

Wellbeing 21

News, information and advice for Oldham residents

In September, we celebrated the opening of the Communal Bungalow on Brown Edge Road as well as the Communal Gardens at Violet Hill Court.



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AROUND THE SCHEMES



At **Chew Vale**, residents came together to celebrate the 90th Birthday of one of their beloved residents, Edith Newton. Edith has shared stories of her childhood during the Second World War, where she can recall the use of ration books, black-outs and the requirement to carry gas masks at all times! Edith's birthday party was held in the communal lounge, and a great time was had by all!

Both **Hopwood Court** and **Throstle Court** enjoyed a musical performance in their communal lounge.



Back in September **Walton House** hosted a Macmillan Coffee Morning with many a prize to be won and raised an incredible £1183.61! Well done to all involved, and thank you to Ann Thorley who helped to gather prizes.



Residents at **Brown Edge Road** got into the spooky spirit for their Halloween party! **Thank you to Bob Renshaw for the pictures.*



In October, residents at **Springlees House & Dunsford Court** enjoyed a very informative coffee afternoon with the local fire service.

There was also some spooky goings on at **School House Flats** on the night of Halloween! Residents dressed up in their best Halloween costumes and enjoyed a spread of hotdogs and home-made cakes. A good time was had by all as they played 'Play your cards right' and card bingo. There was also a raffle held on the night with all proceeds being donated to the Alzheimer's society.



Violet Hill Court welcomed in resident's families and the local community for some Halloween pumpkin-carving fun!

Throstle Court hosted a 70's night in their communal lounge which was organised by one of their residents, Martin. Residents arrived in fancy dress and enjoyed a quiz, with prizes for the best dressed! Various Hollywood stars were in attendance; Olivia Newton John, Tina Turner and Cher to name a few...



Well done to Tina Turner (Sandra) and Cruella De Vil (Margaret) for finishing 1st and 2nd with their costumes! And a big thank you to Martin for hosting such a fabulous event which all the residents thoroughly enjoyed!



Official Openings

Towards the end of September, we had a very busy week of official openings!

The first of the openings was at **Brown Edge Road**, with a celebration to mark the completion of a renovated extended bungalow for residents to use for their social activities and events!

Residents were invited into the lounge for a delicious buffet lunch, and enjoyed a jazz musical performance.

Also in attendance was a number of visitors from the Oldham Retirement Housing Partnership, the Housing 21 Board, a number of Housing 21 members or staff and Councillor Shah, Leader of Oldham Council, who cut the ribbon.



Next was the official opening of the new gardens at **Violet Hill Court**. This project was resident led and centred on a make-over of the original garden area as well as two additional new garden areas for residents to enjoy!

Guests included Oldham Councillor Peter Dean, Oldham Council officers, Housing 21 members of staff and a number of students from a nearby high school who regularly attend Violet Hill Court and have formed lasting friendships with the residents. Over 40 residents were there for the ribbon cutting ceremony, and then went on to enjoy a lovely afternoon tea and musical performance. The gardens are there for all residents to enjoy, and will continue to provide great delight by brightening up the communal space.



70th Wedding Anniversary

On 26th December 2023, George and Margaret Chapman will celebrate their 70th Wedding Anniversary! They married in 1953 at Oldham Registry Office, while George was on leave from the RAF; perfect timing for the couple as George was posted to Singapore shortly after! They share a wonderful life together, with 2 children and 2 grandchildren and are looking forward to celebrating with them, along with many other family and friends, on 28th December. From all at Housing 21, we would like to wish George and Margaret a very Happy Anniversary and we hope that you enjoy your party and celebrations!



OVER TO YOU

Orange October

Throughout October, Housing 21 decided to raise money for Macmillan and Breast Cancer UK in support of our friends, family and colleagues who have been affected by the disease. Across Housing 21 over £3,300 was raised for the two charities, with an enormous £850 contribution from Oldham!

Residents at Old Mill House and Brown Edge Road held a table top sale to raise money while Chew Vale residents dedicated their Halloween Party to the fundraiser. Hopwood Court, Springlees & Dunsford Court and Millgate residents all got involved by hosting a coffee morning while residents at Violet Hill Court and School House flats opted to meet up and wear orange! Both Throstle Court and Tandle View Court residents also got involved with the fundraising, as did staff in the office who got together for a breakfast and wore orange!

Thank you to all who took part and supported the fundraising effort! All donations have been added to the JustGiving page which was set up by the organiser.



Fab Neighbour Awards 2023 Housing 21

This Autumn, we once again ran the Fab Neighbour Awards where we invited you to nominate a fellow Housing 21 resident who you feel deserves recognition for their help and kindness towards neighbours. Overall, we received 14 nominations; 5 of whom were winners who received a certificate and prize. Other entrants will receive a highly commended certificate to demonstrate our appreciation for their kindness as neighbours.

Below is a list of the winners, as well as a selection of the comments which were made about them:

Winners	Comments
Hilda Clarke, Lynmouth Avenue	“Every week, Hilda calls at over 20 bungalows to collect bonus ball money from us - £19 per week is saved so we can have a Christmas party” “She is brilliant”
Joy Powell, Trinity House	“Goes the extra mile for anyone who needs anything” “Joy is a really good asset to Trinity House and a loyal friend”
Jean Crowther, Chew Vale	“Jean is a sunny happy person and will do anything to help whenever she can. I think she is a fab neighbour in every way. I am proud to call her a friend too” “Don’t know what I would do without her, nothing is too much trouble”
Janet Fagan, Wildmoor Avenue	“She goes out of her way to help” “Lovely lady” “While the bus strike was on, Janet was taking people to the shops and hospital”
June Wynn, Throstle Court	“June is at the heart of Throstle Court” “She is always ready with a smile and her laugh is infectious when cheering people up” “What a lovely person, does everything for everyone”

Well done to the winners and thank you to all who sent in a nomination – It was great to read about all of the wonderful neighbours!



Did You Know? – Direct Debit Draw

For the last several years, we have held a Direct Debit draw at the Tenant Conference in November. We draw numbers which then correspond to our list of residents who have a Direct Debit set up, and the winning number receives £250!

The winner of this years draw is Evelyn from Charles Morris House!

If anybody who is currently paying their rent via an All Pay card would like to switch to Direct Debit, please speak to your Local Housing Manager or phone our Customer Service Team (number on the back page).

Maybe you could be our 2024 winner!



**Community
Trust**



Back to the Future Sessions

**In collaboration with Oldham Athletic Community Trust and Active Through Football.*

After the success of the previous round of Back to the Future sessions, Holly returned to Millgate and School House Flats for further sessions in the communal lounge in October, November and December. Residents enjoyed playing with Nintendo Switches, darts, card games and board games as well as using the opportunity to come together in their groups and socialise. All residents are welcome, so if anybody is interested please come along! And stay posted, hopefully we will bring more fixtures to you in the New Year!

Ringing the Changes! – A Staff Update

Since the departure of Kerry Whittle earlier in the year, Chris Dale has now been appointed as the new Property Services Manager.

Chris Lewis has also been appointed as Contracts Manager, covering the secondment of Asif Aslam.

We would like to welcome them both to the team!



IMPORTANT MESSAGE ABOUT YOUR BOILER

Housing 21 have received several calls from tenants who have no heating or hot water. When our contractor, Dynamic, have attended they have identified that the boiler fuse has been switched off.

We ask that tenants **DO NOT switch the fuse spur off** as this will have a detrimental effect on your boiler, potentially causing the water in the boiler to freeze. When the frozen water thaws, the damage from flooding can be severe, often requiring tenants to replace their carpets and furnishing and redecorate their property.

If you have any concerns regarding your property, please call the repairs line or speak to your court manager.

If you are struggling to keep up with your heating bills, please do get in touch on **0345 6044 447** or speak to your Local Housing Manager about our Helping Hands Scheme. We have been able to help Housing 21 tenants to keep warm this winter by supporting them with their fuel and food bills.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Dale

Property Services Manager

Update – Leaving your Property for Holiday

Following on from several instances of burst pipes last Winter, anybody who is going away for a period longer than 2 weeks is required to inform their Local Housing Manager. The Property Service Team will then arrange an appointment to drain your boiler and will then recommission it once you return. This will prevent a potential leak by removing the water which would likely freeze in extreme cold weather.

Thank you for your cooperation on this issue.



Gas Safety Checks

Every year Housing 21 need to carry a service and inspection of any gas heating or hot water system. This is very important for your safety to make sure such systems are working safely and comply with current regulations. To assist us to carry out these checks we need your help in making sure we gain access to your property, which usually takes no more than an hour to complete.

We will write to you when your service is due and set an agreed appointment date and time, and our fully qualified engineers will have full identification when they arrive at your property.

If you have any concerns regarding the annual service, please call our repairs line on 0800 032 1212.

Helping to keep you warm this winter

If you are already struggling with the cost-of-living crisis then you won't be looking forward to winter and the cost of heating your home.

We are here to help you reduce your energy bills by providing support.

Warm Homes Oldham provides a range of money saving services, measures, advice and tips – so why not get in touch?

Support we provide, includes:

- A home visit to determine and provide practical advice.

- The fitting of LED bulbs, timers, radiator foils and draught stripping.

- Giving out tariff switching advice and top tips.

- Providing energy vouchers to top up pre-payment meters and keep people on supply when they need it, subject to circumstances.

- Help with benefit and council tax issues.

- Advice on issues with energy suppliers.

- Assistance with boiler and small

household repairs, subject to meeting the criteria.

- Applications for appliances via Children in Need for vulnerable children in Oldham.

If you think we can help you out – or you know someone who might need support – contact the Warm Homes Oldham team:

E: warmhomes@oldham.gov.uk
T: 0800 019 1084

Or visit the Warm Homes section of our website
www.oldham.gov.uk/warm-homes



**Warm Homes
Oldham**

Did You Know?

Housing 21 insures your property against structural damage but does not insure your contents. During the colder and darker months, it is especially important to make sure that your belongings are covered against damage such as water damage due to burst pipes, fire, theft, and vandalism. Housing 21 now have a partnership with Royal Sun Alliance, who offer two different levels of cover. For more information on this please speak to your Local Housing Manager. Alternatively, Age UK can assist if you would like to consider different options for cover.

Housing 21

Suggestions, Comments and Complaints June – September 2023

Over the last quarter, we received one complaint which was related to Grounds Maintenance and resolved at the informal stage.

In the same period, we received five compliments. Four of these compliments were about repairs contractors and one was about a member of staff.

How to tell us what you think about the services we provide in Oldham

We genuinely welcome any feedback about our employees and services. In the first instance if you have feedback about our housing or care services you should contact your Local Housing Manager. You can write, telephone, email or speak in person to the Local Housing Manager; there is no requirement to fill in a form. More information on providing feedback and our complaints procedure is available by either speaking to your Local Housing Manager or contacting the Oldham office.

Our contact details are on the back page.





Advice from Mind for Those Struggling this Christmas

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/christmas-and-mental-health/christmas-and-mental-health/>

Christmas can affect our mental health in lots of different ways. This could be if Christmas is part of your life, or if it's happening around you. It's a time of year that often puts extra pressure on us. There are a number of reasons why you might be struggling, or just not looking forward to the season; Financial worries, bereavement, loneliness, difficult relationships, ill health, access to support services etc.

If you feel you are in this boat, maybe the below **tips from Mind** will be useful:

- **Look after yourself** – Be gentle and patient with yourself, remind yourself that Christmas won't last forever, set personal boundaries, take time out. Allow yourself to experience your own feelings even if they don't match the atmosphere around you, they're still valid.
- **Plan ahead** – Think about what might be difficult for you over this period and try to pre-plan if there is anything you can do to help. Make a list of any services that you need and their Christmas opening hours. If you are worried about feeling lonely or isolated, try to think of some activities that you enjoy to help pass the time. Maybe plan something to look forward to in the New Year.
- **Managing relationships** – Think about the boundaries you need to put in place with people, if you need to end a difficult conversation then it might be best to practice what you'll say. If other people don't seem to understand how you're feeling, you could share this with them. If there are people who you don't want to see over Christmas but you are struggling to avoid, try to think of ways to keep a distance while you're there.
- **Talking to other people** – Let people know you're struggling, it can help to talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling. You don't have to justify yourself to others but you might feel pressure to if they ask a lot of questions. It could help to tell them that certain situations are difficult for you, and tell them how they can help.
- **Coping with money worries** – It can be tough to cope with the financial pressures of Christmas, especially when so many are already struggling with the cost of living crisis. Citizens Advice, or your Local Housing Manager, may be able to help if you're struggling to pay your bills. Look for local offers or events, community centres or local charities sometimes organise low-cost events. Be open with others, it can be difficult to talk about money but being honest with those you trust can help as they may be able to offer support.

Getting Support

- Call **Samaritans on 116 123 (freephone)**, their English language line is always open and their Welsh language line is open daily from 7pm to 11pm.
- **Text SHOUT to 85258**. This is a free 24/7 crisis text service run by Shout.
- **Mind's Infoline** is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm on **0300 123 3393**. It will be closed on 25 and 26 December 2023, and 1 January 2024.
- **Age UK** can be reached on **0800 678 1602**, and their helpline is open every day from 8am to 7pm.



COMPETITION TIME!

ENTER OUR WINTER QUIZ FOR A CHANCE TO WIN A £25 ONE4ALL GIFT CARD!

Simply enter your contact details below and post your answers to –
Niamh Johnston, Housing 21, 2.06F Hollinwood Business Centre, Albert Street,
Hollinwood, Oldham OL8 3QL

The closing date for entries is Friday 26th January 2024*

NAME:

ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:

1. What do we call the state when animals sleep during the winter?

2. Which river in the UK froze during “The Great Frost”?

3. Which city hosted the 2022 Winter Olympics?

4. In the movie “The Polar Express”, where is the train heading?

5. What do we call the shortest day of the year in England?

6. It’s a popular activity in England to go to the turning on of the _____ ?
Blackpool and Oxford Street are probably the most popular...

7. In fiction, where is the land of talking animals and mythical creatures that one White Witch has ruled for 100 years of deep winter?

8. Which red-breasted bird do we commonly associate with Christmas?

9. What is traditionally hidden inside a Christmas pudding?

10. Which country provides the iconic Christmas tree in Trafalgar Square each year?

**Only Housing 21 residents can submit entries for the competition*



**WELL DONE TO SUSAN COOPER-MORRIS WHO WON
THE PREVIOUS COMPETITION!**

Housing 21

Our office address:

Housing 21
2.06F Hollinwood Business Centre
Albert Street
Hollinwood
Oldham
OL8 3QL

Email: OldhamEnquiries@housing21.org.uk
Customer Services Telephone: 0345 604 4447

OTHER USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

Repairs Line (24 hours)
0800 032 1215

Oldham Council main switchboard
0161 770 3000
www.oldham.gov.uk

Council Tax
0161 770 6622
council.tax@oldham.gov.uk

Environmental Health
0161 770 2244
environmentalhealth@oldham.gov.uk

Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction Scheme
0161 770 6633
benefits@oldham.gov.uk

Payment line
0161 770 6611
24 hour automated payment service

Registrars
0161 770 8960

Waste and recycling
0161 770 6644
waste@oldham.gov.uk

Age UK Oldham
0161 633 0213
info@ageukoldham.org.uk

Ring & Ride
0161 200 6001

Dial-a-ride
0161 633 0097

Citizens Advice Bureau
0300 330 9073
(Adviceline)

Silverline
(confidential friendship support)
0800 470 8090

NHS Advice
111

Police non-emergency
101

Oldham Community Leisure
0161 207 7000

Action Together
0161 339 2345

Oldham Library
Greaves St
0161 770 8000

Making Space
Tandle View, Royton
0161 633 2403

Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service
Book a free Home Fire Safety Assessment
0800 555 815
www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/your-safety/hfsa/

MioCare Group
0161 770 8777
info@miocare.co.uk
www.miocare.co.uk