



# Customer Newsletter



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## Platinum Jubilee Tree of Trees

In September, we were will thrilled to learn that we had been gifted one of the Queen's Green Canopy Tree of Trees, as we had been nominated by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire.

The Tree of Trees was a spectacular 21-metre sculpture featuring 350 British native trees that was erected outside Buckingham Palace as an exciting centrepiece of The Queen's Platinum Jubilee weekend celebrations in June. These trees were then gifted to community groups and organisations as a way to celebrate their work, creating a positive impact on their communities.

On a wonderfully sunny Wednesday in October, we met with the Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, Anna Turner, and Robert Bland, the Deputy, as well as Highley Parish Council and Shropshire Cllr Mark Williams, in Highley to plant this incredibly special gift which acts a superb tribute to the late Queen.

We look forward to watching the tree flourish and provide a focal point for our residents to enjoy for years to come.



As part of our continuing commitment to support the White Ribbon campaign to end violence against women and girls we have chosen a unique way to raise awareness.

Our fabulous Grounds Maintenance team, with the help of Oswestry Borderland Rotary Club, planted a 'White Ribbon' of white and purple crocuses in Oswestry. We can't wait to see what it looks like in the spring!



## Candle Safety

As the nights draw in and the festive season begins, candles always provide a lovely light as well as that little bit of extra warmth.

### Remember!

Always be careful when using candles and follow these rules

- ▶ Always put your candle on a heat resistant surface
- ▶ Never leave a candle to burn unattended
- ▶ Keep candles away from curtains or bedding or other fabrics
- ▶ Keep your candle away from children or pets
- ▶ Always put your candle out before you go to bed



We want you to be safe this winter.

## Christmas Closure

This year our offices will be closing for Christmas on **Friday 23 December at 3pm and we will reopen at 8.45am on Tuesday 3 January 2023.**

If you have an emergency during this time, please call the usual number **0333 32 12 200**. Our 24 hour emergency line will be open and available to anyone who needs it.

For non-emergency repairs, you can raise these using our website and they will be picked up as soon as offices are open again.

[www.starhousing.org.uk/repairs-to-your-home/report-a-repair-form/](http://www.starhousing.org.uk/repairs-to-your-home/report-a-repair-form/)

To make a rent payment, please call the automated phone line on **0345 678 9009**  
For Community Alarm faults please call **0300 333 6511**

As in previous years, our email inboxes will not be monitored over this period.



## HARVEST FESTIVAL

Children at St Martins School, Oswestry celebrated the Harvest Festival this year by collecting items of food for local elderly residents.

These donations were then boxed up by members of the School Council and hand delivered to the residents of Cedar Close by some of the school's younger pupils.

Here at STAR HQ we were delighted by the incredibly generous donation from the school to help some of our most vulnerable residents. We all had a very fun morning and it was lovely to watch the community's oldest and youngest residents chatting away together.



## Cheaper Broadband



Did you know that you can get cheaper broadband and phone packages? Broadband is a necessary fact of life for most households, but it can be a struggle to afford it.

**The good news is that there is help available!**

A number of companies offer 'social tariffs' which are cheaper deals for people claiming certain benefits. They can also be called 'essential' or 'basic' broadband.

If you qualify for one of the cheaper deals, there are a lot of benefits, including:



It's cheaper than a regular package



You will pay less for the initial set up



The price won't go up mid contract



You won't have to pay to end your contract

Get in touch with your provider (or even a new one) and see if you can reduce your bills.

**Money Saving Expert has more information**

[www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/broadband-and-tv/broadband-for-low-income-families/](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/broadband-and-tv/broadband-for-low-income-families/)

# Every Little Helps



We know that the cost-of-living crisis is a serious problem for many of our tenants at the moment and we want to help where we can. We have got together with some amazing partners to try and help and we are also working to support a number of foodbanks across the county.

In the Oswestry area we are working very closely with OsNosh who currently provide "pay as you feel" hot meals every Wednesday and Friday from The Centre in Oak Street, Oswestry. They also have share tables of groceries available to take home, again on a "pay as you feel" basis.

In the New Year we are going to start running cooking workshops, in partnership with OsNosh. These are designed to help you reduce your food bills and the energy needed to cook. These will take place either in our Community Rooms or at The Centre in Oswestry. We are also working with The Qube Dial a Ride who have agreed to transport tenants to these workshops.

The workshops will also make use of the "pay as you feel" food share table where you will be able to supplement your weekly shop and you will learn how to make the best use of your slow cooker. After each workshop everyone will be more than welcome to sit and eat together or even just have a cup of tea and a chat.

**If you are interested in taking part, then get in touch with your Housing Officer or email [involvement@starhousing.org.uk](mailto:involvement@starhousing.org.uk)**

We are really keen to start something similar in the Bridgnorth / South Shropshire area, but we have not been able to find a provider who can help. If you know of someone who can work with us to provide these workshops, please get in touch.



## Benches

For a long time residents in different areas across the county had been asking for more benches to go in their local areas. Having a place to sit and pass the time of day with your neighbours, somewhere where you can watch the world go by.

**Well, you asked for it so we did it!** During October we installed 15 new benches in 10 separate communities. These environmentally friendly benches are made from 100% recycled plastic and designed to last decades without rotting or splintering and won't need any maintenance.

Let's look forward to sunny weather next year so that you can enjoy your new benches.



## Rest in peace Margaret Smith

Margaret was a committed and active Area Panel member for many years. She played a big role in her community and helped us to shape our services. She was also Chair of the Oswestry Tenants' Working Group and was a key driving force to implementing change for tenants, as well as securing much needed Lottery funding.

It has been an absolute pleasure to have worked with Margaret. She was an anchor for her community and always willing to help and support anyone who needed it.

**We would like to pass on our deepest condolences to Margaret's family and friends.**



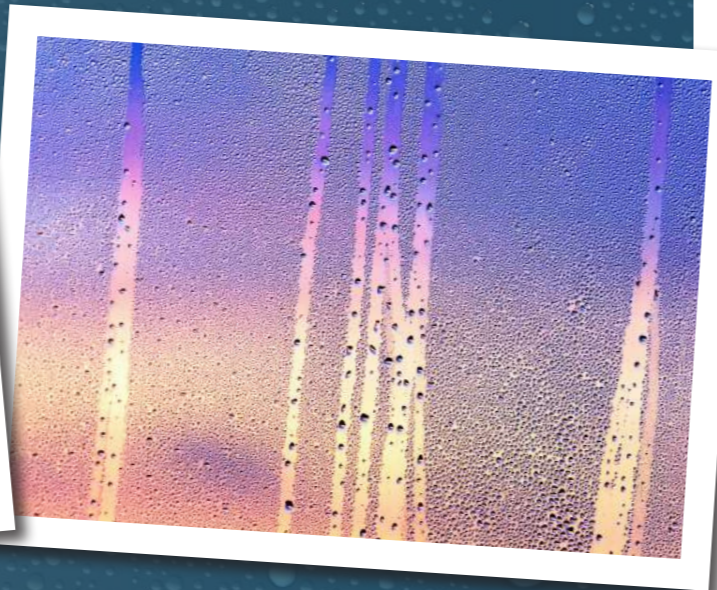
# What we expect from you

We work hard to keep your homes in the best condition we can, but it is a two way process. As a tenant there are things that we expect you to do to keep your home safe and sound – like fixing minor things like chips or cracks in the wall or damaged internal doors.

One way to look after your home is to check if your extractor fans are working. Some of the new fans are designed to be on 24 hours a day. **Don't worry – it only costs £1.75 per year\* to keep your bathroom fan on. It costs £1.95 per year\* to keep the kitchen fan on.** Having the kettle on for ten minutes a day costs an estimated £17.98 per year.\*

Keeping the fans on (or making sure they are full working order) helps to keep condensation to a minimum.

\*these prices may have increased due to changes in energy costs and inflation



Scan to check out our video on YouTube to help prevent condensation



# Work Life

During October the whole of STAR took part in the national Work Life Week encouraging staff to focus on their mental and physical wellbeing.

There were a variety of events to take part in ranging from a talk about how nutrition can help during the menopause to a Pilates lesson. There was also a talk about the Men's Shed organisation which provides community spaces for men and some relaxation sessions including Reiki and crystal therapy.



## Reporting a repair

Don't forget! You need to tell us if you need something repairing.

**You can call us on 0333 32 12 200**

You can also report a repair through the Tenant Portal or you can email us [repairs@starhousing.org.uk](mailto:repairs@starhousing.org.uk)





# MISSION FOR MARTIN

In memory of our friend and colleague Martin Whitelegg who passed away in 2021, we have completed a virtual fundraiser for Asthma + Lung (previously the British Lung Foundation).

In tribute to Martin's love for holidays, staff walked, biked and swam until we made it to a virtual Singapore, one of his dream destinations.

# WE RAISED OVER £5K

through staff sponsorship and donations from some of our suppliers and contactors.

We had a wonderful morning with Martin's wife, Glenys, where we showed her how much we raised and raised a cupcake in memory of our friend.

