A new home for Poppy

Changes to bin collections  Helping the homeless  Growing for gold!

www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing
Welcome to the spring edition of Home Matters

At last spring has arrived. The days are getting warmer and the nights are getting lighter. Although it seems like only yesterday we were enjoying the festive season we’ve already had a busy year so far.

Our homelessness team worked tirelessly through the cold snap to ensure some of our most vulnerable residents had safe, warm accommodation during the winter nights. See page 10 for information about how the team worked with local charities to ensure rough sleepers were given help and support during this crucial time.

This edition we also take a look at one of the Brayshaw bungalows, a purpose built property for one of our families. Turn to page 4 to find out how their new home has had a positive effect on family life. We also have news from our neighbourhoods, including some excellent community spirit in Rawmarsh, led by one of our residents John Nixon. John and his community group went above and beyond to ensure an area of green space was protected from exploration. You can read more on page 6 about the group’s efforts and how they brought their community together. Remember, you too can join in with local groups to make a positive impact in your area. Find out more at www.rotherham.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement.

And finally, with summer just around the corner it’s time to start thinking about dusting off your lawn mower and getting your gardens ready for the annual Garden Competition. The competition is open to all Council tenants and leaseholders so why not show off your green-fingered skills?

Best wishes,

Councillor Dominic Beck
Cabinet Member for Housing
Rotherham Council

DO YOU WANT TO BUY A NEW HOME?

In Rotherham we have brand new houses available on shared ownership schemes in Maltby, Rawmarsh and Broom – with more developments on the way! Come along to this information event to find out more about the exciting new developments and chat to our shared ownership experts.

To find out more about the event visit www.rotherliving.co.uk

Shared Ownership Exhibition
New York Stadium
Thursday 30 May 2019
5pm to 8pm

If you want to get a foot on the housing ladder but you are struggling to find an affordable home, shared ownership could be for you.

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A DAY IN THE LIFE

...of Sam Kendall
Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Representative

In this issue, we caught up with Sam, a Libraries and Neighbourhood Hubs Representative, based at Riverside Library. Sam joined the Council last year and since then has helped countless residents to apply for Universal Credit online.

Sam is one of a number of staff who work in the Council’s libraries, supporting customers who may not be digitally savvy or don’t have their own computers to be able to get online.

Sam tells us: “With so many of our bills and payments now accessed online, we are seeing more and more people coming in for help accessing online payment systems, and this has increased even more since the introduction of Universal Credit.”

He added; “Anyone is free to turn up, and there is no need to book. We provide one-to-one support with Universal Credit applications and can help customers through the registration process.

We can also help with setting up email accounts if people don’t yet have one.

“As well as helping people to register we can also explain any of the more complex questions on the form, show them how to scan documents and help to book appointments with any other organisations the customer may need to speak to such as the Job Centre.”

But it’s not just Universal Credit applications you can get help with. Sam and his colleagues can help with a whole host of online transactions including setting up Council Tax payments and Housing Benefit applications, plus any other digital queries you may have. Many of our libraries also have free weekly IT classes for those who want to improve their digital knowledge. Sam added; “The best part of my job is helping people.”

To access our free IT support, drop in to your local library!

BENEFIT CHANGES TIMETABLE – ARE YOU READY?

Although some changes to Universal Credit will happen quickly, others may be introduced gradually over several years. Below are changes taking place over the next few months. Please note that these changes may be subject to further change.

**APRIL 2019**

**Work Allowances** are the amount of your earnings from employment that you are allowed to keep before it is taken into account as income for Universal Credit. These will increase by £1000 for the year.

**APRIL 2019**

**The National Living Wage** will increase by 4.9% to £8.21 per hour. There is more information about the National Minimum Wage on the gov.uk website.

**MAY 2019**

**Couples** where one partner is above Pension Credit age and the other is below will no longer be able to make a new claim for Pension Credit. Instead they will have to claim Universal Credit.

Find out more and get prepared at www.gov.uk/universalcredit

Discover more online www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing  SPRING 2019  3
A NEW HOME FOR POPPY

Having a brand new purpose-built home is a dream for many people, but for eight-year-old Poppy it is a necessity.

Despite being born with Dravet Syndrome, a severe form of epilepsy, Poppy was attending mainstream school and living at home with mum Amy, and her mum’s partner Sam. But in 2015, a massive seizure left Poppy with a brain injury and she was unable to walk or talk.

Amy says: “We rented a private house in Thurcroft and it was absolutely fine up until Poppy’s brain injury. When she left hospital, she was given a specialist bed which we had to keep in the living room, so we all lived out of that one room for about five months. We had a hoist but the room was so narrow, especially with the bed in there, that there was no room to turn it around, and we couldn’t get through doors very well because they weren’t disabled access doors. We couldn’t bath Poppy, so we had to take her to Bluebell Wood Children’s Hospice once a week to use their facilities. We ended up sleeping on the floor because we didn’t want to be upstairs whilst Poppy was downstairs.”

Staff at Sheffield Children’s Hospital helped Amy and Sam apply for a specialist home to help meet Poppy’s needs. Fortunately the Council was in the process of building four new adapted bungalows for people with disabilities. The ‘Brayshaw Bungalows’ were named after former housing repairs manager, John Brayshaw, who came up with the innovative way to fund the project through efficiency savings on housing repair projects.

Amy said: “We applied for one of the new bungalows. When we were offered it, we snatched their hand off!

“Helen from the Council dealt with all of the adaptations; she liaised with everyone to get the tracking for the hoist in place and made sure everything was right, like the bath, rather than a shower to help with Poppy’s movement disorder.

“We couldn’t wait for the house; we used to drive up each week while it was being built to see how much further it had come along!”

The family moved in June 2017 and Amy says Poppy has now completely settled in. “Poppy has her own bedroom now, with the tracking hoists. We’ve got a massive back garden with a summer house and Lay-Z-Spa.

“It’s nice being open plan so we can do everything together, like make dinner, and Poppy can be involved. If this house had not been available, I really would not like to think what we would have done. We couldn’t have wished for anything better than this.”
SPRUCEING UP OUR NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRES

Neighbourhood Centres are communal facilities, usually located within an aged persons housing development. The centres are a focal point for residents and an area for them to use for activities, meeting new people and enjoying themselves.

York Gardens Neighbourhood Centre at West Melton is one of 15 centres that have been refurbished over the past three years allowing for more comfortable surroundings for residents who use it. More centres are planned for refurbishment works later this year.

If you would like to get involved at your local Neighbourhood Centre email customerinvolvement@rotherham.gov.uk or call 01709 822100.

HAVE YOUR SAY...
ON AREA HOUSING PANELS

Area Housing Panels provide a great opportunity for tenants to work with the Council on issues that matter to them, including the quality of our services, our performance and how we can continue to improve. Panels are supported by an annual budget which is used to make improvements within our neighbourhoods. Area Housing Panels are just one of a number of ways that you can have a voice in how our services are developed and delivered. We would love you to get involved in your local Panel and the activities they undertake so get in touch to find out more.

To have your say about the future shape of Area Housing Panels please visit www.rotherham.gov.uk/tenantinvolvement

HELP US TO COMBAT LONELINESS

The causes of loneliness are varied and include social, mental, emotional, and physical factors. Loneliness is complex and unique to each individual and as such preventing and treating loneliness can vary dramatically.

As a Council we are keen to understand the views and experiences of our tenants who have experienced loneliness or social isolation, or have seen a family member, neighbour or friend go through this experience. Your thoughts and experiences will help us to address loneliness in the borough alongside our partners.

If you are happy to share your thoughts on what helped, or might help people in similar situations please email councilhomes@rotherham.gov.uk

Discover more online www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing
Residents of Rawmarsh and Parkgate are making the most of a local beauty spot after a community event, led by event organiser John Nixon, shone a light on the hidden gem.

**Can you tell us about your community group?**
I’ve been part of the Rawmarsh and Parkgate Friends of Green Spaces group since it formed in 2017. The group was initially brought together to help keep the area clean and tidy, with myself and the other group members spending a couple of hours each week out and about picking up litter and fly-tipping around Rawmarsh and Parkgate. I think it’s fair to say we’re all very much a dedicated bunch and we venture out come rain or shine (and occasionally snow!). Since we started the group nearly two years ago we’ve collected 2,000 bags of litter.

**How did your role evolve?**
One of the groups regular litter picks was on a former spoil tip called Green Hill, also known as ‘Banana Tip’ or ‘Banana Plantation’ due to it’s unusual shape. During the summer of 2018, the area was subject to multiple arson attacks causing myself and another resident to patrol the area, sometimes up to three times a day. It was really important to me to protect the land from further damage, so when I heard of plans to survey the land as a potential source of construction materials I knew I had to do something to protect it for the local community.

**How did you get the community involved?**
Myself and another resident created a petition against the plans and went door to door to speak to other residents about the proposed plans, compiling signatures of those who were against it. I felt it was really important to raise awareness that the space was there for people to visit and before long the whole group was on board to get more people visiting the area. We thought a lantern parade would be a good way to get everyone to come together and get involved.

**Was the parade a success?**
Working with the support of the Rotherham Federation, the group held craft workshops for families to make lanterns, while other group members organised a leaflet showing photos of the vast array of wildlife inhabiting the area. The event was a huge success with 85 people joining in the walk and many others helping out, from serving hot chocolate to decorating the woods. It was very magical, the children didn’t want to take the lanterns down at the end.

**Are the plans still going ahead?**
Thankfully, plans to explore the site for construction materials have now been dropped, which is fantastic news. People have got in touch to tell us they’re disappointed they missed out on the parade so we’re planning to do another within the next year, as well as an Easter treasure hunt and other events. We hope that the events help local people, children and families appreciate the space, and in turn treat it with respect. Anyone can get involved; it’s about the community owning the project and helping to set up the events and activities, so that everyone can make the most of Green Hill.
Many of you will have heard of Rotherham Federation, but do you know what they do and how they can help support you and your community?

Rotherham Federation provides support to groups, helping them to make a difference in their community. It can help both new and existing groups to widen their involvement into their community as well as supporting them in applying for funding bids and implementing new policies.

The Federation also provides services to all Rotherham Council tenants to make sure they are properly consulted with on decisions made about housing services. Its Tenant Scrutiny Panel provides an opportunity for tenants to really make a difference by giving them the power to hold their landlord to account and helping tenants to work together to make changes.

In each edition we’ll be keeping you up-to-date with the Federation’s latest projects and news which this month includes:

**THURCROFT BIG LOCAL**
A group of Thurcroft residents known as the Thurcroft Big Local Community Partnership continues to deliver its Big Local Plan. Now into its seventh year the group, with the support of the Federation and Big Lottery funding, will continue to increase community engagement and improvements within the village including litter picks, skip days, advice sessions and activity fun days.

**VOICES AND CHOICES**
The Federation has secured funding for a follow-up project to its hugely successful Voices and Choices project which, enables people living in some of Rotherham’s most deprived neighbourhoods to shape their community. The new project, More Voices and Choices, will listen to residents living in East Dene, East Herringthorpe, Masborough and Dinnington about changes they want to see happen and help them move these changes forward.

**WELCOME PHIL**
Last month saw Steve Ruffle bow out of his role as Rotherham Federation’s Chief Executive Officer after 14 successful years. But as Steve enjoys his retirement you can be rest assured he has left the Federation in safe hands as Phil Hayes takes up the mantel. Phil is keen to build upon the excellent work that Steve has undertaken and further strengthen and develop Rotherham communities.

For all the latest information about Rotherham Federation including how you can join a local group and make a difference to your area visit www.rotherhamfederation.org

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**TALK TO US**

If you are feeling that low where thoughts of worthlessness, self-harm or suicide cross your mind, or you are worried about somebody else, it’s important to know there is always someone to talk to. Whatever you are going through, you can contact the Samaritans free of charge at any time, from any phone on 116 123.

You can also reach them locally on 01709 361717.

You don’t have to be suicidal to call them for help and advice.
ENTER OUR
GARDEN COMPETITION 2019

Spring is here! It’s that time of year again when we launch our annual gardening competition. We’re inviting all of our tenants and leaseholders to enter the popular contest to show off their gardens.

THE CLOSING DATE
FOR ALL ENTRIES IS
FRIDAY 28 JUNE, 2019.

This year we have two new categories:
- best young gardener (aged under 25)
- best pollinator friendly garden (to encourage bees and butterflies to visit your garden).

Plus our usual categories including:
- best first time entry
- best multi-use garden
- best balcony, patio or small space
- best garden
- and the Mayor’s choice category.

We have prizes of £50 in high street vouchers which can be won for each category and the overall winner will receive £200 in vouchers.

All shortlisted entrants will be invited to the awards ceremony which will take place on Wednesday 18 September at Clifton Park Garden Building and Courtyard.

Calling all horticulturalists...

Have you ever been to a horticultural show and thought “I could do that”? Then why not try your hand at entering at Rotherham Show this year! Even experienced exhibitors had to start somewhere, so give it a go and be part of Rotherham Show’s 40th year celebrations.

The show will be held in Clifton Park on Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 September.

For more information about entering the Horticultural Show, please give the Rotherham Show team a call on 01709 822453 or email them at lcsadmin@rotherham.gov.uk.

Enter online at www.rotherham.gov.uk
e-mail. jessica.sarracco@rotherham.gov.uk tel. Jessica on 01709 822100
# CHANGES TO HOUSEHOLD BIN COLLECTIONS

Most residents should now have received their new pink-lid general household waste bins as changes to collections have been rolled out across Rotherham.

The changes will mean every household has additional space to recycle with more overall space in their bins than they had before.

Recycling will be introduced to residents who live in a flat or area of high density housing over the course of the next six months.

Your new pink lid bin will be used for general household waste, while black bins are now for recycling plastic, glass, cans and tins. Green bins will continue to be used for recycling paper and card.

Your collection day won’t change and your general household waste will still be collected every fortnight in the new pink-lid bins. However your recycling bins will now be collected every four weeks instead of fortnightly. Please ensure you check your new calendar to make sure you are putting out the right bin on the right day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BLACK BIN</th>
<th>GREEN BIN</th>
<th>PINK LID BIN</th>
<th>BROWN BIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Recyclable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recyclable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Non-recyclable</strong></td>
<td><strong>Recyclable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Plastic bottles</td>
<td>✓ Paper and cardboard</td>
<td>✓ General waste</td>
<td>✓ Flowers and plants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Plastic pots, tubs and trays</td>
<td>✓ Newspapers and magazines</td>
<td>✓ Food waste</td>
<td>✓ Garden prunings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Glass bottles and jars</td>
<td>✓ Leaflets and junk mail</td>
<td>✓ Plastic bags and film</td>
<td>✓ Grass cuttings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Tins, cans and foil</td>
<td>✓ Catalogues</td>
<td>✓ Nappies and wipes</td>
<td>✓ Hedge clippings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Metal aerosols (empty)</td>
<td>✓ Envelopes and greetings cards (no glitter)</td>
<td>✓ Vacuum cleaner waste</td>
<td>✓ Twigs and thin branches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓ Shredded paper (not bagged)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ Pet bedding</td>
<td>✓ Bark and wood shavings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ Paper cups and plates</td>
<td>✓ Plant compost (small amounts only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓ Real Christmas trees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WHAT CANNOT BE PLACED IN YOUR BLACK BIN**
- ✓ General waste
- ✓ Plastic bags and film
- ✓ Window or Pyrex glass or drinking glasses
- ✓ Crockery
- ✓ Light bulbs*
- ✓ Paint tins*

**WHAT CANNOT BE PLACED IN YOUR GREEN BIN**
- ✓ Garden waste
- ✓ Drinks cartons and Tetrapak
- ✓ Wallpaper
- ✓ Items contaminated with food

**WHAT CANNOT BE PLACED IN YOUR PINK LID BIN**
- ✓ Hot ashes
- ✓ Electrical items, batteries and light bulbs*
- ✓ Paint tins*

**WHAT CANNOT BE PLACED IN YOUR BROWN BIN**
- ✓ Food waste
- ✓ Cardboard or paper
- ✓ Rubble, stone or bricks
- ✓ Turf and soil
- ✓ Large branches

*Please take these items to your nearest household waste recycling centre. These are located at Car Hill at Greasbrough, Lidget Lane at Bramley, Magilla at North Anston and Warren Vale in Rawmarsh.

Discover more online www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing  
SPRING 2019
You don’t have to go far in Rotherham to find families who have lived in the same street, some in the same house, for most of their lives. And for newer residents many will find themselves living alongside good neighbours within strong communities.

Managing 20,500 homes, the Council knows the importance of having a place to call home. But for a small percentage of people life is much more complex and stability is something hard to keep a hold of. Homelessness, or the risk of being homeless, is real for some people.

We provide services for homeless people and rough sleepers and we remain committed to developing services to ensure we help those most in need. As well as tackling the symptoms of homelessness our services provide advice and support, and promote the importance of health and wellbeing. We will address this in the Homelessness Prevention and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2023.

Over the winter our homelessness team worked closely with community volunteers to help rough sleepers into safe and warm accommodation, both temporary and permanent.

One successful initiative was the partnership between South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, Rotherham Council, Independent Contractor Security Ltd (ICS) and Framework that saw a Rotherham fire station being used as a night shelter.

The Council works closely with Shiloh, the police and voluntary organisations to ensure there is no need for anyone to be sleeping rough in Rotherham. Advice sessions take place in various locations, including three times a week at Shiloh, to engage with people in a place they feel comfortable, and offer help and support to prevent them from sleeping rough. We would encourage anyone who is at risk of sleeping rough to contact our team for assistance.

Anyone who is sleeping rough or anyone who wishes to alert the Council to someone sleeping rough out of hours can call 07748 143 170. In addition to this people can access the out-of-hours service free of charge via one of two digital pods in the town centre.

Pictured: Staff from Housing Services with Elected Members and volunteers.
**KEEPING YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOME**

All rented Council properties are required by law to comply with a range of safety standards and we are committed to ensuring all properties are fully compliant with these standards and legal regulations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW WE KEEP YOU SAFE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GAS SAFETY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We service gas appliances (e.g. gas fires and boilers) every 12 months or on change of tenancy, to make sure appliances are burning correctly and are not producing or leaking carbon monoxide.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELECTRICAL SAFETY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical fixed wire tests are carried out in all properties every five years or at the change of a tenancy, improving electrical safety standards in residents’ homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEGIONELLA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We ensure water systems are flushed regularly and we change shower heads in all empty properties to minimise the risk of bacteria building up. New tenants are also given guidance about legionella and how best to prevent and minimise any risk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire assessments are carried out in communal areas or common parts of buildings to identify and minimise possible fire hazards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FIRE SAFETY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smoke detectors are fitted in all our properties. These are checked annually during heating inspections and during the five yearly electrical tests to ensure they are in full working order. Missing or damaged detectors are replaced immediately and any detectors that are close to their expiry date are replaced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>COMMUNAL SYSTEMS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communal systems installed within our community centres, tower blocks and group dwelling complexes are serviced every six months and tested weekly to ensure the systems are working correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIFT SAFETY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We service all stair lifts, hoists and passenger lifts in properties twice a year to ensure passenger safety.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>AUTOMATIC DOORS AND GATES</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These are inspected on a six monthly basis. All Bamford Doors fitted on blocks of flats are covered by a contract which covers all repairs, re-oiling of parts and checks on the closing mechanism of the device.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**POLICE ALERTS**

*SYP Alerts is a messaging system brought to you by South Yorkshire Police.*

By registering with SYP Alerts, you can choose to receive news and appeals, local crime information and/or prevention advice – direct to you by email, text or voice message.

Registering for alerts is completely free and once you have signed-up, you can chose how you want to receive the messages and what you want to receive messages about.

**Sign-up now at www.sypalerts.co.uk**

Discover more online www.rotherham.gov.uk/housing  

SPRING 2019
If you do need to speak to us urgently the following numbers are available.

**TELEPHONE**
- Housing Enquiries and Repairs: **01709 336009**
- Community Safety and Street Scene: **01709 336003**
- Council Tax and Benefits: **01709 336007**
- Children’s Social Services: **01709 336080**
- Adult Social Care (Single Point of Access): **01709 822330**
- Homelessness Team (Out of Hours): **07748 143170**

**DID YOU KNOW?** You can also visit [www.disabledgo.com](http://www.disabledgo.com) to find out how accessible over 700 venues are across the borough. From wheelchair access to menus in Braille the handy online guide provides you with information to maximise independence and choice when visiting Rotherham.