

HOME NEWS



- **NDH achieves charitable status**

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- **Campaigning for more Homes for Britain**

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Written in partnership by customers and staff of North Devon Homes



Spring 2015

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Welcome to the spring edition of Home News!

We have managed to get through winter relatively unscathed after two years of very wet and stormy winters. This is good for our homes and means we have been able to keep up with our intensive maintenance and redecoration schedules which I am pleased about.

It is the "silly season" of elections and the election build up is well underway. We at North Devon Homes have been doing our best to get the issue of homelessness and the provision of good quality affordable homes for local people onto the National Agenda for politicians to take more notice of the Housing Crisis. This Country needs 250,000 new homes every year and over the past 20 years we have barely managed to build half that resulting in a broken housing market where people cant get on the housing ladder or have access to live in a affordable home.

We have been busy trying to do what we can in North Devon and we have built 250 new affordable homes since the last election and have a further 250 planned which is good news but our waiting lists remain in the thousands and the prospect of living in an affordable home is still a remote prospect for too many people.

In addition to the work we are doing building new homes and making improvements to the existing ones I have been working with the staff at tem NDH to improve customer service and make further improvements to the way we deliver our business to you the customer. I am proud to say that our customer satisfaction remains very good but we won't stop in challenging and working hard to continuously improve the way we deliver our services to you our customers.

Martyn

Martyn Gimber
Chief Executive



Front cover image: Mrs Gallagher, Miss Milton and Ms Drew receive flowers from North Devon Homes Chief Executive Martyn Gimber at the Homes for Britain event in Lovacott on Monday February 23rd. **Further details of the event can be found on page 4.**



Charitable Conversion Update

You will be aware from the previous newsletter that North Devon Homes Limited is currently seeking to convert into a Charity from April 2015.

The decision to formally go ahead was taken at the Board on the 26th January following customer consultation. The consultation was met with a very high level (90%) of positive and constructive feedback from customers who agreed with the proposed changes.

There were a few customers who were worried about the term 'Charity' and how this would be used to refer to our homes in the future.

The conversion to charitable status will not have any negative impact on customers and the branding and our charitable status will

not negatively change our relationship with customers in any way.

The majority of Registered Social Landlords in the UK are registered charities. We are converting the business to a charity to help preserve the affordable housing stock for current and future customers and ensure the business is run as efficiently as possible and help us keep rents as low as we can.

As a Charity we will be able to access additional funding streams that are currently not open to us to help us improve our offer generally to customers.

The proposed changes are currently going through the registration process and we expect to convert in April 2015.



Welcome to the Board

We are delighted to welcome Robert Stronge as our new independent Board Member. Robert was formerly Managing Director of Guinness Hermitage a division of The Guinness Partnership and brings over 30 years experience of working on the housing sector to the Board of North Devon Homes.

"Working together to create communities where people want to live"

Congratulations Philippa

We are delighted to announce that Philippa Butler has been appointed as Finance Director. Philippa has worked at NDH since March 2000 as Financial Controller and for the last 12 Months on a fixed term contract as Finance Director, which she has now secured on a permanent basis. Philippa says "I am thrilled to have been appointed as Finance Director and I am really looking forward to continuing the work I have started with the Executive Team and everyone at North Devon Homes".



HOMES FOR BRITAIN

BUILDING OUR FUTURE

People of North Devon caught a bus as part of the nationwide campaign to end the housing crisis within a

"We are proud to support this important campaign."

generation. The event started at Lands' End and the Relay takes the road to Westminster in time for the Homes for Britain rally on 17th March 2015, campaigning to the next government to tackle the housing crisis and come up with a long term plan.

North Devon Homes received the Baton from Westward Housing on the afternoon of Monday 23rd February. The branded double decker bus took North Devon Homes Customers, Board Members, staff and Councillors to the official opening of their newest housing scheme The Orchards, Lovacott. Here there was an opportunity to look around the new homes and meet those now living in them. Harvey Betts, Charlotte McFarlane and Joshua McFarlane from the village Primary School officially opened the development and North Devon Homes Chief Executive Martyn Gimber welcomed all present into Lovacott Village

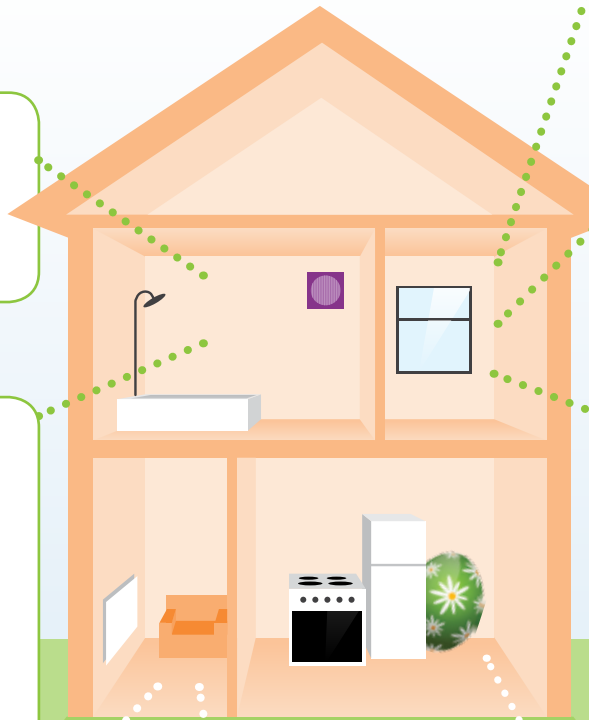


Hall for a cream tea.

Martyn says "We are proud to support this important campaign to raise awareness of chronic housing shortage. The housing market is broken and we need to do things differently going forward to ensure that we can provide one of the most basic rights for people – a roof over their head. We have to get housing to the top of the political agenda for the election and will be campaigning for those who do not have a home."



Safety Tips for Your Home!



Stairs: Keep stairs free from obstructions.
Fit a stair gate for small children.

Fire Safety:
Make sure cigarettes are put out in a proper ashtray.
Turn off electrical appliances when you are not using them and do not overload sockets.
Check cables for any signs of damage.
Only use candles in case of a power cut, secure in a proper holder.
Keep lit candles well away from materials that could catch fire, such as curtains.

DIY: Contact NDH before carrying out **ANY** DIY or decorating (as per the enclosed permissions leaflet).

Heating & Ventilation:
Try to ventilate your home for at least 1 hour per day.
Don't use electrical appliances in the bathroom.
Try to keep some heating on in all rooms during cold weather.

Beds: Never smoke in bed.
Don't leave electric blankets on overnight.

Drying Clothes: Don't dry wet clothes on heaters.

Windows: Window safety catches keep children safe from falls from windows - if you have them, use them.
Keep furniture away from window sills to stop children from climbing up.
Never leave children unsupervised in a room with windows open.

Kitchen: Test smoke alarms and CO monitors weekly.
Know how to turn off mains supply for gas, electric and water.
Don't leave hobs and grills unattended.
Store household cleaners & chemicals out of reach of young children.

If you are concerned about fire safety or other safety issues in your home, please contact us immediately on 01271 312500.

If you need help disposing of large items, you can contact your local council to collect them on 01271 374776. (Remember to tell us if you are leaving items outside for collection, so we do not think they have been abandoned.)

You can report any items you see left in shared areas by contacting the Customer Care Team on 01271 312500.

Older Person Services - An Update

We have completed consultation meetings on the schemes and we have sent letters to all customers about the introduction of charges for support from April 2015. We are currently visiting customers and explaining the charges on a face to face basis and helping people to complete the necessary paperwork.

If anyone has any queries with regard to the charges, please do not hesitate to speak to us on 01271 312500.

We are also carrying out some much needed re-decoration on the sheltered schemes and some improvements to the communal areas. We will celebrate the new service offer in our much improved communal areas in early April, watch this space...



Supported Housing Focus Group

In the past we have consulted with our customers about our Supported Housing services. We are setting up a Supported Housing Focus Group for customers to join to allow us to listen to your ideas and suggestions.

This is an opportunity for customers to share their opinions and ideas about our Supported Housing Services – we really want you to tell us what you want from the service, how well you think it meets customer's needs and what social activities we might add. Please do come along and join in for a chat with a cup of tea and some cake we would love to hear what you have to say.

If you would like be involved in this group, we would love to see you there! We hope to hold the first gathering in April, please contact Rowan Summers on 01271 313384 or email rowan.summers@ndh-ltd.co.uk for more details.

Thinking of buying a mobility scooter?

If you live in a flat and are considering purchasing a mobility scooter please let us know before you do so. We need to check that there is a suitable storage area for the scooter when you are not using it. Mobility scooters cannot be stored in communal areas as they may block emergency exits and/or cause a trip hazard.

For further information please call our Customer Care Team on 01271 312500.

Devon Homelink

Devon Homelink is an alarm service for anyone living in the North Devon area.

A small alarm unit fits to your telephone and a pendant or wrist strap allows the wearer to summon help in an emergency (24 hours a day)

For more information or to arrange a FREE demonstration call FREE on:

0800 083 7553



Planning for 2015/16

The Planned Maintenance programme for 2015/16 has been confirmed and works are made up of the components below.

If your home is due to have any Planned Maintenance work completed you will receive a letter in the post soon detailing the works that will be taking place.



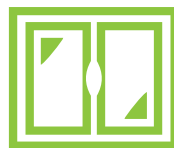
33

Kitchens



36

Bathrooms



3

Windows



119

Doors



106

Electrics



20

Electric Heating



216

Gas Boilers



38

Heating Distribution



10

Air Source Boilers



20

Roofs



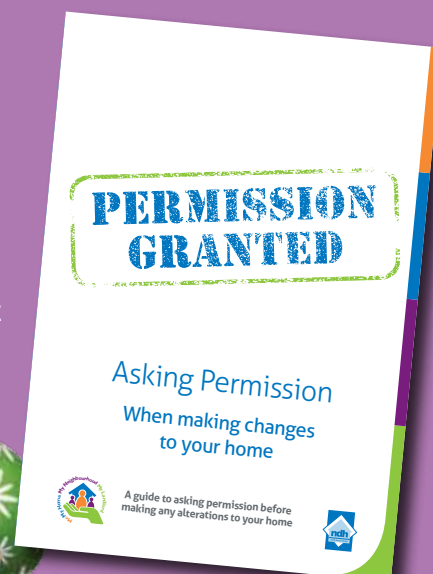
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External Decorations

If you have any queries or questions please call our Planned Maintenance team on 01271 312500.

Permissions

We will consider requests for you to make changes to your home, however we need to ensure that it is safe for you to do so, and does not damage or limit the building. For these reasons the policy allowing you to make changes to your home is governed by current Building Regulations, relevant planning approval and our approval process. A copy of our permission leaflet is enclosed with this newsletter for your information. If you have any queries or questions, please call us on 01271 312500.



EPC Surveys

We are currently looking to improve the energy information that we hold on our properties so we have a better understanding of those homes that are not as energy efficient as we would like. Once identified, we will then target these properties for the necessary energy improvement measures.

To help us gather this information we have commissioned an Energy Assessor to complete Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) on a number of properties. You may be contacted over the next few weeks and we would be grateful if you could support this action by providing access to your home.

If you would like any further information, please call us on 01271 312500.

Customer Satisfaction: Gas Servicing

To ensure we offer continuous Value for Money we tender our contracts on a regular basis. Our gas servicing contract is currently out to tender and the new contractor should be in post by 1st April 2015. As part of this process we have introduced satisfaction surveys for the contractor to deliver and we will use these to monitor their performance. Our target for customer satisfaction is 96% across all our Response Repairs and Planned Maintenance services; we will be aiming for the same high standard from our gas servicing contractor.



New Asset Manager

We are thrilled to announce that Claire Fallow has been appointed as our new Asset Manager. Claire originally joined the company in 2009 and has worked in many roles throughout the organisation gaining a wealth of knowledge and experience. Claire says "I am delighted to have been appointed as Asset Manager, I am continuing to work to ensure that services offer the best Value for Money whilst maintaining a high level of customer service and satisfaction with everyone at Team ndh."



100%
Target: 100%

of properties with a valid Gas Safety Record month end



96.6%
(target 96%)

of Response Repairs customers satisfied with the service they received

Christmas is coming...

Christmas may only just be over but now is a good time for you to plan your finances for Christmas 2015. Setting aside a little each week or month now can help to avoid a large credit card bill or expensive loans from doorstep or payday lenders. We recommend talking to Plough and Share Credit Union who offer savings accounts that will help you plan for the festive season. You can then relax knowing that you won't be left with a financial headache in the new year.

Contact Plough and Share on 01837 658123 or their website at www.ploughandshare.co.uk or pick up an application form from our town centre office.



Rent Free Weeks

This year's rent free weeks run from 16th March through to 10th April. Please ensure your rent account is clear by Friday March 13th.

If you are struggling to pay your rent, please contact the income team on 01271 312500, we are here to help you.



0.9%
(target 2%)

Outstanding rent
(current customers)



1397
(target 775)

Number of customers taking up
Benefit Entitlement Assistance (YTD)

Universal Credit

Universal Credit has started its roll out across the country. In North Devon, single people making a new claim for job seekers allowance from November will be claiming the new Universal Credit. To ensure you are ready you will need to make sure you have a bank account. You can give your finances a health check with www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk and keep up to date with the latest information at www.gov.uk/universal-credit.

If you have any queries or questions about Universal Credit, please call our Income Team on 01271 312500.



New Faces

In January this year we welcomed Alison Myhill as our New Income Manager. Alison joins us from Sanctuary Housing and says "I'm delighted to be joining the team at North Devon Homes. I'll be making sure that we continue to offer good advice and support to customers about rent and benefits and that we help you navigate the changes that are coming in the future."

Advice on Tap

Each year, 20,000 people in Devon and Cornwall save an average of £300-£400 per household by having a water meter fitted.

South West Water has advisors to help you find out if a meter could save you money and help you with the necessary forms if you want to switch. It's free and if, within 12 months, you feel it's not right for you, you can go back to an unmeasured charge.

The *WaterSure* tariff may help to reduce your bill if:

- someone has a medical condition meaning extra water is used
- You have three or more children living with you.

To qualify you must:

- have a water meter
- be in receipt of certain benefits or tax credits



The *WaterSure* tariff helped Sarah, who was paying £82 a month based on her rateable value charges. As Sarah has three children living at home and is receiving the right qualifying benefits, she was eligible for the *WaterSure* tariff so a water meter was installed. Sarah is now saving £480 a year.

The *WaterCare* tariff is for metered customers on a very low income. To qualify, you must be receiving one of the following benefits:

- Income based Employment Support Allowance
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance
- Guaranteed Credit element of Pension Credit

The *WaterCare* tariff helped Pat and John, who were struggling with their household bills. They have a water meter and receive the guaranteed element of Pension Credit. The *WaterCare* tariff has reduced their water bills by 15% saving them £108 a year.

For more information or to receive an application form for one of the support tariffs, call South West Water Accounts helpline on 0344 346 1010.

If you are struggling to pay your water bill, please don't ignore it. You can contact South West Water Debt Helpline on 0800 083 0283, to talk through the different options that are available to help you.

A light bulb moment

We receive a lot of calls from customers about light bulbs needing to be replaced in their homes. There may be light bulbs in your home when you move in (normally left from the previous customer) however replacing light bulbs is your responsibility. We will only replace light bulbs in sealed units such as bathrooms.



Emergency, Emergency...

Providing value for money is always one of our key priorities. Our 24 hour emergency repair service is an expensive service if not used properly. An increase in phone calls could result in the price we are charged for the out of ours service being increased.

Currently, many of the calls to our out of hours service (when our offices are closed) are not genuine emergencies and could have waited to be dealt with during office hours.

We are charged for each call our out of hours service handle, and generally it is twice as expensive for a contractor to attend an out of hours job (approximately £50, compared with £25 in hours) so it is important that you only call our out of hours number for genuine emergencies.

Our staff and out of hours contractor will only consider the following as an emergency:

- Total loss of water
- Burst water main
- Flooding
- Severe storm damage
- Total loss of electricity supply
- Major fault with the electricity supply
- Unsafe electrical fittings
- Breaches of security to outside doors and ground floor windows
- Total loss of gas supply
- Gas leak
- Blocked flue
- Blocked main drains, soil pipe or only toilet
- No hot water/loss of entire heating provision either in cold weather (31st October – 1st May) or if you are elderly, disabled, chronically sick, or if you have children in the property under five years old
- Serious roof leaks/major structural failures
- Failure of lift
- Failure of warden alarm or call system
- Fire damage
- Offensive or racist graffiti

We will respond to all of the above any time, day or night and make safe or repair within 24 hours of you contacting us but you **MUST** be prepared to either stay in your property or arrange for someone else to stay in, to allow the contractors access.

Bonfires

You should not build bonfires unless you have absolutely no alternative. If a bonfire is necessary, we kindly ask that you consider your neighbours and follow these recommendations:

- ✘ Do not burn damp grass or green material as this causes thick smoke
- ✘ Do not burn oily rags, rubber, plastics or materials that will create heavy or toxic fumes
- ✘ Do not light a bonfire when neighbours have washing out, are in their gardens or have windows open
- ✘ Do not light bonfires one hour before dusk or leave them burning overnight

- ✘ Do not leave a fire unattended and never leave a fire to smoulder for long periods
- ✔ Do advise your neighbours before you light a bonfire
- ✔ Do burn material quickly and in small quantities
- ✔ Do choose your bonfire site carefully away from trees, fences and windows

If you have any queries or questions, please call the Environmental Health team at North Devon Council on 01271 388870.



Customer Forum - Francis Gott

North Devon Homes would like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to Francis Gott for his hard work, dedication, commitment and for the difference he has made for all our customers.

Francis Gott has stood down from his post as Chair of the Customer Forum after completing the maximum three year term. Francis says:

"I have enjoyed my time as Chair of the Customer Forum, the challenges and the opportunities the role has bought. I would like to thank all Customer Forum members for their commitment over the last three years and also North Devon Homes for working together with the Customer Forum and supporting it to become the successful group that it is today. I wish the future Chair every success in their new post". Francis will continue to be a member of the Customer Forum and involved with other customer groups.

Francis has worked tirelessly on behalf of the organisation and we are extremely grateful for his valuable contribution.



An Egg-cellent Easter Lunch

Following the success of the Christmas lunch held in December, Whiddon Valley Community Centre will be holding an Easter lunch on Wednesday 1st April. A three course roast chicken dinner will be served at 1pm and will cost just £1 per person.

If you would like to book yourself a place, please call Whiddon Valley Community Centre on 01271 372396 or Carol Lewis on 07811273650.



Community and Residents Groups

Would you like to meet new people, learn new skills, and get to know your neighbours? Have you ever thought about forming a Community or Resident's group? There are lots of good reasons and benefits for you to work together with your neighbours and local community, perhaps to address a local issue or concern, to improve local facilities or to organise community events such as fetes, coffee mornings and lunches. North Devon Homes are committed to building strong sustainable communities and can offer support to any individual or group that has a vision and an idea for a project that will make a difference to people in the area. We can offer advice on how to set up and run a group, to organise neighbourhood events and how to source possible funding to help you support your project.

If you would like to work together with other people to help make your neighbourhood a better place to live then please telephone the Customer Involvement team on 01271 313384 or email rowan.summers@ndh-ltd.co.uk.



211

Customers responded to a customer involvement mailout



35

Residents attended a Christmas Community lunch organised by volunteers



An Evaluation to be Proud of!

An external evaluation, carried out by the University of St Mark and St John (Plymouth), on the young people Lottery funded project that takes place in Slade Valley, Gorwell, and Forches has praised the young people, parents, partners and North Devon Homes for:

- The innovative youth work model 'Developing Young Communities'
- "bringing young people aged 9 to 19 years together to develop their capacity and confidence in order that they can make a difference in their own community"
- "the trusting and respectful relationships achieved between staff and young people"

Our Starfish NDH project has been recognised as exceptional! This has only been made possible through the efforts of the young people, their participation, enthusiasm and joint management roles.

Dr Cooper from the University was particularly impressed by those young people who took part in the focus groups and thoroughly enjoyed meeting some of their parents and speaking with some of the agencies the project has worked with. In summing up Dr Cooper felt the project should be celebrated "far and wide as an example of excellent practice."

Summer Fayre: Save the Date!

We are delighted to announce that our annual customer Summer Fayre will be held on **Wednesday 29th July at Barnstaple Rugby Club from 11-3pm**, we would love to see you and your family there!

Plans are well underway with lots to keep you and your children entertained - face painting, a petting zoo, circus skills, break dance workshops, comedy performances, a photo booth, crafts, soft play, bouncy castles, competitions and lots of stalls.



We are also excited to announce three very special guests – Princess Elsa, Princess Anna and Olaf the Snowman from Frozen!! The event is free for all our customers and your entry card will include vouchers for food and activities making this a really great day out.

Your personal invitation will be posted to you in June, we would love you to come along, join in the fun and make this our best Summer Fayre yet! **If you have any ideas or suggestions for this year's Fayre please contact Rowan Summers on 01271 313384 or email rowan.summers@ndh-ltd.co.uk.**



Tenant 2 Tenant

Members of the Customer Forum are at hand to help with any questions or queries you may have. Tenant 2 Tenant has been set up to provide impartial support to all customers with any housing related issues. Sometimes it can really help to talk things through, and as tenants ourselves we really understand things from a tenant's perspective. If you feel it would be helpful to have an informal chat

with another tenant, no matter how small or silly you may think your query is, then please call us on **07740410970**.

We are available on this number 7 days a week, 9am to 9pm.



The Starfish Community Charity provides a hardship fund to support tenants in both social and private rented accommodation in North Devon and Torridge districts. The fund can provide one off support of up to £200 to help those in financial hardship with essential accommodation, health, education and training costs.

For more information and an application form, please contact NDH Customer Care Team on 01271 312500

What can I join in with at Medard House?

Monday

1.45pm - 3.45pm "55" Club Bingo.
Call 01271-376683 for more info.

Tuesday

12.30pm - 1.30pm Medard House Student Lunch Call 01271-371048 for info.

Wednesday

9.00 am Ring and Ride to Tesco/Sainsbury's (needs to be booked in advance)
Call 01271-328866 for more info.

10.30am - 11.00am Exercise Class.
Mainly chair based.

2.00pm - 3.30pm (approx) Cinema Club.
Every other week. Contact Support Advisors for more info.

7:00pm Alexandra Social Club Bingo
Call Janet 01271-327394 for more info.

Thursday

10am - 11am Alexandra Social Club Coffee Morning. Call Janet 01271-327394 for more info.

1.30pm - 3.30pm Hobbies Club
Call Christine 07851406687 for more info.

6.30pm Disabled fellowship Club
(1st Thursday in month)

Friday

10am - 10.30am Breakfast Club.
Every other week.

Saturday

Alexandra Social Club put on occasional events.

Sunday

10.30am Trinity Church Service
(4th Sunday of month)

11.00am Coffee morning (run by the church)

Support Advisors also put on events throughout the year.

Quiz, Coffee, Games, Speakers afternoons.

For more details about these events and who to contact if you're interested, see one of the Support Advisors. (Tel: 01271 371048)

Protect yourself from Fraud

Fraud is a serious crime

People often choose not to report fraud because they are embarrassed that they fell for a scam. Some believe that fraud is a victimless crime, or that it's not as serious as other crimes. This is not true, fraudsters are often part of serious organised criminal gangs, who use the money to fund many other vicious crimes.

Although fraud comes in many forms, there are some simple steps you can take to protect yourself from the crime.

1. Do not give any personal information to anyone before verifying their credentials.
2. Many frauds start with an email. Remember that banks etc will never send you an email asking you to click on a link to confirm your bank details. If you suspect an email call your bank using the phone number on a letter or bank statement or by searching for their website (typed directly into the address bar).

What should you do if you've received a scam email?

- Do not click on any links in the scam email.
- Do not reply to the email or contact the senders in any way.
- If you do open a link, do not enter any personal information
- Do not open any attachments within the email.



If you think you may have compromised the safety of your bank details and/or have lost money due to fraudulent misuse of your cards, you should immediately contact your bank.

Other things that you can do to protect yourself from fraud are:

- Destroy and shred receipts and post with your personal details on.
- Ensure your computer has up-to-date anti-virus software and a firewall installed.
- Sign-up to 'Verified' by Visa or MasterCard 'Secure Code' while shopping online.
- If you receive bills for things you haven't bought, or financial institutions contact you about outstanding debts, take action.
- Regularly get a copy of your credit file and check it for entries you don't recognise. Callcredit, Equifax and Experian can provide your credit file.
- Be extremely wary of post, phone calls or emails offering you business deals. If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- If you are a victim of fraud, be aware of fraud recovery fraud. When fraudsters pretend to be a lawyer or a law enforcement officer and tell you they can help you recover the money you've lost.

If you need advice about fraud, call Action Fraud. They ensure victims of fraud have a central place to go to in order to report crime and get advice and support. You can report fraud by speaking directly to their specialist fraud advisers by phoning 0300 123 2040.

Written by Lorna Childs,
Vice Chair of Customer Forum

Christmas Dinner

On the 23rd of December 2014 the youth team held a Christmas dinner for some of the young people who always give 100%. The day was filled with lots of laughter and games. Andie Scilly (Lead Youth Worker) was in the kitchen cooking the roast dinner for most of the day for the young people and the staff team to show her appreciation of how hard they have worked throughout the year.



Youth Club Christmas Parties

The young people from Barnstaple and Ilfracombe enjoyed two Christmas parties this festive season. The parties were a huge success with lots of festive jumpers and happy faces.

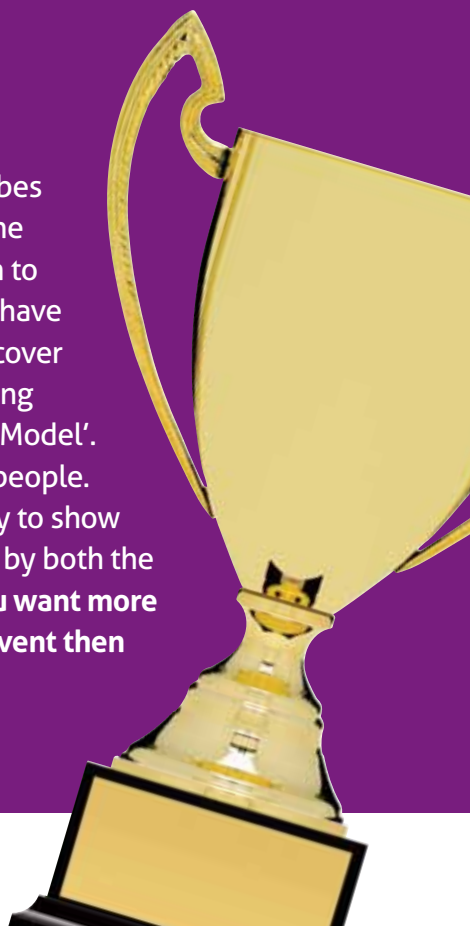
The nights were filled with lots of food, fun and games and all who attended enjoyed themselves.

One of our old members of the youth project, Arron Bennett, has started up his own business as a DJ and supplied the music for the event.



Golden Globes

In March we will be holding two Golden Globes Award ceremonies, one in Ilfracombe and one in Barnstaple. These are to show recognition to the young people for all the hard work they have put in throughout the year. The awards will cover a number of categories including 'Outstanding Individual Contribution', 'Bravery' and 'Role Model'. The winners will be voted for by the young people. We have found this is a fantastic opportunity to show the young people how appreciated they are by both the youth team staff and their peers. **Should you want more information, or to contribute towards the event then please contact Andie on 01271 313377.**




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Young people from Barnstaple and Ilfracombe nominated for Golden Globe Awards to recognise their achievements



Starfish Talent Show

The young people of North Devon Homes Starfish youth project are hosting a talent show on Tuesday 14th April. There are a number of young people showcasing their talents from street dancing to singing; this is to help the young people build their self esteem and confidence and to show off their skills. The young people have been rehearsing every week and working hard to perfect their acts.

There will be refreshments and a raffle during the show with prizes kindly donated from



Funder Zone, Charley's Angels nails and beauty bar and many more local businesses.

The show will be held at Yeo Valley Primary School on the Tuesday 14th April at 6.30pm. There will be a charge of £1 per person and all ages welcome. Please come along to show your support to the young people.

Please call Sam Gifford youth support worker on 01271 313377 for tickets or if you would like any more information.



News flash!

Forches Youth Club will be reopening on Wednesdays starting on Wednesday 11th February.

Young Community Enterprise Project

Since it's launch on 8th November 2011, this project has grown steadily, with community members spreading word of the good service provided by the young people that make up this team.

The young people have helped older and/or busy community members with dog walking. They have learned a wide variety of gardening skills such as weeding, vegetable bed clearing, earth preparation, pruning and vegetable planting. Some of the YCEP team have provided a babysitting service (after a course provided by the Red Cross on paediatric first aid and babysitting).

This is all done to help improve intergenerational relationships, improve the local communities in which the young people live and to raise vital funds, via small suggested donations for the youth club project.

If you are interested in a visit from our team, to help with any of these tasks, please contact Sam Gifford or the team leader Andie Scilly on 01271 313377

Ilfracombe Pilot Gig Club

The young people of Slade Valley Youth Club will be having a free taster session with Ilfracombe Pilot Gig Club. The Gig Club approached us to ask if any of the young people would be interested and from that they will be bringing a boat up to the club to show the young people what it entails. We are hoping to be going out on the water in March, and who knows where it might lead... our very own young people's gig team perhaps?





Woodville

The scheme at Woodville is moving at a pace with the next stage of properties being completed and occupied by the end of March. In the new financial year (15/16) we are rolling out plans to introduce shared ownership properties into the development at Woodville which are due to be completed in early 2016. The rented properties are progressing well with the next completions due for September.

Lee Road

Works at the new development site at Lee Road, Lynton are now well underway. Demolition works to the existing buildings were completed in December 2014, foundation works have started and South West Water preparation works for the site are continuing. The scheme will provide four new flats and two new commercial units to the Lynton area.



Forches

Works on the Forches estate are drawing to a close with all the rented properties now completed. Works are continuing on the final shared ownership properties which are due for completion in April. The Forches Phase 2 Scheme as a whole has provided 65 rented and 15 shared ownerships properties.

Gorwell

We are pleased to confirm that we have submitted three planning applications to North District Council in connection to the three proposed sites on the Gorwell Estate. These sites include:

- Land at Goodleigh Road
- Crow View garage site
- Regeneration of Beaufort Walk flats (even number 2-32)

We are looking to start on site at the Goodleigh Road and Crow View areas of the estate in June 2015 with the works at Beaufort Walk to commence following completion of these two sites.



228
new homes built

Eco Friendly Scrutiny Panel

Identifying, suggesting and practicing Value for Money is close to the hearts of our Scrutiny Panel. In December they became paper free, adopting new technology to reduce printing, paper and postage costs. This development allows the group to have a greater breadth of information at their finger tips when reviewing service delivery.

Michelle (Scrutiny Chair) says: "Becoming paper free was a big decision for the panel but we made it because of the value for money it offered, an integral part of what scrutiny stands for. Also the benefits of being able to access all the information we need for our reports is invaluable. Our members, which include a wide age range, have all received training and support, although we are at an early stage I feel we are already benefiting from the change."

Currently Scrutiny is reviewing Response Repairs from a customer's point of view; details of the results will be shared in the next newsletter.

The Scrutiny review on response repairs customer satisfaction figures was well received by staff and the Board who liked the panel's recommendations. The main one being; to encourage more customers to return satisfaction surveys when repairs are completed, along with some ideas on how this might be achieved.

The panel is still looking for customers to join them; Michelle says "when joining scrutiny two years ago I found it daunting yet within a few months it was relatively easy to understand the terminology and the workings of NDH and Scrutiny with help and guidance from the panel. You will be surprised how much you can help make a positive difference for the company and for your home by attending a meeting just one night a month."

If you would like to give Scrutiny a try please contact Frances Walsh on 01271 312527.

"We are already benefiting from the change."

Get set for sowing and growing this Spring!

Our volunteers will tell you that growing vegetables is rewarding from one small packet of seeds you can grow a whole crop, swapping your crop with neighbour's can provide a great variety of fresh food cheaper and tastier than supermarket food.

Volunteers, staff, the NHS and Community Action South West have worked to complete the final stage of the garden in Forches ready for the new growing season and have also been planting bulbs in some for the green spaces on Forches Avenue and the roundabout.

The community volunteers in Heppenstall have a garden to be proud of with established fruit trees and herbs seasonally interspersed with salad and vegetable crops.

So if you have any ideas for a community garden, sharing home grown vegetables or donating unwanted fruit crops why not let us see if we can help each other, just get in touch with Frances Walsh on 01271 312527 or email frances.walsh@ndh-ltd.co.uk



Spring into Action Days!



Our Neighbourhoods team are going to be busy over the next few months with a number of action days and Estate Inspections planned. These are detailed below:

Gorwel/Frankmarsh Action Day - Thursday 28th May

This event will see NDH staff and volunteers work together to improve the area including litter picking, weeding and strimming. There will also be skips available should you have any large items you wish to dispose of. We would love to see customers getting involved, for further information please call us on 01271 312500.

South Molton Estate Inspection - Wednesday 8th April

Chulmleigh Estate Inspection - Tuesday 28th April

Queens Estate Inspection - Wednesday 13th May

Fremington Estate Inspection - Wednesday 3rd June

Wrafton Estate Inspection - Wednesday 24th June



During these Estate inspections your Neighbourhood Officer and other members of NDH staff will be available on site. We will be looking at the general condition of the communal areas and highlighting any areas for improvement to benefit all of our customers.

If you have something you would like to discuss with your Neighbourhood Officer then please do contact us on 01271 312500.

Keeping our staff safe

We want our staff to feel safe and happy when doing their jobs; and we have a duty of care to ensure the safety of our staff. We therefore politely ask that when staff and contractors are visiting you in your home you:

- Refrain from smoking at all times. If a visit is prearranged please do not smoke for one hour prior to this visit.
- Keep pets under control, particularly dogs, and move them to another room for the duration of the visit (please see our permissions leaflets for details on the procedure before getting a pet).



Too much stuff?

Hoarding is a debilitating psychological condition, in which sufferers are unable to dispose of excess or unused items to the point where they are clogging their living space and affecting the way in which they are able to live their lives.

Do you think you, or someone you know, is hoarding?

- Do you buy things you already have because you can't find them?
- Are you unable to let go of ordinary items like rubbish, thinking they may be used again?
- Is your table too cluttered to eat on?
- Do you avoid having visitors because you don't want them to see your home?
- Is it difficult to manoeuvre around your home because the pathways are narrow as there is too much 'stuff'?
- Are you overwhelmed with daily household tasks and don't know where to start?
- Do you have nonfunctional areas of your home like a bathroom, kitchen or shower that you are too embarrassed to call for a repair service?



- Have people raised concerns that you may have a hoarding problem?
- Do you spend your free time getting or collecting more things?
- Do you feel you have a different life outside your home to that inside it?
- Do you have more than three pets and find it difficult to tend to them?

If you answer yes to 3 or more of the above questions and you would like some help or advice, please contact your Neighbourhood Officer on 01271 312500.

There is also a website www.helpforhoarders.co.uk with lots of valuable and helpful information on hoarding.

New look for Neighbourhood Rangers

Our Neighbourhood Ranger vans now have a new look. The colours tie in with our corporate colours and this should make them more recognisable when work is being carried out in your neighbourhood. We hope you like them as much as we do.



Estate inspections planned
April - June 2015

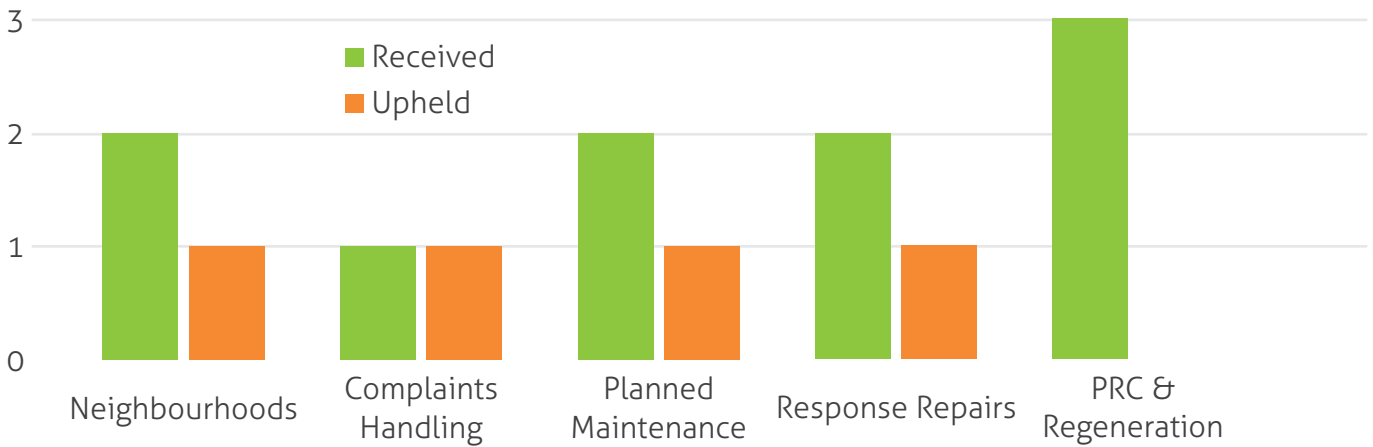


30.3 days
(target 27.7)

Average re-let time of all re-lets (YTD)

Complaints & Compliments

Oct - Dec 2014



Thank you to everyone who took the time to tell us when we performed well or when our services fell short of expectations. Without this information we would not be able to share good and bad service experiences throughout the company to help us improve the services we provide to you.



28

Compliments

10

Complaints Received



Text Alert

You have told us it could be expensive to retrieve messages we'd left on their mobile. So now we can text you at no cost to you. Make sure you let us know if you change your phone number. 01271 312500.

Always check for identification

All members of NDH staff and our contractors carry and present identification when they call at your home. Should you have any concerns or doubts about anyone calling at your home **do not let them in** and call us on **01271 312500**.

Got something to say about NDH?
We want to hear it!
 Call us on **01271 312500**
 or email us at enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk

Identity Card
 If you are unsure of caller please
Telephone 01271 312500

Sharon Hayne
Regeneration Officer

Holders Signature: _____ Expiry Date: 24/02/2016

"Working together to create communities where people want to live"

Garages to Let

We have a number of garages to let in the following areas:


- Bishops Tawton
- Prieford
- Barnstaple

If you are interested in renting a garage and would like further information, please contact the Customer Care Team on 01271 312500.

Don't miss out on free childcare for 2 year olds

Some two year olds in Devon are now eligible for up to 15 hours fee childcare and early learning each week. Your child is eligible if your family receive certain benefits and your household income is less than £16,190, or if your child has a disability, special educational needs, is adopted or placed under a residency order. **Check out your eligibility and apply online at www.devon.gov.uk/2gether.**





If you have NO home contents insurance you could be in for a Shock!

North Devon Homes does not insure your furniture and personal possessions. However we have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks to offer you an affordable home contents insurance policy.

Protect your belongings against a whole range of risks and find peace of mind.

For more information you can call Crystal Insurance on **lo-call 0845 601 7007** (it may be cheaper to call 01628 586187 from a mobile) Or visit www.crystal-insurance.co.uk

You can even request a member of the Crystal Insurance Team to call you back.

Terms & conditions, exclusions & limits apply. A copy of the policy wording is available on request.

The Crystal Insurance Scheme is a product name arranged and administered by Thistle Tenant Risks. A trading style of Thistle Insurance Services Ltd. Lloyds Broker. Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. A JLT Group Company. Registered Office: The St Botolph Building, 138 Houndsditch, London, EC3A 7AW. Registered in England No 00338645. VAT No. 244 2321 96.

ENTRY
£10pp ADULTS
£5pp JUNIOR
including admission to the BIG Sheep

THE BIG SHEEP
YEARS 25 OF FUN



Calling all bakers to enter
THE GREAT NORTH DEVON BAKE OFF
SUNDAY 5TH JULY 2015

Enter into our 5 categories:

- Decorated Children's Character Cake
- 4 Cupcakes
- Victoria Sponge Cake
- Chocolate Brownies
- Lemon Drizzle Cake

Get your entry form from North Devon Homes or The BIG Sheep, Download from www.thebigsheep.co.uk or email debbie.short@thestarfishcharity.org.uk
Closing date for entries is Friday 19th June 2015

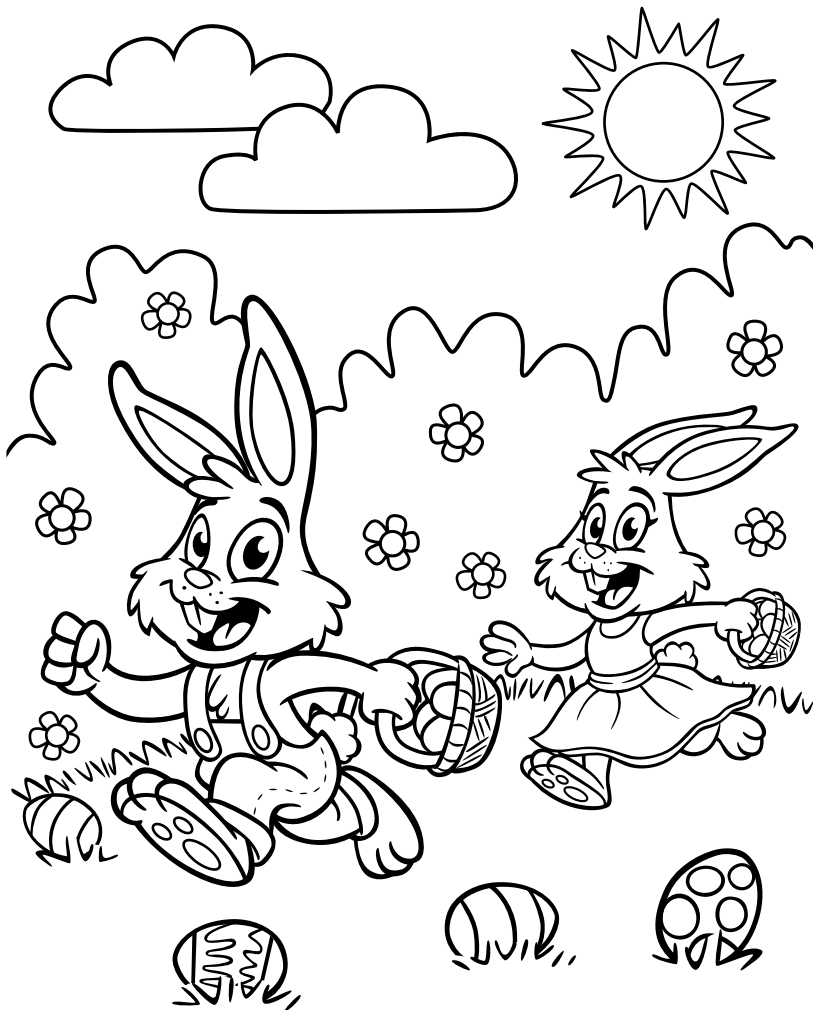
Raising money for:

The BIG Sheep Family Attraction, Bideford, EX39 5AP
01237 472366
www.thebigsheep.co.uk





Kid's Colouring Competition



How to enter:

Fill out the form and send it to the address below by 30/04/2015 for a chance to win an Easter egg.

Name

Age

Address

..... Postcode

Age groups are as follows:

7 and under

8 - 12 years

Please tick this box if you do not wish your child to be named

How Many?

How many Easter Eggs (not including this one) can you find throughout this newsletter?

How to enter: Fill out the form and send it to the address below by 30/04/2015 for a chance to win a £20 voucher.

No. of Easter Eggs:



Please tick this box if you do not wish to be named

Name

Age

Address

..... Postcode

For a chance to win, send all entries to:

Rowan Summers, North Devon Homes, Westacott Road, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 8TA by 30/04/2015