

Summer 2019

voice

Informative news and advice from Watford Community Housing

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watford
community
housing

Supporting Pride in the park

We are delighted to announce that we will be the main sponsor of Herts Pride for 2019 as the celebration returns to Cassiobury Park in Watford on 31st August.

Whatever your sexuality, gender or background, we are committed to creating friendly communities for everyone. Across South West Hertfordshire, we work with our tenants, staff and partners to take pride and challenge prejudice, creating safer spaces for those in the LGBTQ+ community.

Visit the Herts Pride website at www.hertspride.co.uk to find out how you can join us there!

#PrideAndPrejudice

Congratulations to our voucher winner for May!

Did you know that everyone who completes our repairs satisfaction survey is entered into a quarterly prize draw to win a £50 intu gift card?

The winner in May was Mrs Chamberlain, who was thrilled to receive her voucher from Customer Relations Officer Karis Lomas. Congratulations to Mrs Chamberlain and thanks to everyone who has given us feedback over the last few months.



Choose your repair time online!

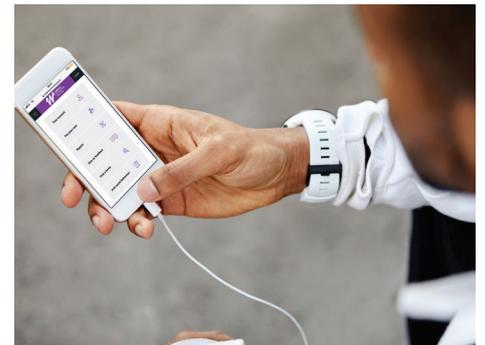
We've improved our digital tenancy services to make booking a repair easier and more convenient.

We know that lots of our tenants like to get things done online rather than having to call us – more than 900 of you are now signed up to a digital account!

To improve the digital service we provide for you, and to give you even more flexibility with your repair appointments, we've created a brand new service for your digital account which allows you to book the time slots for your repairs and manage your repairs online.

The new feature means that, if you have something that needs fixing, you can now select the date and time you would like us to come out and visit using the new calendar booking system.

If you'd like to decide when we pop over to carry out the repair, you just need to sign up for a digital account! All you need to sign up is your tenancy number. Once you've signed up, you'll be free to go online to book your repairs, manage your tenancy, pay your rent, message us directly and much more.



We are always working to provide better services to help make your life easier. This new feature is part of a wider programme of upgrades we'll be making to our digital accounts, so keep your eyes peeled for new changes over the next few months.

If you would like to give us any feedback about the new system or your digital account in general, get in touch on feedback@wcht.org.uk or call us on 0800 2182247. Even if the system isn't working the way you were expecting, we want to hear about it.

Making homes safer on the Meriden

As part of our works to invest in our high-rise blocks, Abbey View and Munden View, we have installed sprinkler systems and state-of-the-art smoke and heat detectors.

After consulting residents – and working closely with the Fire and Rescue service – the decision was taken to spend £1 million installing the new systems. Although these were not a legal requirement, we made the decision to go above and beyond the minimum regulations as resident safety is our top priority.

Residents were pleased with the work, saying that they were “happy with the end result” and commenting on “the quality of the workmanship”.



We have also installed a fireproof box – which can be accessed by the Fire and Rescue service – that contains details of any vulnerable residents in the tower blocks. By having easy access to this information, the Fire and Rescue service will be able to prioritise these residents and make sure they are safely evacuated in the event of an emergency.

On top of the world at Cloud 9!

Single parents from across Watford came together for a fun day out with their kids.

Solo Stars, the group for single parents in Watford, recently arranged an exciting trip to inflatable leisure park Cloud 9 for single parents and their children. Thanks to funding from Watford Community Housing, Solo Stars was able to offer discounted prices to single parents in the group so that they could give their kids a fun day out.

Solo Stars was set up by Watford Community Housing in 2018, and the group has now gone on to form its own committee of single parents who run and manage the events. The main aim of Solo Stars is to bring together single parent families in Watford for friendship, support and advice. However, the group has also organised a number of affordable activities which have given the children a chance to play whilst their parents connect and share their stories.

The trip to Cloud 9 was a big hit with children and parents. Based at Francis Combe School sports hall, Cloud 9 is a fun leisure experience, featuring inflatable bungee runs, bouncy castles and an inflatable dodgeball court. As well as all the jumping they could manage, the children could also play games and have a drink at the café. At a reduced cost of £3 per child as a result of the funding support, the event was very popular, with more than 30 children given an opportunity for a fun morning of activity.

Chair of Solo Stars, Sarah Croombs, and Treasurer Shiralee Braybrooke were both very happy with the event. Sarah said: "We were really pleased with how many people came along to Cloud 9 – the feedback has been excellent and the venue is definitely on our list to revisit!"

"At Solo Stars we appreciate the need for affordable events for divided families in South-West Hertfordshire. As a group, we offer support and friendship for other single parents, as well as the opportunity

to make memories with their children. We are both single parents ourselves and we've found it's a great way to meet people and make friends with other families. The group is growing rapidly, so we're excited for a future with more friendship, fun and family trips."

If you would like to become a member of Solo Stars, search 'Single Parents Watford' on Facebook and join the group.



Improving our customer services

We recently sent you a survey from the Institute of Customer Service so you could let us know what you think about the customer service Watford Community Housing provides.

The results of the survey have allowed us to look more closely at the service we're providing, learning about the things you like and the areas where we can improve. It's been really helpful to hear your feedback, and we can now make changes which ensure our customers experience a high-quality, tailored service.

We're pleased to report that satisfaction with our customer services has improved since we last carried out the survey in 2015, and that you think we've improved in the following areas:

- The helpfulness and competence of our staff
- How easy it was for you to access our services
- The information and advice we provide to residents
- The speed of our written responses
- The speed of responses and outcomes of complaints

We were happy to see these positive improvements, but it is just as important that we take on board the feedback you've given about the areas of our customer service that need to improve.

The results of the survey have given us some excellent insight into how we need to move forward, improving our customer service for you.

If you would like to read more, you can find the full report on our website by searching for 'improving our customer services'.

Preparing for our AGM – everything you need to know

It's that time of year again! Our annual general meeting (AGM) will take place in September, so if you're a Watford Community Housing member here's what you need to know.

This year's AGM will be held on Monday 9th September at our main office – Gateway House on Clarendon Road, Watford.

Members will have the chance to vote on the latest updates to our Rules, which govern how we operate. Watford Community Housing and the Gateway Membership Team (GMT) have been working together to agree the proposed changes that will be put forward.

The main change this year is an amendment to who Watford Community Housing can appoint as Board members. It would mean that there would have to be at least two Board members who are tenants, rather than three, in order to give the organisation flexibility to appoint whoever can help deliver the best services for residents.

Chris Blackett, Chair of the GMT, said: "We want Watford Community Housing to be able to attract the best people to join the Board, to improve services for residents. We believe this change can help them to deliver for us, while keeping tenants at the heart of the organisation."

People attending the AGM will get a sneak preview of 'Our promise to you', which



sets out Watford Community Housing's proposed priorities for the next five years. It has been put together using the feedback collected from a recent survey of tenants – to make sure that these priorities reflect what matters most to you.

Introducing online voting!

Members will receive their information packs in August. This year, for the first time, you can choose to receive your paperwork by email and vote online. Every year it costs almost £10,000 to print and post the packs, so the more people who sign up to read their information pack online, the more money we will have to deliver better services and improve tenants' homes.

If you would be happy to receive your information pack online, let us know by filling in the form here:

www.wcht.org.uk/page/AGMpaperwork

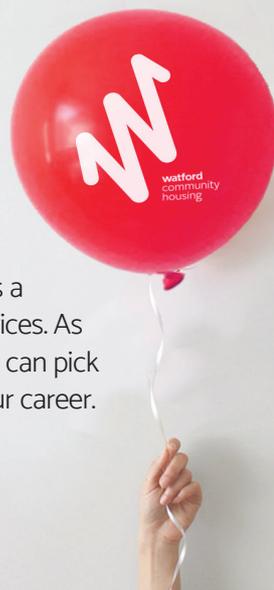
Are you passionate about your community?

We are always looking for people to represent tenants on our Gateway Membership Team.

As a member of the team, you would spend a few hours a month helping us to improve our communities and services. As well as making a real difference to your community, you can pick up vital skills and business experience to help you in your career.

Get in touch now to find out more!

Call 0800 2182247 or email community@wcht.org.uk



Dates for your diary

Holywell festival
Holywell Community Centre
Saturday 29th June

Courtlands fun day
Goodwood recreation park
Saturday 29th June

Meriden Residents' Association coach trip to Southend
Friday 2nd August

Annual General Meeting
59 Clarendon Road
Monday 9th September

Contact Us

Please get in touch to find out more about any of these events!

T: 0800 218 2247

E: enquiries@wcht.org.uk
www.wcht.org.uk