

# HOUSING MATTERS



The magazine for  
East Devon District Council  
tenants and leaseholders

By post, email, online or audio CD  
[eastdevon.gov.uk/housingmatters](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/housingmatters)

YOUR WINTER 2024 EDITION



Community Spirit Shone at the Tenants Festival 2024

P18



P4

Housing Matters is Changing



P17

Competition: Count the Hidden Elves!



P7

Ian Williams Donates Benches

## CONTRIBUTE! WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU

*Housing Matters* is your magazine and keeping it relevant is only made possible with your help. We'd love to hear from you with your suggestions for articles. Send us a letter, article, photo, or household tip. Contact the Communities Team with your contribution ideas.

## DO YOU NEED LARGE PRINT OR AN AUDIO OR A POSTAL FORMAT?

From April, *Housing Matters* will become a 6-weekly newsletter. For more details please see the article on P. 4.

The newsletter will be emailed to you, unless you let us know you want to receive a postal version. Please complete and return the enclosed form if you would like to continue receiving *Housing Matters* by post.


If you currently receive *Housing Matters* by audio or in large print, we will continue to send you *Housing Matters* this way. *Housing Matters* is also available online at [eastdevon.gov.uk/housing-matters](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/housing-matters).

## ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

*Housing Matters* is produced by Housing East Devon District Council for tenants and leaseholders and is edited by tenants and council staff.

### Editorial Group

*Sue Williams* is an Exmouth tenant and former paralegal, soldier and nurse who loves photography, gardening and DIY. She has undertaken several council training sessions on housing and social studies.

*Sandra Ward* is the Chair of the Axe Valley and West Dorset Ring and Ride. She lives in ington and has a long history of involvement in the editorial group.

*Jamie Clayden* is a member of the Communities Team at EDDC. She helps to organise and run tenant participation groups and community events. She has loads of energy and is always smiling.

*Yvonne White* is a volunteer at her local community hub in Sidmouth and enjoys drawing nature.

*Tracey Pile* is a volunteer at her local community hub in Sidmouth and enjoys knitting and crafting.

*Maria Johnson* is a grandmother of 12, a keen bowler for Seaton and Devon. Had a variety of jobs, ranging from Sales Assistant, Caretaker, Boat Painter, Special Constable and Author.

### Do you have a comment, compliment or complaint?

We aim to provide an excellent service for all our tenants. However if we do make a mistake we will apologise and aim to put it right as quickly as possible.

If you are dissatisfied with any service you receive in housing please get in touch with the relevant department.

We encourage all our staff to work with customers and to try to find a resolution to any expressions of dissatisfaction. In many cases we can resolve an issue very quickly – by putting the problem right straight away.

### Complaints

You can raise a complaint in any of the following ways:

a) by email to

[complaints@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@eastdevon.gov.uk)

b) via our website (<https://eastdevon.gov.uk/customer-services/feedback-and-complaints/complaints/make-a-complaint/>)  
or;

c) in writing to: Information and Complaints Officer, East Devon District Council, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathfield Industrial Estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ;

d) OR in person or over the telephone.



## CONTACT US

### The Communities Team

Phone: 01395 517453

Email: [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk)

Write: East Devon District Council,

Blackdown House, Border Road,  
Heathpark Industrial Estate,  
EX14 1EJ

Our offices at Blackdown House, Honiton is open Monday to Thursday each week from 9am – 1pm, and Exmouth Town Hall is open Monday – Friday 9am – 4pm.

### Keep Up to date

Online: [eastdevon.gov.uk/news](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/news)

X: @eastdevon

f Facebook: eastdevon

@ Instagram: @eastdevondistrictcouncil

If you enjoy reading and would like to join the Editorial Group, please contact Communities Team for more details.



Join other East Devon residents and download the free East Devon App from [eastdevon.gov.uk/app](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/app)

Access council services on your smartphone, get councillor contact details, a recycling and waste collection reminder, and check local food hygiene ratings

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# HELLO

As winter approaches, we find ourselves in a season of reflection, warmth, and community spirit. In this edition of our magazine, we're excited to bring you a variety of articles designed to support your well-being during the colder months. From tips on winter wellness to ensure you stay healthy and happy, to essential fire safety advice for a safe and festive holiday season, we have you covered.

We also delve into the importance of fostering strong neighbourly relationships, highlighting how a supportive community can make all the difference in our daily lives.

## HOUSING MATTERS IS CHANGING!

After a review, which included tenant consultation, we are changing the look and distribution of Housing Matters.

Housing Matters has been a much-loved asset to our tenants and to EDDC for over 10 years. It always looks great, and is packed with valuable information, with articles coming from both tenants and staff.

However, in a recent issue we asked people to complete a survey to tell us what they thought about Housing Matters. We sent out over 4000 surveys - one inside every magazine. Only 190 people responded. Out of all these responses, 172 said they always read the magazine, and 148 people said they liked receiving the postal copy of the magazine.

Unfortunately these results do not justify the large expense of producing and posting 4000+ high quality magazines three times a year.

Our hearts are with every single person who loves Housing Matters the way it is now. We love it too! But sometimes change is necessary.

And we are hopeful about the form Housing Matters will take from now on. From April, we will be producing a Housing Matters newsletter every 6 weeks. The content of this newsletter will still be shaped by tenants. Unless you tell us otherwise, your Housing Matters will be emailed to you rather than posted.

Additionally, we'll share insights from the recent tenant satisfaction measures results, ensuring you are informed about how your feedback is shaping our community.

As we transition to a six weekly newsletter format, we invite you to stay engaged and connected. Please let us know if you prefer to continue receiving your updates in paper format, as we want to ensure everyone has access to the information they need.

Together, let's embrace the winter season with warmth and camaraderie. Happy reading!

If you have any other questions or you would like to request a paper copy of the newsletter, or get involved in writing articles then please get in touch with the Communities team using the details at the bottom of the page.

However we are very happy to send you your future Housing Matters newsletter by post if that's what you'd prefer. All you need to do is let us know that you would like it by post.

Please complete the survey included, to let us know how you wish to receive your future Housing Matters newsletter.

If you would like to learn more digital skills, in order to enjoy your future Housing Matters newsletter by email, please see details of our Digital Workshops on page 21.

### Common Questions and answers

**1. Will the editorial group still be involved in the production of the newsletter?**

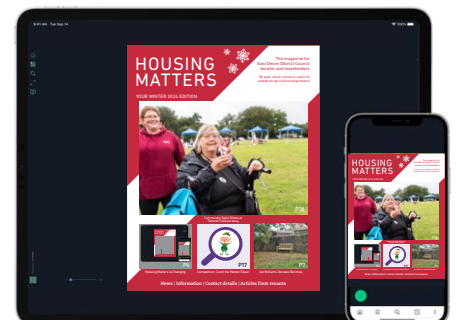
Yes, in fact this group will now have more involvement and greater opportunities to become involved in creating wonderful content for this newsletter.

**2. Will I still be able to have a printed version?**

Yes this option will still be available to you. This can be done upon request as an opt in option.

**3. When will the first edition be available?**

We are hoping to launch our first Housing matters newsletter in April 2025.



# WHAT'S ON | Community Centres

## A great way to make new friends

A wonderful way to make new friends. Did you also know that you can hire the community centres? Contact our booking coordinator on **01395 571696** or **01395 571756**.

### **BIDMEAD, EXMOUTH**

#### **U3A Watercolour Painting and Pottery class**

Wednesdays 10am - 12pm

Join U3A for £15 a year to access this and many other groups and classes across Exmouth

### **BURNSIDE, EXMOUTH**

#### **Community Hub**

Mondays 10am - 3pm

#### **Conexus Tuition East Devon**

Tuesdays 4.30 - 7.30

Hour-long group tuition for and for those wishing to take the entrance exams for Colyton Grammar or other Independent Schools. Contact Karen Sims on 07808 953169 for information and prices.

### **BROADVIEW, BROADCLYST**

#### **Coffee Mornings:**

Mondays 10am-12pm

#### **Craft Group**

Mondays 12pm - 3pm

#### **Community Hub:**

Wednesdays 10am - 4pm

### **CHURCHILL COURT, LYMPSTONE**

#### **Community Hub:**

Thursdays 10am - 3pm

### **CLAYTON HOUSE, EXMOUTH**

#### **Open door - Men's Shed:**

Tuesdays, Wednesdays,

Thursdays 10am-4pm. enquiries to: [menshed@opendoorexmouth.org.uk](mailto:menshed@opendoorexmouth.org.uk)

### **DUNNING COURT**

#### **Coffee Mornings:**

Last Friday of the month  
10am-12pm

### **LYMEBOURNE, SIDMOUTH**

#### **Digital Workshops:**

3rd Tuesday of each month

10am-12pm workshop

12.30pm - 2.20pm drop in with

your own device for support

#### **Community Hub:**

Thursday 10am - 4pm

#### **Christian Free Church:**

Sundays 10:30am - 12:30pm

### **MORGAN COURT, EXMOUTH**

#### **Exmouth dementia carers group:**

3rd Tuesday of each

month 2pm - 4pm

We meet for a cup of tea

and chat with an occasional

speaker on relevant subjects.

#### **Community Hub:**

Wednesdays 10am - 3pm

#### **The Welcome Centre**

#### **and lunch club:**

Thursdays and Fridays

9:30am - 3:30pm

Crafts, exercise, games, free tea,

and coffee. Full day £38 (includes

two course lunch), half day £28

(includes two-course lunch),

lunch only £9. Contact Angela

Boatwright on 07423041146.

### **PALMER HOUSE, EXMOUTH**

#### **Craft group:**

Mondays 10am - 12pm

#### **Chatty Art Café:**

Wednesday during term  
time, 10am - 12 noon

Arts for well-being session

for all ages and all abilities

£10 per person or £15 for

parent/ carer and child. Contact

Catherine Phinn for more

information, 07498 376212.

#### **Brixington Ladies Getaway club:**

1st Wednesday of every

month at 2pm-5pm. £2

entry or £10 for the year

#### **Conexus Tuition East Devon**

Hour-long group tuition

for Primary and Secondary

School students, and for those

wishing to take the entrance

exams for Colyton Grammar or

other Independent Schools.

Contact Karen Sims

on 07808 953169 for

information and prices.

#### **Art Space Café:**

Thursdays term time

10am - 12pm

Arts for well-being session for

children and young people

£10 per child/ young person with

parent/ carer accompanying

£15 for parent/ carer and child

to both join in with art-making.

Contact Catherine Phinn for

more information, 07498 376212.

#### **Lunch club:**

Fridays 10am - 1:30pm

#### **Cake and Bingo:**

3rd Saturday of each month

from 1pm. Call 01395 265386 for

more information or just pop

along. £2 for tea and cake, 50p

for a bingo book of 8 games.

### **PARK CLOSE, WOODBURY**

#### **Afternoon tea:**

Mondays 2pm-4pm

#### **Bring your own computer club:**

Every other Wednesday

2pm-4pm (starting 8<sup>th</sup> Jan)

#### **Bring your own craft afternoon:**

Thursdays 2pm-4pm

#### **Community Hub:**

Fridays 10am - 4pm

# WHAT'S ON | Community Centres

## A great way to make new friends

### RATCLIFFE HOUSE, BURNSIDE, EXMOUTH

#### Community Hub:

Mondays 10am – 3pm

#### Digital Workshops:

1st Tuesday of each month

10am-12pm workshop

12.30pm – 2.20pm drop in with your own device for support

#### Coffee Morning:

Fridays 10am-12pm

#### Day trips from Burnside:

Contact Rodney on 07766887173

for more information and prices

### YONDER CLOSE, OTTERY ST MARY

#### Community Hub:

Thursdays 10am – 3pm




# WHAT'S ON












## JANUARY –

## APRIL 2025

### WHAT'S ON

To find out more about the housing events on these pages please contact tenant participation (see page 2). Please note dates, times and events are subject to change (correct at time of production).

-  Panel and group meetings: if you would like to join any of these meetings, as an observer in the first instance, please contact the Communities Team. Service review groups are a great way for you have your say on the Housing Service is run.
-  Events from the Communities Team: these events are FREE and held in your community so keep an eye out for ones in your area. Everyone is welcome at these events.
-  Events on EDDC land. All events are run by third party organisers therefore there may be some changes which are out of our hands. (not all these events are free)

JAN	7 TUE  Digital workshop. 10am Ratcliffe House, Burnside, Exmouth, EX8 3AQ. 12.30-2.30 drop in support sessions	11 SAT  10am to 14:30 Spoon carving for beginners with Wild East Devon at Seaton Wetlands team. £30pp	21 TUE  Digital workshop. 10am Lymebourne community centre, EX10 9HX. 12.30-2.30 drop in support sessions	21 TUE  Resident Scrutiny Panel 10am-12pm Blackdown House, Honiton, EX14 1EJ	Please contact the Communities Team if you wish to attend as an observer
	22 WED  Editorial Group 10am-12pm 	22 WED  Housing Complaints Support Panel Blackdown House, Honiton, EX14 1EJ 1.30pm - 4.30pm	23 THURS  Repairs and Maintenance Panel 12.30pm-5pm Blackdown House, Honiton, EX14 1EJ	FEB	
MAR	4 TUE  Digital workshop. 10am Ratcliffe House, Burnside, Exmouth, EX8 3AQ. 12.30-2.30 drop in support sessions	18 TUE  Digital workshop. 10am Lymebourne community centre, EX10 9HX. 12.30-2.30 drop in support sessions	APR		1 TUE  Digital workshop. 10am Ratcliffe House, Burnside, Exmouth, EX8 3AQ. 12.30-2.30 drop in support sessions

# YOUR COUNCIL

## Ian Williams Donates Benches

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In a generous gesture to enhance community spaces, Ian Williams, a repair contractor with EDDC, has donated two new benches to Honiton. These welcoming additions have been installed at Tucker Court and Dunning Court, providing residents with comfortable spots to relax and enjoy their surroundings. This initiative not only beautifies the area but also fosters a sense of community among the residents, encouraging them to spend more time outdoors.





# EAST DEVON BUYS SIX NEW HOMES IN CRANBROOK

We are thrilled to announce that, with the support of central government funding, we have successfully purchased six brand new properties in Cranbrook. This means we now have a landlord presence in our vibrant new town, located within the Exeter and East Devon Enterprise Zone.

Cranbrook is home to a growing community and has all the essential amenities, including primary and secondary schools and a railway station. It's a great place for both families and individuals. Until now, East Devon did not own any properties in this area, so we are very pleased with these new acquisitions, which allows us to better serve the housing needs of people in our area.

The six recently purchased homes include a mix of 2, 3, and 4-bedroom properties, all designed with energy efficiency in mind. Each property has an impressive EPC rating of B or C, and benefits from the district heating

system. This system provides heating and hot water to the whole of Cranbrook through a local energy centre. This commitment to sustainability means that residents can enjoy comfortable living whilst also being mindful of energy consumption.

These new council homes will provide much needed accommodation and help us address the housing demand in our community. We are excited about the positive impact these properties will have on the lives of the individuals and families who move into them. We are looking forward to welcoming these residents into our community





# Help!

## My money doesn't cover my bills



If you are finding it difficult to pay bills or manage debts, our Financial Resilience Team are here to help.

They will work with you alongside our partner agencies, including Citizens Advice East Devon, Foodbanks and Exeter Community Energy (ECOE) to improve your overall financial situation.

You can apply online at [eastdevon.gov.uk/request-financial-support](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/request-financial-support) or if you are unable to complete the form online, please call 01395 571 770.

If you are of pensionable age and finding it hard to make ends meet, you may be able to receive help with your rent and Council Tax:

- You can apply for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction from East Devon District Council. Apply online at [eastdevon.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/)
- If you need assistance to complete the form, the financial resilience team are here to help, please call us on 01395 571 770.

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## Are you over State Pension age, or know someone who is?

With the removal of the winter fuel payment, it is worth checking you are getting all the welfare benefits you are entitled to.

If you are over state pension age, you may be eligible to claim Pension Credit, even if you own your own home or have savings.

### People who claim Pension Credit may also be able to get:

- **The Winter Fuel Payment and other help with heating costs**
- **Help with Council Tax and rent**
- **A free TV License for those aged 75 or over**
- **Help with the cost of NHS services, such as NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments**



You could be eligible for Pension Credit if your weekly income is below £218.15 or, if you have a partner that lives with you, £332.95. Qualifying income levels may be higher in some circumstances.

### Don't miss out.

Even if you don't think you qualify for any further pension, you may still qualify for the other benefits. Check your eligibility at [gov.uk/pension-credit](http://gov.uk/pension-credit) or by calling 0800 99 1234.

# FIRE SAFETY TIPS FOR A SAFE CHRISTMAS

As the festive season approaches, many of us are busy decorating our homes, preparing meals, and enjoying the warmth of family gatherings. However, it's essential to keep fire safety in mind to ensure a joyful and safe holiday. Here are some important tips to help you stay fire-safe this Christmas:

**1. Choose Decorations Wisely:**

When selecting Christmas trees, consider an artificial tree that is fire-resistant. If you opt for a real tree, make sure it is fresh and well-watered to prevent it from becoming a fire hazard. Keep decorations away from heat sources.

**2. Check Your Lights:**

Inspect all holiday lights for frayed wires or broken bulbs before use. Only use lights that are marked for indoor or outdoor use, and never overload electrical outlets.

**3. Safe Candle Use:**

If you use candles to create a festive atmosphere, ensure they are placed on stable surfaces and away from flammable materials. Always extinguish candles when leaving a room or going to bed.


**4. Cooking Safety:**

With many delicious meals being prepared, never leave cooking unattended. Keep flammable items like dish towels away from the oven top and have a fire extinguisher accessible in the kitchen.

**5. Plan an Escape Route:**

In case of an emergency, make sure everyone in your household knows the escape routes and has a plan in place. Practice a fire drill to ensure everyone is prepared.

**6. Smoke Alarms:**

Regularly test your smoke alarms to ensure they are working properly. If you have any concerns or issues, then please ~~contact the repairs phonenumber.~~ 

By following these simple fire safety tips, you can enjoy a festive and safe holiday season. Wishing you and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



As we approach the festive period, it's truly been a year of progress and expansion of knowledge in the fire safety industry.

The report that has come out of the Grenfell Enquiry has detailed some major changes needed to building safety.

The fire safety team at EDDC are working hard to increase the safety of all residents. A fire detection upgrade programme has now been created in the new year and will be rolled out across the housing stock. More information about this will be coming in the next newsletter.

In order for us to do this effectively, and within a steady and manageable schedule, we will need your assistance. All of the contractors you allow into your home are accredited third party competent specialists who provide certificates when works are completed. This isn't just for show, this is so they have the liability if they choose not to remediate or repair in a compliant way inline with the latest guidelines and regulations.

You can be assured that the compliance team at EDDC are ensuring each and every fire safety upgrade work has a certificate of works completed, and is inspected in detail for quality assurance purposes.

Working together is always the strongest way to tackle fire safety, and to enable EDDC to carry out their responsibility, it is vital, that both you, the resident and us, the landlord work together as part of an effective team.

Together we can make East Devon a safer place for all to live in, building by building, wall by wall, door by door. We can distinguish the risk of fire related accidents as one solid team.

Have a fantastic festive period, and keep an eye out for the new tips and notice letters, detailing any legislation and regulatory changes that will be on display on your information boards.

# Tenant Satisfaction Measure Survey



Every year we survey our tenants asking them to give us their views on the service we provide.

The survey covers key areas that we are responsible for, such as keeping properties in good order, maintaining building safety, respectful and helpful engagement, effective handling of complaints/ASB and responsible neighbourhood management.

The Regulator of Social Housing is asking all landlords to measure their satisfaction through a series of tenant satisfaction measures so we can see how we are doing. It also means we will be able to compare our performance with others.

Last year, just over half of you said you were satisfied with the overall service we provide. The good news is this is over 10% better than when we last spoke to you in 2023. However, we also know we have a way to go to make sure more of you are feeling happier with the housing service. Particular areas we know we need to work on are our customer service and how we communicate with you about different aspects of the service from repairs to dealing with complaints and anti social behaviour.

To continue to ensure we are doing as much as we can to improve things it's important

that we monitor what you think and get your feedback. This year we have decided to do this in a different way and we have commissioned an external agency, called Acuity, to phone a number of tenants regularly throughout the year. So far this is working well and since September we have spoken to 175 tenants and they are reporting 63% satisfaction with the service. What is interesting about this information is we are beginning to see differences in satisfaction in areas across East Devon. Altogether, your answers will help us to provide a more targeted service and improve areas where you are telling us we aren't doing so well.

Below are some questions you might have on the survey.

## **Who is Acuity?**

Acuity Research & Practice has over 26 years of experience in the social housing sector, helping providers improve services through tenant feedback.

## **How Will I Be Contacted?**

Acuity will contact around 175 tenants every three months via email and telephone. You can participate in two ways:

### **1. Online Survey:**

You'll receive an email and text with a link to the survey.

### **2. Telephone Survey:**

Acuity will call a sample of tenants, with the survey taking about 8 to 10 minutes.

## **When Will They Call?**

Calls will occur Monday to Friday from 9:00 AM to 8:00 PM and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Acuity ensures enough time for tenants with mobility issues to answer.

## **What Number Will Be Displayed?**

Calls will come from 01404 619005 (a Honiton area code). If you miss the call and return it, you'll hear a message confirming the survey.

## **Is the Survey Confidential?**

Yes, the survey is confidential. Results can be shared with East Devon District Council anonymously upon request.

## **What are the Data Protection and Quality Standards?**

Acuity follows strict data protection guidelines and is a member of the Market Research Society. The survey is in line with East Devon's data protection policy. More information can be found at [landlord-services-carrying-out-tenant-satisfaction-surveys.pdf](https://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/landlord-services-carrying-out-tenant-satisfaction-surveys.pdf) ([eastdevon.gov.uk](https://www.eastdevon.gov.uk))



Measure	TSM Survey 2023/24 (Weighted)	Baseline Survey 2022/23 (Weighted)	% Difference over time
<b>TP01:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall service from East Devon District Council.	52.7%	41.1%	+11.3%
<b>TP02:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the overall repairs service from East Devon District Council over the last 12 months	51.5%	43.6%	+7.9%
<b>TP03:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with the time taken to complete their most recent repair after they reported it	46.0%	38.2%	+7.8%
<b>TP04:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied that East Devon District Council provides a home that is well maintained	46.4%	40.6%	+5.8%
<b>TP05:</b> Proportion of respondents who, when thinking about the condition of their property or the building they live in, report that they are satisfied that East Devon District Council provides a home that is safe	57.3%	44.9%	+12.4%
<b>TP06:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with East Devon District Council listening to their views and acting upon them	39.2%	32.6%	+6.6%
<b>TP07:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with East Devon District Council keeping them informed about things that matter to them	44.1%	40.5%	+3.6%
<b>TP08:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they agree with the statement: "East Devon District Council treats me fairly and with respect"	56.2%	46.9%	+9.3%
<b>TP09:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with East Devon District Council's approach to complaints handling	20.2%	16.3%	+3.9%
<b>TP10:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied East Devon District Council keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	39.1%	44.5%	-5.4%
<b>TP11:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied East Devon District Council make a positive contribution to their neighbourhood	36.6%	33.2%	+3.4%
<b>TP12:</b> Proportion of respondents who report that they are satisfied with East Devon District Council's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	36.4%	29.5%	+6.9%

# Making a Complaint

**Housing**  
Ombudsman Service

We know that we don't always get things right and we are committed to ensuring we take a positive approach to learning from complaints in order to ensure continuous improvement across all our services.

Details on how to access our formal complaints process are set out below. We always strive to resolve complaints through our formal complaints process but if you remain unsatisfied you can raise your complaint with the Housing Ombudsman.

## **When dealing with complaints we aim to always;**

- Acknowledge receipt of your complaint in 5 working days
- Respond to your complaint within 10 working days (following acknowledgement)

**but there might be reasons why this is not possible and we will ensure you are aware of times where we might extend the timescale for our response.**

- Ensure a member of our Senior Leadership Team investigates and responds to your complaint.
- Take an open, honest approach to the complaint, detailing what we have found and where appropriate outlining the learning we will take from the complaint with a commitment to putting things right.
- Support you to escalate your complaint to stage 2 if you remain dissatisfied with the outcome of your stage 1 complaint.

Please see details below of how to make a complaint:

WEBSITE [eastdevon.gov.uk/customer-services/feedback-and-complaints/complaints/make-a-complaint/](http://eastdevon.gov.uk/customer-services/feedback-and-complaints/complaints/make-a-complaint/)

EMAIL ADDRESS [Complaints@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:Complaints@eastdevon.gov.uk)

PHONE NUMBER 01404 515 616

## Address

Blackdown House Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton, EX14 1EJ  
Find Blackdown House on Google Maps

Exmouth Town Hall  
St Andrews Road, Exmouth, EX8 1AW

## DETAILS OF HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

Website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

Telephone: 0300 111 3000

Contact us | Housing Ombudsman Service

# LET ME IN!

We are duty bound to conduct regular electrical maintenance checks to make sure your property is safe.

**25%**

of all properties in social housing do not have the Government's recommended five electrical safety features installed.

Source: MHCLG 'Disrepair and Electrics' statistics, 2016

**12%**

of social housing properties failed the Government's Decent Homes criteria in 2016.

Source: MHCLG 'Decent Homes - dwellings' statistics, 2016

Fires started by faulty electrical distribution led to **496** fatalities or injuries in 2016/17

Source: Home Office fire statistics 2016/17

**10%**

of all fires are caused by problems with electrical distribution (wiring, cabling or plugs)

Source: Home Office fire statistics, 2017/18



**3,455**

people visited A&E during 2016-17 as a result of electric shocks

Source: NHS Hospital Accident and Emergency Activity 2016-17

## 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

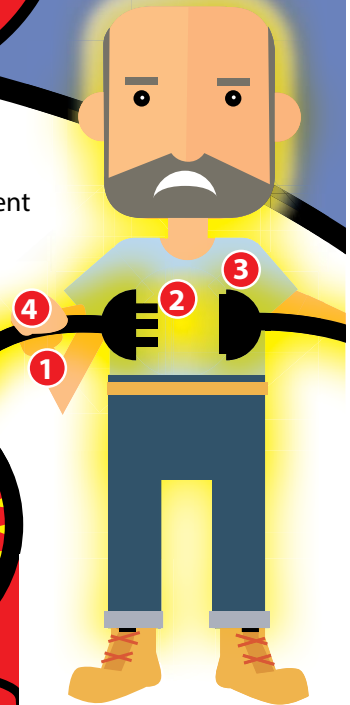
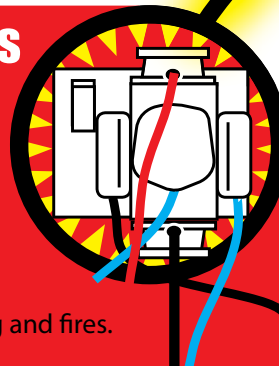
- ⊘ Plugging too many devices into one socket, and over-using extension leads, can lead to overheating and fires.

### ✔ 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.





# GET INVOLVED

## Tenant Rights and Responsibilities in Social Housing

Social housing provides affordable accommodation for individuals and families in need. Understanding your rights and responsibilities as a tenant is crucial for maintaining a positive living environment and effectively addressing any issues that may arise. This article outlines key points regarding tenant rights and responsibilities in social housing.

### Tenant Rights

- 1. Right to a Safe and Habitable Home:** Tenants have the right to live in a property that is safe and free from health hazards. This includes adequate heating, water supply, and structural integrity.
- 2. Right to Privacy:** Landlords must respect a tenant's privacy and cannot enter the property without proper notice, except in emergencies.
- 3. Right to Fair Treatment:** Tenants should not face discrimination based on race, gender, disability, or other protected characteristics. Housing authorities must adhere to fair housing laws.
- 4. Right to Repairs:** Tenants have the right to request repairs and maintenance. Landlords are typically obligated to address these requests in a timely manner.
- 5. Right to Information:** Tenants should be provided with clear information regarding their tenancy agreement, including rent amounts, payment procedures, and any rules governing the property.

### Tenant Responsibilities

- 1. Paying Rent:** Tenants are responsible for paying rent on time as stipulated in their lease agreement. Failure to do so may lead to eviction proceedings.
- 2. Maintaining the Property:** Tenants must keep the property clean and undamaged. This includes reporting any maintenance issues promptly.
- 3. Following Tenancy Terms:** Tenants should adhere to the terms outlined in their lease, including noise regulations and restrictions on alterations to the property.
- 4. Respecting Neighbours:** Tenants are expected to be considerate of their neighbours, which includes minimizing disturbances and maintaining common areas.
- 5. Communicating with Landlords:** Open communication with landlords or housing authorities is essential. Tenants should report issues and concerns as they arise to ensure they are addressed. Understanding your rights and responsibilities as a tenant in social housing is essential for ensuring a positive living experience. By being informed and proactive, you can address common issues effectively and maintain a harmonious relationship with your landlord.

# COMPETITION TIME

## WINTER WORDSEARCH



**1<sup>ST</sup> PRIZE £100**  
**2 RUNNERS UP PRIZES OF £50 EACH**

**How to enter:** Complete the word search, one of the words is missing! Send entries telling us the missing word along with your name, address, age to [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk) (other ways to enter on page 2) by 7th February.

Words can go in any direction.  
 Words can share letters as they cross over each other.

- |            |           |           |
|------------|-----------|-----------|
| TREE       | SANTA     | STOCKINGS |
| PRESENTS   | TINSEL    | JOY       |
| CAROLS     | JINGLE    | REINDEER  |
| MERRY      | CHRISTMAS |           |
| CANDY CANE | ELF       |           |

```

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

The winners of the spring sports wordsearch competition were:

- First Place:** George Hoare  
**Runners up:** Francis Strange  
 Patricia Hagarty

## Spot the elves

Throughout the magazine some naughty elves are hiding. Can you find them all? Tell us how many elves you find along with your name, address and age to [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk). You can also ring us on 01395 517453. First place will win £30.

There will be 2 runner up prizes of £15 each.



# COMMUNITY SPIRIT SHONE AT TENANTS FESTIVAL 2024

The Balloon Animals Were Outstanding



This year, our enthusiastic communities team and tenant panel hosted the Tenants Festival 2024, welcoming over 100 tenants to the Sid Vale Scout Hut in Sidmouth for a day of joy and pride.

The festival featured an exciting array of activities, including workshops, llama encounters, a story tent, archery, a magic show, and a birds of prey experience! It was a fantastic opportunity for tenants to connect with neighbours and learn about community gardening projects and the community initiative fund.



This Gorgeous Toddler was Enchanted by the Owl



Cllr Ledger Presented Christine Morrison with the Silver Involved Tenant of the Year Award

The Awards Ceremony at the Tenants Festival 2024 was a highlight, honouring remarkable contributions from our community. Here are the deserving winners:

## Neighbour of the Year:

- **Gold:** Faye Wareham – Always helping her neighbours, Faye delivers food from the hub and cooks meals, all while managing her own busy life.
- **Silver:** Mike Frewer – A new volunteer who has quickly become an invaluable asset to his neighbours.
- **Bronze:** Fred Ruel – A true friend who has provided incredible support during tough times.

## Community of the Year:

- **Gold:** Friends of Orchard Close – Liz and Rachel have transformed their community with beautiful gardens and organized events, fostering connections among neighbours.
- **Silver:** Woodbury Social Club – A vibrant community hub offering crafts, tea, and tech help, run by dedicated volunteers.
- **Bronze:** Green Haven Budleigh – A supportive group that actively engages with one another.



Mike Frewer won the Silver Good Neighbour of the Year Award



The range of stalls offered something for everyone



Involved Tenant Jose Ireland Manned the Garden Competition Display

### Young Person of the Year:

- **Gold:** Baylie Roberts – A 13-year-old who enthusiastically helps neighbours with grass cutting, building strong connections in the community.
- **Silver:** Kaitlin Williams – Assists her mother by delivering food and walking dogs for those in need.
- **Bronze:** Nicola Skillcorn – Recognized for her fundraising efforts for two charities.

### Involved Tenant of the Year:

- **Gold:** Lesley McAnneney Turner – A passionate leader on the scrutiny panel, inspiring others and fostering a collaborative environment.
- **Silver:** Christine Morrison – A dedicated attendee who actively engages in meetings despite her disabilities.
- **Bronze:** Ron Taylor – A committed tenant who puts in significant effort and time.

### Volunteer of the Year:

- **Gold:** Debbie Trott – Supports families with autistic children, ensuring they feel included and supported.
- **Silver:** Di Bale – A versatile volunteer at the hub, leading activities and helping neighbours in various ways.
- **Bronze:** Rosalind Banwell – Provides essential assistance with paperwork and personal support, making a significant impact on lives.

### Officer of the Year:

- **Gold:** Jamie Clayden – Recognized for her exceptional support, especially during challenging times.
- **Silver:** Colin Higgs – A dedicated council member who ensures residents' needs are met and improvements are made.
- **Bronze:** The Mobile Support Officers – for going above and beyond for individuals and bringing joy and reassurance to so many homes

**Congratulations to all the winners for their outstanding contributions to our communities!**

**The Tenants Festival 2024 truly showcased the vibrant spirit of our community, and we can't wait for next year's celebration!**





# Empowering Communities Through Digital Confidence: Introducing the Forever Connected Workshops



**In an increasingly digital world, technology plays a crucial role in how we socialize, work, shop, manage finances, access services, and enjoy entertainment.** However, many individuals still find themselves disconnected or using the internet only in limited ways. Recognizing this gap, the communities' team has partnered with Cosmic to launch an exciting initiative aimed at fostering digital confidence among residents.

## **Introducing Forever Connected - Creating Digital Confidence**

The Forever Connected project offers free workshops designed to enhance individuals' skills and confidence in using technology and the internet. These workshops will take place in two convenient locations, providing opportunities for participants to engage with digital tools and gain essential knowledge.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own devices, whether tablets, mobile phones, or laptops, to receive personalised support and mentoring. For those without devices, the workshops provide a welcoming environment to enjoy refreshments and become familiar with technology.

All sessions are free, with refreshments provided, making this an excellent opportunity for anyone looking to improve their digital skills. Mark your calendars and join us in building a more connected community!

**For more information or to register for the workshops, please contact the community team. Don't miss out on this chance to enhance your digital confidence and connect with others in your community!**





### Locations:

#### Exmouth

Ratcliffe House,  
Burnside,  
Exmouth, EX8 3AQ  
(1st Tuesday of the  
month)

#### Morning Sessions:

**Time:** 10:00 AM -  
12:00 PM

#### Afternoon Sessions:

**Time:** 12:30 PM -  
2:30 PM

#### Sidmouth

Lymebourne  
Community Centre,  
Sidmouth, EX10 9HX  
(3rd Tuesday of the  
month)

#### Morning Sessions:

**Time:** 10:00 AM -  
12:00 PM

#### Afternoon Sessions:

**Time:** 12:30 PM -  
2:30 PM

### Focus Areas:

- **Online Shopping/Banking/Government Apps:** January 7th & 21st , 2025
- **Video Calling/Using WhatsApp:** February 4th & 18th , 2025
- **Social Media:** March 4th & 18th, 2025
- **Smartphone Photography:** April 1st & 15th , 2025

**Drop in and bring you own device for support and guidance**



# AT HOME

## Car Maintenance Checklist

### Mike Frewer - Tenant

Written using research from the AA and a local garage

It's coming close to that time of year when people drive long distances to visit friends and family.

Are you familiar with all the checks that need to happen before you set off in your car?

The AA, and others, recommend a series of checks known as the "FLOWER" checks. FLOWER is an acronym for this set of checks that should be made once a month.

The FLOWER check is a car maintenance checklist which helps us remember all the things we need to check to make sure our car is safe for the journey ahead.

#### 1. FUEL

It's a good idea to check how much fuel is in your tank before leaving home. The last thing you need is to panic when your low fuel light comes on mid journey. As a general rule, there is between 30 to 50 miles of fuel left once your fuel warning light comes on.

#### 2. LIGHTS

It's recommended to check your lights at least once as part of your maintenance. It's best to do this with a friend who can walk around the car and check the lights while you operate them. If you are on your own, drive or reverse near a wall so that you can see the lights on the wall.

#### Here's a checklist of all the lights on your car:

- Side lights
- Headlights
- Main Beam
- Fog Lights
- Brake Lights
- Rear Lights
- Indicators
- Number Plate Light

#### 3. OIL

Having the wrong oil level can damage your car's engine and leave you stranded. Some newer cars have an electronic oil monitoring system. However, if your car has a manual oil check system, you need to check your engine oil at least once a month. To check your oil, follow these steps when your engine is cold:

1. Park on a flat part of the road.
2. Open the bonnet and locate the oil dipstick. (It normally has a bright coloured loop on the top).
3. Pull it out and wipe the stick clean with a rag or tissue. You will notice two marks at the bottom of the stick marked Min and Max.
4. Put the dipstick back into the tube that it came from and make sure it goes fully in.
5. Now again pull it out and check where the oil level is on the stick. If it is between the two marks you're good to go. If it is near the lower "Min" mark, it's time to top up your oil.

#### 4. WATER

"Water" is the "W" in "FLOWER", the acronym we are using to help us remember which checks to do each month. However, strictly speaking, water should really be "liquids". here are 3 liquids to check: Engine Coolant (Antifreeze); Brake Fluid, and Windscreen washer fluid. Here's how to check each one:

### Engine Coolant

Take a look at the coolant bottle to see where the level is, there are MIN and MAX marks on the side of the bottle. If the level is below the minimum mark then you should top it up with some antifreeze.

### Brake Fluid

Near the bottom of the windscreen, but still in the engine bay, there should be a small round plastic canister. This holds the fluid that makes your brakes work. Like the Engine coolant, there are Min and Max marks on the outside of the canister. Brake fluid is a toxic fluid so if your levels are low, it's advisable to take your car to a fully trained mechanic to top them up.

### Windscreen Washer Fluid

This is also under your bonnet. There is normally a blue colour lid on the bottle containing your windscreen washer, but if in doubt check your handbook for its location. Fluid is available at local shops and supermarkets. Try to get the correct fluid for the predicted weather (there are different versions for each possible temperature range). Once you have the correct type of windscreen washer, top the container up to the full level.



### 5. ELECTRICS

Battery problems are one of the main causes of breakdowns. Checking your battery is something a trained mechanic needs to do, so get your battery checked at your local garage.

### 6. RUBBER

The last letter in FLOWER is R for Rubber, but really it refers to tyres. Your tyres should have a minimum tread depth of 1.6mm.

Take a 20 pence coin and put it in the tyre tread sideways. If you can't see the band around the edge of the coin, your tyres are fine. If you can see the band of the coin then your tyres need replacing.

If you are unsure about doing any of these checks, then take your car to your regular garage. They will have all of the tools needed to check and fill all of the above items in the checklist.

# Festive Activities for Christmas: Alone or with Friends

The Christmas season is a wonderful time to embrace the spirit of joy, generosity, and togetherness. Whether you find yourself celebrating alone or surrounded by loved ones, there are plenty of activities to fill your days with holiday cheer.

## Activities for Solo Celebrations:

1. **Baking Festive Treats:** Spend a cozy afternoon baking cookies, gingerbread houses, or festive cakes. The aroma of freshly baked goods will fill your home with warmth and joy.
2. **Crafting Decorations:** Get creative by making your own Christmas ornaments or wreaths. Utilize materials you have at home, such as paper, fabric, or natural elements.
3. **Watching Classic Movies:** Curl up with a blanket and enjoy a marathon of your favourite Christmas movies. From heart-warming tales to festive comedies, there's something for everyone.
4. **Reading Seasonal Books:** Dive into a good book with a holiday theme. Whether it's a classic novel or a contemporary story, reading can be a delightful escape.
5. **Volunteer:** Consider giving back to your community by volunteering at local shelters or food banks. It's a fulfilling way to spread kindness during the holiday season.

## Activities for Group Celebrations:

1. **Host a Holiday Game Night:** Gather friends or family for a fun evening of board games or holiday-themed trivia. Add some festive snacks and drinks to enhance the experience.
2. **Go Carolling:** Spread cheer by going carolling in your neighbourhood. Gather a group of friends, choose your favourite carols, and share the joy of music with others.
3. **Attend a Holiday Market:** Explore local holiday markets or fairs together. Enjoy the festive atmosphere, shop for unique gifts, and savour seasonal treats.
4. **Decorate Together:** Turn decorating your home into a fun group activity. Whether it's putting up lights or trimming the tree, working together can create lasting memories.
5. **Host a Potluck Dinner:** Invite friends and family to bring their favourite holiday dishes for a potluck dinner. Sharing a meal is a wonderful way to celebrate the season together.

**No matter how you choose to celebrate, the Christmas season is all about creating cherished memories. Embrace the joy and warmth of the holidays, whether you're enjoying them alone or with others!**





# A Seasonal Guide to Managing Your Outdoor Space

As winter gives way to spring, January through April is a crucial time to prepare for the growing season. Here are specific tasks to help you get your garden, pots and plants ready:

- **Assess Your Garden:** Start by evaluating your garden space. Look for areas that may need soil improvement, such as compacted areas or patches that receive too much shade. Make a note of plants that did well last season and those that didn't.
- **Clean Up Debris:** Clear away any fallen leaves, dead plants, and other debris from your garden beds. This helps prevent diseases and pests from overwintering. Dispose of any diseased plant material in the trash rather than composting it.
- **Soil Preparation:** Conduct a soil test to determine pH and nutrient levels. You can find soil testing kits at garden centres. Based on the results, amend your soil with organic matter like compost, well-rotted manure, or peat moss to enhance fertility and drainage.
- **Plan Your Planting:** Decide what vegetables, herbs, and flowers you want to grow this year. For cool-season crops, consider planting peas, spinach, kale, and radishes in early spring. Create a planting calendar to ensure you know when to start seeds indoors and when to transplant them outside.
- **Start Seeds Indoors:** From late January to March, start seeds for warm season crops like tomatoes, peppers, and aubergine indoors. Use seed trays filled with a seed-starting mix and place them in a sunny location or under grow lights. Keep the soil moist but not soggy.
- **Pruning and Maintenance:** Late winter (January to early March) is an excellent time to prune deciduous trees (trees where the leaves fall off) and shrubs while they are still dormant. Focus on removing dead or crossing branches to promote healthy growth. For fruit trees, prune to encourage an open centre for better air circulation.
- **Mulching:** As soon as the soil is workable in March, apply a layer of organic mulch (such as wood chips, straw, or shredded leaves) around your plants. This helps retain moisture, suppress weeds, and regulate soil temperature.
- **Plan for Sustainability:** Incorporate eco-friendly practices such as creating a compost bin for kitchen scraps and yard waste, planting native species to support local wildlife, and using organic pest control methods. Consider installing a rain barrel to collect water for irrigation.

By following these tips, you'll ensure your garden is well-prepared for a bountiful growing season. Happy gardening!

# Exploring Festive Traditions Around the World

Christmas is a time of joy, celebration, and unique traditions that vary across cultures. Each country has its own way of honouring the holiday, reflecting its history, beliefs, and customs.

## United States

Families often gather around a decorated tree, exchanging gifts and enjoying festive meals. The tradition of Santa Claus, inspired by St. Nicholas, plays a central role, with children eagerly awaiting his arrival on Christmas Eve. There are regional differences across the country. In the Southern US, more outdoor celebrations occur due to warmer weather.

## Mexico

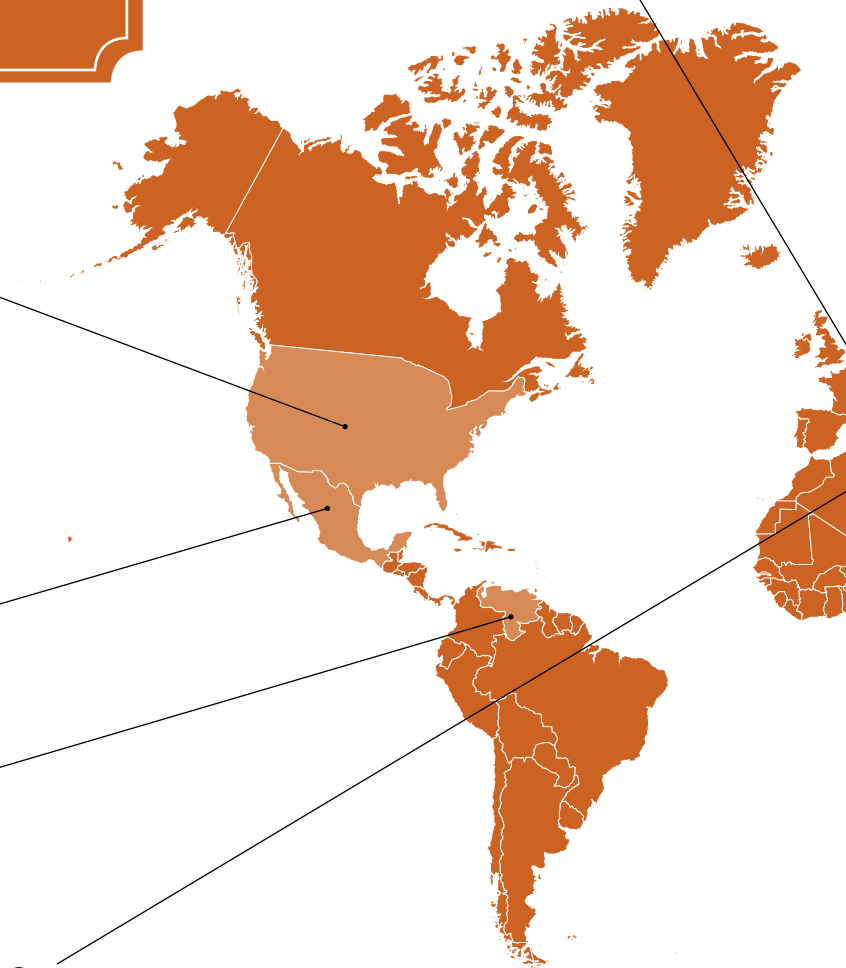
Christmas celebrations begin on December 16 with Las Posadas, a reenactment of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem. Las Posadas, which lasts for nine nights, symbolizes the journey of Mary and Joseph searching for shelter. Families gather for festive meals, piñatas, and fireworks, culminating in a joyous Christmas Eve feast.

## Venezuela

In Venezuela, hallacas are a traditional Christmas dish. Similar to tamales, they consist of corn dough stuffed with meat or seafood, depending on the region. Another popular item on the table is pan de jamón, a savoury bread roll filled with ham, fried bacon, raisins, and green olives.

## Switzerland

Families gather around the table to enjoy a Fondue Chinoise, where thin slices of meat are dipped with skewers into boiling broth. This particular meal is popular both for Christmas and New Year's Eve dinners.



## Greece

On Christmas Eve, it's customary for Greek families to prepare a rustic sweetbread called Christopsomo (meaning "Christ's bread"). The dough is filled with raisins, apricots, nuts, cardamom, and cloves, and the top is often decorated with a cross and honey glaze. It becomes a delicious centerpiece on Christmas Day.



### Italy

The Christmas season is marked by La Vigilia, a feast held on Christmas Eve featuring multiple seafood dishes. Many Italians also celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany on January 6. The celebration of the Epiphany commemorates the visit of the Magi. La Befana, a kind witch, delivers gifts to children on the night of January 5th, in remembrance of this event.

### Denmark

In many countries, meat dishes are a staple of Christmas celebrations, including Denmark where flæskesteg (a pork roast with crackled skin) is served as the main component of the Christmas Eve meal. According to mettekirkk, it's served with "warm red cabbage, gravy, small caramelized potatoes, and chips."

### Netherlands

Gourmetten is the typical holiday meal in the Netherlands, with most families having a "gourmet set" for the occasion. In this tradition, small meats and vegetables are cooked on a tabletop hotplate by the whole family.

### Ukraine

Christmas is one of the favourite holidays in Ukraine, and it's celebrated with a hearty table. The main Christmas celebrations happen on Dec 25th and Jan 7th, however many families still gather on Christmas eve for Sviata Vecheria ('Holy dinner'). Traditionally, the Sviata Vecheria table would have been served with 12 dishes, symbolising the twelve apostles. The main dish of the evening would have been Kutia (boiled wheat mixed with poppy seeds and honey).

### Philippines

In the Philippines, the Christmas season is one of the longest in the world, starting in September and culminating with the Feast of the Three Kings in January. The highlight is the Simbang Gabi, a series of nine early morning masses leading up to Christmas Day, often followed by festive gatherings.

### New Zealand

In New Zealand, the holidays are often celebrated with a festive barbecue, where families grill a variety of meats and vegetables. The meal is typically finished with Pavlova, a beloved meringue-based dessert

### Ethiopia

Christmas, known as Genna, is celebrated on January 7. Traditional celebrations include attending church services and enjoying a special meal of doro wat (spicy chicken stew) and injera (flatbread).

### Botswana

According to mommagen, the Christmas meal in Botswana is similar to that served at any important occasion such as a wedding and consists of rice, salad, and fried chicken.



# Home Maintenance Checklist: Preparing for Spring

As winter fades, the days grow longer and spring presents the perfect opportunity to refresh and revitalise your property.

Preparing your space for this new season can enhance your comfort and maintain the integrity of your home. Here is a seasonal checklist to guide tenants in getting ready for spring, covering essential maintenance tasks, cleaning tips and gardening advice.

## Conduct a Thorough Cleaning:

Dust and Vacuum:

- Start by dusting surfaces, vacuuming afterward to remove any winter dust/allergens.

Wash Windows:

- Clean windows inside and out to maximise natural light, don't forget the sills and screens!

Declutter:

- Sort through belongings, consider donating or recycling items you no longer need for a more organised space.

## Inspect and Maintain Your Home

Check for Leaks:

- Inspect faucets, pipes and under sinks to prevent more significant issues down the line.

Test Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Detectors:

- Please test these regularly, report any faults to us promptly, do not attempt to repair them yourself.

- Sweep Chimneys if used or wood/coal fires

## Prepare Outdoor Spaces

- Clean Patios and Decks: Sweep/Wash outdoor surfaces and check for any needed repairs i.e. loose boards/railings.

- Start Gardening: Prepare for the flowers/vegetables you'd like by clearing weeds and adding compost/fertiliser to enrich the soil.

Check Outdoor Equipment : Inspect lawnmowers, garden tools and furniture ensuring it's ready for use.

- specified benefits are typically eligible for social tariffs. The primary beneficiary of the benefit must be the main account holder.

## Freshen Up Your Décor

Change Bedding and Textiles: Swap

- heavy winter bedding for lighter linens, colourful pillows/blankets can help brighten up your space.

Incorporate Plants: Add indoor plants or fresh flowers for life and extra colour

- to your home, they can also improve air quality and improve mood.  
Plan for Seasonal Activities.

## Organise Outdoor Gatherings

- Plan for BBQ's and picnics with friends/family to enjoy the warm weather.

## Explore Local Parks and Events

- Take advantage of parks, farmers markets and community events.

In following this maintenance checklist you can ensure your living spaces are ready for Spring. A little preparation goes a long way to create a comfortable, inviting home.

# Quick guide: what repairs and maintenance issues are my responsibility?



Items which we will repair

**Keys:** If tenants lose or break keys, having extra keys cut is their responsibility (this includes radiator keys). Equally, if tenants lock themselves out, Repairs do not get involved in resolving the situation.

**Windows:** Replacing broken/cracked glass is the tenant's responsibility (unless this is due to criminal damage and a police crime number is given). Fitting draught proofing to doors/windows; fitting curtain rails, pelmets, and fitting extra window locks (unless recommended by the police) are all things tenants can do for themselves.

**Bathroom:** Tenants are responsible for clearing blocked basins, sinks, baths or toilets caused by misuse. Tenants are also responsible for replacing toilet seats, flush chains, plugs and chains on baths, basins or sinks. Clearing drains is our responsibility but we charge tenants if the blockage is caused by negligence or misuse.

**Electrical:** It's a tenant's responsibility to replace light bulbs; reset electrical trip switches (unless in exceptional circumstances); replace TV aerials and sockets (except for communal aerials), and install extra electrical sockets, unless the number available is below the minimum standard.

**Appliances:** Tenants check smoke detectors (included ones provided by us); replace batteries, except for those in the Home Safeguard system, or in exceptional circumstances; replace clothes lines and restring rotary driers (except for those in shared area); disconnect and reconnect appliances such as cookers or washing machines, and bleed or vent central heating radiators.

**Outside:** Tenants are expected to maintain garden paths and patios (except those leading to front or back doors or ones provided specifically for an existing disabled tenant) and any other general garden features (unless in shared areas). Keeping gully grids and wall vents clear of leaves and rubbish, replacing and maintaining garden fencing are also tenants' responsibility (unless post and wire fencing are provided by us, or boundary fencing bordering a public road, path or carpark).

**Indoor Miscellaneous:** Tenants will fit coat hooks; all internal door maintenance and replacements (other than bathroom) are the tenant's responsibility; adjust doors when new floor coverings are fitted; get chimneys swept if they are used for a wood or coal fire; fill minor cracks or holes in walls/ceilings (anything below 2mm in width); fit or replace internal door latches, handles, chains or spy holes; repair or replace handles, catches or knobs on kitchen units, and complete all internal decoration.

Your tenancy agreement sets out the repairs for which we, the council, are responsible. We will keep in good repair and proper working order our installations for supplying water, gas, electricity and sanitation including basins, sinks, baths and toilet fittings, as well as our installations for room and water heating.

We will keep the structure and exterior of the property in good repair, including drains, gutters, external pipes as well as the lift service where provided. We will maintain communal entrances, halls and stairways in flats, as well as any other areas for use by all tenants, their families and visitors. We will periodically decorate the outside of your home and communal areas of flats and maisonettes.

We will do repairs which are our responsibility within a reasonable period and advise the timescale for completion of any repairs.

**Don't Forget:** Report repairs promptly and keep your property in a good state of repair.

Know your responsibilities as explained in your tenancy agreement.

Seek written permission from us prior to making any alterations to your property.

Clean and clear your property before moving out.



# Find Cheap Food Using These Apps



Food waste is a pressing issue in the UK, with millions of tons of food discarded each year. Thankfully, technology is paving the way for innovative solutions. Several food saving and waste reduction apps for your mobile phone are now available, helping individuals and businesses minimize waste while saving money. Here are some of the top apps to consider:

## 1. Too Good To Go

This popular app allows users to buy surplus food from local restaurants, cafes, and shops at a discounted price. By purchasing "magic bags," you can enjoy delicious meals while helping to reduce food waste. It's a simple way to save money and support local businesses.

## 2. OLIO

OLIO is a community-driven app that connects neighbours and local businesses to share surplus food. Users can list items they won't consume, whether it's groceries or homemade dishes, and others can claim them. This not only reduces waste but also fosters community connections.

## 3. Waste Not

Waste Not helps users track their food inventory and provides recipe suggestions based on what you have at home. By using this app, you can be more mindful of your food usage, avoid overbuying, and make the most of what you already have.



# Timing Your Grocery Savings: When Supermarkets Slash Prices



For savvy shoppers, knowing when to hit the aisles can lead to significant savings on groceries. Supermarkets often reduce prices at strategic times, allowing customers to grab discounted items before they disappear. Here's a quick guide to when some of the major supermarkets typically offer price reductions on food:

**Aldi:** Discounts begin at 8 AM when stores open, making it a great time to find fresh markdowns.

**Lidl:** Like Aldi, Lidl offers reductions starting at 8 AM and often has discounts towards the end of the day.

**Asda:** Price reductions are available from 7 PM onwards, with additional discounts often seen at 6 AM and 10 PM.

**Marks & Spencer (M&S):** Look for markdowns starting about 30 minutes before the store closes, perfect for evening shoppers.

**Morrisons:** Discounts typically begin at 6 PM, allowing evening shoppers to find great deals.

**Tesco:** Similar to Morrisons, Tesco starts reducing prices at 6 PM.

**Sainsbury's:** Discounts are available from 6 PM onwards, with additional reductions occurring between 2 PM and 3:30 PM.

**Co-op:** Expect price reductions from 6 PM to 8 PM on Sundays, with discounts starting at 10 AM during the week.

**Waitrose:** after the lunchtime rush (1pm onwards) then around 2 hours before store closes

By timing your visits to these supermarkets, you can maximise your savings and enjoy fresher food at lower prices. Happy shopping!

# Winter Wellness: Staying Healthy During the Cold Months



As the temperatures drop and the days grow shorter, it's easy to let our health and well-being take a backseat. However, winter can be a wonderful time to focus on self-care and maintain both physical and mental health. Here are some tips to help you stay healthy and vibrant during the cold months:

## 1. Indoor Exercises

Staying active is crucial during winter, especially when outdoor activities may be limited. Here are some indoor exercise ideas:

- **Yoga:** Practicing yoga at home can help improve flexibility, strength, and mental clarity. There are plenty of online classes available for all skill levels.
- **Dance Workouts:** Turn up your favourite music and dance! It's a fun way to get your heart rate up and lift your spirits.
- **Bodyweight Exercises:** Push-ups, squats, and lunges can be done anywhere and require no equipment. Create a simple routine to follow a few times a week.

## 2. Healthy Recipes

Winter is a great time to enjoy hearty, nutritious meals that warm you up. Here are some healthy recipe ideas:

- **Soups and Stews:** Prepare a big batch of vegetable soup or a hearty stew filled with beans and whole grains. These meals are comforting and can be packed with nutrients.
- **Roasted Vegetables:** Roast seasonal vegetables like carrots, sweet potatoes, and Brussels sprouts. Toss them with olive oil, herbs, and spices for a flavourful side dish.
- **Smoothies:** Even in winter, smoothies can be a great way to incorporate fruits and vegetables. Use frozen fruits, leafy greens, and a splash of almond milk for a refreshing treat.

## 3. Prioritize Self-Care

Taking time for yourself is essential during the winter months. Here are some self-care practices to consider:

- **Mindfulness and Meditation:** Spend a few minutes each day practicing mindfulness or meditation. This can help reduce stress and improve your overall mood.
- **Reading and Hobbies:** Use the extra indoor time to dive into a good book or engage in hobbies that you enjoy. This can provide a great mental escape and boost your creativity.
- **Stay Connected:** Reach out to friends and family, whether through phone calls, video chats, or social media. Maintaining connections can help combat feelings of isolation during the winter months.

## 4. Stay Hydrated and Get Sunlight:

Don't forget to drink plenty of water, as hydration is just as important in winter as it is in summer. Additionally, try to get some sunlight, even if it's just a few minutes outside during the day. Natural light can help improve your mood and support your vitamin D levels. By incorporating these tips into your winter routine, you can maintain your physical and mental health during the cold months. Embrace the season, take care of yourself, and enjoy the cozy moments that winter has to offer!



# The Importance of F.A.S.T.

If we don't know the meaning of the acronym F.A.S.T. we should! It might save someone's life one day. It is terribly important for us all to recognise the meaning of these four letters in the suspicious occurrence of a stroke happening to anyone.

**F:** F is for Face or facial drooping, usually affecting one side, maybe a crooked smile or slight dribbling on one side of the mouth.

**A:** A is for arms. Can both be fully raised? Can both hands squeeze your hand? This can also apply to the legs. Can the person in question raise her legs and stand correctly?

**S:** S is for speech or smile. When the person is asked a question can he or she reply without slurring the sentence? A simple sentence like "The sky is blue" is quite a good.

**T:** This is most important! T stands for time. If any of the above symptoms are present then call 999. If necessary take the person in question to the nearest A&E immediately Please try and keep as calm as possible. If known note the time that the symptoms started. A Stroke affects different parts of the brain. If a quick response is possible the symptoms can be slight, if not they can be life changing for everyone whose loved one is the unfortunate stroke victim.



# Veganuary Recipes

As the new year begins, many people are looking for fresh starts and healthier habits, making January the perfect time to embrace Veganuary! This annual challenge encourages individuals to explore a plant-based lifestyle for the month, promoting not only personal health but also a more sustainable way of living. Whether you're a long-time vegan or just curious about incorporating more plant-based meals into your diet, this article is here to inspire you with delicious and easy vegan recipes that will tantalise your taste buds.

## RECIPE STIR-FRY



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup broccoli florets
- 1 bell pepper, sliced
- 1 carrot, sliced
- 1 cup snap peas
- 2 tablespoons soy sauce or tamari
- 1 tablespoon sesame oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- Cooked rice or quinoa for serving

### METHOD

1. Heat the sesame oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add the garlic and sauté for 1 minute.
2. Add the broccoli, bell pepper, carrot, and snap peas. Stir-fry for about 5-7 minutes until the vegetables are tender-crisp.
3. Pour in the soy sauce or tamari and stir to coat the vegetables. Cook for another minute.
4. Serve over cooked rice or quinoa.



## RECIPE VEGAN CHILLI

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1 cup corn (fresh or frozen)
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon chilli powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- Salt and pepper to taste

### METHOD

1. In a large pot, sauté the onion and garlic over medium heat until softened.
2. Add the chilli powder and cumin, cooking for an additional minute.
3. Stir in the black beans, kidney beans, diced tomatoes, and corn. Bring to a simmer.
4. Cook for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper.
5. Serve hot, with toppings like avocado or coriander if desired.



## RECIPE

# CREAMY VEGAN MUSHROOM RISOTTO

### METHOD

1. In a saucepan, heat the vegetable broth and keep it warm over low heat.
2. In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onion and garlic, and sauté until translucent.
3. Add mushrooms and cook until they release their moisture, about 5 minutes.
4. Stir in Arborio rice and cook for 1-2 minutes, allowing the rice to absorb the flavours.
5. If using, pour in the white wine and stir until absorbed.
6. Gradually add the warm vegetable broth, one ladle at a time, stirring frequently. Allow the liquid to be absorbed before adding more.
7. Continue this process until the rice is creamy and al dente, about 20 minutes. Stir in nutritional yeast and season with salt and pepper.
8. Serve warm, garnished with fresh herbs if desired.

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup Arborio rice
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 1 cup mushrooms, sliced (e.g., cremini or button)
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/2 cup white wine (optional)
- 1/4 cup nutritional yeast (for a cheesy flavour)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Fresh thyme or parsley for garnish (optional)



# IN YOUR COMMUNITY

## ACED Call for Young Creatives: Free Mentoring Opportunity

Are you a young person looking to kickstart your career in the creative sector? Arts & Culture East Devon (ACED) is excited to announce a call for young creatives aged 18 to 30 living in East Devon who are interested in receiving mentorship from experienced professionals in the field.

### Who Can Apply?

Whether you are just starting your journey in the arts or are already on your way but seeking to elevate your career, ACED wants to hear from you. This is a fantastic opportunity for aspiring artists, film makers, musicians, and those involved in festivals, theatre, and creative education.

### What's on Offer?

Participants will benefit from:

- One-on-One Mentorship: Work closely with successful ACED mentors from your specific creative sector.
- Skill Development: Gain confidence and learn valuable skills that can enhance your career prospects.
- Flexible Mentoring Hours: Enjoy up to 6 hours of free mentoring over a 6-month period, tailored to your needs.

### How to Apply

If you're interested in this unique opportunity, don't hesitate to reach out! To apply, simply email [aced@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:aced@eastdevon.gov.uk) or visit [www.aced.org.uk/opportunities/mentoring/become-an-aced-mentee](http://www.aced.org.uk/opportunities/mentoring/become-an-aced-mentee) for more information.

This is an incredible chance to connect with industry professionals and gain insights that can help shape your future in the creative industries. Take the first step towards your dream career with ACED's mentoring program!





# The Importance of Neighbourly Relationships

Building relationships with neighbours can lead to a more supportive and friendly atmosphere. When we know our neighbours, we can share resources, exchange ideas, and look out for one another. This sense of community can be especially beneficial in times of need, whether it's borrowing a tool, sharing a meal, or simply having someone to talk to. Additionally, strong community ties can lead to collaborative efforts that improve the neighbourhood, such as organizing events or addressing local issues together.

## Tips for Connecting with Neighbours

- 1. Host a Street Party:** Organizing a Street party is a fantastic way to bring neighbours together. Set a date, invite everyone, and encourage potluck-style contributions. This informal gathering allows residents to socialize, share food, and get to know one another in a relaxed setting.
- 2. Start a Community Clean-Up:** Rally your neighbours to participate in a community clean-up day. Choose a local park, playground, or shared outdoor space that could use some TLC. Not only will this beautify the area, but it will also foster teamwork and camaraderie among participants.
- 3. Create a Neighbourhood Group:** Consider starting a neighbourhood group or social media page or WhatsApp group where residents can share information, ask for help, or promote local events. This platform can serve as a valuable resource for communication and connection.
- 4. Organize a Book or Movie Club:** Establish a book or movie club that meets regularly to discuss selected readings or films. This shared activity can spark conversations and help neighbours bond over common interests.
- 5. Plan Seasonal Events:** Celebrate the changing seasons with themed events, such as a spring garden planting day, summer barbecues, or winter holiday gatherings. These activities can create traditions that strengthen community ties over time.
- 6. Volunteer Together:** Identify local charities or organizations that need assistance and organize a group volunteer day. Working together for a common cause can deepen connections and create a sense of shared purpose.
- 7. Be Friendly and Approachable:** Sometimes, simply being open and approachable can lead to connections. Take the time to greet your neighbours, share a smile, or initiate small talk when you see them. These simple gestures can pave the way for deeper relationships.

By actively seeking to connect with neighbours, you can build a supportive and engaged community. Whether through organized events or everyday interactions, fostering these relationships can enhance everyone's living experience and create a neighbourhood where everyone feels welcome and valued. So, take the first step and reach out—your community is waiting!

If you have a group of residents already and would like some support moving your group forward or creating a residents' association contact the communities team using the information at the bottom of the page.



We're here for anyone in East Devon, who may find the Christmas Season hard, be it for financial or social reasons. The community support we provide is open to anyone who feels they need it, at no cost.

**Here's how we can help...**

**Community Meal on Christmas Day**

Come and celebrate Christmas with us at The CUB (Honiton) or Pebbles (Seaton) at 12:30, transport available if needed. Unable to come and join us? We are also able to bring a cooked meal out to you.

**Gifts from Santa**

No one should wake up on Christmas Day without a gift from Santa. We have hundreds of amazing donated gifts ready to bring joy.

**Christmas Day Meal Box**

We can supply a box of ingredients for you to cook yourself at home, either supplied and sponsored by Combe Farm Shop & Estate, or via Seaton Foodbank (Seaton area - or via project if outside of foodbank criteria).

This is a community lead project, working with Re:Store(Seaton) and other community groups.

To request support please visit:

<https://operationrudolph.com>

where you can register or find out how to volunteer or email [info@inspiring-connections.org](mailto:info@inspiring-connections.org)

Registered CIC  
14312970



# Hub News!

community hub



This summer we have been super busy at the Hubs running craft activities, themed days and even a trip out! In June those who wanted to went on a day trip to Weymouth, we had the best day of the summer so far, not a drop of rain, not too much sun and calm sea. The fish and chips were marvellous, and the sea was warm. What a joyous day.

Several specialist visitors have visited us over the summer, we had a very jolly morning learning how to make balloon models with Simon Croft, learning how to make flowers, swords, dogs and hats.

Hubsters at Morgan Court finding their inner child!



# Hub News!

Members of the communities team have been forcing visitors to take part in craft activities. We have been making recycled garden bugs, autumnal leaf lanterns and cactus pet rocks. The participants may be reluctant, but the results are always fantastic!



We have celebrated many themed days. We had Space Week in September with an opportunity to try freeze dried ice cream and make water propelled rockets from empty pop bottles. We also had a wonderful week marking National Pirate Week, with much silly dressing up and bad jokes.



The motely crew at Yonder Close Hub, Ottery.

It's not all dressing up and being creative though. At the end of September all 8 Hubs held a Macmillan Coffee morning with a tombola, cake stall and raffle. The total raised by the Hubsters was £1018.75 which was a fantastic amount!

As you can see there is plenty going on every week. Everyone is always welcome - you don't have to be outgoing and enjoy dressing up, you can just come along and make new friends and have a very nice homecooked lunch, and maybe indulge in a little creative activity - all for free.



Seaton Hub

**The Hubs are at the following centres.**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<b>EXMOUTH</b> Burnside Community Centre, Withycombe, EX8 3AQ 10am - 3pm		<b>BROADCLYST</b> Broadview Community Centre, EX5 3HA 10am - 4pm	<b>OTTERY</b> Yonder Close Community Centre, EX11 1HE 10am - 3pm	<b>WOODBURY</b> Park Close Community Centre 10am - 3pm
		<b>EXMOUTH</b> Morgan Court Community Centre, EX8 2AD 10am - 3pm	<b>SIDMOUTH</b> Lymebourne Community Centre, EX10 9HZ 10am - 4pm	<b>SEATON</b> Methodist Hall, Scalwell Lane, EX12 2JN 10am - 3pm
			<b>LYMPSTONE</b> Churchill Court Community Centre EX8 5JB 10am - 3pm	

For further information please contact project officer  
 Lucinda Cliff 07816 533803  
 or 01395 517453 email  
[tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk)

# CREATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

Please send us your photos, pictures, poems or stories.



## Snow

*Snow falls softly all glittery, bright  
Making the world look so lovely & white  
Cars rumble along with infinite care  
With visors pulled down to shut out the glare*

*Children out building a snowman with glee  
Calling for parents to come and see  
With coal for eyes and a carrot for the nose  
The arms made with twigs to strike a pose*

*Children are looking, hot drinks in their hands  
Look at their snowman and shout "It looks grand!"*

*But all too soon it's time to go  
Hoping tomorrow will bring more snow*

Poem: Jose Ireland

Whatever your creative talents are, we would love to share them in our next edition! Please send your contributions to [tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk), or post them to Communities Team, East Devon District Council, Blackdown House, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton EX14 1EJ.

## Fairies

*I believe in fairies, I know I do  
With stories in books which make them seem true  
With long flaxen hair and gossamer wings  
Voices that sound like tinkle bells when they ring  
Their homes are the flowers in hedgerows where they grow  
Fairies are mystical beings, don't you know?  
Flying around without much care,  
Not really knowing that we know they are there  
So be careful when you see flowers swaying  
For the fairies are about, but they are just playing.*

Poem: Jose Ireland





## Trees

*They sway and glisten in a gentle breeze  
The wondrous things we know as trees  
With leaves of green and golden hue  
In the morning light, moistened with dew*

*All shapes all sizes, short and tall  
Birds perched on branches putting out their call  
Their babies are calling for their food  
But their mums can't hear them, they are not  
in the mood*

*To tend to their calls, and feed them food*

Poem: Jose Ireland



## Autumn Leaves

*Green leaves like lime  
As crunchy as crisps  
Beech leaves like fire  
Flickering like flames*

*Leaves sleeping like a human  
Leaves flying through  
The chilled autumn air  
Twirling and swirling  
Above the stormy autumnal clouds*

Poem: Niall Age 9



## Sue Says...

*When in doubt  
look intelligent!*

*The older you get  
the better you get  
- unless you are a  
banana!*

*The human eye is the  
fastest muscle in your body -  
hence the expression "in the blink of an  
eye". We blink more when talking and less  
when reading - the reason why we get  
tired reading.*

*I am always in front of you but you  
can never see me. What am I*

Answer:  
the future

# USEFUL CONTACTS

## ALLOCATIONS

Devon Home Choice  
(council house) Register  
and Applications, Garages  
and Mutual Exchanges

[HousingAllocations@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:HousingAllocations@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
01395 517469



## BOOK A COMMUNITY CENTRE

Hire an EDDC community centre  
for events and meetings

[adminhousingssupport@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:adminhousingssupport@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
01395 571696 or 01395 571756

## COMMUNITIES TEAM

Get involved with your housing service  
and community development

[tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
01395 517 453

## ESTATE MANAGEMENT

Tenancy management and  
antisocial behaviour

[estatemangement@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:estatemangement@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
01395 571755

## HANDYPERSON SERVICE

Provides an experienced  
tradesperson who can  
do free\* minor repairs  
or improvements  
to tenants' homes

[handyperson@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:handyperson@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
01395 517458

\*if eligibility requirements met



## HOME SAFEGUARD

Support for vulnerable people or our  
24 hour community alarm system

[homesafeguard@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:homesafeguard@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
Regarding alarm queries 0330 678 2381  
Emergency out of hours 0330 678 2382

## HOUSING OPTIONS

If you know someone who is homeless  
or threatened with homelessness, they  
can make a homelessness application by  
Calling 01395 571660  
emailing

[housingoptions@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:housingoptions@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
or visiting our offices in either  
Exmouth Town Hall; 9am – 4pm  
or Blackdown House Honiton; 9am – 1pm.

## HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

Enquiries, new claims and  
existing customers

[counciltax@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:counciltax@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
01395 517446

## MISSED BINS, WASTE COLLECTIONS

Complaints and requests  
for new or replacement  
recycling boxes

[csc@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:csc@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
01395 571515



## RENTAL

Rent accounts and paying rent  
for housing and garages

[housingrental@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:housingrental@eastdevon.gov.uk)  
01395 517444

## REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Report a fault or request  
a repair or adaptation

Visit our website

[www.eastdevon.gov.uk/repairs](http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/repairs) and click  
request a repair to your home

01395 517458



HOUSING  
MATTERS

WINTER 2024



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