

Our Homes Newsletter

A newsletter for Chesterfield Borough Council tenants and leaseholders

Spring 2017

A photograph showing a person's hands placing various items into a blue recycling bin. The items include a clear plastic bottle, a green can, a white coffee carton, and a newspaper. The person is wearing a black watch. The background shows a brick building.

Recycling in flats

Inside:

Action against drug dealers

Influencing decisions in your community



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

More action against drug dealers

On 20 December, the neighbourhoods team obtained court orders to close two properties that were being used to deal drugs. The properties were closed the same day. This follows three closure orders earlier last year in the same neighbourhood.

This action was again made possible by local people who were not prepared to put up with serious nuisance connected with drug dealing in their neighbourhood. They provided us with evidence over an extended period that persuaded the court to give the orders. A lot of the evidence presented to the court was anonymous. However, the case was made even stronger when some residents attended the hearing and told the court what had happened and how it had affected them. In the words of the judge, "I am satisfied the case paints a picture of wholly inappropriate and long-standing behaviour."

Councillor Helen Bagley, our cabinet member for customers and communities said "No one should put up with this sort of behaviour. If people are prepared to give the neighbourhood team information about what is happening, they can take action. They can even use information from witnesses and victims who do not want their identities to be revealed. If you are suffering from nuisance from people who are ruining your community by selling drugs, please just contact the Neighbourhoods Team to talk it through. They will never let anyone know your identity unless you allow them."

Mike Moore, the Neighbourhoods Manager said "This action involved hundreds of hours of our officers' time with help from our legal service and the police. I am very proud of their dedication and professionalism. They were motivated by a determination to help the residents who were suffering from the greed and extreme selfishness of others and who were prepared to help us to do something about it."



Community litter pick

Residents in Newbold and Racecourse have teamed up with our neighbourhood rangers to clear the area of litter.

Residents and staff from the council meet up on the last Wednesday of every month for an hour or so to clear litter in their area. The council provides items such as litter picks, disposal bags, and high visibility vests for people to use. They finish the morning with a community lunch at Stand Road Park Pavilion. This has helped them to get to know their neighbours and a community feel is growing strong.

Lorna Catchpole, neighbourhood ranger has said how amazed she is that the community are showing how they care for their area. She has also noticed how local residents are taking much more care not to drop litter since raising the profile through local residents regularly litter picking.

Local tenant Pam Meyrick said, "The litter pick is a brilliant idea and I wish more people would get involved. It is good to keep the place tidy. I have a good time meeting everyone afterwards when we socialise together and I have got to know people who I saw around the neighbourhood but didn't know before. Now I know them and we speak to each other when I see them out. It has been a chance to meet new people and make new friends."

If you interested in creating a local litter picking group in your neighbourhood, please contact our neighbourhood rangers on 01246 345 142 who will be happy to help organise something similar in your area.

Please be aware that enforcement officers from the council can issue a £60 fixed penalty notice to members of the public who are caught littering.

Council, police and schools work together to put litter in the spotlight in Mastin Moor

Pupils in Staveley area are getting on board with an anti-litter campaign run by the police and Chesterfield Borough Council.



Officers from the Staveley Safer Neighbourhood Policing Team have joined forces with the council to encourage the community to put their litter in the bin.

The issue has come to light particularly in the area around Lansbury Avenue Park, Mastin Moor, which needs to be cleared every day. The only other park in the area which is cleaned as often is Queen's Park in Chesterfield town centre, which is much larger and sees a greater number of visitors.

PCSO Sue Cooke and Mark Rawson, the council's enforcement officer have spoke to youngsters about the concerns and effects of litter on the wildlife during assemblies over the past few weeks. They visited Norbriggs Primary School, Woodthorpe Primary School and Netherthorpe School, and will be visiting others in the areas over the next few weeks.

As well as showing the youngsters a slideshow of the rubbish and affects it has on the environment, the students at Netherthorpe got to see the types of litter left behind, which included food wrappers, drinks cartons and even dirty nappies.

PCSO Cooke said: "Everyone in our community has a responsibility not to drop litter, young and old alike. Our message is simple, put your rubbish in the bin and help keep our area clean and tidy. It was great to speak to so many young people to raise awareness of the issue, and we hope they'll encourage their parents, friends and other relatives to also dispose of their waste correctly."

Recycling at flats

Every year each household in Chesterfield produces on average three quarters of a tonne of waste. Without recycling and composting, this waste would go for disposal which wastes resources and money.

The majority of our residents don't want to contribute to this waste and are happy to use the bins provided so they can recycle from home. In 2015-16 we collected 18,172 tonnes of recycling across the borough which meant we recycled and composted 45 per cent of the waste we collected. Our target is to recycle 50 per cent of the waste collected by 2020.

To help us to achieve this, putting the right stuff in the right bins is really important. When the wrong items are put in the recycling bins the bin is contaminated. Unfortunately around 70 per cent of recycling collected from our blocks of flats is contaminated. This can lead to the waste not being recycled, collected separately and sent for disposal. This leads to additional cost for our residents and damages the environment.

Recycling is easy – check out below to see if you are using your bins correctly.

For residents with individual bins please follow the guidelines on the calendar that was left with your bins in December.

Information for occupants of FLATS only

Shared large black bins should be used for:

- All paper, cardboard, plastic containers, plastic bottles, tins and cans, empty aerosols



Shared blue bins should be used for:

- All glass bottles and jars



Items which cannot be recycled

Please place these items into the general waste bins:

- Polystyrene packaging and trays
- Pyrex kitchenware and drinking glasses
- Window glass
- Light bulbs
- Cutlery, crockery, pots and pans
- Large plastic items e.g. buckets, children's plastic toys
- Waxed or laminated packaging e.g. drinks cartons
- General waste
- Garden waste
- Black plastic sacks
- Nappies and sanitary items
- Food waste
- Dog waste or cat litter - bagged

Items including large plastic items, light bulbs, garden waste and drinks cartons can be taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centre on Sheffield Road.

For further information please call 01246 345 734.

We have two services that can help you sort out rent arrears

Tenancy sustainment team - get help when you're struggling with tenancy matters.



The team helps tenants who have difficulty keeping their homes because they are vulnerable in some way and are more likely to get into rent arrears. They can help tenants by making sure that they are getting the the benefits they're entitled to.

They give advice on managing money, explain housing rights and responsibilities and help tenants get services that they struggle getting access to. The officers can help people who have trouble sustaining their tenancy and can prevent them from being evicted.

This is how the team helped Hannah. Her name has been changed.

Hannah is a young woman with a one bedroomed flat. Her housing costs are paid by Universal Credit and are always paid a month in arrears. Hannah is ill and when the job centre told her that she had to go on work experience she missed some sessions because she was too ill to go every day. Her Universal Credit stopped and she was living on her rent money as she had no money for food, electric or gas. She was not paying her rent and she was at high risk of being evicted.

The money she received was paid into her bank account and because she was overdrawn, this was immediately taken by the bank. With the help of her tenancy sustainment officer she managed to see her doctor who helped her access health services to deal with her illness and to provide the evidence that she should get disability benefits, so she didn't need to look for full-time work.

The tenancy sustainment officer helped Hannah to claim disability benefits and helped her to go to the Derbyshire Unemployed Workers Centre to appeal against the sanctions on her Universal Credit. They helped her clear the arrears by increasing her income with the benefit Personal Independence Payment, and by getting some Discretionary Housing Payments. Her family helped her to deal with the overdraft fees from the bank so she could access hardship payments. With the basics in place and getting support, Hannah can keep her home.

If you are having problems managing your home, and are willing to work with the tenancy sustainment team to deal with your issues, please ring 01246 345 354 to speak to someone who may be able to help you.

Rent recovery team - We can help you sort out your rent arrears

The team has supported many tenants when they were facing eviction due to rent arrears, allowing them to continue to live in their homes instead of being evicted. Tenants can receive advice for budgeting and benefits which can help them pay their weekly rent on time and reduce any arrears that have built up. Rent advisors support tenants by offering them a payment plan agreement to pay off their arrears at an affordable rate. If a rents advisor is unable to help a tenant then they can signpost them to another department or agency who can help.

Here is an example of where we have supported a tenant who was having difficulties managing his rent and was under threat of eviction. The person was willing to work with the rent recovery team to address their problems.

A young man with their first tenancy accrued very high rent arrears. The rent recovery team sent letters and was unable to contact the tenant by telephone so they carried out a home visit. At this point the tenant explained he experienced mental health difficulties and had presumed that Housing Benefit was helping to pay their rent.

He received a notice to quit which is the council taking legal proceedings that could lead to eviction, so it was important to deal with the benefits quickly. A rent advisor visited and in a short time the housing benefit issues were resolved. Some of the rent arrears were cleared by backdated housing benefit and the remainder of the arrears by applying for Discretionary Housing Payment which the man was entitled to but he had been unaware of this.

He is now able to stay in his home, there are no rent arrears and he has the knowledge that there is support available should he require it in the future.

Discretionary Housing Payment is a fund managed by the council's benefits team. This money is to help tenants who receive Housing Benefit and need help to pay rent arrears, Bedroom Tax or Benefit Cap due to welfare reform changes.

Please always contact the rent recovery team if you have a problem with paying your rent. If we are aware you have problems with paying your rent, we can try and help. If we are not aware of any problems, we will assume you are able to pay and you could risk eviction. The sooner you contact the team, the fewer arrears you will accrue and the easier it is to help you from facing action.

The rent recovery team can be contacted on 01246 345 501/345 504 and are keen to help tenants who are willing to work with them to address their problems.

Improving your homes 2017 to 2021

Although tenants will welcome rent reductions over the next three years, we have taken a close look at our finances over the same period and how we can continue to provide services to our tenants and leaseholders.

The rent reduction will mean that by 2020 we will have had £10 million less income than anticipated.

Our staff, councillors and tenants have looked at the funding available for improvements to tenants' homes including: central heating, roofs, kitchens and bathrooms.

They recommended a series of principles about investment over the next five years and where and when this would take place. This was approved by councillors at their February meeting. In total, we will spend £19 million in 2017/18.

In order to try and reduce the amount of money spent on day to day repairs, we will carry out work in areas where we have been seeing a high level of day to day repairs and where our stock condition survey tells us we need to carry out improvement first.

Borough Local Investment Programme Areas by Year

AREA	External	Blocks	Unity	Environmental
Barrow Hill-New Whittington-Old Whittington	2021/22	2020/21		2019/20
Birdholme-Grangewood	2021/22	2018/19		2017/18
Boythorpe-St Augustines	2019/20	2018/19		2020/21
Brampton-Loundsley Green	2020/21	2021/22		2017/18
Brimington	2020/21	2018/19	2021/22	2019/20
Duckmanton-Poolsbrook-Inkersall	2017/18	2018/19		2021/22
Dunston-Newbold Moor-Whittington Moor	2017/18	2019/20		2018/19
Green Farm Estate-Holme Hall	2021/22	2021/22		2017/18
Hady-Hasland-Spital-Tapton-Town Centre	2018/19	2021/22	2020/21	2018/19
Highfields-Newland Dale-Pevensley-Peveril-Stonegravel	2019/20	2020/21		2021/22
Lowgates-Mastin Moor	2020/21	2020/21		2020/21
Middlecroft-Staveley	2021/22	2020/21		2020/21
Newbold	2018/19	2018/19	2019/20	2018/19

The group has also been looking at ways we can deliver our services cheaper and more efficiently. We will tell you about some of these other changes in our next edition of Our Homes and will also be consulting with you in more detail over the course of the year.

In addition, as all of the council's properties now meet the Decent Homes standard, we work on an area basis rather than individual properties.

To do this, work will take place in a series of packages:

- Externals – works to the outside of a property e.g. windows, doors, roofs, pointing and external wall insulations
- Blocks – work as described above to blocks of flats
- Unity (non-traditional build) – the work to ensure the future structural stability of the council's 122 unity dwellings
- Environmentals – work to areas such as: fencing, gates, footpaths, communal areas

Work to replace kitchens, bathrooms, rewires and central building will continue to take place based on its age and condition.

In addition, we will also refurbish two sheltered schemes in 2017/18, build nine new council homes and begin work on the estate improvements at Barrow Hill.

Help us change our housing services

Due to increased pressure to reduce costs to our services, we are reviewing many areas of our housing services, and we want tenants to influence those decisions.

We are looking for tenants to join one of four focus groups, each requiring five tenants. They are:

- Group 1 – Rents and arrears
- Group 2 – Standards of properties when ready to let / lettings / marketing of empty properties
- Group 3 – Repairs and tenant obligations
- Group 4 – Tenancy agreement and garage agreement review

We expect the groups will meet approximately fortnightly for around four months between 25 April and the beginning of August. They will review areas where savings can be made and make those recommendations for the council to consider and put in place. The aims are to find savings but also maintain a good standard of service for tenants.

To take part please contact the tenant engagement team on 01246 345 147 or email tpenquiries@chesterfield.gov.uk for further information.





Local children plant 22,000 daffodil bulbs at Pevensey estate

We funded planting of 22,000 daffodil bulbs on the Pevensey estate working in partnership with Newbold Primary School and Outwood Academy autistic unit. Friends of Pevensey Green also got involved with the planting and the Friends of Wimborne Community Room gave their support by providing refreshments for all volunteers and children involved.

The mayor and mayoress attended and helped the children from both schools to plant the bulbs on two days in November. The mayor said "I'm absolutely delighted to have been invited to take part in the daffodil planting project in front of Newbold C of E Primary School on Cranbourne Avenue and again on Salisbury Avenue with Outwood Academy. They were excellent activities for the youngsters who thoroughly enjoyed the event and of course being in the fresh air. My thanks to our staff and all at the schools for making this happen and for an enjoyable time."



Pevensey estate looks delightful now the daffodils are in bloom and the children can see their hard work come to fruition.

If you have an idea for a project you would like us to consider, please contact the tenant participation team on 01246 345 147 or email tpenquiries@chesterfield.gov.uk

Let us have your ideas to improve your area

We are looking for ideas from tenants of how to improve the area they live in. We have a budget that allows tenants to put forward ideas to improve their environment.

The project has to benefit a number of tenants, and not just one, therefore communal or shared areas will best meet our criteria. We have to consult with people living in the areas affected. This feedback from tenants will help us decide if the idea is suitable. The budget is limited so we are unable to consider ideas such as additional car parking as this is very expensive. The budget can only be spent on one-off, low maintenance projects.

In the past we have supported community gardens where tenants have committed to maintain them in the long term and they provide plants for the continuing years. We have helped provide fencing at communal schemes where additional security was required. We have provided communal seating areas where tenants feel there would be a benefit to the area. We have also provided bike stands, daffodil planting across estates, converted drying areas to communal areas for tenants to use in the summer months, to name but a few.

If you have an idea you want us to consider, please contact the tenant participation team on 01246 345 147 or email tpenquiries@chesterfield.gov.uk



Mobile office visiting your area in 2017

Look out for the mobile office visiting your area in 2017. The mobile office is used when we are carrying out consultation in an area. We are putting together a programme for the good weather months for you to visit us with any housing issue you wish to discuss with us. On Tuesday mornings every month between 1 April and 31 October, we will be visiting the following areas:

First Tuesday of every month:

- 9:30am – Lansbury Store, Mastin Moor
- 10:30am – *Devonshire Close / **Darley Close, Staveley (alternate)
- 11:30am – Inkersall Green shop area, Inkersall Green Road

Second Tuesday of every month:

- 9:30am – *Newland Dale / **Flamsteed (alternate)
- 10:30am – Near to blocks 32-63 Green Farm Close
- 11:30am – Shop area Holme Hall

(*Apr/June/Aug/Oct or **May/July/Sept)

Call in to discuss how we can improve your area. We have some money which can be spent on communal areas that the council own and we want your ideas. Tell us about any housing issue you have such as anti-social behaviour, support needs for older people including assistive technology, access to benefit advice, access to managing your tenancy if you have rent arrears and general council issues such as dog fouling, etc.

Come and chat with us, we would love to see you. For more information, contact us on 01246 345 147 or email: tpenquiries@chesterfield.gov.uk

Third Tuesday of every month:

- 9:30am – *Annesley Close / **Talbot Crescent, Hasland (alternate)
- 10:30am – Opposite Co-op, Grangewood Road
- 11:30am – Shop area Loundsley Green

Fourth Tuesday of every month:

- 9:30am – Arundel Close, Newbold Moor
- 10:30am – *Nisa Store, Station Lane / **Redhouse Close, Old/New Whittington (alternate)
- 11:30pm – Opposite shops, Barrow Hill



Wasps and bees

In spring, bees and wasps become active again.

Many people report sightings of wasps, particularly in April and May. These are actually bees; usually honey bees, solitary bees mortar and mining bees, tree bees or white tail bees.

If the insect is going into holes in the brickwork, you should look carefully to see if they are going in or out of a single hole or air brick or investigating several holes over an area wider than one square foot. Wasps will use a single hole, but bees, particularly mortar bees will investigate several. A further test is whether the activity continues on cold overcast days or just warm sunny days. Bees are generally more active on sunny days.

Although bees are capable of stinging, they are generally not aggressive and will not sting unless provoked. Bees should be left alone.

We do not routinely deal with bees as they are valuable to the environment. Honey bees in particular are beneficial to the environment and we are committed to saving swarms and re-homing them in safe locations.

The council offers a pest control service to treat wasp nests. However, we do not remove nests. It is very uncommon for the same nest to be used more than once.

Cost of service:

Wasps - £45 full price and £35 concessionary rate (restricted to some benefits).

Free telephone advice including ways you can deal with pests yourself 01246 345 345.

Home advisory visits are charged at £20 (no concessionary rate).

More information can be found here:

www.chesterfield.gov.uk/bees



Need a cooker or oven installed?

Moving into a new home, or buying a cooker or oven?

Our fully qualified and experienced team can save you the hassle by fitting your electric or gas cooker/oven for you:

- Electric cookers £54.72 (including VAT)
- Gas cookers £61.34 (including VAT)

All prices include connection to existing pipework and any minor alterations. Major additional pipework or cable alterations will cost extra.

To get a free, no obligation quote, or find out more, ring us on 01246 345 551.



New community garden on Wardgate Way

We have been working with Holme Hall Unite to identify an area for a community garden for residents. An area has been found on Wardgate Way next to Woodlands Residential Home.



Last year, the group and the council developed a partnership with Marks & Spencer who also wanted to help create an area for people who suffered dementia and it seemed a good opportunity to collaborate on a single project.

M&S asks their stores across the country to create volunteering opportunities for their staff called "Spark Something Good" which will happen in June 2017.

Staff from the Chesterfield M&S store will be at Wardgate Way between 5 and 9 June to help create the community garden for local people.

M&S and Home Hall Unite have asked other companies to get involved and so far Rolls Royce, Wilko, the National Trust, the Eden Project, Kew Gardens, three local garden centres, Chesterfield College, Holme Hall Primary School plus some other local businesses have all agreed to give either their time, equipment or funding towards this project.

The college will be designing and building a pergola and some raised beds and the school will paint and plant up some plant pots as well as making bat and bird boxes.

This is a fabulous project for local people to get involved in. If you would like to take part in this project between 5 – 9 June, even if it for only a couple of hours, please phone Tony Hedley from the group on 07547 757 670 for more details.

Damp and mould handy tips



Tenants sometimes contact us because they believe they have damp in their home but mostly the problems are caused by condensation. Condensation is caused by people failing to ventilate the property and not as a result of any property defect.

- Open windows and doors to allow a change of air
- Ensure vents and chimneys are not blocked
- Don't use paraffin or Calor Gas heaters as they produce moisture. This breaches the tenancy agreement
- In very cold weather, keep your home warm enough
- Avoid boiling pans and kettles for a long time, ventilate, and use lids where possible
- Close bathroom and kitchen doors when in use so that the moisture does not go into cold rooms
- Wipe surfaces where moisture settles
- If you can, leave your window slightly open or your night ventilators open at night
- Think about whether you need to dry clothes on radiators



Careline and Support Service

Careline is a 24/7 alarm monitoring and response service supporting you to live independently. At the push of a button you will be connected to one of our trained operatives who will ensure you receive the support you need.

If you need immediate assistance, one of our responders will attend to aid you. As part of the full support package, you gain access to our Support Service which provides support specific to you in your home.

The team work with every individual to develop a personalised support plan which promotes safety and independence.

If you think this might be suitable for you or a loved one, please call us on 0300 323 0076 or email on queries.careline@chesterfield.gov.uk



Get in touch

Council contacts

Careline (including support service)

T: 0300 323 0076

Customer services contact centre

T: 01246 345 345

Environmental services (bins and recycling)

T: 01246 345 345

Home improvement agency (minor improvements)

T: 01246 345 748 / 345 701

Homelessness prevention team

T: 01246 345 825

E: homelessness.prevention@chesterfield.gov.uk

Homelessness (out of hours)

T: 08456 058 058 or 01629 532 600

Housing option team (housing waiting list and allocations of council housing)

T: 01246 345 700

E: onthemove@chesterfield.gov.uk

Housing Benefit and Council Tax support

T: 01246 345 345

Minicom: 01246 345 285

Neighbourhoods team

T: 01246 345 071

E: neighbourhoods.team@chesterfield.gov.uk

Rents and rent recovery

T: 01246 345 345

Reporting repairs during office hours

T: (Freephone) 0800 5875 659

E: repair.requests@chesterfield.gov.uk

Repairs - emergency only (out of hours)

T: 01246 345 041

Text / voice messages

T: 07960 910 264

Smart phone app

Get our updated free smart phone app. Just type Chesterfield Council into your app store.



Bank holiday closures

Council offices will be closed on the following days:

- Good Friday, 14 April
- Easter Monday, 17 April
- Monday 1 May
- Monday 29 May

ARE WE ACCESSIBLE TO YOU? IF NOT ASK US!

کیا ہم تک آپ کی رسائی ہے؟ اگر نہیں تو ہمیں بتائیے!

你可覺得易於與我們接觸？若不同的話，請提出要求。

Czy łatwo jest skontaktować się z nami? Jeżeli nie, powiedz nam o tym!

Siamo accessibili nei vostri riguardi? In caso contrario rivolgetevi a noi!