

# t1c

Tenants' and leaseholders' community magazine



Autumn/Winter 2022

Tenant approved



**Giving back to the community**  
Page 6

**Have your say on tenant involvement** Page 5

**Renewable energy in council homes** Page 9

**LOVE NORWICH**  
PLAY YOUR PART

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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](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Intran) or call 0344 980 3333.

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# Introduction from Councillor Gail Harris

Welcome to the autumn/winter edition of TLC magazine

Deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing

It has been another busy year for the housing service and wider council. We've achieved a lot and are constantly planning ahead for the future.

An example of this is explained on page four which covers the annual service charge changes which apply to some of our residents. I am acutely aware that these increases come at a difficult time, as we all try to adjust to the cost of living crisis. Rising prices affect the costs incurred by the council too, and we have a responsibility to manage budgets carefully. Please do make use of the free budgeting and money advice available to our tenants.

Looking ahead, we are keen to make sure our residents feel understood, communicated with and able to provide feedback on the housing service. We have a longstanding commitment to engaging with you and want to check our overall approach

is working. This includes considering the value of all methods including this magazine, so please do take the short survey detailed on page five.

I am passionate about making improvements to our housing estates, which we do all year round. This work has received a further boost this year thanks to the help of the Community Payback scheme which is run by the probation service and sees low-risk ex-offenders fulfilling work in the community as part of their rehabilitation. Find out more on page six.

We were all saddened to hear of the death of Her Majesty the Queen in September. Her historic reign touched us all throughout our lives, and I am pleased that a member of our

Tenant Involvement Panel was happy to share her personal feelings at this time, which you can read on page eight.

I was delighted to visit Barnards Yard recently to see the incredible new water pump which is now providing renewable energy to the 84 homes there. We are committed to investing in our social housing, and this innovative project is an excellent demonstration of this. More details on page nine.

You'll also find updates on our progress to meet requirements of the new Social Housing Regulation Bill, our response to changing fire safety legislation and information on our new fly-tipping initiative throughout the magazine.



Councillor Harris meets Neil Watts, major works manager, at Barnards Yard

# Annual changes to weekly service charges

If you live in a flat or sheltered housing property, the amount you pay for some service charges changed from Monday 3 October.

These charges include caretaking, district heating, TV aerial maintenance and enhanced services in sheltered housing schemes.

Service charges are updated every October to make sure we recover the actual costs for services during the previous financial year and anticipate any changes for the coming year.

Every year, we carefully review the cost of our service charges and try to avoid high increases. This year's changes are small but given the increasing cost of living, some tenants may need additional support.

If you pay by Direct Debit, you do not need to do anything now as we will send you a letter outlining your new payments shortly.

If you receive Housing Benefit we will tell the relevant agency and the amount you receive will be updated.

If you receive the Universal Credit housing element you must inform the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) by updating your rent and service charges through your online journal or telling your work coach.

## Concerned about budgeting?

You may be facing difficult financial choices at the moment, and our expert budgeting and money advice team can help, from getting the most from your budget to in-depth debt advice.

Last year the team helped nearly 500 households save an average of over £1,100 each by either applying for grants,

referring to specific specialist support, dealing with debts or simply smarter shopping.

If you would like to talk about your rent account or wider finances, our income team is available at [housingincome@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:housingincome@norwich.gov.uk) or online at [www.norwich.gov.uk/MoneyAdvice](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/MoneyAdvice)

For a round up of cost of living advice, visit [www.norwich.gov.uk/CostOfLiving](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/CostOfLiving)



# What we can do to involve you

We're reviewing the ways we involve residents and looking to see if there are new and different opportunities we can provide.

Do you feel like you know what's going on within the housing service? Do you feel able to tell us your views and confident that we'll listen?

There are many different ways you can be involved

or give feedback and we'd like to know how you'd prefer to do this – if at all!

What would feel most appealing to you about keeping in touch with the council and having your say on the housing service?

Online surveys?

Virtual meetings?

Family friendly events?

Meetings in the community?

Reading this magazine?

Please complete a survey to tell us what you think at [www.norwich.gov.uk/TenantInvolvement](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/TenantInvolvement)

# How are we doing?

We monitor the performance of the housing service by asking residents to take part in our STAR satisfaction survey and measuring key performance indicators. Here are the latest quarterly results as at June 2022:

- Above or on target
- Close to target
- Below target

**80%**

of tenants are satisfied with the service we provide

**74%**

of households who asked for help were prevented from becoming homeless

**35**

days is the average time it took to relet empty properties

**73%**

of tenants are satisfied with the quality of their home

**84%**

of tenants feel their home is safe and secure

**62%**

of tenants find the housing service is easy to deal with

**91.67%**

of rent was collected (including arrears brought forward)

**0%**

of reviewed homeless decisions were overturned



Visit [www.norwich.gov.uk/HousingPerformance](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/HousingPerformance) for more information.

# Giving back to the community

Housing estates in Norwich have been benefitting from improvements completed by people giving back to the community, thanks to partnership work between the city council and the probation service.

Community Payback is a scheme which allows low-risk offenders to make amends for their crimes by carrying out unpaid work on local projects such as re-decorating community centres, tidying public spaces and removing litter in their communities.

The scheme is a part of a Community Order sentence which is passed by Crown and Magistrates Court in England and Wales. It can also form part of a Suspended Sentence Order. Offenders can be sentenced to between 40 and 300 hours of unpaid work in the community and must carry this out in their spare time.

Northfields resident, Terry, with housing team leader, Jamie and Community Payback supervisor, Paul, discuss plans for the estate.

Here's what one of the members of the scheme had to say about it:

"I am happy to be resolving problems rather than making problems for the community. Everyone makes mistakes and it is important to learn from them.

"I'm a single father and hope this experience will help my job search. I want to set an example to my son.

"This is good experience to go into a trade that I wouldn't have had previously.

"My supervisor treats us with respect and supports us as workers getting the job done."

Areas that have already benefitted from the work done through Community Payback include: Northfields Brooke Place and Regina Road.

Feedback from residents has also been positive:

"Please pass on a huge thank you to the probation team for the works that they are undertaking on the gardens. The team of workers are gentle, friendly and efficient. They've really improved the neighbourhood and they are doing a wonderful job."

If your area is identified for work from a Community Payback team, we will write to you to let you know first.

"...They've really improved the neighbourhood and they are doing a wonderful job."

Northfields resident, Terry, with housing team leader, Jamie and Community Payback supervisor, Paul, discuss plans for the estate.



# Fulfilling our duties



The Social Housing Regulation Bill is currently going through Parliament and is expected to become law. The Bill proposes a new approach to regulating

social landlords like us, on issues such as safety, transparency and tenant engagement, and aims to ensure we are held to account

for our performance. Here's how we are getting on with our preparations to meet the requirements as soon as the Bill becomes law:

Key requirement	Our progress
To make sure social housing is safe	<p>Making sure all homes have smoke and carbon monoxide alarms</p> <p>Working closely with the Regulator of Social Housing to improve safety compliance – find out more: <a href="http://www.norwich.gov.uk/housingcompliance">www.norwich.gov.uk/housingcompliance</a></p>
To appoint a health and safety lead to monitor safety compliance	Recruiting to this new role
To make sure we have good quality, decent homes and neighbourhoods	<p>Rolling out a programme of stock condition surveys</p> <p>Continuing to invest in energy homes, such as the innovative heating system at Barnards Yard (page nine)</p>
To make it easier to know how landlords are performing	Making changes to the data we collect and satisfaction surveys so that we can report on the new set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures – please take part in any satisfaction survey you are invited to complete
To empower tenants to actively engage with holding landlords to account	Developing a new tenant engagement strategy – find out more on page 5 and take part in the survey about how you would like to be involved
To ensure swift and effective complaint resolution	<p>New complaints policy launched</p> <p>Completed a self-assessment against the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code</p> <p>Introducing a new satisfaction survey for complaint handling</p>

## The government also plan to introduce:

- A new advisory panel which will include social housing tenants
- The return of landlord inspections and improvement plans for landlords failing to meet standards
- New electrical safety standards

Keep up to date at [www.norwich.gov.uk/HousingPerformance](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/HousingPerformance)

# Remembering Her Majesty The Queen

Everyone at Norwich City Council was saddened to hear of the passing of Her Majesty the Queen.

Hundreds of people have visited City Hall to sign the Book of Condolence and leave flowers to pay their respects.



The chief executive and Sheriff pay their respects



Floral tributes outside City Hall

Cym Cant, a member of our Tenant Involvement Panel pays tribute:

*Her Majesty the Queen meant so much to me. My father was in the Army and unfortunately died in Singapore during the war. My mother and I were evacuated to England in 1941 until 1945 when we went back. Singapore was a colony at the time with deep roots to Britain and there was a lot of love and respect for the Queen, the Royal Family and Winston Churchill.*

*I was in Singapore when the Queen had her coronation. There was no television those days but we saw it all on film. It was magical seeing her in her golden coach, with all the soldiers and bands, and the people lining the routes – I was aged 12 at the time.*

*The Queen visited "Her Majesty's Stationery Office"*

*in Norwich as we celebrated its bicentenary and I was able to see her very close by as she walked past. I have seen the Queen on other occasions too as one of the crowd of onlookers when she has visited Norwich and I'm so pleased that I've had that privilege.*

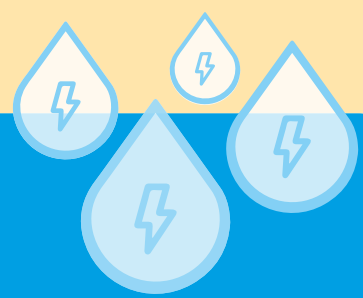
*The death of our Queen has been emotionally draining. I've attended a church service in memory of her and watched many of the television programmes about her since; from Balmoral, Holyrood and now Westminster, and seen the many people paying tribute to her. My heart is with them. I've watched untold films of her early life and just love them. She was such a great and gracious lady, she gave her all and was loved worldwide. I pray that King Charles III will make his mother, the Queen, proud of him as he continues in his reign.*



A Book of Condolence at City Hall



# Renewable energy flowing into council homes



An innovative heating system using water from the River Wensum has recently been installed at Barnards Yard and is set to achieve a major reduction in carbon emissions.

The new system is providing heating and hot water to 85 homes, replacing the old system which used natural gas, a carbon generating fossil fuel.

**The new system emits approximately 270 tonnes less carbon dioxide in the atmosphere each year – the equivalent absorption of almost 1,300 fully grown trees.**

**The pump itself is powered by renewable electricity, so no particulates will be created by combustion on site.**

To make the system work, water is taken from the Wensum and pumped into a new plant room where a small amount of heat is taken from it before it is returned to the river.

As part of the work to build the new plant room, the car park has been transformed to look much smarter with a clean asphalt finish, bespoke timber sleeper bin enclosures and planters as well as refreshed pathways and stylish railings. More work is planned to enhance greenery and improve lighting.

Future benefits to residents include the introduction of specific billing for each property, meaning their bills will accurately reflect their individual energy usage, thanks to a computerised tracking system. This will replace the current communal heating charges

which means that charges are shared equally between the block, regardless of usage. Councillor Gail Harris, Norwich City Council's cabinet member with responsibility for social housing said: "I'd like to thank residents at Barnards Yard for their patience and assistance while the work to complete this installation has taken place as I know it has caused some unavoidable disruption.

"This ambitious project is an example of our ongoing commitment to investing in the city's social housing, and crucially enhancing its environmental credentials."

This scheme was awarded Non-Domestic Renewable Heat Incentive (NDRHI) funding by central government and there are substantial savings on running costs when compared to the old gas system.

There are 85 properties at Barnards Yard



The new plant room



The heat source water pump



Part of the innovative heating system



# Keeping communal areas safe for everyone

TOPIC SUGGESTED BY  
TENANT INVOLVEMENT PANEL

Living in a flat means living in a community of people with different needs, views and lifestyles.

We are responsible for making sure all fire exits and routes out of the building are kept clear at all times, which is why we do regular checks and ask for items to be moved.

all residents, including anyone with mobility issues or visual impairment. This is so important it is covered by equality laws.

As well as fire safety, communal areas need to be accessible for

Upcoming fire safety legislation asks us to provide signs in all buildings with communal areas with safety information specific to each building, so please look out for these arriving over the next few months.

We want to work with you to help keep the areas surrounding your home safe, and we will also be providing new ways to get in touch with concerns or requests about your communal area.



## Making it easier to do it online

Manage your housing application, report a repair and view your rent account through the Housing Online section of My Account.

You will need your Housing Online ID (this will be found on your most recent rent letter below your rent reference number).

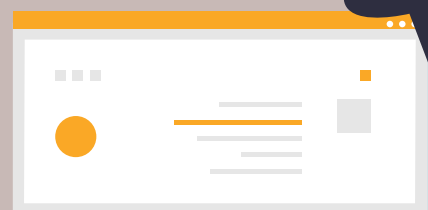
A step-by-step guide on how to access Housing Online is available at [www.norwich.gov.uk/MyAccount](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/MyAccount)

### Leasehold property repairs

It is not possible for leaseholders to create an account at this time, but you can still report repairs online through the contact us form.

them ready before you start the form. Files can be a PDF, Word or JPG file, maximum size 4MB.

In the form, select 'all other enquiries' as the enquiry type, found at the bottom of the drop-down list. You will be able to upload images of the issue, so please have



# Love Norwich – play your part

Keeping Norwich a clean and inviting place to be is one of our top priorities.

Along with our company, Norwich City Services Ltd, we are working on a programme of improvements to help keep the city clear of waste, while also cracking down on fly-tipping.

There will be more street cleaning, graffiti removal and emptying of litter bins. In council homes, we will be looking at bin stores, making changes to help everyone dispose of their waste correctly. But there are ways you can help and play your part.

Fly-tipping is a crime that impacts our communities and costs the tax payer £180,000 per year to clean up. If you'd rather see your money invested in other services, then please help us tackle fly-tipping in Norwich.

Did you know that leaving bags of rubbish or unwanted items at the following locations is fly-tipping?

- Next to street bins and recycling banks
- In communal bin areas next to bins
- Outside closed charity shops or recycling centres
- On roads, paths and in the countryside

Anyone caught fly-tipping faces a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £400 or an unlimited fine. If you see anyone fly-tipping in your area or find waste dumped where it shouldn't be, please report it to the council through our website [www.norwich.gov.uk/report](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/report)

If you pay someone else to take your waste away and they then fly-tip it, you could be fined. Please make sure anyone disposing of your unwanted

items has a Waste Carriers' Licence. Ask to see it before you agree to pay them.

## Ways to dispose of your waste

More than 80 per cent of waste that is fly-tipped in Norfolk can be taken to a recycling centre for free. There are two recycling centres which serve the city – Norwich North and Norwich South. Find more details about the centres, including what you can take along at [www.norfolk.gov.uk/RecyclingCentres](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/RecyclingCentres)

Try selling your items or giving them away on sites such as Gumtree or Freecycle. Some charities will collect larger items from your home for free.

Norwich City Council runs a paid-for bulky waste collection service. Visit [www.norwich.gov.uk/BulkyWaste](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/BulkyWaste) for more details.



# Contacting Norwich City Council

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

[www.norwich.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.norwich.gov.uk/garages)