Welcome to the summer edition of Connect.

We have been asking what you think about your home, your neighbourhood and the housing services we provide. The good news is that tenants are generally happy with the service they receive from the Council. And, even better, council tenants in Kettering are more satisfied with their housing service than people in other local authority areas who have taken part in the same survey.

Having said that, there is always room for improvement and we’re determined to provide an even better housing service. A big part of that is providing homes where people are proud to live.

On page 8, you can read about the new bungalows and family homes we are building in Laburnum Crescent, Kettering, whilst on page 9 you can read about our work with the Police to improve the appearance of housing estates. These are two examples of where we are working to improve our service and your neighbourhood.

Happy reading!

John Conway, Head of Housing
Congratulations to Joyce who won £25 worth of shopping vouchers after finding the Easter eggs hidden in the pages of the last issue of Connect!

**Spot the beach balls and win!**

Now it’s your turn to try and win **£25 worth of shopping vouchers**. Simply find the beach balls scattered amongst the pages of this newsletter and email the number you find to connect@kettering.gov.uk

Don’t forget to include your name and contact details. All correct entries will be checked and the winner drawn out of a hat. The closing date is **21st July 2016**.

And the winner is…

Joyce Simpson collects her winning vouchers.

**Here’s a beach ball to start you off!**

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**Meet & Greet in Burton Latimer**

In April, we held another of our ‘Meet & Greet’ events – this time at Yeomans Court in Burton Latimer. Our residents braved the weather to talk with our staff over a cup of tea. Representatives from our gas maintenance, repairs, tenancy support and financial support teams were on hand to offer advice and support.

We’d like to say a big ‘Thank You’ to our two tenant reps, Jim French and Lynne Lund, who gave their time to welcome residents and talk with them about tenant involvement.
How happy are you with our Housing Service?

At the start of the year STAR surveys were sent to a random selection of 1,700 tenants as well as all 401 of our Sheltered tenants. Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete a STAR Survey, we had a great response with 851 surveys being returned. The results are a useful way for us to find out what we’re doing well and areas we need to improve.

The Housing Service you receive

- **Overall service provided**: 86% Satisfied, 9% Dissatisfied
- **Treated fairly**: 83% Satisfied, 7% Dissatisfied
- **Being kept informed**: 78% Satisfied, 9% Dissatisfied
- **Listen to views and act upon them**: 69% Satisfied, 14% Dissatisfied

**Your neighbourhood**

- **84%** of tenants agreed that staff are friendly and approachable
- **80%** of tenants felt that we provide an effective and efficient service

**Problems in neighbourhood**

Tenants were asked to select which issues affect their area. Here are the top three:

1. **Car parking**
2. **Rubbish or litter**
3. **Dog fouling / mess**

**Neighbourhood as a place to live**: 87% Satisfied, 9% Dissatisfied

**81%** are satisfied with overall appearance of their neighbourhood

**74%** are satisfied with overall estate services provided by the Council

If you are interested in the results you can view them online at [www.kettering.gov.uk/housingsurvey](http://www.kettering.gov.uk/housingsurvey) or you can come along to the Tenants Forum on 14th July where a presentation of the findings will be given.
As part of the STAR Survey, everyone who responded had the chance to win £200-worth of shopping vouchers in a prize draw.

Our lucky winner was Albert Brown from Kettering, pictured with his son Nick. He said: “When I was told about the prize I was over the moon, absolutely delighted.”

Albert, 83, plans to use the vouchers to put towards a trip to Australia to visit a friend – a friendship that has lasted 74 years.

He added: “Me and my late wife both used to say that the home the Council gave us was better than anything we could have bought. I’ve always found the service we’ve been given to be excellent.”
MAINTAINING YOUR HOME
You must take reasonable care of your home and must report any repairs to us as soon as you notice them.
However, we know it can be confusing as to who is responsible for what, so here’s our handy guide to looking after your home:

1. What am I responsible for?
As a Council tenant, you’re responsible for decorating your home, reporting repairs and completing minor repairs such as bleeding your radiators and repairing any accidental minor damage. You usually don’t need our permission to do this.

2. Who is responsible for maintaining any alterations I’ve made?
You are initially. If the work has all the necessary permissions, the Council will take responsibility for it after 12 months.

3. Solid Fuel Appliances
We will not provide permission for installation of wood burners, stoves or any other heating appliance with an open flame within our properties.

Any customer who installs one of these without permission will be asked to remove it immediately and return the property to its original state.

4. Gas Servicing
We have a legal duty to service all gas heating appliances annually. You must allow us access to do this.

5. When should I ask permission?
Whether it’s a minor improvement such as getting a garden shed or a major improvement such as re-designing your kitchen, you must always contact the Council **before** you start the work.

Never start the work until you have received written permission from your Neighbourhood Manager **before** you start planning any work.

6. What about flooring?
If you want to use anything other than carpet on your floors, please discuss this with us first. This is because should we need to gain under-floor access to complete a repair we may need to remove this flooring, which could be expensive for you if there is any damage.

7. Reporting Repairs
Please check if a repair is your responsibility before you report it. Full details can be found in your Tenants’ Handbook.

Report any repairs or alterations to Customer Services on 01536 410 333 or at housing@kettering.gov.uk

You must have written permission from your Neighbourhood Manager **before** you make any alterations to your home.
Do you have a repair that is your responsibility, but you don’t know where to start? Care & Repair Northamptonshire can help. They provide a range of practical handyman services to keep tenants’ homes warm, safe and secure. Subsidised rates are available for those who are older, vulnerable or on means tested benefits.

Call **01604 782 250** for a **FREE** quote, or email **office@careandrepairnorthamptonshire.org.uk**

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**LIVING IN YOUR HOME**

- **Report repairs in a timely manner**
- **Don’t make alterations without speaking to us first**
- **Don’t cause nuisance to your neighbours with loud music or any other form of anti-social behaviour. It is forbidden to use or deal illegal substance in our properties**
- **You must allow access for essential maintenance (such as gas inspections) and visits by Neighbourhood Managers**
- **It is your responsibility to repair or renew broken fences and windows**
- **Don’t park vehicles in non-designated areas**
- **Ask for our permission before running a business from your home**
- **Keep your garden tidy and free of rubbish. Trees and hedges must be kept trimmed**

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A sting in the tail!? With the onset of warmer weather, you can find our guide to bees & wasps at **www.kettering.gov.uk/bees**
Kettering is set to gain 72 new affordable homes thanks to a partnership between house builder Westleigh, Waterloo Housing Group and Kettering Borough Council.

The £8.3 million scheme on Laburnum Crescent will be made up of one bedroom flats, one and three bedroom bungalows and two, three and four bedroom houses. Once constructed, the majority of the properties will be owned by Waterloo Housing Group and will be let for affordable rent, and the remaining five properties will be owned by Kettering Borough Council.

Once we take handover of our five properties they will become part of our council housing portfolio and managed alongside our existing stock. First completions on the old Avondale School site are expected towards the end of 2016/17. Shared ownership is being offered by Waterloo on 16 of the properties, which allows you to buy a share of your home and pay rent on the remaining share. It’s designed to help house buyers who would not be able to buy a property outright and need a little help to get on the route to home ownership.

“We’re delighted to have genuinely affordable homes being built within our borough. This scheme will provide the first new build council homes in a generation”.

John Conway, Head of Housing
Putting RENT first

Make paying rent your priority!

If you are worried about paying your rent, not sure about what you should be paying each week, or want to talk to someone about your rent account, we can help!

Pop into one of our Customer Service Centres or call the Housing Income Team on 01536 410 333.

New innovative rain garden

A rain garden has been built on a patch of grass in Northumberland Road that had previously been used as an improvised car park. We've developed a permanent parking site for 8 cars, while improving the look of the area. The eco-friendly garden on Northumberland Road helps prevent flooding and nourishes nearby plants.

Local tenants Christine and Penny, said:

“The works are a fantastic improvement and the car park has made a huge difference. It's something different and we feel privileged to be the first in the Borough to have a rain garden - we’re over the moon!”

Using new legal powers to improve where you live

The Council is using new legal powers designed to improve the environment for tenants and leaseholders.

Under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, designated Council Officers are now able to issue Community Protection Warnings (CPWs).

The warnings can stop a resident from doing something (such as allowing a dog to foul in communal areas) or require them to take action (such as tidying up a garden).

They can also be used to make a tenant take reasonable steps to achieve specified results (e.g. by reducing noise levels).

Last year, your Neighbourhood Managers issued 14 CPWs - only half of which progressed to Community Protection Notices. Three Notices were then breached, resulting in Fixed Penalty Notices and £100 fines each. Further failures to comply can result in a Magistrates’ Court prosecution, where fines can be a maximum of £2,500.

We will continue to effectively use these powers in conjunction with the Police.

CPWs in action: Take a look at these before and after photos. What a difference!
Entertaining yourself and the family doesn’t have to be expensive this summer. Here are some fun, free activities to put in your diary for exciting days out!

Coming Soon
Kettering by the Sea
at Kettering Market Place
21 July–13 August

Featuring:
West Lodge Farm
Splash Fountains
Big Screen
London Science Museum

Beach
open 10am–4pm Monday - Saturday
Pantomimes
Beach Volleyball

See you there!

Keep up to date with the latest events at /ThisisKettering
FREE PARKING* All day on Friday 29 July Friday 5 August Friday 12 August *In all Council owned car parks

Summer Activities in your area

Bring along your chairs, a picnic and enjoy great music in the park. All concerts start at 3pm!

KBC reserve the right to alter or amend any given dates.

For further information please contact Kettering Borough Council on 01536 410 333.

If weather is poor, concerts will be held at All Saints Church.

All monies raised at the events will be donated to Cransley Hospice.

Desborough Carnival
Saturday 25 June
The Desborough Carnival promises plenty of fun and entertainment for the whole family, starting at 2.30pm making its way around the town. There is also entertainment in the Dunkirk Avenue Recreation Ground including a fairground and a stall with all money raised going to charities in the town.

Rothwell Carnival
Saturday 9 July
Starting at 1:45pm Rothwell Carnival makes its way through the town with attractions and a family fun day at Rothwell Manor Park.

Kettering Carnival
Saturday 20 August
The Carnival will make its way towards Montagu Street, London Road, Bowling Green Road and through the town centre before heading to Rockingham Road Pleasure Park. At the Park there will be a variety of attractions for all the family to enjoy.

Super Heroes and Heroines Family Fun Day
Alfred East Art Gallery & Manor House Gardens
Wednesday 3rd August, 1pm – 3.30pm FREE
Inspired by the Gallery’s Comic exhibition ‘COMICS UNSTRIPPED’, we invite you to have some fun in the park dressed as your favourite super hero or heroine! Come along to take part in craft activities, trails, face painting and lots more.

Bands in the Park
SUMMER 2016!
ROCKINGHAM ROAD PLEASURE PARK

Bring along your chairs, a picnic and enjoy great music in the park. All concerts start at 3pm!

- Sunday 12 June
  New Priorities
- Sunday 19 June
  Sonny and the Honey Dippers
- Sunday 26 June
  Rushden Mission Band
- Sunday 10 July
  Dave Johnson Band
- Sunday 17 July
  KBA Steel Band
- Sunday 24 July
  Corby Silver Band
- Sunday 14 August
  Kettering Silver Band
- Sunday 4 September
  Gretton Silver Band
- Sunday 11 September
  Kettering Salvation Army

KBC reserve the right to alter or amend any given dates.

For further information please contact Kettering Borough Council on 01536 410 333.

If weather is poor, concerts will be held at All Saints Church.

All monies raised at the events will be donated to Cransley Hospice.
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

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

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

Support Services

- **Accommodation Concern**
  01536 416 560
  www.accommodationconcern.co.uk
- **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**
  0844 855 2122
- **Welfare Reform**
  www.kettering.gov.uk/welfarereform

Utilities

- **National Grid** – report gas leaks or for general gas information
  0800 111 999
- **Anglian Water**
  08457 145 145

If you are interested in supporting your community by joining Northamptonshire Street Watch, please visit www.northants.police.uk/streetwatch

Visit Us

Visit Us

Kettering Borough Council

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