

Housing News

The six-monthly newsletter for Epping Forest District Council tenants

Spring 2022 – ISSUE 65



Inside...

- **It's your Letters!**
– everything you ever wanted to know about paying your rent
- **Meet the Home Ownership Team**
- **What's going on in Sheltered Housing**
- **Christmas at Norway House**
- **Chris the Handyman**

and more...



Welcome

to the Spring 2022 edition of *Housing News*, with updates and useful information for all our tenants and leaseholders. Inside you'll find articles contributed by teams from across the Property & Housing Service, as well as some ways to keep busy from the Community Health & Wellbeing Team!

If you're interested in any of the issues raised, you can get in touch with the teams directly, contact details are included throughout... We hope you enjoy reading!

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With thanks from the Editor to all our contributors...

Abigail Oldham, Charlotte Wright, Chris Bullock, Denise Pegler, Eleanor Green, Jane Branch, Haydn Thorpe, Jeff Cochrane, Jordan Dapaah, Marie Thorpe, Olivia Timotheou, Rachel Smith, Rochelle Hoyte, Val Pomfrett and Wyn Marshall. And to Martin at MFP Marketing for producing this edition. Thank you all for helping to make this edition of *Housing News*! *Christina Bagan-Jones, Editor*



A Word from Wyn

Chair of the Tenants & Leaseholders Panel

These last couple of years have been trying times for everyone but through the power of the internet and the use of virtual meetings the Council has been able to stay in touch with us, their residents, and there have been regular Tenant and Leaseholder Panel (TLP) meetings, plus the introduction of focus groups and webinars. There has been a change of structure in the roles that Officers have in relation to housing issues, and the TLP have been made fully aware of these and are very supportive of the new structures and roles.

One of the biggest developments of the last couple of years is the Government publishing The Charter for Social Housing Residents (the Social Housing White Paper). There are seven elements of the White Paper but one of the main points is the need for improved relationships and working between landlords and their residents. One aspect of this is the Regulator for Social Housing setting new Tenant Satisfaction Measures, against which all landlords will be accountable. As part of this process the Regulator has been consulting with landlords and tenants on their views to what these measures should be and asking for responses. EFDC have fully engaged with their tenants in putting together their response, and they have done this through the Tenants and Leaseholders Panel and via focus groups. It is hoped that once all the responses have been formulated, these measures can be introduced next year. However, EFDC have already begun the process and are very proactive in listening to us, their tenants, and working towards a better way of getting everyone involved.

So, if you want to become involved, watch out for notices of meetings taking place and join in if you want to have your say on how EFDC interacts with its tenants.

There will be lots of new opportunities to get involved with housing plans, and issues, this year, and EFDC is always looking for new members for its groups, so if you would like to take part, email

GetInvolved@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

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About Wyn – Wyn is an EFDC tenant and has recently been elected vice-chair of the ARCH Tenants' Group (Association of Retained Council Housing) and through this, a Director of ARCH. He also sits on the Housing Ombudsman Residents Panel and is a member of the Housing Regulator's Focus Group.

Get Involved!

What does 'Resident Involvement' mean – and how you can take part

Hello Residents...

from Christina, the Estate & Land Team's Resident Involvement Officer.

2021 was a really busy year for our Team, and especially for finding new ways to meet with our residents and listen to their thoughts to help shape plans and services.

We hosted quarterly Webinars, to keep residents informed, and answered questions and comments 'live'. We invited tenants and leaseholders to join us in Focus Groups around subjects such as Repairs, Tenant Satisfaction, and new ways of



involving residents. We arranged 'Chatterbox' sessions (both in-person and online) in a number of locations, giving residents a chance to speak directly to Managers about any concerns or questions about their estate.

We continued to work with existing residents' associations, and were very pleased to see new groups formed on the Limes Farm estate and in Roydon. We loved working with residents around the District on our '**Growing Projects**' – a chance for locals to work with EFDC staff and use their gardening talents to brighten up their local areas.

One of the exciting results to come out of our Resident

Involvement Focus Group, is our forthcoming brand-new **Resident Involvement Strategy**. This document sets out a wide variety of new ways for our residents to 'Get Involved' and a draft version of will be published for your comments in the coming months...

We would love for every single one of our residents to be involved with us and help create the housing service that you want. But we know that everyone's lives are very different. Some people may have plenty of spare time, whilst others may have a busy lifestyle and wonder how they could possibly



SHELTERED HOUSING FORUM
10.30 am, 18th January 2022



Online meeting via Zoom

Your Sheltered Housing Officer will help you join the meeting on their i-pad...

...or email GetInvolved@eppingforestdc.gov.uk to join on your own device ☺

Coming soon to a sofa near you...
CHATTERBOX!
Join us for an informal chat with your Estates & Land Officer, meet your neighbours and let us know what's on your mind...
Time and date - up to you!



email GetInvolved@eppingforestdc.gov.uk for your Zoom Invite

Estates & Land presents...
RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT
Focus Group #2
22nd June 2021
11am via Zoom



find the time! Our new Strategy aims to provide opportunities for residents to **Get Involved** as little or as much as they wish, and at all levels, based on personal interest, expertise, time available and preferred communication channels.

We will be advertising lots of new ways for you take part as the year goes on, but for now, here's a short list of some opportunities you may be interested in... Email getInvolved@eppingforestdc.gov.uk if you would like to know more...

Join a focus group – help us shape plans and policies on subjects you're interested in.

Become a Resident Inspector – be our 'eyes and ears' on your estate and show us issues from a resident's perspective.

Be a Growing Champion – help us brighten up estates and improve your own wellbeing by taking part in gardening projects.

Armchair Review our draft policies and help to shape services – from the comfort of your sofa!

Get involved
Working with residents to create great places where people want to live



Epping Forest District Council

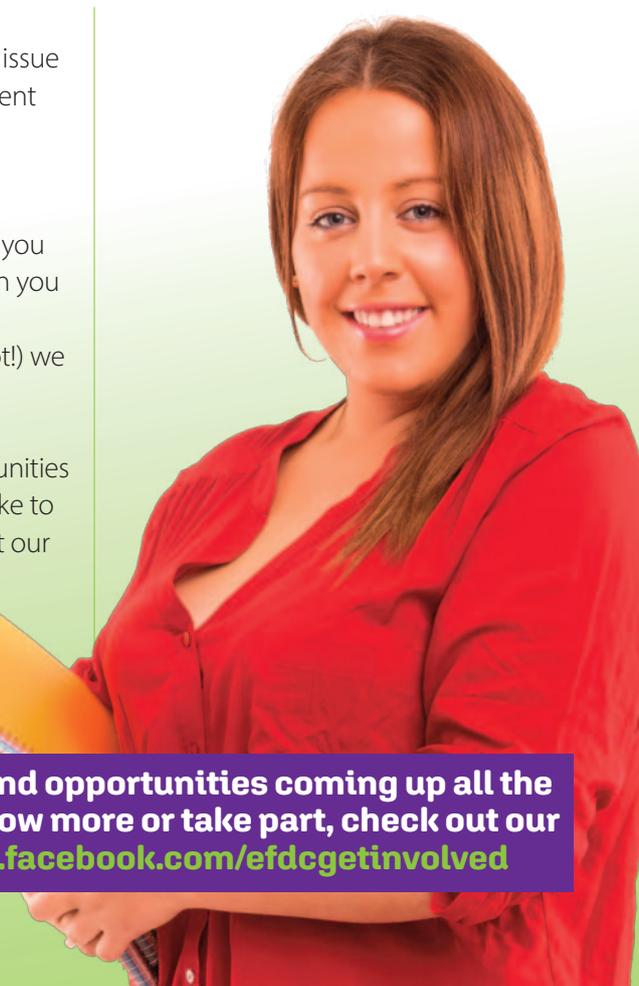
Be a Resident Writer – review communications for us before we issue to a wider audience, suggest content for our publications or even write content yourself...

Mystery Shoppers wanted! If you use Council services regularly, then you could be our 'undercover agent', reporting back on how well (or not!) we are doing...

There are new events and opportunities coming up all the time – if you'd like to know more or take part, check out our facebook page

 [efdcdgetinvolved](https://www.facebook.com/efdcdgetinvolved)

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CREATING GREAT PLACES WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE



GET INVOLVED!

**MAKE YOUR ESTATE A
WONDERFUL PLACE**

**COMMUNITY GROUPS & EVENTS
FOCUS GROUPS & WEBINARS**

**FOR ALL EFDC TENANTS &
LEASEHOLDERS**

[HTTPS://WWW.EPPINGFORESTDC.GOV.UK/TENANT-PARTICIPATION/](https://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/tenant-participation/)

[WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/EFDCGETINVOLVED/](http://www.facebook.com/efdcgetinvolved/)

'More than Bricks and Mortar' Estate Enhancement Scheme

Will you work with us to make your estate a great place where people want to live?



Last year the Council launched its **'More than Bricks and Mortar'** Estate Enhancement Scheme which specifically focuses on improving the look, feel and lived experience of our Council housing estates through minor estate enhancement projects.

Following our call for ideas last year, we are excited to be working with local residents to bring the following projects to fruition in 2022-23:

Ninefields, Waltham Abbey

- Play area for 5yrs + and a Multi-Games Area
- Signage and planting

Oakwood Hill, Loughton

- Wildflower area, tree planting, rustic play equipment for young children
- Landscaping
- Aesthetic lighting

Roundhills, Waltham Abbey

- Mixture of aesthetic and functional lighting
- Signage
- Landscaping

Romeland, Waltham Abbey

- Functional lighting
- Bin store enhancements

We will update you on the progress of these projects in the next edition of *Housing News*.

We want to hear your views about what would improve your estate (or road).

We are pleased to announce that we have reopened our **'Call for Ideas'** and would invite you to send us your ideas or aspirations for the next financial year.

Please complete our **'More than Bricks and Mortar'** online survey at: www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/8DQKSCB
OR

email your idea to mtbm@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
OR

write to us at 63 The Broadway, Loughton, Essex, IG10 3SP. Please mark your correspondence 'Call for Ideas'.

OR
speak to your Estate & Land Officer on Tel 01992 564186.

Details we need from you are:

- **Your idea**
- **The exact location,**
- **The reason the enhancement is needed**
- **An explanation of how you believe the enhancement will benefit the wider community**

By submitting your response, you give us permission to analyse and include your response in our results.



Christmas at Norway House

Did you know that the Council provides temporary accommodation for homeless families, at its Norway House hostel in North Weald? Families stay here while the Rehousing Team finds them suitable longer term accommodation, and hostel staff provide support and assistance during what is usually a very difficult time for their residents.

Christmas can be especially hard for families under these circumstances, and so with the help of a number of generous donors, throughout Christmas 2021 the Council did its best to brighten up the festive season for the residents of Norway House.



The Council's Executive Assistant, Kelsey Taverner, launched a Just Giving page to fund an early December visit from Father Christmas, with presents for the resident children – who also received a brand new Christmas jumper courtesy of **St Mary's Church**. The **Epping – Upper Clacton Rugby Club** very kindly paid for tickets to the Christmas panto at Harlow Playhouse, and later in the month Santa popped by again (this time on his sleigh!) courtesy of **Epping Rotary Club**. As Christmas itself approached, the **Epping Forest Food Bank** kindly donated a food hamper to each family, and children each received their own gift, provided again by the **Epping – Upper Clacton Rugby Club**. **Here's hoping that 2022 brings happiness and a bright future for all our Norway House residents!**

If you are homeless or likely to become homeless within 56 days, please see our website for more information: www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing/homelessness/get-help-advice-and-support/

If you are interested in supporting the team with future activities for our residents, please email us at norwayhousemanagers@eppingforestdc.gov.uk.

Understanding Homelessness

We would like to talk to residents who have been homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, to learn from first-hand personal accounts - what made the difference, or could have made the difference.

In particular, we are keen to ask:

- What or who helped or worked well; and
- what was or is most challenging or difficult to overcome

The idea is that by listening to people with personal experiences of homelessness, we find out the best ways of helping to prevent homelessness and hidden homelessness (such as sofa-surfing and rough sleeping).

If you would like a confidential chat with Charlotte our Housing Strategy Officer, then please email: HousingStrategy@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

We will make sure that anything we learn from you will be treated sensitively. We will not share any information unless you agree, and we will make sure you cannot be identified from any details about your story that we do share.



Limes Farm Regeneration

Over the last twelve months at Limes Farm Estate, the project team have been working hard to deliver on the Council's vision to 'create great places where people want to live'.

Limes Farm Estate was originally identified as an external major works project, however, during the project's initial resident engagement sessions it was quickly established that residents wanted to see more.

The project team moved to set up a new Tenants and Residents Association (TRA), alongside a dedicated focus group, to help assist with the development of regeneration ideas, and the project as a whole.

With these channels of communication set up, the project was able to collectively agree the key aims for the project as follows:

- **Regular resident communication.** Following the creation of the TRA, members were keen to be kept updated. The project team now meet with the TRA bi-monthly.
- **A number of resident Block Champions were appointed.** Having a resident assume a Block

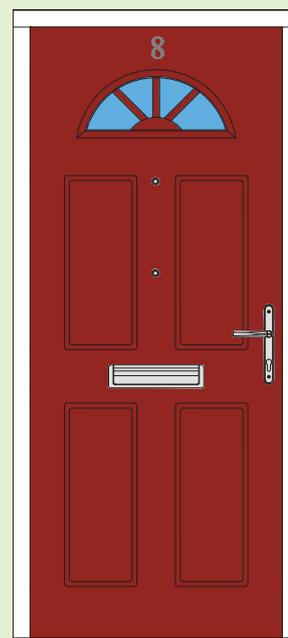
Champion role allows other residents the chance to liaise anonymously with the project team if they so wish.

- **Regular written updates** by post, ensuring that every resident at Limes Farm estate is kept up to date regardless of TRA membership.

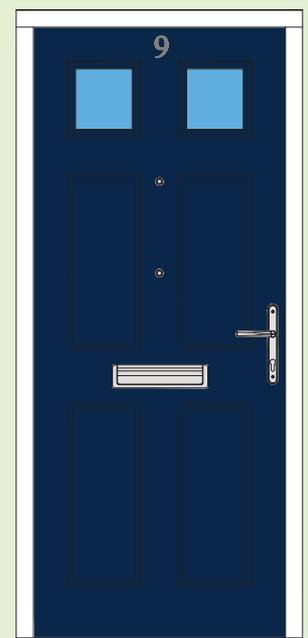
- **Deliver on the Council's planned preventative maintenance strategy.** We plan to undertake maintenance works to all life-expired external components. These include elements such as roof repairs, window replacements, front entrance door replacements, walkway/balcony repairs,



"Carisbrooke"
(4PAG)

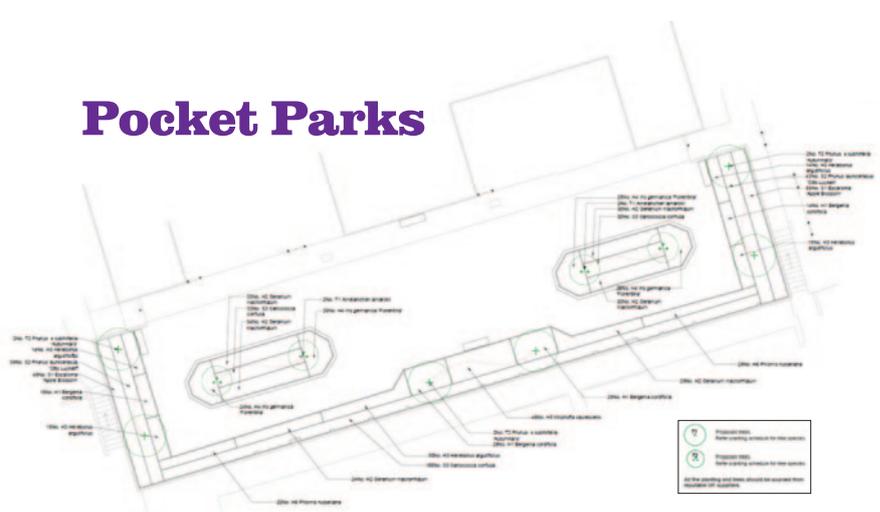


"Carisbrooke SB"
(4PAG)



"Warwick"
(6P2G)

Pocket Parks



| Trees | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|---------------------|-----|-------|-----------|------------|----------|----------|------------------|----------|
| Key | Name | Form | Age | Girth | Height cm | Clear stem | Root Cdn | Spacing | Number of breaks | Quantity |
| T1 | Amelanchier tamarckii | | 3x | / | 200-250 | Multi Stem | Rootball | as shown | 3 | 4 |
| T2 | Prunus x subhirtella 'Autumnalis' | Standard (Ex heavy) | 3x | 18-20 | 450-650 | min 200 | Rootball | as shown | | 6 |

| Shrubs and Groundcover | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------|-----------|------|-----------|---------|----------|-----|
| Name | Height cm | Rt Cdn | Cont size | Spec | No breaks | Spacing | Quantity | |
| S1 | Escalonia 'Apple Blossom' | 40-60 | C | 3 L | Bushy | 4 | 5m2 | 104 |
| S2 | Prunus laurocerasus 'Otto Luyker' | 30-40D | C | 3 L | Bushy | 3 | 4m2 | 82 |
| S3 | Sarcococca confusa | 20-30 | C | 3 L | Bushy | 6 | 5m2 | 228 |

| Herbaceous | | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|----------|-----|
| Name | Rt Cdn | Cont size | Spacing | Quantity | |
| H1 | Bergenia cordifolia | C | 2 L | 5m2 | 67 |
| H2 | Geranium macrorrhizum | C | 2 L | 5m2 | 180 |
| H3 | Helleborus argutifolius | C | 2 L | 5m2 | 88 |
| H4 | Iris germanica 'Florentina' | C | 2 L | 5m2 | 101 |
| H5 | Kniphofia caulescens | C | 2 L | 5m2 | 46 |
| H6 | Phlox russelliana | C | 2 L | 5m2 | 48 |

redecorations, car park repairs, controlled access upgrades and compliance works.

- Deliver on the TRA's ambitions to redevelop as many unused areas around the estate as possible.** Together with the TRA we developed a list of approximately 20 mid-scale regeneration options. All estate residents were then sent a questionnaire to submit their views on the options, and a short-list has now been drawn up.

- Deliver on the Council's pledge to 'create places where people want to live'.**

Current Update

Since agreeing the above, the project has gone on to develop many of the regeneration and major work ideas put forward by the TRA, and a snapshot of some of these is below :

- **Outdoor Gymnasium**
- **Pocket Parks**
- **Various new trees to be planted**
- **New external doors**



Next Steps

The project will continue to develop the major works specification alongside the above regeneration options in anticipation of going to tender in late March '22.

The three month look-a-head is as follows:

- Complete Specification and Tender: **March 2022- April 2022**
- Complete Leaseholder Section 20 (stage 2): **May 2022 - June 2022**
- Commence works on site: **July 2022**

If you have any queries about the Limes Farm Regeneration Plans, you can contact the Team by emailing
MajorWork@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or find further information at
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/limes-farm-regeneration-project/

House-building Programme Update

Hello from the Development Department! We are the team behind the Council's House Building Programme.

We are a team of six; two Senior Housing Development Officers, Lizzie and James; two Development Officers, Francisca and Omair; Collins our Legal Consultant and me, Rochelle, heading up the team!

We thought it would be a lovely time to share how things are going with our development programme. It is an exciting time as we have a number of properties completing ahead of the end of this financial year. **We have schemes in Loughton, Ongar, Buckhurst Hill and Waltham Abbey.**

Below are some pictures from our **Queensway site in Ongar** which completed on the 9th February 2022. Queensway contains four one-bedroom bungalows at affordable rent. These units were delivered by our contractors TSG.

We are planning a further 190 units over the next five years.

If you'd like any further information about the plans, or would like to let us know about any other development opportunities in the District, you can get in touch via housingdevelopment@eppingforestdc.gov.uk



Queensway – affordable rent bungalows in Ongar



IT'S YOUR LETTERS

questions you always wanted to ask about your rent

They say there are two things that are certain in life – death and taxes. If you're a Council tenant, there's a third one – RENT!

We asked the Income Recovery Team what questions they were asked most frequently. Their nuggets of wisdom are below, and we hope this will solve any mysteries you've been baffled about for ages...

If you've got a query about anything to do with your rent, you can contact the team on the following number:

Income Recovery
general contact
number:



01992 564545

Or email incomerecovery@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Q Do I have to arrange for my Direct Debit payments to be amended for the new financial year?

A No - the new rent collections will be automatically adjusted for you, so there is nothing for you to do. Please note, if you pay by Standing Order and need help calculating your rent payments for the new financial year, please contact your Income Recovery Officer for assistance (details below).

Q Why am I in arrears when I'm on Universal Credit?

A Under DWP, Universal Credit payments are always paid to claimants in arrears. If there's a shortfall, tenants will have to make arrangements to settle this, either with DWP Case Managers (via your journal) or by discussing a repayment arrangement with your Income Recovery Officer. The responsibility lies with the tenant to ensure their rent is paid within their terms of their tenancy agreement.

Q Why is my monthly rent more than my calculation of 4 x weekly rent?

A Because each month is not an exact period of four weeks. We calculate your monthly rent as follows: your weekly rent cost, multiplied by 52 (to give a yearly total) then divided by 12 (to give the monthly total). If we charged rent on an exact 4-weekly basis, you would end up with 13 payments per year, and on different dates each month – which is more difficult for many people to manage.

Q I get paid at the end of each month, so that's when I make my monthly rent payment. Why do I still receive arrears letters in between?

A Rent payments must be paid in advance at all times, regardless of the frequency of your salary payments. So, if you decide that it is easier for you to pay your rent monthly, you will need make your monthly payment in advance of the due date – then you will not find yourself in arrears or receive an arrears letter.

Q Where can I get advice on problems that I may have with my rent payments?

A Our Income Recovery Officers are specially trained to give good helpful advice to all our tenants on their rent accounts, and will always offer supportive measures when assistance is required.

DIFFERENT WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT

Paying online You can pay your rent online using the Council's secure website facility. The address is www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk When you enter the site click on Pay it and then again on pay your house or garage rent. Then follow the on-screen instructions. You can use this facility to make one off payments, or set up a Wallet or Recurring payments.

Telephone payments To pay your rent using the Council's automated 24-hour telephone payment line **01992 564600**, you will need a debit card or credit card. Give your account number, which is printed under your name on your rent payment card. Telephone payments can also be made via the **Income Recovery Team on 01992 564545**.

Text message payments You can pay your rent by SMS text message. First you need to register your details online at www.allpayments.net You will need your rent payment card, email address, mobile phone number, debit card or credit card. Once you have registered you can text the amount you wish to pay to **81025** and it will be deducted from your account. You will be sent a text to confirm your payment has been processed.

Direct Debit/Standing Order If you would like to set up either a direct debit or a standing order, please **contact the Income Recovery Team on 01992 564545** for details of how to do this.

Payments at Council Offices Payment machines are available at the **Civic Offices in Epping**, Monday to Thursday 9am to 5.15pm and Fridays 9am to 5pm. The cash office at the **Broadway in Debden** is open on Mondays and Tuesdays, 10am to 2pm. The payment kiosk in **Waltham Abbey Library** is available as follows: Monday/Tuesday 9am to 5:30pm, Wednesday 9am to 1pm, Friday 9am to 7pm, Saturday 9am to 5pm.

Payments by Cheque These can be posted to the Civic Offices in Epping, marked for the attention of the Income Recovery Team, however, please be advised that due to restrictions currently in place, these are taking a minimum of 3 weeks to be processed.

Payments at other outlets Payments can continue to be made at external outlets that accept payments to other organisations, such as some newsagents, Post Offices etc. Please note that you will need your rent payment card to do this.

Change in Circumstances

If you have had a change in your circumstances regarding income, and you are currently receiving Housing Benefit, please contact the Housing Benefit Team on 01992 564000. If you are currently claiming Universal Credit or need to make a claim, please visit the Universal Credit website at www.gov.uk/universalcredit or notify them of any changes via your Universal Credit Journal. Please also notify the Income Recovery Team on 01992 564545 if you are experiencing problems paying your rent.

Rent Increases due in April

All tenants who are in receipt of DWP Universal Credit Payments will be required to update their new rent costs from April (rent and service charges if applicable) via their Journal, to ensure they receive the change in entitlements. The responsibility lies with the claimant to ensure they advise DWP of any change in circumstances. Failure to do so will result in a loss of entitlement and could cause rent arrears to occur.

If you are unsure about this process, please speak to your Income Recovery Officer as soon as the change in rents takes place (early April).

Can he fix it?... probably!

Dear Residents...

Please let me introduce myself, I'm **Chris the Handyman**. I work for a charity called **Voluntary Action Epping Forest** and we have been based in Epping for over 25 years.

In partnership with the Council, we provide a Handyperson service to **residents who are over 60 (or who are disabled)** and who have no one else to help them.

Over the last nine years working together we have helped hundreds of residents with small (and larger) tasks around their homes and gardens – and the best bit is... **the service is FREE!**

All you will ever need to pay for are any materials, which we always buy at the lowest possible prices. The Council cover the labour costs. For example, say you need a light bulb replaced – well, rather than climb up on steps or on that wobbly chair, you can call us, and we will come along and fit a new bulb for you. All you would pay for is the bulb (or if you have a bulb of your own there would be nothing to pay).

People always ask us, what can we do. The list is huge, so here are a few examples:

Kitchen – replacing fluorescent light tubes, tap washers, sink plugs, plumbing in washing machines, levelling cookers and washing machines, putting up shelves, clocks, utensil racks and more.

Bathroom – replacing light bulbs, tap washers, sink and bath plugs, bathroom cabinets, shelves, accessories like towel holders and more.

Rest of the home – fitting curtain rails, installing blinds and nets, changing

curtains, putting up shelves and pictures, tidying up cables and wires, replacing carpet threshold bars in the doorways (where they always seem to lift and catch your toe!) even building flat pack furniture, and lots more.

Outside – fence repairs (not replacement), repairs to gates and shed roof felt, aligning the bolts properly on the back gate to keep you safe. We can repair cracked paths and fill in minor damage to pathways, we can fit outside taps and so much more.

If you would like to use our service, you just need to call Qualis (they manage all the Council housing repairs and they take requests for the Handyperson scheme). Their number is 0333 230 0464. Just tell them you would like the help of the Handyperson and they will take your details. We will soon be in contact with you to arrange a convenient day and time to visit, and aim to do the work there and then.

Rest assured that we are all fully policed-checked and we are very keen to help. We are tidy and professional, and most importantly, we care about what we do.

So, to those of you who we have already helped we look forward to seeing you again soon, and to any new customers reading this today – **we look forward to meeting you!**



FREE
to residents who are
over 60 (or who are
disabled)



Keep yourself busy

The Community, Culture & Wellbeing Team at EFDC is in place to help boost health and wellbeing across the District, reduce isolation and provide a varied sports, recreation and culture programme.

As well as hosting regular activities and one-off events, the Team are also keen to share resources and opportunities with residents.

Did you know we have a grant scheme, volunteering roles and active community groups across the District?

You can find all this good stuff and more in the Team's quarterly brochure, available online at www.facebook.com/EFDCcommunities or paper copies available from Civic Offices and the District Museum in Waltham Abbey

Weekly Activities

- Active Living
- Cycling for Health
- Indoor Bowls
- Keep Fit
- Keep Moving
- Lifewalks
- Musical Memories
- Pilates
- Street Athletics for children
- Street Tennis for children
- Strength & Balance
- Social Active Strong
- Walking Football
- Wildcats – girls football
- Revive
- Puzzle & Games Club
- Community Cafés
- Yoga
- Football for Fitness

Social. Active. Strong.

Social. Active. Strong. is a **FREE** 12-week programme of exercise to help build up strength and mobility as well as improve balance and co-ordination through a series of gentle exercises. The sessions are low-impact and can be adapted to suit all ages and abilities. Week by week, you will progress to a more active, social and independent lifestyle.

Classes are held at various locations in the District including Loughton, Epping, Waltham Abbey, Chigwell, Buckhurst Hill and Ongar and are available to all adults living in, or registered to a GP practice in the Epping Forest District.

To register your interest in this service simply email: sasreferrals@eppingforestdc.gov.uk or call 01992 564 226, and our Falls Prevention Team will get in contact to explain more about the service,

available classes and if this is the right activity for you.

Have a look at one of our gentle exercise routines below...



PLEASE CHECK WITH YOUR GP IF YOU HAVE ANY MEDICAL CONCERNS BEFORE COMMENCING WITH THE EXERCISE PROGRAMME.

1. Marching

This can be done either seated or standing. Lift tail through the spine and swing your arms as you march. Try and march for 30 seconds. This will help you warm up and get the legs moving.

4. Calf Raises

This can be done either seated or standing. Raise your heels up and down. Use a chair to support yourself if you like. Aim for 10 of these. Excellent for improving strength in the lower leg and mobility through the foot.

2. Sit to Stand

Start seated on a chair and then stand up. Slowly lower yourself back to the chair and repeat. Aim for 10 of these if you can. Don't worry if you can't begin with, just do what you can and build it up. Perfect for building up leg strength.

5. Arm Rolls

Like the action to 'wind the bobbin up', roll your hands around each other in front of you. Try in front of you, side to side and up and down. Try 30 seconds of arm rolls. This one is a good fun way to mobilise the arms and also improve coordination.

3. Shoulder Rolls

Rotate your shoulders, up, back and down. You can do one or both shoulders together. Gradually increase the movement to full arm circles. Aim for 10 shoulder rolls. Really good for mobility through the shoulder and easing tension.

6. Balance

Holding a chair for support if you need it, stand on one leg and balance. Then try the other side and repeat. Try and stand on one leg for 10 seconds and then change to the other side. Ideal for improving core stability and leg strength.

Take your time doing each exercise and only do as much as you feel comfortable with. Repeat exercises daily to begin to feel the benefit.

Our falls keeping active exercises can help keep you independent, improve your mood and wellbeing, help manage existing conditions and even help you when you play with your children/grandchildren.

Epping Forest Inclusion Project

is a varied programme for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). If parents/carers want to help shape the service, they can get involved in the



Parent Forum. For the latest news, check our Facebook page 'Epping Forest Disability Forum' or request updates directly from Will at wfordham@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Epping Forest District Museum

Epping Forest District Museum tells the story of the people and events that have shaped the District. In the Museum you will find everything from the remains of woolly mammoths who roamed here over 10,000 years ago to a wooden turkey - favourite toy of a Victorian child!



Come and see our changing exhibitions, six galleries and gift shop, and enjoy a variety of events and activities suitable for all ages.

Admission to the museum is free however some events and activities will have an additional charge

Wildlife Photographer of the Year

Saturday 21 May – Saturday 27 August

Come and see the world-famous Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition on tour at Epping Forest District Museum. Explore the natural world in all its fragility and diversity at the annual Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition, where 100 powerful photographs tell the story of a plant under pressure. Gaze through the lens of some of the world's best wildlife photographers and marvel at the beauty of our planet. This exhibition will be free to visit but tickets will need to be booked via our booking platform: <https://eppingforestdc.bookinglive.com/>



West Essex Adult Disability Inclusion Project – Buddy Up

Have you found yourself with more free time and not sure what to do with it? We're looking for buddies to join our Buddy Up programme.

What's the Buddy Up Project?

The Buddy Up project will be running across West Essex (Harlow/Uttlesford and Epping) supporting adults 18+ with autism, learning disabilities or both into community activities by connecting them with buddies in the community.

If you would like to volunteer to support someone or would like to hear more about joining this project, then please do get in touch.



For more information contact:

Olivia Timotheou - Adult Disability Inclusion Officer,
Epping Forest District Council
Tel: 01992 564083 Mobile: 07729 109006
Email: otimotheou@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Let's become a more enabling, inclusive, and accepting society.



Epping



Harlow



Uttlesford

Meet the Home Ownership Team...

Did you know that EFDC tenants have the chance to buy their property at a discount, under the Right to Buy scheme?

If you have a secure tenancy with EFDC and have held a public sector tenancy for a minimum of 3 years (usually with a local authority or housing association), then you could qualify to own your own home! We thought our leaseholders and interested tenants might like to find out a bit more about the Team, so take it away Marie!

Marie Thorpe

Home Ownership
Team Manager

Marie is a long serving member of Epping Forest District Council. She oversees the statutory functions of the Home Ownership team which includes Right to Buy, Management of Leasehold service charges plus service charges for Social Housing Rents. To set her up for her working day Marie enjoys very early morning walks, and outside of work she enjoys spending time with her friends and family, especially her new grandson.



Wendy Early

Home Ownership
Officer

Wendy has been with the Home Ownership team for the last seven years, where she deals with leasehold enquiries, calculation of service charges, setting up direct debits and payment plans and processing refunds. Outside of her working hours Wendy ensures she walks 10,000 steps a day and recommends Richard Osman's novel "The Thursday Murder Club" as one to read.



Olwen Lawson

Home Ownership
Officer

Olwen has been part of the team for the last fifteen years! As a



bit of an expert, she deals with solicitors in providing pre-sales information packs and right up to completion. Surveys show that selling and buying your home is one of the most stressful life experiences, this comes as no surprise due to the pressures involved. Olwen ensures that this process is as smooth as possible and works hard to ensure a good customer journey to completion of the transaction. For downtime, Olwen enjoys watching movies and is known by friends & family as a "Netflix Connoisseur".

Sandra Stanley

Home Ownership
Officer

Sandra works part time as a Home Ownership Officer and has been with the team since January 2014. One of her many talents is providing in-depth explanations to residents on how service charges are applied and calculated, as well as dealing with applications for Sub-lets. Since her move to Suffolk in 2017 Sandra has worked from home, and was well equipped for the new changes that were brought in due to the current climate. She loves the country life but has not yet bought a combine harvester!



Ruman Siddique

Rent & Service Charge
Officer

Ruman started his role in June last year, but has over 13 years'



experience in the housing sector. His first project was to review and set the service charges for the rented accommodation. For leisure Ruman enjoys playing sports and watching docuseries, and he's currently loving David Attenborough's Green Planet.

Deborah Matthams

Home Ownership
Officer – Right to Buy

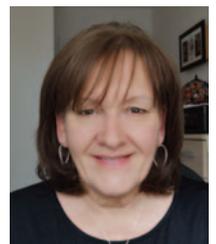
Deborah is a new member to the Home Ownership team and is currently in training and learning EFDC's Right to Buy processes. She will be taking over from Denise who will soon be leaving for an early retirement. Debbie as she prefers to be called, enjoys eating out and travelling the world. Welcome to the team Debbie!



Denise Lewis

Home Ownership
Officer – Right to Buy

It's an introduction and a farewell to Denise who has been with us since 2010 and has taken an early retirement in March this year. Denise has been a fantastic servant of Epping and she's looking forward to spontaneous days out and spending time with her family. The team will really miss her and wish her a very happy retirement!



If you have any enquiries that relate to Homeownership

please do not hesitate to contact the team via email on HomeOwnershipTeam@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

If you want to set up or amend a Direct Debit instruction

in respect of your Estimated Service Charges, please contact the team on **01992 564428**

We would also like to take this opportunity to remind you of our on-line portal and introduce you to our additional and improved functions...

Leaseholders who would like to request permission to sublet their leasehold property

and pay any associated fee can now do so by visiting our website.

Please see www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders/sell-or-let/ for more information.

Leaseholders who wish to request a Pre-Sales information pack

can now request this information and make payment.

Please see www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing/leaseholders/sell-or-let/ for more information.

You may qualify to purchase your property under the Right to Buy scheme with a discount.

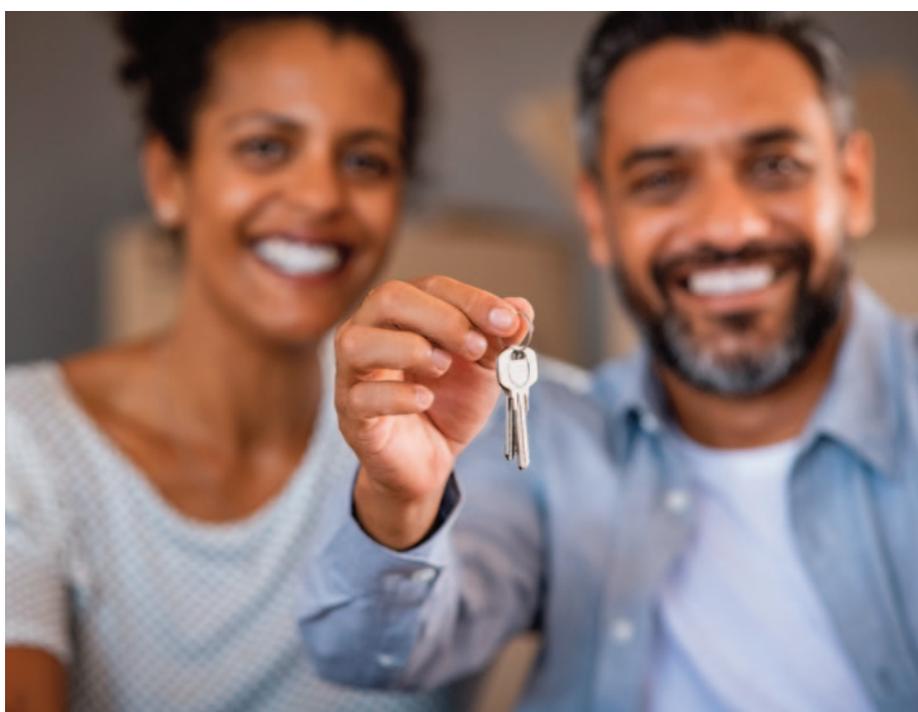
- Tenants must have a secure tenancy with EFDC and have held a public sector tenancy for a minimum of 3 years, this is usually with a local authority or housing association.
- The qualifying period can be made up from the present tenancy and any previous relevant public sector tenancies.
- These periods do not have to be consecutive.
- The property must be the tenants only or principal home.

Your discount will be calculated on the length of tenancy you have completed.

The current maximum discount allowed for the EFDC district is **£84,600 (to be updated April 2022)**.

Further Qualifying Criteria and Exclusions can be found in the Right to Buy Guidance booklet on the website, please visit

www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/buy-your-council-house-right-to-buy/



Changes to Right to Buy

Right to Buy allows most council tenants to buy their Council home at a discount. As of 6th April 2022, **the maximum Right to Buy discount you may be entitled to is increasing to £87,200.**

These discounts will apply to applications which are served on the landlord by the tenant on or after 6 April 2022. The reductions do not apply retrospectively to applications made before 6 April 2022.

Qualifying Criteria and Exclusions can be found in the Right to Buy Guidance booklet on the website, please visit

If you have any enquiries that relate to Homeownership please do not hesitate to contact the team via email on

Who's that knocking at the door?

Upgrade of Audio-Controlled Door Entry Systems

The Council currently has audio-controlled door entry systems installed at around 400 blocks, which are maintained and serviced to ensure the security of the communal areas of our sheltered housing schemes and general needs blocks of flats. However, the existing systems are installed with old technology such as key-based access, obsolete control systems and with access doors that are beyond economic repair.

We've now approved a programme for upgrades and the installation of **new audio-controlled door entry systems, with video-enabled handsets** allowing residents to see and hear who is requesting access.

Where appropriate, we will also be installing assisted door opening for physically challenged residents, and a

mobile Cloud-based system for the management of access key tokens (futureproofing the design and specification).

Property Assets have completed these upgrades to nine general-needs blocks of flats so far, and installation is in the pipeline for another nine general-needs blocks in the near future.

The new door entry systems are coupled to a cloud-based software system, giving Estate and Land Officers full remote access to enable or disable key tokens, run comprehensive reports on key token use and receive notification if an entrance door is forced or left open.

All these benefits provide increased security and assistance to the users and residents of the block.



Fobs are provided to all residents at the time of upgrade, however if yours becomes lost or damaged you can order a replacement via www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/apply-for-a-replacement-key-fob/

Confused about waste and recycling?

If you are not sure about what you should be doing with your rubbish or want to know what you can do to help, you should find this simple guide useful.

Personal bins

Black residual containers

Any waste that can not be recycled should be placed in these containers such as nappies, cling film, crisp packets, tissues, food and drink pouches, expanded polystyrene.

Blue box

Clean glass bottles and jars. All colours and clear. Lids can be kept on.

Clear sacks

Plastic containers and bottles, clean paper, card and shredded paper. Tetra packs and other food cartons. Food and drink cans as well as aerosol cans. Large cardboard boxes should be flattened and placed neatly next to sacks when they are put out for collection.

Plastic carrier bags

We collect small waste electrical items, low energy light bulbs, batteries, textiles and paired shoes every week. Put them in separate carrier bags and leave them on top of you bin to be collected.



Communal bins

Black residual communal containers

Any waste that can not be recycled should be placed in these containers such as nappies, cling film, crisp packets, tissues, food and drink pouches, expanded polystyrene.

Yellow lidded communal recycling container

Clean glass bottles and jars. All colours and clear. No tops or lids.

Green lidded communal recycling container

Food and garden waste only – all cooked and uncooked food. Food waste can either be wrapped in newspaper or biodegradable bags as highlighted on our website. You should have received a 5 litre green kitchen caddy. If you do not have one you can order it from www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/apply-for-a-new-bin/

Red lidded communal recycling container

Plastic containers and bottles, clean paper, card and shredded paper. Tetra packs and other food cartons. Food and drink cans as well as aerosol cans. Large cardboard boxes should be flattened and placed neatly next to the recycling container.



Furniture, mattresses and other household items

Bulky items must not be left in the bin area or left outside the property, as this will be classed as fly-tipping for which enforcement action could be taken. Increased expenditure on waste collection could increase service charges.

Bulky item collection can be booked via EFDC at www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/request-a-special-collection for a chargeable collection (prices listed on the web page). The cost depends on the number of items.

The items must only be placed out for collection on the morning of the collection. Alternatively, bulky items can be taken to the local civic amenity sites in Chigwell and Waltham Abbey. More information can be found at the Essex County Council website www.lovesessex.org



The Council's Environmental Enforcement Team can investigate and take enforcement action against individuals where rubbish is not disposed of correctly. This can result in the people responsible receiving Notices. Failure to comply with these Notices may result in a fixed penalty of £60. If residents use the incorrect bins, or deposit waste in an area where they are not authorised to do so they can receive a fixed penalty of £400 or be taken to court for fly-tipping.

The Neighbourhoods Team may also take action against your tenancy or lease if our investigations show that one of our Tenants or Leaseholders is frequently fly-tipping or not disposing of their rubbish correctly. Whilst we use a range of softer measures to encourage residents to manage their waste responsibly, more formal action is sometimes necessary for persistent offenders. Possible sanctions might include Community

Protection Warnings, Community Protection Notices, Injunctions, but where absolutely necessary, Possession action or even Forfeiture of Leases could be considered.

If residents choose to use a private contractor to remove any waste, they should ensure that they check if they have any waste carriers licence from the Environment Agency at environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-brokers.

If they do not, and their waste is fly-tipped, they could receive a fixed penalty of £400 or be taken to court for not complying with their duty of care. For a full list of what items can be placed in what container, please visit www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/what-goes-in-each-bin

What's going on in Sheltered Housing?

There are a number of Sheltered Housing Schemes across the District, providing housing for the over-60s. The staff and residents have been busy in recent months, and we asked our Older People's Services Manager, Denise Pegler, for an update...

Refurbishment of Frank Bretton House

Working with Buckingham Interiors, we undertook a pilot project to refurbish all communal areas at Frank Bretton House, our sheltered housing scheme in Ongar. The purpose of this project was to make the scheme feel more "modern" and welcoming and to improve the overall quality and desirability.

To help achieve this, residents were invited to choose from three mood boards that were specifically designed for Frank Bretton House. The mood boards contained samples of furniture, fabric, floor coverings, wallpaper and wall colourings. A range of furniture was also delivered to the scheme for residents to try at their leisure.



Buckingham Interiors supplied and installed the carpet, furniture, soft furnishing and accessories, while the Council undertook the internal decorating and installed new doors for all residents.

This is the first refurbishment of its kind that we have undertaken and although the work took longer than expected overall it's been a success and residents are very happy with the result.

Upgrade of the emergency alarm system in the Council's sheltered housing schemes

"The current emergency alarm equipment in our sheltered housing schemes is around 16 years old, although it still provides a very reliable service it has limitations, these being

that residents need to get to a pull cord in each room of their property to raise an alarm call and we can only link a limited number of peripherals to the system such as pendants and smoke detectors.

Technology has moved on and so have emergency alarm systems. To ensure the alarm systems in our sheltered housing schemes continues to provide a reliable service, and meet the needs of our residents moving forward, we will be undertaking a program of works to upgrade them to digital.

There are many benefits to a digital system, it's faster and even more reliable. It also benefits from a range of sensors and devices which will allow us to offer bespoke care technology





The Chairman of the Council, Councillor Helen Kane presented the 'Flowers in Bloom' competition awards at Leonard Davis House last October.

packages to residents helping them remain in their home for longer.

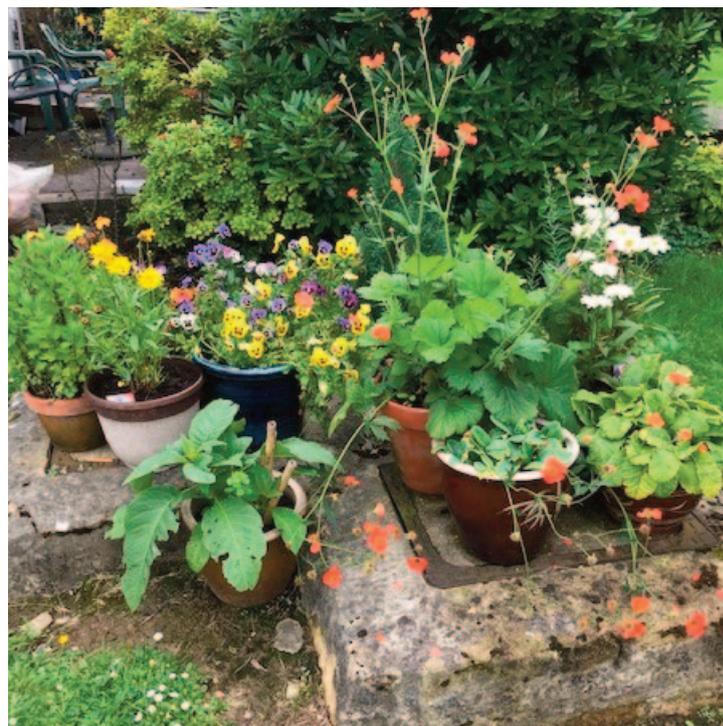
Flowers in Bloom

Over the summer months we held a

"Flowers in Bloom" competition among our sheltered housing schemes. We had a number of really great entries and these were judged by the Director of Housing & Property services along

with the Senior Older Peoples Services Officer.

A presentation event was held at Leonard Davis House in October to



which all runners up and winners were invited. The Chairman of the Council presented the awards which was followed by a light buffet lunch. The event was so successful we will be holding the competition again this year so get planting.

Sheltered Housing Forum

If you live in sheltered housing and want to influence the way we deliver services within our schemes why not join our sheltered housing forum. Meetings are held virtually on a quarterly basis. You don't need to be a whizz on the computer or own a device, we have purchased i-pads and our Sheltered Housing Officers will provide all the support you need to

help you join and participate in the meeting.

However, if this is not for you, why not come along to our Chatterbox sessions? These meetings are less formal and held on a quarterly basis at each sheltered housing scheme. They provide an opportunity for residents to socialise with neighbours, have a cup of tea and chat to their Sheltered Housing Officer and Resident Involvement Officer about sheltered housing matters.

When the iPad's are not being used for sheltered forum meetings, residents are very welcome to use them to help learn or improve their digital skills. We have digital buddies within the Council who

are happy to assist you.

Sheltered Housing Befriending Scheme

During lockdown we introduced a befriending scheme. The purpose of the scheme is to help residents who are feeling lonely or isolated. We put them in touch with a resident at another sheltered housing scheme so they can chat and get to know each other. We try to match people with similar interests to help develop lasting friendships and reduce that feeling of loneliness.

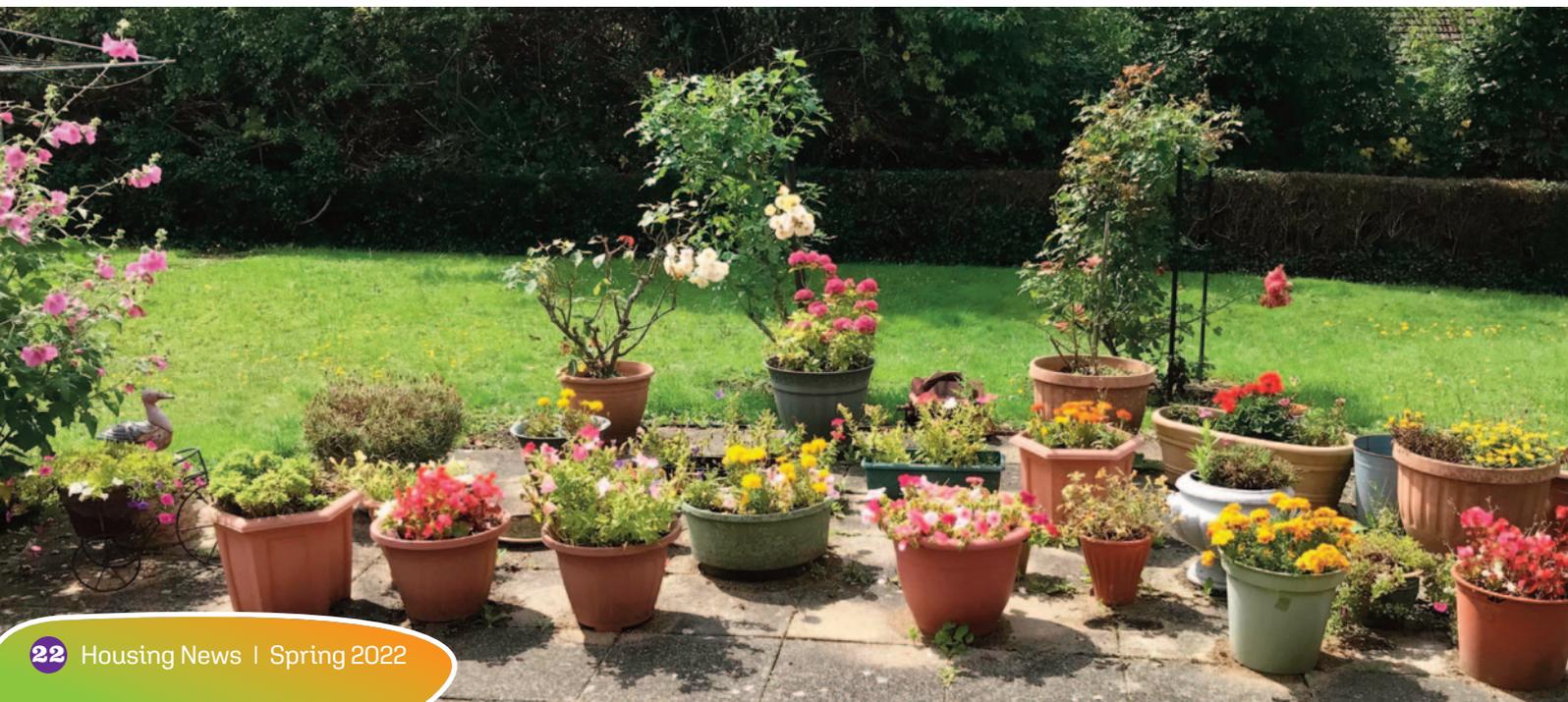
If you would be interested in our befriending scheme please let your Sheltered Housing Officer know.

Sheltered Housing is for people over the age of 60 who want to be independent but feel safer in the knowledge that there is a Sheltered Housing Officer on hand to offer support and advice.

Across the District we have seven sheltered schemes and five grouped schemes (made up of flats/ bungalows). Each property is fitted with an emergency alarm system for added security and peace of mind.

To apply residents should complete an application at www.homeoption.org

If you don't have internet access, you can contact the Rehousing Team on 01992 564716 and a member of staff will help you with the process.



Heating and hot water service move to Qualis Management Ltd

EFDC is changing the contractor who currently provides the gas heating and hot water service within our homes.



From Friday 1 April 2022, Qualis Management Ltd will be taking over the service on behalf of Epping Forest District Council, this will include all maintenance and servicing.

What this means for tenants

Tenants renting their homes from Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) will need to contact **Qualis Management Ltd**, to report an issue with their heating or hot water system.

The transition from current contractor, Gracelands to Qualis Management Ltd will be done with minimal disruption to EFDC housing tenants.

Qualis Group

Qualis Management is the management services company of Qualis Group. It currently provides the repairs and planned maintenance to tenants renting their homes from Epping Forest District Council.



Best number for repairs

0333 230 0464

repairs@qualismanagement.co.uk

Useful contact details

Council rent and other tenancy issues

Rent

Income Recovery Team – 01992 564 545
incomerecovery@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Estate and Land

Estate and Land Team – 01992 564 186
estateandland@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Tenancy

Neighbourhoods Team – 01992 564 765
neighbourhoods@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Buying your home from the Council

Home Ownership Team – 01992 564 428
homeownershipteam@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Finances

Communities Finance Team – 01992 564 429
communitiesfinance@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Housing Benefits Team – 01992 564 155
benefits@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Moving home with the Council

Rehousing Team

Allocations – 01992 564 716
Homelessness – 01992 564 165
rehousing@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Repairs and maintenance

Housing Assets Team – 01992 564 203
propertyassets@eppingforestdc.gov.uk
Repairs – Qualis 0333 230 0464 (24 hour)
repairs@qualismanagement.co.uk

Other departments in housing

Resident Involvement Officer

GetInvolved@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Community Safety Team – 01992 564 000
safercommunities@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Older People's Services – 01992 564 381

Epping Forest District Council,
2 Parsonage Court, Loughton IG10 2BB
Careline@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Complaints

Complete the online form at:
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/yourcouncil/comments-compliments-and-complaints
or phone **01992 564 000**

Other useful numbers

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Epping Forest District CAB offers FREE confidential, impartial advice.

03444 770 808 option 7

(Mon – Fri 10:00 to 16:00)

www.citizensadviceefd.org.uk

Epping: Ernest Wythes House,
50a Hemnall Street, Epping CM16 4LS

Loughton: Loughton Library (1st floor),
Trapps Hill, Loughton IG10 1HD

Waltham Abbey: Town Hall, Highbridge Street,
Waltham Abbey EN9 1DE

Essex County Council (ECC)

County Hall, Market Road,
Chelmsford CM1 1QH

0845 743 0430 www.essex.gov.uk

Care for Children: 0845 603 7627

Care for Adults: 0845 603 7630

24-hour Protection Line: 0845 606 1212



Never miss a copy of Housing News again! Sign up to the mailing list here:
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/housing/council-housing/sign-up-to-the-housing-newsletter/