

Tenant Topics

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Sedbury school children spot speeding drivers outside their school!

As restrictions have lifted, our teams have finally been able to get back out into our communities. We've held lots of events for tenants at our HomePlus schemes and started a Junior Warden programme with Gloucestershire Police and the Street Wardens.

In October and November, primary school children from the Forest of Dean took part in the programme, which combines outdoor education and classroom-based learning.

One of the activities saw them taking on speeding drivers by standing outside their school with speed cameras at the ready. This was a great way for the children to learn and it is also hoped it will help drivers think twice about breaking the speed limit!

They were also tasked with designing a poster to remind drivers to stick to the speed limit. Two Rivers Housing has had the winning design turned into a banner that will be hung up outside their school as a reminder to local drivers.

Alongside the speed tests, the children also donned hi-vis jackets and took to the streets to survey their local area for litter. They identified the litter hotspots and discussed why these were so messy before using litter picking tools to clean up the entire area.

Back in the classroom, they used the information they had gathered from the speed cameras in a maths lesson, before holding a class discussion on how to manage and solve the litter problem in their local area.

Then, guided by Gloucestershire Police, the Street Wardens and the Two Rivers Housing team, the children were encouraged to think about their communities. They drew pictures to represent how they see their community now and what they would like to see in the future.

It was amazing to see what they came up with in such a short space of time. Some of the children are part of an environmental group at school and are going to take these ideas to their next meeting to see if they can put some of them into practice.

Supporting our communities is an important part of what Two Rivers Housing does. As restrictions continue to ease, we hope to get out and about in even more of our communities.



Your feedback matters

We want to know how you would like to get involved and have your say on the running of our housing services.

Scan the QR code to complete our short survey and have the chance to win a £25 voucher.





This gruesome twosome have been keeping a watchful eye over Crawshay Place this Halloween

Did you spot this gruesome twosome?

Residents at Crawshay Place got into the Halloween 'spirit' this year with these two spooky skeletons.

The gruesome twosome were dressed in their own clothes, much to the confusion of the tenants pooches who kept jumping up for a creepy cuddle!



With the New Year fast approaching, we all start looking to the future and the things we want to achieve. Maybe you want to learn a new language, get your HGV licence, or take a course in web design, food hygiene or even train to be a teaching assistant.

If so, you can apply for financial support from a special fund, set up exclusively for Two Rivers Housing tenants.

Established by our former Chairman, the late David Garnett, the programme provides financial support to our tenants, helping them improve their job prospects, learn new skills, and develop existing ones.

If you would love to work towards a qualification, complete a training course or pursue a hobby in 2022 and need some financial help to make it happen, then all you need to do is ask!

All the information you need about The Garnett Foundation Bursary, including the application form, can be found on our website: www.tworivershousing.org.uk/careers/garnett-foundation-bursary

So why not get in touch and make 2022 your year!

Talking crime prevention at Crawshay Place

In September, we held a crime prevention coffee morning at our HomePlus Scheme in Crawshay Place. Tenants were invited to come along for a chat and a cuppa with the Neighbourhood Policing Team and our Scheme Co-ordinator Nancy Weller.

The police were on hand to provide practical crime prevention advice and answer questions from tenants.

During the event, the police and the local Neighbourhood Watch Co-

ordinator, shared their top tips for keeping your home safe and secure. This included information on window and door security and how to keep burglars out of their homes.

You can find all of the hints and tips on the Gloucestershire Police website: www.gloucestershire.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention

In the meantime, why not take a look at the 'Checklist for securing your home when you leave it' below?

Popping out? Make sure you leave your home safe and secure with this quick checklist!

It's important to leave your home secure when you leave it. The police recommend getting into a habit when leaving the house so you don't forget important things like not leaving valuables near windows, and leaving the lights on if it will be dark when you get home. Here's a handy check list to follow if you are popping out.

- Close and lock all your doors and windows, even if you're only going out for a few minutes.
- Double-lock any door.
- Make sure that any valuables are out of sight.
- Keep handbags away from the letterbox or cat flap and hide all keys including car keys, as a thief could hook keys or valuables through even a small opening.
- Never leave car documents or ID in obvious places such as kitchens or hallways.
- In the evening, shut the curtains and leave lights on.
- If you're out all day, use a timer device to automatically turn lights and a radio on at night.
- If you have one, set your burglar alarm.
- Make sure the side gate is locked.
- Lock your shed or garage.
- Lock your bike inside a secure shed or garage, to a robust fitting bolted to the ground or wall, like a ground anchor

Two Rivers Housing Good Neighbour Award

With so many wonderful people in our communities going above and beyond to support their neighbours, we wanted to highlight their efforts and say a massive thank you!

The latest winner of our Good Neighbour Award was Zoe Davis from Joysgreen. She was nominated by her neighbour Kim, who wanted to say thank you for all of Zoe's efforts throughout the pandemic.

Kim said: "Throughout the whole pandemic, Zoe has gone out of her way to help people. She has been everyone's rock and was there in a flash if anyone needed anything."

"Not only has she helped those that were self-isolating or shielding, but she also put on quite a show to lift the spirits of the whole community. Every Sunday throughout lockdown, Zoe, her family and her neighbour Laura Stacey dressed up and were spotted dancing on doorsteps around the whole estate and encouraging others to get up and dance with her. It really made everyone's day for sure!"

When Zoe was told that she had won our Good Neighbour Award, she said she was shocked and overwhelmed by the kindness and generosity of her community and couldn't thank Kim

enough for putting her forward for the award. She was just glad to be able to help lift the community's spirits through such a difficult time.

Well done Zoe and from everyone here at Two Rivers Housing, thank you for being such a good neighbour!



Jonathan Higgs joins our Board



Chief Executive of the Raven Housing Group Jonathan Higgs joined our Group Board in September.

Jonathan Higgs has joined our Group Board. He is the former Chief Executive of Oxford Citizen's Housing Association and was Managing Director of Home South at Home Group.

He is currently the Chief Executive of Raven Trust Housing. In this role, he oversees a team of 300 people and more than 6,000 households in Surrey and Sussex.

Jonathan has lived in Gloucestershire for more than 30 years and is keen to get to know the team and our tenants. He will help us to deliver on our promise to build 1,000 new homes by 2028 and support investment in our older properties as we continue our journey to become net-zero carbon by 2050.

He joined us as a Non-Executive Director in September 2021.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

SkillZONE is an interactive life skills centre in Tuffley, with an indoor village and activities to help children learn to stay safe at home, online and out in their community.

We are looking for volunteer guides aged 18 and up to show school children around the indoor safety village and deliver our safety education messages. If you can spare 2.5 hours twice a month, on days to suit you, we would love to hear from you.

We offer full training and support to help you feel confident in the role. You will meet new people, have fun and know that you are making a difference every time you come in.

Why not contact us and see for yourself how rewarding volunteering can be?
Email volunteer@glosfire.gov.uk or call **01452 834150**.
Please visit our website for our online application.

Please visit skillzone.glosfire.gov.uk

Parkside residents create perfect poppy tribute

Residents at our HomePlus scheme in Parkside got together to create a stunning poppy display to honour fallen heroes for this year's Remembrance Day.

It started with an idea, which always means work according to Barb, one of the quartet that created the fabulous display. Gwyn's ideas always do!

Undeterred, Gwyn explained her vision to her friends, and they set to work. Knitting needles at the ready, Gwyn and Judy started the first of 1,000 poppies that would be needed.



Left to right: Judith Parker, Gwyneth Jacobs, Barbara Harvey, Cynthia Knight proudly show off their tremendous efforts for this year's remembrance day services.

Cynthia and Barb were left to create the display and wreaths that the poppies would eventually cover.

More than 68 balls of red wool later (and quite a few balls of black too), the poppies were finished, and the fabulous foursome were done. Their work was

proudly displayed at the community centre at Parkside for all the residents to enjoy.

Inspired by the perfect pop-up poppy display, Barb even wrote a poem documenting their antics!

One Thousand Poppies by Barbara Harvey

It started with an idea,
We all gave a sigh!
Gwyn's ideas meant work,
But we'll give it a try.

Knitted poppies for
Remembrance Day,
Gwyn wanted a display,
To grace the wall of the centre,
What could we say?

We were still in lockdown,
So, no groups could meet,
Decisions were made,
And a target to reach.

One thousand was the aim,
Knitting needles in place,
Gwyn was ready,
And started at a pace.

Judy started on the centres,
And sewed everyone,
Together they kept counting,
Hoping they soon would be done.

68 one-hundred-gram balls,
A bit less of black,
Goodness how many stitches,
We didn't keep track.

Ruth cut the chicken wire,
And measured it well,
Attaching the poppies,
Who'd be volunteered you
never could tell.

Cynthia and Barbara,
Were handed the task,
Of placing and tying,
It was quite a big ask.

But we did it, a big sigh!
We made wreaths as well,
Will it be admired,
Only time will tell.



Our Chief Executive Garry King, thanked John Bloxsum (right) for his contribution to Two Rivers Housing when he stepped down in September.

John Bloxsum retires from our Board

John Bloxsum retired from our Group Board at the Annual Members Meeting held on 23 September 2021.

John first joined us in 2012 and became Vice-Chair in 2013. Over the years, he has used his knowledge and experience as a housing practitioner and consultant to help guide our organisation. John was

also a member of the Governance and Remuneration Committee, to which he brought valuable knowledge and skills.

We'd like to thank John for everything he has done during his time with us and wish him well on his future endeavours.

Spot the signs of domestic violence



Tenancy Enforcement Officer, Sue Pritchard is a former PCSO for the Forest of Dean. She has worked with communities across the area,

helping to prevent crime, anti social behaviour and raise awareness of issues affecting the local community. In this article she shares some vital information to help those suffering from domestic abuse.

Spotting the signs of domestic abuse

People suffering domestic abuse change their behaviours. Sometimes these behaviour changes are obvious, but they can also be very subtle. Below are some of the changes you might notice in someone suffering from domestic abuse:

- They stop doing things they used to do, like seeing friends or family, or going to work or college.
- They seem fearful of their partner's reactions to things they do or did; perhaps they asked you not to tell their partner about something they've done.
- They don't seem to have full control over their money – perhaps they

worry about spending too much or have to explain everything they spend. Do they complain that their partner is spending all their money, or is running up lots of debt?

- Does their partner check up on them a lot? Are they constantly getting texts or phone calls; does their partner turn up unexpectedly? Do they feel the need to keep in touch all the time?
- Does their partner get jealous? Do they get accused of being flirty or unfaithful? Do they worry about spending time or being photographed with friends because of their partner's reaction?
- Does their partner put them down in public?
- Has their self-esteem dropped recently?
- Does their partner set lots of rules that they must follow, such as who they can see, what they can wear, what they can spend money on and how their home must be kept?
- Do they bear any bruises, or other signs of physical injury?
- Have they been pressured into sexual activity they are not comfortable with?

How can you help?

If you get the feeling that something isn't quite right, trust your instincts. It maybe nothing but your help could make a huge difference.

If you can, try talking to the victim. Find a safe and confidential space and ask them about your concerns. People are much more likely to confide in a friend or someone close to them than the police.

Be prepared. Make sure you are able to sign-post them to places they can go for help and support.

As a concerned friend or neighbour, you could report your concerns to the police or a specialist organisation. You should do this with caution, as making a report on the victim's behalf can be dangerous, disempowering for them or could result in consequences for the victim that you are unaware of.

If you believe someone is in immediate danger, you should dial 999.

Find out more

Neighbourhood Watch Domestic Abuse Toolkit

www.ourwatch.org.uk/crime-prevention/crime-prevention-toolkits/domestic-abuse/domestic-abuse-campaign-toolkit

Womens Aid and Avon #LoveRespect
www.loverespect.co.uk

UK government Disrespect NoBody
www.disrespectnobody.co.uk

AVA prevention Platform
www.preventionplatform.co.uk

Keeping watch over your community

The Neighbourhood Watch programme has a long-established history of helping communities work with police to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. In fact, most of us will have seen the Neighbourhood Watch logo proudly displayed in the villages we grew up in.

Neighbourhood Watch first came to the UK in 1982 in Mollington, Cheshire. Since then, it has grown into the largest voluntary crime prevention movement in England and Wales and has more than 2.3m members.

There are many reasons to join Neighbourhood watch. Not only will you be helping to improve your community making it a safer place to live, but you will also be part of a dedicated and enthusiastic community group.

The organisation provides its members with a whole host of material on identifying and tackling issues such as domestic abuse, cyber-crime, dog theft and rural crime.

Getting involved is easy. You can find your local Neighbourhood Watch Group by visiting its website: www.ourwatch.org.uk.

Alternatively, you can contact your local neighbourhood policing team by calling **101** or emailing **101@gloucestershire.pnn.police.uk**.



Holiday health and safety



Our Health and Safety Business Partner Jonny Leech shares his top tips for a safe and happy Christmas Holiday.

While it's not the first thing that comes to mind when you start planning for the festive period, good health and safety practices are important in helping keep you and your loved ones safe.

I've looked at some of the most common Christmas activities and what you can do to help reduce the risk of accidents and injuries in your home.

Decorations

Nothing gets us in the Christmas mood quicker than getting the decorations out and decorating our homes. According to a survey from the National Accident Helpline*, one in 50 people has fallen out of the loft while getting the decorations down and one in 40 have received an electric shock from faulty Christmas lights.

Top Tips for trimming your tree safely

- If you have an artificial tree, make sure that it is fire resistant
- Keep your tree at least three feet away from fireplaces, radiators and other heat sources and don't block doorways.



- If you are using a live cut tree, make sure you keep it well watered and remove it from your home if it becomes dry. **Turn off the lights before you water it!**
- Avoid placing breakable ornaments or those with small detachable parts on low branches that young children can reach.
- Use a hop-up or step ladder to reach the top of the tree – don't stand on a chair or over stretch.
- Remember the berries from mistletoe and holly are poisonous. Keep them away from pets and children.

Don't trip the light fantastic!

- Replace light sets that have broken or cracked plugs, frayed or bare wires, or loose connections.
- Don't overload plug sockets by plugging in multiple sets of lights and keep plugs off the floor and away from water or snow.
- Never nail, tack, or stretch wiring when hanging lights.
- Only use lights in line with the manufacturer's instructions – indoor lights should only be used indoors, and outdoor lights should only be used outdoors.
- Turn off all lights and decorations when you go to bed or leave the house.



Visiting family and friends

If you are travelling to see family, drop off presents or are off to grab that last minute present, make sure you are prepared.

- Prepare your car for winter. Keep an ice-scraper and de-icer, torch with spare batteries, first aid kit and warm blanket in the car and make sure your mobile is fully charged before you leave.
- Put your fully charged mobile phone away, there are many distractions that occur while driving – you don't need your mobile to be another one!
- Get a good night's sleep before departing and avoid drowsy driving.
- Have a designated sober driver and don't get behind the wheel if you've had a drink

*All stats taken from www.national-accident-helpline.co.uk/news/12-hazards-of-christmas survey.



Be mindful of fire-starters!

Candles and open fires look great but with all the additional fuel you've got hanging around in the form of decorations and Christmas cards, there's an increased risk of fire. The same survey from the National Accident Helpline suggest that more than half a million people have had a fire in their home at Christmas.

- Make sure candles are out of reach of children and not in a position where they can be easily knocked or blown over.
- If you can, use flameless or battery-operated candles, especially around flammable objects.
- Store matches and lighters high-up and out of reach of children.
- Don't burn trees, wreaths or wrapping paper in the fireplace and always use a screen on the fireplace when a fire is burning.
- Never leave candles or fireplaces burning unattended or burning when you are asleep.

The main event

Next to spending time with my family, Christmas dinner is my holiday highlight! With so much going on and the pressure to create that Instagram perfect Christmas dinner, it can be easy to forget the basics. Food poisoning is no joke, and it will definitely put an end to the festivities. Here are my top food safety tips:

- Wash your hands frequently when handling food.
- Keep raw meat away from fresh produce and use separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils for uncooked and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination.

- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature.
- When storing turkey, cut the leftovers in small pieces so they will chill quickly.
- Refrigerate hot or cold leftover food within two hours of being served.

SAVING TIP

Buy supermarket own brands – they're usually cheaper and just as tasty and nutritious. This could save £1,500 a year on a family's £100 weekly shop.



Gloucestershire Constabulary launches its annual Anti-Drink and Drug Driving Campaign across the Forest of Dean

Drivers in the Forest of Dean are being warned not to get behind the wheel after a pint too many this Christmas. Motorists can expect to see more roadside police checks across the Forest of Dean as the festive clamp-down begins.

The campaign will run throughout December. The aim is to educate drivers on the dangers and penalties they could face as a result of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

More than 3,000 people are killed or seriously injured in the UK every year in drink driver related collisions. Combining illegal drugs with alcohol is especially deadly. Drivers who have consumed both are 23 times more likely to be involved in a fatal crash than those who are sober.

Chief Inspector Alistair Barby said, "We will be out in force over the Christmas period and would ask that people consider their actions before getting behind the wheel.

"We all know of the profound impact that driving after having been drinking or taking drugs can have on people, and so we will be ensuring that those who ignore this advice will be targeted.

"It is important that those people understand the consequences of their actions".



Tackling damp and mould

As we head into the winter months, closing windows and trickle vents, drying clothes inside and turning up the heating can all increase the amount of moisture inside your home. This increase in moisture is the most common cause of black spot mould.

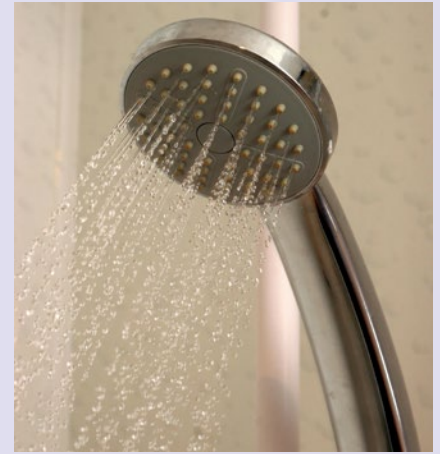


Finding black mould in your home can be distressing and we are committed to working with you to help manage and resolve the situation as quickly as possible. We've recently written to tenants where there has previously been a damp and mould problem in their homes, to check if they have spotted any signs that the problem is re-occurring.

We are also asking our neighbourhood housing team to be on the lookout for signs of damp and mould in our homes when they visit tenants and would encourage anyone who has an issue in their home to contact us as soon as possible.

Where an issue is identified, our surveyors will make an appointment to visit the property and carry out an inspection, but there are some simple things you can do to help reduce the risk of black mould appearing in your home.

- Hang washing outside to dry. If you need to dry washing inside, hang this in the bathroom with a window open or the extractor fan on.
- Don't dry clothes by hanging them over the radiator – as this creates lots of condensation.
- Use your saucepan lids and use as small amount of water as possible when cooking food or boiling the kettle.
- Ventilate your kitchen after cooking, keep the window open a little and use the extractor fan if you have one.
- Ventilate your bathroom after you've had a shower or bath.
- Keep kitchen and bathroom doors closed to stop moisture moving through your home.
- Open the trickle vents in your windows or have your windows slightly open (remember to close them if you go out!)
- Don't overfill your wardrobes and cupboards. This reduces air circulation and could cause mildew on clothes.



Open a window or use the extractor fan after you've had a shower. This will help reduce the amount of moisture in your home.

If you do spot black mould in your home, treat it quickly to avoid it spreading.

- Wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash. You can also use diluted bleach to wipe down surfaces.
- Shampoo any carpets that have been affected.
- After the area has been treated, redecorate using fungicidal and anti-condensation paint.
- Dry clean mildew affected clothes.

If you have a damp or mould problem in your home, please report this so that we can help resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

How much moisture is in your home?



It's amazing how many pints of moisture we produce in an average home each day:

Two people breathing



Cooking and using a kettle



Bottled gas heaters



Having a bath or shower



Washing up



Drying clothes indoors



That's 26 pints of water a day. It's got to go somewhere and if it's on your walls and ceiling it could provide the perfect place for mould to grow.

SAVING TIP

Save on your water bill. Ask Severn Trent Water for a free 'Save-a-Flush'. Put it into your toilet cistern and save 1.2 litres of water every time you flush.



Out and about in our communities

Kathryn takes some of our team through the process of conducting estate inspections.

Neighbourhood Housing Officer Kathryn Hamilton and Tenancy Compliance Officer Sue Pritchard, take notes as they conduct an estate visit in Newent.



Since restrictions have been lifted, our teams have been back out in our communities. It's an important part of the job, as it gives our teams a better understanding of what's going on in the area. It also provides a great opportunity for us to talk to tenants in their neighbourhoods and hear about their experiences.

In November, Neighbourhood Housing Advisor Kathryn Hamilton, took a

group of colleagues from across the organisation out with her. Kath explained what she is looking for when she carries out an estate inspection and talked about some of the issues that our communities face and what her role is in helping to tackle them.

It was a great opportunity for some of our office-based colleagues to get out into our communities, chat with

a few tenants and get a feel for the type of work our neighbourhood housing team carry out.

Keep an eye out for our neighbourhood housing team as they continue to get back out into our communities – they are always happy to stop and chat and hear from our tenants!

How to make a complaint

We always strive to deliver the best possible service to our tenants, but we understand that sometimes we don't get this quite right.

If we do get it wrong, we want tenants to get in touch with us. Your feedback helps us to make improvements to our services and understand what went wrong so that we can learn how to do things better.

You can make a complaint to us in writing, over the phone, by email, using the form on our website or in person. When we receive a complaint, we log this and start our complaints process. This has two stages.

At stage one, we will confirm we have received your complaint within five working days of receiving it. Your complaint will be handled by our Complaints Business Partner, who will provide full response to your complaint within 10 working days from the date you first contacted us.

We hope to resolve most complaints at this stage however, if you do not believe our stage one response answers your complaint, you have the right to request a further review.

You must do this within 28 days of the date of our stage one response letter and you must clearly state why you disagree with the original decision. You must also provide details of what, if any, further action you would like us to take.

You will be told the name of the person who is dealing with your complaint and will normally receive a response from them within 20 working days from when your complaint was moved to stage two.

You are also able to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point to raise your complaint with them. If you haven't already done so, the Ombudsman will log your complaint with us, and we will handle it in line with our complaints process.

We are committed to improving our services and will work with you to resolve any issues as quickly as possible. You can find more information about how to raise a complaint, including the contact details for the Housing Ombudsman in our Compliments and Complaints Leaflet.

This can be found in the library on our website. Alternatively, you can ask for a copy by contacting our contact centre on **0800 316 0897** or by email **customerservices@2rh.org.uk**.



Almost 20 homes in Blakeney will be fully retrofitted, making them warmer, more energy efficient and cheaper to run.



Our journey to net-zero carbon

From the initial design work, we estimate that we will be able to reduce the carbon emission in these homes by at least 45%. We will also be able to improve the Energy Performance Certificate rating to Band B.

All of this means that these homes will be warmer, more energy efficient and cheaper to run for our tenants.

While we are currently trialling the programme on a small number of properties in Blakeney, the information we gather from this project will help us plan future improvements for all of our homes.

We are committed to providing warm, safe, affordable homes for local people. The work we are doing through this project will benefit many more families in the area for years to come.

Against the backdrop of COP26, where leaders from around the world got together to agree how we can tackle climate change, we are proud to be doing our bit too.

Things are gathering pace at our first ever full retrofit project in Blakeney. In October, we announced that we will be working with Bristol-based gpc Architects. Their team has been busy finalising the designs for each of the different homes involved in the project.

They will be working with specialist Retrofit Coordinators, VOR Group and between them will ensure that the changes we make to our homes meet the correct standards.

With the design phase now complete, we've been able to start the improvement works at some of the properties. This includes making improvements to the fabric of the building, like replacing doors and windows, as well as using new green and renewable technology.

SAVING TIP

Energy-saving lightbulbs may cost more than traditional bulbs, but they can last 25 times longer, saving money in the long-run.



1,000 new homes by 2028!

We are committed to making more affordable homes available across Gloucestershire and our development team has been busy making this happen.

Since pledging to build 1,000 new homes back in 2018, we've built and let out 377 new affordable homes – but we're not done yet.

Between April and September 2021, our team signed four new contracts

with our development partners. These contracts will help us provide 191 affordable homes to families in Lydney, Twigworth and Newent and some of these are already available to rent through the Homeseekers' website.

In October, we signed a contract with Redcliffe Homes to develop eight new affordable homes in Hempsted, Gloucester, and a contract with Wainhomes for 26 at its site in Twigworth, Tewkesbury.

With 377 homes of our 1,000 target already built and plenty more on the way, we are well on our way to keeping our promise of building 1,000 new affordable homes by 2028!

An artist's impression of our new homes at the Merlin's Gate site in Newent.



Direct Debit collections over Christmas



There may be some changes to the dates that we will collect your Direct Debit between 25 December 2021 and the 4 January 2022.

Direct Debit payments that are due to be collected on the 25, 26, 27 or 28 of December, will be collected on Wednesday 29 December 2021.

Direct Debit payments that are due to be collected on 1, 2 or 3 of January 2022, will be collected on Tuesday 4 January 2022.

All other Direct Debit collection dates in December 2021 and January 2022 will be collected as normal.

The Forest is alive with the sound of music!

Back in February, we launched our Two Rivers Initiatives Community Grant programme, which will see £90,000 donated to good causes across the Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire. We paid a visit to Coleford-based Forest Pulse, which was awarded £5,000 to find out how the grant is helping to support its music project.

As you walk into the afterschool club, you can feel the excitement and hear the noise! This is a place where children can learn in their own way and at their own pace and there is something magical about that.

Traditional musical instruments can create barriers for young people with disabilities, but the wonderful staff and volunteers at Forest Pulse make it accessible for all. Using accessible instruments and adaptive technology, the children are able to explore music and communication through vocalisation and movement.

They are given access to a whole range of instruments and the freedom to play and discover in their own way. The results



are easy to see, not only through the sheer joy on their faces, but also in the development of their confidence and social skills as Charity Director Pam Jones explains:

“When they first come to us, some of the children are unable to attend loud social settings, but the group has drastically changed how they interact with others.”

“They’re allowed creative freedom, which includes playing traditional instruments such as guitars and keyboards as well as more specialist equipment such as the Soundbeam, which is a ‘touch free’ device that uses sensors to translate movement into sound. Through the use of these instruments, they learn valuable

skills on how to interact with others in a fun and welcoming environment.”

The great news is that Forest Pulse are currently looking for volunteers to help with fundraising as well as new trustees to help them maintain and grow the group. If you’d like to get involved, please get in touch with Pam by emailing developmentmanager@forestpulse.co.uk or calling **01594 826 357**.

It really is a wonderful project to get involved with and we are pleased to see our community grant put to such fantastic use!

If you know a local community group or charity that could benefit from a community grant, please get in touch with us! You can find all of the details on our website www.tworivershousing.org.uk/communityfund

Applications for the third and final pot of £30,000 close on 31 December 2021.

The children are given the freedom to experiment with different musical instruments.



Our tenant Amy shares her start-up story

Like many people across the country, mum of two Amy Warren found herself furloughed during the pandemic. Determined to make the most of her time away from the office she focussed on developing her own business, which has gone from strength to strength.

“Back in 2019, I was on maternity leave with my first child. It’s hard work being a new mum, but I wanted to do something that allowed me to be creative that wasn’t baby related. I came across wax melting

and spent several months researching the process and testing my finished products.

“By the time I returned to work, I had created my brand and had some great quality products that I wanted to sell. I ended up launching my website and online shop ‘Oh So Melty’ the same week I returned to work part-time.”

In March 2020, Amy was furloughed, and this gave her the perfect opportunity to really focus on her business.

“At that point I decided to put all my energy into my little business, and because of the financial support from the furlough scheme, I was really able to focus on developing the business.” Amy explained. “Things were progressing really well, but then in the summer of 2020 the company I worked for informed me that they were making my position redundant.

“At that point I had a choice to make. Try to find another part-time graphic design job, which are pretty hard to come by or bite the bullet and take on my business fulltime.”

She decided on the latter and the rest, as they say, is history!

“My business keeps getting stronger and I’ve built up a loyal customer base that is growing locally and nationally. We’ve been featured in Glamour UK’s online gift guide as well as House & Garden Magazine and are stocked in several small shops.”

Amy has big plans for 2022 as she looks to expand her business and maybe even open a shop locally.

If you’re looking to start your own business or learn a new skill to help improve your job prospects, you could apply for funding from The Garnett Foundation Tenant Bursary. To find out more turn to page two.



Festive tea break

Win a £15 voucher!

Grab a pen and a cuppa, sit back and complete our Christmas wordsearch.

Simply find the words and let us know which one is missing and you could win a £15 voucher.

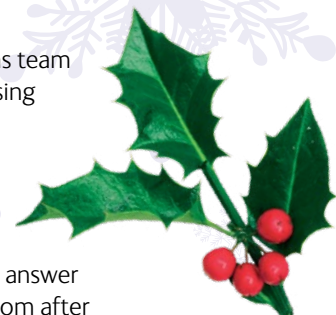
You can enter by emailing your name, full postal address and the missing word to us at **communications@2rh.org.uk** or by completing the form and returning it in the post to:

Communications team
Two Rivers Housing
Cleeve Mill Lane
Newent
Gloucestershire
GL18 1DS

The first correct answer selected at random after **31 January 2022** will win a £15 gift voucher.

The missing word in our autumn wordsearch was **CONKERS**.

Good luck!



Wordsearch grid:

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

Which winter word is missing from our festive wordsearch?

- | | | | | | |
|----------|---------|----------|----------|--------|-----------|
| Blizzard | Chilly | December | Earmuffs | Frosty | Fruitcake |
| Icicle | Mittens | Polar | Reindeer | Scarf | Snowman |

Name: _____

Address: _____

Tel number/email: _____

Preferred voucher: Amazon Tesco M&S B&Q Argos



Christmas opening hours

The festive period is nearly here, and we want to wish all of our tenants a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

If you need to get in touch with us over the festive period, you will be able to do so by phone or email, during the following times:

- Friday 24 December** 8:30am - 12noon
- Monday 27 December** – CLOSED
- Tuesday 28 December** – CLOSED
- Wednesday 29 December** – 9am - 4pm
- Thursday 30 December** – 9am - 4pm
- Friday 31 December** – 9am - 4pm
- Monday 3 January** – CLOSED

If you have an emergency and need to contact us, you will still be able to get in touch. Please call our out of hours team on 0800 316 0897.



Contact us:

Please tell us if you would like this in large print or on audio CD.

Freephone
0800 316 0897

Email
customerservices@2rh.org.uk

Join the Two Rivers community on



Registered Charity No1104723