Connect
Official newsletter for tenants and leaseholders
September 2019 | Issue 51

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Tenant Approved
Kettering Borough Council
Welcome to our Autumn edition.

In this edition, you can read our latest Tenants’ Annual Report which shows some excellent results in some of our key service areas. Thanks to all of you that took the time to complete and return your surveys, we really do appreciate hearing your views.

It is now 100 years since the Addison Act kickstarted a programme of building council housing in the UK. We want to recognise this momentous event and delve into the history of council housing in Kettering as part of our celebrations. We are teaming up with the Kettering museum to hold a special celebration event exhibiting the impact of council housing over the last 100 years. See page 7 if you would like to share your memories of council housing in Kettering.

On page 8, we have included some updates regarding Universal Credit, we hope you will find these useful. If you are affected by Universal Credit, we want to make sure you are still able to manage your finances. Speak to us if you have any concerns or issues so we can assist you or point you in the right direction to find support.

Finally, read about our annual Silver Service Bake Off event held in August which raised over £1,300 for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI). Well done to all residents, staff and helpers for organising this third successful Bake-Off event which was such good fun and for a very deserving cause.

John Conway,
Head of Housing

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And the winner is...

Congratulations to Julie Tounsi who won £25 worth of shopping vouchers after finding the reindeer hidden in the pages of the last issue of Connect!

Spot the autumn bells and win!

Now it’s your turn to try and win £25 worth of shopping vouchers. Simply find the autumn bells scattered amongst the pages of this newsletter and email the number you find to connect@kettering.gov.uk or enter via post to Connect Competition, Kettering Borough Council, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX. Don’t forget to include your name and phone number. All correct entries will be checked and the winner drawn out of a hat. The closing date is 20th October 2019.

Here’s an autumn bell to start you off!

Garden Competition

Thank you to everyone who entered our Garden Competition this year. The judging took place in June by our returning judges, previous winners in the competition, Jim and Jackie French from Desborough. The standard was as high as ever and made our job very difficult. The presentation evening takes place on Tuesday 17th September so look out for the winners’ photos in December’s Connect!
The tour attendees visited a number of key housing initiatives including a visit to Carey Street new Supported Housing development, visits to two void properties, a ‘before’ and ‘after’ Environmental scheme and a new build potential development site on the Grange estate.

Around 30 tenants, leaseholders, officers and councillors attended the annual coach tour which kicked off with a buffet tea and welcome from the Head of Housing in the council chamber.

The new-build scheme has been developed by Seagrave Developments, a local development company, who have worked in partnership with emh homes (housing association). The scheme comprises 45 one-bed flats across two blocks and all flats are disabled adapted.

Block A will be completed by November and will provide supported accommodation for people over the age of 55. Block B completed earlier this year and will provide supported accommodation for younger adults.

The scheme will be managed by emh. The contract for the support element of the scheme was awarded to emh Care and Support via Northamptonshire Adult Social Services (NASS). Allocations to the scheme will be made via an allocations panel which will include representatives from NASS, NHS and KBC.

Approximately £1.4m of Homes England grant was used to enable to delivery of Carey Street. It is a good example of effective partnership working and how this can lead to much needed accommodation being provided for vulnerable people.
Kettering’s Meadow Road Park is now open following the first phase of major improvements! Visit the town centre destination park and you will find new play equipment, footpaths, safety surfacing, lighting, CCTV and natural seating areas.

Kettering Borough Council improved Meadow Road Park using money from agreements negotiated as part of recent local housing developments. Improvements to this important open space will provide a place to play, work out or relax in a town centre destination park enhanced by the offer of nearby shopping and places to eat.

A consultation took place during December and January to hear the views of local people on the proposals, which were used to influence the final design of the park.

The park will continue to evolve over the course of the year so expect to see more additions over the coming months, including:

- New bank slides
- New picnic benches to complement the current natural rock seating
- Sand play
- Fitness zone equipment
- Further landscaping
- Fencing to mark the area were dogs must be kept on a lead
- Planting of Silver Birch trees
- New gateway entrance at the top of Meadow Road

Further information will be provided when the second phase of works are underway. You can find out more about the project at www.kettering.gov.uk/meadow-road-park
It is 100 years since the ‘Addison Act’ kickstarted the widespread building of council housing in the United Kingdom. The 1919 Act, named after the Minister of Health Dr Christopher Addison, was an attempt to meet the huge demand for housing by the working classes following the end of the First World War. The Addison Act introduced government subsidies to help finance the construction of 500,000 houses within three years. It made housing a national responsibility for the first time and so local authorities were given the task of developing new housing and rented accommodation wherever it was needed by working people.

*First tenants on Windmill Avenue estate in 1921*
A history of council housing in Kettering

The first new council houses were built by Kettering Urban District Council in 1920 at a site on Stamford Road, costing around £950 for a three-bedroom house. The good news is that after many years and many council homes sold through the ‘Right to Buy’ scheme introduced in 1980, we are progressing with plans to build new council housing at Stamford Road, Albert Street, Scott Road and also a further site in Desborough.

Get Involved in our Birthday Celebrations!

We think council housing is special and deserves a wonderful birthday celebration so we will be holding a celebratory event and exhibition later in the year. Having a safe, secure home is the bedrock of society so we want to share your experiences of council housing and what it has meant to you and your family.

We want you to share your memories of life in council housing in Kettering over the last 100 years. Send us your photos, stories, poems and any documents you may have kept relating to your tenancy such as old rent books or Tenancy Agreements. Send your memories to; Tracey Copeland, Housing Services, Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX. Please send us copies if possible rather than originals. Alternatively, bring them into our Customer Service Centre or attend our special session below and we will copy them for you.

We would also love to receive your objects from council housing in the past! We will use these to hold a special exhibition and showcase of 100 years of council housing in Kettering. Please bring them and any other memories, photos or documents to our ‘Tea & Biscuits session in the Manor House Museum, Kettering on Saturday 2nd November, 11am - 3pm.
If you want to keep up to date with any changes remember to speak with your Work Coach in the first instance.
Domestic Abuse

The Council is proud to have signed up to a new national campaign to help tackle domestic abuse in our communities. The Make a Stand campaign centres around a pledge which has been developed by the Chartered Institute of Housing in partnership with Women's Aid and the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA). By signing the pledge, we have committed to take action to support tenants and staff who are experiencing domestic abuse.

Domestic Abuse can include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Coercive control (a pattern of intimidation, degradation, isolation and control with the use or threat of physical or sexual violence)
- Psychological and/or emotional abuse
- Physical or sexual abuse
- Financial or economic abuse
- Harassment and stalking
- Online or digital abuse

Remember you are not alone - Domestic abuse is one of the biggest issues we face in society today and two women are killed every week in the UK by their partner or ex-partner.

If you or someone you know is a victim of Domestic Abuse, help and support is available.

Support services

Below is a list of national support services. However, if you or someone you know is in immediate danger, please call 999.

- National Domestic Violence Helpline: Run by Women’s Aid and Refuge. Call 0808 2000 247
- Women’s Aid: For a full A-Z list of local support groups, visit womensaid.org.uk
- Refuge: For support and advice, literature and articles, visit refuse.org.uk

Locally, the Sunflower Centre are able to provide advice and support to high risk victims.

Finally, please seek independent legal advice and speak to your Neighbourhood Manager for advice on your tenancy rights, or for information on any other support that is available to help keep you safe in your home.

Independent legal advice is available from CAB via the National Helpline 03444 111 444.

We’ve signed the Make a Stand pledge to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

#makeastand
cih.org/makeastand
Tenants Get Involved Updates

We have had a really busy period with so much going on. Read on for some updates and to find out what our involved tenants have been getting up to.

Environmental Improvement Panel Updates

Windmill Avenue / Hodge Way – Tenant Community Action Day
Wednesday 7th August

Tenants from the flats at Windmill Avenue and Hodge Way took part in a Community Action day to make over their external communal areas with funding granted through the tenant-led Environment Improvement Panel.

The action day saw tenants and staff from the council and our contractor Lovells work together to clean, paint and spruce up the communal gardens. An access point used for drug-dealing has also been closed off to help reduce anti-social behaviour and communal lighting in the area improved.

Congratulations to Martyn!

Kettering tenant Martyn Lund has been elected as the new Chair of the ‘See the Person’ campaign.

Representing ARCH and council tenants nationally, Martyn will help tackle stigma in social housing. Congratulations Martyn on your appointment!

Sign up for Tenant Involvement updates!

Every month we send out an email newsletter with updates about tenant involvement and our services. To subscribe to the newsletter, just get in touch with your email address and we will add you to the mailing list.

Also, we have a new email address for you to get in touch with other tenants to find out more about ways of getting involved.

Email: Talking2tenants@kettering.gov.uk

Why I got involved

Simon Sheldrick is a tenant and has been involved for around a year:

“As a child I had always been around areas of social housing. Many of my friends and family lived in council houses all over the country and at the time I wasn’t aware of just how integral to this country that social housing was and still is.

Two years ago when I unfortunately became disabled due to a disease and I could no longer live in my private rented first floor flat due to being unable to get up the stairs to the property, the future looked bleak. Thankfully I was helped by the council into a council property where I am fully able to carry on with my life and live my life to its full potential. Because of this I felt that I wanted to give something back in order to help ensure that social housing stays a strong and thriving part of our country, keeping communities in safe, affordable housing well into the future.

In order to play a part, I became a member of the Tenants Overview and Scrutiny Panel as well as a Tenants Forum member and Tenants Representative for Weston by Welland. This takes up a couple of hours of my time a week. However, giving up just an hour or two a week is a huge contribution in order to help keep the dream of Dr Christopher Addison (the father of social housing) alive. There is also an added personal benefit to me of being able to meet wonderful people while at the same time have fun and keep it interesting.”
8th August 2019 marked the 11th birthday of our Silver Service and our 3rd annual Silver Service Bake Off event for our sheltered housing customers. This year our Social Organiser’s Group chose a seaside theme for the event with the RNLI being the chosen charity.

Thank you to all our Silver Service customers and team for making this year’s event the most enjoyable yet!

This year’s bakers surpassed themselves with these amazing seaside themed show stopper cakes which were blind judged by our “shark” and “crab” judges.

Our very own Richard “Dich” Adams, Support Worker, was our compere for the afternoon. Although you might not recognise him in these photos!

Through selling our “Bake Off” quiz, raffle tickets, tombola and the event itself which was so well supported a staggering £1304.89 was raised for the RNLI.

Huge thanks again to Kettering Buccleugh Academy for letting us use their venue and facilities for free.
How to contact us

- **Call us** on 01536 410 333
- **Write to us** at Kettering Borough Council, Municipal Offices, Bowling Green Road, Kettering, NN15 7QX
- **Come and see us** in one of our Customer Service Centres in Kettering, Desborough, Rothwell or Burton Latimer
- **Email us** at housing@kettering.gov.uk
- **Send a TEXT message to the Council**
  Write a short message and send it to 07824 451281
- **Send a PICTURE message to the Council**
  Attach a picture and send it to 07824 451281

You can also check your Council Tax, Business Rates and Benefits online at:

[www.kettering.gov.uk/connectonline](http://www.kettering.gov.uk/connectonline)

Please remember, our Customer Service Centres are able to deal with:

- Repair reporting
- Tenancy queries
- Rent queries and payments
- Housing queries
- Council Tax benefit
- Follow us on Twitter @KetteringBC

Find out about events, things to do & places to eat, drink & shop in the Borough of Kettering at [www.thisiskettering.com](http://www.thisiskettering.com)

If you are interested in supporting your community by joining Northamptonshire Street Watch, please visit [www.northants.police.uk/streetwatch](http://www.northants.police.uk/streetwatch)

Support Services

- **Age UK**
  0800 169 6565
  www.ageuk.org.uk

- **Free Fire Safety Check**
  (Free) 0800 389 9950
  For further information, visit the Northamptonshire County Council website

- **Youth Information Helpline**
  01536 510 089

- **Citizens Advice Bureau**
  03444 111 444

Utilities

- **National Grid** – report gas leaks or for general gas information
  0800 111 999

- **Anglian Water**
  08457 145 145

- **Western Power**
  08006 783 105

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If you are interested in supporting your community by joining Northamptonshire Street Watch, please visit [www.northants.police.uk/streetwatch](http://www.northants.police.uk/streetwatch)

When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.