



Welcome to the September Housing Newsletter

Within the newsletter find out the latest news on our improved out of hour's service, and get ready for winter by testing your heating system. Hear about what our Neighbourhood and sheltered housing team have been up to during the summer.



Universal Credit migration phase

People of working age that are in receipt of Tax Credits only will be receiving letters from the DWP informing them of the need to apply for UC in order to continue receiving the tax credit money (UC equivalent of). If anyone has any questions or needs help with the application, please contact the DWP or Citizens Advice to check when would be the best time for you to complete a UC application.

Other people of working age on Housing Benefit will be migrated at a later date and will receive letters from the DWP when that is due to happen. Everyone else on legacy benefits will be contacted in phases from 2024 to 2028.

One of the ways you can start to prepare for that move is to ensure that your rent account is a month in advance so that the 5 week wait for UC does not impact you. Contact your Housing Rent/Income Officer on 01962 848 343 if you wish to discuss working your account into advance by affordable instalments.



Switch on your heating

Don't get caught out this summer, get ready for winter and check your boiler! Every October we see an increase in the number of boiler breakdowns. This is usually because when the system has been inactive for a long period, such as during the summer months, the boiler can lose its internal pressure.

We want to make sure you're ready for winter, so we're asking you to test your boiler now. Our contractors are less busy over the summer months, so we can deal with any issues faster now, than we can when demand is high in October/November.

We would ask you to test your heating system following steps 1 – 7 below:

1. If you have a pre-payment meter, make sure your gas meter has credit on it.
2. Turn your time clock heating control to “constant” or “24hr”.
3. Turn your wall thermostat up, so your heating switches on.
4. Turn all your radiator valves open to maximum.
5. Run the heating for 15 - 30 minutes and check your radiators are all getting hot.
6. Check for water leaks on radiators.
7. Turn room thermostat back down and reset your time clock back to how it was previously set.

If your heating system doesn't come on or develops a fault as part of these tests, please raise a repair via the on line portal [My Winchester Tenancy email](#) or by calling 01962 848 400



Preparing for Christmas

As the autumn starts and school's have started a new academic year so thoughts turn from summer holidays to festive celebrations. Now is the time to start planning your finances for a good Christmas budgeted for from the money left after all your essential bills are covered. Visit our [website](#) for more information.



The Winchester Young People 2Gether

This event took place at the Winchester Sport & Leisure Park on Thursday 3rd August. This was a partnership event organised by Winchester Neighbourhood Policing Team and Winchester City Council Neighbourhood Services and Community Safety Team with the financial support from Housing. Young people were invited to this free event by local partners as part of a summer campaign within the Winchester district.

The event included 1-hour rock climbing sessions, boxing skills with the Winchester Boxing Academy and playing basketball with the local Winchester Neighbourhood Policing Team. Partner agencies were also available on the day to respond to young people's questions, offering advice and providing information about local services, to include; Winchester Boxing Academy, No Limits, Princes Trust, The Youth Commission, Police Education Partnership and Army Careers.

The event was deemed to be hugely successful with some young people indicating further interest in joining the services independently.



Tenant Satisfaction survey Prize Winners

Mrs Bellarosa-Homer from Alresford the winner for the iPad for completing this summer's tenant satisfaction survey said ' *she has completely forgotten about filling in the survey, what a wonderful surprise*'. Mr & Mrs Davis from Winchester said ' *they were looking forward to spending the £50 shopping vouchers*'.

The results will be published on the website in the Autumn.

Out of Hours improved process

Last year the country saw a spike in heating system breakdown calls in the first week of December, when the temperatures fell to one of the lowest recorded levels. This led to our out of hours call centre, First Call, which handles calls nationwide, being swamped with more calls than they can handle and led to extended waiting times across all their contracts (including Winchester City Council).

Fortunately Winchester City Council was not too badly hit with breakdowns; however, we did fall victim to the extended call wait times. In order to minimise a similar problem this year we are having regular monthly meetings with First Call on the run up to December to monitor their readiness in preparation for this winter.

In order to make sure they are ready for winter First Call are increasing their staff levels to 120 operatives for the winter period and are looking to review their telephony systems to speed up re-prioritisation of calls should they

become swamped again.



Beware of Rogue Traders

A cold caller may offer you a service you don't really need. They may claim to have noticed something about your property that needs work or improvement and offer to fix it for cash or an inflated price. Rogue Traders often ask for a payment upfront in order for the work to be carried out. They may convince you to withdraw money for payment while they set up. Often they will identify additional work, requiring further payment.

Always Remember:

- Don't feel pressured. Don't agree to hand over money at the door, take time to think about it and talk to someone you trust.
 - Check their credentials. You should always check someone's identity, a genuine person won't mind. Never use the contact details they give you to check.
 - Don't feel embarrassed about turning someone away. Only let someone in if you are expecting them or they're a trusted friend, family member or professional.
 - Never disclose your PIN. Don't let anyone persuade you to hand over your bank card or withdraw cash on your behalf
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Rural Crime Prevention Advice

The Police and Crime Commissioner and Hampshire and IOW Constabulary have created an electronic crime prevention booklet for those living and working in the rural areas.

**IT'S TIME TO
TACKLE ONLINE
ABUSE**

[#TackleOnlineAbuse](#)

! **REPORT
HARMFUL
CONTENT**

SWGfL
Safe, Secure, Online

The advertisement features a close-up of a soccer player's foot in a black boot with yellow studs, resting on a black and white soccer ball. The background is a blurred stadium filled with spectators. A large red graphic element on the right side contains the text "IT'S TIME TO TACKLE ONLINE ABUSE". Below this, the hashtag "#TackleOnlineAbuse" is displayed. In the bottom left corner, there is a black square with a white exclamation mark and the text "REPORT HARMFUL CONTENT". In the bottom right corner, the SWGfL logo is shown, consisting of a colorful circular icon and the text "SWGfL Safe, Secure, Online".

Online abuse, which includes bullying and harassment, can have a profound impact on athletes' mental wellbeing and performance. Recognising the rising

impact of this issue, Report Harmful Content has launched an awareness campaign to empower individuals across the UK to stand against online

harassment in sport, and report harmful content through established channels. Visit the [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) for more details

Volunteer Police Cadets



Our Volunteer Police Cadets need you!

The Volunteer Police Cadets scheme provides a safe environment where young people can learn as individuals, develop positive relationships with the police and actively support the community. Volunteering your time as a Cadet Leader is a very personally rewarding thing to do. It will enable you to develop your skills to inspire young people to become good citizens.

There are opportunities to become a leader no matter how many hours a week / month you are able to volunteer and you will receive training to support you to develop your own knowledge and skillset.

If you would like more information on the role or have any questions, please visit the [Volunteer Police Cadet scheme](#).

FREE
EVENT

1960s afternoon party

Step back into the swinging 50's & 60's and join us for a special cream tea at St Peters Church Hall, Bishops Waltham SO32 1NR



1960 Afternoon tea party

There is a 60's event taking place in Bishops Waltham for our more isolated older residents particularly those in bungalow sites who do not have access to communal lounges.

Food and entertainment will be provided. Dawn sings a variety of 50's and 60's songs, there will be a raffle and food provided. The event is supported by Winchester City Council, the Sheltered Housing Team and Osbornes with the help of Monica Gill and a team of willing volunteers, on Wednesday 25 October 2.30 – 4.30pm.

Feel free to dress up and bring along your special photos and memories of the 1960.

For more information and to book your place contact Monica Gill on 07759 250 843 or [email Monica](#).



Summer BBQ

Summer Barbecues have taken place in many of our sheltered housing schemes across the district with invitations extended to residents in our alarm linked bungalow and neighbouring sheltered schemes where garden space is limited like at our City centre schemes.

Residents were provided with a wonderful array of barbecued meats, salad and deserts including profiteroles and succulent strawberries.

The events were well attended and provided opportunities for residents to meet both their neighbours and new faces including local Councillors and even the Mayor at some events. Residents were particularly impressed with the food provided and expressed their thanks to Jim the chef who catered all of the Barbecues and the Sheltered Housing Officers who assisted with the arrangements and provided hot and cold drinks.

“ What a wonderful afternoon with lovely food, thank you very much”

“ I really enjoyed myself and now I won't have to cook for myself either, thank you”

If you have any comments on this newsletter or any suggestions on what you would like to hear about please contact us by [email](#)



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