

May 2023

TENANT NEWS

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HELP WITH
HOUSING COSTS

CELEBRATING
ONE YEAR OF
THE REP

ENTER THE
GARDEN
COMPETITION

...and lots more!



RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT PANEL
APPROVED 

SURVEYING YOUR HOME

As part of the council's work to maintain your home, we'll be carrying out a condition survey of all of our properties. This is important as the information we collect will inform our plans for future improvements such as new kitchens, doors or windows.

These surveys will last around 30 minutes and, if you are one of our tenants, we'll need access to most areas of your home, including loft space and basements if you have these, to get the information we need.

If you're a leaseholder, we'll only need access to the outside of your property.

We'll keep any disruption to a minimum and book an appointment in advance.

Tackling damp and mould

We're now approaching warmer weather where damp and mould may not be such an issue. But we know in some of your homes it is a year-round problem. We want to help.

If your home is suffering with damp and mould, please report it straight away by visiting [canterbury.gov.uk/repairs](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/repairs) or by calling **01227 862 000** if you struggle to use the website.

We'll also be looking for damp and mould when we survey your property.

You can find our Damp and Mould Policy by visiting [canterbury.gov.uk/dampandmould](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/dampandmould)

YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY

In March the government launched a campaign to empower social housing tenants to complain about substandard housing.

We fully support this campaign and agree that all housing should be safe and comfortable for tenants.

Household repairs

To report a repair call **0800 313 4740**

Gas, hot water or heating

To report a problem with your heating or hot water call Swale Heating on **0800 987 40 33**

Grounds maintenance

If you need to report any issues with grass cutting or general grounds maintenance, please contact Canenco on **01227 947 860**

If you are unhappy with the service provided, you can make a complaint by calling **01227 862 142** or emailing tenantcomplaints@canterbury.gov.uk

We aim to provide a reply within 14 days. If we're unable to do this, we will let you know who is dealing with it and what to do if you're not satisfied with the outcome.

MAKE THINGS RIGHT



Fire doors

In January, a new law came into force that requires the council to inspect communal fire doors. Our high-rise and blocks over 11 metres will be the first to be inspected.

Inspections will include the front doors of flats so our team will be in touch to schedule an appointment with you.

We'll be getting in touch separately about the issue of fire safety more generally including help and advice on how to carry out your own fire checks, should you wish to get involved.



Maximising help with housing costs

In March, you received a letter with changes to your rent.

If you claim Universal Credit, you must complete your online 'to-do' task as soon as possible to make sure you receive the right amount of Universal Credit Housing Element.

If your 'to-do' task doesn't appear, please make contact with your Workcoach from the Department for Work and Pensions.

If you already receive Housing Benefit, you do not need to inform the housing benefit department of any rent changes. If you have had other changes to your circumstance that you have not yet informed the housing benefit department of, please let us know. You can do this online at [canterbury.gov.uk/benefits](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/benefits)

If you're in debt, you may like to consider free and independent government sponsored debt advice, just search for the Money Advisor Network or visit [canterbury.gov.uk/costofliving](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/costofliving)



BUYING YOUR HOME

If you are a secure tenant who has lived in social housing for at least three years, you could be eligible to buy the home you live in from the council.

To find out more about the under the Right To Buy scheme and to check whether you are eligible, please visit [canterbury.gov.uk/righttobuy](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/righttobuy) or contact homeownership@canterbury.gov.uk or call **01227 862 373**



Energy and water saving tips

We are now moving into spring and looking forward to warmer weather and relying less on our heating. However, energy bills are increasing and we know many people are struggling to keep their homes lit and comfortable. Below are some tips on how to save on energy and water.

- Turn your thermostat down by one degree
- Turn off appliances at the socket when not in use
- Wash your clothes at a lower temperature
- Close all your curtains and blinds at night to keep the heat in
- Turn the lights off when you are not in the room
- Only fill your kettle up with the amount of water you need
- Use water saving devices such as a shower timer or rainwater barrel

You can find more advice and help on our website [canterbury.gov.uk/costofliving](https://www.canterbury.gov.uk/costofliving)

Thank you to our tenants

Our Tenancy Enforcement team and Legal team, have been successful with two court orders. They removed tenants who have caused extreme levels of antisocial behaviour from their property.

These actions are only used in extreme cases. Sometimes this is essential as it allows the complainants to have some peace while we take action against the tenant causing issues to permanently remove them from their home.

These orders not only help the neighbours, they also work to reduce nuisance in the community, if the nuisance has spread wider than the property alone.

We would not have been successful with these orders if it wasn't for the neighbours providing us with the evidence we needed in court. We work closely with our tenants and together we can achieve the results we need to resolve these issues.

If you need to report any anti-social behaviour, please contact the team by calling **01227 862 142** or fill in the ASB form on our website or by emailing **tenancyenforcement@canterbury.gov.uk**



One year of REP

Our Resident Engagement Panel (REP) celebrated its first birthday in March. It is a group of 12 tenants from across the district who represent the tenants' point of view, challenging the council on its performance and policies. It has been a busy year, with lots achieved by all tenants involved.

- **396 volunteered hours**
- **Eight meetings**
- **Two training sessions**
- **One successful garden competition**



Achievements and areas reviewed across the year

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures
- Housing Annual Report
- the grounds maintenance contract
- Housing Revenue Account
- council's performance and complaints
- housing compliance
- voids processes

In memory of Geoff Bradley

In February we sadly lost a dedicated member of our Resident Engagement Panel. Geoff had been volunteering as a council tenant for over 13 years. He was very well known in Canterbury, with a warm and welcoming personality. He will be sorely missed, our thoughts and sympathies go to his wife and family.

Special thank you



We'd like to say a special thank you to John Shilling who is retiring from his position as a Resident Engagement Panel member. Before REP, John was a member of the Tenant Consultative Group for 28 years. Over those years he has achieved a great deal and is a well known face in the council and the area that he lives.

We appreciate all the time that John has committed over the years, especially recently where he has helped shape the new way of engagement at the council.

Are you interested in joining our Disability Forum?

We are in the process of setting up a Disability Forum, focusing on the service disabled tenants receive, looking at ways to improve this.

The meetings will be held online through Google Meet. There is no need to leave the comfort of your home. Full training on Google Meet will be provided to all forum members.

If you would like to be involved, please email getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk or call Lizzie Norcott on **07597 528 428**

READY STEADY GROW

We're getting ready to hold the annual garden competition which encourages tenants and leaseholders to take up gardening or to improve their gardens.

This is a great opportunity to show off your garden, patio or balcony and a chance to win some great prizes, including garden centre vouchers! The names of winners and the sponsors will be announced in a future issue of this newsletter and we will also contact the local press to ask them to feature it.

HOW TO ENTER

Complete the form at canterbury.gov.uk/gardencompetition or if you're not online, fill in the form below, tear it out and post it back to us in the freepost envelope enclosed with this newsletter.

Entries must be received by Friday 23 June.

Judging will take place in July and we will contact you with a date once we have finalised the arrangements. Winners will be invited to an awards ceremony which we plan to hold in August.

RULES OF THE COMPETITION

- To enter, you must be a Canterbury City Council tenant or leaseholder - your details will be checked on our system to make sure this is the case
- Previous winners may enter the competition
- Work on gardens must be done by you as the resident
- You can enter more than one category, but you can't enter the same space in more than one category (e.g. you can't enter your front garden in both the front garden and containers categories)- please choose which category best applies
- By entering, you agree that the council can share your address and contact information with the judges, for the purpose of judging the competition
- The council cannot accept any responsibility for loss or delay to entries being received



WHICH CATEGORY WOULD YOU LIKE TO ENTER? Please tick all that apply

- FRONT GARDEN:** open to all front gardens, large or small
- BACK GARDEN:** any size, anywhere
- COMMUNAL OR COMMUNITY GARDEN:**
Open to residents who have worked together to create a beautiful shared space
- Containers, pots and baskets**

SPONSORED BY

- Swale Heating
- Mears
- VPro Solutions
- Canenco
- Town & Country

Your name: _____

Address of entry: _____

Postcode: _____ Your phone number: _____

Your email address: _____

Estate inspections

We will be starting up our estate inspections this summer, giving tenants, officers and contractors the opportunity to visit estates as a group and suggest improvements. The inspection will be led by the Neighbourhood Manager for that area and a Resident Engagement Officer.

If you see us out and about, please feel free to stop and say hello and suggest improvements. If you wish to join us on an estate visit, please contact our resident engagement team on getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk or call **07597 528 428**.



DATE	MEETING POINT	TIME	INSPECTION AREAS
Wednesday 3 May	St Andrews Close, Whitstable	10am	St Andrews Close
Wednesday 17 May	Outside Tennyson House, Canterbury	10am	Parkside Place, Tennyson Avenue, Tennyson Place
Wednesday 7 June	Canterbury City Council Visitor Car Park, Canterbury	10am	Brymore Road, Hudson Road, Wemyss House, Wemyss Court
Thursday 22 June	23-57 Alfred Close, Thanington	10am	Alfred Close, Athelstan Road, Cockering Road, Godwin Road, Ingoldsby Road, St Nicholas Road, Strangers Lane, Thanington Road, Windsor Road
Thursday 6 July	St Stephens Community Centre, Hales Place	10am	Downs Road, Beverley House & New Beverley House (St Stephens Hill), The Close, Tenterden Drive
Wednesday 19 July	Entrance to Canterbury High School	10am	Franklyn Road, Knight Avenue, Merchants Way, Mill Lane, Miller Avenue, Priest Avenue, Prioress Road, Shipman Avenue, Squire Avenue, Wife of Bath Hill
Wednesday 9 August	Querns Community Centre	10am	Littlebourne Road, Querns Place, Querns Road, St Martins Hill, The Paddock, Windmill Road
Wednesday 23 August	16 - 19 Collins Road	10am	Barnfield, Collins Road, Gilchrist Avenue, Herne Drive, Love Street Close, Matthews Road, Rowland Drive



Reminder: photographs

In our last newsletter we asked you to share your images of your community. We've heard from some of you already but would love to receive some more photographs from our tenants.

Please send your photos (no larger than 5MB) along with your name and where the photo was taken to getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk. By sending us your photos you are consenting to us using them in future publications.

We've spoken to members of the Resident Engagement Panel (REP) about how often we publish Tenant News. Between us we've agreed to two editions per year.

We're working on other ways of letting you know about the service we provide and finding out what you think.

If you've got any suggestions, get in touch with your ideas. Email getinvolved@canterbury.gov.uk or call **Lizzie Norcott** on **07597 528 428**