

HOME NEWS

Summer 2019

Written in partnership
by customers and staff
of North Devon Homes

Join us for some
Summer Fayre fun!

Your invitation is enclosed

contents

Communications	3
Independent Living	4 - 5
Customer Care Team	6 - 7
Planned Maintenance	8 - 9
Digital by 2020	10 - 11
Income Team	12 - 13
Customer Involvement	14 - 15
Regeneration & Development	16 - 17
Neighbourhoods	18
Home2Home	19
Updates	20 - 21
Health & Safety	22
Notice Board	23
Competitions	24

Front cover image:
Summer Fayre 2018

Welcome to the summer edition of Home News!

I hope this edition of Home News finds you and your family well. We face some interesting times as a country at the moment and, with all the political issues swirling around Westminster, it can be easy to forget that we still remain in the midst of a housing crisis which hasn't improved over the past three years. North Devon Homes is working with key partners and agencies to help try and alleviate the impact the lack of affordable homes is having on our local community and economy. For instance, we have been working hard to deliver a new community at Anchorwood Bank, which will provide 135 new homes for sale and 37 affordable homes for local people who need a home. We are nearing completion on the first phase and are delighted to be welcoming people into their new homes on this fantastic new scheme for North Devon.

The housing crisis is not just about bricks and mortar; it's also about helping people sustain their tenancies and keep rents affordable. We have been working hard to keep our costs low and therefore rents as low as we can by operating as efficiently and effectively as possible. We reduced rents further this year and have been able to maintain our costs within budgets through very challenging times. I am pleased to say we also continue our programme of modernising our services for customers and are undergoing a major investment in technology to make sure we continue to deliver a great local service to our customers.

We will continue this work no matter what else happens. I hope you have a fantastic summer.

Martyn Gimber
Chief Executive



An update from the board

We have just completed our annual review of our Board operations and noted the considerable steps we have taken to meet the challenges and opportunities provided by Brexit, government policies and regulation and importantly the move for greater space for hearing customers' views. We are in a good place with our C90 and Scrutiny arrangements, and indeed, it is great that we have achieved national recognition for our engagement structure with nominations for awards such as the UK Housing Awards, Neighbourhood Transformation Award.

The feedback from Board members during the review process has highlighted a wish to build upon the success of C90 and increase the influence and impact of customers in our decision making and reviews of services. Dawn Ash has been our lead Board member on C90 and has been a great champion of customers' views. She has been involved in the creation of C90 from the outset and led its success. She is very keen that we maintain the momentum we

have gained. However, it has become difficult to balance the demands of being both a Board member and chairing C90, so Dawn has decided to step down from the Board to concentrate on leading C90. By dedicating more time to this, we can build on our engagement success and meet the Board's desire to hear more from customers.

The link between C90 and the Board will remain strong as we will still have two other members attending meetings – myself and Debbie Hay plus, of course, Dawn will be there on C90 to ensure we stay focused! We now need to recruit a new Board member and will be reviewing the needs, skills and experience required to continue leading a successful community landlord.

Robert Stronge
Chair of the Board



Join us for some Summer Fayre fun!

This year's North Devon Homes' Customer Summer Fayre is taking place on Wednesday 31st July at Barnstaple Rugby Club between 11am and 3pm. Your invitation to this year's event is included in this newsletter. You can register online through our website www.ndh-ltd.co.uk; on our Facebook page; or by calling us on 01271 312500 to book your places.

Amongst the attractions this year there will be yoga sessions, games, donkeys, a small animal petting farm and some inflatable challenges, to name but a few, as well as plenty of stalls with useful information for our customers.

The event is free for all our customers and your entry pack will include a picnic lunch and vouchers for activities - making this a really great day out.

There is limited parking this year, so please do let us know if you wish to catch our free bus when you register.

We are looking forward to seeing you there for another fantastic, fun and informative day!





We're a Dementia Friendly Organisation

North Devon Homes is committed to being a Dementia Friendly Organisation. Through the design of new properties with specialist features and support options, and how we deliver our services and provide information, we aim to make sure you can lead a rewarding life with Dementia.

As a nation we have an increasing population and, as people are living longer, a higher percentage of those people are now living with Dementia. Dementia is mis-commonly known as being simply a memory loss problem; however, it is much more than that to the people that live with the condition. Dementia can have many other symptoms, including having difficulties concentrating, problems with planning and talking things through, struggling with daily tasks such as following a recipe or using a bank card, trouble communicating, misjudging distances and difficulty controlling emotions.

If you think you may be in the early stages of Dementia, or if someone you know could be suffering, please speak to a member of our team and we will be happy to help and support you to find the relevant changes to your lifestyle that will mean you can continue to lead a fulfilling and active life.

For more information please visit:
www.alzheimers.org.uk and
www.dementiafriends.org.uk



Getting online at Medard House and Mariners Close

With the ever changing channel shift to digital, more and more companies are providing their services online only. As we ourselves move to be digital by 2020 we want to ensure that all our customers can get online, not only by having the facility to do so, but also in their ability to work online.

As a start to our commitment to get our residents online, we have provided Wi-Fi at our Medard House and Mariners Close Independent Living Centres as well as 'Kiosks' to use to get online. Our kiosks are computers or tablets available in the common rooms of these centres and also in our Head Office reception for the use of our customers.

Getting online can mean more than just paying bills and dealing with admin; the internet offers an array of opportunities to people wanting to stay in touch with loved ones, a chance to learn new things, finding local events and news, even watching TV shows and films online.

Our community team, with the help of Cosmic, are running free digital familiarisation sessions for our customers to help them get set up online in whatever form that may be. Whether you need help paying a bill or setting up a direct debit, or whether you want help to find a long lost friend on Facebook, our team can help you.

For more information on our digital workshops get in touch with your local support advisor or a member of the North Devon Homes team who will be able to assist.





Hoarding

When you think of hoarding, your mind immediately goes to the US programmes of extreme hoarding where it's not physically possible to live in your home anymore. Actually, most cases of hoarding are much smaller than this and sometimes unnoticeable to friends and family.

Hoarding can start as simply as collecting a certain item, or being unable to let go of anything. It may get out of control to the point where it takes over your home, or it may be small enough that the issue of hoarding is something that merely needs to be tackled in your mind and a bit of a clear out at home. Sometimes a good declutter is all that's needed to make sure your home is safe and clean.

Research indicates that trauma is normally the main cause of hoarding behaviour and so it needs more than just someone coming in to clean up. Tackling the wider issues is so important to ensure that once the clear up has happened, the underlying issue won't repeat for years to come.

Hoarding can be dangerous. Aside from the mental health issues associated with it, hoarded items can become a fire risk, can attract vermin and, if left in certain areas, could also encourage anti-social behaviour. It is also a breach of your tenancy with North Devon Homes. We want to work with our customers to ensure any hoarding problems are dealt with as soon as possible, so people can live healthy lives in their homes. The earlier we can start working with you, the more effective the advice can be.

If you think you know someone, or if you yourself are in danger of hoarding, please get in touch with a member of the Independent Living Services team who will be able to see how we can help and, if necessary, refer you to other agencies who may be able to assist.

10 years of our Customer Care Team

In April the Customer Care Team (CCT) turned 10! The team was created in 2009 to help streamline the processes between teams. Before then we published various phone numbers for customers to use depending on the reason for your calls, which was confusing for customers and also staff. By creating one central team, we were able to provide a team of experienced staff who had knowledge of the whole business

and who were able to deal with enquiries from start to finish.

Allison Bird, our CCT Manager, came in to head the team and she's been here ever since. With 42 members of the team over the years, and a team which is currently 12 strong, they deal with all sorts of enquiries from customers every day.

Here are just a few things the team have achieved over the past decade:

Ways to pay

Each year we look at making our payment processes as easy and accessible to our customers as possible, providing lots of different ways to pay your rent. Last year we introduced AllPay, a system available to our customers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, so you are not restricted to paying your rent during our office hours.

What you may not know is that AllPay offers three different forms of payment methods, so as well as our Direct Debit payment you can also pay in one of these three ways:

- 1. AllPay app.** The free app is available to all Android and IOS users. It's the easiest way to make your payments and can be done direct through your phone or tablet at your convenience. Once you've completed the registration process, the app will retain as much information as you allow it to, meaning you only have a few clicks for your payments in the future.
- 2. Online.** Paying online either via our website or direct through www.allpayments.net means you can make payments using your bank card at any time of day. Again, the system should remember your information if you allow it to, so you are only a few clicks away each month from making a payment.
- 3. Automated phone line.** If you prefer to pay over the phone, the AllPay automated phone number allows you to control your payment

details and it is available all day, every day, so you don't have to wait for one of the NDH team to be in the office. Just call 0330 0416497 but please note this option costs 3p per minute, so please do seek the bill payer's permission.

As well as being more available to you and easier to use, these options are also more efficient for us, so by using these methods rather than other methods such as paying at the Post Office or Pay Point, you will be helping us to cut down on administration costs and in time these savings will always be brought back to benefit our communities.

To set up any of these options all you need to do is have your 19 digit payment reference to hand and payment details. If you need help you can email enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk for more information.


12%
Families

33%
Couples, single
& other

55%
55+ years old

Our customers that CCT help on a daily basis - no customer query is the same

In the last ten years...

 **444,793**
calls have been taken...

by **42** 
different members
of the CCT

 that's well over
3 million
minutes on the phone
to our customers

Knowing your rechargeable repairs

Not all repairs in your home are the responsibility of North Devon Homes. We have a leaflet on our website which outlines exactly what is your and our responsibility. Where a repair is made within your home that is your responsibility, we will make a reasonable recharge for that repair.

A recharge is made when we complete the works required on behalf of our customer and then recover the cost from them. If you get our permission to arrange for the repair yourself, then no charge will be made.

Our customers are responsible for the cost of carrying out any repairs to their home, which are not the result of fair wear and tear, as stated in the tenancy agreement.

Some examples of chargeable items (and the approximate cost of the recharge) are shown below:

Unblock drains (where the blockage has been caused by improper use such as cooking fat, nappies, wet wipes)	£33
Change light bulb	£33
Renew an internal door	£150
Faults caused by customer appliances	£33
Lock changes or lost / forgotten keys	£45 - £70

Where a recharge is raised as a result of a crime or criminal damage, the customer will need to recoup these costs from either the perpetrator or the police.

Making use of our online offering

As we're updating our website and online channels, such as social media, more opportunities are arising for our customers to interact with us online. We want to encourage our customers to help us on our way to a smoother Digital by 2020.

Did you know that on our website you can report your repairs directly to our team, find our library of leaflets, pay your rent, find new homes, contact our team for support, give feedback on our services and find forms for various queries such as seeking permission, applying for mutual exchanges and making changes to your home? The possibilities are endless and if we aren't offering what you need yet, get in touch and we will take all feedback on board.

There are many advantages to dealing with your tenancy queries online or by email rather than over the phone. Some such advantages include being able to be online at any time of day or night meaning you don't have to wait for our office to be open; our online services are free to use, no more pesky phone bills; they are quicker, we always endeavour to reply to our website enquiries and emails within 48 hrs and where forms are needed you don't need to wait for the postman to get your form.

We understand that not everyone has access to our online services or knows how to use them and so we will always have our team on hand to help you over the phone. What's more we want to help you get online so if you need advice or training we can refer you to the Digital Skills Advisor at Cosmic who we are working closely with to help all our tenants get online. Just email enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk for more information.



Please make sure you include your address in any correspondence to us so we can find you in our system to ensure a prompt reply.

A new lift for Mariners in Braunton

Our planned maintenance team has successfully installed a new made-to-measure lift at our Independent Living Centre, Mariners. After the previous lift became unreliable and was recommended for replacement we engaged our lift servicing team, Isca, to create a bespoke lift, which was installed earlier this year.

Whilst the lift was out of use a stair lift was installed at the centre to ensure customers had access to their homes. Our support team,

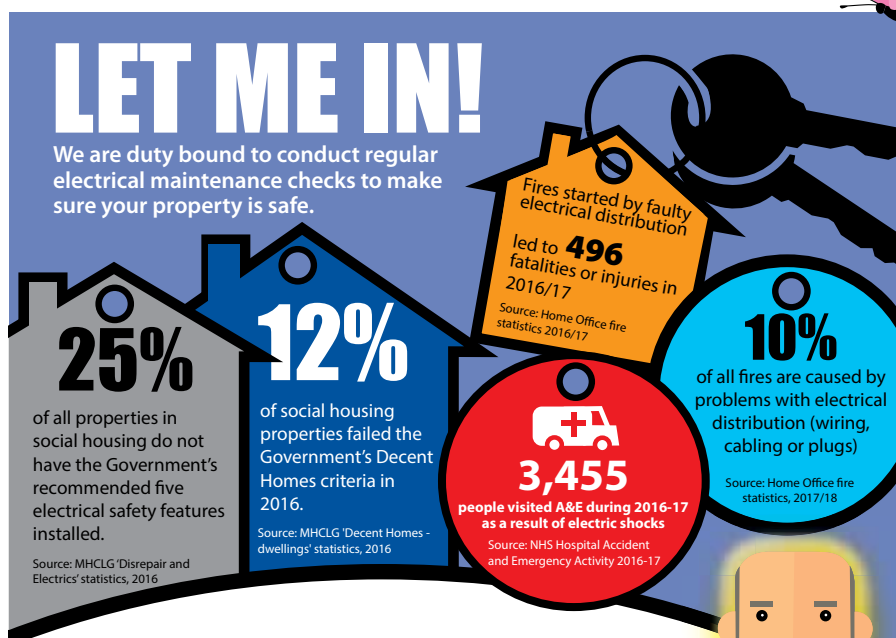
Caroline and Becky, were also on hand to help our customers; a special thanks go to them for going above and beyond during this period.

By replacing the lift we are, once again, ensuring our customers' safety and convenience at the centre by providing reliable equipment that customers can depend upon to live independently in their homes.

Thank you to all the residents at Mariners for your patience during the work.

Allowing access is part of your tenancy

Allowing property access to our team, whether for a service, inspection or tenancy appointment, is a condition written into your tenancy agreement. It is extremely important that we can access the property to ensure you can live safely in your home. Here's a graphic to show you the importance - just from an electrical point of view - but with all the services we need to maintain in your home, it's vital that you work with us to allow access at a time that's convenient for all parties.



When your body receives an electric shock:

- 1 Muscles tighten up, making it almost impossible to let go of the equipment
- 2 Lungs constrict, making it hard to breathe.
- 3 Heart constricts and blood vessels tighten.
- 4 Burns occur where electricity enters and exits the body.

Electricity: The Do's and Don'ts

DON'T DO IT YOURSELF!

- ⊘ DIY wiring can: Lead to electrical parts overheating, causing fires, shocks and death.

DON'T OVERLOAD SOCKETS

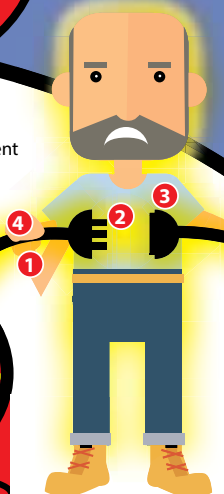
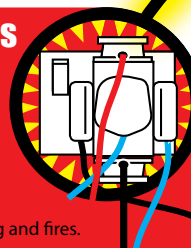
- ⊘ Plugging too many devices into one socket, and over-using extension leads, can lead to overheating and fires.

✓ DO BUY REPUTABLE ELECTRICAL GOODS

Cheaper, 'unofficial' electrical products such as phone chargers may not meet safety regulations, increasing the risk of fire.

✓ DO ALLOW ELECTRICAL INSPECTIONS TO TAKE PLACE

Regular checks are the best way to be sure that electrical installations are safe, and to spot potential problems before it is too late.



Getting our ok: When making changes to your home

If you wish to make any changes to your home, you must always check with us first. We will consider requests for you to make alterations, but we need to ensure that they are safe for you and do not damage or limit the building.

If you wish to make any alterations you must let us know in writing by completing an NDH permission form, available from our Customer Care Team, proposing the changes you wish to make. Please include drawings of the proposed changes if possible.

If in doubt please call and check with us first.



Home Surveys

You may receive a letter letting you know that a surveyor will be in touch to carry out a home survey of your property. These surveys are carried out on all NDH homes once every five years.

The idea is to collect information on each aspect of your home that needs upgrading or that will need upgrading at some point in the future.

Our trained surveyors take a look at the age and condition of areas such as your kitchen / bathroom / boiler / fire doors / heating system / roof etc. The information is then updated on our system to make sure all our details are correct and up to date.

If you have any outstanding maintenance issues you wish to report, then this would be a great opportunity for you to let our surveyors know.



New Gas Servicing Contract

This year has been fantastic for our new gas servicing contract. We achieved 100% compliance by the end of the year, ensuring that all our assets were checked and serviced as required by law to protect your safety.

The new contract has also improved our performance as we can now offer multi-purpose appointments; the contractors can now check additional things like your smoke alarm on the same visit, which saves us disturbing you in your home more than once.

The cost saving of the new contract is also substantial; making sure our servicing offer gives the charity and our customers the best possible value for money.

We want to say a big Thank You, not only to our new providers, Liberty Gas and their team, for getting the new system up and running smoothly, but also to you, our customers, for working with our team to allow access to your homes so that we could ensure your safety.



Transforming
Customer Experience
#DB2020

Digital by 2020

An exciting and progressive project is now underway at North Devon Homes – The Digital by 2020 Project.

The world is constantly moving forward with new ideas and new ways to work, and North Devon Homes is moving forward with it. By keeping up with technological advances, we are aiming to improve our services for our customers and company. Digital by 2020 (or DB2020) involves revising our way of working through updating our systems, technologies and processes, and reinvesting savings (be that money or time) to improve our service for customers.

Throughout the project we want to continue to give customers the choice of how they interact with us while improving the experience they receive, no matter how they choose to contact us.



Centre was transformed into a vibrant and modern workspace. The DB2020 project space perfectly reflects our organisation and its movement into the modern world of technology. This space will be a hub of activity throughout the course of the project, and will be used for customer events, company away days, testing systems and processes, training and much more.

Our vision for the future is aligned to our corporate objectives:

- Me:** Putting the customer at the heart of all we do.
- My Home:** Maintaining and building quality, affordable homes.
- My Neighbourhoods:** Improving, supporting and developing our neighbourhoods.
- My Landlord:** Delivering value for money.

After working to clearly outline our vision for the future, we have a project plan which identifies the key stages of the project. Teams within NDH alongside our customers have been reviewing our processes, such as income collection and response repairs, to identify our requirements for the new ways of working and what can be improved to deliver better services.

The Project Launch

The DB2020 Project was officially launched on 14th December 2018. We held a launch event at our creatively refurbished project space in Braunton - what had been the Mariners Day

Customer Involvement

Improving the offer to our customers is at the heart of the DB2020 project, so it is vital that we fully understand what you need and the best way this can be delivered. By involving customers in DB2020, we can get to know you better and ensure that we are working together to design the future.

One way we have involved customers in the project has been through customer journey mapping. Journey mapping involves capturing the customer experience through a process for example, how a customer may feel when moving home with us. By capturing this information we ensure our new ways and systems of working meet our customer requirements as well as our own.



So far, we have carried out a handful of mapping sessions. Each event has been a huge success with one event attended by 20 customers! We received really positive feedback and lots of insight on how we can improve the way we work. A big thank you to all the customers who got involved!

Not only are we improving our ways of working, but the ways our customers work with us too; this is why we are designing a customer portal, one which aims to serve all your needs at the touch of a button. This portal will be available to all customers and will include, but will not be exclusive to:

- Access to customers key information (e.g. statements, repair history, address etc.)
- The ability to book and track a repair
- The ability to web chat with members of staff
- And much more ...

Once we have acquired the new portal, we want to open it up to our customers for testing, to assess whether or not it fits your needs. If you would like to be involved in the testing of the portal, or any events related to DB2020, please contact our customer involvement team: Frances at frances.walsh@ndh-ltd.co.uk or Tracey at tracey.williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk.



We hope that you are as excited as we are about the Digital by 2020 Project; we look forward to delivering an improved service and identifying opportunities to work together to 'create communities where people want to live'.

Finalist at the UK Housing Awards



We are extremely proud to have been a finalist for the Neighbourhood Transformation Award at the UK Housing Awards 2019; for our work in regenerating and improving neighbourhoods in North Devon and creating more communities where people want to live.

NDH is responsible for 3,300 homes in North Devon and our corporate plan over the next three years will see us transform more homes and communities in the local area, as well as helping our customers have better lives in the area.

As part of our work in the community we offer 'Young Positive Action', which provides activities and opportunities for young people to access support, make friends and have a voice in the community. As well as this, we run many classes for over 55s, support groups for getting online, job clubs and homework classes to name a few. Throughout the year we also have many seasonal events to help fundraise and support more people in our area.

We didn't win first place at the awards back in May, but we are extremely proud of our team to be shortlisted as finalists for two years in a row! We were highlighted at the event as "Highly Commended", an achievement only given to a few housing associations on the night.



Mixed-Age Couples Benefits Update

Universal Credit can only usually be claimed by people of working age, however, from 15th May 2019, mixed-age couples are now also able to claim.

A mixed age couple is where one is of working age and the other one is of pension credit age. You can work out what your pension credit age is at www.gov.uk/state-pension-age

After the 15th May, mixed-age couples who do not have an existing pension credit or housing benefit claim will need to claim universal credit instead. There will be no brand new claims for pension credit, housing benefit and tax credits.

Maggie is 65 and has had her state pension of £90 a week for the past three years. James is 63 and was working full time. They had enough to live on without claiming any benefits until recently when James' job came to an end. He will not reach state pension age until he is 66, so he will be claiming the new style Job Seekers Allowance alongside Universal Credit. James will have to look for work, but Maggie being pension age, will not.

Polly and Andy are 66 and 62 respectively. They claim pension credit and housing benefit on their two bedroom house in Exeter. In June 2019, they moved to Barnstaple to be closer to their daughter. They are still allowed to make a claim for Housing Benefit in North Devon because they are in receipt of Pension Credit.

Universal Credit

There have been lots of stories in the press and on TV about Universal Credit, and staff at North Devon Homes have been working with customers to make sure they are well prepared for this change. We've noticed that lots of people are apprehensive about claiming Universal Credit because they think they will be worse off financially, this isn't true in all cases and we recommend that you use one of the free online calculators to check your own individual circumstances and to make sure that you're not missing out.

www.entitledto.co.uk • www.turn2us.org.uk

John is a single man of 55. He lives in a one bedroom flat and his rent is £100 per week. He works part-time, usually 20 hours each week. He was getting £29 per week in Housing Benefit towards paying his rent and no other benefits. He recently made a claim for Universal Credit and now gets the equivalent of £55 a week to help with his housing and living costs. Over the course of the year he'll be £1,352 better off.

Fiona and Mark have a six year old daughter and they each work 12 hours a week bringing home £200 in wages between them. They were getting housing benefit of £64, Council Tax Support of £5, Tax Credits of £64 and Child benefit of £20.70 – a total of £153.70 per week in benefits. They checked out how the old style benefits compared to Universal Credit and found that they would get a total of £215.48 per week if they switched. That's £61.78 better off each week.



Making a Household Budget

It's a great idea to make a household budget to balance what you have coming in with all your expenses going out. We have some handy printed planners that are a great starting point. Just drop us an email at rents@ndh-ltd.co.uk and we'll pop one in the post.



Local Energy Advice Partnership

LEAP is a free service that is helping people keep warm and reduce their energy bills without costing them any money if you're eligible for the service. Check to see if you qualify and how you can save at www.applyforleap.org.uk.

Credit Union Sustainability Partnership



An update article from our Credit Union Sustainability Partnership, Westcountry Savings and Loans.

Westcountry Savings and Loans (WSL)

In September last year, we started working with North Devon Homes as part of a joint sustainability partnership in the area to bring fair financial services to everyone living in the south west. Since then, here at WSL, we've embraced the digital age and are pleased to have a new online banking facility, a mobile banking application and new secure-messaging software.

Online Banking

With our easy-to-use online banking members can:

- View accounts, balances and recent transactions
- Transfer money between WSL accounts
- Make withdrawals
- Pay bills



Mobile Banking App

Members can now access their WSL accounts 'on the move' via our new mobile banking app. The app has a secure login, giving members peace of mind knowing their data is safe, and means they can:

- Check account balances wherever they are
- Transfer funds between WSL accounts
- Transfer funds to external accounts
- Pay bills

NIVO

We've recently launched a secure instant-messaging network built specifically for financial services which will improve communication with our members and simplify new member sign-up by automating steps like ID verification.

Talk to us about saving or borrowing

We offer a range of savings accounts and loans to suit all purposes:

Savings

Our aim is to help all members build up their savings for treats, rainy days and life's necessities:

- Save as and when you can, or set up a regular Direct Debit or Banker's Standing Order
- You'll qualify for annual dividends
- Your savings are pooled and used to provide loans to members living or working locally meaning funds stay in our community.

Loans

Whether you're looking for a new car, a special holiday or a small loan to help with cashflow, then we should be your first stop. Borrowing from us is different:

- All applicants are treated individually
- We charge daily interest rather than front-load it and there are no early repayment charges
- Members with a savings pot benefit from discounted loan interest rates



Customers helping us to design the future

Over the past few months we have held a handful of events where customers have helped us design our business future. The events have been held at our Community Centre in Barnstaple and at our new community and office space in Braunton.

These popular events have been busy, with customers giving us their insights on paying rent, neighbourhood issues and how to report repairs to name but a few. All the comments and feedback during the session were gathered and used to map the customers' perspective of each process.

This gives us a clear understanding of what our customer journey map looks like and how our decisions impact our tenants. The customer journey map is a process that looks at all the points where we interact with customers for a particular thing such as rent payments or response repairs. During the sessions we saw some very good ideas emerge on how we could design what our future might look like. We also had some suggestions that could be quickly implemented, which we will update you on over the coming months.

If you are interested in getting involved with this exciting project, please contact Tracey Williams on 01271 313384 or email for dates on tracey.williams@ndh-ltd.co.uk

C90 Update

Our C90 group has been busy informing and influencing decisions, strategy and performance on behalf of our customers. The group, which is made up of four customers was formed as part of our governance changes to ensure that the Board and management were able to hear our customers and make sure that customers were able to help influence our decision making.

The last couple of meetings have seen consultations on IT projects, briefings from members of the team on various issues, and feedback on changes from the previous meetings. The group is working well across the whole business having an input in everything from policy setting in our lettings team to helping design our marketing material.

We are constantly reviewing how we work with customers and C90 play a pivotal part in helping to shape the charity in a way that both benefits customers and the business.

During the 90 days prior to each meeting, various customer involvement events and activities are arranged to consult a minimum of 100 different customers about services we provide linked to C90 themes. Thank you to all those customers who helped with our surveys and focus groups. Our next meeting will be held in July.

Scrutiny Panel Update

In January, C90 and the Customer Scrutiny Panel reviewed the Complaints Policy and looked at the current system to find out if it is fair and clear for customers.

The Scrutiny Panel suggested changes to our leaflet for customers, showing how to make a complaint when things go wrong. The Fresh Ideas Group have reviewed this leaflet, which will be put onto our website alongside the other new leaflets customers are co-designing with us.

Fresh Ideas

The Fresh Ideas focus group has been busy helping us co-design more customer information leaflets, which you can find on our website under 'Publications'.

The new leaflets are: Your Rent (Ways to pay your rent); Your Home Inside and Out (how we look after your home); Repairs (what you need to know) and Tell us what you think, share your ideas (help us to build the future you want). More leaflets are added regularly, so do keep checking.

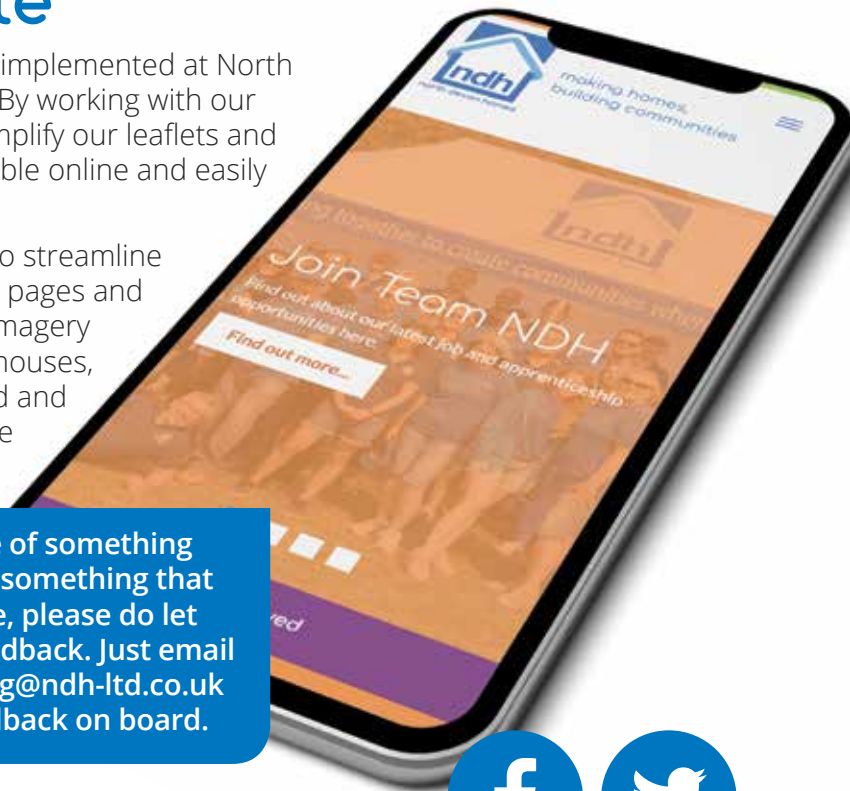
These leaflets enable us to quickly update information customers want to have; for example, at the 'paying your rent' Journey Mapping session customers told us they did not know there were four days in the month that they could pay rent by Direct Debit, not just the 1st of each month. That information has now been updated in the 'Your Rent' leaflet.



Updating our website

This year will see many new technologies being implemented at North Devon Homes and our website is one of these. By working with our customer Fresh Ideas group we are trying to simplify our leaflets and printed materials and make sure they are available online and easily found by our customers.

Over the past few months we've been working to streamline some of the navigation, improve content on the pages and make the content more engaging using better imagery and including the photos you want to see (less houses, more community)! We are the people's landlord and we want to make sure everything on our website tells our story, which means telling your story.



If you have any feedback, want to see more of something or just generally want to let us know about something that might be out of date or incorrect on the site, please do let us know as we love to receive customer feedback. Just email your comments or suggestions to marketing@ndh-ltd.co.uk and our marketing team will take your feedback on board.

Social Media

If you're on Facebook or Twitter come and like our North Devon Homes pages to ensure you're kept up to date with our communications, campaigns and events. We post almost daily and there's always something going on to interest everyone.

With more exciting news planned with our Digital by 2020 project, and our shift to use more online channels, there's never been a better time to join us on Facebook to make sure you are up to date with the latest goings-on at NDH! www.facebook.com/northdevonhomes • www.twitter.com/northdevonhomes



Development Update

2019 sees the biggest year for new housing developments at North Devon Homes. We are making great progress with our three year promise to provide 321 new homes by 2021. Read more on our ongoing developments below.

Jordan Close

Customers have moved into two new specially-designed homes in Jordan Close, Barnstaple. The development came from a partnership between North Devon Homes and North Devon Council to provide homes for tenants who have specific requirements to be able to live comfortably with their disabilities.



The development was the first of its kind in the area, with new-build, specially designed homes rather than adapting older buildings. The development consists of two bungalows and one two bedroom home. The bungalows both have special adaptations made to the kitchens and bathrooms, as well as access points to make them fully accessible by wheelchair.

Sarah Medlin, one of the new tenants for whom the development was designed, said "The home has made a huge difference to my life. Having the ability to go outside with my granddaughter to play in the garden or to bake with her in the kitchen has made every bit of difference to my life."

Sharon Hayne, our Development and Regeneration Officer, said: "This is a fantastic project that demonstrates strong working together skills between NDH, NDC and Pearce Construction to provide amazing new homes."

More projects will follow this example and tenants will be chosen by NDC and Devon Home Choice for suitability.

Lamaton Park

Lamaton Park in South Molton is due to be completed in the autumn of this year and will provide 33 new affordable homes for the over 55s. The development will be a central hub to the community, hosting social events and offering an on-site support officer for residents.

The homes offer the perfect opportunity for customers over 55 to downsize and move to more suitable accommodation within South Molton. The homes also offer support options for residents to ensure peace of mind for family and friends.

As well as the 28 residences available we're also offering five of these homes as shared ownership opportunities for residents who may have home ownership aspirations in South Molton.



35 Crosslands

After the successful regeneration of the Woodville and Crosslands area in Barnstaple in 2016 there are now a couple of new 2-bedroom flats being developed at 35 Crosslands. The flats are coming along well and are due to be completed in February 2020.



Shared Ownership

What it actually means

Taw Wharf

The Taw Wharf development was successfully launched back in January with an event held in one of the retail spaces at Anchorwood Bank. Along with the teams at Webbers and Pearce, staff from NDH went over to speak to potential buyers and interested parties about the site and the homes that would be available.

The development has since progressed with the show home opening in April drawing large crowds of interested buyers in the local area. The first phase of the development saw the purchase of five shared ownership homes and, moving into the second phase later this year, we'll see more affordable homes released for customers of North Devon Homes.

There are many myths out there surrounding shared ownership; what it actually is; and how it can help you get on the property ladder. There are so many schemes available now to help you get a property it can be a confusing system to decide what's best for you and your family. Shared ownership offers a great opportunity for people to get onto the property ladder without having to get a full mortgage on a home.

Shared ownership varies depending on the homes available but, in essence, you are purchasing a percentage share of a home and renting the remainder. The usual amount is 50/50 with the opportunity to staircase (increase your share) to up to 90% of the home.

As a buyer, you purchase the leasehold of the building, meaning the seller retains the

freehold of the building and the rental share of the property.

Here is an example of the cost of a shared ownership home to help give you a guide to the benefit of the scheme:

Value of property:	£220,000
Mortgage:	£90,000
Net value:	£130,000
<i>(which is used to set rent)</i>	
Rent:	
£130,000 x 2.75%	= £297.92
	per month

Here at North Devon Homes we have a number of shared ownership opportunities available for local residents as follows:

- **Taw View, Bickington:**
Two x 2 bedroom houses and two x 3 bedroom houses, sleeping 4 and 5 respectively.
- **Lamaton Park, South Molton:** Three x 2 bedroom apartments and two x 2 bedroom bungalows for the over 55s.
- **Sticklepath, Barnstaple:**
Two x 3 bedroom homes at Osborne Gardens and Highgrove
- **Taw Wharf, Barnstaple:**
Six x 2 bedroom apartments.



If you're interested in the shared ownership homes that we are offering, please contact Sophie Dewey on 01271 312541 or email her at sophie.dewey@ndh-ltd.co.uk.

Removal of Fixed Term Tenancies

Earlier this year our customer Scrutiny Panel met to review our Fixed Term Tenancies policy to see whether it was something we wanted to continue with, or remove. The panel decided that the tenancies were not offering security for customers, they were not working efficiently for us, and did not offer the best value for money; this finding was backed up by our Board, and the decision was made to remove them from our offering.

Customers currently on a fixed term tenancy will be contacted towards the end of their current contract and, as long as their tenancy review is marked as satisfactory, will move to an assured tenancy or will be reviewed for alternative options.



More information about your tenancy agreement can be obtained through our Customer Care or Neighbourhoods team by emailing enquiries@ndh-ltd.co.uk or calling 01271312500.

Clean up days

Over the past few months, we've been busy helping to clean up our neighbourhoods. Whether it's been dry or wet outside, our team have been out around the streets of North Devon litter picking, weeding and generally giving a spruce up to the areas. Some of the spots where you may have seen a difference include Westacott Road, Lower Moor in Whiddon Valley and Bratton Fleming to name just a few.

More clean up days are planned for 2019, so keep your eyes peeled for a team near you! Check our Facebook page for more regular updates.



A successful 12 months

In the last financial year our Home2Home Team has gone from strength to strength.

Team

We have increased our team from having only 10 members 2 years ago to now having 25 skilled workers, 2 apprentices (Lucas and Byron), and 1 trainee (Sam). In the past, we've taken on apprentices in general skills, but after working with Petroc College we found that placing them on a particular skill path was a much better way for them to be working and learning with us rather than just shadowing our current team of operatives and not getting much hands-on experience.

Showing the progression within the team are 2 of our previous apprentices, Nat and Ryan, both having moved into permanent roles in the team and who are now learning more skills to help advance their careers and our workforce.

Response Repairs

Our response repairs team is constantly working to keep our customers' homes in a good state of repair, whether an emergency or general repair. Now, with a bigger team, we are able to expand our offering to wider projects such as paths, scooter stores and, coming soon, roofing repairs, to save outsourcing this work to other companies. This makes these repairs much better value for money overall for both customers and our business.



before



after

Empty Homes

With ten of our team working full time on our voids programme, we are now completing more work internally rather than outsourcing, which makes the programme better value for money. Being able to save money and better plan our time means we are now able to provide, not only a cheaper and more efficient programme, but an improving skilled workforce who deliver a better product for our customers.

Follow us on Twitter @NorthDevonHomes

Projects

In the last year the planned maintenance team has fitted 44 wet rooms, 17 bathrooms and 18 kitchens; with an average fitting time of over 60 hours for each, it's quite an achievement for our team to have completed all this in just 12 months!

In the last 12 months Home2Home have...

been busy fitting...

44 wet rooms

using the Disabled Facilities Grants...

18 kitchens

for families to cook in...

and **17 bathrooms**

for bathing in...

we completed nearly...

200 void properties

as well as responding to...

3,850 repair requests

which means we've spent over...

10,000 hours

on repair tickets

4,000 hours

fitting wetrooms

12,500 hours

on our voids

1,500 hours

fitting kitchens

1,500 hours

fitting bathrooms



Behind the scenes

As well as our team of H2H operatives we also have a small team based in the office on our Home2Home Helpdesk, working to make sure you get an appointment at a time that is convenient to you and to ensure that all customers get an appointment the first time they call without having to call back to arrange a time to visit.

Improvements have also been made to the mobile working systems for our operatives. Each operative now works from a tablet remotely meaning they spend less time in the office doing admin and paperwork and are available to spend more time fixing your homes.



Meet Lorenz from Cosmic

Lorenz is our Digital Skills Advisor for the Building Better Opportunities Project (BBO). You can find out a bit more about him below along with how to get in touch with him.

As Digital Skills Adviser for North Devon working for Cosmic and under the Positive People banner in partnership with North Devon Homes the services that the project can provide is one to one support in a variety of digital skills, short courses and workshops to a variety of residents within North Devon Homes.

Cosmic can help individuals to become more confident using Digital, help them to understand how technology can help them in the 21st century and be able to use devices more easily.

Areas covered in one to one sessions or workshops include:

- Essential Digital Skills
- Exploring the Internet
- Introduction to Social Media
- Online Safety and reputation
- Getting online and communicating
- Transacting online and internet banking
- Digital scrapbooks
- Blogging
- Creative Editing/Digital photography and Instagram
- Using technology in the home

Cosmic also offer Self Employment courses and support including:

- Be Your Own Boss-3 Day Introduction to starting up a business
- Web Design for start ups
- Ongoing support to participants once trading in digital

Cosmic offer digital support by way of home visits or in convenient neutral locations such as libraries, cafes or community centres.

Also available are training events, workshops, courses and programmes to engage participants in receipt of benefits onto the Positive People project to aid them in gaining employment or self-employment.

Current Drop -Ins are:

Forches & Whiddon Valley Community Centre – Job Club Tuesdays from 10am to 1pm.

Forches & Whiddon Valley Community Centre – Digital Drop In Tuesdays 1pm to 3pm.

Barnstaple Library – Job Club – Digital Drop In Thursdays 2pm to 5pm.

Video Filming

During 2019 you will see North Devon Homes on location, filming a number of videos for our marketing pipeline. Working with Seth Conway we aim to produce a series of films throughout the year, some of which will promote NDH and what we do as a charity in the local area, and others which are aimed at helping our customers in some self-help repairs videos. More information will follow soon but if you'd like more information, would like to star in our videos or just want to feedback on some of the shoots, we'd love to hear from you at marketing@ndh-ltd.co.uk.

Team NDH Christmas Raffle

December saw the return of the NDH Christmas raffle. All prizes donated to the raffle were from suppliers, contractors and customers as well as by the team themselves. Plenty of chocolate, wine, crystal glasses, cutlery and even a cuddly toy were on offer! After selling tickets throughout the month, the total raised was £286.

The star prize of the raffle, as always, was to choose the charity for the donation. The winner was one of our own Board members, Suzanne Ingman, and she very kindly chose to donate the money to our very own youth club.

The money has since been used to support the youth club's holiday programme including running Easter themed sessions and baking groups during the Easter holidays.

Welcome to Team NDH

In the six months since our last newsletter, we've seen a real run on recruitment as we increase Team NDH. More opportunities have been created and lots of new people have joined the team.

We're pleased to welcome:

Julia Bagine Nagy
HR Apprentice

Susannah Huntley-Robertson
Home2Home Works Coordinator

Charlotte Hurved
Lettings Administrator

Abigail Kingdon
Administration Apprentice

Joshua Nicholls
Assistant Youth Worker

Emma Wonnacott
PR & Marketing Coordinator

Michael Malin
Independent Living Support Officer

Adrian Baines
Multi-Skilled Operative

Simon Jones
Multi-Skilled Operative

Daniel Meredith
Multi-Skilled Operative

Andrew Pool
Multi-Skilled Operative

Chloe Prince
Customer Service Adviser

Emma Knight
Asset Management Administrator

Chloe Davison
Customer Service Adviser

Joanne Welch
Assistant Youth Worker

Kris Somerville
Wet Room Fitter

Sam Johnson
Trainee General Operative



The first Slade Christmas Fayre

Just before Christmas, the residents of Slade Valley and the local area got the chance to meet Santa in his grotto at the Slade Christmas Fayre. Team NDH and the young people from our Youth Project put on a really magical Christmas event, complete with falling snow! Residents got the chance to get in the Christmas spirit, indulge in a few Christmas treats and get involved in the local community. We hope everyone who came along enjoyed it as much as we did.

Generations Together for Christmas

Back in December a few volunteers from Team NDH and the young people from our youth project put on a special Christmas lunch at the Whiddon Valley Community Centre for the Wrafton Christmas celebrations. The team served up a roast turkey with stuffing, vegetables and plenty of pigs in blankets. For dessert there were mince pies and chocolate cake and, to help raise a bit of money for the youth club, there was a Christmas quiz and raffle - with prizes made by the young people themselves during their youth clubs. It really was a fun festive lunch!

Loverings enjoys Christmas Carols

The community at Loverings got in the festive spirit just before Christmas with a carol singing session. With mince pies, alcohol free mulled wine and other festive goodies the evening was enjoyed by all who attended. Mrs James, a resident of Loverings Court, said "It was a wonderful evening that was thoroughly enjoyable. We all appreciated the event being held to get us in the festive spirit."



Accidents and under 5s

As one of the most vulnerable group of people, toddlers and young children are constantly getting involved in accidents. Whether it's trips and falls, or the effect of environmental surroundings, when under 5's have accidents, the results can be potentially life threatening.

The majority of accidents that lead to serious injury in toddlers are preventable through general awareness and improvements in the home environment. So, please, watch out for any possible dangers that could affect your children, and help them to stay safe.

For more information please visit www.rosipa.com

Accidents and Under 5s

Accidents are the biggest killer of children and young people...

Every week
at least one child under-5 is killed in an accident

At least half of all under-5s will attend A&E this year because of an accident

Every week over 100 under-5s are hospitalised for accidental poisoning

More than 75% of under-5s who die in an accident, do so in the home

Every week 60 under-5s are hospitalised as a result of a burn or scald

Since 2001 at least: 18 babies have died after suffocating or choking on a nappy sack

32 toddlers have died due to strangulation on a looped blind cord

Electrical Safety

Did you know?

Over 7,000 house fires per year are a result of faulty electrics, appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets.

House fires are becoming increasingly widespread in the UK, with the common cause often standing with electrical faults.

How can electrical fires be avoided?

- Make sure an electrical appliance has a British or European safety mark when you buy it.
- Keep electrics (leads and appliances) away from water.
- Remember – one plug per socket. Plugging too many electrical appliances into one socket can lead to overheating
- Unplug appliances at night or when you're not using them to reduce the risk of fire – unless they are designed to be left on all the time, such as a fridge or freezer.
- An extension lead or adaptor will have a limit to how many amps it can take, so be careful not to overload them to reduce the risk of fire.



Appliances use different amounts of power – a television may use a 3amp plug and a vacuum cleaner a 5amp plug for example.

- Don't put anything in the microwave that is made of metal, or has a metallic finish or parts.
- Don't position lights or bulbs near curtains and other fabrics. The heat, which you cannot see, will set the fabric above alight within hours. Ensure you have the correct bulb for the light fitting.

So, please remember to be careful when using your electrical appliances and keep these points in mind; they could be the difference between life and death.

Please contact NDH for further information on electrical safety in your home. You can also contact Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service for more information: w: www.dsfire.gov.uk e: firekills@dsfire.gov.uk t: 01392 872200

Events Calendar

At NDH we have a lot of events throughout the year where we offer the chance to meet new friends, have some fun and, in most cases, enjoy a refreshment or two! Here is a snapshot of our events. You can find exact dates and timings for all these events on our website.

Forches Community Centre

Junior Youth Club (age 6-8 years)
Mondays 4.30pm - 5.30pm (in the Children's Centre)

Homework Club
Mondays 4.30pm - 6pm

Youth Club
Mondays 6.30pm - 8.30pm

Community Job Club
Tuesdays 10am - 1pm

Digital Drop In
Tuesdays 1pm - 3pm

Youth Session (age 14+ years)
Tuesdays 6pm - 8pm

Community Café
Tuesdays 10.30am - 12.30pm

Slade Valley Community Centre

Teen2Be
Wednesdays 5pm - 6pm

Youth Club
Wednesdays 6.30pm - 8.30pm

Medard House, Barnstaple

Coffee Morning
Thursdays 9.30am

Cinema Club
Wednesdays 2pm

Bingo
Wednesdays 7pm

Breakfast Club
Once a fortnight on Friday 9am (check our website for dates)

Quiz
Once a month on Friday 2pm (check our website for dates)

The Candar, Ilfracombe

Coffee Morning
Fridays 9.30am

Exercise for the over 55s
Mondays 1.30pm

Bingo
Once a fortnight on Wednesday 12.45pm (check our website for dates)

Bingo
Wednesdays 7.30pm

Magdalene Lawn, Barnstaple

Coffee Morning
Fridays 9.30am

Bingo
Wednesdays 2pm

Other Events

Wrafton Coffee Morning at the British Legion Club
Once a month on Monday 10am (check our website for dates)

Youth Happy Gym at Studio 20 in Ilfracombe
Thursdays 4pm - 6pm

Community Job Club at Barnstaple Library
Thursdays 1pm - 4pm

North Devon Homes Customer Summer Fayre at The Barnstaple Rugby Club
Wednesday 31st July, 11am

We also run more activities with our youth club and centres during the school holidays, so please do check our website and Facebook for more information.



Pitch in a Pound

In February we helped support the North Devon Hospice with its 'Pitch in a Pound' fund-raising event. On the day the team held a dress down day and raised over £50. Throughout the month of February Team NDH also raised a further £31 in their monthly tuck shop which was also donated to the Pitch in a Pound fundraiser. Well done Team NDH!

100 Days Volunteer Scheme



This year as part of our promise and Corporate Plan as a team we are committing 100 days to help out in the local community and other charities. We have already successfully achieved 10 days towards our total, with many more days planned during the rest of 2019 such as working with the Northern Devon Foodbank, gardening at North Devon Hospice, and organising many clean up days in the community. Watch this space for even more great news stories and if you have a charity you need our help with, please get in touch at megan.chaplin@ndh-ltd.co.uk for more information.

Summer Wordsearch Competition

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

- | | | |
|-----------|----------|-----------|
| BEACHBALL | SEASIDE | OUTDOORS |
| SUNSHINE | PINWHEEL | HOT |
| ICECREAM | SUNHAT | SEAGULL |
| SURFING | BARBECUE | FLIPFLOPS |
| PICNIC | HOLIDAY | BODYBOARD |

How to enter:

Fill out the form and send it to the address below by 02/08/2019 for a chance to win a £15 cinema voucher.

Name

Adult Child

Address

..... Postcode

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



How Many?

How many butterflies (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 02/08/2019 for a chance to win a £15 cinema voucher.



No. of butterflies:

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

Name

Adult Child

Address

..... Postcode



For a chance to win, send all entries to:

Emma Wonnacott, North Devon Homes, Westacott Road, Barnstaple, Devon EX32 8TA by 02/08/2019