

The magazine for residents of Wales & West Housing

FREE

# In Touch

SPRING 2025

60

## Celebrating 60 years of Wales & West Housing

Organise your own community  
party with our 60th birthday  
grant scheme for residents

Find out how to apply inside



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Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this publication. We would advise residents to check up-to-date information on our website, [wwha.co.uk](http://wwha.co.uk), Government websites and other official and reputable sources.

# ANNE'S MESSAGE



**W**elcome to the first edition of In Touch for 2025. This year is an exciting one as we are celebrating our 60th anniversary.

That's six decades of providing homes for residents, something that I am extremely proud of.

We have exciting things planned to mark the anniversary throughout the year that I hope you will get involved in, starting with our 60th anniversary party grant.

We're offering grants of up to £250 to groups of residents to help fund celebrations in your communities. You can find out how to apply on page 4.

It's incredible to think that back in 1965 in Cardiff, as the Beatles were preparing to play their last British concerts at Cardiff's Capitol Theatre, a group of residents who needed low-cost homes were making their own history. They moved into their new homes at Hillside Court, Penylan, our first affordable housing development. Since then, we've

continued to provide homes for thousands of people across Wales.

In this 60th anniversary edition some residents, who have lived in our homes for many years, share their memories of their communities then and now. Throughout the year we'll be sharing more of your recollections and, as you read on, you can find out how to get in touch with your old photos and stories.

We also look ahead at the new homes we are developing and celebrate the residents who are creating communities of their own.

I hope you'll join us to celebrate our history of creating homes and communities as we look forward to the next 60 years.

**Anne Hinchey**  
*Group Chief Executive*

## Other languages and formats

If you would like a copy of this edition of In Touch in Welsh or another language or format, for example, in large print, please let us know and we will help you.

## GET IN TOUCH



Wales & West Housing,  
Archway House, 77 Parc Tŷ  
Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff  
CF14 5DU



**TEL:** 0800 052 2526  
**TEXT:** 07788 310420



**contactus@wwha.co.uk**

contact members of staff direct by their email. For example,  
**joe.bloggs@wwha.co.uk**



**www.wwha.co.uk**



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# Join in our 60th birthday celebrations



**2025 marks our 60th Anniversary at Wales & West Housing. We have a long history of providing affordable homes for people; from our first homes in Penylan Cardiff in 1965 to now managing 12,400 homes in 13 local authority areas across Wales. To mark our anniversary we want to celebrate as we look forward to the next 60 years.**

## Apply for a grant for your community party

As part of the celebrations, we are offering our residents the opportunity to organise their own 60th birthday party.

To help with this we are offering grants of up to £250 per group of residents to help fund refreshments (non-alcoholic), decorations, activities and entertainment to bring people together for your event.

We are  
offering  
grants of  
up to

£250

## How to apply for a grant

If you'd like to arrange a celebration in your area, first you need to get in touch with your local Community Development Officer, who can tell you what you need to do to apply.

**Cardiff:** Claire Ashby,  
[Claire.Ashby@wwha.co.uk](mailto:Claire.Ashby@wwha.co.uk)  
07581 033796 and  
Herman Valentin,  
[Herman.Valentin@wwha.co.uk](mailto:Herman.Valentin@wwha.co.uk)  
07827 279711

**North Wales:** Judith Sellwood,  
[Judith.Sellwood@wwha.co.uk](mailto:Judith.Sellwood@wwha.co.uk)  
07866 156923

**Bridgend:** Laura Allcott,  
[Laura.Allcott@wwha.co.uk](mailto:Laura.Allcott@wwha.co.uk)  
07929 201313

**West Wales:** Rhiannon Ling,  
[Rhiannon.Ling@wwha.co.uk](mailto:Rhiannon.Ling@wwha.co.uk)  
07791 805311

## Share your 60th birthday stories with us

During the year, we will be sharing resident stories and memories of living in a WWH home, online, on social media and in this magazine.

If you have a story you would like to share, please contact the [communications.team@wwha.co.uk](mailto:communications.team@wwha.co.uk) or speak to your Housing Officer.



# Resident stories

To celebrate our 60th anniversary, we've spoken to residents across Wales to find out what they enjoy most about living in a Wales & West Housing home.

**G**reat-great grandmother Kathleen Williams is not only the oldest resident at Cwrt Anghorfa – she's also been living there the longest.

Kathleen, who was born in Kenfig Hill, Bridgend, moved into her flat in Pyle 30 years

ago to be close to her family following the death of her husband.

Over the decades she has seen many changes and made many friends at the scheme, where she gets involved in lots of activities and even calls the numbers at the weekly bingo sessions.

One of the most recent changes has been the redecoration of the communal room at Cwrt Anghorfa, where friends and neighbours organised a surprise party for Kathleen in December.

"I like living here, I like the company and over the years I've got to know a lot of people here," Kathleen said.

To celebrate her 100th birthday, Kathleen also had

a family party at a local club where she was joined by her two daughters, her grandchildren, great grandchildren and great, great grandchild.

Born in 1924, Kathleen started working as a trainee waitress at Porthcawl's Seabank Hotel. During the Second World War, 18-year-old Kathleen went to work in a factory in Bridgend where she made wartime ammunition including bomb

detonators. Over the years she worked in local shops and managed a restaurant.

She says her long life is down to hard work and lots of friends.

"We had no luxuries when I was younger. I've had to work hard all my life."

Neighbour Yvonne, who helped to organise the surprise party, said: "Kathleen is an amazing neighbour and a friend to everyone."

*"I like living here, I like the company"*



**Kathleen Williams celebrating her 100th birthday**

*“Immediately I felt safe and secure moving to Llain Las.”*

**M**arge Marsden moved into her flat at Llain Las independent living scheme in Fishguard 17 years ago.

When she first moved in, Marge, who worked at a local art gallery before her retirement, had been living

alone.

“Immediately I felt safe and secure moving here. All visitors need a code to get through the main entrance, so it means that I don't get cold callers, which makes a big difference to me.

“The lovely flat is the

perfect size for me and I have company around me.

“I have a comfortable flat with the freedom to come and go and I don't have the worry and expense of maintaining my property.

“Living in my flat is a way of life that suits me very well.”

**J**oe Millward, aged 71, and 78-year-old Pat Williams have been neighbours in one of our communities in Wrexham for more than 20 years. They first met when Joe moved to Hackett Court, where Pat lived with her husband Ron. Pat still lives in the same apartment, while Joe now lives in a bungalow at Thomas Court, a short walk away.

“I grew up in the area and I remember the houses at Barracksfield, as it was known then, being built,” said Joe.

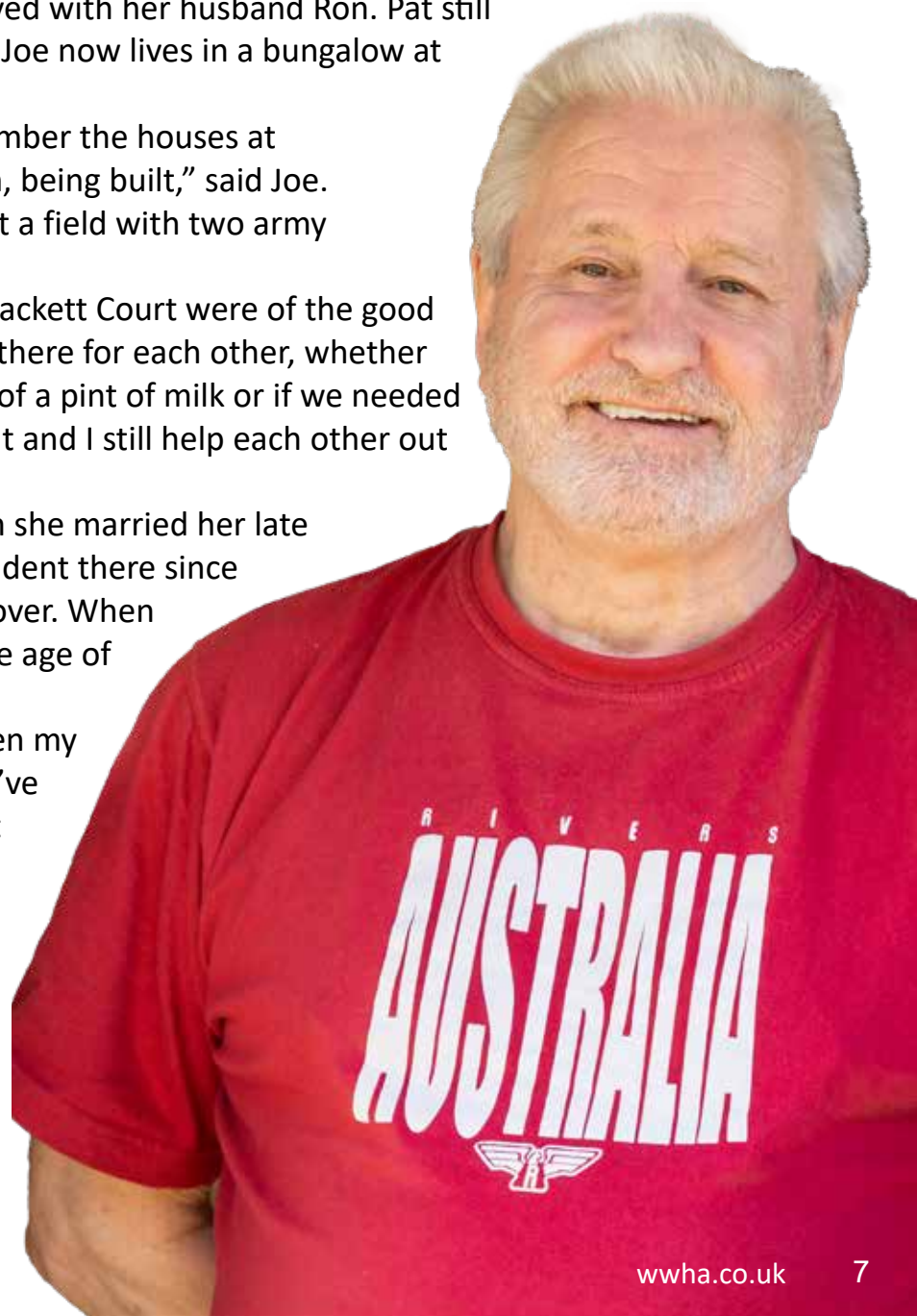
“Where the estate is now was just a field with two army containers.

“My early memories of living in Hackett Court were of the good neighbours I had. We were always there for each other, whether it was when one of us had run out of a pint of milk or if we needed help to clear snow in the winter. Pat and I still help each other out now.”

Pat moved to Hackett Court when she married her late husband, Ron, who had been a resident there since the first sets of keys were handed over. When he passed away 16 years ago, at the age of 90, Pat opted to stay in Wrexham.

“The flat in Hackett Court has been my home for more than 30 years and I've made good friends here, so I didn't want to move,” she said.

“I'd never been to Wrexham before I met Ron. It was a big change – I moved from a fairly big house with a garden to a one bed flat - but we built a good life together. It is a quiet place to live, the gardens are really well kept. I've settled into life in Wrexham.”





# 60 years of building homes

**Over the decades, the number of new homes we are building has risen. Across Wales, we're working with our long-term construction partners and currently have more than 400 homes being built.**

## South Wales

In Penarth, the foundations are laid and soon our extra care scheme will begin to take shape.

We're working in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council and Hale Group to build the scheme of 70 one and two-bedroom apartments for over-55s on land next to our current scheme at Oak Court, Myrtle Close. It's due to be finished next year.

Work on two other schemes in the Vale of Glamorgan is also coming along well. The 17 new homes at St Brides Road, Wick, a mix of two and three-bedroom houses and one-bedroom apartments and bungalows, are due to be finished toward the end of 2025 by P+P Builders. The company is also building 15 houses and flats at Heol Y Pentir, Rhoose, which we expect to be ready early next year. These homes will be rented in partnership with the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

## North Wales

Work is now underway on the rebuilding of our development at Cwrt Pentwmpath in Llay, near Wrexham.

A scheme of 25 modern, energy-efficient homes are being built in place of the old block of flats which were demolished last year.

At Wynnstay Technology Park, 43 homes are scheduled to be ready for residents next year.

Both schemes are being completed by our long-term construction partners Castlemead Group Ltd.



Cwrt Pentwmpath, Wrexham





Penarth extra care scheme starts to take shape

## West Wales

**W**e're currently building more than 140 new homes in West Wales.

In Carmarthen, work has started to build 48 apartments for older people on the site where the former Lidl store once stood. Our long-term contractors Jones Brothers (Henllan) Ltd are working on the site and the homes are expected to be ready for residents in 2027.

Meanwhile in Fishguard, Jones Brothers are making good progress at Parc Y Chwarel,

where 50 new houses are taking shape and will be ready for residents later this year. They have also started building 12 new flats for older people where the Ship and Anchor pub once stood, in Fishguard town centre, and are continuing work on 12 new homes at Dinas Cross, Pembrokeshire.

Work is also underway to build 20 flats on the site of Aberaeron Hospital in Ceredigion, where we are working with local construction company Jamson to provide more homes for affordable rent in the popular coastal town.



How the new homes in Carmarthen will look





## *Meet the residents who have moved into their new homes near Ceredigion*

Lauren and Daniel were living in temporary accommodation with their one-year-old daughter before moving to Gwar Y Garth, near Aberystwyth.

“We spent eight weeks living in a hotel, then the council moved us to temporary accommodation,” says Lauren, who’s expecting their second child in September.

“It was cold and lonely as we were living so far away from our family.

“My mother lives at Maes Y Môr extra care scheme in Aberystwyth and I visit her regularly, so I’ll be closer to her in our new home.

“Also, having a bedroom and garden for our daughter will also make such a difference to our lives.”

Lauren and Daniel are just one of the



Lauren outside her new home

families moving to our new development of 19 houses and bungalows at Gwar Y Garth, Penrhyncoch near Aberystwyth.

Jamie and his partner Paulina (pictured above) also moved into the development, which was built by our long-term construction partner Castlemead Group.

He says the family was “living on top of each other” in a small flat in Aberystwyth town centre before moving.

“We had no space and had to climb two flights of stairs with the children, which wasn’t ideal. Now we have a garden and so much more space,” says Jamie.

Another new resident is Joanna, who suffers from health issues that limit her mobility.

Before moving to a bungalow at Gwar Y Garth, Joanna was also living in temporary accommodation after years of sofa surfing.

Joanna said: “The open plan living area and wet room in the bungalow are perfect for me.

“Being able to park the car outside the house will also make such a difference.

“I can finally put down roots in a place where I have friends and a support network around me. After the uncertainty of the past four years, I have a place to make a home.”

Local dad Paul is looking forward to getting his bike out of storage now that he has a home of his own.

Paul was made homeless in 2024 when the private landlord he was renting from decided to sell.

As a result, Paul was moved to a hotel, then a house which he shared with five other men.

In January, he moved to a new WWH apartment at Clos Yr Orsaf, Gileston, Vale of Glamorgan. His home is one of 18 houses and apartments built on the site overlooking the coast. All the homes were built to the highest energy performance standard EPC A by our long-term contractor Hale Group and fitted with air source heat pumps and solar photovoltaic (PV) panels.

*“This is going to be a fresh start for me.”*

Paul said: “I couldn’t keep any personal items in temporary accommodation, so I

had to put my bike in a lock up. I’m looking forward to getting it back out and riding it again.

“I enjoy keeping fit and cycling and I want to get out and explore the paths around the area and go geo-caching with my daughter.”

“Sharing a house with so many others was affecting my mental health. I like my own space and that’s what I have here.”

Paul’s neighbour, Chelle, is also planning to set down roots in a home of her own at Clos Yr Orsaf after living in a hotel and shared house for the past year.

Chelle said: “This is going to be a fresh start for me. I was privately renting a house in Barry with a friend but we had to move out and I couldn’t afford to rent privately on my own.

“Sharing a house with strangers was awful, it wasn’t good for my mental health.

“Now I have a place to call home, I want to learn to drive, find a new job and I’m looking forward to getting outdoors and getting fitter.”

***New resident Chelle and her Housing Officer Joanne in the garden of her new home in the Vale of Glamorgan***





# See something, say something

**H**ave you ever worried about a neighbour or had a gut feeling that something is not right with one of your friends or family members? By saying something, you could play an important part in helping us to keep our residents safe in their homes and communities.

Safeguarding is all about protecting a person's health, wellbeing and human rights; helping them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect. It's an important part of providing safe and secure homes for our residents.

There are some warning signs that you can look out for which might indicate that someone you know may need some extra care and support.

## Are you concerned because:

- you haven't seen someone for several days, or you notice post piling up at the door?
- you've seen poor living conditions where it looks as though someone is struggling to care for themselves or those around them?
- you believe a neighbour is being targeted by scammers or fraudsters?
- someone is hoarding in their home and you are worried for their safety?
- someone you know is at risk of harm from their partner or a family member?
- a person's behaviour, appearance or mobility has changed?



# Something



Sharing information is a key part in helping to safeguard adults and children who may be at risk.

The sooner we know, the sooner we can start to help.

**If you have any concerns, please contact Wales & West Housing on:**



**0800 052 2526**



**[contactus@wwha.co.uk](mailto:contactus@wwha.co.uk)**



**[wwha.co.uk/en/contact](http://wwha.co.uk/en/contact)**

**If you have an immediate concern that someone's life is at risk, please dial 999 and choose the most appropriate emergency service.**

# Setting the standard for our homes

We want to make sure your home is safe, secure, comfortable and warm. To do this, we have a plan to make sure your home meets your needs and complies with the standards set by the Welsh Government for social housing in Wales.

We've been working to these Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) since they were first introduced in 2002. Last year Welsh Government updated these standards to further upgrade social homes to promote positive health, education and wellbeing for residents, as well as reducing carbon emissions from Welsh homes.

## What are the main changes?

### Homes must be affordable to heat and have minimal environmental impact

This sets out to improve the energy efficiency of homes. Our focus is on the insulation of the areas of your home which cause the most heat loss, such as walls and roofs ("fabric-first") and is the most effective. This reduces the amount of heat you need to keep your home at your preferred temperature, making it more affordable. We will continue to understand what is required and plan and prioritise upgrades where we can. However, we anticipate this will take far longer to achieve on all our homes than the 2034 timescale, unless additional resources are made available to social landlords.

### Homes must be comfortable and promote wellbeing

We agree that having suitable floor covering in rooms used for living and sleeping makes a difference when you move into your WWH home.

We've been looking at the most cost-effective way to do this for new tenancies. In some cases, we leave existing flooring in place if it is in good condition when the previous resident moves out.

We'll continue to experiment throughout 2025 so that we can assess what meets the needs of the incoming resident while also meeting the standard.





## What does the standard say?

It says homes must:

- be in a good state of repair
- be safe and secure
- be affordable to heat and have minimal environmental impact
- have an up-to-date kitchen and utility area
- have an up-to-date bathroom

- be comfortable and promote wellbeing
- have a suitable garden
- have an attractive outside space

## What are we doing?

As a result of this new standard, we have looked at the way we maintain and improve our homes while meeting the new regulations. We have developed a 'WHQS Compliance Policy' which

sets out how we will work to meet the standards.

Some of these standards do not apply to all homes, and other homes may not be able to achieve the standard for a variety of reasons.

However, one thing remains the same. We want to make sure we continue to have the right conversations with you, our residents, so that, wherever possible, we can take account of what matters to you about your home and the estate where you live.

## Providing smart meters and water butts at a change of tenancy

We feel this is a personal choice. If you are a new resident moving into one of our homes, we'll give you detailed information on how you can get a smart meter or a water butt, if it's appropriate for you and your home.

## Space for recycling and facilities for washing, drying and airing clothes

Every local authority area has different recycling rules. When we fit new kitchens, we'll design the layout to take account of local recycling arrangements, as well as providing space for a washing machine, where possible. Only in exceptional circumstances will we alter the layout of a home to meet the standard.

## Attractive and practical outside space

We will work with residents to make sure that we provide lockable, outside storage if there is a need and suitable space.

We have also started to engage with residents to gather views and share our ideas for increasing biodiversity and transforming grounds and large grassed areas on some of our schemes.

## Your feedback

Your views are always welcome so that we can shape our services to meet your needs. If you have any comments or questions about our plans to meet the new WHQS standards, please get in touch.

[wwha.co.uk/en/contact](http://wwha.co.uk/en/contact)

Call **0800 052 2526**, option 3.

## Learn more

Find out how we meet the WHQS standards on our website.

[wwha.co.uk/en/about/publications/self-evaluation/](http://wwha.co.uk/en/about/publications/self-evaluation/)

Visit the Welsh Government website [gov.wales](http://gov.wales)

# How are we doing?

We want to provide the best services we can and are always looking for ways to improve.

As part of that improvement, we regularly tell you about our performance in the delivery of services – both good and bad.

For several years, we've been including our full Performance Report in this magazine. However, to provide the most up-to-date service, we will be putting all our quarterly performance information online first.

We'll focus on different areas of our services in each magazine so that you can see the progress we are making.

**71%**

fixed first time by Cambria

**137** windows installed

**16** front doors installed

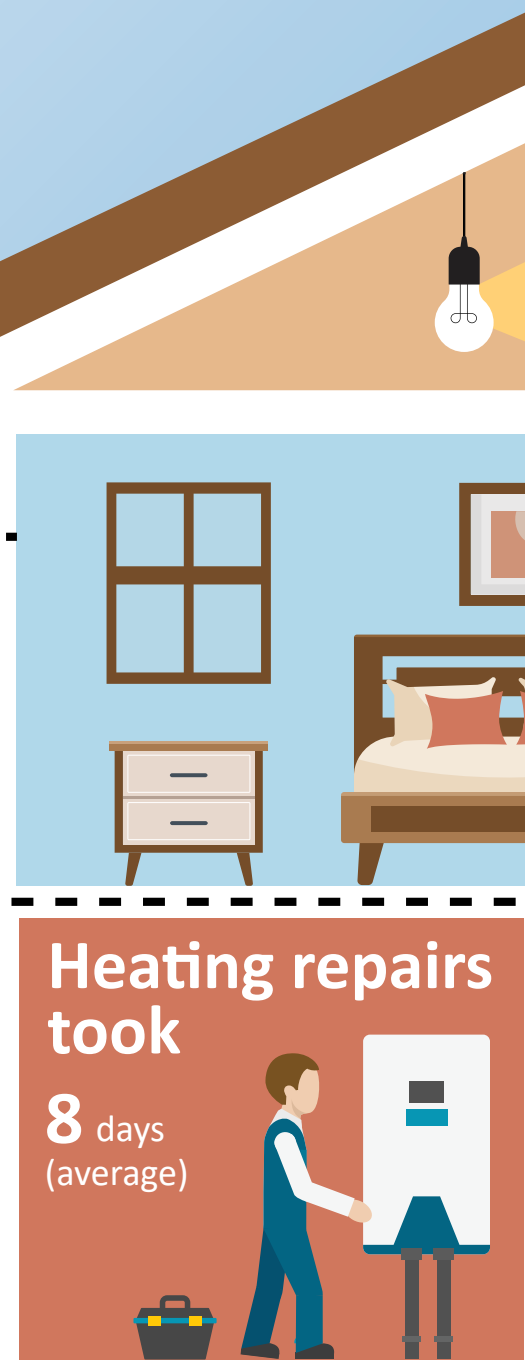
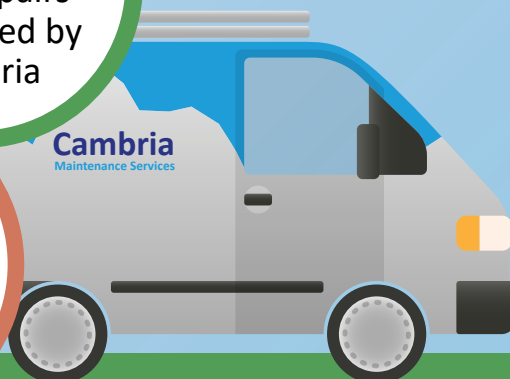
**10** back doors installed

**8775**

total repairs completed by Cambria

**13.5**

average number of days Cambria took to complete repairs

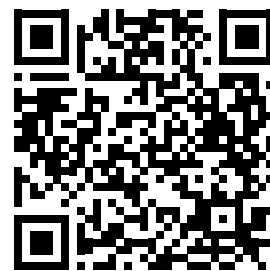


**Heating repairs took**

**8** days (average)

99%

of all  
appointments kept by  
Cambria



You can read our full  
Performance Report here

Electrical  
repairs took  
**12** days  
(average)

30 bathrooms installed

101 kitchens installed

**2057**  
total repairs  
completed by  
external  
contractors

**23**  
average number  
of days external  
contractors took  
to complete  
repairs



# Our focus for the next six months

As part of our Resident Involvement Strategy, we said that we'd publish information in this magazine and on our website about the work we are prioritising. These are called our business priorities. Through these priorities, we aim to make improvements across all areas of the organisation while continuing to run our day-to-day services.

Here's what we've been doing on the work we highlighted in the Summer 2024 In Touch [wwha.co.uk/intouch-magazine/improving-our-services/](https://wwha.co.uk/intouch-magazine/improving-our-services/)

## Gathering resident information

We aim to provide homes and services which are suitable, accessible and fair to all.

To help staff tailor services and to make sure those services are fair, we need to understand our residents and communities. We have reviewed the information that we have about residents, and we know we have some gaps. So, we've been checking the information we hold with you to make sure that it is correct.

## Our complaints process

We've updated our complaints policy and our staff are now recording more information. We want to use this information to improve

and tailor our services. In future, we'll provide more information on the types of complaints we get and the lessons we learn from them.

## Improving our repairs service

The work so far has been on managing routine repairs from first call, through planning and scheduling stages, to completing the jobs. This has been successfully piloted in the Cardiff area. We are now aiming to roll out this new way of working across other types of repairs and other areas.

## Looking after our homes

We have revised our plans to look after and invest in our homes, what we call our Asset Management Strategy.

We will be using this to develop an approach for future investment to improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

## Anti-social behaviour and lettings system improvements

We are always looking to improve the way we do things to make them easier and more efficient. We work with you on the things that matter to you. We are continuing to build on the lessons learnt from our recent review of anti-social behaviour. We have also started to review the way we let our homes. This will stay as a priority for us over the next six months.



Our Business Plan 2024-28 sets out our business priorities. You can read it on our website [wwha.co.uk](http://wwha.co.uk). Over the next six months, our priorities will be to improve the following services:

## What next?

### Hearing residents' voices

We are reviewing the way we handle complaints and assessing the feedback from residents through our satisfaction surveys. We'll also be looking at the way we present how we are doing as a business (our performance information) for residents.

### Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS)

We are reviewing our plans to make sure our homes are safe, secure, comfortable and warm for the future to meet the standards set by the Welsh Government for social housing (WHQS). The standards set out areas to improve social homes to promote positive health, education and wellbeing for residents, as well as reducing carbon emissions from Welsh homes.

### Estate management (resident engagement)

We have completed several scheme consultations focusing on sharing and developing ideas for increasing biodiversity. This has included a number of different approaches to engagement. Face-to-face conversations have been the most effective.

Don't forget, if you want to be involved or have your say, there are a number of ways to do this - [wwha.co.uk/en/contact/have-your-say/](http://wwha.co.uk/en/contact/have-your-say/)

# Steps to stay on top of your finances

**The start of a new year is a time when many people choose to reset, make a new start or reassess after the expense of Christmas.**

**W**ith the focus on personal finance, Wales & West Housing's Tenancy Support Officer, Lucy Beavan, has put together some helpful hints and advice on how you can make the most of your income and gain control of your finances. Make a list of your income and all of your essential outgoings. Then introduce non-essential expenditure in order of priority.

## What are your priority bills?

Paying your rent, council tax, gas, electric, water and food bills should be considered the most important. There are things you can do to make the outgoings more manageable.

Please remember, if you don't pay rent, you could end up losing your home.

If you are struggling, speak with your Housing Officer about managing payments before falling into debt.

## Put aside money for one-off expenses, if it's possible

This could be for things like car repairs, new home appliances or replacing clothes or shoes.

## Can you get a reduction in Council Tax?

To check whether you are entitled to a reduction, visit [gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction](http://gov.uk/apply-council-tax-reduction)

## Know what you are entitled to

Our Tenancy Support Officers can help. Be aware of situations which may cause your benefit amount to change. If you don't claim any benefits, you can check if you're entitled to any by using the benefits calculator at [turn2us.org.uk](http://turn2us.org.uk)

## If you're claiming Universal Credit (UC) budget carefully

If you work and have received higher wages, for example, if you do overtime, your UC income may reduce. You will need to cover the shortfall with your wages. You can use an online benefits calculator to see if your wages will affect your UC payment.

## Check whether any deductions are being made from your UC payment

If you see anything you weren't expecting, contact the UC debt management helpline on **0800 016 0647**.

## If you're single and reach pension age, your UC payments will stop

You need to make a new claim for State Pension as it will not be paid automatically when you reach pension age.





If you're a joint UC claimant and only one person reaches State Pension age, your UC payments won't stop but will be reduced because of State Pension payments received.

### Make sure your Universal Credit (UC) information is up to date

For example, after a relationship breakdown with a live-in partner or spouse, you would need to update all details relevant to your claim. If an ex-partner is still living in the same household, they would need to be added to your claim as a "non-dependant" as well as any other person living in the home who is over the age of 18 and not in full-time

education.

Don't assume that UC will have all the information they need from your previous joint claim. This could result in you missing out on payment of elements that you should be entitled to. "Help is always available for anyone struggling with their finances," says Lucy.

"Repaying debts and gaining control of your finances may require you to change your spending habits – but the benefits to mental health and physical and financial wellbeing are worth it!

"Even if you feel that debt is spiraling and you can't see a way out, seek advice. You can contact your Tenancy

Support Officer by calling our Housing Support Team on **0800 052 2526**.

### Useful links

#### Citizens Advice

[citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk) or call **0800 702 2020**

#### Universal Credit Debt Management

call **0800 916 0647**

#### Online benefit calculators

[gov.uk/benefits-calculators](https://gov.uk/benefits-calculators)

[betteroffcalculator.co.uk/login](https://betteroffcalculator.co.uk/login)

[entitledto.co.uk](https://entitledto.co.uk)

## Water charge rises ...

### What help is available?

#### People living in Wales are facing higher bills over the next five years.

Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water announced that bills will rise by 29% over the next five years to invest in services and improvements for customers and the environment. That means the average bill will rise from £455 in 2024/25 to £645 by 2029/30. The highest increase comes this year with an average rise of around £111.

For those who are already having trouble affording to pay their water bills, Dŵr Cymru has ways of saving and managing water bill

payments. These include a HelpU tariff for low-income households on certain benefits. If you, or someone in your family, have a medical condition that needs extra water or have three or more children, you could request a bill cap so that your charges are capped (currently at just under £400 per year).

There are also schemes to manage water bill debt.

For more information visit <https://www.dwrcymru.com/en/help-with-your-bills>

Your Tenancy Support Officer can also help you to apply for any support available.

# Making a Difference



## West Wales

Everyone loves a new kitchen – especially the groups who use the village hall in Eglwysrwr, Pembrokeshire.

As the main hub for social activities in the village, it's a busy hall. But the kitchen was over 30 years old and badly in need of replacing.

So, the volunteer committee, who manage the hall, turned to us for support. The hall is regularly used by many local groups including Ysgol Feithrin, the Women's Institute, the Heritage Society and Community Council. It's also used for community events and regular knit and natter, bingo and coffee mornings. So, raising funds to renovate the kitchen was important to them.

The hall is next door to our new housing development at Golwg Y Llan, so we were happy to sponsor the kitchen renovation project. We also approached our kitchen suppliers, Symphony, who donated new cabinets.

Mandy Philips, Chair of the Eglwysrwr Village Hall Association, said: "The kitchen we had was very dated and in dire need of



Cookery lesson for local children in the new kitchen at Eglwysrwr hall

replacement. Our Annual Christmas dinner, which was attended by 70 people, was so much easier to prepare this year with the new facilities.

"We will now be able to hold events for the community such as lunches for the elderly, curry and quiz nights and even the children in Ysgol Feithrin can now have cookery lessons.

"It has made a real difference."

## South Wales

**A** new repair café has been launched in Cardiff helping local people to fix instead of throwing away broken items.

Llanishen Eco Group launched the area's first repair café in January. The volunteers who run the group came up with the idea for the 'Repair Café' to help local people to repair items that they can't afford to replace and stop them from ending up in landfill.

The group approached us as we have homes and offices in Llanishen, and we provided funding to help cover set up costs.

Councillor Bethan Proctor, Chair of Llanishen Eco Group, said: "We have been

planning a repair café for almost a year, but it is only with this support that we could actually go ahead. The funding helped us to cover the costs of publicity, insurance, small materials and a PAT-testing kit to ensure the safety of electrical items that are repaired.

"Without the financial backing, this project simply could not have taken its first step."

"We are convinced that the café is helping local residents while also reducing waste and landfill. Beyond the environmental benefits and financial savings, we hope it will also become a regular event that the local community enjoy being a part of – whether as repairers, volunteers or visitors."



Local people visiting the first Llanishen Repair Café, Cardiff

## North Wales

**S**cout groups in Flintshire will soon have new cooking facilities on their local camping field in Flintshire, North Wales.

Our construction partner, Castlemead Group, is funding the cost of materials for fire altars which will give young people the

opportunity to enjoy cooking outdoors.

The project, which is being led by Hawarden Scout Group, will add to the range of activities on offer to hundreds of young people across the county, improving their physical and mental health and equipping them with skills for life.



**Hundreds of thousands of people in Wales are affected by painful and life-limiting conditions. Staff at Wales & West Housing Group are currently raising money for four health charities. Here are some of the ways those charities could help you or people you know.**



### Cerebral Palsy Cymru

is a centre of excellence that provides specialist therapy and support to children and families across Wales living with cerebral palsy.

Cerebral palsy is the most common physical disability in children worldwide, and it is estimated that every five days a baby will be born in Wales who will have the condition.

Cerebral Palsy Cymru provides services and support for families including a specialist early intervention service 'Better Start, Better Future' offering therapy and support for babies in Wales

who have, or are at high risk of, cerebral palsy. Last year, they provided 1,121 therapy sessions to 301 children across Wales.

March is Cerebral Palsy Awareness Month (CPAM), a global awareness campaign that pushes for positive change in the education, health care system, and job market to give more opportunities for those living with cerebral palsy.

Throughout the month, you can support the charity's vital work and help raise awareness of cerebral palsy, by 'Going Green for CP.'

Green is the official colour for cerebral palsy awareness as it reflects youthfulness and new growth, as well as hope for advancements in

treatment and acceptance.

Whether it's organising a 'Go Green Day' in your community or child's school, or getting involved in Cerebral Palsy Cymru's Facebook Fundraising Challenge, '70 Miles in March', there are plenty of ways to show your support and raise awareness of cerebral palsy.

To find out more about CPAM, Cerebral Palsy Cymru fundraising events and its early intervention service and private therapy provision, please scan the QR code / link below to visit our website:

[www.cerebralpalsycymru.org/private-therapy-enquiry-form](http://www.cerebralpalsycymru.org/private-therapy-enquiry-form)

### Support for people with Parkinson's

Interested in local Parkinson's UK support groups or community activities?

Parkinson's UK Cymru has a dedicated community development team, developing new community initiatives and supporting local groups for people affected by Parkinson's.

For more information, please email Dawn McGuinness at [dmcguinness@parkinsons.org.uk](mailto:dmcguinness@parkinsons.org.uk)



**Motor neurone disease (MND)** is a fatal, rapidly progressing neurological condition affecting more than 5,000 adults in the UK at any one time. The disease causes messages from nerves (motor neurones) in the brain and spinal cord that control movement to gradually stop reaching the muscles, leading them to weaken, stiffen and waste.


The MND Association is the leading charity in Wales, England and Northern Ireland focused on improving access to care, research and campaigning for those people living with or affected by MND.


In Wales, the MND Association has six different groups and branches run entirely by volunteers. Through their range of expertise, they help to coordinate and organise fundraising events. They also provide information and financial support for people with MND, their carers and family.


It also runs a free confidential helpline run by the MND Connect team, which offers information and support.

The line is available Monday to Friday between 9am - 4pm.



 0808 802 6262

 [mndconnect@mndassociation.org](mailto:mndconnect@mndassociation.org)

 [mndassociation.org](http://mndassociation.org)

## CYMRU VERSUS ARTHRITIS

Whether you're looking for information about your arthritis condition, or you want to support family and friends, **Cymru Versus Arthritis** can help. Its free-to-call helpline is available to anyone who needs support.

When you call, you can be sure you'll speak to someone who understands, because each member of the team is trained and has extensive knowledge of different types of arthritis and new developments. The team can provide information and

support on a range of topics such as:

- understanding your condition
- managing your condition
- how to get a diagnosis
- medication and treatment options
- pain management
- issues with work
- benefits available
- self-help (diet, exercise, complementary therapies)
- surgery
- latest research
- other services available

Mags is one of the advisors on the helpline and knows from personal experience the difference a helpline can make to someone with a health condition.

“We try to provide callers

with whatever support they most need at the time,” she says.

“On one call we could be exploring self-management tips, like exercises or diet. On the next, someone might be telling me about the impact their pain and fatigue is having on their work, their emotional wellbeing, or on their family or social life.”

If you, or someone you know, is living with arthritis and need support, call the helpline on **0800 5200 520**. The helpline is open Monday – Friday 9am to 6pm. You can also contact [helpline@versusarthritis.org](mailto:helpline@versusarthritis.org) for support via email.

For more information on the support and services available visit [versusarthritis.org/in-your-area/wales](http://versusarthritis.org/in-your-area/wales)



## 6 WAYS TO COPE WITH HOARDING

**Do you have difficulty throwing things away? Maybe you hang onto items because you're worried you may need them in the future or you'll lose your memories if you throw them away.**

**M**any people have possessions that they save because they are special. Some even collect things such as sporting memorabilia, books or coins, and keep them in order and on display. This is different from hoarding, which is classed as a mental health disorder, where the amount of clutter becomes unmanageable for those involved.

This can lead to problems if the amount of clutter interferes with everyday

living so that a person may be unable to use certain rooms in their home because they are too cluttered. It can also cause distress if someone tries to clear it.

Tackling hoarding can feel overwhelming and a person may feel that they don't know where to start or that it will take too long. However, the mental health charity Mind has the following tips to help to start to cope with a hoarding problem.

**1** *Set yourself small goals* Try something like throwing away one thing per day.

**2** *Set a timer and try to tidy one area* Or you could limit the time in other ways, like listening to a set number of songs.

**3** *Make a plan* For example, you might schedule one hour a week for cleaning. Try to plan where your items will go, such as in the bin or as a donation. As soon as possible, try to make sure they go exactly where you planned.

**4** *Put up a 'no junk mail' sign* Cancel things like magazine subscriptions. This might help to stop new things coming into your home.



## RESIDENT STORY

*“I’ve had friends around for the first time in ages and I could welcome them into my home without feeling embarrassed.”*

**5** *Come up with some rules* Some people use the rule that if they haven’t used an item in the last year, they’ll get rid of it. Different rules work for different people, but these can help to make decisions easier.

**6** *Explore new activities that don’t involve buying things*

This could be going for a walk, watching a film or visiting a museum. You could also talk to people close to you about gift giving. Try to agree on ways of giving gifts that don’t involve physical objects, like having a meal out.

To learn more about hoarding disorders, their treatment and ways to stay motivated while decluttering, visit Mind’s website [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)

**J**enny (not her real name) has lived in her Wales & West Housing flat in Cardiff for over 20 years.

Over the years, she had collected many memories, and lots of clutter, to the point that she could no longer use some of the rooms in her home.

Late last year, she took steps to start decluttering, with some help from staff at Wales & West Housing.

“I’m not very good at throwing things away,” Jenny admits.

“I was very much hanging on to stuff. I was keeping all the memories from when my son was growing up and, over time, everything built up. I’m a painter and I had also kept all my paintings and art things from years ago.

“I didn’t know where to start tidying up and needed help.

“Wales & West Housing were great in helping me to sort through my clutter. Over a couple of sessions, they came to my home, and we went through all my things together. I only kept things that had sentimental value. We filled a van with the clutter and while we were clearing up, I found things I hadn’t seen for a long time that I can use again.

“I’ve had friends around for the first time in ages and I could welcome them into my home without feeling embarrassed.”

“My home feels more like a place I can be proud of, and I can keep on top of things when they build up.”

# WORDSEARCH

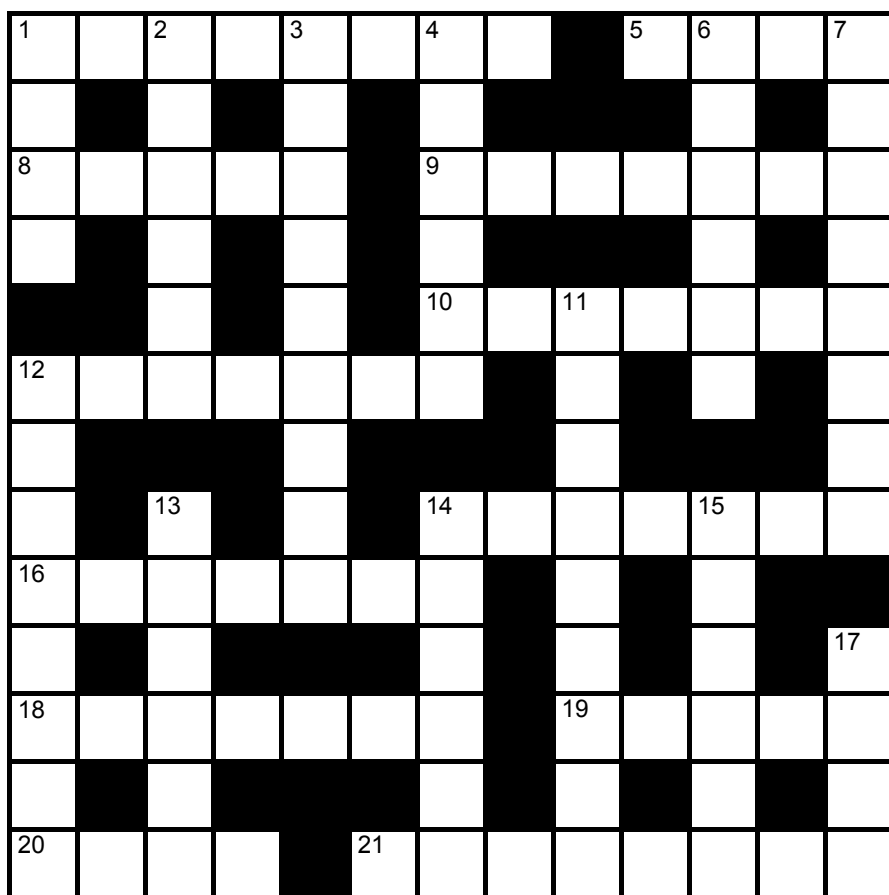
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 D G F K N F L X S W H I T E L M L E T O  
 E D D S I K H F O D K V L K H C J G A C

## Correction

In the latest edition of  
 In Touch there was an  
 incorrect word in the  
 Wordsearch puzzle.  
 The word should have  
 been evergreen not  
 leaves. We apologise  
 for this error.

1. Red
2. Purple
3. Emerald
4. Bronze
5. Grey
6. White
7. Blue
8. Gold
9. Pink
10. Orange
11. Black
12. Ginger
13. Yellow
14. Amber
15. Copper
16. Green
17. Silver
18. Indigo
19. Cream
20. Violet

# CROSSWORD



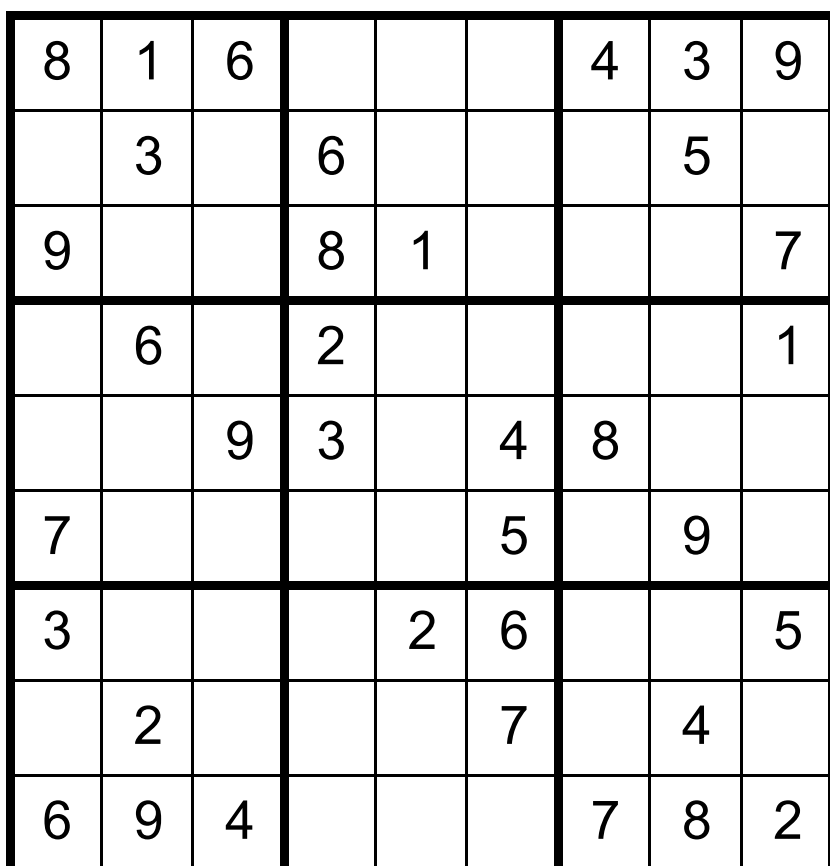
## Across

- 1 Location next to the warmest place in the house (8)
- 5 Immense (4)
- 8 Kingdom in the South Pacific (5)
- 9 Italian dumplings (7)
- 10 Stimulate (7)
- 12 Message informing of danger (7)
- 14 Authoritative command (7)
- 16 Body of water into which the River Jordan flows (4,3)
- 18 Distance measured in three-foot units (7)
- 19 Machine for bundling hay (5)
- 20 Item of crockery (4)
- 21 Move towards (8)

## Down

- 1 Convulsions (4)
- 2 Forest firefighter (6)
- 3 Areas into which the zodiac is divided (4,5)
- 4 Angle that resembles the hind limb of a canine (6)
- 6 Small recess opening off a larger room (6)
- 7 Three-sided figure (8)
- 11 Comfortable room in a pub (6,3)
- 12 Looking angrily distressed or distracted (4-4)
- 13 Large northern marine mammal (6)
- 14 Cosmetics applied to the face (4-2)
- 15 Plant similar to the rhododendron (6)
- 17 Curved shape that spans an opening (4)

# SUDOKU







**Our residents and communities across Wales had lots of fun over the festive season.**

**A**t St Clements Court, Cardiff, residents were treated to a Christmas concert when pupils from the nearby St Philip Evans Catholic Primary School visited. Meanwhile, at Llain Las in Fishguard, residents also enjoyed a Christmas carol concert thanks to the pupils and teachers from the town's Ysgol Glannau Gwaun.

There were festive celebrations at Hightown Community Resource Centre, including a visit from Ysgol Bodhyfryd school choir at an annual festive afternoon tea carols and bingo event.

The Grinch brought the joys of Christmas, and a little mischief, to our Maes Y Môr extra care scheme in Aberystwyth when he helped residents to decorate the building.



Christmas tea time at Hightown Community Resource Centre



Christmas carols with Ysgol Glannau Gwaun

**We also supported several community projects helping families in need over the Christmas period. These included:**

- helping to provide hundreds of hampers for local people and families organised by Wrexham Outreach Tenancy Support, Abergele Foodbank and Everyone Deserves a Christmas in Merthyr Tydfil
- Wrexham Round Table's annual Santa Float
- the annual volunteer-led toy and gift project at Hope St Mellons, Cardiff
- the Kindness at Christmas family event, in Newtown, Powys, which was attended by 1,000 children and their families

## Easter opening hours 2025

Our offices will be closed to visitors from **4pm on Thursday 17 April until 9am on Tuesday 22 April.**

Our repairs and housing support telephone lines will close at **5pm on Thursday 17 April and reopen at 8am on Tuesday 22 April.**

**We will be running an emergency repair service during this time. For emergency enquiries please call: 0800 052 2526**

You can pay your rent online or report a non-urgent repair online at:

[www.wwha.co.uk](http://www.wwha.co.uk)

Our social media channels will not be monitored.

## Direct Debit payments over the bank holiday weekend

Over the Easter holidays, with banks closed, the following dates may affect your Direct Debit rent payments.

If your Direct Debit is due to be paid to us on **Friday 18 April** or **Monday 21 April** you won't see this come out of your bank account until **Tuesday 22 April.**

As we submit the payment file in advance it may, however, show as a pending transaction and affect your cleared funds over the bank holiday.

## Crossword answers

**Across:** 1 Fireside, 5 Vast, 8 Tonga, 9 Gnocchi, 10 Enliven, 12 Warning, 14 Mandate, 16 Deadsea, 18 Yardage, 19 Baler, 20 Dish, 21 Approach

**Down:** 1 Fits, 2 Ranger, 3 Starsigns, 4 Dogleg, 6 Alcove, 7 Triangle, 11 Loungebar, 12 Wildeyed, 13 Walrus, 14 Makeup, 15 Azalea, 17 Arch



Families have moved into their new homes on the site of a former pub in Flintshire, North Wales. All eight houses are now occupied at the development on Station Road, Sandycroft. Completion of the homes by our long-term construction partner, Castlemead Group, brings the site back into use for much-needed affordable housing following the demolition of the New Inn pub, which had been closed for a number of years.

