are lots of clubs and activities for residents of all ages including cubs, tennis, cricket, amateur dramatics, running, zumba and pilates. The Village Community Association (HVCA) helps to organise events and welcomes new residents to the village. Check out their welcome pack online at www.thehvca.co.uk where you can also find out more about local clubs and events.

“We’ve lived in Hursley for over 8 years and we absolutely love it! We’ve made great friends here, it is a lovely community with good local amenities and easy access to Winchester and Romsey.”

Tony, a tenant from Hursley

What’s on in Hursley

12th May HVCA Charity Cycle Event and BBQ 9am at IBM social club
15 June Village Fete, 11.30am-3.30pm at John Keble School
16 June HVCA Village Cricket Day 12.30pm at Hursley Park Cricket Ground
15 September HVCA Hursley 10k and fun run 10.30am John Keble School

A free social activity, “The Hursley Hub” takes place at All Saints Church on the third Saturday of every month between 9am and 12noon. All welcome.
Had a repair? How was it?

We carry out thousands of repairs to tenants’ homes every year and it’s important that you let us know how we’re doing so we can change or improve the repair service where needed.

Please give us your feedback after every repair job to let us know the work was completed as planned, if there were any issues or problems, or if you want to say thank you to the contractor for a job well done.

The quickest and easiest way to do this is to complete the online feedback form on our website. Completing the form online means we receive your feedback instantly so we can deal with it promptly, and also saves on paper and postage costs.

Tell us what you think

Simply visit... www.winchester.gov.uk/greencard

Make sure you have your job reference number to hand (this is shown on your appointment letter).

You can also find the web link on the green paper customer care feedback card you will receive after your repair.

Fire safety

It is important to test your smoke alarms weekly and report any faults immediately to Customer Services on 01962 848 400.

If you live in a block of flats please help to keep your block safe by never wedging fire doors open, keeping stairwells and walkways clear and not smoking in communal areas.
Help us to keep you safe

Faulty gas appliances can be deadly so it is essential that we ensure all our gas boilers are safe and working efficiently. We carry out an annual gas service (as well as an electrical test every five years) to make sure your home is safe.

You will receive a letter with the details of when an engineer will visit your property. Please make sure you are in at the specified time. If it isn’t convenient just let us or our contractor know so that we can rearrange another date and time. We have to carry out these important inspections by law so it is essential that you let the engineer in. If you keep missing the appointments we can take legal action to gain entry to your home to check it is safe.

See when your home is due to be painted

We don’t just work hard to keep your homes in good working order on the inside, we make sure all council properties look good on the outside too. All existing external paintwork receives a fresh coat of paint every five years and we also clean out all gutters, and repair and wash down upvc.

Lighting the way to energy efficiency

We are busy changing all of the lighting in communal areas to energy efficient LED bulbs which are not only brighter but use 90% less power than the old lightbulbs. You might see our contractors at work in communal areas changing bulbs and testing the emergency lighting. If you do see someone you don’t recognise in a communal area always ask to see their ID.

When you need to replace lightbulbs in your home LEDs are the smart choice to help cut your electricity costs and make your home more energy efficient.

Go on line to find out when your home is due to receive this work

Simply visit www.winchester.gov.uk/housing-repair-dates and enter your postcode to see when your home is scheduled to be redecorated externally.

If you are a sheltered tenant and don’t have access to the internet or don’t know how to get online, check out page 8 for details on our free training and support service.
Access our digital services at the touch of a button

Do you know there are lots of services available on our website, meaning you don’t have to telephone or visit us when you need to contact the Council.

You can pay your rent and other council payments or report a repair and view the Tenant Handbook which is packed full of useful information about your tenancy, your home and the housing service.

You can even receive digital surveys via email, providing a quick and convenient way for you to provide feedback about the housing service. See page 11 for details.

Need help to get online?

From applying for benefits, booking a holiday or buying groceries, so much of our everyday lives involve the internet. But if you aren’t sure how to get online or you don’t have access to a computer, don’t worry.

Hampshire libraries all offer free computer access. Talk to library staff if you need help to get online, and to find about free IT training sessions available. Call 0300 555 1375 for more details.

If you live in sheltered housing, we can help you discover how easy it is to get online, surf the web and send emails. You can even borrow a tablet computer to take home for a few weeks to practice your IT skills. For more details talk to your Sheltered Housing Officer, call 01962 855 335 or email shelteredhousing@winchester.gov.uk

Can you help others?

If you live in sheltered housing and you’re a confident IT user please volunteer as a Digital Champion. We can provide training to help you share your skills to benefit others. Call 0800 716 987 or email TInvolvement@winchester.gov.uk to find out how you can volunteer with us.
Understanding
Universal Credit (UC)

Who can receive UC?
Universal Credit can be paid if you are unemployed and looking for work, unable to work because of illness or disability, or if you are working but on a low income.

The amount you will receive will depend on how much you earn and other family circumstances. There will be a basic personal amount with extra for disability, caring responsibilities, children and housing costs.

Do I need to make a claim?
Universal Credit replaces Housing Benefit, Working and Child Tax Credit, Employment Support Allowance and Job Seekers Allowance. If you already claim one or some of these benefits you do not need to do anything, unless your circumstances change or the Department of Work and Pensions contacts you.

But, you will need to update your UC claim if your circumstances change. For example if you move house, have a baby, start work, separate from your partner or you’re unable to work because of long term sickness your payments may be affected.

Need help?
Our Tenancy Support Officers specialise in money and benefits. We can help with your money worries and we offer confidential advice on issues including how to budget your money, tackle debt and apply for benefits.

We can also help you to open a bank account, access the internet and set up an email address (you’ll need to do this to claim UC).

If you’re having trouble making ends meet talk to us, we can help work out a way forward together. For a friendly and confidential chat please call 01962 848 332 or email tenancysupport@winchester.gov.uk

Ways to pay your rent
Even if you’re struggling with money you must still pay your rent or you could risk losing your home. There are several ways to pay:

Set up a Direct Debit so your rent is paid automatically each week or each month, and never worry about missing a payment. Call 01962 848 521 to set up a Direct Debit.

Pay your rent online at www.winchester.gov.uk/pay

Use the self service payment tills at the Council reception in Colebrook Street open from 8:30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8:30am to 4:30pm on Friday.

Stop Loan Sharks
Loan sharks are illegal and unethical. If you have concerns about illegal money lenders please call the Illegal Money Lending Team on 0300 555 2222.
Is your home too big for your needs?

If you are considering downsizing to a smaller property more suited to your needs, we can help you move and even give you up to £2,500 to spend on your new home.

You can use the money towards moving costs, to buy new furniture or carpets or even to pay off any rent arrears.

Why downsise?
Living in a home that's too big for you can be stressful and expensive. Larger homes mean bigger bills, more cleaning and often a garden to maintain.

If you have spare bedrooms you no longer need, there are many benefits to downsizing including:

- increased eligibility for benefits
- lower utility bills and council tax
- a home that's easier to manage, quicker to clean and more suited to your needs
- you will be freeing up a larger home for a family who needs it.

Here to help
We want to make it as smooth and easy as possible for you to find a smaller home. Along with a cash incentive, our Wise Move scheme also offers practical advice and support, from sorting out removals to registering with new utility companies. Check out page 3 for details of how our Handyperson Service can manage the DIY jobs in your new home.

Are you eligible for Wise Move?
If you are a Winchester City Council tenant moving or mutually exchanging to another council or housing association property with fewer bedrooms, you can apply for a Wise Move cash incentive. Our tenancy team will let you know if you are eligible. For more details visit www.winchester.gov.uk/downsize

Call 01962 848 400 • Visit www.winchester.gov.uk/downsize
You can shape the service you receive

As advertised in our last issue we have launched online tenant surveys as a quick and easy way for you to tell us what you think of the Housing Service and where we could improve.

Some of the recent topics we’ve asked for your feedback include:

- The current mutual exchange policy (this allows council tenants to swap to a larger home).
- Checking if PH Jones (the contractor who repairs and maintains heating and gas boilers) is doing a good job.
- Using incentives to encourage more people to complete surveys.

Your views count

Thank you to everyone who has completed a survey so far. Not only are you in with a chance of winning a £50 shopping voucher, but your feedback really does count and your comments can shape the service you and your neighbours receive.

We are using responses from recent surveys to help us improve the mutual exchange experience for tenants who want to swap properties. Following requests from tenants we hope to introduce the facility to track the stages of your exchange online. We also asked if you think it’s fair that tenants can exchange to a larger home with more bedrooms than they are entitled to. Respondents were split about this issue but all the feedback will be presented to councillors before a final decision is made on whether to change this policy.

Sign up to receive a survey by emailing Tinvolvement@winchester.gov.uk or call 0800 716 987.

You can see all our online consultations at https://winchester.citizenspace.com/ and on our social media pages.

Well done…

to Kenneth from Alresford who is pictured receiving his £50 shopping voucher from Tenant Involvement Officer Lucy Spence. If you complete a survey you will be in with a chance of winning a voucher too.

Thank you…

to everyone who completed a Tenant Satisfaction Survey. The survey closed on 26 April, look out in our Autumn/Winter issue for an article on the results.
Rebecca Hallett, Neighbourhood Services Supervisor told us:

“The job is really interesting and varied, no two days are the same. I take a lot of pride in my work to ensure our open spaces and estates are clean and safe places for residents to enjoy.”

We followed the team for a day to get a better idea about their work:

- **8am**  
  Time to catch up with emails, discuss with colleagues what’s happening in the district and prepare for any meetings.

- **10am**  
  Sue Newman (Neighbourhood Services Officer) attends a coffee morning with residents at Valley Court in Stanmore, where concerns are raised including barking dogs, anti-social behaviour, overgrown hedges and fallen leaves. Sue will action all the issues and report back at the next coffee morning.

- **11am**  
  Sue patrols Stanmore where she notes litter, evidence of drug use (which she removes immediately), overgrown hedges and fly tipping.

- **12.30pm**  
  Back to the office for some lunch and time to catch up with the team and to action the items raised this morning.

- **2pm**  
  Rebecca joins local Councillors and residents for a walkabout in Highcliffe where they point out bins on pavements, overgrown brambles, blocked drains, parking concerns (which she reports immediately), faulty street lighting and an abandoned vehicle.

- **3.30pm**  
  Rebecca spends the rest of the day investigating the issues raised earlier, handling new enquiries and planning the team’s activities for the week ahead.

Whilst Rebecca and Sue were out, the rest of the team worked on issues including liaising with The Environment Agency on fly tipping cases and visiting alleged illegal encampments and fly tips.

Since this article was written Sue has moved to another department in the Council.

---

To report issues to the team, and to find out about estate walkabouts in Winnall, Highcliffe and Stanmore:

- Call [01962 840 222](tel:01962840222)
- Email [nservices@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:nservices@winchester.gov.uk)
FOCUS ON

Sheltered housing

Makeovers for communal areas
Most of our sheltered housing communal lounges, kitchens, and guest bedrooms have received a makeover recently. Tenants at each scheme helped to choose the new colour schemes and furniture to ensure each is individual and meets the needs of the tenants living there.

Communal lounges host regular events and activities to bring residents together, including coffee mornings, bingo games, computer training and film afternoons. Crucially for older people who live alone, these rooms help to create a real sense of community and reduce isolation and loneliness.

“Our common room is well used by residents here and the refurbishment works were very welcome, and most appreciated by us all.”
Susan, a tenant at King Harold Court

To find out about activities in your communal lounge talk to your Housing Officer. Visit www.wlahs.org to discover local activities and events across Winchester for older people.

Silver surfer
Proving that you’re never too old to learn something new, 94 year old tenant Inga has recently discovered the benefits of the internet! Thanks to help from one of our Digital Champions, she has learnt how to video call to keep in touch with her family around the world.

New resources room at Lawn House
Residents at Lawn House are set to benefit from a new multi-purpose room that is being created there. We are renovating the common room and sheltered housing office and also making the toilets accessible. Lawn House tenants can still use the common room for coffee mornings and get-togethers and we will be using the new-look space to provide training and meeting opportunities. Our involved tenants and members of TACT (Tenants and Council Together) will also have access to a computer in a private space. Work has already started on site and we hope the new look room will be completed early this summer.

If you are experiencing any technical or Wi-Fi problems at your scheme contact Social Telecoms on 01743 730 100 or email support@socialtelecoms.org.uk Monday-Friday 9am - 5pm and Saturday 10am - 2pm.

Participants at the regular coffee morning held at Hyde Gate donated their pennies over the year, and raised a whopping £230 for the Change 4 Change campaign which supports local homeless charities.
How to avoid being scammed

Fraudsters use clever schemes to trick millions of people every year. Here are some practical tips you can follow to avoid being scammed.

• Never give out your personal information to someone you don’t know. Fraudsters often pretend to be someone you trust like a family member, bank, charity or government official. If in doubt talk to a friend or phone the police on 101.
• Never send money, hand over your bank cards or give out personal information in response to an unexpected request – whether it comes as a text, a phone call, an email or knock at the door.
• Remember your bank will never ask for your PIN code.
• Do online searches. Google a company, product name or even a phone number to see if other people have reported them as scams.
• Don’t pay upfront for a promise. If someone claims that you’ve won a prize but asks you to pay a fee first, it’s undoubtedly a scam.
• Talk to someone. Before you give up your money or personal information confide in someone you trust. Con artists want you to make decisions in a hurry. Slow down, check out the story, and talk to an expert or a friend.

For more tips and advice on how to avoid being a victim of fraud, visit www.hampshire.police.uk

New homes

Here’s a roundup of the latest affordable homes we are developing in Winchester.

Work is continuing at three sites near Mayles Lane (right) in Knowle to build 13 new affordable homes. Two of the houses are being built as shared ownership to enable more people to get on the property ladder. They will be marketed through Help to Buy South and you can register your interest at www.helptobuysouth.co.uk

Planning permission has been granted for two new family houses in Twyford on the site of the former police station.

Meanwhile tenants are busy settling into brand new homes at Bailey Close in Stanmore (where five one bedroom flats have been built), and also at Victoria Court on Victoria Road in the city centre; a modern development of 27 one and two bedroom apartments (below).
What’s on

May
19th
Alresford Watercress Festival
Free, family street festival including local food and drink producers, arts and craft, musicians and street performers. www.watercressfestival.org

June
8th
Bishop’s Waltham Carnival
1-5pm at Hoe Road Recreation Ground (classic car and motorbike motorcade from 12pm)

8th
Alresford Music Festival
www.alresfordmusicfestival.com

9th
Winchester Criterium and CycleFest
The Broadway, Winchester. A day of cycle racing and family activities. www.winchestercriterium.org/

July
5th–7th
Winchester Hat Fair
Outdoor arts festival around the city centre. www.hatfair.co.uk

20th
Bishop’s Waltham Gardening Club annual open flower and produce show
Jubilee Hall 9am-6pm

27th
Winchester Party in the Park
12pm-5pm, Somers Close Recreation Ground, Stanmore. Free, fun-filled family event with live music, attractions, activities, stalls and funfair. www.facebook.com/wpitp

August
1st–4th
Wickham Festival
www.wickhamfestival.co.uk

7th–12th
Boomtown Fair
www.boomtownfair.co.uk

17th–18th
Winchester Chilli and Cheese Festival
North Walls Recreation Ground. Fun, family friendly event. Adults £6, Seniors 65+ and disabled and carers £4 http://cheeseandchillifestival.com/winchester/

Get active

Winchester and Whiteley parkrun
5km timed run every Saturday at 9am at North Walls Recreation Ground and Meadowside Recreation Ground. FREE

Winchester and Whiteley junior parkrun
2km timed run every Sunday at 9am at Bar End, Winchester and Meadowside Recreation Ground. FREE

Walking Tennis
Fridays 12-1pm at River Park Leisure Centre. Cost £3.10.

Walking Netball
Mondays 1-2pm and Fridays 11am – 12pm at River Park Leisure Centre. Cost £3.10.

Walking Football
Tuesdays 10-11am at River Park Leisure Centre and Wednesdays 10-11am at Winchester Sports Stadium. Cost £2.10

Disability Tennis
Thursdays, 5-6pm at River Park Leisure Centre. FREE

Disability Football
Tuesdays, 5-6pm, River Park Leisure Centre. FREE

Couch 2 5k
A programme aimed towards complete beginners and people getting back into running. Thursdays 6-7pm at River Park Leisure Centre. £27 Contact: lornacurtis@pfpleisure.org

Keep fit for less
The Winchester Saver Membership enables those on low income to access Leisure Centre activities at cheaper rates. Contact 01962 848 700 (River Park Leisure Centre) or 01489 577 464 (Meadowside Leisure Centre).

For more local, free events visit www.winchester.ac.uk/events or www.visitwinchester.co.uk or pop into the Tourist Information Centre at Winchester Guildhall.
Competition

Win a FREE family swim pass at River Park Leisure Centre

Complete the wordsearch to find the letters in the yellow boxes. Arrange these 6 letters to form a seasonal word. Send your answer, along with your name, address and contact number to the Tenant Participation team address at the bottom of the page.

Competition only open to Winchester City Council tenants and leaseholders, and not employees of Winchester City Council. Closing date 30 June 2019. The winner will be notified by 5 July 2019. Full terms and conditions for the entry to the competition can be found at www.winchester.gov.uk/tv_competition

CONGRATULATIONS

to Mark who won the competition in our last issue.
If you want to win a FREE family swim pass just enter the competition above.

Find these words

HANDYPERSON
HURSLEY
DIGITAL
DOWNSIZE
WIFI
SURVEY

Free family swim at River Park Leisure Centre

Visit riverpark.placesleisure.org for centre details

Winchester City Council
Freepost Plus RTLH-KXUA-SEEC
Tenant Involvement
Winchester
SO23 9ZT

Freephone: 0800 716 987
Email: tenantvoice@winchester.gov.uk
www.winchester.gov.uk/tenantvoice

Facebook: WinchesterTenants
Twitter: @WinchesterCity