

HOME NEWS



Winter 2018

Written in partnership
by customers and staff
of North Devon Homes



Seasons Greetings!



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Front cover image:
Christmas dinner at
Medard House

Welcome to the winter edition of Home News!

The last time I wrote the introduction to the newsletter, I told you about the changes we hoped to make to prepare us for the future. I am very glad to say that we are in a good position to meet the challenges ahead of us. These are now well underway; we have made great appointments to the Board, created a new working partnership with the local authority, as well as setting up a new customer engagement structure through the C90 customer group.

I have been excited to see the first homes at Anchorwood Bank in Barnstaple. This innovative landmark development at Taw Wharf looks set to be a great addition to the local community. In South Molton the new Lamaton Park development will deliver 33 affordable, adaptable homes for people aged over 55 and will meet a range of needs suitable for a life time. We continue to look for opportunities to build new homes and communities, and our new Partnership Board arrangement with North Devon Council will be key to enabling us do this.

The launch of a new Credit Union Sustainability Partnership, which will enable direct access to credit union services for 120,000 households across the south west, is really fantastic. This initiative, which is led by our Chief Executive, Martyn Gimber, will provide professional, affordable and accessible financial services to customers, community partners and staff. There's more information on page 10 of this newsletter.

As always, customer engagement is at the forefront of our business and C90 and Scrutiny Panel have been working very hard on your behalf. The Board and C90 are working very closely together to help maintain our high levels of service for you and, indeed, C90 has even formed a new working group of customers called 'Fresh Ideas' to look at the design of our customer information leaflets. We are looking forward to continuing this great partnership in the coming months and celebrating the success of this engagement model which has also been recognised at a national level by being a finalist at the 2018 UK Housing Awards.

With best wishes for the festive season.

Robert Stronge
Chair of the Board





Don't allow the cold weather to spoil your Christmas

Following a very cold spell last year and to try and avoid some of the problems it caused, here is some general advice for the winter.

If you are going away for an extended period over the Christmas period, please take the following actions to keep your homes safe from leaks:

- Maintain a low level of heat in your home even while you are away
- If you feel that you have insufficient insulation in your loft or around your water tank then please contact us to discuss
- Leave your loft door/hatch open to ensure some warm air circulates to the pipe work in the roof space
- Disconnect external hoses and turn off external water supplies at the stopcock. The external tap should be drained once this has been done
- Ensure you get any leaking taps repaired
- If you are going away for an extended period and do not wish to leave your heating on, then you should turn the mains stop tap off and drain all wet systems such as radiators and water tanks (we can provide advice on how to do this)
- Ask a friend or neighbour to check your home regularly and provide them with an emergency contact number
- Ensure that you have insurance cover for your personal possessions.

If you need emergency help during the holiday period please refer to the list of emergency numbers below:

Out of hours emergency repairs: 0800 917 0619

North Devon Homes repairs: 01271 312500

National gas emergency service: 0800 111 999

Please feel free to call us on 01271 312500 if you have any queries or would like further advice.

Gritting

We would also like to remind customers that we will only be gritting sites with an office so that these are accessible to employees, minimising impact on service to our customers.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Governance Update

The North Devon Homes Board looks after the overall running of the business to ensure that it remains viable, is governed appropriately and that customers' long term interests are protected when making key decisions.

The Board always tries to balance the need to invest in maintaining the homes, delivering a good service, building new homes whilst keeping rents as affordable as possible.

The Board has 10 members, all of whom bring a considerable amount of expertise, experience and skills to the team and work really hard to ensure that what we do meets the needs of customers now and into the future.

The Board has updated the Corporate Plan this year and has set out a number of key strategic priorities for the next three years:

- To build over 300 new homes
- Expand our internal repairs service Home 2 Home to develop better maintenance services
- To introduce a new and improved online service offer for customers
- Update our tenancy handbook and terms of tenancy
- Provide 100 days of staff time for community projects

These are uncertain and challenging times as the country faces Brexit and the potential impact this may bring. The Board has been working with the Executive team to ensure that we have all the necessary plans in place to deal with any issues that could arise over the coming months.

The Government is currently looking at a range of changes to housing policy and has issued a Green Paper: "A new deal for Social Housing" which proposes some real changes to the way housing will be managed in the future. The Board welcomed some of these changes and many of the recommendations and policies being proposed are already in place at North Devon Homes for the benefit of our customers and communities.



Annual Report to Tenants Did you get yours?

In September we published our Annual Report to Tenants which looks at how we have performed over the year. Copies have been sent to all our customers. We hope you found it useful and interesting. Your feedback is always very welcome, so please do let us know what you think by emailing enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk

If you did not receive your copy, and would like one, please telephone the Customer Care Team on 01271 312500.

Customer Summer Fayre 2018

Thank you all so much for joining us at our biggest and best Customer Summer Fayre ever! Over 1,130 people attended the event at Barnstaple Rugby Club on 31 July 2018. We really like these photographs and we hope you do, too.



Hoarding



Hoarding Disorder is a growing phenomenon and can seriously affect people's health and wellbeing.

Hoarding behaviours may be the result of some trauma or an indication of deteriorating mental health. The World Health Organisation has now recognised hoarding disorder as a mental health issue. It can have a negative effect on people - feelings of isolation; low self-esteem; and risk of bullying. It can also threaten safety (e.g. fire risk) and create problems for the wider community.

There is no distinction between age, gender, ethnic group, socio-economic status, educational or occupational tenure. There may be some family history of OCD; and only about 5% of hoarders come to the attention of professionals.

Hoarders cannot use rooms for the purposes for which they have been designed but it is more than just clutter; and hoarders need more help than just throwing stuff away.

Our Independent Living Support Officers have been trained in hoarding interventions and will be working with some hoarders to minimise risk, and support hoarders to take control of their hoarding. The training was given by a specialist charity in assessing hoarding behaviour and supporting interventions.

You can get more information at www.hoardinguk.org or by calling us on 01271 312500.

Independent Living Service



We are a trusted provider of services in the area, available to anyone in the North Devon district.

Emergency Response Alarms

- ✓ Low weekly cost (+VAT*)
- ✓ NO UPFRONT FEES
- ✓ Free demonstrations/installations
- ✓ 24 hour monitoring and assistance

£4.20 per week

Home Support

- ✓ Regular calls/visits from a Support Officer
- ✓ Low weekly cost
- ✓ Free initial visit
- ✓ Tailor made support plan

www.devonhomelink.com

0800 083 7553

01271 329831

*Many of our customers do not have to pay VAT



Dementia

NDH has started a journey to becoming a dementia friendly organisation by working with volunteers from the Alzheimers Society to train staff as "dementias friends".

We want to take a positive approach to help people maintain their tenancies if they are living with dementia. We want our staff to understand dementia so they can see how we can adapt the services we provide.

We are looking at processes and procedures to support people with dementia. An e-Learning module has been developed for staff aimed at supporting dementia friendly approaches. Staff are being trained to support us in delivering services in ways which are dementia friendly.

Useful websites:

www.alzheimers.org.uk

www.dementiafriends.org.uk



New Out of Hours Number

In December we will be introducing a new number for customers to call our Out of Hours service. This number is 01271 312522 which is a local number and, therefore, may be more cost effective for customers to call. Calls will continue to route to our current Out of Hours call centre, where the staff will diagnose and prioritise any emergency callouts. The new number will run alongside our existing freephone number of 0800 9170619.

Emergency Out of Hours

If a major problem occurs outside North Devon Homes' opening hours, such as during the evening, or over a weekend, you can call the Out of Hours emergency line. The Out of Hours call centre will take details of the issue and refer them to our on-call contractor who will attend and carry out repairs to make the problem safe.

Please note that the Out of Hours line is for emergency repairs only, such as major electrical faults, heating breakdowns or uncontrollable leaks / burst pipes.

If you contact the Out of Hours service with a routine repair, this will be passed to the Customer Care Team on the next working day. You can report routine repairs via our website at www.ndh-ltd.co.uk

Our emergency out of hours number is 0800 917 0619 / 01271 312522



STAR Survey

Your feedback matters

Every three years we ask customers to complete a Survey of Tenants and Residents, known as STAR. This is a recognised measure, right across the housing sector. The results help us to compare our performance with other housing providers to truly understand how we are performing as a landlord, from the perspective of our customers.

A huge 'thank you' to all 681 customers who completed our customer Star Satisfaction Survey. The information you have provided is important to us and will be reviewed at our next C90 meeting. C90 is made up of NDH management, Board members and Customers and, at the meeting, all the results will be looked at in detail so that we can continue to provide services you are happy with and look at where we can make improvements.

Every completed survey returned to us was entered into a prize draw. Ten lucky customers won gift vouchers from £250 to £10. Congratulations to Mr Isaac from Barnstaple who won the top prize of £250; and to Miss Tanton from Barnstaple who won the second prize of £100.



Asking permission when making changes to your home

If you wish to make any changes to your home you must always check with us first. We will consider requests for you to make alterations but we need to ensure that they are safe for you and do not damage or limit the building.

If you wish to make any alterations please let us know in writing by completing our NDH permission form, available from our Customer Care Team. If you are able to include drawings and details it will help us to assess your request and feedback as soon as possible.

If in doubt please call and check with us first.



Gas Servicing and Response Repairs

Following a tendering exercise, Liberty Gas has been appointed as our gas contractor covering all Gas Servicing and Response Repairs.

Liberty Gas took over the contract on Tuesday 27th March this year.

As part of our drive to ensure good value for money, gas engineers will now cover issues with the hot water system, radiators, as well as the boiler and gas pipe work. They will also be carrying an improved van stock of parts specific to the boilers installed in your homes. This will deliver an improved service to you with fewer visits from contractors, and an increase in first time fixes on response repair issues. They will also service smoke and CO alarms.

All the engineers have moved across from Robert Heath Heating to Liberty Gas so you will continue to see the same familiar faces for any gas servicing and response repairs visits to your home.

Home Surveys

You may receive a letter advising that a surveyor will be in touch to carry out a survey of your home. These surveys are carried out on all NDH homes once every 5 years to help us have up-to-date information on your home.

Our trained, friendly surveyors take a look at the age and condition of things in your home such as your kitchen, bathroom, boiler, fire doors, heating system, roof etc. This information is then updated on our system to make sure we have the correct dates and latest details for our records and can produce reports to help us maintain your home more effectively.

If you have any outstanding repair issues you wish to report, this would be a great opportunity for you to let our surveyors know.





Barbican Lane in Barnstaple

We have recently completed an external maintenance project for 22 properties at Barbican Lane in Barnstaple. The works comprised of external decoration, new external doors and replacement of old timber cladding materials. The properties were refurbished with a new cement based material which gives them a fresh modern look and will reduce the maintenance requirements in future years.

What should you do if any materials you believe might contain asbestos are damaged?

You may have seen information about asbestos in previous editions of Home News. Asbestos was a widely used building material up until the 1990s. Provided it is left in situ and not disturbed, it is perfectly safe, but we have been making efforts to tell you about it, as it can create risks if you do not know how to work with it.

If you damage any asbestos, remain calm, vacate the immediate area of the damaged material and contact North Devon Homes straight away on 01271 312500, or 0800 9170619 during hours when the office is not open. Do not try to repair or clear up the damage. Do not try to brush or vacuum up the material because further disturbance to the fibres could increase health risks.



Joint working with schools to prevent falls from scaffolding

Scaffolding, especially in residential or town centre areas, can present a tempting opportunity for children and young people to climb; however young people may not fully understand the risks of falling from height. The risk is especially high during school holiday times, if parental supervision is not present.

As a responsible social landlord, North Devon Homes strives to ensure that the areas in which we work are safe and secure to protect the public; unfortunately, determined individuals can still defeat security measures, gaining access to high risk areas.

In July our scaffold contractors were alerted through social media of such an occurrence when two young people were witnessed climbing scaffolding at a town centre location. The scaffolding company acted immediately, with North Devon Homes increasing security patrols at the site. Through a joint approach with the Police and the local school, the individuals were identified and they, and their parents, were made aware of the serious consequences of a fall from height.

Fair Affordable Finance for All

The 24th September marked a key milestone for the launch of a new **Credit Union Sustainability Partnership**, enabling direct access to credit union services for 120,000 households, including all of North Devon.

North Devon Homes has teamed up with 8 other housing associations across the South West to tackle some of the issues our customers face in accessing affordable credit and financial services.

We were concerned that we were seeing a dramatic increase in household debt in our communities that was linked to very high cost loan providers as well as the high street 'rent to own' companies. These are big businesses with slick marketing, often geared towards extracting income from lower income households. They charge high rates of interest for their services, many of which range from 150% to 2,000% APR.



We knew that many families were turning to doorstep lenders and rent to buy companies for essentials like cookers, fridges and washing machines. Whilst the weekly repayment amounts might look manageable, the interest rates and the long repayment periods meant that these customers were getting a really bad deal.

The National Housing Federation reported recently that 49% of high cost credit is actually being spent on food. Using high cost credit for life's essentials is clearly not sustainable over the long term

The Partnership wanted to take strong and decisive action to challenge this. We know that the amount of high cost interest being paid in North Devon every year is over half a million pounds. We wanted to capture some of this high cost interest and divert it back into a credit union offering an ethical, not for profit alternative, where all of the interest can be recycled back into the community.

We set out to find a good credit union who are professional and trustworthy, who shared our vision.

After a national procurement exercise **Westcountry Savings and Loans** were chosen





as a strategic partner, being able to provide the financial stability, business plan, product range and, above all, the culture and vision that we felt could deliver a successful offer to our customers, staff and partners.

Westcountry Savings and Loans can offer a wide range of products including Christmas savings schemes, Creditbuilder Loans (that combine loan repayments with savings) and pre-paid debit cards.

The credit union is owned by its members and joining is free. Savings up to £85,000 are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. They are regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority – the same regulators who supervise banks and building societies.

We are excited to be able to work together to develop innovative, competitive and, bespoke products that will offer wider choice for customers across North Devon.

Longer term, we will be looking to develop the partnership into a full scale Community Bank to provide mortgages for shared and full ownership as well as products such as contents insurance that are affordable and specifically aimed at customers who may have been previously locked out from obtaining them.

Have a look at their website for more information about their products www.westcountry.org.uk or have a chat with their friendly team on 0800 3047041 or 0330 563994





Debt Advice?

There's no need to pay for advice about your debts. Free, impartial debt advice is available from:

- Citizens Advice
- Stepchange
- National Debtline



Positive People

If you're over 25 and out of work Positive People can help with learning new skills, boosting your confidence, health and wellbeing and getting advice on returning to work. Give them a call to see what they can do for you on 0800 334 5525 or check out some of the brilliant success stories on their website www.positive-people.org.uk



Privacy Data Protection

Your privacy is important to us and we want you to feel comfortable with how we use and share your personal information. To see what information we collect and process, as well as other important information about your privacy, please see our Privacy Notice which is available on our website or you can request a copy from enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk. If you think that any data we hold on you is incorrect then please let us know.

Our notices and policies are reviewed and updated periodically, so please always check you are looking at the latest version published on our website.





Christmas

Christmas is an expensive time of year and it's important to get the balance right between enjoying the festivities and avoiding the January financial hangover. Most North Devon Homes customers treat their rent payment as a top priority all year round and this means they can relax and enjoy the holiday. There are lots of inspirational ideas online about how to do Christmas on a budget, but perhaps the best idea is to start saving in January for the following Christmas. So, why not start off early in 2019 by putting aside a small amount each month in a savings account or a credit union?

Universal Credit

By the end of 2018 around 200 North Devon Homes' households will have switched over to Universal Credit (UC). We've been talking to our customers about UC for quite a while now making sure everyone knows about some of the main differences. Working age people can no longer make new claims for the old benefits. UC replaces housing benefit and housing payments are made direct into the claimants bank account. Most people can no longer choose to have housing costs paid direct to the landlord. We've been asking everyone to make sure their rent is up to date and paid on time. For those people who have switched already, this has helped make the switch much smoother. There are no plans at the moment to migrate everyone over to UC, but those making brand new claims are already claiming UC. If you would like to know more about UC and your rent then give the Income Team a call on 01271 312500.

Case studies

Natalie from Barnstaple made a new claim for Universal Credit when she and her partner had a baby at the end of October.

"I was quite scared at the thought of going over to universal credit - I'd heard all sorts of things about it and, with a newborn baby, I was worried about not having any money for several weeks. We got the two week run-on of housing benefit and that helped towards the rent. We were paying in advance so we had a bit of breathing space"

Natalie took a modest advance of £250 which was received really quickly and made some sensible decisions about the family budget.

She told us "I'd advise anyone switching to UC to ask for help from the right places, talk to the Job Centre and North Devon Homes"

Roy from South Molton had been unwell and wasn't able to carry on working. His partner works part time as a carer. They made a joint claim for universal credit to help out now that their income had reduced.

"We've found it really difficult. You don't find out how much you're going to get until a few days before your payment date, and then, for us, it was a lot less than we expected. We've paid out on a lot of bills and were waiting for our universal credit money to come in. I've had to make lots of phone calls to my caseworker. North Devon Homes have helped out with a food voucher and have topped up our gas and electricity to tide us over".

"I would advise anyone else to build up some savings that they can fall back on if at all possible, and to double check everything you put in your claim - the onus will be on you to get it right."

If you're struggling with your universal credit claim, talk to your Work Coach or Case Manager at the DWP (or send a message via your online account). North Devon Homes can also help with things like benefit entitlement checks, budgeting, discretionary grants and awards and rent payment issues. Give the Income Team a call on 01271 312500.

C90 Update

The Customer led C90 Group agreed to set up a working group of customers to review and influence the redesign of many of the information leaflets we provide to our customers. This new working group is called 'Fresh Ideas'; wherever you see their 'Customer Approved' logo you will know customers have been central in how we communicate our policies and procedures to you.

In keeping with the communication theme, C90 undertook to survey customers about how they use social media. This took place through our youth club activities, with 50 young people and their parents giving us feedback. This feedback showed that Facebook is still the most popular way you would like us to keep you informed. Please follow us on Facebook to find out about the latest news and events.

As part of our C90 consultations, since the last newsletter C90 have carried out four focus groups and a local conversation in the North Molton and South Molton areas. Thank you to the 34 customers for talking to us on the day



and giving us valuable feedback. During our local conversation surveys, customers informed us on what is happening and, in some cases, not happening in your neighbourhoods. C90 really value this 'real time' satisfaction information which highlights areas where we can improve our service delivery. Look out for us in a neighbourhood near you in the future!

In October C90 received and wholeheartedly welcomed the Scrutiny Panel recommendations to end issuing customers 5 year fixed term tenancies. The Board has since approved a revised Tenancy Management Policy and we will now be giving customers greater security in their homes. This is a wonderful example of the customer influence within North Devon Homes.

In our next issue we will be able to update you on the C90 group's work that will include Fixed Term Tenancies, Star Satisfaction Survey results and other consultation undertaken.

Scrutiny Panel Update

In October, C90 and the Customer Scrutiny Panel reviewed the Tenancy Management Policy, in particular Fixed Term Tenancies. They looked at the Government policy that started this type of tenancy arrangement, recent research into the effect such tenancies have on customers and communities and the cost to NDH of administrating such tenancies. The Scrutiny Panel asked that customers with Fixed Term Tenancies were consulted to gain an understanding on the local effect of such tenancies.

After reviewing all the consultation results, the Scrutiny Panel made recommendations to C90 in October that NDH discontinue further Fixed Term Tenancies and move customers towards lifetime tenancies (Assured Tenancies) giving people greater security in their homes. This will be presented to the Board in December.



Fresh Ideas

Based on recommendations from our Customer Scrutiny Panel, a group of customers has formed our 'Fresh Ideas' working group to look at refreshing all our customer information leaflets.

Meeting every two weeks in the informal setting of the local community centre, the Fresh Ideas group has been central in the redesign of our 'Getting our Permission' and 'Keeping a Pet' leaflets, which you can find on our website www.ndh-ltd.co.uk

If you would like to know more about this group, or would like to get involved, please call our Community Involvement colleague Tracey on 01271 312500.



Summer Fayre Community Involvement Marquee

Thank you to everyone who came along and joined us in our Community Involvement Marquee for tea, coffee and biscuits and chatted with us and our Involved Customer Volunteers.

A very special 'thank you' to those who filled in our Star Survey and congratulations to the lucky iPad prize draw winner.

All the information you gave us on how satisfied you are with the services we provide for you, how safe you feel in your home and other feedback was shared with our C90 Group Customers and Directors meeting in October 2018.

We look forward to seeing you next year.



Designing the Future

Work has started and will continue over the next year to work with our customers to review our systems and how customers access our services; what is important for them; and what will make it easier to contact and engage with us.

We want to ensure we work in partnership with our customers to design the future, and that customers are fully involved at all stages of the project. This is a real opportunity to shape the way we work and how we can improve our online and digital offer.

If you would like to be a part of this exciting opportunity to shape the future of our digital offer, please contact Frances.Walsh@ndh-ltd.co.uk or Tracey.Williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk

We will, of course, keep you updated with progress on this exciting project over the coming months.



Youth Club had a Crealy great time!

Twelve Senior Members from the Youth Club project had a fun packed day at Crealy Adventure Park, as a reward for all their hard work. This was funded by Jed Mason, Gates Consultants and an anonymous donation. A huge thank you to them.

Generations Together

Bringing together young people from our Young Positive Action youth service and members of the Wrafton Coffee Mornings at the Fremington Quay Cafe was a delightful outing for all. The outing was funded through the Coffee Morning monthly raffle, with transport provided by the Community Involvement team.



On Friday 21st September customers joined our Community Involvement team and young people for a Cream Tea & Digital Event at Magdalene Lawn, Barnstaple.

361 Energy and Cosmic attended both events to give advice to customers on saving energy and getting online.

Young people will be continuing to get to know our older residents with a series of carol singing events planned for December in some of our sheltered schemes, along with helping to cook Christmas lunch for 40 older residents in Barnstaple.



Date for Diaries: 5th December 2018



In partnership with the Slade Vision Community Group, the Big Lottery 'Awards for All' fund and our Community Involvement Team there will be a 'Slade Valley Christmas Fayre' on 5th December at the Slade Valley Community Hall.

The event will start at 4.30pm and end at 8.00pm with lots of activities; face painting, photo booth, raffles, rides, chip van and hot drinks. Santa has been booked and will be in his own Grotto for the evening!



Junior Youth Club Forches

Parents in Forches asked us to run a Junior Youth Club for children aged 6 to 8 years old as many older brothers and sisters go to our other youth club for 9 years upwards. We are happy to announce we have been able to achieve this with support from Action for Children.

The Junior Youth Club runs on Monday evenings from 4.30pm to 5.30pm at the Children's Centre on Forches Avenue and is supervised by our youth workers, who provide activities and light snacks. If you have children who want to join in, just bring them along to register.

For more information call our youth worker Leigh on 01271 313377.



Team NDH Charity race night raised £2,250

Summer holiday activities for young people started with an adventure weekend at Torrington's Beam House. Funding for this activity was raised by the Community Involvement Team who organised a Charity Race Night and Auction at the Barnstaple Rugby Club. After paying for the venue, food and race night host from Atlantic Entertainment, the event raised £2,250 and Ilfracombe Rotary very generously donated a further £750.

A huge 'thank you' to all the sponsors who provided raffle and auction prizes.



Rain did not stop play

The planned Summer BBQ at Medard House for 34 older residents was not thwarted by heavy rain on the day. Our Community Involvement team took over the kitchen, cooking what would have been on the BBQ; and volunteers from Normandy Community Garden made salads, organised a raffle and afternoon Bingo.

Cosmic provided a Digital Gadget Show.

Residents funded this whole event themselves and it is set to become a regular summer event in the future.

Live the life you want

We are very excited about the new confidential service that is available to our customers that can help with all aspects of setting up your own business (with some funding availability), returning to work, or just looking for that extra bit of support.

Positive People offers support to people who are not in work no matter what the reason. If life is not working out for you, we are here to help you build your confidence, skills and give you a sense of hope for your future.

We believe that no individual barriers should stand in the way of what you want to achieve. We provide personal 1:1 support with our skilled coach, Andy, and our digital skills advisor, who will help you get tech savvy, with workshops using a variety of digital equipment. They are

here to help you to move forward with life.

We can also help you get involved with new and exciting activities and help you learn new skills, no matter what your academic background.

We know that life can hit us hard, and we realise support and guidance can sometimes require more specialised help (so please don't be afraid to ask). We can help with anxiety and isolation, access to advice and confidence building. As you move through our tailored programme we can also support you with preparing for work.

For more Information please call Frances or Tracey on 01271 312500 or simply call Positive People direct on 0800 334 5525.

The Positive People project is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and the European Social Fund.



Taw Wharf

We are delighted to announce that over the summer, the new and innovative development at Taw Wharf is fast becoming a significant feature within the local landscape of Barnstaple.

Throughout 2019 we will be working on the first 2 phases of work at Taw Wharf, providing a range of unique 1 to 5 bedroom apartments and townhouses with parking and stunning views along the river Taw.

Phase 1 and 2 of this development is really starting to take shape with 37 spectacular riverside properties for open market sale where we are planning to release prices in January 2019 and 5 affordable townhouses for shared ownership sale completing in March 2019 (currently being marketed on Help to Buy South West).

Phase 2 will provide 26 riverside open market sale properties and 18 affordable homes that are either for rent or shared ownership. These will start to be completed on site in early 2020. A start to Phase 3 to 5 of the development will follow in 2020 seeing the completion to the remaining 15 affordable homes on site and a start to the delivery of the remaining market sales homes. In all we are programming completion of the Taw Wharf development by July 2022.





Jordan Close

We are pleased to announce that Pearce Construction are making great progress on our development of three new homes for affordable rent at Jordan Close.

These properties are due for completion in December 2018.



Osborne Gardens (Section 106)

This development at Osborne Gardens is next to the Highgrove development and will provide us with 13 new homes where 3 are shared ownership and 10 social rent. The first handovers are social rented homes (1 and 2 bed houses) planned for completion in early 2019.

A further four units of shared ownership are also planned for completion from July 2019. These will consist of three, 3 bedroom shared ownership properties and one, 2 bedroom shared ownership home due for completion in mid and late 2019.

If you are interested in enquiring about the shared ownership homes that we are offering please contact Sophie Dewey on 01271 312541.

Lamaton Park

Development on Lamaton Park is progressing apace with the main blocks fast becoming what will be a feature within the South Molton landscape.

The scheme will provide a new development for NDH, delivering 33 new affordable homes for individuals over 55. We will be selling 5 of the new homes as shared ownership providing those with home ownership aspirations the opportunity of acquiring an interest in their new home. This development will consist of adaptable homes for a range of needs suitable for a life time. The vision for the site is that it will be a central hub to the local community for social and community events. This scheme is due for completion in August 2019.



Highgrove (Section 106)

We are pleased to announce that we successfully received the handover of two, 3 bedroom semi-detached shared ownership properties from Pearce Construction in October 2018 with the expectation that a further detached 3 bedroom shared ownership property will be handed over in mid November 2018.

In addition to the shared ownership homes we have secured ten new 2 bedroom houses for social rent that are due for completion in early 2019.





Action Days

This year we held a number of 'Community Clear Up Days'. The team of volunteers, which included staff from North Devon Homes, members of Town Councils, Community Timebank, Westcountry Maintenance Services, One Ilfracombe and people living in the local communities, helped with litter picking, hedge and weed trimming, collecting unwanted household goods and a general tidy up of the estates. Skips were provided for local residents to dispose of their unwanted items. There were also recycling areas for people to leave unwanted goods or to browse to see if there was anything that they may like or need to take away.

The events were organised in response to feedback from local residents, who approached North Devon Homes about the possibility of holding a 'Clear Up Day'.

The events have all been great successes with all parties working together to improve the appearance of the local area. The team of volunteers amassed lots of bags of rubbish and collected numerous unwanted items which filled the skip provided during the events. People litter picked the pathways and grassed areas, pathways were weeded and hedges trimmed even the odd tree was felled.

Thank you to everyone who supported the events and worked together to help improve their local communities.

Staff

Kylie, who has worked in the team on the lettings side for the past 3 years, has recently stepped into the role of Neighbourhood Officer. Kylie will be covering Forches, Woodville and all areas up to Westleigh from Barnstaple as well as Burrington and Chulmleigh.

Kylie is very much looking forward to being out on the estates and working with customers.

Charley came from a local estate agent to take up the role of Lettings Administrator which will include coordinating the mutual exchange process.

Georgia has a new role within the team as Neighbourhoods Apprentice so, over the next year, she will be learning all about us as a team and supporting the admin for the team, including organising appointments for home inspections.



Mould and Condensation

Condensation

There is always moisture in the air, even when you cannot see it. When the air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear, particularly on cold surfaces. This is condensation. Condensation mainly occurs during cold weather. It tends to appear on cold surfaces, such as windows, and in places where there is little movement of air. Condensation can lead to mould.

What to do: Ventilation is very important so keep vents open, use extractor fans and, wherever possible, open windows slightly to allow your home to air. It is also important to heat your home.

Mould

Mould will appear as small black and green spots. Mould is a living organism so needs killing to get rid of it. To do this, wipe down affected areas with a fungicidal wash, remember to wear rubber gloves and follow the manufacturer's guidelines.

If you have tried these suggestions and are still concerned then please contact us on 01271 312500. A member of our Customer Care Team will be able to arrange for a surveyor to carry out an inspection of your home. See our 'Dealing with Condensation' leaflet on our website.



Team ndh of tomorrow

We have recently taken on six new apprentices: three in our Home 2 Home Team and three Administrative Apprentices in our front line teams.

This brings our apprentice numbers up to the highest they've ever been, with more planned for the future.

Georgia Richards says "being an apprentice allows me to learn on the job whilst attending college. Best of both worlds!"

Two Home 2 Home apprentices have been promoted: Ryan Madge to Trainee General Operative and Nat Elliott to General Operative. Congratulations!

We are proud to employ these young people who are truly team ndh of tomorrow.



Charge Hands

We have made some staff changes to our Home2Home team to promote 3 of our operatives to Charge Hand posts as we look to strengthen and expand the team in terms of the services that we offer.

The Charge Hands will lead on the following areas of works:

- Voids - bringing any empty properties back up to our lettable standard
- Planned Improvements - delivering the installation of bathrooms (including those adapted for disabilities) and kitchens
- Response Repairs - providing the day to day repairs service.

Fire Home Safety Check

With the Christmas period upon us, Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service (DSFRS) are urging people to stay fire safe throughout the festive season. At this time of year homes are often decorated with lights, decorations and candles. With appropriate care and attention, decorations and lights are safe to use.

Some of the main causes of fire in the home at this time of year are candles left unattended and Christmas tree lights left on for long periods, very often overnight.

Statistics show that people are 50% more likely to die in an accidental home fire during the Christmas period than at any other time of the year. Households can take some simple steps for a safe Christmas:

- Turn Christmas tree lights off at night. Unplug them from the socket to remove the risk of a fire starting.
- Keep matches, lighters and candles out of children's reach.
- Don't overload electrical sockets.
- Make sure you have a working smoke alarm on each floor level of your home. Don't take the batteries out to power Christmas toys.
- Extinguish cigarettes before going to bed.
- Get out alive. Plan an escape route and make sure your family knows how to get out in the event of fire.
- Never leave your Christmas dinner cooking unattended and make sure you switch off the oven and hob if you're leaving the house.

We offer free Home Safety Checks. The check takes no longer than five minutes after which you may be offered a home safety visit. The visit takes less than 30 minutes, we provide advice and fit a free smoke detector if required. If you would like a free home safety check please call 0800 05 02 999.



Health and Safety

Your safety is very important. Please remember to keep cupboards free of flammable items and keep corridors clear so that in the event of a fire the exit routes are safe for people to evacuate the building and for the Fire Service to enter the building safely.

Remember if the building is filled with smoke, visibility will be poor and items left in the exit routes can cause trips and falls, as well as being at risk of catching fire.

Keep all communal areas free of obstructions and free of items that could burn:

- All escape routes must be clear of obstructions.
- Cupboards within communal areas must not be used to store flammable items such as petrol, diesel, gas cylinders or other fuels, solvents, oil based paints, thinners or spirits.
- Combustible items, such as paper and wood, should not be accumulated in quantity within store cupboards.
- Where a risk has been identified, combination locks have been fitted to cupboards in communal areas in order for you to control what is stored in the cupboards.
- If you require any further information or fire safety guidance, please contact the office on 01271 312500.

Festive Period Office Opening Hours

Monday 24th December:	Open 8.30am - 1pm
Tuesday 25th December:	Closed
Wednesday 26th December:	Closed
Thursday 27th December:	Open 8.30am - 4pm
Friday 28th December:	Open 8.30am - 4pm
Monday 31st December:	Open 8.30am - 4pm
Tuesday 1st January:	Closed

Competition Winners

Sean Symons won our wordsearch competition and receives a £15 cinema voucher.

Pauline Frayne won our 'Guess how many seashells' competition and receives a £20 voucher.

Congratulations to you both!

Wear it Pink for Breast Cancer Now

In October, staff wore their best pink outfits to raise money for Wear it Pink. This national fundraising event raises money for Breast Cancer Now. Staff raised an amazing £51.88.



Refurbishment of Gorwell Play Area

Gorwell Play Area was becoming costly to maintain due to age. Working in partnership with North Devon Council, North Devon Homes secured sufficient funding to refurbish this play area to provide a range of equipment for all ages.

NDC were able to direct some of Section 106 monies from local developers to help fund this improvement. Work has started on site, and is expected to be complete by mid December.





Winter Wordsearch Competition

G P W I N T E R V E T I S
 D R C A S H O L L Y D P A
 O A E L T I K Y O H C C O
 P I T S A N T A T O H I P
 R R R M E T L N S S R D R
 E A E A S A D L N L I K A
 I M I S T L E T O E S E L
 N D C T E S R T W D T S A
 D N I O T N H I M D M E L
 E O C E I P T N A I A D X
 E L L B S L E S N N S O R
 R M E W A E D E M G C A I
 I E S L T U N L L S R N N
 N O C A E I B I G V L O L
 A L A H E T A L I A E L E
 E E R A V B T T E H D S A
 X R F N G L O V E S N H S
 D E R A E N Y O D E R A T

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|----------|-----------|-----------|
| WINTER | CHRISTMAS | TINSEL |
| SNOWMAN | HOLLY | MISTLETOE |
| REINDEER | SCARF | ICICLES |
| PRESENTS | GLOVES | SLEDDING |
| ELVES | BAUBLES | SANTA |

How to enter:

Fill out the form and send it to the address below by 14/12/2018 for a chance to win a £15 cinema voucher.

Name

Adult Child

Address

..... Postcode

Please tick this box if you do not wish to be named

How Many?

How many penguins (not including this one) can you find throughout this newsletter?

How to enter: Fill out the form and send it to the address below by 14/12/2018 for a chance to win a £20 voucher.

No. of penguins:



Please tick this box if you do not wish to be named

Name

Adult Child

Address

..... Postcode

For a chance to win, send all entries to:

Emma Wonnacott, North Devon Homes, Westacott Road, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 8TA by 14/12/2018