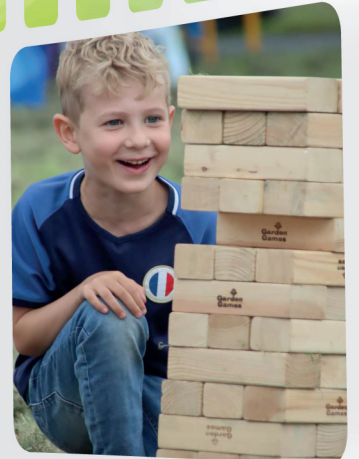


your

council housing matters

AUTUMN 2022

LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL
Promoting City, Coast & Countryside



ESTATE MATTERS | COMMUNITY MATTERS | MONEY MATTERS

WELCOME

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NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUND SO FAR

Lancaster City Council Housing are aware that many of the best ideas that we provide funding for come directly from our residents and resident groups. In this section, we'll be discussing the projects that have been brought to life through council funding and the amazing efforts of all involved.

Ryelands Summer Creative Activities Club

Total: £3000

Managed by Ludus Dance, the Ryelands Summer Creative Activities Club is for children age 6-13 years who live on Ryelands Estate during the summer holidays.

The club, founded in consultation with Ryelands Primary School and Ryelands Residents' Association, aims to help parents living on the estate who wanted to see a greater provision of holiday activities for their children.

Ludus Dance managed the enrollment - recruiting a number of wonderful people via the school & residents association – and the delivery of the project (together with community safeguarding and risk management), while Ryelands School hosted the programme itself.

The club ran for three weeks, starting on the 25th July 2022 and aimed to:

- provide games, dance, arts & craft activities, as well as drinks & snacks for up to 30 children each day;
- help children to develop interests in creative activities;
- help to nurture the confidence of children and supporting them to succeed;
- keep children happy and entertained by offering activities that develop personal resilience;
- provide parents with a respite through the summer;
- promote equality for children living on the estate by providing free high-quality activities delivered by inspirational organisers.

The club was a tremendous success, offering a welcoming environment for all concerned. In order to build relationships between the creative team and the families, both parents and carers were invited in for a drink at the start of each session once they had dropped off their children. At the end of each afternoon, those parents and carers were invited back to learn about the activities that their children had taken part in with the hope that the club helped them to discover new hobbies, gain confidence, and build healthier relationships within their family, circle of friends, and the wider community.

Cornerstones

Total £1115.79

Refresh is a way of starting to rebuild our communities after a period of lockdown that amplified the impact of loneliness and isolation within neighbourhoods that are already struggling with poor mental health. Throughout our conversations with residents, there has been an

overwhelming feeling that the best step forward would be to create spaces where people can re-engage with one another, allowing neighbours to share experiences and ideas together.

Refresh has been developed over a period of 12 months as a result of listening to the neighbourhood through a range of surveys and events, conversations and group activities. This ensures that the project has been developed from the ground-up, building upon the aspirations, skills and knowledge of those with who have 'lived experiences' within our community.

The idea of a community-led coffee bar was originally floated by a group of residents and this has gained traction with a much larger group, becoming a priority in recent surveys.

Refresh will be developed as a community hub where advice and support can be accessed and, most importantly, friendships made.

This hub will provide opportunities for neighbours to become more engaged in their community by offering volunteering and training opportunities, as well as helping neighbourhoods to become more resilient through strengths and asset development.

Langridge Estate Westgate Residents Group

Total - £3000

As a project, the Langridge Estate Westgate Residents Group will initially work towards updating the aesthetics of the estate and having a huge litter pick to clear the whole estate.

Immediately after, they will introduce large planters within certain areas of the estate, filled with perennial flowers and other plant life. The group also want to introduce benches and picnic tables for use by local children and families.

By giving the estate a much-needed facelift - the group hope to turn a new page and prepare the region for the future.

Eventually they would like to add plaques to the benches to remember the past and present Residents' Association members who made a difference to the community and estate.

If you have an idea for a project and would like to apply for backing from the Community Housing Fund – or would simply like to learn more about the scheme - please visit lancaster.gov.uk/planning/housing-strategy/community-housing-fund.



WORDS FROM COUNCILLOR CARY MATTHEWS

It's been an exciting few months for many of our residents across the Lancaster district, and it's been wonderful to see so many people taking advantage of the summer sun and getting involved with all of our various events.

I would particularly like to thank everyone who took part in our recent District-Wide Tenants' Forum – especially The Chairperson of the DWTF, whose efforts have been invaluable. In fact, our meeting on 15th September was our most attended and most successful Tenant Forum to date, with resident groups from multiple housing communities joining us and working together to discuss topics and ask questions that will ultimately help us to make improvements that benefit everybody.

We urge any resident who wishes to take part and discuss any potential issues to join us at our next meeting on 8th December 2022 between 6pm-8pm – with transport available on request. And don't forget, this Christmas-themed meeting will have free refreshments and an entertaining resident quiz!

We are also encouraging our residents to help us improve our service as housing providers by becoming Scrutineers for their own schemes. This is a great opportunity for individuals to influence the decisions and policies affecting their home by attending a **completely free** training session by TPAS.

Of course, with the festive season on the horizon, it would be amiss not to draw attention to the colder weather and the ongoing cost of living crisis.

This winter, we want to help all at-risk individuals to stay warm, stay well, and save money by providing funds to help cover the rising cost of gas and electricity. If you are worried about your ability to cover your bills, please contact our Energy Support Officer, or visit our website for more information, including how to apply for your Warm Home Discount.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Your Council Housing Matters. We're always looking for better ways to help all our residents, so please visit our social media pages, use our website contact form, or get in touch with your nominated Housing Officer if you would like to make a suggestion.

Cary Matthews

Cabinet Member for Housing

WHAT CAN WE DO TO OFFSET THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS?



The ideal temperature to stay well and feel warm is between 18 and 21°C - and don't forget to turn the heating off an hour before you go to bed to make sure you are not wasting energy by heating the home unnecessarily.



Set your boiler water temperature to 55°C only. Any higher means that your boiler will be constantly adding cold water to the system and using additional energy to maintain the heat.



Dry air heats up faster than damp air, so ventilate your home by opening windows and doors whenever possible and be sure to keep your trickle air vents open. This also helps to prevent condensation and mould.



Simple measures such as thermal insulated curtains over doors and windows will improve the heat retention in your property - especially during the night – helping you to feel warmer, for longer.



If the weather forecast says the following day is likely to be warm, turn off your storage heater's input valve to reduce energy usage.



If you have Storage Heaters – turn off the output valve before bedtime and leave the input valve on at about 4 or 5. This way you are not needlessly heating unused rooms during the night, and storing more heat for the next day.



Check with your energy company that both your tariff and bills are correct. To best monitor your usage, provide them with up-to-date meter readings, or have a SMART Meter installed.



Make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to. If you are unsure, you can use the 'Turn2Us Benefits Calculator' (benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk), the GOV.UK benefits page (gov.uk/browse/benefits), or simply contact Citizens Advice.

HOW TO STAY WARM, STAY WELL AND SAVE MONEY THIS WINTER



With the colder months approaching, many Brits are beginning to feel the pinch as a result of the cost of living crisis. While economists believe that the ongoing effects of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine are heavily contributing to the increased cost of goods and services for everyone across the country, it is clearly those in lower-income households who are being hit the hardest.

While most of us are unable to influence the nation's financial and international policies directly, there are many things that we can do to stay warm and well at home - without breaking the bank. That's why, in this section of Your Council Housing Matters, we're going to discuss some of the steps you can take to save money, as well as the types of support available for those most at risk over winter.

WHAT SUPPORT HAVE WE, AND THE GOVERNMENT MADE AVAILABLE?

Additional help is available to assist Lancaster residents with the rising costs of energy bills along with the £150 already paid to those who pay Council Tax via Lancaster City Council.

- A non-repayable £400 grant for almost all households, paid from October in 6 instalments as credit on your energy bill or vouchers if you prepay.
- You may be entitled to Cold Weather Payments. You will receive a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below over 7 consecutive days. You'll get £25 for each seven-day period of very cold weather between 1 November 2022 and 31 March 2023. Cold Weather Payments are available if you are currently receiving:
 - o Pension Credit
 - o Income Support
 - o Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
 - o Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
 - o Universal Credit
 - o Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI)
- A payment of £650 for those on certain means-tested benefits, split into two equal £325 payments in July and then later in autumn.
- A one-off £300 top-up for pensioners who get Winter Fuel payments, paid in November or December. If you were born on or before 25 September 1956 you could get between £250 and £600 to help you pay your heating bills. The amount you'll get includes a 'Pensioner Cost of Living Payment'. This is between £150 and £300. You'll only get this extra amount in winter 2022 to 2023. This is in addition to any Cost of Living Payment you currently receive via your benefit or tax credits.
- An extra £500 million for the 'Household Support Fund', which is a pot for councils to distribute to those in hardship.



THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT SCHEME FOR 2022/2023 IS CHANGING

The Warm Home Discount Scheme has been running for ten years. This year, the Government have responded to comments regarding the scheme and explained how the funding is distributed.

In previous years there was a 'lottery' effect in place and funding was successfully awarded depending on who your supplier was and when you originally applied.

In order to improve how this process is handled, the Government has undertaken a consultation process in an effort to better support those residing in low income households and/or those suffering from fuel poverty.

This means that all applicants are now placed into one of two core groups:

Core Group 1:

- You must have been a customer with your present energy supplier from a fixed date. For some suppliers, this date was 21st August 2022.
- You must be in receipt of pension credit.
- If these both apply, £150 will be credited automatically to your electricity account. You do not need to take any further action.

Core Group 2 (This will be targeted support for eligible households (Low Income / High Energy Costs):

- Customers will be contacted in writing by Mid-December to notify them of their eligibility. The letter will inform households whether or not they will get the Warm Home Discount automatically, and what action they need to take if they haven't qualified at this stage but feel as if they should and would like to appeal.
- It is important to note that there may be families who have previously qualified but find that this year they do not meet these strict criteria.
- Further details on what do if you don't automatically qualify but want to appeal the decision will be made available. It is likely there will be a Warm Home Discount helpline phone number provided.

Low Income is based on the following qualifying benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income support Housing Benefit
- Pension Credit savings
- Child Tax Credits
- Working Tax Credits (tax credits must be below a household threshold adjusted according to household composition)

High Energy Costs Criteria

If you meet the income criteria, you now also need to meet the new high energy costs criteria – this is set by the Government, and the department for Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). They will gather data from the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and there will be an internal process of validation carried out with the energy companies directly.

The VOA will use the following data to determine High Energy Costs:

- Floor area
- Property age
- Property type

Where data is missing BEIS will consider:

- Information on other similar properties
- Energy Performance Certificates (EPC)
- Other information held by the Land Registry

Further information will be made available as more details of the Warm Home Scheme are released.

If you are concerned about your energy bills and the rise of the cost of living, please contact our Energy Support Advisor, Elaine on 01524 582000.





INDEPENDENT LIVING DAYS OUT

One of the benefits of living within one of Lancaster City Council Housing's Independent Living Schemes is the ability to join us on one of our organised days out, which are a wonderful opportunity to get to know others from within your community.



Over the last six months, many of our residents have taken part in various organised trips and events, and we look forward to holding many more over the festive period and beyond.

In our Ripley scheme, ILO Carol Davison and her team held a lovely party to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, with some delightful feedback

from all those who attended. Carol also organised a Summer Fayre in aid of our local Ukrainian Refugees – raising just under £500!

On the other side of the river at Parkside Court near Westgate, Morecambe, ILO Angela Watson and her team have been responsible for a number of days out and events for residents – most recently holding an Afternoon Tea for charity to mark the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, raising just shy of £100.

Residents at our Gummings Howe, Hard Knott Rise and Highfield Road schemes in Carnforth also had the opportunity to get involved in several days out thanks to ILO Jenny Jackson. Starting with a truly enjoyable and sunny excursion to Blackpool on July 3rd, followed by a Tenants' Lunch Club meet on July 20th. Our residents also had the opportunity to enjoy a trip to Garstang on September 8th to explore the historic market town.

Residents at our Morley and Price Close schemes on The Vale also managed to get out and about in recent months, including a fun trip out to Bury Market which was a tremendous success. In fact, another trip has been planned at the end of November so everyone can get their Christmas shopping done early!

Over at Beck View, Mel was good enough to treat us all to some fresh homemade soup with crusty bread rolls, and ginger cake with custard for dessert, and later on, residents got to enjoy a bingo session while snacking on some parkin!"



A LOOKBACK AT OUR SUMMER EVENTS ON THE BRANKSOME AND HALA ESTATES

We had a great couple of weeks over the summer holidays in August when - assisted by staff across the Housing service - we all took part in a door-knocking exercise across the Branksome and Hala estates.

We spent our time asking tenants about their likes and dislikes regarding where they live, and what they would like to change.

We asked a number of questions to determine which factors contributed in a positive way to their community, as well as which commonly used services they would like to be more prevalent. Using this information, we will be working towards the development of a community plan for each area, with suggested changes for the areas put forward by residents.

Community Fun Days

Our Community Fun Days also took place later in the same week, with many partner organisations putting on stalls and activities throughout the day.



Beyond Radio helped to advertise what was happening and helped us organise a number of quizzes and prize-giving events for those who attended, including a giveaway of 12 bikes to children from the Hala estate – all provided by Active Lives Lancashire.

Hala Community Day

The event was held on the green near Hala Hill on Thursday 18th August, offering many stalls from local community organisations and plenty of fun family activities too. This was a wonderful opportunity for local council tenants to share their views and get access to information and advice.



We were lucky enough to have Duncan Moore and Greg Lambert from Beyond Radio playing music and making announcements, with support from Luke Edmondson and Nathan Hill who chatted to people from the various organisations who came along. The Beyond Bear was there too!



Hasan Sidat (pictured above with colleague Amy Bond) is a manager at Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, and showed attendees how the HARRI bus helps local people with their health and well-being.

Linzi Jackson (pictured, second from left, with the Red Rose Recovery team) is the lead volunteer at Red Rose Recovery and gives up her time to help people deal with addiction and help them with recovery.





Other organisations on hand included Lancaster Methodist Church; Lancaster District CVS (Community & Voluntary Solutions); Lancaster District Food Justice Partnership; Food Futures; Lancashire Fire and Rescue; Lancaster City Council Community Hub; Independent Living; the Dog Warden Service; Lancaster YMCA; Citizens' Advice; Lancashire County Council

Safe Trader Scheme; Lancashire Volunteer Partnership; North Lancashire and South Cumbria Breast Screening Programme; as well as NHS teams who carried out health checks and COVID vaccinations.

Branksome Community Day

Held on the green near Benson Avenue on the Branksome Estate in Morecambe on Thursday 4th August, this was a great opportunity for local council tenants to share their views and get access to information and advice.



We were very lucky to have a large number of stalls from local community organisations, and an exciting array of fun activities for all the family including face painting by Stanley's Youth and Community Centre.



Mark Waddington from Lancaster District CVS is pictured above with colleague Sharon and prize draw winner Olivia.

We also had a fantastic range of organisations attending including Bay Volunteers; Ideal Choice Homes; Lancaster Methodist Church; Lancaster District CVS (Community & Voluntary Solutions); Lancaster District Food Justice Partnership; Food Futures; Lancaster City Council; and Lancashire Fire and Rescue and their Princes Trust team (*pictured below*)



The Beyond Radio team were delighted to be part of this Morecambe-based Community Day, with Duncan Moore and Greg Lambert providing a soundtrack for the day and making event announcements with additional support from Luke Stutchbury and photographer Andy Slack.

Keep an eye out for more Community Day announcements on our social media pages in the near future!



MAINWAY REGENERATION UPDATE



Putting your feedback into action...

As you will undoubtedly be aware, over the last two years Lancaster City Council - in partnership with Beyond Imagination from Lancaster University - undertook extensive consultation work to gather the views of residents and the community about the regeneration of the Mainway estate.

This research helped us to discover how residents felt about living on the estate and which aspects were the most important to them, helping us to shape the future of Mainway. Most importantly, we discovered that 70% of tenants were in favour of a big change. The council, therefore, have appointed Place Capital Group to lead a detailed masterplan of the estate.

This process will involve developing plans based on the needs of residents, including the construction of new, energy efficient homes; the remodelling and refurbishment of existing buildings; the extensive enhancement of the public realm; and an improved community infrastructure.

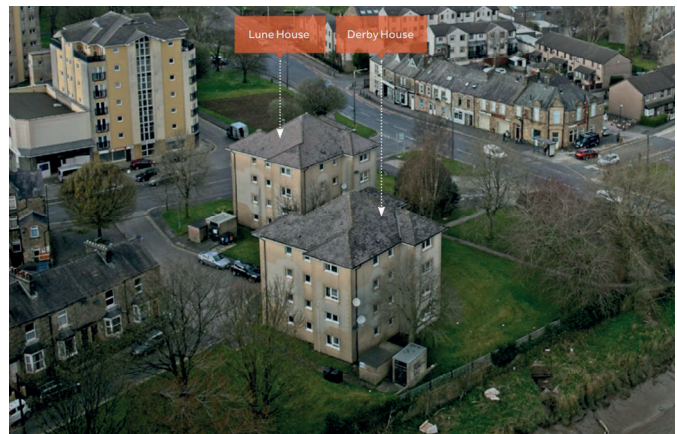


This plan will also be driven by the council's environmental concerns having declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. Our ambitious goals will ensure that Mainway is fit for the future, offering low and zero carbon homes that meet the highest thermal standards, allowing residents to enjoy the lowest possible running costs.

Work will be phased over several years to reduce the disruption to existing tenants. The first phase will initially start as a pilot project at both Lune House and Derby House to help us to discover what will or will not work. The results of this pilot project will influence the full plan for the entire estate and we anticipate that work will start toward the end of 2022 or early in the new year.

Phase one pilot project: Lune House and Derby House

The pilot project marks the start of the regeneration work for Mainway. Initially, it may seem easier to just demolish the houses and start anew, but the environmental impact of demolition is enormous. The purpose of the project, therefore, is to understand what can be achieved by working with the existing architectural structures of these buildings.



In retaining the structure of both Lune House and Derby House, we have estimated that we will save 780 tonnes of carbon - this is equivalent to driving around the planet 78 times in a standard petrol-fuelled car!

However, this doesn't mean we will be compromising our ideas or standards. Using innovative building techniques, we hope to turn these two buildings into a collection of modern, energy efficient dwellings - each with its own balcony and shared private garden.

The latest update of plans, designs and drawings for the MyMainway project arrived on 3rd August 2022, with the project team setting up in front of Shards Court armed with an array of display boards.

Joining the team were our colleagues from Place Capital Group (our development partner for the project); Grounded (the architects charged with designing and co-developing the project); and our local ward councillors, who are always kept fully informed about any developments.



“Possible layout of Derby House and Lune House landscape regeneration”

Helped along by the weather, we had a great turn out of residents who all gave us lots of helpful feedback on the latest designs for the phase one development of Lune House and Derby House – as well as their hopes for the overall plans for the Mainway estate. We were also asked whether repairs would still be carried out as normal while any future plans are being developed – and yes, we will continue to carry out our day-to-day repairs service within Mainway as normal. If you need to report a repair you can ring the team on 01524 582929, or email chreception@lancaster.gov.uk.

The Mainway Hub is currently open: Monday, Tuesday and Thursday - 10.00-16.00”

It was brilliant to catch up on the project and have some great conversations about where things are heading, and don't forget that you can always contact your councillor to discuss the Mainway estate (or anything else for that matter):

Cllr Robert Redfern, Skerton East, Tel 01524 381923, Email rredfern@lancaster.gov.uk

Cllr Sandra Thornberry, Skerton East, Tel 07851 761150, Email athornberry@lancaster.gov.uk

Cllr Cary Matthews, Cabinet Member, Tel 01524 850080, Email cmatthews@lancaster.gov.uk

Cllr Abbott Bryning, Skerton East Ward, Tel 01524 69185, Email abryning@lancaster.gov.uk

YOUR TEAM

Meet the people helping to plan an exciting future for Mainway:



Joe Frith – Estate Manager

Joe is your Estate Manager on Mainway and can often be found at the Mainway Hub on Owen Road. Joe has been with the housing team for two years and is not only an enthusiastic and hard-working member of the MyMainway project team, but he is also available to help you with all your other estate and tenancy-related needs.



Rachael Harland - Community Engagement Officer

Rachael knows Mainway better than most, having been Estate Manager there before she moved into her current role as Community Engagement Officer. Rachael is passionate about the future of the estate and is currently supporting the Mainway Residents Association as well as being a key member of the project team.



Pete Linsley - Neighbourhood and Support Services Manager

Pete has been with the Housing Team for just over ten years now and is responsible for organising neighbourhood services. “It's been brilliant to get out and about in recent months and chat with residents about Mainway – it's such a great community of people! It's been a slow process at times bringing the project to this point, but we are on the verge of things really starting to happen.”



Michelle Fitton - Mainway Community Group

Michelle has lived in the area for 8 years and is helping to make Mainway a more family friendly community by organising activities, fundraising and social events for all ages to enjoy. “I would like to hear your views on what we, as a community, could do together to improve the area.”

Housing Complaints

WE'RE MAKING OUR COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE MORE EFFICIENT



From the beginning of October, the Housing Ombudsman is overhauling their policies and guidance advice on the way that a tenant's complaint is dealt with by their landlord.

These changes are being made to benefit those who, in the past, have been unhappy with the final response given to them by their landlord, and provide them with a more effective avenue of recourse.

It is important to note that the method for raising a complaint will not change for our tenants, just the way that the complaint is handled by the Council.

To ensure that we adhere to these updated rules, and that all our residents enjoy improved access to the Ombudsman, we have revised our complaints procedure and have published this on our website.

All relevant information will be made available at lancaster.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/customer-care.

According to our 2021 STAR tenant satisfaction survey (carried out by ARP Research), we discovered that only 48% of those questioned were even aware of our current complaint procedure, and only 67% of those questioned were genuinely satisfied with how their complaints were settled. This needs to change for the better.

Whilst we always do our utmost to ensure that any issue encountered by our residents is resolved in a timely, effective manner, we are acutely aware that there is always room for improvement – and we intend to improve our policies to deliver the best service possible.

If, however, you are unhappy with the response you receive at any point, you can learn more about how to contact the Housing Ombudsman at housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/understand-complaints-process.

Our hopes for the future



ESTATE WALKABOUTS

Estate Managers are regularly on our estates visiting tenants individually, but Estate Walkabouts help us to meet with residents on a formal basis alongside other interested parties such as Councillors to have a look at the maintenance and appearance issues of the whole estate.



Some of the issues picked up in the last six months included:

- We noted on the Bowerham walkabout that the storage sheds at York House were looking shabby, so we have put this forward for future improvement works.
- Water Street flats have been painted recently after it was noted that they needed a refresh, they look much improved.
- A recommendation for additional bins to be placed into consideration on the Marsh estate.
- The need for a deep clean and drain clearance at Ridge Square.

FUTURE ESTATE WALKABOUTS

Over the next six months, there will be many more estate walkabouts taking place. If you would like to know more about what they entail, please contact your estate manager or keep an eye on our Facebook page.

Estate	Meeting Point	Date
Halton	Meeting point TBC	8 November 2022 @ 10.00am
Beaumont	Junction of Hill Rd/Halton Rd	9 November 2022 @ 13.00pm
Kingsway	Kingsway Court	11 November 2022 @ 14.00pm
Branksome	Shop on Windermere Avenue	15 November 2022 @ 10.00am
Trumacar	Bottom of Combermere Road	16 November 2022 @ 13.00pm
Bolton-le-Sands, Slyne	Bungalows Church Brow, Bolton-le-Sands	17 November 2022 @ 10.00am
Lune Valley Villages	Drive about	18 November 2022 @ 10.00am
Greaves	Arcon House	23 November 2022 @ 13.00pm
Ryelands	Shop at Greta Place	1 December 2022 @ 10.00am
Carnforth	Shop on Highfield Road	8 December 2022 @ 10.00am
Vale	Fleet Green Shakespeare Road Depot	3 March 2023 @ 13.00pm 3 March 2023 @ 14.00pm
Kingsway	Kingsway Court	14 March 2023 @ 14.00pm



MEET THE INDEPENDENT LIVING TEAM

The Independent Living Team at Lancaster City Council are dedicated to supporting those aged 60 and over by providing a comfortable, easy to manage home without the stress of maintenance or repairs.

In this issue of Council Housing Matters, we're going to meet the people who work hard behind the scenes to ensure the privacy and independence of their residents, while also offering a dependable support system whenever it may be needed.



Helen Wright - Independent Living Team Leader - Prospect Grove

"I am one of the team leaders for Independent Living, covering the north side of the district. I have worked for the Housing team at Lancaster City Council since April 2007. I spent three years at Melling House, before working for ten years as an Independent Living Officer at Beck View."



Leonie Costin - Independent Living Team Leader - Prospect Grove

"I work with Helen as the other team leader for the service, and I manage the south side of the district. I joined Lancaster City Council in 2014 as a Scheme Manager and I have also worked as an Estate Manager."



Melanie Cooper - Independent Living Officer - Beck View (Hala, Lancaster)

"I joined the Housing team in 2021. Prior to joining the Council, I worked as a registered manager in nursing and residential care homes in Morecambe and Lancaster specialising in mental health and helping those with learning difficulties. Mel has been a great addition to the team and has been responsible for reintroducing activities back into Beck View after they were cancelled during Covid-19."



Jenny Jackson - Independent Living Officer - Carnforth (including Gummings Howe, Highfield and Hard Knott)

"I previously worked at the DWP for 15 years, as well as in a local primary school as a qualified teaching assistant. Prior to starting as an Independent Living Officer with the Housing team in January 2021, I held the same position with another housing provider. I love working with tenants, promoting independence and thanks to the variety my role gives me, no two days are ever the same."



Kenny Priestley - Independent Living Officer - Glebe Court (Lancaster)

"I joined Lancaster City Council as an Independent Living Officer in 2018 - although my career working in the field of Independent Living was not planned - it was the people that made the job for me, and still is, which is why I have continued to work with those in Independent Living for the past 9 years".



Michael Wilson - Independent Living Officer - Melling House (Hala, Lancaster) and Leachfield Close (Galgate)

"I am the Independent Living Officer for Melling House and Leachfield Close in Galgate. I'm a bit of a 'newbie' having only started with Lancaster City Council in April of this year. In the past, my work experience has been centred around social care with time spent as the registered manager of a domiciliary care agency, as well as owning a number of care homes which took care of people with learning disabilities, mental health issues alongside elderly individuals with dementia.

I have found my role at Lancaster City Council very rewarding and enjoy almost every aspect of the job - apart from the inevitable paperwork! I especially enjoy getting the chance to meet a variety of different people, finding out about their life experiences and appreciating the reward and satisfaction of knowing that I have helped someone and left them with a smile on their face."



Carol Davison - Independent Living Officer - Ripley Court (Lancaster)

"I have been at Ripley Court for 8 years and seen many changes in that time. This year we held a lovely party for the Queen's Jubilee, which was the highlight of our year. We also held a Summer Fayre in September for the local Ukrainian refugees, for whom we raised £473!"

Caroline Doyle - Independent Living Officer – Alder Grove/Close, Holly Walk and St Thomas More Walk (Marsh, Lancaster)

“I began working as an Independent Living Officer in October 2020. Prior to that, I worked in care for 16 years - so it was quite a change of career. I really enjoy the job, meeting the tenants, and helping them to get any problems dealt with.”



Graham Gardner - Independent Living Officer – Artlebeck Close (Caton) and Elterwater Place (Newton, Lancaster)

“I am relatively new to the role of Independent Living Officer at Caton and Newton, but I am really enjoying the role. I am a confident person who absolutely loves a chat. I often volunteer my spare time working with junior grassroots football - coaching boys' and girls' football for those aged 4 to 14 years old.”



Michelle Baker-Lowe - Independent Living Officer – Kingsway Court (Heysham)

“I have worked for Lancaster City Council for almost 5 years, but only as an Independent Living Officer for 2 years. Previously I was a Painter and Decorator. The things I enjoy most about being an Independent Living Officer are the people I get to meet every day, and the variety of work from organising events to safeguarding adults. Myself, and the tenants I work for, often enjoy weekly dominoes, bingo and coffee mornings.”



Diane Hunter - Independent Living Officer – Penhale Gardens (Heysham) and Altham Walk (Westgate, Morecambe)

“I joined the team in January 2022, before which I worked in care for over 16 years where I cared for elderly and vulnerable people in their own homes. Being an Independent Living Officer is a very busy but rewarding job. I really enjoy working with people and I am part of a fantastic team.”



Angela Walton - Independent Living Officer – Parkside Court (Westgate, Morecambe)

“My name is Angela Walton, and in November I will have been an Independent Living Officer at Parkside Court for 11 years, which I have enjoyed thoroughly. I provide support to help the tenants live independently and because no two days are the same – with some more challenging than others - the role is always interesting. We have many day-trips out and social gatherings in the scheme. This week we had an afternoon tea to remember the Queen and raised £85.18 for charity.”



Linda Howard - Independent Living Officer – Shakespeare Road (Vale, Lancaster)

“My name is Linda Howard and since 2004, I have worked as an Independent Living Officer within Council Housing. I previously worked at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary as a receptionist on the Main Out-Patients department. One of my favourite things about my role is that I really enjoy working with the public and getting the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life. I am hoping to organise both a lunch trip and shopping trip before Christmas – watch this space!”



Andrew Hartley - Independent Living Officer – Morley Close (Vale, Lancaster)

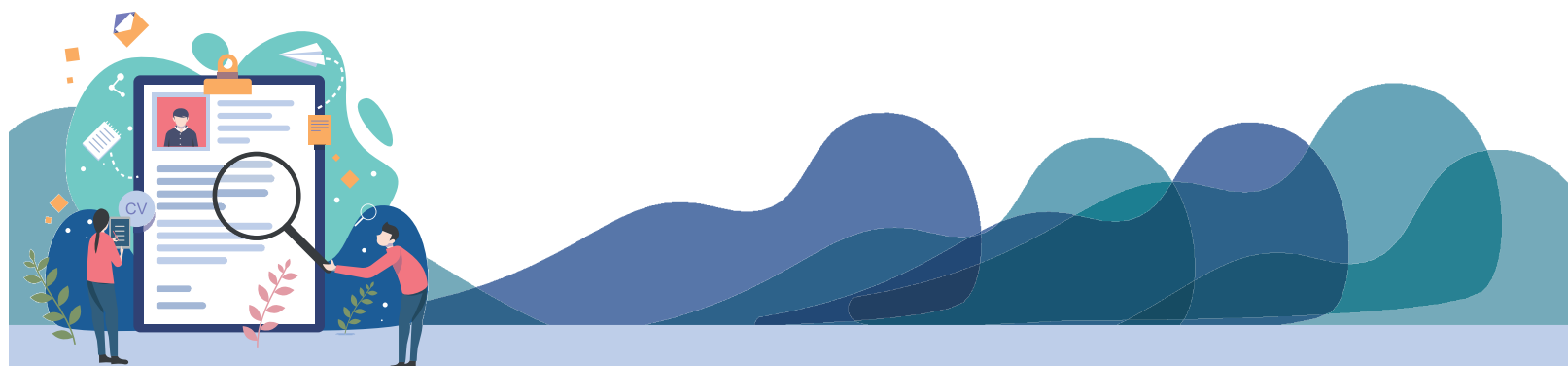
“I joined Lancaster City Council in 2015 as a Facilities Support Officer, leaving the Council briefly in late 2021 before returning as an Independent Living Officer in June of this year. The most satisfying part for me is getting the residents to use the community lounge again after COVID and organising fun trips out for my residents.”



**If you need to contact a member of the Independent Living Team,
please call 01524 582929.**

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

HOUSING AREAS / OFFICERS / LETTINGS TEAM					
Estate	Estate Manager	Income management officer	Inspector	Community Housing Manager	Lettings Team
LANCASTER NORTH					
Beaumont	Graeme	Paul	Dave	Rachel	Debbie
Mainway	Joe	Paul	Chris	Rachel	Debbie
Ryelands	Graceleanne	Nicola	Chris	Paula	Debbie
Vale	Daniel	Sam	Dave	Paula	Debbie
LANCASTER SOUTH					
Caton	Michelle	Nicola	Chris	Paula	Sue
City Centre	Michelle	Alister Hosmer	Chris	Paula	Sue
Greaves	Graeme	Paul	Chris	Rachel	Sue
Galgate & South Villages	Daniel	Paul	Chris	Rachel	Sue
Halton	Lorraine / Carol	Nicola	Chris	Rachel	Sue
Hala	Graeme	Paul	Chris	Rachel	Sue
Bowerham	Daniel	Sam	Chris	Paula	Sue
Hornby & Lune Villages	Graceleanne	Sam	Chris	Paula	Sue
Marsh	Lorraine / Carol	Alister Hosmer	Chris	Rachel	Sue
Ridge	Joe	Michelle	Chris	Paula	Sue
Newton	Lorraine / Carol	Michelle	Chris	Rachel	Sue
MORECAMBE / COASTAL					
Branksome	Lorraine / Carol	Alister Hosmer	Dave	Rachel	Andrew
Carnforth	Graceleanne	Michelle	Dave	Rachel	Andrew
Higher Heysham	Joe	Nicola	Dave	Rachel	Andrew
Trumacar	Graeme	Nicola	Dave	Rachel	Andrew
The Kelleys	Michelle	Michelle	Dave	Paula	Bryony / Debbie
Kingsway	Daniel	Michelle	Dave	Paula	Andrew
Morecambe Central	Michelle	Alister Hosmer	Dave	Paula	Andrew
Middleton & Overton	Joe	Sam	Dave	Rachel	Bryony / Debbie
Slyne	Graceleanne	Nicola	Dave	Paula	Bryony / Debbie
Bolton le Sands	Graceleanne	Nicola	Dave	Paula	Bryony / Debbie
Westgate	Michelle	Sam	Dave	Paula	Andrew
Warton & Rurals	Michelle	Michelle	Dave	Paula	Bryony / Debbie





THE CONSEQUENCES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We sadly had to carry out an eviction on the 13th September in Heysham after neighbours were subjected to persistent anti-social behaviour from one of our properties in relation to dog breeding and serious neighbour nuisance.

Despite our best efforts to work with the tenants in question to find a diplomatic solution, the terms of a prior injunction awarded in 2021 were breached, forcing the judge to return possession of the property to the Council.

Prioritising the community

We always try and work with and support tenants in the first instance if neighbour complaints are reported.

If serious issues persist - despite the Council providing support and being clear about our expectations of tenant conduct - we will not hesitate to take legal action against those who are inconsiderate of their neighbours. This could, in certain circumstances, lead to them losing their home.

Fly tipping – a growing concern

The Council has, for many years, provided a range of services in an effort to help tenants rid their homes of any unwanted items. This has included free collections by local charity Bulky Matters, and an excellent Household Waste Recycling Centre located at Salt Ayre, where white goods can be disposed of safely and without charge.

Please continue to make use of these facilities – and don't forget, every council tenant is entitled to one free Bulky Matters collection per year. To access this service, please contact us by calling 01524 582491.

Unfortunately, in recent months numerous residents have come forward to voice their concerns about an increase in the incidence of fly tipping in their neighbourhoods.

'Fly tipping' involves the illegal dumping of waste and other unwanted items such as broken and unwanted appliances or furniture in public areas, instead of discarding of them in the correct manner. Fly tipping is not only unsightly and bad for the local environment, it also has the potential to be hazardous and cause harm to others within the community.



How will we tackle fly tipping?

Fly tipping is not just a local problem, but a frequent issue that is affecting many regions of the UK – often in rural areas where offenders are less likely to be caught.

In many cases, chemicals and gases from damaged electronics such as freezers and batteries find their way into the ground, inhibiting the proliferation of plant life and poisoning the soil. In more urban areas, fly tipping has led to passers-by incurring injuries from slipping due to leaking substances, and cuts from sharp objects that are protruding from piles of rubbish that have been abandoned on the pavement.

Many people who fly tip are often unaware that their discarded items can easily be traced back to individual households with little effort - and if their waste has caused injury to a member of the public, the act itself becomes a criminal offence and will be handled by the police.

It is also important to note that injury through negligence can be a legal matter even if a tenant decides to discard their belongings within the boundaries of their own garden. This is because services such as Royal Mail, couriers who are fulfilling deliveries, and staff from the Housing team who have justifiable reasons to visit the property are entitled to safe working conditions by law.

We know that all council housing residents are aware that, as part of their tenancy agreement, they must keep their homes and gardens in a reasonable condition. We are very thankful that the vast majority of our tenants are proud of their homes and are happy to do so, but in order to tackle the few who are negatively affecting the health of their fellow residents, the housing team will be working closely with tenants alongside the Council's public realm and enforcement teams in the coming months to tackle the issue – details of which will be made available on both our website and social media.

Nobody wants to see their road become a dumping ground, and we're determined to help you keep your communities clean and safe. If you have any concerns you'd like to report - please contact your Estate Manager.



Council Housing Performance Data Q1

Here is a general overview of how we performed between Apr-Jun 2022/23 in a number of key areas.



Income Management



£118,531
Current Tenant Arrears



9.5% reduction from previous year



£12,000+
less rent arrears owed by our tenants compared to last year



Empty Properties



We let 130+ homes with a:
25.4 days
Average relet time



£71,594
of rent was unable to be collected due to empty properties



This equals **1.8%** of rent we can collect each year and marks a dip in our performance



Repairs and Maintenance



2,483
Number of repairs carried out in 2022/23 including emergency repairs



100%
of council homes had a valid gas certificate



92%
repairs completed at first visit



93%
of tenants were satisfied with the repair service received



Anti-Social Behaviour



We received **82**
reports of ASB - 35 less than in the previous year



92
cases of ASB were closed in the same time period



96%
of ASB cases closed were resolved



Litter/Fly tipping was the most common type of ASB - making up more than 20% of all reports.

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

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



Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR)

Recap & Update

Last time this magazine made the rounds we wrote about the Survey of Tenants and Residents we had undertaken, and shared the feedback you provided. Outlining how you feel about our services and where we could improve.

Since then, we have taken on board that feedback, both the good and the bad, and used them to create a plan of action to improve our service. Below features some of the actions currently underway to provide, you the tenant, with the best possible service.



Communication

- Employment of a communication officer
- Developing a cyclical maintenance communication schedule
- Publish more information on services available and our performance



Community Improvement

- Community Plans underway
- Share information on available community funds
- Give more information on how we spend community budgets



Neighbourhood Services

- Reviewing the grounds maintenance contract in relation to grass cutting
- Giving tenants opportunity to review block cleaning



Rent, Service Charges and Cost of Living

- Give a better breakdown of service charges and what they are spent on
- Develop community drop in sessions focused on income and energy advice.



Repairs Service

- Creation of a dedicated Independent Living repairs service.
- Improving communication with tenants about their repair appointments
- Review appointment times for repairs

More to come...

We want to make sure that the services we provide to you are the best they can be. Thank you for telling us what really matters to you.

We will be providing more information on the work we are carrying out to improve our services in the upcoming months.

If you have any other suggestions on how we can improve our services, please get in touch via 01524 582929 or councilhousing@lancaster.gov.uk



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

Whatever your reason, for most 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 - social 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 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.

We would also like to welcome Karin Stennett to the team as our new Mutual Exchange Officer. Karin is here to help all current and potential tenants find a new home and will be available to answer your questions in person every Monday and Wednesday between 10.00-13.00 at our drop-in shop on King Street.

Cars need homes too

An often-overlooked service that we offer at Ideal Choice Homes is the provision of garages for tenants who need a safe place to park their cars, or simply long-term storage for their possessions.

Available from as little as £11.66 per week for tenants paid monthly via Direct Debit, with certain locations in greater demand than others (full location details are listed on the next page). All maintenance and repairs are carried out by the Council, although it is important to note that there is no electricity or water available in our garages.

Insurance must be handled by the tenant themselves, and we do not allow our garages to be used for running a business.

If you are in need of a garage, please contact Ideal Choice Homes and ask to be added to our list and we will contact you when your preferred site becomes available.



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 1pm.

GARAGE LOCATIONS

Housing Matters

If you would like to apply for a garage at one of the following locations, please visit idealchoicehomes.co.uk, or contact the team directly by calling 01524 582005.

All garages are priced at £11.66 per week for council tenants, or £13.99 per week for non-council tenants due to the addition of VAT. All payments should be made in advance via Direct Debit.

City	Countryside	Coast
Bowerham	Bolton Le Sands	Morecambe - Branksome/Christie Park
York House Garages	Brookfield Close Garages	Christie Avenue Garages
Greaves	Caton	Morecambe - Hestham
Arcon House Garages	Artlebeck Road Garages	Hestham Avenue Garages
Ashton Road Garages	Galgate	Morecambe - Hutton Grove
Dorrington Road Garages	Leachfield Close Garages	Hutton Grove Garages
Hastings Road Garages	Halton	Heysham - Higher Heysham
Heaton House Garages	Pennystone Road Garages	Warton Avenue Garages
Wellington Road Garages	St. Wilfrids Park Garages	Heysham - Kingsway
Hala	Nether Kellet	Tarnbrook Road Garages
Gressingham Drive Garages	Hornby Bank Garages	Heysham - Trumacar
Lentworth Drive Garages	Over Kellet	Combermere Road Garages
Scorton House Garages	Church Bank Garages	Warren Road Garages
Tunstall House Garages	Middleton, Nr Heysham	Carnforth
Marsh	Hall Grove Garages	Coniston Road Garages
Charnley Street Garages	Silverdale	Kellet Road Garages
Ridge	Gaskell Close Garages	Windermere Road Garages
Ennerdale Close Garages	Slyne	
Keswick Road Garages	Manor Estate Garages	
Patterdale Road Garages	Wray	
Ryelands	Wennington Road Garages	
Marshaw Road Garages	Wennington	
Skerton	Nether View Garages	
Captains Row Garages		
Earl Street Garages		
Mainway Garages		
Vale		
Barley Cop Lane Garages		
Greenset Close Garages		
Hareruns House Garages		
Hathaway Road Garages		
Shakespeare Road Garages		

ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY - GET INVOLVED AND FIND YOUR VOICE!

Understanding the needs of tenants 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, Tenant and Resident Associations, surveys and much more.

- 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.

To participate, visit
[keepconnected.lancaster.gov.uk](https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/keepconnected)/[council-housing-tenants-get-involved](https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/council-housing-tenants-get-involved)
 or contact Rachael Harland, your Community Engagement Officer, on 01524 586891 or via email at rharland@lancaster.gov.uk.

DISTRICT-WIDE TENANTS FORUM - COME ALONG AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

This group is tenant-led and plays 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 transitioned into a hybrid-style, with some members attending Morecambe Town Hall in person, and others appearing virtually.

The group offers everyone an opportunity to have input into the roll-out of future plans and projects that will impact council tenants and communities. The group also shares news of happenings in their areas, and allows them to share best practice tips with others 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 Christmas-themed meeting held on the 8th of December 2022 between 18.00-20.00 at Morecambe Town Hall.



If you would prefer to join virtually, please contact **Rachael Harland**, your Community Engagement Officer on **01524 586891**, or via email at rharland@lancaster.gov.uk.

UPCOMING DISTRICT-WIDE TENANTS FORUM MEETINGS 2022/2023

Location	Date/Time
Morecambe Town Hall	08.12.2022 @ 18.00-20.00
Morecambe Town Hall	19.01.2023 @ 18.00-20.00
Morecambe Town Hall	16.03.2023 @ 18.00-20.00



MORE NEWS AND UPDATES ABOUT HOW TO BETTER ENGAGE WITH YOUR COMMUNITY



WHY NOT BECOME A SCRUTINEER?

In partnership with TPAS - England's leading tenant engagement experts - 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 make recommendations for improvements based on their findings. We are looking for people with good communication skills who are passionate about making improvements and possess the ability to obtain evidence, weigh up evidence, and make recommendations based on that evidence.

The training course is absolutely free, and support will be given.

TENANTS AND RESIDENTS GROUPS

A Tenant and Resident Association (TARA) is a formal group of people who live in a neighbourhood or estate who want to get together to handle concerns that are affecting their local community.

The group can include tenants, shared owners, leaseholders and homeowners. Groups of residents might start a Tenant and Resident Association in order to:

- campaign for something positive e.g. a better play area;
- campaign against something or get services improved;
- gain a greater community voice than they would have as an individual;
- create a better sense of community in their area;
- keep residents informed of what's happening in their neighbourhood.

If you are interested in forming a tenants and residents group in your area and you are unsure where to begin, please request an information pack containing training materials alongside how to book a personal one-to-one meeting to help get started."

CARBON ZERO COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

A 'Carbon Zero Community Champion' will help to highlight the need for a substantial change in the way that we approach environmental issues. Lancaster City Council will support you with training, allowing you to have a cascading effect on the wider community.

A Carbon Zero Community Champion will be aided in understanding how climate change may affect them and the people around them. They will also acquire the knowledge and skills to develop their own approach to lowering their carbon footprint and the carbon footprint of others while also gaining the confidence to share their Carbon Zero knowledge. If you are interested in this new and exciting community role, get in touch.

If you are interested in any of the above opportunities, please contact Rachael Harland, your Community Engagement Officer on 01524 586891 or via email at rharland@lancaster.gov.uk.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PROJECTS FUND ASSESSOR

We have created a Neighbourhood Project Fund, which groups can apply to in order to gain financial backing for projects that would benefit council tenants within their community.

We currently need a group of tenants to assess the projects put forward by Tenant and Resident Groups and help decide how to distribute the funding pot so we can turn these possibilities into a reality.

This is a great opportunity to help make a real, visible difference to the place you live - so get in touch if you are interested!



GREEN CHAMPIONS AND 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; raises awareness and education on green issues; or allows members of the local community to come together and pro-actively improve their local environment. An example of this could be taking part in litter picks; recycling initiatives; or simply help to provide garden-grown produce for 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, and that is why we welcome tenants who wish to 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 where they live.

CLOSING LOOPS

A COLLABORATIVE LOCAL INITIATIVE FUNDED THROUGH THE NATIONAL LOTTERY CLIMATE ACTION FUND

In an effort to combat climate change, reduce waste and support local food producers, we're proud to be working alongside six key local organisations (LESS, Lancaster District CVS, Eggcup, Global Link, Shared Future and Scientists For Global Responsibility) with our new five year project Closing Loops.

Closing Loops is a community-led project designed to help us move away from society's wasteful habits of the past by promoting fresh, locally grown produce; encouraging a circular economy; and bring people together to discuss the best ways to tackle the environmental issues affecting our district through World Cafés.

These World Cafés are an opportunity to meet, discuss and promote ideas that will influence the Closing Loops project over the next five years.

Carnforth - Civic Hall	03.11.2022 @ 18.00
Morecambe - The Salvation Army	09.11.2022 @ 18.00
Caton - The Victoria Institute	19.11.2022 @ 18.00

Each event will be held at 6.00pm, with a tasty two-course meal at 7.15pm prepared by a local chef using local produce for all who attend on a pay-as-you-feel basis.

So, if you're looking to help make a difference on a local level, why not visit the blog at foodfutures.org.uk/closing-loops-world-cafes and register your interest?

COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

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 promote 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 the messages and consultations that are relevant to individual communities.

Membership is open to anyone who has a formal or informal role as a member of their community and wishes to represent them at one of the group's meetings. If you are interested to join, please email communitiestogether@lancaster.gov.uk

Gardening Competition

Every year, we have the pleasure of hosting our Tenant and Leaseholder Gardening Awards to applaud the efforts of those who work hard to keep their homes and gardens looking fantastic throughout the year.

Last year's trophy winners included William Ingle and Grace Benson for their beautiful arrangements – and we were over the moon to have Grace back this year to help our Community Engagement Officer Rachael Harland pick a winner from our fresh crop of participants!

With several prizes up for grabs there was no shortage of competitors with a total of 44 entrants – and we were simply astonished at the amount of time and effort invested by those who took part, all of whom worked extra hard to create a stunning variety of beautiful gardens that blew us away.

This year, we would like to congratulate **Jim and Lynne from Ireby**, and **Dave from Carnforth** for winning first place for fruit, veg, herbs and flowers – each receiving **£100 in vouchers** for **Ashton Hall Garden Centre**. Both gardens were exceptional and clearly took a lot of dedication!

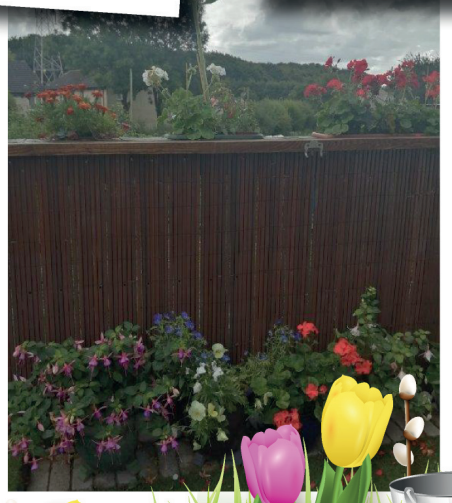
All the gardens entered impressed us greatly, and as expected, this year's competition was closer than ever before - that's why Rachael and Grace felt it was only fair for the following individuals to receive a special mention:

- Melling House Residents produced a beautiful communal garden and credit must be given to all who contributed.
- Tony from Westgate worked extremely hard to produce a beautiful new garden, and it is amazing what he has managed to achieve in such a short space of time.
- Mrs Wood from Carnforth has, in just a few short months, created a superb assortment of vegetables and fruit – you would be forgiven for thinking that she had been working on her garden for years!
- Mrs Macrae from Morecambe deserves recognition for her beautiful and colourful garden which is a lovely place to sit and relax!
- Carole from Slyne is more than worthy of praise for her beautiful garden – and for successfully adapting her approach so that she can continue to enjoy her horticultural pursuits.

We had a lovely couple of days going out and meeting people. Seeing some beautiful gardens and picking up great gardening tips along the way. We have also taken on board people's comments about the judging being too late in the year so we will look at revising the closing and judging dates for next year's competition.

Thank you to everyone who entered the competition this year and thank you to Grace for taking the time to help with the judging and all her excellent knowledge – we hope you will all get involved again **next year!**





THE FIRE SAFETY ACT 2022

The Fire Safety Act became law on the 16th May 2022 and is a primary piece of legislation that the Government has introduced following the fire safety concerns highlighted by the inquest into the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

The Act clarifies that those responsible for multi-occupied residential buildings - usually referred to as blocks of flats or buildings that have been converted to flats - must manage and reduce the risk of fire for the structure and external walls of the building, including: cladding; balconies and windows. They must also manage and maintain the fire doors which are located in the common parts of the building, and the individual flat entrance (fire) doors that open into common areas.

As your landlord, Lancaster City Council is responsible for fulfilling these requirements.

HOW WILL LANCASTER CITY COUNCIL ENSURE THAT MY HOME IS SAFE?

The provisions of the Act vary according to the number of storeys (floor levels) within the building, and their height above ground level. These provisions apply especially to those buildings with common areas where any storey is positioned 11 metres or more above external ground level - usually containing four or more storeys.

However, there are aspects of the Act that will affect all residents who live in buildings with common areas - i.e. a shared external entrance door and hallway and often a staircase and landing above ground level - and the differences are as follows:

- Residents of all buildings with common parts – regardless of height and number of storeys - must be provided with information from their Landlord concerning the fire safety evacuation instructions for the building, alongside information about the importance of fire doors.
- Residents of buildings that are 11 metres or more in height - in addition to the above information - will also see appointed persons undertaking checks on all fire doors in common areas every 3 months (quarterly) and once per year (annually) starting from the **23rd January 2023**.
- You will be notified about any visits to check the condition of the entrance door to your flat - which is a fire door. Full access to both sides of the door will be required to complete the check successfully.

Please look out for a leaflet that will shortly be delivered to you if you live in a building that is described as above.

This leaflet will have the main title of “**Fire Safety**” and will contain all the information that Lancaster City Council is required to send to all residents of buildings with common areas.

This is an important leaflet concerning your health and safety and it is essential that you read it and keep it in a safe place for future reference.

Should you have any concerns or require further details about the Fire Safety Act then please contact :
chcompliance@lancaster.gov.uk or 01524 582000.

