

# HomeNews



Written in partnership by customers and staff of North Devon Homes

Spring 2022



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Love2Shop  
Voucher

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Your Summer  
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# Welcome to our newsletter

We continue to live in strange times and as we finally emerge from the pandemic and try to get back on track, the threat to peace and further political instability persists. The impact of this will continue to cause economic disruption resulting in higher costs of living, supply problems and increases to energy cost for us all.

As a community business we continue to work hard to try and maintain our levels of service whilst keeping our costs as low as we can. We will though, continue our programme to invest in improving homes, making homes more energy efficient and where we can provide new homes for local people.

Despite these very challenging times it is a privilege to lead a business that works so hard to bring our customers, staff and board together to help us work in partnership to enable us to

make difficult choices and decisions for the benefit of our customers. I am particularly proud of the incredible work our customer representatives do, and the way they ensure we make the connection between your front room and our board room. They work hard and devote their own time to help keep us focussed on what really matters to you, and I am extremely grateful for their continued hard work.

We remain committed to working together to create communities where people want to live and I hope you find our latest issue of Home News informative.

*Martyn Gimber  
Chief Executive*



## Your chance to win

Want a chance to win a £20 Love2Shop voucher?  
We are giving away an e-voucher to one lucky customer who can answer our question below - and the answer can be found in this magazine!

**What is the date of this year's North Devon Homes Customer Summer Fayre?**

To enter, send your answer, along with your name, address and email to: [marketing@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:marketing@ndh-ltd.co.uk); or post it to: F.A.O. Marketing, North Devon Homes, Westacott Road, Barnstaple EX32 8TA. Competition entries must be received by 31st May 2022. Full terms and conditions are available on our website: [www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/competition-tcs](http://www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/competition-tcs).

# Summer Fayre

## You're invited!

After two years of having to cancel it, we are pleased to say that our Customer Summer Fayre is making a big return in 2022!

We have a lot of new customers reading this that may never have attended one of our Fayres before, or existing customers that never thought it would be an event for them, but we'd like to share some of the fantastic things that we have planned for this year's Fayre to encourage as many of you to come along for a free, fun day out for everyone!

## What's on?

The Fayre is all about fun and so for our young at heart we have bouncy castles, face painting and photobooths. For the youngest we are pleased to say we will have a dedicated soft play area: a chance for some playtime with our youngest customers.

The fun isn't just for the young ones though. You may be an adult but let us take away some of your 'adult worry' for just one day with this free event. You and your family will also be treated to a free meal too. All ages will find plenty to do with our partners and their stalls, with games and competitions galore.

No matter what your age, we have plenty to keep you entertained. Come and meet our team and involved customers in our



community café, and, if you feel like you want to join in, there'll be plenty of games and activities suitable for all ages!

## Who can I bring?

All customers living in a NDH home can attend our event for free! They can also bring a friend or two along with them to enjoy the day for free too! When reserving tickets, make sure you book a Guest Ticket for your friends and a Customer Ticket for each person in your household.

## Book your tickets online now!

[www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/summer-fayre](http://www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/summer-fayre)  
Thursday 11 August 2022, 11-3pm  
Petroc, Old Sticklepath Hill, Barnstaple

## Want to know more?

Email [marketing@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:marketing@ndh-ltd.co.uk) and we'll be happy to answer your questions.

# Customer Involvement

## Scrutiny Panel



**Customers on our Scrutiny Panel have continued to review and inspect a number of policies and services and have reported their findings and recommendations to the Customer Board Partnership.**

They recently reviewed our Permissions Policy, making five recommendations. For example, that we should “bust the myth” that most permission requests are declined, as 66% are approved. They also asked for requests to receive more explanation on why decisions have been made. As an extra part of this review the Scrutiny Panel recommended that locking lofts with large black bolts should be changed to installing more pleasing, smaller white locks.

They also reviewed and inspected the Asset Management Policy for the next three years, identifying areas they would like to be regularly updated on including: warm efficient homes, safe and healthy homes, investment in homes and estates and neighbourhoods. They made two recommendations, which are:



- The Panel should see and review all the associated policies.
- Review response repairs satisfaction telephone surveys from customers every six months at Scrutiny Panel meetings.

They also reviewed the Annual Return to Tenants publication, making six recommendations for the 2022 issue. In particular, they recommended that a group of customers is central in the design of the 2022 edition to ensure that customers understand how North Devon Homes is performing.

Finally, they reviewed complaints received over the last 12 months (including low level complaints) making five recommendations with future plans to review all complaints every six months and compare those against other housing associations' performance.

## Customer Board Partnership

**This panel of Customers, Board Members and managers meets every six to eight weeks looking at:**

- Health and safety with the Health and Safety Customer Partnership. The chair giving a concise update on all the activities the panel has undertaken, along with any findings, recommendations and actions required
- Scrutiny reports, presented by the Scrutiny Chair, to approve and understand customers' recommendations
- Updates from around the business
- Service performance against targets and our Corporate Plan



- All Fresh Ideas Group activities undertaken to understand customers' points of view and how they have influenced policy making and the services we deliver
- Results of any wider customer consultation.

To help work towards our energy efficiency and zero carbon aims, we are working with other Housing Associations across the south west, alongside our customer champion, to ensure that energy efficiency and zero carbon projects and choices of new systems are undertaken with customer input.



## Health and Safety Customer Partnership



**This partnership has continued to work closely with our Building Safety Manager, Will Bowden, putting customer safety first. Will and the team have been having the opportunity to be out and about engaging with other customers from Medard, Trouville, Normandy and Calvados, which has allowed them to identify any health and safety or fire risk issues which Will has taken action on.**



As part of this work, there has been a series of informal coffee mornings with residents where customers have been able to bring any concerns. The panel have also carried out on site fire inspections alongside the Building Safety Manager. These types of events are expected to take place across all our sheltered schemes over the coming months. If you would like to be involved as a resident where you live, look out for a personal invite we will pop through your door when we are in your neighbourhood.

We saw a recent success from our group, where after a visit from the Fire Service to meet the group seven residents took them up on a Home Fire Safety Visit proving the group's work reach goes beyond just communal areas by influencing customers to look at safety in their own home.





## Customer Involvement Events

**Customers have attended a number of national events representing North Devon Homes and showcasing the work they carry out as involved customers. These include:**

- Tpas' Scrutiny Week where up to 60 delegates from across the country came together on various virtual workshops to share ideas and successes of their Scrutiny Panels. Tpas is a membership organisation who work on tenant engagement.
- Our three Customer Chairs, along with the Head of Housing and Communities Manager, attended a conference in Bristol run by the Housing Regulator to "Meet the Regulator and help reshape consumer regulation". They networked with other customers from across the south west and shared the work they do at North Devon Homes.
- Monthly coffee mornings at Mariners which are becoming increasingly popular, with customers from Wrafton and Braunton joining in. These usually take place on the second Monday of the month.
- We have helped to facilitate monthly bingo sessions at Medard.

As life begins to return to normal, we will be developing more coffee mornings and events within other communities. Keep an eye on your notice boards and the NDH Facebook page for more details and dates.

Our involved customers would like to invite all customers to join them for a cup of tea or coffee at the Summer Fayre Community Involvement Cafe.

Our Community Involvement Team has been able to begin building back some social gatherings which have included:



## Fresh Ideas Group



**Fresh Ideas Group is an informal customer group open for anyone to join. Recently, together with some of our managers, they have been busy reviewing a variety of policies and customer correspondence making suggestions on what they would like to see changed and discussing new ideas.**

**For example:**

- Following a request from the Scrutiny Panel for a further review of some policies, they reviewed our Planned Maintenance, Response Repairs and Voids Policies.
- Viewed 60 example permission decline letters making recommendations to give more detail to customers when permission is refused.
- Customers were given the opportunity to share their ideas with the Income Manager

on how the new Income Collection Policy will look.

- Reviewed the Pet Policy with Neighbourhoods Managers, making a number of recommendations. For example, are customers aware of the responsibilities of owning a pet and the need to ask permission for each pet they own?
- Reviewed the new fencing guidance, set up for customers to clarify fencing ownership, boundaries and the types of fencing provided where North Devon Homes is responsible.

We are always looking for more customers to join Fresh Ideas Group. Everyone is welcome to drop in at any time. Transport and light refreshments are available.

**Please contact Tracey Williams by phone on 01271 313384 or email [tracey.williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:tracey.williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk).**

## Events

**2nd Monday of every month: 10.30-11.30am**

Coffee morning at Mariners Close, Braunton for Braunton & Wrafton residents

**3rd Wednesday of every month: 2.30-3.30pm**

Coffee afternoon at Sellick Court, South Molton



**1st Thursday of every month: 10.30-11.30am**

Coffee morning at Magdalene Lawn, Barnstaple

**3rd Thursday of every month: 10.30-11.30am**

Coffee morning The Candar, Ilfracombe

**3rd Friday of every month: 2-3pm**

Bingo at Medard, Barnstaple



# Development and Regeneration



## Development update

**Our development work continues and we have a busy year ahead with a number of sites starting and underway. We currently have planning permission progressing for Glebeland Villas in Bishops Nympton for two homes; Pill Gardens in Braunton for eight; Oakford Villas in North Molton for four; and Mariners Close in Braunton for 29 over-55 apartments.**

As well as the developments at planning stage at the time of printing, we are due to be starting on site at Beechfield Road in Fremington shortly, which will make more efficient use of the outside space at an existing property and bring two much needed new affordable homes to the area.

## ZEBcat

The Zero Energy Buildings Catalyst (ZEBcat) project is all but completed with works finished last year and is now in the monitoring phase. The project was partly funded by the European Regional Development Fund and was delivered in partnership with Devon County Council, other Registered Providers and Regen. This retrofit project has improved two existing homes, guaranteeing levels of comfort and energy saving for users whilst reducing their carbon footprint.



## Taw Wharf update

Progress on our Taw Wharf development continues and since Phase 3 launched back in the autumn we've seen another influx of sales. All the 2-bedroom homes in the first release of Phase 3 have now been reserved or sold and we have a large number of enquiries and early bird reservations for the next few releases of homes and apartments. We expect to have a show home ready for new viewings in the spring.

So far, sales at Taw Wharf have been successful as there is huge demand for new homes and the profits from these will help us to build 100 new affordable homes for local people in North Devon.



# Welcome to the team!

## A big welcome (and welcome back!) to the two newest members of our Regeneration and Developments Team.

At the end of March, our current Head of Developments, Stephen Snooks, took his well-earned retirement after helping us to build close to 500 new homes over his 13 years on the team.

Stephen's departure meant the need for something new, and so we welcome Tim Hamilton-Miller to the new role of Group Development Director, alongside the return of Paul Scovell, a previous member of Team NDH, as Development Manager.

Having originally grown up in Devon, Tim joins us from his roles in social housing and commercial development industry in London. He will be helping to push forward with our housebuilding targets and growth ambitions for North Devon Homes and Anchorwood Ltd to help provide more families a home in North Devon.

Paul joined NDH back in 2009, initially as a temporary member of our Customer Care Team. After discovering a love for developing houses, he moved across to our Regen Team, eventually becoming the Strategic Development and Regeneration Officer and, after a short break away over the last year to develop his experience in the industry, he now returns with more ambition to deliver more affordable housing than ever.

Alongside them, the rest of the Regeneration and Developments Team look forward to an exciting new chapter for the organisation, with an ambitious development programme and innovative projects to deliver new affordable homes for the communities we serve and especially for key workers in North Devon. There are new roles being brought into the team to help realise these exciting new projects, and Tim, Paul and the rest of the team look forward to updating you regularly on our progress.



## Community Services

# Meet our new Community Services Team

**Community Services was formed by combining our Neighbourhood Services Team, our Independent Living Services Team and our newly introduced Specialist Support Team.**

Bringing all three areas of specialism and expertise together will provide a “team around the home” that will offer practical support, assisting to support healthy tenancies to all of our customers. You can find out more about each team below.

If you think our team can help you or someone you know, please get in touch by calling 01271 312500 or e-mail [enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk).



## Independent Living Service

The Independent Living Service specialises in the management of sheltered accommodation for older persons and provides practical support and assistance to help people to keep their independence and live well in their homes. On top of this, for a small weekly charge, our additional support service responds to the needs of the customer and usually includes a weekly welfare check, support with managing bills and accounts, referrals to other agencies and encouragement to remain active and engaged.

We have also integrated our alarm service that used to run as Devon Homelink into this team. After some discussions with customers and staff it was decided that having a separate brand to sell our alarm service was a confusing

message and didn't highlight the great work that this service offered to customers. So, with the restructure we reintroduced the alarm service back under the North Devon Homes brand. You can find out more about our alarm service by visiting [www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/alarms](http://www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/alarms)





## Specialist Support Team

North Devon Homes' newest team offers a service to all North Devon Homes' customers to support you to live well and sustain your tenancy. The Specialist Support Team members will co-ordinate a person-centred support plan to best suit your support requirements and will work closely with you and external agencies to help you achieve your goals.

### We specialise in supporting those with:

- Mental wellbeing concerns
- Trauma
- Addiction
- The vulnerable and those with learning difficulties



- High rent arrears
- Family and young person challenges
- And so much more!

## Neighbourhood Services

Neighbourhood Services work closely together to deliver frontline, tailored support to our customers, helping them to sustain their tenancies and live independent, healthy lives. However, occasionally challenges arise and we have to work to address anti-social behaviour and neighbour disputes within our communities.

The 'Customer Guide to North Devon Homes Anti-Social Behaviour Policy' sets out what you can do if you are an NDH customer having problems with your neighbours.

We want to ensure that all our customers can enjoy peace, quiet and security in their homes. Everyone has the right to live in their homes free from excessive noise, vandalism, harassment and fear of crime.

### ASB can be reported to us by:

- Online at [www.ndh-ltd.co.uk](http://www.ndh-ltd.co.uk)
- In person or in writing at North Devon Homes, Westacott Road, Barnstaple, EX32 8TA
- By telephone to 01271 312500
- Or by emailing [customercare@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:customercare@ndh-ltd.co.uk)

## Clean up dates are back!

With restrictions easing in 2022, we are looking at a full calendar of clear up days in our communities. Exact dates will be confirmed before each event is publicised and we are always on the look-out for other areas that need an action day.

Remember, we also have our dedicated in-house Estate Services Team who are in your communities every day of the week too!

At the time of going to print, these are our provisional timings for a variety of areas:

March	April	May	June
<b>Heppenstall Road 22nd</b> <b>Springfield</b> <b>Date TBC</b>	<b>Forches</b> <b>Date TBC</b> <b>Bratton</b> <b>Flemming 27th</b> <b>Witheridge</b> <b>Date TBC</b>	<b>Woodville 11th</b> <b>Loverings and</b> <b>Magdalene 24th</b>	<b>Queen's Avenue</b> <b>The Candar</b>

### Future Dates

**July:** Wrafton, Medard

**Aug:** Gorwell and Frankmarsh

**Sept:** Slade Valley and Burnside

**Sept:** Forches Litter Pick

## The Straw Patch Project - Wellbeing and Support



The Straw Patch Project is a wellbeing centre, based on a small holding set in the beautiful North Devon countryside around Ilfracombe. Members of our new Community Services Team contacted the centre in the autumn of last year and, as a result, a group of NDH customers have been able to benefit from a series of weekly sessions run at the centre and funded by Active North Devon.

The funding was targeted at supporting over 55s to get active - to get out and meet people, learn new skills and contribute. Specialist Support Officer Mike Malin has led the NDH side of this project and says, "The project has been so beneficial for those who have attended. They really seem to have enjoyed each other's company and we can see people's moods lifting as well as their physical strength and fitness".

Activities have included volunteering in the gardens and arts and crafts - and there's always a hot drink and some cake before the

end of the day. Some attendees are now looking at going into volunteering opportunities in their community, such as the Ilfracombe Men's Shed. Based on the success of these sessions, NDH will be partnering with the project through 2022 to explore further sessions to widen the availability of the benefits of getting more active, making friends and building confidence to make a contribution in our communities. Keep an eye out for fundraising events to help maintain these sessions.

Want to watch a video of our visit in 2021? Visit <https://fb.watch/aU-mTeJq-P/> or find out more on The Straw Patch Project website: [www.thestrawpatchproject.com](http://www.thestrawpatchproject.com)

# In the Community

## Gardening for all Maximum garden, minimum budget

By Flora Gardiner (NDH Customer)

This is for beginner gardeners of any age, any plot-size. All you need is enthusiasm - knowledge comes over time. The deep or organic beds are gravel boards with cloches of plastic water pipe and insect net.

### Projects for spring and summer:

#### 1. Spring container

Did you buy spring bulbs last year? Never mind if not. You can make displays with multipacks of bulbs in flower: buy spring not summer bulbs. Mini Narcissi (daffodils), Muscari (blue hyacinth) and Iris look pretty in recycled pots, shallow tubs or troughs of timber or breeze block.

Use builders' merchant rummage for off-cuts, damaged or free timber. Plant bulbs to the same level as in the pot. After flowering, plant out (or 'guerrilla-garden' and plant in wasteland!). Bulbs spread happily under trees or shrubs where little else grows due to roots and lack of light.



#### 2. Mixed wildflower bed for summer (organic gardening principles).

Buy native annual mix (sold as, 'seed for pollinators' or 'annual meadow mix'), or 3-4 packets of Marigold (yellow); Cornflower (blue), Poppy (red, orange or yellow), Ammi (white) or Nigella (blue or pink), optionally adding annual grasses with a max height of 60cm/24 ins. Natives prefer poor soil so do not use John Innes 2 or 3.

Dig a patch to 3 metres (8-10 ft) long by 0.5 metres (18 ins) wide, removing weeds. Or empty

## Looking for an allotment?



We have an area in Whiddon Valley that needs some green fingers. If you're interested, please email [tracey.williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:tracey.williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk). We're committed to creating more green spaces as part of our Corporate Plan to create communities where people want to live.

compost onto a similar area of lawn using edging (see picture). Organic gardeners don't tread on soil to prevent compaction. Mix your seeds then 'broadcast' sow evenly (add silver sand if you wish, for bulk). If you want vegetables or cultivated flowers, top this bed annually with 3-4" of compost or well-rotted manure.

### Skills learned:

Planning; growing bulbs or vegetables; propagation by bulb and seed; organic gardening principles; deep beds; gardening terminology.

## Another chance to win!

If you'd like to win a gardening themed book bundle then read on! We want to see your green fingers in action. Whether you have a windowsill flower garden or a full allotment of veggies just send us a photo with an explanation of what you've done and how you did it.

We'll pick the winner based on the creativity and how thrifty the space is used to go along with the mantra of this column - Maximum Garden, Minimum Budget!

To enter, send a photo (we are unable to return originals) and description, along with your name, address and email to: [marketing@ndh-ltd.co.uk](mailto:marketing@ndh-ltd.co.uk); or post it to: F.A.O. Marketing, North Devon Homes, Westacott Road, Barnstaple EX32 8TA. Competition entries must be received by 31st May 2022. Full terms and conditions available on our website: [www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/competition-tcs](http://www.ndh-ltd.co.uk/competition-tcs).

# Safety

## Fire Safety

As part of our ongoing commitment to keep our customers safe, we continue with fire safety upgrades above the recommended regulation standard. We continue to meet with customers as part of our Customer Health and Safety Partnership, which you can read more about on page 5.

Our planned fire alarm upgrade installations have now been finished, having completed Medard House in 2020 and continuing with The Candar in 2022.

This year's fire door programme has also gone well and we are on target to fit over 120 replacement fire doors by the time you read this.



DEVON &  
SOMERSET  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE

## Message from the Fire Service

The fire prevention team from Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service is aware of the build-up of bins and waste close to homes and is warning residents about the risk of arson.

You are being asked to:

- take rubbish to designated bin areas
- avoid leaving bins or rubbish close to your property, especially at night
- remain vigilant to the risk of arson.

Thank you from the Fire Service for your help in reducing the risk of fire.



## Servicing to keep you safe

Our 2022 programme of smoke alarm servicing (for non-gas properties) is well underway and James Electrics will be contacting customers over the coming weeks to arrange convenient appointments for customers. The service visit is quick and ensures all alarms are working as they should, to keep you safe.

If your home has gas as well, your smoke alarm checks will be combined with your gas visit and Liberty Gas will be in touch to arrange your 2-hour slot appointment for your annual gas service when it is due.

## Gas service audits

Morgan Lambert have been appointed to carry out our gas service auditing. Each month a random selection of properties that have had their service in the previous month will be audited. We carry out gas audits to establish the effectiveness of our working practices, policies and procedures and to also ensure that we are keeping up to date with the ever-changing industry best practice. Morgan Lambert will contact customers directly to arrange these appointments.



## Radon surveys

Last year we held a trial survey of Radon levels in a selection of our properties. Radon is a naturally occurring gas which affects indoor air quality. Every single building in the UK has some levels of Radon within it, but in Radon affected areas these can be higher. Devon is at a higher risk for Radon levels and so we are carrying out further surveys to monitor these levels in our homes.

In most cases Radon levels will be completely normal and will fluctuate day by day and month by month. When we receive survey results over a certain level, we can take measures to improve the air quality in your home to reduce those levels with ventilation.

We plan to survey another 300 homes in 2022 and will be in touch with those customers directly to give more information.

**All our servicing visits are really important to keep you safe, so please ensure you take the time to allow access for these vital appointments. Thank you to everyone who has worked with us to get your servicing done on time.**

## Electrical safety

At the time of going to print, we have undertaken over 600 periodic electrical tests to

customers' homes and communal spaces in our blocks of flats. We are well on the way to achieving our target of over 700 properties by the end of March 2022.



## Defibrillator for Sellick Court

During the pandemic we were pleased to be able to install a defibrillator at Sellick Court with funding kindly donated by Liberty Gas. Although we hope it never has to be used, we are hugely grateful for the donation of life saving equipment at one of our schemes.

We also have defibrillators at a number of our sites across North Devon, which can be accessed by calling 999 in an emergency.

**Don't forget #TestItTuesday a weekly reminder to check the batteries in your alarms. It takes just a second and may save your life!**



## Energy Efficiency

### Funding win for energy improvements

NDH has been working with a consortium to bring funding into the south west for energy improvements to our properties. Our focus is largely on properties with E7 heating and we are planning to deliver improvements to the insulation of our homes and installing more energy efficient heating systems.

The first wave of funding was successfully won and £4.7m was announced back in February. Work has begun amongst the consortium to start the improvements to 48 properties in our rural communities. Within this, we have started working on two of our sheltered scheme properties. We are also drawing up plans for wave 2 of this funding so we can hopefully receive more funding to extend this project.

"It's good news that NDH have secured the Government funding to upgrade some property's energy efficiencies. We visited the customers benefiting from the first wave of the funding in Witheridge and Bishops Nympton and the customers are looking forward to the work starting and having more efficient and cost saving homes. We look forward to visiting when the project has finished." Kate, Energy Efficiency Customer Champion



### High heat retention storage heaters

This year we are on track to replace older style heaters with the most efficient units on the market to 35 homes. These units have modern features such as programmability and digital temperature controls.

### New boilers for over 100 customers

As part of our Planned Maintenance programme, we have fitted 100 boilers so far this year, out of our 140 planned installations, and are extremely grateful to PH Jones for their ongoing support with these upgrades to such a vital part of the home and energy improvements.



### Boxergy heating scheme at Witheridge

During 2021 we were able to obtain funding from the Energy Savings Trust to install a new technology called



Boxergy, which uses a combination of heat pumps and batteries and which is powered by the off-peak electricity tariff. This has been installed to seven properties in Witheridge and the success of this scheme will be monitored over a year.

# Energy consumption

With the ever-rising costs to our energy prices we thought it would be useful to share some energy saving advice and information to help you reduce your costs where you can.

The diagram below highlights the extent of the costs per hour of each device, so for example, each time you boil your kettle for three minutes it can cost 6p each time or if running your washing machine on an hourly cycle it will cost 45p.

This data was supplied for us by our partners 361 Community Energy, they are the experts in helping customers reduce their energy bills with some easy to fix cost saving tips.

## Here's some key tips:

- Put on a three-minute song as you enter the shower and aim to get out by the end of the music. This will cut the cost of your shower from 42p (for 10 mins) down to 12p and will save water.

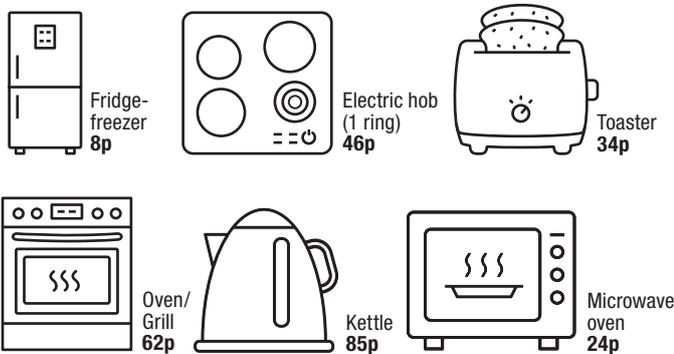
- Don't run your dishwasher half full - it'll cost the same 51p each time so you may as well fill to the brim!
- If you can, instead of having your heating on all the time, sometimes switch it to a lower temperature, and use a heated or electric blanket instead. This could save 90% of the cost from having your heating on.
- Devices use power even when on standby - so reduce costs by switching off devices at the plugs when not in use.

If you are struggling with bills or looking for tips on how to use less energy, you can request a FREE energy advice visit from the 361 Energy team. To book your advice visit, please go to [www.361energy.org](http://www.361energy.org) or call us on 01271 599361.

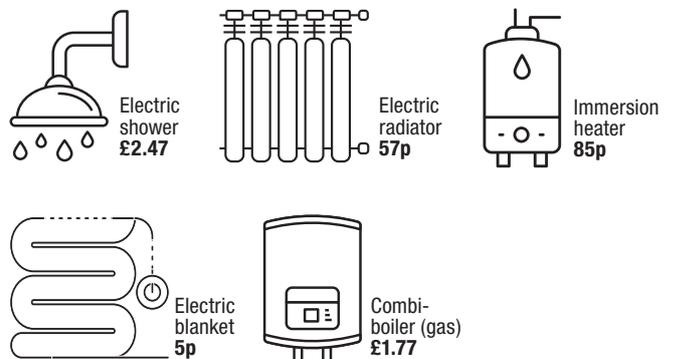


Average cost\* to run appliances for one continuous active hour

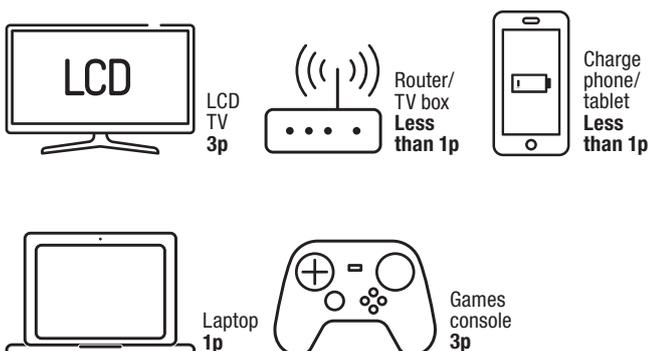
## Kitchen



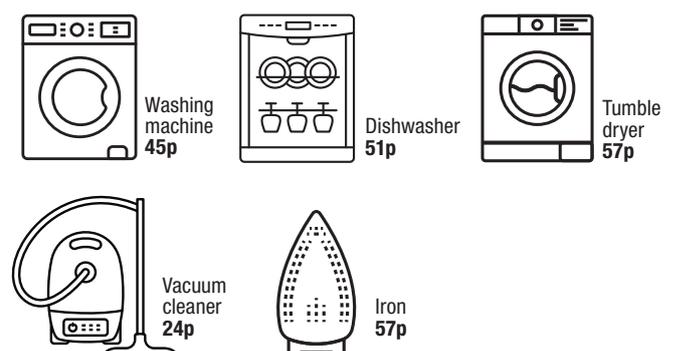
## Bathroom/heating



## Living room



## Utility



\*using average power consumption per appliance and cost/kWh of 28.34p (electricity) and 7.37p (gas) capped prices for Direct Debit customers 1 April 2022

# Home Improvements & Repairs

## New fencing guidance

We have recently worked with customers on our new fencing guidelines to help clarify to all customers whose responsibility it is when a fence needs repairs. You can find this information on our website.



## Hitting the 100s!

Our Home2Home Team has been busy with its biggest kitchen programme in recent years and has fitted over 100 kitchens so far this year! On top of this, they have also achieved a score of 100% in our customer satisfaction surveys.



## Aspen Grove and some free-bee residents...



We recently undertook a significant programme of external repairs and improvements to Aspen Grove which were redecorated externally and were enhanced by cement-based wall planks. The colour scheme used a combination of monotones and muted colours for the new wall planks which has really improved the overall look of the site.

Something that also will 'bee' of interest - during the renovation we found many new residents trying to live in our homes for free by building their hives in our roofs. As you can see in the photo, these residents were safely removed and have been rehomed (also still living rent free!) at the Honey Farm in South Molton! The honey hives they'd built also went as well, so next time you're enjoying some local honey it may well have come from our houses!

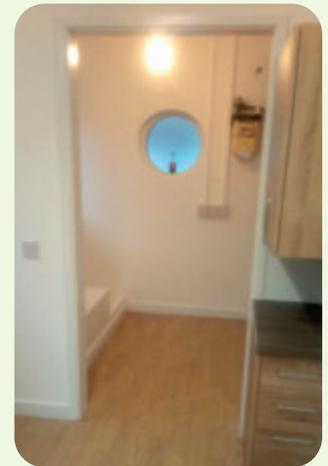


## A special project

As well as our standard programme of home improvements, in partnership with North Devon Council, we took on a special project to help a customer this year. We were able to do this due to being well on track with our planned and repairs works; something we are grateful to our customers for, for helping us to complete works in plenty of time by allowing access and jobs to take place.

After sustaining life-changing injuries, a customer required a full home adaptation to enable them to continue to live independently. The work on a one-bedroom bungalow included reconfiguring the internal layout and widening all doors to allow for wheelchair access, renewing the wet room and creating a new accessible kitchen, adding in ramps and new doors as well as the final redecoration.

There was a tight timescale, with work beginning in October, and the customer was able to move in just in time for Christmas.



## Door Programme

This year we are also working our way through replacement front, rear and communal entrance doors with 125 doors in the programme. We are aiming to have all these doors fitted as we run up to the end of the programme on 31st March 2022 and by the time you read this issue.

## Repairs

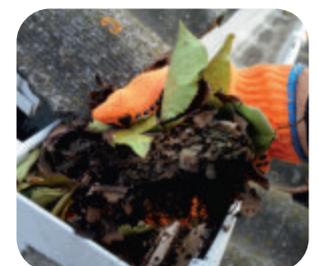
The Response Repairs Team has managed to build on the excellent work it did post lockdowns and maintain on time repair targets. The automated Customer Satisfaction Survey for the Repairs system has been operational for a year now and has proved very popular with customers and managers alike, as it has enabled us to respond more quickly to any issues that have may have arisen following a repair. We have also seen the level of compliments received for the team increase significantly, which is always lovely to hear.

## Other Home2Home updates

We are pleased to be on track with our bathroom programme, having completed 18 last year (at time of going to print) and we worked closely with North Devon Council to install 50 wet rooms for our customers.

Home2Home has also delivered the roofing programme this year and we are looking forward to expanding this programme over the next 12 months.

A gutter clearing programme is also gathering momentum, which, in conjunction with the ongoing work done by the Surveying Team, is part of our overarching Asset Management Strategy of proactive rather than reactive repairs and maintenance.





## Money Matters

### Rising costs? We are here to help!

We are extremely aware that many of our customers will be struggling with their everyday costs at the moment. Rising energy costs, increases in tax and reductions in Universal Credit are all adding to the pressures when paying your rent and bills.

We want to reassure customers that we are here to help. There's no judgement from us if you are struggling; anyone could be just one pay packet away from financial trouble and so we want to help in whatever way we can.

Here at NDH we have a dedicated Money Matters and Income Team. They are responsible for collecting our rent, but they are also here to help support you to sustain a financially healthy tenancy and lifestyle. The team can help you find support or additional benefits you may be entitled to. This may be the first time you need to claim for benefits, which is something we are finding more with Covid job losses and implications.

We are also part of a Credit Union Sustainability Partnership with eight other housing

associations in the south west and work together as a group to find new ways to offer financial support to our customers. One part of this is the offer of low interest loans or savings opportunities through our Credit Union, Westcountry Savings and Loans. Aiming to stop high interest lenders such as pay day loans and loan sharks from taking advantage of those who need help.

Through our partnership over the last three years we have already helped hundreds of customers secure low interest funding or a saving opportunity. All money saved with the Credit Union is protected for the customer, whilst being invested into helping other people in your community with affordable loan opportunities.

Remember there is also free debt advice available through StepChange or Citizen's Advice Bureau.

**If you'd like to speak to someone at NDH about money matters support, please call 01271 312500. If you'd like to know more about our Credit Union offer visit [www.westcountry.org](http://www.westcountry.org).**



**Want to save money on your bills?  
Try Martin Lewis' Money Makeover  
[www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/money-help](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/money-help)**

### Universal Credit - Are you better off?

You may see the Universal Credit (UC) campaigns at the moment promoting the benefits. We want to let all customers know they should always compare their entitlements on UC versus their current benefits before they switch over. Some people will find they are better off on UC, but many may find their benefits are reduced.

You can find free calculators to work this out for you on [www.entitledto.co.uk](http://www.entitledto.co.uk), [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk), [policyinpractice.co.uk](http://policyinpractice.co.uk).



# 20 money saving activities

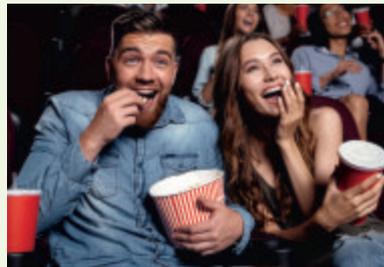
As we see the nice weather returning and school holidays fast approaching, we thought it would be helpful to share some free or cheap things to do to keep all ages entertained. Trying to think of days out or keeping your little ones busy can be an expensive job during the six week long break. Hopefully some of these activities will help you save money this summer.



1. Build a bug house or bee hotel - use old toilet roll tubes, sticks, bamboo. What creature will be the first to move in?
2. Sow some seeds - grow some tasty cress on your window sill or who can grow the tallest sunflower?
3. Have breakfast outside - listen to the birds. What birds can you spot today?
4. Explore a new place and take a picnic - find a new park, garden or beach.
5. Do a litter pick in your local area - who can pick up most in your family?



6. Spa day - nail varnish and a face mask can be very relaxing
7. Cinema trip - did you know that it's cheaper on a Monday in Barnstaple cinema?



8. Decorate a pebble - unleash your creativity by painting your favourite pattern or scene
9. Bike riding - the Tarka Trail is an excellent place to ride with ice cream treats along the way at Fremington and Instow!



10. Fly a kite
11. Build a sandcastle at the beach
12. Play a board game



13. Get crafty - What can you make out of a cardboard box?
14. Make homemade pizza - have lots of different toppings for people to make their own
15. Feed the ducks or go to a farm park / petting zoo
16. Outside yoga or obstacle course
17. Learn a new craft
18. Take photos of beautiful flowers and plants - can you find one for each colour of the rainbow?
19. Do some colouring in - use a colouring book or lots of designs online for all ages
20. Learn a magic trick



# Brain Teasers

For adults

## Quiz

1. What does "www" stand for in a website browser?
2. How long is an olympic swimming pool (in meters)?
3. What countries made up the original axis powers in World War II?
4. Which country do cities of perth, adelaide & brisbane belong to?
5. What is "cynophobia"?
6. What punctuation mark ends an imperative sentence?
7. Who named the pacific ocean?
8. How many languages are written from right to left?
9. What is the name of the man who launched ebay back in 1995?
10. What is the name of the biggest technology company in South Korea?

## Sudoku Puzzle

Every square has to contain a single number

Only the numbers from 1 through to 9 can be used

Each 3x3 box can only contain each number from 1 to 9 once

Each vertical column can only contain each number from 1 to 9 once

Each horizontal row can only contain each number from 1 to 9 once

Once the puzzle is solved, this means that every row, column, and 3x3 box will contain every number from 1 to 9 exactly once.

			9				6	7
	9						2	8
4	6			7	8			
3	2			9	4		7	
7			6		3			2
	1		7	8			4	3
			8	5			1	6
5		1					9	
6	7				9			

## Find the two identical arrows



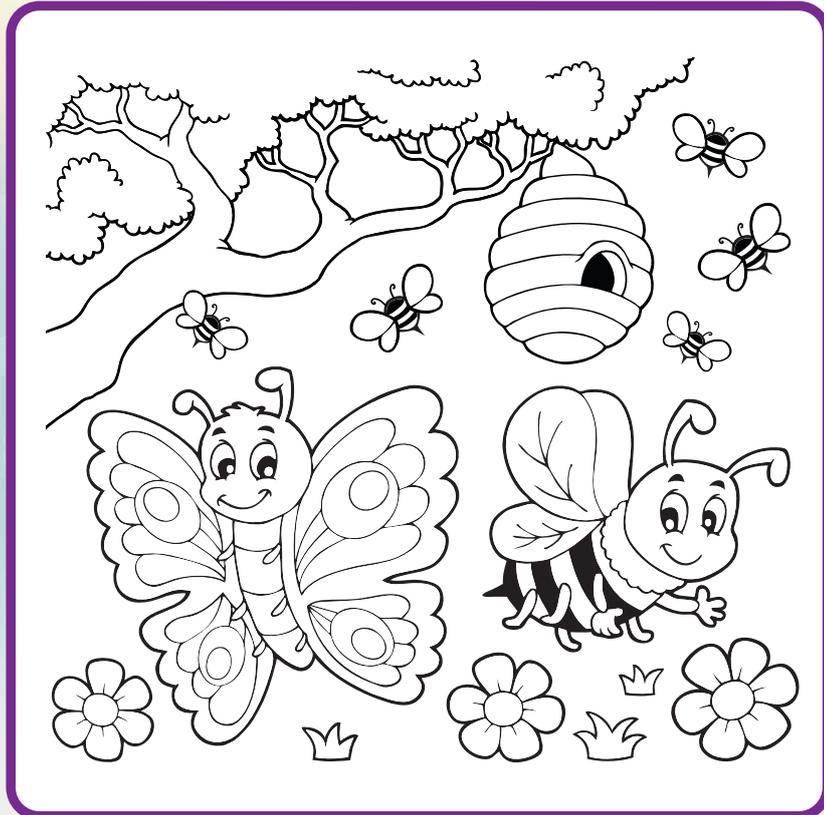
ANSWERS TO QUIZ 1) World Wide Web. 2) 50 meters. 3) Germany, Italy, and Japan. 4) Australia. 5) Fear of dogs. 6) A full stop or exclamation mark. 7) Ferdinand Magellan. 8) 12. 9) Pierre Omidyar. 10) Samsung.



# Just for fun

## Colour me in!

Can you add some colour to this buzzzzzy picture?



## Quiz

1. How many wives did Henry VIII have?
2. What is Sweden's capital city?
3. What's the highest mountain in the world?
4. What famous battle happened in 1066?
5. What crisp brand is Gary Lineker the face of?
6. How many makes up a baker's dozen?
7. Which is the only word in the English language that has no true rhyme?

## Spot the difference

Can you spot the 7 differences between the 2 images?



ANSWERS TO QUIZ 1) Six. 2) Stockholm. 3) Mount Everest. 4) The Battle of Hastings. 5) Walkers. 6) 13. 7) Orange.

# Noticeboard



We will always ask a few security questions when you contact us. Make sure your details are up to date so you don't run into any hiccups when you do need to reach us.

## Be aware

Be aware of so-called 'no win no fee' solicitors cold calling and bullying people into make claims for disrepair instead of making complaints or reporting repairs in the correct way - overall you could be down thousands of pounds in hidden fees if the claim is not successful, despite what they may tell you.

If you have a repair talk to us and we will work with you to get these done. We have an open and transparent complaints procedure should you want to make a complaint and would hate to see any customer defrauded based on false information and claims.

## Looking for broadband?

If you are a low-income household you could qualify for a social broadband tariff visit [ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs](http://ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing/social-tariffs)

It's never too early to save for Christmas, visit [www.westcountry.org.uk/christmas-savings](http://www.westcountry.org.uk/christmas-savings) for more information on some great ways to save.

