

# STREETS AHEAD

THE MAGAZINE FOR FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING TENANTS

**COST OF LIVING FINANCIAL SUPPORT  
COMMUNITY FUND OPENS  
OUR REPAIRS PROMISE**

**SUMMER 2022**

DEVELOPING HOMES AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR PEOPLE WITHIN WEST NORFOLK

**Freebridge**  
COMMUNITY HOUSING

# WELCOME TO STREETS AHEAD



Anita Jones, Chief Executive of Freebridge Community Housing

## Hello and welcome to the summer issue of Streets Ahead.

Over the last few months we've been seeing how the rising cost of living has been hitting many of our customers, so in this edition of Streets Ahead, you'll be able to read about our top tips for saving on your energy costs, and also information on how you can contact us if you are in need of some extra help. We have resources available to you; we don't want to see any of our customers struggling.

Also in this issue, I'm pleased to be able to share with you that we are once again opening our Freebridge Community Fund for applications, so if you are a local charity or group that is in need of funding, please do apply to the fund. You can find out how on page 8.

I've written a personal letter to you all about our backlog repairs progress, and our commitment to you. We want all of our customers to live in a safe, warm and good quality home. You can read this on page 5.

And finally, it's been an exciting few months and at the time of writing we are finishing our first round of Hillington Square consultations. It really has been great to hear your thoughts on our proposed plans and we look forward to updating you on this as we progress down the road. You can read more about our ambitious regeneration plans on page 15.

I hope you all get to enjoy the sunshine this summer, and I look forward to catching you in our next issue in September.

*anita*

## SUPPORTING YOU - WE CAN HELP

In the last issue of Streets Ahead, we talked about the many ways in which we can offer you our support, and following feedback from some of you we thought a reminder would be useful.

We can offer support in a number of ways including:

**1-2-1 reviews** to find out what individual support we can offer you.

Access to our **Tenancy Support Fund**, which has been put in place to provide financial help to those that need it most.

**Information and advice** that you need about paying your rent

and financial help that is available to you whether it's through us, or another partner agency.

**Tenancy and Independent Living workshops** which are run by Your Own Place, provide advice and training on how to improve your skills in a number of areas including financial management (more about this on page 8).

If you are struggling to pay your rent, the first thing to do is get in touch with us.

Please pick up the phone and speak to our Income Team as there will be ways that we can help. You can get in touch

by calling 03332 404 444 and choosing option 3 or emailing [income@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:income@freebridge.org.uk)

You can also visit our website [www.freebridge.org.uk](http://www.freebridge.org.uk) or our Facebook page [facebook/freebridge.com](https://www.facebook.com/freebridge.com).

**We are here to help you.**

**And there's more information about further financial support on the opposite page.**



# COST OF LIVING FINANCIAL SUPPORT

**At the end of May, the government announced a package of support to help households with the rise in the cost of living.**

This means that a large number of households will receive some kind of financial support to help with the cost of living, with **all** domestic electricity customers receiving at least £400.

**These payments will be made directly to eligible people across the UK, so claimants don't need to take any action.** Included in the package of support is:

## **£650 one-off Cost of Living Payment for those on means tested benefits**

Households on means tested benefits will receive a payment of £650 this year, made in two instalments. This includes all households receiving the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Pension Credit

The payment will be made in two lump sums, the first from July, the second in the autumn. Payments from HMRC for those on tax credits only will follow shortly after each to avoid duplicate payments. Claimants will need to be in receipt of one of these benefits, or have begun a claim which is later successful, as of 25 May 2022 to be eligible for the first of the two instalments. This payment will be tax-free, will not count towards the benefit cap, and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards.

## **£150 Disability Cost of Living Payment**

People across the UK who receive the following disability benefits will receive a one-off payment of £150:

- Disability Living Allowance (including Child Disability Living Allowance)
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Scottish Disability Benefits
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- War Pension Mobility Supplement

For the many disability benefit recipients who receive means tested benefits, this £150 will come on top of the £650 they will receive separately. As with the other Cost of Living Payment these payments will also be exempt from tax, will not count towards the benefit cap, and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards.

## **Energy Bills Support Scheme doubled to a one-off £400**

Households will get £400 of support with their energy bills through an expansion of the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

As well as doubling the £200 of support announced earlier this year, the full £400 payment will now be made as a grant, which will not be recovered through higher bills in future years.

## **£500m increase and extension of Household Support Fund**

To support people who need additional help, the Government is providing an extra £500 million of local support, via the Household Support Fund, which will be extended from October 2022 to March 2023.

**Further information about these this support can be found online at GOV.UK**

# THE FREEBRIDGE TENANT PANEL

Our Customer Voice Lead Rebecca Claydon, sat down with Anne from our Tenant Panel, to get an update on what they've been involved with in the last few months.

**Anne, who originally comes from Kings Lynn, left the area when she was 16 to train as a nurse. Anne spent many years in London working in a variety of hospitals helping care for people when they most needed it. Leaving London after reaching the position of Chief Nursing Officer, she decided to move back to Norfolk to retire.**

## Why did you become a Tenant Panel Member?

When I returned back to Norfolk, I was looking for something interesting to do, something that would involve my brain, get me thinking and help me make a difference for other people. I have been a Tenant Panel member for four years and it has been one of the best things I have done since coming back. In a small way, the Tenant Panel can make a positive difference for other tenants by helping Freebridge deliver its services in a way that tenants need them.

## What has the tenant panel been up to in the last quarter?

The panel have been focused on working together with the Freebridge Team to address

the backlog of repairs. We receive monthly update reports from the Responsive Repairs Team which we scrutinise and question. We are really happy to see that the backlog is reducing and at this stage it looks like it will be completed by November this year.

In addition, I am also part of the Customer Service Committee, which gives me the opportunity to work alongside Jas Rigg, who is also a tenant and sits on the Board, to look at areas of the business that needs improving.

We are supporting the Customer Voice Lead in delivering a survey to the 100 people who applied to participate with the TPAS (Tenant Panel Advisory Service) Engagement Research to establish the top five areas of service that Freebridge, together with the tenants, should focus on to improve.

I also attended an online Housing Ombudsman meeting in March where they discussed their first review of complaints annual report. The review found that 66% of complaints were upheld and it highlighted that poor complaint

handling considerably affected the trust residents have in their landlords to put things right and set out the challenges for social housing to overcome.

From the surveys, the Residents Panel members scored access to the complaints process with 68% rating as acceptable, but 70% felt more could be done by Landlords to improve their complaint handling. The same number thought that Landlords could do more to raise awareness and 77% of Residents thought that Landlords should do more to learn from the complaints that they receive.

During this discussion, it was clear to me that Freebridge is ahead of the curve with noise complaints, as currently there are 44 noise complaints sat with the Ombudsman and from the wider discussions it was clear that Freebridge deals with this area very quickly and efficiently in comparison to other Housing Associations.

Finally, together with two other Tenant Panel members, we participated in the TPAS sessions.





### What can you share with other tenants about these sessions?

The variety of voices heard in these sessions was brilliant. There were lots of new voices who were all keen to participate as they want to be a part of the improvements and make real changes. These sessions were really productive, as we were working alongside the Freebridge Team to put forward changes. The sessions have been inspiring and whilst change will not be immediate, change is about to happen!

Anne

Thank you Anne for taking the time to update everyone on what the Tenant Panel have been up to recently!

**We want all our customers to live in a safe, warm, good quality home. And that's why we've made repairs a number one priority at Freebridge.**

We're not where we want to be with the service we provide in this area, but we're on the right track and are working to a plan that's seeing us making improvements every day.

You rightfully expect an excellent repairs service from us, and we appreciate your patience while we work to achieve that because it's what we're aiming to deliver to you.

So, we've made some promises to you about our repairs service and what you can expect from us. We will:

- make it quick and easy for you to report repairs, whilst keeping you informed at each stage of our process
- endeavour to be able to provide you with an appointment day and time that suits your needs to carry out repairs
- aim to complete the repair on our first visit, and where this is not possible, we will agree a follow-on appointment date and time with you on the same day
- provide you with an emergency repairs service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- respond to your emergency repairs within 4 hours, urgent repairs within 24 hours and routine repairs within 28 days.

**We've already made progress in tackling the backlog of repairs and I'm pleased to tell you we've seen a 45% reduction in our repairs backlog since December 2021. Our target is to complete all backlog repairs built up through the pandemic by 31st December 2022 and we are on track to achieve this.**

What's more, 95% of our emergency repairs are carried out in 4 hours and 94% of urgent repairs in 24 hours. And, we've had some good feedback about your satisfaction with repairs – that's great to hear.

But we know that's not enough. We want and expect more for our customers. Which is why we've recently set up a new team to manage customer repairs. We're also going to be investing millions in our repairs service and improving customers' homes.

What does that mean for you? Well, we want you to keep reporting repairs in the usual way and for our part we will all – and that's our schedulers, our operatives, our coordinators, our managers, our leadership team – continue to do everything that we can to deliver the excellent repairs service you deserve.

**Get in touch to report your repairs on 03332 404 444**

*anita jones*

**Chief Executive of Freebridge**

Our new Home and Community Maintenance Team



# MEET THE NEW TEAM TRANSFORMING YOUR CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE ON REPAIRS

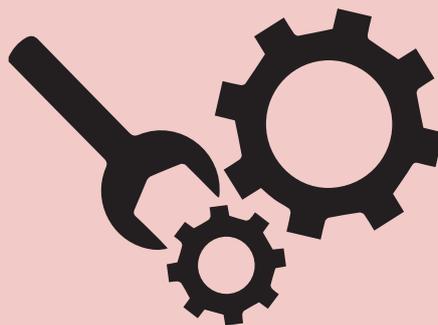
It's hugely important to us at Freebridge that our customers live in homes that are safe and well maintained, and to help us to do this last year we contacted all customers about their homes. Over the last 10 months, our team have spoken to over 4,500 households and logged over 2,400 new repairs.

In addition to the calls we made we also set up a new Home and Community Maintenance Team (shown above) to help make getting a repair completed in your home easier. This is the team you speak to when you call through to us for your repairs.

We are now continuing to work through the outstanding jobs as quickly as we can. Since January, we have completed almost 3,000 outstanding repairs, in addition to reducing wait times for those new repair jobs that our team receive on a daily basis.

We know that there's still a lot of work to do and that many customers have been waiting longer than we would like - but we're getting there.

Here's a quick overview of what we've achieved from January through to May of this year:



## REPAIRS AT FREEBRIDGE

At the start of the year we had **6426** historic repairs outstanding.

We've now completed almost **50%** of those and now only have **3522** of those to do.

**In May we completed:**

**95%** of our emergency repairs in 04 hours

**94%** of our urgent repairs in 24 hours

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT IF I STILL HAVE WORK OUTSTANDING?

We have a team of colleagues dedicated to completing outstanding repairs, spread throughout the north, south and central areas of West Norfolk, and they're working hard to complete as many jobs as quickly as they can on their visit. For more complex works we are working with a number of specialist contractors, to ensure we can complete everything required. If you told us about something which might need further inspection, such as damp and mould, we will contact you to book a date to do this.

If you haven't already heard from us about any outstanding repairs you may have we will be in touch over the next few months to book an appointment with you. During June you will also have received written confirmation of the work that we have a record of that needs completing in your home.

We are focused on clearing all outstanding repair jobs by November this year and we appreciate your continued patience as we work to achieve this.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF YOU HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO ME YET?

Since August 2021 we have attempted to contact everyone living in our homes and have been fortunate enough to speak with over 4,500 of you. And throughout June we made further attempts to contact those of you we hadn't already spoken to.

If we didn't manage to contact you, you will have received a letter explaining how you can contact us to talk about any concerns you may have with your home.

We would still love to speak to everyone, so if you haven't already had the conversation, please call us on 03332 404 444 and choose option #1 or email us at [repairs@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:repairs@freebridge.org.uk).

**If you have any concerns about your home, the work that is needed, or how it is impacting on you or your family in the meantime then please do call us on 03332 404 444 to discuss what else we can do to help.**



## HOW TO READ YOUR GAS OR ELECTRICITY METER

**Your supplier needs regular readings from your gas or electricity meter to work out your bill.**

Smart meters usually do this automatically, but if you have a standard meter, you'll usually need to do monthly readings to make sure your bill is not too low, or especially not too high.

A digital meter has a digital display and it will show five numbers in black or white and then might be followed by 1 or more red numbers.

To read your meter, you'll need to write down the first five numbers shown from left to right. You can ignore any other numbers, including those in red.

Some of you will have two readings, usually for normal/day and low/night settings, which means you'll need to supply both of these to your energy provider.

**If you need more information on how to read your meter visit: [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)**



Our new team taking your calls.



# FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY FUND OPENS

Every year Freebridge makes £5,000 available to the Freebridge Community Fund. This fund gives local groups the opportunity to apply for small grants of up to £1,000, to support community and voluntary activity that meets the needs of communities within West Norfolk.

So if you're involved with a local community group, or know someone who is, then the good news is that we are now welcoming applications for this year's funding.

The Community Fund welcomes applications from charities and community organisations whose aims include:

- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Tackling disadvantage;
- Supporting local solutions to local needs
- Promoting community cohesion
- Developing sustainable and supportive communities, and
- Improving the environment for Freebridge's tenants.

Applications are assessed by a panel of Freebridge employees and Tenant Panel members.

Freebridge Director of Customer & Communities Sophie Bates said: "Freebridge's vision is to provide quality homes and excellent services for current and future generations so that the people and communities of West Norfolk can thrive. The Freebridge Community Fund is a great way to allow us to do this, through the money we've provided in support of projects which are helping improve people's lives all across the area."

If you'd like to apply to the fund, head to [www.norfolkfoundation.com/funding-support/grants/groups/freebridge-community-housing-fund/](http://www.norfolkfoundation.com/funding-support/grants/groups/freebridge-community-housing-fund/)

**The closing date for applications is Friday 22 July 2022.**

## INTERESTED IN LEARNING NEW SKILLS? BUILDING YOUR CONFIDENCE?

If you want to share your skills, build your confidence, meet people in a similar situation and go away with some top tips then you might be interested in a Tenancy & Independent Living Skills Plus workshop.

Run by yourownplace, who are working alongside Freebridge and a number of other local housing associations, these FREE workshops cover a huge range of topics including money management, self-care, wellbeing and digital skills.

The next workshops are taking place on the:

- 9th, 10th, and 11th August 2022, taking place in King's Lynn,
- 18th, 19th, and 20th October 2022, taking place in Downham Market
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd November 2022, taking place in King's Lynn, and
- 29th, 30th November, and 1st December 2022, taking place in King's Lynn.

If this sounds like something you'd like to know more about, send us a message and we'll put you in touch with our Tenancy Support Team who can get you booked on.



# STRUGGLING WITH YOUR ENERGY BILLS?

We've teamed up with Agility Eco who offer a free advice service - called Connect for Help - for people who may be struggling to access affordable energy in their homes. By calling us, you will be able to speak to someone who will understand exactly what support you need.

They can provide a range of support including:

- an in-depth energy advice session to help you with issues such as your bills or your meter,
- a money advice check to make sure that you're getting all the benefits you're entitled to,
- energy saving improvements, such as heating systems or insulation,
- Or, you could have your energy tariff checked and if you're not on the best one for you, you will be given advice to help you switch.

If you'd like to speak to us about how we can help, please call us today on 03332 404 444, hold the line and ask to speak to our Tenancy Support Team.



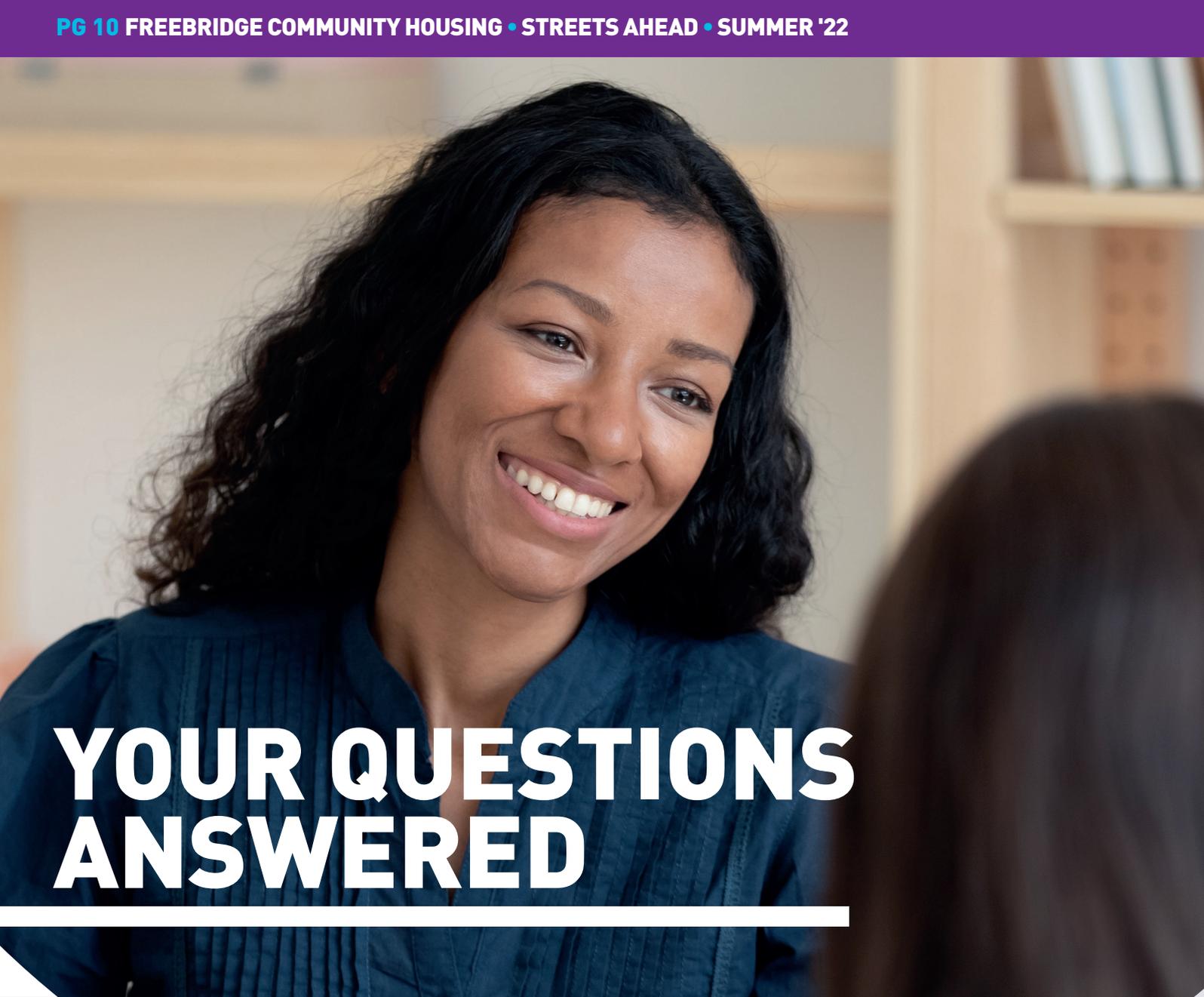
## HAVE YOU RECEIVED YOUR ENERGY REBATE?

If you pay your Council Tax via Direct Debit, you should have already received your energy rebate from the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.

If you don't pay your Council tax via Direct Debit, you have until the 4th September 2022 to apply for the rebate.

Customers can apply for the energy rebate through the borough council website here: [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20002/council\\_tax/944/150\\_council\\_tax\\_energy\\_rebate](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20002/council_tax/944/150_council_tax_energy_rebate)

If you are in receipt of any amount of council tax support, you will be eligible for a payment of £175 instead of £150.



# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Welcome to our questions and answers page. Thank you to everyone who responded to our call out for questions in May. We received three questions overall, which we answer on this page.

We'll be asking for your questions again for a week in July, please follow our Facebook page - [www/facebook.com/freebridge](http://www.facebook.com/freebridge) - to find out more. Alternatively, you can speak to your Support Advisor and ask them to email your question to us. We look forward to hearing from you in July.

Here are your questions answered:

**Q: I would like to apply for a home but I find the forms very difficult to complete. I have tried a few times but it always times out before I can finish. When I try to get back to the online form it keeps telling me my date of birth is incorrect! Is there someone who can help me with this please?**

**A:** Whilst the Homechoice registration process and website is something that's owned by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk, rather than Freebridge, we are certainly able to help.

If you need help or assistance with filling out the form, the Borough Council can provide help, please call them on 01553 616200 and ask to speak to the Homechoice Team. Alternatively colleagues in our Lettings Team at Freebridge are always happy to help - to speak with them please call us on 03332 404 444 and choose option 4

**Haley, Lettings Manager**

**Q: Are you planning to replace storage heaters, half the flats in my row have central heating, and the rest have outdated expensive storage heaters?**

**A:** Most of our heating is upgraded through our programme of works, which is calculated using the initial installation date of the heating system. This is not to say that we only replace heating systems on these grounds, but this is the fairest and best way of keeping all our properties to the highest standards.

We are always more than happy to visit customers at home and discuss their particular circumstances.

Therefore, we encourage you to contact the Repairs Team and provide your details to them to arrange a home visit.

**John, Gas Manager**

**Q: As I'm on a very tight budget, will you install an over bath shower? This would help with the finances and water usage.**

**A:** We are committed to improving all of our new and existing homes. We understand the importance of having a shower over the bath as one of the key improvements, helping with water conservation and providing flexibility for families.

Whilst we will not be able to instal these in all homes immediately, we are planning to start trialling the install of these when properties become empty. We expect that this programme will take a number of years to bring all properties to this standard, and would encourage anyone with any specific concerns or requirements to contact us direct, to discuss what we may be able to do to assist in the meantime.

**Paul Newbold, Director of Development**

**Back in March, you asked us about Freebridge's culture, and we wanted to take the time to respond, that it deserved.**

**Q: What is the culture at Freebridge?**

**A:** At Freebridge we treat everyone fairly, with respect and dignity. We promote equality of opportunity, and value the differences between our customers and everyone who works at Freebridge Community Housing. We are committed to a culture of inclusivity where colleagues are encouraged to be themselves at work.

We do not tolerate any discriminatory, or bullying behaviour of any kind and we encourage the reporting of any such behaviour, so that any such matters can be addressed appropriately.



# 10 reasons to choose My Home Contents Insurance Scheme

- 1) Apply over the telephone or complete an application form
- 2) Covers loss or damage to food in a fridge/freezer (excludes damage caused if the electricity supplier deliberately cuts off the supply to your home)
- 3) Covers theft, water damage, fire and many more household risks
- 4) Covers tenants improvements (up to £2000 or 20% of the sum insured whichever is the greater)
- 5) Covers theft or attempted theft of contents in sheds, outbuildings and garages (up to £3,000)
- 6) Covers damage to external glazing for which you are responsible
- 7) Covers replacement and installation of locks for outside doors or windows and alarms, if keys are lost or stolen
- 8) You don't need to have special door or window locks (just a lockable front door)
- 9) Up to 35% of the contents sum insured for damage to your landlord's fixtures and fittings which you are legally liable for as a tenant (excludes loss or damage whilst your home is unoccupied).
- 10) Flexible regular Pay-As-You-Go payment options (fortnightly and monthly premiums include a transaction charge)

Exclusions & limits apply. A copy of the policy wording is available on request.

Ask your landlord for an application pack or to apply for cover today, call My Home on:

**0345 450 7288**

email: [myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk](mailto:myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk) or  
visit [www.thistlemyhome.co.uk](http://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk)



Rebecca on an Out &amp; About talking to our customers in South Lynn



## CUSTOMER VOICE - LOUD & CLEAR

**Rebecca, our Customer Voice Lead, gives an update on what's been going on with customer engagement in the last few months, and what's on the horizon!**

The last few months have been really busy behind the scenes as we've been starting to get the foundations in place for customer engagement.

We have now come to the end of the TPAS (Tenant Panel Advisory Service) Engagement Project that we spoke about in our previous Streets Ahead magazine.

We are now taking away thoughts as to how engagement should look in the future from customers and colleagues that were involved with this research and the results will be posted online soon.

What has been very clear, is the importance of communication,

improving Streets Ahead and offering more opportunities for you, our customers, to engage with us.

You will see from our Tenant Panel update in this edition that they also participated in the TPAS Engagement Research and will now be working alongside me, the Customer Service Committee and the customers who participated in the TPAS research, to make sure that we get the right framework in place to meet your needs.

I can also confirm that we are working on five projects over the next 12 months:

- Implementing a digital engagement platform which will offer realtime conversations and feedback;
- Creating a new engagement framework which will offer us all an open, honest and transparent platform to engage with one another;

- Rolling out our Customer Charter and measuring its performance;
- Conducting bi-annual surveys with an external survey provider to ensure the data we collate is accurate and robust, and;
- Hosting spotlight sessions on the top five areas that the Tenant Engagement Group feel Freebridge should focus on.

We really want to know what our customers think and we will be giving you the opportunity to join in the conversation. We will also ensure that the results are communicated to you on a regular basis.

I look forward to updating you on our progress in the next edition of Streets Ahead Until then, have a wonderful summer!

Rebecca

Alice celebrating her birthday during the Jubilee celebrations

# JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS AT WINDSOR (PARK)

**At the beginning of June we know that many of you got involved in the celebrations that took place over the extended bank holiday weekend for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It was great to see so many of you getting involved with decorations up across West Norfolk helping to celebrate Her Majesty's seven decades on the throne.**

One of the events that we went along to was an afternoon of festivities arranged by the Windsor Park Residents Club at Freebridge's sheltered scheme of the same name in the centre of King's Lynn.

The event, which occurred a few days after the main celebrations took place in the Community Room at the scheme where the group

normally meet each Wednesday to play bingo and have a cup of tea and chat together.

Rowena Sharps, one of the organisers of the event said "We were lucky enough to receive a grant from the Norfolk Community Foundation's Jubilee Fund to help us put on the event for the residents – and this also allowed us to provide a commemorative gift to everyone who came along to remember the day.

"So many of these kinds of events haven't happened over the last couple of years because of Covid – so it's been wonderful to be able to bring everybody together to celebrate such an important moment in history."

As well as marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee the group were also there to celebrate Windsor Park resident Alice Ely's 98th birthday. Happy birthday Alice!

Other joining in with the celebrations



# PLANS UNVEILED FOR FURTHER £25M INVESTMENT AT HILLINGTON SQUARE

**Freebridge Community Housing launched a public consultation on a proposed £25 million investment at Hillington Square, King's Lynn, in May. This will provide 70 new homes and a wide range of community benefits. This will bring the total investment in Hillington Square to £45m.**

The plans from Freebridge involve completing the refurbishment of Vicarage and Farrow House and the redevelopment of the residential blocks known as Aitken, Chestnut and Norris Houses, as well as the Providence Street Community Centre to the rear of Hillington Square.

It is proposed that in their place, 70 affordable homes will be delivered, built to the highest environmental standards. They will provide a mixture of one, two and three bedroomed homes.

As well as the much-needed new homes, a number of purpose designed community spaces, will be created to upgrade the much used facilities previously located at the Providence Street Community Centre.

Anita Jones, Chief Executive of Freebridge Community Housing,

said: "We are delighted to be sharing with the community our plans for 70 new, high-quality, affordable and environmentally friendly homes at Hillington Square together with the refurbishment of the buildings adjacent to Bridge Street and All Saints.

"The current residential blocks and Community Centre are tired and need replacing. Our proposals will deliver the new, affordable homes that King's Lynn needs and we encourage members of the community take part in our consultation events.

"Alongside the homes we are also proposing a range of community uses. We will be working with our current clients who provide services from the Community Centre and reaching out to other new potential providers to ensure that as much as possible we can shape our proposals around their requirements."

**A number of you came along to our consultation events and filled out our surveys and we are currently looking at our plans to reflect this.**

**We hope to have more updates on this soon. If you would like to stay up-to-date, keep an eye on [www.futureofhillingtonsquare.co.uk](http://www.futureofhillingtonsquare.co.uk)**

Kevan Crane, Pathways Manager



## INTRODUCING PURFLEET PATHWAYS

**Purfleet Pathways is a new multi-functional space on the North Lynn Industrial Estate, which provides next-step training and employment opportunities to people in King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Those who are vulnerable and living with complex needs face multiple disadvantages and barriers to housing and employment, and Purfleet Pathways has been introduced to tackle this.**

**Pathways to Employment** is a project that has been developed to provide holistic support when getting back into work. The journey out of homelessness is often not a straightforward one and Purfleet can provide long term support beyond moving people into housing. The project provides practical workshops in furniture upcycling, woodwork and warehousing as well as training courses in retail, and customer service.

The other main project Purfleet is running out of their new space is **House 2 Home**.

Furniture restored and upcycled through the workshops will be used to furnish homes for those moving in to independent accommodation for the first time. Moving from homeless or shared accommodation to your own tenancy is an exciting time but can also cause anxiety around your new environment and how you will cope. By running this project, Purfleet aims to make sure every individual has not just a house, but a home.

Purfleet is always looking for volunteers, so if you would like to give some of your time to this important local charity, they have lots of opportunities available this summer.

Allan who volunteers on the House 2 Home project said: "In my younger years, I was brought up in a really tough area. I am very acutely aware of the impact homelessness can have on people. I now have that opportunity to fully commit to supporting the Trust

in something I feel passionately about. One of the absolute highlights for me in my role is when we deliver furniture to clients moving to their first home and we get a big 'thank you', that's what it's all about for me, a two-way experience".

Allan who volunteers for Purfleet Pathways



**If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Joy Wylie at [joywylie@purfleettrust.org.uk](mailto:joywylie@purfleettrust.org.uk) or call them on 01553 767829.**

## Training at Purfleet Pathways

Purfleet Trust aims to run courses and workshops to support individuals to progress towards employment.

Accredited courses in Customer Service and Warehouse Operations will be on offer alongside workshops in upcycling and woodwork.

The courses and practical workshops will help learners to develop their skills and produce a strong CV, and access one-to-one support as they prepare to enter or re-enter employment.

We recently delivered our first Customer Service Course and one learner said: "I found the course enjoyable and learnt the importance of how you behave around customers and being mindful of their experience. I would definitely recommend the course if you are looking for a job."

The next courses coming up are listed below. To sign up to get regular updates, or to register your interest, please call 01553 871375 or email [kevan@purfleetrust.org.uk](mailto:kevan@purfleetrust.org.uk)

- **Level 1 Certificate in Customer Service:** Starting early September – please make contact for more details.
- **Delivering A Cracking CV:** 7th, 14th & 21 July
- **Level 2 Certificate in Warehousing and Storage Principles:** Date tbc – please make contact to be put on waiting list.



## DO YOU NEED A TRANSLATOR TO SPEAK WITH US?

Please let us know at the start of a call with us if you need a translator and we can arrange one for you. This goes for any printed material too - we want speaking with us to be easy, language should not be a barrier.

### Ar jums reikia vertėjo, kad galėtumėte su mumis kalbėtis?

Telefoninio pokalbio pradžioje pasakykite mums, ar jums reikia vertėjo, ir mes tuo pasirūpinsime. Tai taikoma ir bet kokiai spausdintinei medžiagai: mes norime, kad jums su mumis kalbėti būtų lengva, ir kad kalba nebūtų kliūtis.

### Vai jums ir nepieciešams tulkoņājs, lai sazinātos ar mums?

Lūdzu, zvana sākumā paziņojiet mums, ja jums nepieciešams tulkoņājs, un mēs to nodrošināsim. Tas attiecas arī uz drukātiem materiāliem - mēs vēlamies, lai sarunāties ar mums būtu viegli, un valodai nevajadzētu būt šķērslim.

### Czy do rozmowy z nami potrzebny jest tłumacz?

Prosimy o poinformowanie nas na początku rozmowy, czy potrzebują Państwo tłumacza, a my zapewnimy jego obecność. Dotyczy to również wszelkich materiałów drukowanych - chcemy, aby rozmowa z nami była łatwa, a język nie powinien stanowić bariery.

### Precisa de um tradutor para falar conosco?

Por favor, informe-nos no início da chamada se precisar de um interprete e nós arranjaremos um. Isto aplica-se também a qualquer material impresso - queremos que seja fácil falar conosco e o idioma não deve ser uma barreira.

### Você precisa de um tradutor para falar conosco?

Por favor, informe-nos no início da chamada se você precisar de um tradutor e nós providenciaremos um. Isto vale também para qualquer material impresso - queremos que seja fácil falar conosco e a linguagem não deve ser uma barreira.

### Нужен ли вам переводчик для разговора с нами?

Пожалуйста, сообщите нам в начале разговора, если вам нужен переводчик, и мы его предоставим. Это касается и любых печатных материалов – мы хотим, чтобы разговор с нами был легким, и язык не должен быть препятствием.

# MAXIMISING YOUR INCOME

Some of you may have seen, that we recently ran a 'Maximising Your Income' takeover day over on our Facebook page. We're sharing our top tips again for those that may not have seen it.

**Have you checked what you are entitled to?** You might be able to claim some additional benefits. Whether you are working or not, take a look at a benefit entitlement calculator like [www.entitledto.com](http://www.entitledto.com), or you can contact our Income Team.



**If you pay Council Tax and are on a low income**, you may be able to claim Council Tax Support.

**Are your children entitled to free school meals?** Check here: [www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals](http://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals)



**Can you get help with free NHS prescriptions?** Check here: [www.gov.uk/help-nhs-costs](http://www.gov.uk/help-nhs-costs)



**If you are already claiming benefits and/or tax credits – are you receiving the correct amount?** Are you affected by:

- Deductions from Universal Credit
- Under occupancy deductions
- Benefit cap
- Two-child limit



If so, contact the Income team on 03332 404 444 to complete a benefit review

It is estimated that **500,000+ people in the UK aren't claiming Universal Credit**, or any alternative benefit/tax credit, when they could be.



You can apply for Universal Credit online at [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit) or if you cannot access the internet, by telephoning the Universal Credit Helpline on 0800 328 5644.

**Could you be entitled to a little extra help?** Check for any available grants, such as:



- Freebridge Community Housing's Tenancy Support Fund
- Norfolk Assistance Scheme

For information and access to either of the above please contact a member of the Support Team on 03332 404 444.



**If you are married, are you eligible to claim Marriage Allowance?** Check your eligibility at [www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance](http://www.gov.uk/marriage-allowance)

**Where can I go for help?** If you want help or further information about any of the above and how to maximise your income, please contact the Income Team at Freebridge.

You can contact our Income Team on 03332 404 444 and choosing option 3, or by emailing [income@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:income@freebridge.org.uk)



HM Government

# Are you over State Pension age, or know someone who is?

**Pension Credit** tops up pension income and can help with day to day living costs.



If you are over State Pension Age, you may be eligible to claim **Pension Credit**, even if you own your home or have savings.

People who claim **Pension Credit** may also be able to get:

- help with heating costs
- help with rent and Council Tax
- a free TV licence for those aged 75 or over
- help with the cost of NHS services, such as NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments

**Don't miss out.**

Check your eligibility at [gov.uk/pension-credit](https://gov.uk/pension-credit) or by calling 0800 99 1234



# FAMILY FUN PAGE

In the last issue, we ran a small colouring competition for all of our younger Streets Ahead readers to mark the Queen's Platinum Jubilee - thank you to those that sent in your entries!

Congratulations to Noah, aged 4, from North Lynn who was our winner - we've got a £10 toy voucher on its way to you!

We're running another competition on Facebook at [facebook.com/freebridge](https://facebook.com/freebridge) - so make sure you head over to our page to find out more!



## GETTING TO KNOW YOUR NEIGHBOURS THROUGH FOOD!

This time, we've been sent a recipe from one of our customers. Thank you to Martina from South Lynn!

We are sure your Portuguese neighbours will describe this dish like a soup but at the same time a salad, and even better it doesn't need an oven to make!

### Chilled Tomato Soup

#### Ingredients:

- 5 ripe tomatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 onion, minced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- Cucumber, minced (optional)
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- Oregano (to taste)
- 1 loaf of stale sourdough bread, cut into one-inch cubes

#### Instructions:

1. Place cut tomatoes in a large bowl, followed by the onion, garlic and (if using) cucumber. Lightly mash together with your hand. Season with oil, vinegar, oregano and salt. Taste and adjust if needed.
2. Pour about four cups of cold water into the bowl until it has the consistency of a light soup. Stir. Taste again to check the seasoning.

3. Serve with the bread cubes, stirring them in like croutons. The goal is to have a chunky texture without letting the bread get too soggy.





# OPT IN TO RECEIVE A DIGITAL COPY OF STREETS AHEAD



## A STAKE IN FREEBRIDGE: HOW TO BECOME A SHAREHOLDER

Freebridge Community Housing is inviting its tenants to become shareholders. Shareholders have the right to attend the Annual General Meeting and vote on major issues in the running of the organisation.

Shareholding is designed to increase tenants' stakeholding in their housing provider and is a way to become involved in what Freebridge does.

If you need more information about how to become a Freebridge shareholder or just want to know more contact the Governance Team on 03332 404 444 or email [shareholderenquiries@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:shareholderenquiries@freebridge.org.uk)

**Streets Ahead is sent to you every few months because you are a customer of Freebridge Community Housing.**

We send the magazine to all our customers so we can tell you about the services we provide and the work we're doing as a registered provider of social housing.

If you no longer want to receive a paper copy of Streets Ahead delivered to you, and want to receive a digital copy

instead, just let us know, and we will arrange for you to be removed from our mailing list.

To opt-out of receiving a paper copy, you can either call us on 03332 404 444, or email your name, address and preferred email address to [communications@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:communications@freebridge.org.uk) or you can complete the form below and send it to us at FAO Communications Team, Freebridge Community Housing, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1DZ

please sign in this box

**Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

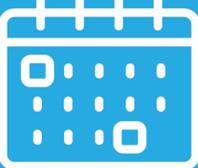
.....

.....

**Email address:** .....

.....

# HOW WE PERFORMED

		January	February
	<p>% of our emergency repairs that were completed within four hours</p> <p>our target for this year is to achieve above 90%</p>	93%	94%
	<p>% of our urgent repairs that were completed within 24 hours</p> <p>our target for this year is to achieve above 90%</p>	91%	91%
	<p>Average number of days to re-let a home once it becomes empty</p> <p>our target for this year is to achieve below 20 days</p>	31	59
	<p>% of the complaints we received that were dealt with within the time set out in our policy</p> <p>our target for this year is to achieve above 100%</p>	94%	91%
	<p>% of our tenants that were satisfied with how we have handled cases of anti-social behaviour</p> <p>our target for this year is to achieve above 90%</p>	n/a%	n/a%
	<p>Rolling number of complaints at the end of the month since the 1st of April 2021.</p>	286	309

## March

87%

87%

52

85%

75%

344

The statistics shown in the coloured bars on the left detail how we performed in the final quarter of the 2021/2022 year.

This way of displaying information about our performance was endorsed by the Tenant Panel following discussions with them, as we wanted to make the data as clear and easy to understand as possible.

We get the data from customer surveys that are conducted by telephone, or we may have emailed you to fill one in online, so if you do get a call or an email we'd really appreciate it if you could spare the time to answer these questions because it helps us know how well we're performing and where we need to improve.

As you can see our performance against Emergency and Urgent Repairs timescales remained above target in January and February, although dropped just below in March.

Satisfaction with the cleanliness and safety of our communal areas is marginally below the target but is well above what it was.

And our year to date average of overall re-let times is lower than the figures for the the fourth quarter of 2021/2022 but still remains higher than we would like and above the target set, continued work is planned to help reduce this through changes we're making in dealing with empty homes.



of our tenants were satisfied with the cleanliness and safety of our communal areas our target for this year is to achieve above 85%

83%

Six monthly figure performed between October - March

# HOW TO CONTACT US

## **VISIT or WRITE TO US at:**

Juniper House, Austin Street,  
King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 1DZ

We're open between:

8:45am - 5.15pm (Monday-Thursday)

8:45am - 4.45pm (Friday)

and closed on Saturdays, Sundays and  
Bank Holidays.

**TELEPHONE:** 03332 404 444

We've been made aware that some mobile  
phone providers now charge for calling  
numbers beginning with 0333, if your provider  
is one of these you can also contact us on 0800  
1691694 - which is free from all numbers.

Out of office hours our main number diverts to  
our 24 hour emergency service.

**WEBSITE:** [www.freebridge.org.uk](http://www.freebridge.org.uk)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/freebridge](http://www.facebook.com/freebridge)

**TWITTER:** @freebridge



member  
**tpas**



WORLD  
LAND  
TRUST™

[www.carbonbalancedprinter.com](http://www.carbonbalancedprinter.com)  
Barnwell Print - Reg. 2102  
CBP009705

By using Carbon Balanced Paper  
through the World Land Trust on this  
publication we have offset 334kg of  
Carbon & preserved 64sqm of  
critically threatened tropical forests.

**Carbon Balanced Paper.** One of the most sustainable forms of communication that  
will reduce your carbon foot print and promote CSR. [www.carbonbalancedpaper.com](http://www.carbonbalancedpaper.com)

This magazine is wrapped in 100% compostable  
film. Mailing film certified as biodegradable and  
compostable to the European standard EN13442.

## **TREATING EVERYONE FAIRLY**

Freebridge treat everyone fairly. We promote equality of opportunity and value the differences between our customers and everyone who works for Freebridge Community Housing. All our employees, contractors and consultants must treat colleagues and customers with politeness, tolerance, and respect, regardless of their age, colour, disability, ethnicity, sex or gender identity, marital status, nationality or national origin, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities or any other unjustifiable reasons.

**We will not tolerate unfair discriminatory behaviour of any kind and we encourage the reporting of any such behaviour. We will act upon all complaints appropriately.**

The views expressed in this publication are those of contributors, and not necessarily those of Freebridge Community Housing. This entire publication is under copyright, and is not to be duplicated or reproduced in any way without permission.

**IF YOU NEED ANY HELP TO UNDERSTAND THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE GET IN TOUCH.**

DEVELOPING HOMES AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR PEOPLE WITHIN WEST NORFOLK

**Freebridge**  
COMMUNITY HOUSING