

tlc

Tenants' and leaseholders'
community magazine



NORWICH
City Council

Summer 2022

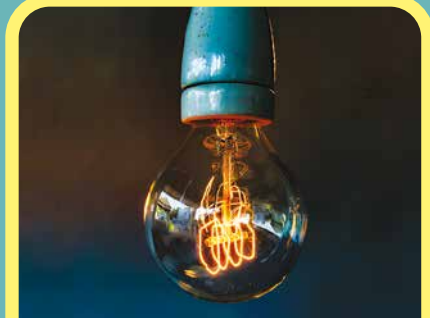
Tenant
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What would you like to read in TLC?

This magazine is all about tenants, leaseholders and the housing services you're at the heart of.

If you have an idea for a story or want to let us know your views on the magazine, we'd love to hear from you!

Send your comments to

**communications@
norwich.gov.uk**



If you would like this information in another language or format such as large print, CD or Braille please visit www.norwich.gov.uk/Intran or call 0344 980 3333.

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Norwich City Council



Introduction from Councillor Gail Harris

Welcome to the summer edition of **tlc** magazine

Deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing

I'd like to begin with a thank you to residents and colleagues across the council for the way you have come together to support the efforts to welcome people fleeing the crisis in Ukraine. You can find out more on page four, alongside an update on the local elections held recently in the city.

The past two years have demonstrated the role the local community plays in all of our lives. Looking out for our neighbours is something we can build on as we move out of the pandemic, and I am really impressed with the impact Community Connectors, introduced on page five, are having across the city.

As you know, we've recently made changes to the way we manage our properties and their maintenance. You can find out more about how this

change in approach is going and what it looks like now on pages six and seven.

I'm sure we're all looking forward to spending more time outdoors over the summer months, here's hoping the weather is kind! We have condensed some top tips for making the most of the months ahead, whether that's in the garden or at one of our glorious parks. All the details are on page eight.

I was so pleased to see people enjoying jubilee celebrations around the city. As always, we'd love to hear from you about anything that went well in your neighbourhoods. On the topic of hearing from you, we have also recommissioned a quarterly survey to gain feedback on how the housing service is performing. We are committed to improving our

service to meet changing needs and expectations, so please do take part if you are contacted. More on tenant voices can be found on page nine.

Financial pressures are at the forefront of most people's mind as we all try to adjust to rising living costs. There is no shame in asking for help and advice if you are struggling. We have collated information about some of the best free support services on page 10.

Finally, I am pleased to say that it is now easier than ever to make suggestions for estate improvements, an area close to my heart. As residents, we know our neighbourhoods best, so who better to flag where things can be made better? Find out more about this on page 11.

Have a lovely summer.



We stand with Ukraine



The city council is working with colleagues and communities to welcome people to Norwich who are fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

The spirit and generosity that individuals, organisations, community groups and businesses have shown by

offering a range of help, including donating money, provisions and services, providing accommodation and helping refugees arrive and settle in, has been remarkable.

If you have a secure tenancy and would like to apply to host (also known as 'sponsoring') a

guest from Ukraine, you do not need specific permission but are welcome to discuss it with a housing officer.

To find out more about how you can donate, other action you can take or for advice and support, visit www.norwich.gov.uk/Ukraine

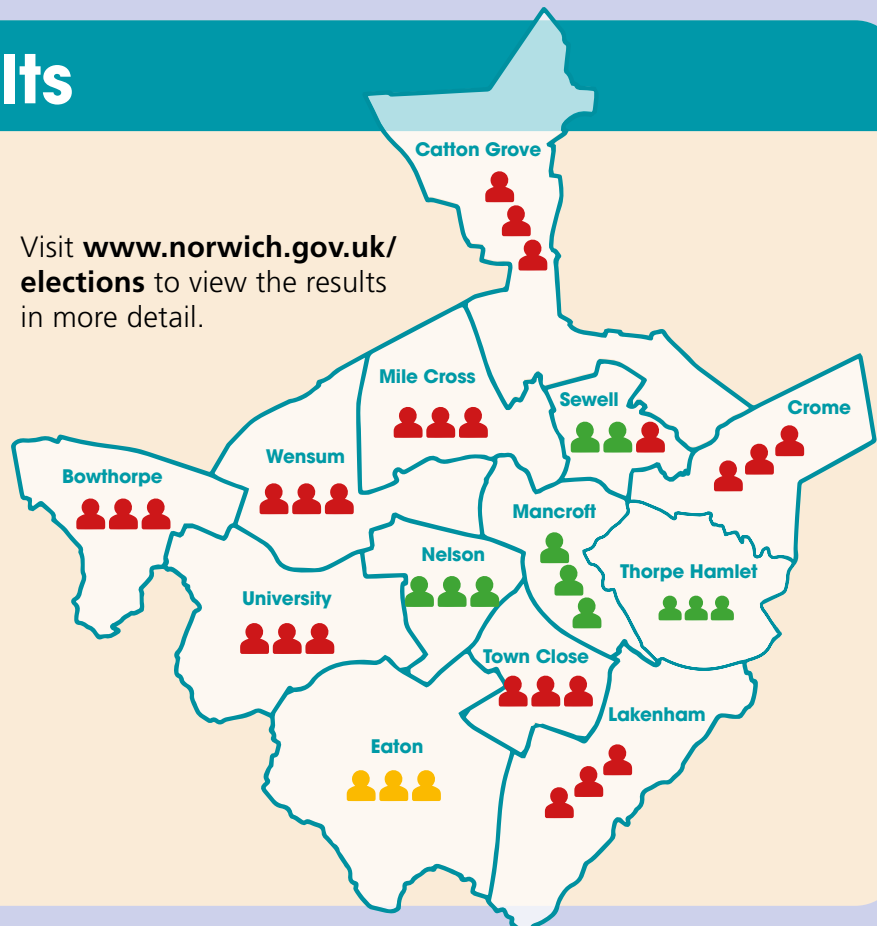


Election results

Thanks to everyone that voted in our local election in May. Overall turnout across the city was 36.4% (this includes person and postal votes).

Following the election, Labour remains the party in power at Norwich City Council, having the majority of the council's 39 seats. The only political change was in Sewell ward where the Green Party gained a seat from Labour. This means the overall political composition of Norwich City Council after the vote is Labour (25 councillors), Green Party (11) and Liberal Democrats (3).

Visit www.norwich.gov.uk/elections to view the results in more detail.



Meet the community connectors

A friendly team of Community Connectors from social enterprise, The Shoebox, is having conversations with local residents in neighbourhoods across Norwich to discover what matters to them, what they are passionate about and what they would like to do with others to help them flourish in community life.

The conversations take place in a range of settings such as cafes, outside local schools, community events, door knocking and at The Shoebox



Making connections at community events

Community Hub on Castle Meadow. You may have even had a chat with the Connectors already!

Feedback from the conversations is shared with the community, local forums and colleagues.

Connectors Saskia and Chloe have been out in the Heathgate, Mousehold and Cowgate areas meeting and talking to local people and finding out what is going on in the community. For both of them, it has changed the way they see how communities are connected through many different groups and personal associations, weaving a complex web across Norwich.

“...it has transformed the way I see where I live”

Chloe commented, “There are so many hidden connections within Norwich and the different things people are involved in – it has transformed the way I see where I live. There is so much going on and a real sense of community. There has been a lot of richness that has been discovered in the areas we have been working in.”



Saskia planting daffodils in the Mousehold area

The two connectors have been attending local community events, supporting gardening workshops and sessions at community centres. They have also visited businesses and allotments to understand what people are interested in and how they can get more involved.

Chloe continues: “As well as plugging into what is already happening, there have been opportunities to connect with members of the public who are more isolated and not aware of the different groups in their local area. It has been encouraging to follow the journey of residents who previously were not involved in their communities and now feel more integrated because of the work of the connectors.”

If you'd like to find out more or get involved, visit www.theshoebox.org.uk

A new chapter for property services

With 14,500 properties, we have more council housing than any district authority; something we're incredibly proud of.

In April this year, the way we manage our properties, including housing, operational, community, cultural and commercial buildings, was brought back under direct council control so that we can more closely manage the needs of the properties we are responsible for.

What are property services responsible for?

- Day to day repairs and maintenance – including kitchen and bathroom upgrades
- Compliance – making sure properties meet legal health and safety standards
- Building maintenance contracts

- Commercial and investment property
- Strategic asset management
- Housing development – planning for future housing need
- Building surveying and asset reviews

What are the priorities?

- Reviewing all our housing properties to ensure we have a full understanding of their condition.
- Planning a programme of improvements to existing stock to make sure our homes meet the needs of residents.
- Rolling out a retrofitting program to improve the environmental performance of our stock.

- Establishing new procedures to ensure compliance with emerging building safety legislation and providing assurance around compliance monitoring.
- Developing an investment strategy – to identify both existing housing stock in need of upgrading and housing areas that need regenerating, in order to meet the current and future needs of tenants.
- Introducing a new process to inform decisions on the retention, disposal or redevelopment of existing homes and housing areas.
- Making sure we have a pipeline of sites which can facilitate delivery of new housing provision to meet the needs of the city.



All hands on deck

To help us catch up with any outstanding repairs, we are also working with local contractors Fosters and Breyer who may be in touch with you directly if you are waiting for a repair.



Hello from NCSL

Hi! I'm Hannah Leys, managing director of Norwich City Services Ltd (NCSL), the council owned company responsible for carrying out repairs and maintenance in council homes since April 2022.



Hannah Leys,
Managing Director

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I joined NCSL in January 2021 and have 20 years of experience in the public and private sector.

I am passionate about making a positive difference and implementing change both internally for the company and externally for customers.

A work-life balance is important for everyone, and I try and spend as much time with my young family as I can – cycling is our latest family activity which we are all enjoying.

What does NCSL's workforce look like?

We locally employ over 300 people with plans of continuous growth, aligned with high aspirations of excellent service delivery.

Environmental roles include grounds maintenance, tree maintenance, cleansing services, graffiti and fly tipping removal

and cleaning services.

In building repairs and maintenance we have a variety of trade roles including electricians, plumbers, plasterers, roofers, painters, and multi-trade operatives with teams working across repairs and empty properties.

What are NCSL's priorities?

One of our most significant priorities is to deliver quality services efficiently and effectively that deliver a positive customer experience.

For this coming year, the mobilisation of the building maintenance service is key for us.

Our vision is to provide a service which will complete repairs on our first visit, providing a positive experience of the services provided.

We are grateful for any feedback as this allows us to recognise great work

and explore ways of improving our service so please do keep in touch.

What can I expect from NCSL when you visit my home?

When we visit your home, our teams will be in NCSL uniform and carry ID cards. You can expect our employees to be courteous, polite and professional.

We also work with subcontractors for some elements of our work, and they may contact you to arrange a visit. If you ever want to verify a contractor, you can call us on 01603 987770.



Summer in the city

As we enter the summer months thoughts move to making the most of the great outdoors.

Green fingers

It's the time of year we all notice what we love, and perhaps don't love, about our gardens – if we're lucky enough to have one.

If your garden needs some love, there are a number of tools and safety equipment available to borrow through our community sharing platform, Lumi. Buckets, kneeling pads, spades, shears and much more are ready and waiting at locations around the city. Visit lumi.org.uk to find out more.

Pick a park

There are enough parks and open spaces in Norwich to keep you going all summer long.

Whether it's skateboarding at Marlpit Lane, tennis at Lakenham Rec or pitch and putt on Mousehold Heath, there's no excuse to be bored this summer!

Pop your postcode in **MyNorwich** on the council's website to see the parks nearest to you.

Planning a barbecue?

If you haven't used your barbecue since last year, make sure it's still in good working order before you use it this year.

Make sure the barbecue is placed outside on a flat site away from buildings, trees or shrubs.

Refresh yourself with general food safety advice – keep raw and cooked meats separate and keep uncooked meat, fish and vegetables separate from each other when preparing. More food safety advice is available at www.norwich.gov.uk/FoodSafetyTips

Tell your neighbours – they may want to get any washing in!

If you're having a gathering, it's always polite to let your neighbours know and please be considerate about noise.



Your voice matters

We are always keen to hear what you are doing in your neighbourhoods and how you feel about the housing service.

Share your royal celebrations

In early June, communities around the country were busy marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. How fantastic is the below regal post box topper created by local resident Emma Bettis, spotted on Larkman Lane?

We'd love to share more community stories in issues of *t/c*. Please share any photos and details about your celebrations by emailing communications@norwich.gov.uk

Say thank you to a community hero

Do you know someone who is making a difference in your community? Why not nominate them for a national ARCH Community Champion Award to recognise their dedication, and inspires others?

ARCH is the Association of Retained Council Housing. To request an entry form please email rose.buckle@housemark.co.uk The deadline for entries is Friday 12 August. The announcement of this year's winners and the presentations, will take place during the conference on Thursday 15 September.

In 2022 there will be two ARCH Community Champion Awards, one of which will be specifically for someone aged under 25. Nominees don't have to be part of a formal panel, group, committee or forum to be successful. They could be a tenant, a member of a tenant's household, a community group or anyone contributing to an area with social housing.

As well as celebrating the contributions of nominees, this award helps motivate others to get involved in helping their community.

Help us improve

It is important that the council understands how you feel about the housing service. We conduct an independent company, Viewpoint, to commission a quarterly satisfaction survey.

If you get a phone call from Viewpoint, please do answer their questions – your feedback helps us make improvements to the services we provide.

Thanks to everyone who has taken part so far. If you do not wish to be contacted for this survey, you can opt out at www.norwich.gov.uk/StarSurvey



Help with energy bills

The government announced a rebate to help people with rising energy costs. This means that most households in Norwich (providing they are in council tax bands A-D) are eligible for a £150 payment, which you won't have to pay back.

This payment should be paid directly into bank accounts. At the time of writing, we had made these payments to more than 30,000 people. If we have correct bank details for you (and if you pay council tax by direct debit, we should do), you will have likely received this already. If you pay by Direct Debit and haven't received

the £150 payment by the end of June, we will get in touch with you to arrange payment.

If we do not have bank details for you – for example you do not pay by Direct Debit – we will be writing to you and in that letter we will explain how you can supply them. Please wait for this letter, because it will contain a secure access key code, so you can give your bank details to us in a safe and secure way.

We know this payment is important to many people and are working to get it to you as quickly as possible.



More information can be found at www.norwich.gov.uk/EnergyBillsRebate

Budgeting support

If, like many people, you're struggling to make ends meet, don't forget all council tenants have access to free, specialist budgeting and money advice.

There's more than one way to get in touch:

- Complete a referral form at www.norwich.gov.uk/BudgetingAndMoneyAdvice
- Email BudgetingAndMoneyAdvice@norwich.gov.uk
- Call **0344 980 3333**



Other resources you may find useful:

New-U

A unique boutique style shop in central Norwich offering quality pre-loved clothing and accessories for the whole family.

New-U is a registered charity, with three aims at its heart: experience, swap, and borrow.

If you're a young person seeking smart clothing for an interview, they may be able to lend you the clothes that you need.

Level 2, Castle Quarter
new-ultd.co.uk

Anguish's Educational Foundation (part of Norwich Charitable Trusts)

Provides grants as a contribution towards school uniform and residential school trips.

www.NorwichCharitableTrusts.org.uk

Turn 2 Us

Check if you are eligible for a grant given as money, products or services.

www.Turn2Us.org.uk
or call 0808 802 2000

Entitled To

Leading provider of online benefits calculators.
www.EntitledTo.co.uk

Change at your fingertips

It's now easier than ever to make suggestions to improve the area you live in.

Estate improvements can cover anything from introducing new communal washing areas and resurfacing car parks, to replacing benches and upgrading external lighting.

We're also open to creative ideas such as turning an unused space into a communal garden – just let us know how it could help you and your neighbours enjoy your homes more or feel safer.

Use our new online form to make your suggestion today: www.norwich.gov.uk/EstateImprovements

While you're on our website, don't forget to sign up to **My Account**, if you haven't already done so. It's the best way to do all your council business – from council tax and benefits to repairs and rent balances – all in one place. To access all areas, including tenancy matters, you'll need your unique person reference, a four digit number found on your latest rent statement.



Information for leaseholders

- The council's insurance provider has changed from Ocaso to Avid.

We arrange a buildings insurance policy that covers your property. The policy does not include cover for the contents of your property. You need to make your own arrangements to cover these.

To make a claim for damage to your buildings you should contact Avid directly by calling 01204 860427 and quoting policy reference 2022CP000279. The insurers will support you through the process of making your claim.

- All leaseholders are also invited to attend an NLA (Norwich Leaseholders Association) Open Meeting, taking place from 7:30 to 9pm on Wednesday 20 July at the Chapelfield Methodist Church Hall. The meeting is free to attend and should include a guest speaker.

The NLA is an organisation, run by volunteers to support fellow leaseholders regarding any issues relating to their properties. Previous topics covered include service charges, insurance issues, safety testing, door access controls, electricity charges and communications with the council.

Contacting Norwich City Council

ONLINE You can report repairs, access council services and make online payments.

www.norwich.gov.uk

Register for 'My Account' to check your rent and council tax balance. Take a look at 'My Norwich' to see what services are available in your area.

POST Norwich City Council,
City Hall, Norwich NR2 1NH.

Out of hours emergencies:
01603 412180.

Free phone payment hotline:
0800 021 7784 (a 24/7 service).

Money advisers:
0344 980 3333 or email
budgetingandmoneyadvice@norwich.gov.uk

Text relay users only:
18001 01344 980 3333
(9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday).

Leaseholders:
For help and advice on your rights and responsibilities, contact the home ownership team on 0344 980 3333 or at homeownership@norwich.gov.uk

Report repairs online

A chance to win **£50!!**

*T&Cs apply

To report non-urgent repairs (and for a chance to win £50):

- **Log in to 'My Account'**
- Sign up for '**Housing Online**' to report and book your repair, where you can also manage other elements of your tenancy, including your rent account.

You will need to set up two separate log-ins for both **My Account** and **Housing Online** if you've not logged in before. After you have signed up, you'll only need to sign into My Account to access Housing Online features.

When signing up for the first time, you will need your unique person reference, which can be found on your recent rent notification.

Available 24/7 and works on PCs, tablets and smartphones



Loss of gas or electricity?

If you have lost your gas or electricity supply you should contact your energy supplier directly in the first instance.

Need space for your car?



Are you confident that you can secure a parking space every time you drive to work? Would you like secure off-street parking at home? Why not rent a garage or parking bay from Norwich City Council? Garages are located throughout the city and available to rent whether you live within the city boundary or not.

For more information, go to www.norwich.gov.uk/garages