

your

council housing *matters*

LANCASTER
CITY COUNCIL

Promoting City, Coast & Countryside

Spring 2022



ESTATE MATTERS | COMMUNITY MATTERS | MONEY MATTERS

WELCOME

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And much more



FOREWORD

COUNCILLOR CARY MATTHEWS

I was elected to Lancaster City Council in 2019 representing Heysham Central ward, I am also elected member on Morecambe Town Council for Poulton area.

It has been and continues to be a very challenging time for everyone in our district with the pandemic and ever-increasing costs of living. As we continue to listen and work with our tenants to support and help through these times, I would like to encourage you all to join us at the Districtwide Tenants Forum. These are hybrid meeting so you can attend in person or by Teams. It is a great way to share ideas, problems and receive information.

It was my privilege and great fun to join residents at Beck View and Parkside Court for a 'chippy dinner' earlier this year to celebrate the winning schemes of the Christmas decoration competition, well done.

Lastly, I would like to thank all our committed and caring staff who look after our tenants, their homes, and communities. Well done!

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Your Council Housing Matters – please get in touch with the team if there is something you'd like to see in a future edition.

Cary Matthews
Councillor



COUNCIL TENANTS REFURBISHED PROPERTIES SHOULD HELP TO TACKLE RISING ENERGY COSTS

The whole house improvement programme on Mount Avenue, Lancaster, is focused on improving the energy efficiency of tenant's homes: to help save money on energy costs and reduce the carbon emissions generated per household by 30% each year as part of Lancaster City Council's Climate Emergency Resolution.

To complete the works in the safest and most efficient way possible tenants are housed elsewhere on a temporary basis while works are carried out, supported by us to either move in with family or friends or to be provided with alternative properties for the duration of the works. Works commenced on phase 1 - the first nineteen properties - on Mount Avenue at the beginning of June 2021, and were completed just before Christmas 2021.

The improvement works include full electrical rewire, new bathrooms and kitchens, 'A' rated boilers and new central heating system installed, energy efficient composite front and back doors and 'A' rated double glazed windows. Homes will also benefit from insulation works, LED lightbulbs throughout, full decoration of property and the offer to have the property fully carpeted on completion.

Plans are in place now to roll out the second phase of the programme to the remaining 30 properties later this year.

To ensure tenants make full use of the efficiency measures now in place in their properties, we provide guidance on how to use their heating systems effectively and top tips on other actions they can take to reduce their energy bills and carbon emissions.

Councillor Cary Matthews, cabinet member with responsibility for housing said, "The aim of this long-term improvement strategy is to improve the health and wellbeing of our tenants by providing high quality energy efficient homes that they can be proud of. We are also very excited that this improvement programme will be another way in which we can drive our ambition to reduce the CO2 emissions generated by our operations to net zero by 2030."

The feedback from tenants living in the newly refurbished homes has been extremely positive.

One extremely happy tenant, Shelley, said "the heat retention is very good, and when the heating is on it is felt effectively throughout the home in next to no time. The fans are very efficient inside the bathroom after use."

Another tenant, Samantha, said after moving back they are very satisfied with the improved standard of living. Her staircase used to be cold even with the heating on full, but this is no longer an issue as she now experiences more efficient heat retention around all living areas of the property without the need to have it on for long periods.

Amy, also benefitting from the phase 1 works, said "the improvement of living standards for myself and my children is fantastic. We now have a lovely warm cosy home. Whenever I have the heating on at a standard level I no longer feel it necessary to turn it up like I did prior to the work being done, or worry as much about how much it is going to cost me."



WE CARRY OUT 5 YEARLY ELECTRICAL TESTS ON OUR PROPERTIES - LETTING US INTO YOUR HOME FOR THESE IS VITAL - THEY'RE JUST AS IMPORTANT AS GAS SAFETY CHECKS.

Why is electrical testing important ?

When it comes to your home - regardless of whether you are a landlord or the homeowner - it's important to test your electrical circuits are in good working condition.

We are required by law to perform an EICR – an Electrical Installation Condition Report. After all, your property's electrical systems can be prone to deterioration over time; general wear and tear can have a big impact on how efficient the circuits operate and, of course, how safe your electrical installations are.

What 5-Year electrical testing involves

A 5-year electrical safety test involves performing a thorough inspection off your property's electrical installations. Sockets, wiring, fuse boxes, light switches and appliances must meet British Standard BS 76719 (IET Wiring Regulations).

**5-YEAR ELECTRICAL SAFETY CHECKS
MANDATORY FROM JULY 2020**



TPAS - TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS

Lancaster City Council has been a member of TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) for a number of years now but we only have a hand full of tenant members. We want everyone to benefit from our membership of TPAS and want to highlight the benefits of residents becoming members.

As a TPAS member you will gain a stronger voice in the sector and TPAS will provide you with ongoing support and guidance to help you to be involved with key decision-making processes within Lancaster City Council's Council Housing Services or to lead activity in your community.

TPAS have been promoting, supporting and championing tenant involvement and empowerment

across England for two and a half decades.

Investing in TPAS means benefitting from the latest tenant involvement policies and practices but also securing and supporting the future of the tenant involvement agenda.

It is easy to join and costs nothing as your membership is covered by Lancaster City Council's membership.

TPAS MEMBERSHIP - KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.

We believe that engaging and involving our tenants will help us find solutions to improve services, save money and bring lasting change to communities. Don't miss out on your free membership benefits, visit www.tpas.org.uk to register your details with them to access training, regional networking events with other tenants and the latest housing involvement news

straight to your email inbox. They also operate a free enquiry service for those interested in getting the most out of engagement activities. 0800 731 1315

TPAS Connect is an online networking platform which is home to Tpas National Tenant Network and also the national Scrutiny Club. Both of these groups are exclusive to TPAS tenant members and allows them to network, share best practice and offer support to their peers across England. To join TPAS Connected please email your request to rharland@lancaster.gov.uk

If you are interested in any of the courses listed or have a problem registering as a member please contact Rachael Harland Community Engagement Officer on 01524 586891 email rharland@lancaster.gov.uk

National Training Programme 2022

Explore our brand new national training programme, created to help you to raise the standard of tenant engagement.

<p>Making the Most of Digital Meetings</p> <p>Achieve productive meetings in a digital world, that are chaired well and make a difference.</p>	<p>Getting Microsoft 365 (and Teams) to work for you</p> <p>Take advantage of Microsoft 365, break down the barriers and ensure you can take part successfully.</p>	<p>Resident Engagement and Building Safety</p> <p>Ensure you put residents at the heart of building and fire safety and put the Hackitt report insights into direct action.</p>	<p>Maximise the Power of Scrutiny</p> <p>This specialist scrutiny course will equip you with all the skills and knowledge needed to ensure your review packs a real punch!</p>
<p>Chairing Skills</p> <p>Build your confidence and develop your skills to become an expert chair.</p>	<p>Introduction to Scrutiny</p> <p>An excellent introductory course to help you understand what scrutiny is and how you can be involved.</p>	<p>Using Behavioural Insights to Increase Involvement</p> <p>Learn how Behavioural Insights (or 'nudge') can reach a wider, more diverse number of tenants and achieve their involvement.</p>	<p>Dealing with Difficult Situations</p> <p>How to manage difficult situations, using conflict as a positive tool.</p>
<p>Housing Ombudsman Complaints</p> <p>Masterclass for Engaged Residents</p> <p>Aimed at engaged residents, you will learn how to play an effective role in the dispute resolution process and understand good approaches in complaint handling.</p>	<p>Recruiting for Scrutiny</p> <p>We all know that its people who make scrutiny successful so recruiting the right customers/tenants/residents is an absolute must.</p>	<p>Marvellous Scrutiny Models</p> <p>Find the right model for any topic, provide practical tips and gives you the chance to learn from other tenants.</p>	<p>Procurement and The Role of Customers</p> <p>Poor procurement leads to dissatisfied customers and a waste of resources. Identify ways in which to involve customers in the procurement process.</p>
<p>Housing Policy and Regulation</p> <p>Understand current trends and how issues such as supply, demand, benefits, homelessness effect policy.</p>	<p>Introduction to Housing Law</p> <p>Understand the fundamentals of housing law, look at current issues and illustrate the links to your role.</p>	<p>Effective Challenging and Questioning Skills</p> <p>Develop your communication skills, be more assertive, learn how to challenge effectively and express your point of view.</p>	<p>Delivering Scrutiny Digitally</p> <p>This course will explore the many tools and techniques available to help you to scrutinise effectively in this 'virtual' world.</p>
<p>Running a Successful Residents Association</p> <p>Explore how to set up, run and improve your Residents Association.</p>	<p>Understanding Performance Information</p> <p>Find out how to interpret performance information and ask the right questions so that you can confidently challenge performance and drive improvement.</p>	<p>Digital Engagement and Social Media</p> <p>Find out how to use social media and digital technology to get your point heard and influence others.</p>	<p>Engagement and GDPR</p> <p>Practical and non-technical, this training session tells you what you need to know about the General Data Protection Regulations.</p>
<p>Engagement for Non Engagement Workers</p> <p>Understand what community engagement is, why it matters, and how to do it successfully.</p>	<p>Mystery Shopping</p> <p>Find out how to become an expert mystery shopper and assess your landlord's services.</p>	 <p>TENANT ENGAGEMENT EXPERTS</p>	



Housing Matters

MORE STALLS THIS WAY

COMMUNITY HUB WHERE TO FIND US

After a long closure of both Morecambe and Lancaster Town Halls they have both re-opened and customer services will be present for face to face enquires at both town halls Monday to Friday 9am to 1pm excluding bank holidays.

Visit lancaster.gov.uk/community-hub/where-to-find-us to see the weekly calendar of other venues. These may be subject to change so please check facebook and twitter for any changes.

HOUSING ONE-STOP SHOP

5 KING STREET LANCASTER LA1 1JN

Provides a face-to-face service for customers looking for advice and information for everything housing related in the district.

Staff are on hand to answer a wide range of housing related enquires including:

- Help with applying to Ideal Choice Homes and taking copies of Documents
- Reporting repairs to council properties
- Advice for anyone worried about losing their home or struggling to pay their rent
- Garages available

Opening Hours:
Monday Wednesday and Friday
10am - 4pm

There is a free phone for applicants to use to contact other council departments or agencies such as the CAB.



HOW THE MONEY IS BEING SPENT OVER THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR

2022/2023 Capital Programme

* contractor – unknown (not out to tender yet)

CAPITAL BUDGET

External refurbishments – Door replacement (Westgate bungalows)

Contractor: *
Contact value: £44k
Works: replacement of timber doors with energy efficient composite doors

External refurbishments – Re-rendering (24 properties in Halton)

Contractor: *
Contact value: £149k
Works: re-rendering of 24 properties in Halton

Environmental Improvements – continuation of Higher Heysham & commencement on Kingsway Estate

Contractor: Lancaster City Council Repair and Maintenance Section
Contact value: £150k
Works: fencing and gates to approx. 50 properties

Housing Renewal & Renovation – Beaumont whole house improvements

Contractor: *
Contact value: £1001k
Works: whole house improvement works to 30 tenanted properties. Internal works including new kitchens, bathrooms, energy efficiency measures (insulation to roof space, sloping ceilings, under timber floors), heat recovery mechanical extract fans, composite doors/windows if required), rewire, new smoke/ heat detection systems, fire suite.

Kitchen & Bathrooms – Ryelands & part Ridge (bungalows)

Contractor: Lancaster City Council Repair and Maintenance Section
Contact value: £862k
Works: Renewal of Kitchens and installation of showers over existing baths where required.

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Contact value: £862k
Works: Renewal of Kitchens and installation of showers over existing baths where required.

Re-roofing – remaining tiled bungalows on Ridge, Rosemary tiles on Christie Ave, Branksome slate roofs to Halton and Palatine Ave

Contractor: *
Contact value: £525k
Works: Renewal of roof coverings and increasing of loft insulation

Fire precaution works – smoke/heat alarm renewals (vale estate)

Contractor: *
Contact value: total budget £240k
Works: Installation of radio linked heat and smoke alarms to 490 properties. Installation of CO detectors to properties with gas appliance

Disabled adaptations – various addresses throughout the district

Contractor: mainly Lancaster City Council Repair and Maintenance Section for wetrooms, other works include Hoists, stairlifts and specialist equipment, and usually one extension per financial year.
Budget: £300k

Boiler replacement & heating & hot water system improvements

Contractor: EMCOR
Contract value: £700k (£20K increase)
Works: Replace existing boilers with 'A' rated boilers to 180 properties plus renewal of full heating systems with more energy efficient radiators.

Energy efficiency works – measures to improve EPC ratings to least efficient properties

Contractor: various
Budget: £289k
Council Housing has a target of all properties achieving an EPC energy efficiency rating of at least 'c' or higher by 2030. We have committed a budget of £289K per annum for the next 7-8 years to upgrade to achieve the new standard. Measures include increased insulation, efficient electric heating/hot water systems in off-gas properties, installation of PV systems, specialist secondary glazing, removing in-efficient heating and improving controls.

Window renewals – Shakespeare Rd area, Vale

Contractor: *
Contact value: £120,000
Works: replacement of existing windows to approx. 80 properties with more energy efficient, 'A' rated double glazed Upvc windows

Window renewals – Secondary glazing installations – Cable & Water St & Ryelands Lodge

Contractor: *
Contact value: £50,000
Works: installation of secondary glazing to single glazed timber windows in conservation areas

Housing Renewal & Renovation – Major Void works

Contractor: BTB
Contact value: £150k
Works: house improvement works to specific void properties identified throughout the year – this contract is to support RMS.

Rewiring – Consumer Unit Renewals (led by results of electrical inspections)

Contractor: *
Contact value: £50,000
Works: new consumer units

REVENUE BUDGET

Refurbishment of Garage sites – phase 3 (TBC)

Contractor: *
Contact value: £50k
Scope of works: refurbishment of council owned garages (mainly new garage doors to garages throughout the district)

Rota Painting – continuation of programmed rota painting

Contractor: Lancaster City Council Repair and Maintenance Section
Contact value: £154,300
Scope of works: re painting of previously painted areas (doors/windows/facias/gates/fence s. Also internal communal areas & sheltered schemes)

Electrical Inspections – (where 5yr inspections are due to expire)

Contractor: *
Contact value: £80,300
Scope of works: Inspection of electrical installations to approx. 750 properties



Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) results 2021

Between October and December 2021, you may have taken part in our Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR), carried out on our behalf by ARP Research. We'd like to thank those of you that did complete the survey as it means a lot to the service.

The aim of the survey was for us to understand how you feel about the services we provide. And while there are some areas where we are doing well, we also recognise that there are areas we must clearly improve and we will be focusing on these in more detail in the upcoming financial year.

What you've said....



We want to make sure that the services we provide to you are the best they can be and we can only do that when you tell us what really matters to you.

So, from the results we received we will be taking on board all of your feedback and comments, both the good and the bad. And we will be using them to improve the way we do things in our service. To make sure of this we will be working with residents' to agree on how we are going to go about making those improvements and we will let you know how things go in the coming year.

Council Housing Performance Data Q3



Here is a general overview of how we performed between Apr-Dec 2021/22 in a number of key areas.



Income Management



Empty Properties



Repairs and Maintenance



Anti-Social Behaviour



£136,731

Current Tenant Arrears



We let 240+ homes with a:

58.9 day

Average relet time



7992

Number of repairs carried out so far in 2020/21



We responded to

240

ASB reports - 8 more than the previous year



23% reduction from previous year



£247,661

of rent was unable to be collected due to empty properties



100%

of council homes had a valid gas certificate



85

cases of ASB were closed in the same time period



£41,000+

less rent arrears owed by our tenants



This is a **17%** increase to rent lost due to empty properties equal to over **£30,000**



89%

repairs completed at first visit



94%

of ASB cases closed were resolved



92%

of tenants were satisfied with the repair service received



Noise Nuisance is the most common type of ASB - making up more than 25% of reports.

To stay up to date on how we are performing please visit:

www.lancaster.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/policies-and-performance



ENERGY SUPPORT UPDATE ELAINE WILSON (ENERGY SUPPORT OFFICER)

Over the last few months I have visited over 200 properties, meeting new and existing tenants and taking nearly 200 direct interventions to assist with issues identified during my visits.

Guidance on use of heating systems is provided as standard to help tenants keep warm cost effectively. Advice includes good ventilation practices, use of boiler heating controls, and managing the radiator regulator valves in order to prevent cold spots in the property. These simple but effective habits help to control and prevent issues such as condensation and mould within the home.

I have been working with tenants to explain the Warm Home Discount, which is available every winter for those who qualify. The application process is quick and easy and once approved can result in £140 being credited to the electricity account by the end of March, if not sooner. The Government have announced that this is set to rise to £150 for the winter 2022/2023 and I'll be working hard to support tenants in accessing this scheme.

The new generation of SMART meters are also proving effective in allowing households to keep track of their energy usage and how much it is costing. This means no more estimated bills, which can result in under or over payments – both of which can cause financial stress on a household. SMART meters also allow households to see where energy is being wasted, such as keeping appliances on standby or turning down the heating by 1 or 2 degrees. Simple changes can reduce energy bills.

When visiting tenants I am also able to assist setting up electricity accounts, arrange for our gas contractor EMCOR to uncap the gas supply where needed, and deal with estimated billing and resolving problems with energy companies.

CASE STUDY NO. 1

Recently I was able to assist an elderly tenant who had not been able to set up accounts for his gas and electric supply. He was paying for his electricity on a pre-payment meter so there was electric to his property, but no gas. He told me it didn't feel like home because it was so cold and so he went out all the time. When he was in the property he went to bed where he could use the duvet to keep warm.

I was able to contact the energy supplier and set up his electricity and gas supply and book an appointment for the installation of SMART meters along with arranging payment cards. I arranged for EMCOR to visit the property to uncap the gas supply and complete a gas safety check. An application was made to the Warm Home Discount Scheme and a referral was made to the Council's Household Intervention Team so that he can be supported in his tenancy to remain well and warm.

CASE STUDY NO. 2



Another tenant I have recently assisted was making payments to the wrong energy supplier from the date she moved in, over a year earlier. The correct energy supplier didn't know she was the new account holder so didn't write to her with a welcoming pack. This issue lasted for over a year with the tenant overpaying one company and not paying the correct company. This may have had serious ramifications for the tenant as she was a vulnerable tenant, and the stress alone was very unsettling for her.

After numerous phone calls to the companies involved, I was able to set up her account correctly with the new supplier and arrange a payment plan with payment cards. I also arranged for SMART meters to be installed. The tenant is now seeing a drastic reduction in the amount owed for her gas and electricity. I then made contact with the previous company she had been paying, and they eventually agreed to refund every penny she had mistakenly paid to them.

The tenant was so relieved that the stress and anxiety she had been going through in trying to sort all this out herself was finally over. "I had cried and cried trying to deal with this, but I'm so happy it's now over and I can get on with my life with no more stress," she said.



TOP TIPS FOR KEEPING WARM AND SAVING MONEY




1. The ideal temperature to keep well and warm is between 18 and 21 degrees Celsius. Turning down your thermostat by just one degree can save you £60 - 80 a year on your heating, according to the Energy Saving Trust.



2. Check your boiler water temperature is set at 55 degrees as heating to a higher temperature may simply mean you are adding cold water immediately and so wasting energy in heating it any higher than it needs to be.



3. Turn off the heating up to an hour before you go to bed – so you are not wasting energy heating the home unnecessarily.



4. Simple measures like thermal insulated curtains over doors and windows will improve the heat retention in your property especially during the night and you will feel warmer for longer.



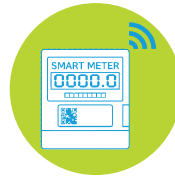
5. Ventilating the property to reduce the condensation in the air will keep the energy bills lower – as it takes more energy to heat up moisture laden air. Dry air heats up faster and you will feel warmer faster along with saving money. Ensure your Trickle Air Vents are open at all times. When the sun is shining and it is dry outside open windows and ventilate the property. Allow the property to breathe by keeping doors open within the property to allow air to circulate – this also reduces condensation and mould spots in corners of rooms and behind furniture.



6. If you have Storage Heaters – be sure to turn off the Output Valve before bedtime and just leave the Input Valve on at about 4 or 5. This way you are not heating up the rooms during the night when you don't need the heat and you will have more heat in the Storage Heaters remaining for the next day. Note: keep an eye on the weather forecasts – if its going to be a warm day the next day turn off the Input Valve so that you are not storing heat that you won't need.



7. Check your bills are correct and if necessary, give up to date meter readings. The easiest way to monitor usage is to have a SMART Meter installed – contact your energy company directly.



8. Check your energy bills to ensure you are on the best tariff deal with your energy company.



9. In Autumn look out for the Warm Home Discount Scheme. This scheme is administered by your energy company and if your application is successful will result in £150 being credited to your electricity account – and you don't have to repay it. It's simple to apply for and can be done online through your energy company.



10. Finally, if you are struggling with keeping warm or are worried about your energy bills you can contact Lancaster City Council on 01524 582929 and request a visit from the Energy Support Officer.





Community Matters

GET INVOLVED AND FIND YOUR VOICE! WE WANT TO HEAR YOU.

By getting involved you can help us to

- Keep on improving - we need your feedback to help us improve the services we provide
- Make better decisions - we can make decisions in an informed way if we know what tenants/residents want.
- Increase accountability - by tenants/residents being involved we are more accountable to our customers.
- Achieve value for money - We make sure we are getting the most out of our money using the income from our tenants in the best way. Understanding tenants' needs is an important part of achieving value for money.

There are lots of ways to get involved and have your say on the services we provide here at Council Housing, including Scrutiny Groups, the District Wide Tenants Forum, Tenants and Residents Associations, Surveys and much more.

Please complete the survey on how you would like to get involved by going to:

<https://keepconnected.lancaster.gov.uk/council-housing-tenants-get-involved>

**or contacting Rachael Harland your Community Engagement Officer on 01524 586891
rharland@lancaster.gov.uk**

DISTRICT WIDE TENANTS FORUM COME A LONG AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE ACROSS THE LANCASTER DISTRICT.

This group is tenant led and play a vital part in shaping services for all tenants across the district. The group has managed to keep going through the pandemic by meeting virtually but from the end of last year meetings have started to be held in a hybrid style, some members meeting virtually while others have been attending Morecambe Town Hall in person.

The group look at future plans and projects that will impact Council Tenants and communities with an opportunity to have input into how this will look. The group also share things that are happening in their areas and share best practice across the district.

If you are passionate about the Lancaster district and your community and really want to make a difference, why not come along to the next meeting being held on Thursday 19th May 2022 from 6pm-8pm at either Morecambe Town Hall or virtually. If you would like to join virtually, please contact Rachael Harland Community Engagement Officer on 01524 586891 rharland@lancaster.gov.uk for the link.

There is some up coming training on chairing meetings, taking minutes and conduct in meetings which will be free to District Wide tenant Forum members. For more information contact Rachael Harland Community Engagement Officer on 01524 586891 rharland@lancaster.gov.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

District Wide Tenants Forum Meetings 2022/2023.

Thursday 26th May 2022 6pm-8pm
Morecambe Town Hall/Virtually

Thursday 14th July 2022 6pm-8pm
Morecambe Town Hall/Virtually

15th September 2022 6pm-8pm
Morecambe Town Hall/Virtually

24th November 2022 6pm-8pm
Morecambe Town Hall/Virtually

19th January 2023 6pm-8pm
Morecambe Town Hall/Virtually

16th March 2023 6pm-8pm
Morecambe Town Hall/Virtually



Looking forward to an exciting year for the District Wide Tenants Forum

WHY NOT BECOME A SCRUTINEER

We are creating an independent scrutiny panel of Council Tenants to influence the policies and decisions made by the council and other organisations involved in delivering public services. The scrutiny panel would gather evidence on issues affecting local people and makes recommendations for improvements based on their findings. We are looking for people who have the ability to obtain and weigh up evidence and make recommendations based on that evidence, and have good communication skills and a passion to make improvements. Full training and support will be given. In-house Scrutiny Panel training has already been booked for May/June. For detail further contact Rachael Harland Community Engagement Officer on 01524 586891 rharland@lancaster.gov.uk

TENANTS AND RESIDENTS GROUPS

A Tenants and Resident Association (TARA) is a formal group of people who live in a neighbourhood or Estate and decide that they want to get together to deal with concerns that affect their local community. The group can include tenants, shared owners, leaseholders and homeowners. Groups of residents might start an TARA for the following reasons: • To campaign for something positive e.g. A better play area • To campaign against something or get services improved • To give your community a greater voice than you would have as an individual • To create a better sense of community in your area • To keep residents informed of what's happening in your neighbourhood. If you are interested in forming a tenants and residents group in your area and you are unsure where to start contact Rachael Harland Community Engagement Officer on 01524 586891 rharland@lancaster.gov.uk for an information pack, information on training and one to one help getting started.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECTS FUND ASSESSOR

We have created a Neighbourhood Projects fund which groups can bid into to provide community projects that would benefit communities and Council Tenants. As we received exciting project proposals we need a group of tenants to assess the projects put forward by groups and distribute the funding pot and turn these application forms into reality. This is a great opportunity to help make a real, visible difference to the places people live. If you are interested get in touch.

GREEN CHAMPIONS/ PROJECTS

This could be a project that improves or transforms a green space, uses or creates a new green area for the local community to enjoy, raised awareness and education on green issues or members of the local community coming together to pro-actively improve their local environment – for example, taking part in litter picks, recycling initiatives or providing locally grown garden produce to the local community.

ESTATE WALKABOUTS

This is a vital role in pointing out issues on estates including fire safety issues. A fresh set of eyes or a different perspective is sometimes what is needed. Tenants can accompany the Estate Manager, the Repairs and Maintenance Inspector and local councillors on walkabouts of individual areas. Estate Walkabouts take place twice a year to enable tenants to identify any issues that affect the quality of the environment where they live.

CARBON ZERO COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Carbon Zero Community Champions will highlight the need for substantial change and Lancaster City Council will support you with training to enable you to have a cascade effect on the wider community. A Carbon Zero Community Champion will be supported to understand how climate change will affect them and the people around them. A Carbon Zero Community Champion will acquire the knowledge and skills to develop their own responses to lowering their carbon footprint and the carbon footprint of others, whilst having the confidence to share their Carbon Zero knowledge. If you are interested in this new and exciting community role, get in touch.



Lancaster District Communities Together Group is facilitated by the City Council and lead by community members. The purpose of the group is:

- To provide the Lancaster District with a forum where community members and representatives of key agencies can come together, build relationships and share experiences and knowledge to improve community cohesion and a sense of belonging.
- To encourage and promote positive relationships between the diverse and emerging communities and groups in the Lancaster District
- To organise and support events that celebrate diversity, welcome newcomers and promotes positive relationships between the District's diverse communities and groups

- To act as a link between local communities and statutory agencies, including advising statutory agencies on messages and consultations that are relevant to those communities

Membership is open to anyone who has a formal or informal role as a member of a particular community and who wishes to represent that community at the meeting.

The group meets quarterly and the next meeting is on the 13 June.

If you are interested to join, please email communities-together@lancaster.gov.uk

INCOME MANAGEMENT OFFICERS – WE ARE HERE TO HELP

If issues arise and you start struggling to pay your rent, or a change in your circumstances makes you worry that you will struggle to keep up payments on your rent account, please don't be afraid or ashamed to contact your Income Management Officer.

They will be more than happy to help you in any way they can. Here are just a couple of examples of how your Income management Team have assisted tenants to sustain their tenancies.

CASE STUDY ONE

A single lady who was living on her own in a two bedroomed property was a carer for her elderly mother and had been struggling with mental health and alcohol issues for some time. Housing Benefit were paying her rent but there was a shortfall for her to make up each week due to her having a spare room.

The tenant in question was claiming Employment Support Allowance which she was receiving on a fortnightly basis. Once deductions had been taken from her benefit and due to a large number of debts, she was left with only £30 a week to live.

When the Income Management Officer had spoken to the lady and been given this information, with the tenant's consent, a referral was made to the Citizens Advice Bureau to complete a benefit check and see if she was claiming everything she was entitled to, as well as looking at the debts she had.

While CAB were helping with these issues the Income Management Officer put in a claim for a Discretionary Housing Payment to cover the shortfall in the rent, so the lady was not getting into anymore arrears during that period.

CAB helped her apply for Universal Credit with the premium for Limited Capacity for Work-and Work-Related Activity which she was awarded. This increased her income by £343.63 per month.

There was also an application made for Personal independence Payments which was also awarded increasing this lady's income even more.

The Income Management Officer then referred the lady to our internal Household Intervention Team for support with other tenancy related issues and the team are still working with this lady to help her move into more appropriate accommodation for her needs.

Just a conversation with her Income Management Officer has prevented a court application, increased her income dramatically and removed risk to her tenancy until she is able to move.

CASE STUDY TWO

The Income Management Team supported a couple who were classed as a mixed aged couple. This is where one member of the couple is of pensionable age and the other is of working age. Previously where one member of the couple was of pensionable age the couple received the protection of being a couple of pensionable age, but this is no longer the case. If you are in this position, please call to your Income Management Officer for advice to see if you could be better off.

The couple in question were on Housing Benefit when the younger partner started work which meant they no longer qualified for Housing Benefit. Unfortunately, the partner then lost his job and they had to start claiming Universal Credit as a mixed aged couple.

The older partner's Pension was included as income for the purpose of calculating their entitlement to UC so reduced their housing costs element of UC to £20 per week, leaving them with the rest of the rent to pay.

The Income Management Officer made a referral to our inhouse Household Intervention Team with the consent of the couple. The Household Intervention Team worked with the lady of pensionable age to claim Attendance Allowance due to her health issues, which was awarded. They also applied for the premium for Limited Capacity for Work and Work Related Activity, which was awarded, and this increased their UC by £343.63 per month. They also started receiving 75% for their rent costs from UC leaving them with 25% to pay due to under occupancy.

The property was then affordable due to their increased income and the Household Intervention Team are still working with the couple to assist them in moving from a three bedroomed property to a bungalow due to the couple's mobility issues. Unfortunately, the partner's health deteriorated so the Household Intervention Officers are assisting him to apply for Personal Independence Payments.

The intervention by the Income Management Officer and the Household Intervention Officers has prevented a Court application, increased the tenant's income, and identified issues with their accommodation not just around affordability but around suitability. This couple will continue to be supported.

MUTUAL EXCHANGE – IT'S THE WAY TO MOVE

Are you looking to move? Maybe your children have started high school and you wish to move nearer to save on bus fares, maybe you have outgrown your current home or you children have moved out and you are looking for something smaller that is more affordable to heat.

Whatever your reason for looking to move, for the majority of our tenants the best way to find a new home is via a mutual exchange. A mutual exchange is when two or more social housing tenants agree to swap properties with each other. A mutual exchange can take place between tenants of the same or different landlords living anywhere in the UK

Waiting times on Ideal Choice Homes has significantly increased since the start of the pandemic and the supply of social housing has drastically reduced. Unless you are looking to move to a bungalow or Independent Living accommodation this will be the easiest and quickest way to move.

You can look for properties on our website www.idealchoicehomes.co.uk without having an account but if you want to send a message to someone advertising a property or advertise your own property you will need to set up an account and complete a mutual exchange advert.

To find out more about a mutual exchange give the Ideal Choice Homes team a ring on (01524) 582005 or call into the King Street Housing Hub on a Monday, Wednesday or Friday between 10am and 4pm.

MYMAINWAY HUB

Come along to the MyMainway Hub and have a coffee and a chat. Get involved in the regeneration of Mainway.



We are currently open:
Monday 10-4
Tuesday 10-4
Thurs 10-4

We can scan and copy documents for people if they need to send them to us.

We have the computer to access planning, housing and other services also.

We can give advice and help on the My Mainway project, but also deal with other housing issues too.

CAB (Citizen's Advice Bureau) are in the hub 28th April and 26th May

MAINWAY UPDATE



My Mainway Proposals get a Yes from cabinet to finally move forward.

After what seems a very long time of uncertainty for residents and staff the ambitious proposals to

rejuvenate the Mainway Estate in Lancaster have been given the go ahead to move to the next stage.

Constructed back in the 1960s and comprising of the three iconic high-rises and 13 low rise blocks on the route into Lancaster over Skerton Bridge the estate is due some major maintenance work.

The MyMainway project is using this as a chance to bring homes and businesses on Mainway up to modern, energy efficient standards and to breathe new life into the open spaces and bring back a sense of community. The project team has been working closely with tenants, residents and businesses in the local area over the past two years holding coffee mornings, estate walkabout, conversation days and informal chats in the MyMainway Hub, a dedicated office on Owen Road where people can come along a have their say about their community.

The local community input has helped guide the project to where it is today. On 8th February Lancaster City Council's cabinet agreed a number of steps to take the project forward. Firstly approval has been granted for the project team to develop a MyMainway masterplan for submission for eventual planning permission in Autumn 2022. The masterplan will bring together a range of plans and aspirations for the project and look at various things including flood-risk, open space assessment, energy efficiency assessments, details about the development and design of the project and affordability considerations.

Approval has been given to formally progress (subject to Secretary of State approval) with purchasing the old Skerton High School site. This large site sits next to the existing Mainway estate. Currently, the masterplan work assumes that existing blocks within Mainway will remain in place but will be reconfigured and refurbished. The large old school site will be developed with new council housing, services and community facilities that would make the new Mainway a thriving community and a great place to live in the district.

On 8th February 2022 Cabinet also approved progression of an accelerated phase 1 of the project which will involve the reconfiguration and refurbishment

of two of the existing Mainway blocks which are situated right on the side of the river Lune with amazing views and fantastic location. Work has already started on contacting residents affected in these two blocks, and arranging either temporary accommodation and then assistance moving back to Lune or Derby House once works have been completed, or an alternative permanent move elsewhere. Tenants in Derby House will be supported to move out by May 2022, with those in Lune House following not long after. We are unsure how long residents will be in the temporary properties for but there are dedicated officers that will be supporting and assisting residents throughout this process.

Councillor Cary Matthews, cabinet member with responsibility for housing said " These are exciting times for tenants of Mainway and this is a once in a generation opportunity to improve our social housing provision. Our Council Housing team has been in regular conversation with residents of Mainway in recent months, as initial ideas for the project have started developing into reality. Our Housing Team have been blown away by the imagination and enthusiasm local residents have shown for the Mainway estate. The decision allows us to progress plans for the estate and provide us with a fantastic opportunity to breathe new life into the area by creating good quality homes that are energy efficient and support the needs and requirements of a broad range of households and age groups."

If you are a resident on Mainway please get involved. We have had loads of great discussion and ideas from residents since we started discussing the project with you, please keep the conversation going. We will be organising meeting, conversations and workshops in the near future for residents but in the meantime please contact us using any of the following methods:

Tel: **01524 582929**

Email: mymainway@lancaster.gov.uk
www.keepconnected.lancaster.gov.uk/my-mainway-lancaster

Pop in: **MyMainway Hub 7 Owen Road Lancaster**



Would you like
to join our
community
network?

At the start of the pandemic, the council set up online network meetings to bring communities from across the district to find out what support and resources were available within them.

Coming out of the pandemic, we would like to continue these networks so that communities can carry on connecting with one another and with the council.

Lancaster Community Network

First Tuesday of every other month - 2pm

Morecambe and Heysham Community Network

First Friday of every other month - 10-11am

Rural Areas Community Network

First Tuesday of every other month - 3-4pm

The meeting will be online are a mix of themes that either the council would like to talk to you about or that might be of interest to you.

If you would like to join one or more of these networks email communityconnectors@lancaster.gov.uk with your name and we will send you an invitation.



Meet Your Council Housing Officers

Estate Managers



Graeme
Ext: 6874



Michelle
Ext: 2307



Graceleanne
Ext: 2820



Joe
Ext: 2347



Lorraine
Ext: 6870



Carol
Ext: 6870



Vacant
Ext: 2929



Helene
Ext: 6895

Income Management Team



Paul
Ext: 2532



Sam
Ext: 2547



Nicola
Ext: 2523



Michelle
Ext: 2568



Stephen
Ext: 2652



Linda
Ext: 6872

Inspectors



Dave
Ext: 2422



Chris
Ext: 2425

Lancaster & Rural

Patch	Estate Manager	Income Management Officer	Inspector
Beaumont	Graeme	Paul	Dave
Bowerham	Helene	Sam	Chris
Caton	Michelle	Nicola	Chris
City Centre	Michelle	Stephen	Chris
Galgate & South Villages	Joe	Paul	Chris
Greaves	Graeme	Paul	Chris
Hala	Graeme	Paul	Chris
Halton	Lorraine/Carol	Nicola	Chris
Hornby & Lune Villages	Graceleanne	Sam	Chris
Mainway	Joe	Paul	Chris
Marsh	Lorraine/Carol	Stephen	Chris
Newton	Lorraine/Carol	Michelle	Chris
Ridge	Joe	Michelle	Chris
Ryelands	Graceleanne	Nicola	Chris
Vale	Vacant	Sam	Dave

To contact your Council Housing Officer call: **01524 58-** followed by their extension
Alternatively you can contact Council Housing Customer Services on: **01524 582929**

Meet Your Council Housing Officers

Morecambe & Coastal

Patch	Estate Manager	Income Management Officer	Inspector
Bolton le Sands	Graceleanne	Nicola	Dave
Branksome	Lorraine/Carol	Stephen	Dave
Carnforth	Graceleanne	Michelle	Dave
Higher Heysham	Joe	Nicola	Dave
Kellets	Michelle	Michelle	Dave
Kingsway	Vacant	Michelle	Dave
Middleton & Overton	Joe	Sam	Dave
Morecambe Central	Michelle	Stephen	Dave
Slyne	Graceleanne	Nicola	Dave
Trumacar	Graeme	Nicola	Dave
Warton & Rurals	Michelle	Sam	Dave
Westgate	Michelle	Michelle	Dave

Additional Information



Garages

If you are a council tenant these are £11.66 to rent per week.

If you are interested in a garage and wish to be added to the waiting list, please email: allocations@lancaster.gov.uk with details of which area you are interested in or telephone (01524) 582005.



Lettings

If you are interested in moving home in the new year or applying for a mutual exchange (swap) then please visit our website: www.idealchoicehomes.co.uk

You can also contact us by telephone on (01524) 582005 or contact us via email: allocations@lancaster.gov.uk to find out more.



Repairs

We are continuing to prioritise emergency and urgent repairs at this time (including annual gas safety checks).

We will contact those repairs logged to plan when we can complete these in the coming weeks when it is safe to do so.

To report a repair please contact us on: (01524) 582929

These are the planned maintenance team that you will see out and about on your estates. Now you can put a name to the face.

The fencing team



Robert Eccles - Joiner

Joined Council: 2014

Initially Bob worked on Responsive Repairs but moved over to Planned Maintenance in 2020. During the pandemic he has been working on different projects, including welfare checks on vulnerable tenants. However, for the last 12 months Bob has worked on the fencing replacement scheme.



Dan Bleasdale - Joiner

Dan started with LCC in 2014. Dan was initially taken on to work in the wood mill. He soon found himself working in different areas of the department. Dan has worked on Responsive Repairs, the kitchen contract, for most of the time he has worked with the fencing team. Dan has also covered the role of Maintenance when required.



Colin Mulliner - Landscaper

Colin also came over from highways department when that section dissolved. He has worked on both Responsive Repairs and Planned Maintenance during his time with RMS. He is currently working on the fencing replacement scheme. Colin has worked at LCC since 1983, he is one of the longest servants in the department.



Ricky Holroyd - Landscaper

Ricky arrived within Responsive Repairs in 2016, when the Highways department moved over to Lancashire County Council. He has also previously worked with the refuse team, before making the transfer over to highways. He has worked at LCC since 2002.



Kev Taylor - Landscaper

Like Col and Ricky, Kev is the 3rd member of the highways team that came over to RMS. He is currently working on the fencing replacement scheme. Kev has worked at LCC since 2003.

The kitchen team



Stuart Hillerby - Joiner

Stuart has worked at Lancaster City Council for over 10 years now. Prior to covid Stuart was working as part of the kitchen team. However, over the last 2 years Stuart as worked as an acting Supervisor on the external doors fitting project. This has involved the ordering of all materials, plus arranging appointments with the tenant. With the kitchens restarting in May, Stuart will move back to that team.



Mark Rigg - Plumber

Mark is one of the longest serving members of the workforce. Mark has worked at the Council since 1979. During this time Mark will have seen many changes, he originally worked out of the Lancaster Depot, moving to Morecambe when both teams merged. For the last 2 years Mark has been working on Voids and Responsive Repairs.



John Broadbent - Joiner

John has worked with the Council since 2019, spending the first year on the kitchen contract. He has spent the last 2 years working on external doors and the fencing renewal scheme.



Sean Kennedy - Joiner

Sean has worked at Lancaster City Council since 2015. During this time Sean has been an integral part of the kitchen renewal team. He has spent the last 2 years working with Stuart on the door renewal scheme.



Bill Frankland - Labourer

Bill started with LCC in 2013, originally employed as an Estate Steward working on voids. Bill moved over to the fencing team after a year or so as a temporary measure, he has stayed on Planned Maintenance ever since. Bill works in between both kitchens and fencing, doing deliveries and removing rubbish from the sites, plus other duties as required.

David Ferguson - Tiler
David started working at LCC in April 2020, employed as a tiler on the kitchen contract. David has yet to start working on the kitchen contract, he has been working on Responsive repairs and adaptations. The kitchens are due to start in May, Dave will be able to return to his established post.

Adaptions

David Atkinson – Plumber
David started in 2015 on disabled adaptations bathrooms. This involves removing the existing bathrooms and the installation of a level access shower. Dave excels in the customer relations helping to understand tenants needs. The work can be complicated and bathrooms can be unusable for long periods. Dave originally worked as a contractor on this work, before becoming a LCC employee.



RYELANDS GREEN WEEK WORKING TOGETHER TO LOOK AFTER THE ENVIRONMENT AND TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE



In the February half term we organised a green week on Ryelands estate and despite three storms and a change of venue at the last minute it was a great success.

We did a well needed litter pick around the estate. Everyone was pleased about how much better the estate looked. Due to the interest in the litter pick the Ryelands Residents Community Group have been given equipment to do regular litter picks on the estate. Great job everyone!

We had the recycling roadshow with members of our recycling Green Team from Public Realm and giving advice about recycling and getting the kids to do some recycling activities. According to the Green Team our young people on Ryelands are extremely knowledgeable about recycling. Well done guys!



We were hoping to have a community roadshow on the Skate Park on Dee Road but due to yet another storm we were forced to change venue and managed to use St Chad's Church Hall for a great day of information and activities. The Lancaster Men's Hub, Lancaster District Community Hub and our lovely Energy Support Officer Elaine Wilson were all on hand to give advice on anything Green from building a bat box to top tips on saving money on your energy bills.

We also had the Fire and Secure Service down with their fire engine and loads of info on fire safety. The kids were



amazed by how much equipment there is in a fire engine.

We had loads of fun with games for the kids, a poster competition, building and decorating butterfly houses and the amazing Smoothie bike - You have to pedal to make your own smoothie! That was a great hit with everyone and the smoothies taste so much better when you have had to work for them!

Thursday saw us all braving the cold to plant shrubs and flowers at Crossgill Place. The area is frequently used to dump unwanted household items and looked very unloved before our great group got to work. What a transformation in a





couple of hours. Absolutely amazing work by the Ryelands Green Fingered Gang. Everyone enjoyed a well earned ice-cream (despite the cold) or hot drink and a chat about what types of things we could look at planting next around the estate.

Throughout the week we were asking people to have their say about the Ryelands Community Plan and what residents would like to see contained in that document. We also consulted about the green spaces on Ryelands and what residents would like to see these spaces be used for.

We had suggestions of improving the park, grow you own spaces on some of the green areas and even the ambitious idea of putting a community centre on the skate park. We did manage to consult with some residents during Green Week but felt we still needed to reach more people on the estate as the horrible weather had clearly put some residents off coming out. A letter was sent out to all tenants on the estate with a link to a survey regarding the green spaces and community plan which we have had a really good response



from, so thank you to everyone who took the time to complete that. We are hoping to get Ryelands residents' approval of the community plan in the very near future.

A massive thank you to all the services that helped make it happen and an even bigger thank you to all the residents who came along. You all made a massive difference to your estate!



THE BUILDING SAFETY BILL AND THE RESIDENTS' VOICE

Ensuring good health through good quality, safe and decent homes has been at the cornerstone of developing social housing over the past century, led by the vision shown by the pioneering work of Octavia Hill, George Peabody and others.

In the wake of the Grenfell tragedy, Dame Judith Hackitt's Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety, found that the regulatory system for high-rise and complex buildings was not fit for purpose.

The risk to the public from fire is low and has decreased over recent years, but the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower Fire made clear that the current regime leaves too much space for poor practice, poor culture, poor accountability and poor management to take root.

The Building Safety Bill, together with housing, construction product and fire safety legislation will deliver a stronger regulatory system, to ensure that the nation's homes and buildings are safe.

A fundamental finding of the Independent Review was that residents' views and concerns must never be ignored by those responsible for managing the safety of their building.

An independent review of Lancaster City Council's property compliance including gas safety, electrical safety, fire safety, asbestos management, water hygiene and lift equipment commenced back in June 2021. This has resulted in the compliance roadmap in

order to strengthen Lancaster City Council's approach to property compliance.

As Lancaster City Council are working through this process we will be consulting with residents and asking their views on how best to make residents feel safety, informed and heard.

As part of this joint process with residents Lancaster City Council are looking for residents to become part of a Property Compliance Residents Safety Group. We also need residents to take part in Block Safety Walkabouts and look at changes to policies such as Gas and Heating Policy, Electrical Safety Policy and Fire Safety Policy. A workshop regarding Compliance took place in December 2021 for residents and we are hoping to organise more in the future. There will also be dedicated newsletters going out to residents. If you require further information about getting involved please contact Rachael Harland Community Engagement Officer on 01524 586891 rharland@lancaster.gov.uk



NEW PROGRAMME TO ASSIST COUNCIL IN CLIMATE CHANGE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Lancaster City Council and its partners will be hosting district-wide conversations on tackling and addressing the climate emergency following a successful bid to join the UK's Local Climate Engagement Programme (LCE).

The LCE aims to provide local authorities in England with the support they need to conduct widespread, high quality, inclusive local public engagement and participation in their climate decision-making.

This will help to ensure that the UK can reach these climate targets and that it does so in a way that is fair and empowers communities to fulfil their potential.

For Lancaster City Council this support will include training, in depth project support and peer learning sessions.

Councillor Kevin Frea, cabinet member with responsibility for climate action, said: "I'm delighted that the council has been accepted into the LCE programme.

"Research shows that people want their local council to take action on climate change but feel switched off from politics and unable to influence decisions that are being taken on their behalf.

"Enabling public participation in our climate decision-making will provide us with the opportunity to build a deeper understanding of local preferences,

aspirations and needs to support the development of policy that is more likely to achieve public buy-in.

"The council has already made great strides in reducing its carbon footprint and being part of the LCE will help us to go further and faster as we look to achieve our goal of being net-zero carbon by 2030."

The Local Climate Engagement Programme is being run by Involve; UK100; the Democratic Society; Shared Future CIC and Climate Outreach.

To find out more, visit the projects section at www.involve.org.uk/our-work



NATIONAL ENERGY EFFICIENCY AWARDS

We've received a Special Commendation at the 20/21 National Energy Efficiency Awards (Local Authority of the Year Category) for the works we're carrying out on our housing stock to tackle fuel poverty and climate change.

The works include the installation of new boilers and solar panels along with other energy saving measures and advice. We aim to bring all our properties up to at least EPC Band C by 2030. The commendation has also been awarded for the valuable advice and support provided by our Home Improvement Agency to improve the energy efficiency of the homes of vulnerable households too.

Thanks go to Green Rose Community Interest Company for nominating us for the award.





ESTATE WALKABOUTS

Date	Location	Estate Manager
8 th June	Trumacar walkabout at 3:00pm, starting at the bottom of Combermere Rd	Graeme Milce
9 th June	Marsh meeting outside community centre at 3pm	Carol Porteous
15 th June	Carnforth - 10am. Meeting by the Spar shop on Highfield Rd. To the sheltered scheme first before carrying on to the rest of the estate	Graceleanne Higgins
15 th June	Greaves walkabout at 2:30pm, starting outside Arcon House	Graeme Milce
8 th September	Westgate meeting at Westgate school at 10am	Michelle McMeeking
8 th September	Morecambe Central meeting at Hutton Grove at 2pm	Michelle McMeeking
15 th September	Lancaster City Centre meeting at Park Square at 10am	Michelle McMeeking
22 nd September	Warton Caton Kellets and Rurals meeting at 10am (Starting point the Roods, Warton, Yealand, Silverdale and then Caton)	Michelle McMeeking
21 st October	Bowerham 11 am Oswald House & 14.00 York House	To be confirmed
28 th October	Vale walkabout 12 noon - meeting point to be confirmed	
4 th November	Ridge walkabout Ridge community Centre 2pm	
11 th November	Kingsway meeting at Kingsway Court 2pm	

Please check facebook and Lancaster City Council Council Housing Website for any changes to the advertised dates.



ELTERWATER PLACE

Tenants have reconfigured the bin store at Elterwater Place to make it more user friendly.

It makes better use of the space and makes all bin accessible which has been a problem in the past. The first picture is of the bin store with the old lay out and the others show the improvement. What a brilliant job by everyone involved.



LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL LAUNCHES TREE WARDEN SCHEME

Tree lovers from across the Lancaster district are being asked to put their green fingers to good use and help breathe new life into communities.



Lancaster City Council has launched a new Tree Warden scheme to plant, promote and protect local trees.

Run in partnership with the Tree Council, the scheme enables people to play an active role in conserving and enhancing the trees and woods that we all see in our communities and neighbourhoods.

Some of the projects completed by Tree Warden groups elsewhere include:

- Arranging local tree planting days
- Pruning, watering and giving vital aftercare to local trees after planting
- Working with the city council to plant and care for our precious street trees
- Rejuvenating local woodlands in need of management
- Raising funds and identifying suitable land for local tree planting projects
- Going into schools to talk to young people about the value of trees.

Councillor Dave Brookes, cabinet member with responsibility for environmental services, said: "We are very lucky to have so many people in the district who are passionate about trees and the Tree Warden scheme is an excellent way get more involved with their welfare.

"Not only do trees and woods increase biodiversity, reduce air pollution and provide a place for people to walk and relax, but they also help to improve mental health through contact with nature.

"Whether you want to get your hands in the earth and plant trees, raise awareness about trees in your local community, or simply be the eyes, ears and voice for the trees on your street, then you have what it takes to be a Tree Warden and the council would love to hear from you."

**To find out more about becoming a Tree
Warden email**

milliontrees@lancaster.gov.uk

MOVING OUT? GET A PACK AND LEAVE YOUR OLD PROPERTY READY FOR ANOTHER FAMILY TO MAKE THEIR OWN.

Moving out packs are designed to help tenants who are moving out of their Council property. They can be given out at a pre-vacation visit to any out-going tenant who would like one.

We ask tenants to leave their property in a condition that is ready to be re-let.

Paint and roller/brush is provided to ensure the property is neutrally decorated.

We also provide filler for any holes left when taking down personal belongings like TV's, pictures and shelves.

We ask the property is left clean and free of rubbish, therefore cleaning products and bin bags are provided to tenants who need additional supplies.

Contents:

Paint • Roller and tray • Brush • Filler and spatula
Sugar soap • Anti-bac • Cloths and scourers • Bin bags

HOUSING COMPLAINTS

While we work hard to deliver the best possible service to you, we don't always get it right. Complaints are a really important way for you to tell us when you're not happy with the service received, and we use them to help us improve.

Have a look at our Customer Care web page here:
<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/customer-care>

This is where you'll find lots of information about how to make a complaint, and how the council housing complaints process works.

You'll also find our complaints policy, and a copy of our recent self-assessment which shows how we are complying with the Housing Ombudsman Complaints Code – as a social housing provider we have to show

that we are handling complaints effectively in line with this code.

If you would like a copy of the council housing complaints policy get in touch on 01524 582929 and we'll be happy to post one out to you.

You said, we did

Here are some examples of what we've learned from the complaints we've received, and what we've done in response.

You said	We did
We need to improve how well we communicate during the complaints process, keeping you up to date with the progress and outcome of your complaint	We have an action plan in place to improve how well we do this – making sure that we don't just send letters in response to complaints, but that we speak with complainants more regularly to discuss their complaint and what is being done
We've had a number of complaints in recent months about grounds maintenance, and how well the open areas around your home are looked after	All tenants will receive information about exactly what grounds maintenance work is carried out in their neighbourhood by our public realm team, including how often it should happen – if you haven't received this already, it will arrive in the post soon
You have told us that on occasion appointments with council housing teams have not been met at the agreed time	We have plans to develop a set of service standards – working with tenants and residents to agree some new, updated standards of service that you can expect, and that we will publicise widely
Complaints have shown us that different neighbourhoods have different issues that are important to them, and different areas they would like us to improve	Our Estate Management team are working to develop Community Plans for particular neighbourhoods – listening to what residents tell us are the local issues that need improving and agreeing a plan together. The first plan is being finalised now for the Ryelands Estate

RESIDENTS FIRE SAFETY NOTICE

LEGISLATION - REGULATORY REFORM (FIRE SAFETY) ORDER 2005

Your block has had specific fire safety measures installed to aid you, your family and visitors in the event of a fire. All council owned Flats in this block are fitted with 30 minute fire resisting doors to protect your means of escape and they must not be altered by residents in any way. The communal area is also fitted with emergency lighting and escape signage to aid your escape in an emergency. Additionally you should have working smoke detection system in your flat. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the following Do's and Don'ts, and for everyone's safety please adhere to the Fire Safety advice given at all times.

DO'S

Report faults with fire doors, communal lighting or smoke detectors to council housing customer services (01524 582929)

Become familiar with your escape routes

Follow the fire action plan provided, or undertake your own personal emergency evacuation plan, (PEEPS)

Respect the safety of yourself and others
Ensure communal entrance doors are secure before you retire to bed

Provide access for periodic safety checks

Contact customer services with any Fire safety concerns you may have

DONT'S

Don't Store or leave any items in the communal areas, (See important note below)

Don't alter or add items to your flat door

Don't tamper with electrical supplies

Don't Smoke in communal areas

Don't Tamper with Fire safety equipment

Don't Remove Notices or Signs



IMPORTANT NOTE: In order for the Council to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, Any items that are left in communal areas, basements or service rooms will be removed without any further notice, and disposed of by the Council (this does not apply to managed items permitted under the communal areas Fire Safety Policy). Recycling & general waste must not be stored in the communal areas and must be placed in the designated external areas.

Gardening Competition 2021 Winners

William Ingle and Grace Benson received their vouchers and trophies for all the hard work they put into making their gardens grow so beautifully. Their dedication and green fingers show in the visual delights they have created.



Gardening Competition 2022



This year the same as last year there will be two categories for you to enter

Fruit, Vegetables and Herbs –

With the rising prices in the shops have you decided to grow your own. Show off your amazing spuds and garden design and be in with the chance of winning £100 voucher

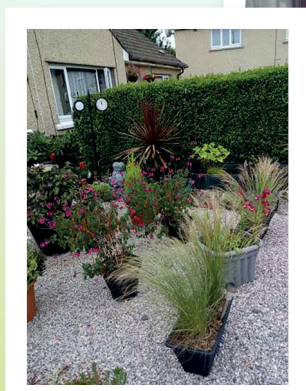
Flowers - Have you been spending a lot more time at home and decided to dazzle your neighbours and friends with your green fingers and artistic flare? If the answers yes enter the flower category for a chance to win £100 voucher.

It doesn't matter if you are growing on your balcony, in pots or you have a large garden dedicated to your passion for gardening. Enter yourself, a friend or neighbour or a communal garden.

Its easy to enter just speak to your Estate Manager or Independent Living Officer with details of your entry and a few photos of the garden or enter via email councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk

Closing date is Friday 29th July 2022.

The winner's presentation will take place at The Tenant and Leaseholder Champions Awards 2022 being held later in the year.



Relating

The people around you offer a valuable pool of support so it's important to put time into strengthening those connections.

Give it a go:

- Meet up with someone you haven't seen in a while
- Turn off distractions to chat with friends or family about your day

Exercising

Regular activity will provide an endorphin boost and increase confidence.

Give it a go:

- Find an activity that suits you and your schedule
- Swap the car on short journeys and cycle or walk to work



Awareness

Taking time to switch off autopilot and 'be in the moment' is a great tool to combat stress.

Give it a go:

- Pay attention to your senses — what can you see, hear or feel around you?
- Choose a regular point in the day to reflect



Giving

Holding out a helping hand makes other people happy and will make you feel happier too.

Give it a go:

- Share your skills or offer support
- Ask friends, family or colleagues how they are and listen without judgement



10 KEYS TO HAPPIER LIVING

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

Find out more about the 10 Keys to Happier Living at actionforhappiness.org



MHFA England

Visit mhfaengland.org to learn about Mental Health First Aid and how you can support a friend, family member, colleague or student with their mental health

Trying out

Learning new things is stimulating and can help to lift your mood.

Give it a go:

- Take on a new role at work or school
- Try out a new hobby, club or activity that interests you



Meaning

People who have meaning in their lives experience less stress, anxiety and depression.

Give it a go:

- Prioritise the activities, people and beliefs that bring you the strongest sense of purpose
- Volunteer for a cause, be part of a team, notice how your actions make a difference for others



Direction

Working towards positive, realistic goals can provide motivation and structure.

Give it a go:

- Choose a goal that is meaningful to you, not what someone else expects of you
- Remember to celebrate progress along the way



Resilience

Although we can't always choose what happens to us, we can often choose our own response to what happens.

Give it a go:

- Find an outlet such as talking to friends or writing it down
- Take action to improve your resilience skills



Emotions

Positive emotions can build up a buffer against stress and even lead to lasting changes in the brain to help maintain wellbeing.

Give it a go:

- Take time to notice what you're grateful for and focus on the good aspects of any situation
- Set aside time to have fun

Acceptance

No one is perfect. Longing to be someone different gets in the way of making the most of our own happiness.

Give it a go:

- Be kind to yourself when things go wrong
- Shift the focus away from what you don't have and can't do, to what you have and can do