

TENANT MATTERS



Summer 2018



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

JOHN'S WELCOME

MHA'S 10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

PITCH FOR YOUR PROJECT

ESTUARY VIEW FUN DAY

DADS CAN SUCCEED

AND MUCH MORE

Inside this issue...

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|--|
| 3 | John's Welcome | 26 | Life Begins Sing Along |
| 4 | 10 Years Old | 28 | Pension Credit |
| 11 | Making A Difference Awards 2018 | 29 | Winter Fun in the Sun |
| 12 | New Homes Team | 29 | Lifeboat - Here for You |
| 14 | Goodbye to Right to Buy | 30 | Engagement Programme
- June to November |
| 15 | Meet Toby Wales - Service Charge
and Leasehold Officer | 32 | Tenant Network South |
| 16 | Universal Credit - Be Prepared | 33 | Training & Skills Academy |
| 17 | Tenancy Coaches | 34 | Rise to Inspire |
| 18 | Live Chat | 35 | Performance Indicators |
| 18 | Service Testing Team | 36 | Dealing with Anti-social Behaviour |
| 19 | Fun in the Sun at The Views | 38 | Let's Go Digital |
| 20 | Pitch for Your Project | 38 | Win a £50 Voucher |
| 22 | Dads Can at the Welsh Assembly | 39 | Puzzles |
| 24 | Homeswapper | | |

If you would like this Newsletter in a different format (e.g. large print or electronically) or in Welsh please contact **Louise Davies** on **01495 761104** or email **louise.davies@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk**

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Scan the QR code to access the MHA website.



Monmouthshire Housing
Tai Sir Fynwy

10 Years Old

Our Journey

When we started out 10 years seemed a long way into the future yet it has passed in the blink of an eye. MHA has reached this point in rich health and you as tenants have played a part in helping make that happen.

Every single property has benefitted from significant improvements and there are more to come. We have built 221 new homes, and have another 500 in the pipeline.

We have helped thousands of tenants with financial advice and budgeting, we have helped hundreds of tenants either into work or developing skills to improve their lives.

We have some of the highest satisfaction rates in the country, but we won't be resting on our laurels, there is much to do and to prepare for and with your help and support we will meet all of those challenges and continue to be a strong and successful company with the tenants at the heart of everything we do.

We look forward to the next 10 years and would like to thank you all for your feedback and input to help us get to where we are today.

John Keegan
(Chief Executive)



▶ 2008

Monmouthshire Housing Association was established on 21st January 2008 following a stock transfer from Monmouthshire County Council voted by you the tenants. This allowed MHA to provide and manage affordable homes and to make improvements to achieve the Welsh Housing Quality Standard by 2012.

▶ 2009

Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) Works Began



Tenants started receiving new kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, front doors, and new roofs to improve the quality of your home.

▶ 2010

1st Making A Difference Awards

We held our 1st Making a Difference Awards which gives recognition to those tenants who make a real positive difference in their communities. It's our way of saying thank you to tenants and residents in our communities who are inspirational and can be given recognition of their commitment and dedication to helping their local community. We are now in our 8th year and the awards just get bigger and better.

People who made a difference



Community Champions

For the person who is making a real difference to their Community

The winners: Mike Logan & Mr & Mrs Moeller (2017)

Mike worked for Building Bridges in Monmouth and his passion for helping young people went beyond his working role. He supported many young people and tenants into volunteering activities so they were giving back to the community. He supported some through numerous changes including some going to university. His passion and facilitation has led to many participants supporting his working of supporting those with disabilities. He was described as a 'valiant might of change and hope'.

Mr & Mrs Moeller are active members at Old Hereford Road, despite having only moved there in March. They have already organised 2 music nights where there were between 20-30 people in attendance. Old Hereford Road has many single, isolated older people and over the years community activities have decreased. The volunteering they are doing is much needed. They have seen a need in their local community and have acted for the benefit of everyone. They are the type of people that don't expect any praise or congratulations, they just want to bring some happiness to their immediate neighbourhood.

Service Testing Team Launched



We introduced a tenant mystery shopper and reality checking team now called Service Testing Team. Our services Testers look for and suggest improvements from a tenant perspective to make the services we provide to you better. To date, 52 Service Testing Team recommendations have been approved and taken forward.

MONEY WISE

We received funding to be able to launch Money Wise. A confidential service to help and support tenants to maximise their income and reduce outgoings to help save you money. Since launching the service we have helped save tenants £618,410 on bills and debts.

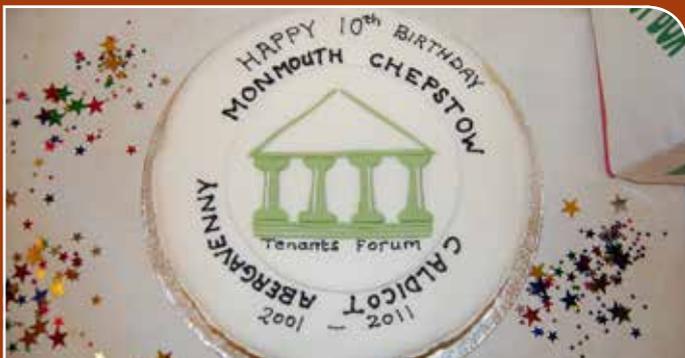
New homes built



We built our First new homes in Llanarth.

▶ 2011

Tenants Forum turned 10



The Forum's 10th Birthday celebrations followed with those tenants and staff present from the first meeting in November 2001 receiving a warm round of applause from the 60 strong members of the Forum present. One member of the Forum Michael Bennett from Llanfoist was recognised as he had only ever missed two meetings in the last 10 years.

Online repairs service launched

We launched our online repairs service to allow tenants who have access to the internet to report repairs via our website.

▶ 2012



A tenant incentive scheme 'Good as Gold' was launched as MHA felt that recognition should be given to those tenants who pay their rent on time and rarely, if ever, accrue any rent arrears.

We completed the Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) £39 million was invested in tenant's homes. 2,447 new kitchens, 2417 bathroom and shower rooms, 3141 properties rewired or upgraded, 2493 new boilers or completely new heating systems, 3719 entrance doors replaced, 1,492 properties with new windows, 485 new roofs, 167 Environmental Works Improvements, 641 shed doors replaced, 3180 external works carried out including painting.

▶ 2013

WAY INTO WORK



We launched our Way Into Work project and helped 219 people in work and 235 into volunteering. The Project aimed at young people who are not in work, education or training and also offers the chance of a two week work placement. A tenant from the project said "it was brilliant to speak to people who know how it feels to be looking for work." The course showed her how to effectively promote herself and her skills to make her more employable.



MHA Launched its trading subsidiary Capsel who provides home, property and maintenance services to people, organisations and businesses across South Wales.

▶ 2014

We started helping tenants appeal against benefit sanctions.



Monmouthshire Housing Association's trading subsidiary, Capsel, completed its flagship multi-million pound housing development Bowen Gardens, Monmouth.



Cwrt Dewi Sant Development was specifically built for people affected by bedroom tax. Mrs Marlog said "Moving here was a fresh start for me and being able to live comfortably. My bills are much more manageable and less of a worry. Although my property is smaller I have more space and my grandchildren love coming over".



Dads Can is a lottery funded project to support dads living in Monmouthshire and Newport.

▶ 2015

New schemes



Trevor Bowen House & Skenfrith Court open

Monmouthshire Homesearch completed it's 100th cycle



Way Into Work won the Youth Excellence Award



Anne Kidman MHA Tenant

I couldn't be more pleased with the care and attention you have given me. I have to confess I thought long and hard before I could agree to the changeover from Monmouthshire County Council, you promised so much and it all sounded too good to be true.

I come from an age when 'The Council' was our security and we had nothing else to support us. But your pitch was just too enticing and I took the plunge and voted for the change. What a good decision it was and how glad I am that it came about.

The changes you have made to my home have made a vast difference to my wellbeing, not least my beautiful shower room - which being less abled - has made things so much easier for me.

I am a member of Raglan Coffee and Computers group and it was through this whilst attending an award ceremony that I met some of your wonderful people and had my eyes opened to the very worthwhile projects that you are involved in.

This also led me to being asked to be a Service Tester for you and it has been great fun and also very instructive working with the lovely Emma and Lorna.

As you'll see, I have much to thank you for... you have enriched my life on so many levels and for that I can only say a very big...

THANK YOU!

▶ 2016

Our Pathway to Careers scheme was launched

PATHWAY TO CAREERS



Margaret Harris wins TPAS Tenant of the Year



New void standards introduced



External environmental works start

Bowsher Court opened



▶ 2017

3
tenants turned
100



Old School Close & Llys Cadoc open



We were named:

- 1st in Wales
- 2nd best housing association in the UK
- 3rd RSL in the UK (24Housing)



Oakley Way refurbishment began

Before



After



Sylvia Meredith MHA Tenant

I've been an MHA tenant for 9 years. My move was for health reasons. I had lived in my previous house for almost 40 years in a very rural area, which I become very custom to. So when I moved I expected it to be very difficult for me, but MHA couldn't have been more empathetic, sensitive and helpful.

From the time we were shown the bungalow it was made clear that renovations were needed! Explanations were given to alterations needed - an old fireplace to be removed and refurbished, the bathroom was to be renovated and financial help was given for decorating materials. The workforce who carried out the work were courteous and professional, we were given exact time scales, which helped enormously.

The life changes that have happened since I moved have been positive and boosted my confidence. At first I was offered afternoons out at St Cadocs, which involved nail manicure, bus trips out organised by MHA, warm and well in cold weather talks at different venues, with offers of transport. I then became more involved in MHA services, with invites to attend involvement groups, such as the Tenants Forum and MHA Service Testing Team - which I'm now a member of and thoroughly enjoy!

With the backing of MHA we have now formed a computer club which is very successful, we are a constituted group and have a small not for profit business account. This has enabled us all to keep abreast with skills, whilst meeting our social needs.

**Congratulations to MHA -
Happy 10 year Anniversary!**



Emlyn Lunn MHA Tenant

Wow, ten years! An inspiring, empowering ten years, and still going strong. Previously I lived near Trellech in a very rural area, very quiet with no buses but then following my stroke I applied to move and now live in Chepstow in better suited accommodation for my needs. It's very spacious and have a lovely garden which keeps me busy.



Little did I think on that wet October morning at Bridges Community Centre in Monmouth would lead to a journey of new friendships, both with staff members and tenants with similar ideas. From that first meeting I knew I could contribute in some way. Starting with the better build group, landlord and tenants came together with a single aim - How do we provide comfortable, safe homes with all the amenities that tenants expect in this day and age. It was a success.

From this led to other interests. I joined the Service Testing Team, Your Homes Work Group and various other groups within MHA and later on was selected to join the scrutiny panel.

Many friendships have been formed over the years not least the engagement team, who have inspired confidence and enthusiasm for all aspects of social housing. The training and conferences I have attended have led to a greater knowledge as well as an increase in self-confidence and self-worth.

Ten years and the service has improved year on year, from the repairs service to answering the telephone. The ability of the staff and tenants to communicate with each other is a refreshing change.

MHA not willing to stand still has embraced social media engaging with tenants from all age groups with its own facebook page, twitter and the virtual voice page for tenants to have their say from the comfort of their own home.

Not content to sit back the investment in new homes continues. Not just investing in bricks and mortar but people's lives.

Here's looking
forward to the next
ten years.



Nominations open 1st July

- Neighbour from Heaven
 - Community Champion
 - Inspirational Young Person
 - Outstanding achievement in self-development.
 - Most inspirational Journey
 - Best group, project or initiative
 - Outstanding contribution to MHA
 - Volunteer of the Year
 - Have you or others in your community benefitted from a local group or business that started up in your area? This could be a local café, crèche, play scheme, hobby or learning group, charity or support group
 - Has someone inspired you with their commitment, ideas, positive attitude or achievement?
- Take this chance to say thank you to someone who has made a difference to you!

To nominate someone you know for an award, just call the Engagement team for a chat about the person you want to nominate or for a nomination form. We want to know how their actions have had an impact on themselves, you and the wider community.

- Do you know someone who regularly goes out of their way for others?
- How have they gone above and beyond?

Call: 01495 767179

Text: 07841 183893

Facebook: MHACommunityBuzz

Email: engagement.team@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk

Nominations close on Friday 7th September.



New Homes Team

Did you know that Monmouthshire Housing completely changed the way we work with our new tenants in 2016?

We found that new starter tenants were more likely to end their tenancy than other tenants, and that putting in extra support right at the start made a huge difference to new tenants.

So, MHA created a specialist 'New Homes' team, raised our repair and decoration standards to the highest in Wales and created a brand new service model for starter tenants.

We now work intensively with future tenants before they move-in, to identify support needs, manage tenancy risks and build positive relationships to reduce tenancy failure rates. We have made more than 140 referrals to specialist support services for our tenants since we set-up and currently work with 230 starter tenants across MHA.

Thanks to feedback from starter tenants, who agreed to be interviewed about what they would change, drawing on best practice from around the country and coming up with our own ideas we have more than halved our starter tenant arrears and raised tenant satisfaction levels for people moving into their first MHA home.



But self-praise is feint-praise and so...

- In November 2017 we were thrilled to hear that we had won the 'People's choice' award at the Welsh Housing awards- the biggest award of the night and tremendous recognition of all the hard work of the staff.
- In March 2018 our auditors gave us a green pass and commended us for three items of 'best practice' about the way we work, that they would recommend to other landlords.
- We have also seen some amazing successes with a starter tenant successfully standing to become an MHA Board member and another starter tenant come runner up in the 'most inspirational journey' at the 2017 Making a Difference awards.
- Other social landlords are now asking to visit us - to learn the 'secrets' of our success

- Since we started asking tenants to gauge their own housing journeys, we have seen tenants report tremendous improvements in their health and wellbeing, after they move into their new MHA home.
- Best of all, we now have 96% of MHA starter tenants converting to an assured tenancy after 12 months!

A huge thanks to all of the tenants who helped to shape what we do, the Chartered Institute of Housing members who voted the MHA new homes team the best of the best, and the dedicated staff who deliver our award-winning new service every day!

Goodbye Right to Buy



Abolition of the Right to Buy and Associated Rights (Wales) Act 2018

Your tenancy rights are changing because of a new law that has been recently passed by the National Assembly for Wales.

What does the new Act mean?

The new Act received Royal Assent in January 2018 and will end the Right to Buy, Preserved Right to Buy and Right to Acquire for all MHA tenants.

The aim of this new Act is to protect social homes for future generations and meet local housing needs.

When will the Right to Buy & Right to Acquire end?

For Homes built before 24th September 2018 the rights will end on **26th January 2019**.

For homes built after 24th September 2018 the rights will end on **24th March 2018**.

Do I have the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire?

It depends on the type of tenancy that you have with MHA.

Enhanced Assured or Secure Tenancy: If you have one of these tenancies then you probably have the preserved Right to Buy your home. This is because you were formerly a council tenant, before the council transferred your home to MHA in 2008. If you live in sheltered or specialist housing, then this is usually exempt from the Right to Buy.

to Buy



Assured Tenancy: If you have an 'assured' tenancy then you may have the Right to Acquire if you:

- Have lived in your MHA home for more than five years
- Do not live in a rural area that is exempted from the Right to Acquire
- Live in a general needs property (not sheltered or specialist housing)

Starter or Shorthold tenancy: If you have one of these tenancies then you do not have the Right to Buy or the Right to Acquire your home.

What do I do now?

If you do not wish to exercise the Right to Buy or Right to Acquire your home then you do not need to do anything. You will continue to have the same occupancy rights that you had before the Act, except for the Right to Buy/Acquire.

For those who wish to exercise their Right to Buy or Right to Acquire you should complete an application form before the deadline. You can request an application form and further information by contacting MHA on **0345 677 2277**.

Summer 2018



10 Years Old

Meet **Toby Wales**

My name is Toby Wales and I am your new Service charge and Leasehold Officer.

What I do

I calculate and review your service charges. These charges would cover communal electricity, communal lighting, grass cutting and the cleaning of communal areas. You pay for these service in addition to your rent.

I'm also the point of contact for Monmouthshire Housing's leaseholders.

What can I do for you?

Now that service charges have been de-pooled and are itemised separately to your rent. I will be looking carefully at the service charges you pay, make sure they are fair and that you are being charged correctly for the services you receive. I'm always available to answer any questions or queries you may have relating to your service charges.

I do the same for MHA's leaseholders, in addition to collecting their service charges and answering wider queries in relation to their properties and leases.

How can you contact me?

For any queries you can contact me on **01495 745746** or email toby.wales@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk

UNIVERSAL CREDIT:

BE PREPARED



1. **Stop & think**
2. **Understand what Universal Credit (UC) is**
3. **Know when it's going to hit you**



1. **Six weeks = no cash**
2. **Manage your debts & start budgeting**
3. **Get online**



1. **Open a bank account**
2. **Start saving**
3. **Tell us as soon as you are asked to apply for UC**



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TENANCY COACHES

What we do

The tenancy coaching service within the Support & Wellbeing department supports and empowers MHA tenants at risk of losing their tenancy. The coaches use a person centred approach, working towards the tenants agreed identified goals.

By equipping people with vital skills and building on personal strengths the coaches aim to stop problems from recurring or escalating. We provide information and practical support to assist people to develop their skills and access other specialist services in their local communities.

We pride ourselves on our strong relationships with external agencies, which ensure that the support is tailored towards meeting each tenant needs, achieving their personal goals for sustaining their tenancy and improving their overall health and wellbeing. Our support can range from money management, practical property management to intensive support with complex problems such as hoarding.

MR X'S JOURNEY

Mr X suffers from Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) which leaves him with low energy and severe joint pain. He struggles to maintain his property and as such his flat has a build up of belongings, rubbish bags and is very unhygienic. After a visit from a gas engineer from MHA a concern card was received with concerns about the property and the tenant's wellbeing. Shortly after, a referral to the Tenancy Coaches was made. Mr X has previously received specialist help for his mental health, to try and tackle the issues with his property, but he has struggled to apply the theory from these sessions into practice. After a couple of visits from his tenancy coach it was identified that Mr X did not have any attachment to any of the built up items in his flat. The reason that the situation had escalated so much was due to the fact he had low energy and no means to get rid of the items.

After identifying the barriers a support plan was put in place, where Mr X would start to sort through the items. In the meantime, the tenancy coaches would arrange a de-clutter day where a skip would be ordered to dispose of the clutter in a quick and efficient way. After the de-clutter was completed Mr X noticed that his mental health had improved and realised the strain that it was causing him. He was then able to invite his family to his property after years of not allowing them to visit him.

Your Tenancy Coaches:

chanelle.baker@
monmouthshirehousing.co.uk

07815 440072



nadine.fletcher@
monmouthshirehousing.co.uk

07718 656240





Live Chat enables people to talk directly with MHA's contact centre staff via the MHA website.

The Live Chat system gives you the chance to talk to a member of staff if you are out and about, doing other things or if you're unable to make a phone call. It also enables MHA staff to deal with multiple enquiries at once and answer certain questions more effectively.

Live Chat launched towards the end of 2016 and over the last 12 months has helped MHA deal with nearly 1,000 enquiries on subjects from rent to repairs.

Live Chat Champion Rhiannon Pearce said:

"Live Chat has been a big success since it launched and we are now getting more and more enquiries via the system as people become more used to asking questions online.

"Lots of people prefer typing messages to calling up. So if you are looking for answers to questions, but don't have time to make a call, you can 'Live Chat' us at your own leisure, whilst doing other things. Go on – give it a go!"

The Monmouthshire Homesearch team are also now able to deal with Live Chat enquiries directly, as a large number of Live Chat enquiries have been to do with Homesearch.



Are you keen to influence and improve the services MHA provides to its tenants?

If so, the Service Testing Team is the one for you!

The Service Testing Team is a vibrant group of mystery shoppers that test MHA services from the point of view of you, the tenant, helping us to monitor and improve the services we provide. To date, the team have been busy reviewing the Rent Payment Line, Informal Complaints process and Homesearch - with many more checks in the pipeline.

As a member of the team you will learn a variety of transferable skills, make new friends and hopefully have fun! But don't just take our word for it, check out the Service Testing Team video on MHA's website to hear from current members about what being part of the team means to them! The Team meets every few months and you can attend to suit you. Transport can be provided or travel expenses reimbursed, with a complimentary buffet and refreshments provided in recognition of your contribution.

If you too are inspired at the prospect of shaping the services that matter to you, and you are an existing MHA tenant, then just email Lorna lorna.selmer@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk or Emma on emma.tapper@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk or call 01495 745767/ 01495 761142 for an informal chat.



Fun in the sun at the Views

On a lovely spring day the April Showers held off in Caldicot and the residents from Estuary, Denny, Moorland and Railway view came out in force to enjoy a community fun day organised by MHA and Space Saviours.

MHA worked with Space Saviours to hold a fun day in the local neighbourhood to create community spirit for the residents in this area. The children who came out to the event bounced and baked the afternoon away and got involved in all the free activities on offer, such as the bouncy castle, Engagement sports like archery and golf, children's soft play area and Natasha Bragg's Flying Pig Cookery School cake decorating stall, with all activities being very popular!!

Refreshments were offered with bacon sarnies, tea, coffee and cold drinks were handed out to the attendees, who enjoyed a bacon roll with a cuppa while the children played with the activities.

The aim of the day was to create community cohesion and interest in regard to the green playing fields within the community. Space Saviours have highlighted that the green fields are a fantastic asset to this area and could be utilised, so tenants were consulted on what they would like to see happen on the green field.

Space Saviours will now be gathering the results and will be taking the relative actions coming from the consultations.

Watch this space!



PITCH FOR YOUR PROJECT

Fifth round of grant funding donates £12k to local groups

In February we held the fifth round of Pitch for Your Project grants at the Glen-yr-Afon Hotel in Usk. The “Judges Den” style events give local groups and charities the chance to pitch for a share of £12,000, twice a year towards a local community project!

Since starting in 2015 the events have grown in popularity with eight groups shortlisted from 21 applications. The judges’ job was made extremely difficult by the groups, all of whom had innovative ideas to provide much needed support across the county and a passion that left the judges extremely impressed. No-one went home empty-handed - here’s how the deserving groups got on:

The biggest portion of funding was awarded to Ready, Steady, Go, a group set up to encourage autistic children to develop to their potential. The judges loved this new idea as it was one of the first they’d heard about that encouraged autistic children in a structured way that the children could relate to. Ready Steady Go were given a cheque for £5000.

Top Stop Coffee shop went away with a well-deserved cheque of £1,750 to continue to provide a relaxed venue in Chepstow for young people with and without additional needs to socialise and enjoy new activities such as creative and craft activities, dance and performance and sports. The judges were impressed at how the café was run by a group of young people, the variety of experiences offered and that the group was inclusive to all.



Four groups were awarded £1,000 each:

Abergavenny Crafty Women: The judges were pleased to welcome back Crafty Women and wanted to support the group's ongoing development:

Children's Services: The panel was also thrilled to support Children's Services again this year to provide equipment for older children during visits with their parents;

Monmouth Self Help and Friendship Group: A fantastic voluntary group who provide peer support at regular meetings for people managing their mental health; and

Dance Blast: A local dance company who want to expand dance classes to people with limitations to their physical mobility, one young dancer said that dancing made her "feel like she didn't have a wheelchair and experience a world of freedom and possibility."

2nd Caldicot Scouts: Their bid for some new tents was well received by the judges who were impressed at the commitment of the scout leaders and the Scouts and Cub Scouts themselves to promoting and instilling new skills. The Scout Group was awarded £750.

Little Life Savers: Finally, £500 was awarded to a group of local GPs under the banner of national charity, Little Life Savers who aim to encourage children's confidence and skills in life saving by delivering basic life support.

The next round of Pitch for Your Project will take place on the 3rd August 2018 where £12,000 will be available. If you have a project that needs funding, come and show your passion to our panel. Visit our website for information and an application form www.monmouthshirehousing.co.uk/pitch-for-your-project or call the Engagement Team on 01495 767179.



at the Welsh Assembly

Our Dads Can team along with a small but excited group of dads were invited to the Welsh Assembly in March. The invitation, sponsored by Nick Ramsay, AM included the opportunity for the dads to meet and chat to other Assembly Members about the work of the project.

The Dads Ben Scott, Nevin Ryan, Josh Pitt and Kim Holly (representing Sam Edwards who was working) welcomed members of the Children, Young People and Education Committee who listened to stories and presentations from the dad's own experiences as well as hearing about the achievements that help dads achieve, change and improve their lives.

46 dads
have improved
their career
opportunities

In the last year,
35 dads reported
they now add value
to their family

94%
dads feel
more positive
about their future,
confident & better
supported

Members were enthralled by Nathan's story, read by Ben and were moved by his determination to succeed as a father with the help of Dads Can. They were impressed with the work that Dads Can does to combat the challenges that often exist as a result of disadvantaged backgrounds and how the dads we work with are pushing barriers and boundaries to gain work, learn new skills and be better dads.

Rebecca Evans, AM, Minister for Housing and Regeneration attended and was inspired to learn from the dads about the activities they take part in and how they help to expand their skills and give them their own motivation to achieve more.

Members learned about plans for the future, including goals to include more men across south Wales and promote and provide more support services, including legal support. Last year 16 dads gained access to their children, thanks to the free legal advice Dads Can was able to offer via solicitors, Reuben, Lewis O'Brien and ETLP Solicitors.

Nick Ramsay and his colleagues in the Welsh Government were so impressed with the project that Nick will be debating the role of Dads Can at a Short Debate on 23rd May 2018!

Dads Can also got all toggged up for the UK Housing Awards Finals in London on 2 May. Having been shortlisted among finalists for the Promoting Equality and Diversity awards, Dads Can caught judges' attention for helping



promote services and support for men and father figures. They were worthy runners up to Queens Cross Housing Association but had an amazing time at the awards.

*Well done to our
dads and Dads Can!*

We saved over
£20,000 in legal
fees for our dads

16 dads gained
access to their
children



CRONFA
LOTERI
FAWR
BIG
LOTTERY
FUND

ARIENNIR GAN Y LOTERI
LOTTERY FUNDED



HomeSwapper

The easy way to mutually exchange!

There are 500,000 homes already registered across the UK, check out some of the current MHA tenants looking to swap with you and register your interest to mutually exchange your tenancy now at www.homeswapper.co.uk

	<p>Rother Avenue, Abergavenny Property: 4 Bed Semi Detached Tenancy type: Assured Rent per week: £95 Swap: Bulwark, Chepstow</p>		<p>Western Avenue, Chepstow Property: 2 Bed Terraced Tenancy type: Assured Rent per week: £96 Swap: Bulwark, Chepstow</p>
	<p>Ysguborwen, Abergavenny Property: 1 Bed Flat / Studio Tenancy type: Assured Rent per week: £79 Swap: Monmouth, Cwmbran</p>		<p>Caemawr Road, Caldicot Property: 2 bed Semi Detached Tenancy type: Assured Rent per week: £95.28 Swap: Monmouthshire, Weston Super Mare</p>
	<p>Middle Way, Chepstow Property: 4 Bed Semi Detached Tenancy type: Fixed Term Rent per week: £100 Swap: Monmouthshire</p>		<p>Oakley Way, Caldicot Property: 2 Bed Flat Tenancy type: Secure Rent per week: £98.17 Swap: Hayle</p>
	<p>Grove Avenue, Llanfoist Property: 2 Bed Flat/ Studio Tenancy type: Assured Rent per week: £93 Swap: Abergavenny</p>		<p>The Avenue, Govilon Property: 2 bed semi-detached Tenancy type: Assured Rent per week: £95 Swap: Abergavenny, Govilon</p>

The above property details were correct at time of print.



HomeSwapper

The **easiest** way to swap your social home



Join over **500,000 social tenants** at
www.homeswapper.co.uk



The Sound of Music

Life Begins Sing Along

In some cosy communal rooms on several afternoons across Monmouthshire you may have heard the sound of singing, laughter and joy ringing through the air. This is because Trevor Bowen House, The Reddings, Plas Mawr and Old Hereford road communal rooms have had live performers attend to spread the joy of music!

Monmouthshire Housing worked in partnership with the charity Music in Hospitals to deliver four live performances for residents in these complexes, who travelled the county to meet other residents living in other complexes. The event aimed to reduce social isolation, loneliness and improve the wellbeing of MHA residents.

The events were a huge success with tenants laughing, chatting and singing from start to finish. A lot of music brought back happy memories for a lot of people which created a lot of conversations and the sharing of stories. It was also a chance for tenants who knew each other from previous engagement activities

to reignite their friendship, "It's nice to bother with different people and see old friends that I haven't seen in a long time. I know these two ladies from Plas Mawr as they were on Senior Voice like I was" (Mary Williams regarding Ruth James and Connie Fisher).

The events were resounding successes with friendships made, smiling faces and with the aim for more events to be organised. The laughs echoed, the stories of old flowed and the songs of the past rung around these 4 complexes with music being the cause of it all.

**We
gained 4
volunteers
from the
events**

**A total of
43 people
attended the
events**

**There were some lovely
comments from the event:**

"We want all the ladies from Usk to do things with us more, they are lovely women and a real good laugh."

- Jackie Parry

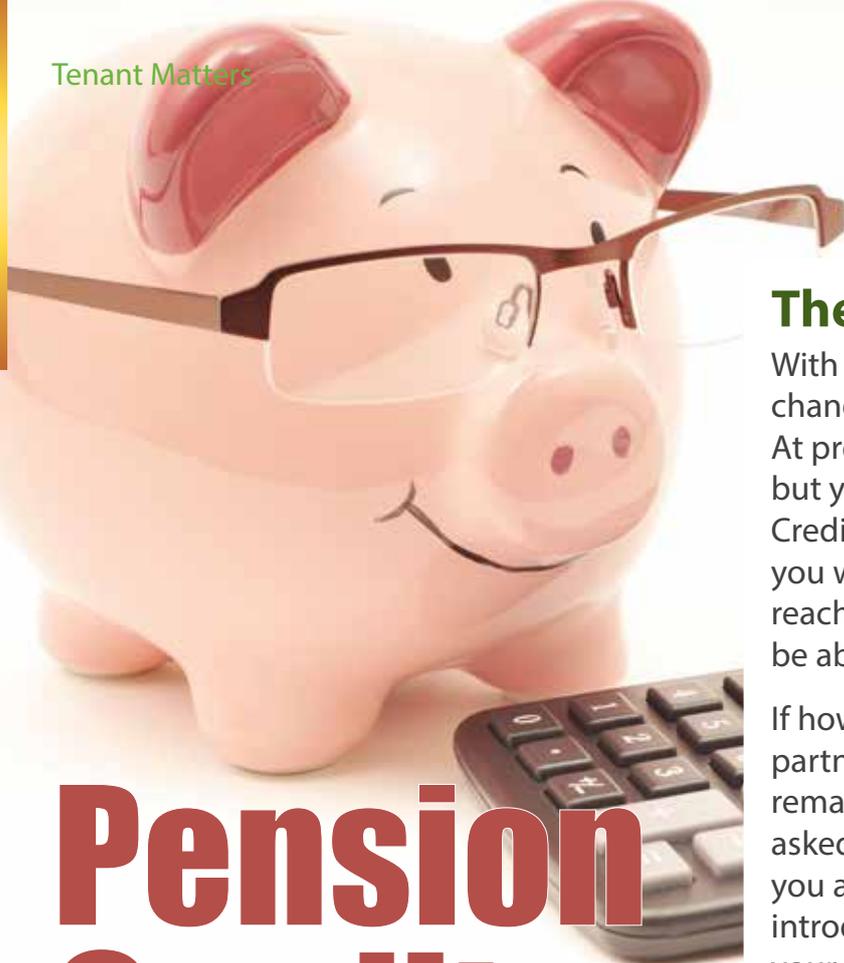
"The musician was really good and played lots of songs I know and enjoyed." - **Olive Powis**

"The musician was good and entertaining, such a laugh."

- Betty Southern

"One of the most enjoyable afternoon's I've had in a long time, I thoroughly enjoyed it." - **Joan Parker**





Pension Credit

Pension Credit is an income related benefit that guarantees most people of pension age an income and is made up of 2 parts:

1. **Guarantee Credit** – £159.35 for a single person or £243.25 for couples; and
2. **Savings Credit** – an extra payment for people who saved money towards their retirement i.e. a pension.

Eligibility

To qualify you or your partner must have reached qualifying age and live in the UK. The qualifying age for Pension Credit is based on the current state pension age for women, which will rise to 65 in November 2018.

Although the Savings Credit element is currently being phased out, it is still possible to qualify if you or your partner reached state pension age before April 6th 2016, or were already receiving Saving Credit prior to this date.

The effect of Universal Credit

With the roll out of UC there will be some changes to the eligibility criteria for couples. At present if you are of Pension Credit age but your partner is not, you can claim Pension Credit. But once Universal Credit is rolled out, you will only be able to claim once you both reach pension age. Until this time you will only be able to be eligible to apply for Universal Credit.

If however you currently claim and your partner is below the pension age, you will remain on Pension Credit and will not be asked to change to Universal Credit. But if you are part of a mixed-age couple after the introduction of Universal Credit, you will lose your entitlement to Pension Credit and will have to claim Universal Credit as a couple instead.

Pension Credit is more generous than Universal Credit and there could be a big difference between the amounts you would receive through Pension Credit compared to Universal Credit. It may be worth couples with one person over Pension Credit age at present checking their entitlement before Universal Credit come into force.

Pension Credit can open the door to qualifying for other benefits such as help with council tax, Cold Weather Payments and Housing Benefit. The earliest you can apply for Pension Credit is 4 months before you reach qualifying age. Claims can be made any time after you reach this age but can only be backdated for 3 months. There is nothing to lose from putting in a claim and you could potentially have a lot to gain.

If you would like more information on Pension Credit or get help applying speak to someone on the Money Wise team on **0345 677 2277** or call the Pension Credit Claim line on **0800 99 1234**.

Winter Fun in the Sun

Back in February the tenants and residents of Oakley Way and Oakley Close in Caldicot had fun in the winter sun at their half term fun day. As part of the redevelopment of the area MHA staff and residents were able to discuss plans for the green space at the rear of the flats and pick up issues with refurbishment programme. The event was really well attended with over 70 people engaging in the fun. There were lots of activities for children too including soft play, cake decorating, Fruit Kebab making and sports taster sessions.



If you would like to organise a fun event in your area speak to the Engagement Team at engagement.team@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk or telephone 01495 76767179.

Lifeboat - Here for you

Based in Mardy Park Resource Centre, The Well-being Life boat, a volunteer led group, aim to support people within the local area with mental health issues. The group meets once a week on a Monday evening and hold activities in a relaxed environment so that people could come along take part or chat to one of the trained volunteers about their problems in a safe, private environment away from the group. The focus of the group is all around wellbeing and helping people achieve a balanced healthy life.

The group sessions are free (there is a five pounds one off registration), and offers counselling, creative sessions, Reiki, therapeutic massage and have digital equipment, which was purchased through Pitch for your Project funding. This is for improving people's wellbeing and for people to upskill and achieve their goals.

The group has made massive progress since September 2017 and have been super busy helping people back into the community, whether that be employment, volunteering or

simply socialising out in public. The group has set up a 'Just Giving' page in order to continue their hard work.

Marcia and Michelle of The Well-being Life boat always state that "When people attend for support, which they receive and then you see their life improve so much so they don't need to attend any more, we know they can now take ownership of their well-being and continue on their journey".

"Supporting our community is important to us, and after 2 years we are still learning and working to improve what we do. Feedback from people who attend our sessions help us to better the support we offer".

Many people come and go, which is fine for The Well-being Life boat, because they know through feedback and the support given by them, if people do not attend then their well-being is in a much more positive place.

If you are interested in learning more about Lifeboat then please contact Marcia or Michelle on lifeboatmhs@gmail.com

Engagement Programme: June – November 2018

June

Dads Can Paintballing

Cardiff
8th June 2018
09:00 - 17:00

Dads Can Forest School Fun

Deri View School,
Abergavenny
6th & 13th June,
16:00 - 18:00

Monmouth 10 Year Celebration

Carbonne, Monmouth
23rd, 11:00 - 13:00

Paediatric First Aid

Wellfield Hall -
Abergavenny
28th, 10:00 -
16:00

Overmonnow School Summer Fete

Overmonnow Primary
School, Monmouth
29th, 12:00 -
16:30

July

Ten Year Celebration Fun Day

Caldicot
26th July 2018 11:00
- 15:00

August

Dads Can Folly Farm Visit

Pembrokeshire
2nd, all day event

Caldicot Town Centre Fun Day

Caldicot Town Centre
3rd, 10:00 - 16:00

Pitch For Your Project

Glen Yr Afon, Usk
3rd

Dads Can Family Fun Day

Cwmbran Boating
Lake
18th, all day
event

Ten Year Celebration Event

Chepstow
16th, 11:00 - 15:00

Community Lunch

Oakly Way,
Caldicot
24th

All dates subject to change.

September

**Brecon
Beacons Trip**
3rd, all day event



**Ten Year
Celebration
Event**

Wyesham -
Monmouthshire
23rd, 11:00 - 15:00

**I can Cook
- Cooking with
Kids**

Bulwark Community
Centre Chepstow
23rd, 14:00 -
15:30

**Coffee
and
Computers**

ACE, Hillcrest Road -
Abergavenny
30th, 14:00 -
16:00

October

**All about
Engagement**

ACE - Abergavenny
8th, 10:30 - 12:30

**Paediatric
First Aid**

Caldicot
10th, 10:00 - 16:00

**Dads Can
Family
Half Term Trip**

Llanant Farm, Raglan
30th, all day event

**I can Cook -
Cooking
with Children**

Bridges Community
Centre, Monmouth
31st, 10:00 - 12:30

November

**Making
a Difference
Awards**

Cwrt Bleddyn,
Usk
8th



To find out more or to book your place, please
contact a member of the team:

0345 677 2277

engagement.team@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk





MHA's new Tenant Network took place on Saturday 28th April at the Severn View Social Club, Caldicot with the event being attended by over 200 tenants and residents. MHA tenants were able to get advice about June's roll out of Universal Credit in Monmouthshire, as well as contributing to consultations about MHAs current grass cutting service and wider estate management issues, MHA's performance, the development programme at Oakley Way, support Services and opportunities with the Engagement and Working Skills Wise Teams.

Partner organisations such as Ready Steady Go, Flying Pig Cookery School, Volunteering for Wellbeing and Crafty Women ran information stands and workshops, which together with Kids activities including face painting, bouncy castle, soft play, Pizza making, Puppeteer and sports taster sessions made the event a massive success with many tenants commenting how informative and entertaining the day was.

A similar event will be run in the North of the County in September, so keep a look out for details coming your way in due course.

Some of the comments from tenants and residents...

"Had a lovely time today, very well organised event which was very informative on the upcoming Universal Credit changes"

"Had a lovely day and learned a lot today!"

"What a wonderful day, children especially loved it. Thank you so much for putting this all on for families to enjoy"

"Great to see such amazing community spirit and MHA bringing everyone together!"

MHA's Training & Skills Academy

MHA has launched its very own Training & Skills Academy programme for 2018/19. We are committed to supporting both tenants and residents to increase their knowledge, confidence and skills.

All MHA tenants are eligible for free training: you can book onto courses by completing the academy registration form which is online at www.monmouthshirehousing.co.uk

If you are not a tenant of MHA, training places can still be offered if places are available, although a small fee covering costs might be applicable. If you would like more information about training opportunities at MHA please go to www.monmouthshirehousing.co.uk or contact the Engagement Team 01495 767179 or email engagement.team@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk

The courses available are:

Course Title	Date	Venue	Delivered by	Time
Influencing Decision Makers	Tuesday 12 th June	MHA HQ Board Room	Rob Carey	10am - 1pm
Be a Dementia Friend	Friday 22 nd June	Davies Court, Communal Lounge, Chepstow	Rob Carey	11am - 12noon
Paediatric First Aid	Thursday 28 th June	Wellfield Hall, Abergavenny	Amanda Sweet Training	9.30am - 4.30pm
Understanding Social Housing	Thursday 12 th July	MHA HQ, Board Room	Rob Carey	10am - 1pm
I can Cook - Cooking with Children	Thursday 23 rd August	Bulwark Community Centre, Chepstow Centre	Natasha Bragg, Flying Pig School	2pm - 4.30pm
Coffee and Computers	Tuesday 28 th August	ACE Abergavenny,	Rob Carey	2pm - 4pm
Equality and Diversity	Thursday 20 th September	Wellfield Hall, Abergavenny	Sally Strong Training	10am - 1pm
Join In - It's all about Engagement	Monday 8 th October	ACE, Abergavenny	Rob Carey	10.30am - 12.30pm
Paediatric First Aid	Wednesday 10 th October	St Marys Church Hall, Caldicot	Amanda Sweet Training	9.30am - 4.30pm
I Can Cook - Cooking with Children	Wednesday 31 st October	Bridges Community Centre, Monmouth	Natasha Bragg, Flying Pig School	10am - 12.30pm
Basic Food Hygiene	Thursday 22 nd November	St Michaels Centre, Abergavenny	Natasha Bragg, Flying Pig School	10am - 4pm
Coffee and Computers	Thursday 31 st January, 2019	Bridges Community Centre, Monmouth	Rob Carey	2pm - 4.30pm

Travel Expenses

We will always pay your out of pocket expenses and we will make the necessary transport arrangements to get you to your training course.

Childcare or Carer Costs

We will support you by covering costs to allow you to participate in training. The carer must be approved by MHA in advance.

Refreshments

Light refreshments will be made available at all courses and full day courses will include a free lunch.

Accessible Venues

We have made sure that all our venues are fully accessible and disability friendly.

Be Inspired

Rise 2 Inspire is Coming...

Did you know that MHA have just been awarded funding from Comic Relief Active Ageing grant to enable us to deliver our **Rise 2 Inspire** project for the next 2 years?

- MHA are one of the 17 projects receiving funding which was whittled down from a whopping 379 projects UK wide
- This project will engage with people aged 55 plus who are isolated from their communities in order to remove barriers and build self-confidence so that can share their life skills, experience and knowledge with others

Rise 2 Inspire will focus on what is strong and not what is wrong

The Rise 2 Inspire facilitator will work within the Support & Wellbeing team, and will work with MHA's tenants (focusing on older people aged 55 and over) within community hubs as a launch pad where we have the skills, experience and knowledge people are willing to share. We will support and work with tenants who are willing to share and work with a 'buddy', who could be a volunteer or part of the project team, to build confidence and remove barriers, to empower individuals to reconnect to the wider community to share their skills, knowledge or experience. This will be through group work, group activities, and 1-1 support.

Come and be part of this exciting journey and new project at MHA. People involved will hopefully have improved their mental health & wellbeing, increase quality and

quantity of their social connections, and develop an enhanced sense of purpose and empowerment.

How may the project develop?

This all depends on you, on your skills and interests. An example of possible projects are below, but of course this depends on what skills and interests are in communities (as every person and community is different) – the opportunities are endless:

- **Literacy activities** – this could include book clubs or reading groups
- **Digital activities** – develop digital skills i.e. Facebook, history projects, better banking, better fuel offers
- **Cooking activities** – sharing skills and knowledge in regards to better nutrition, group shopping trips, sharing of special offers, cooking for each other, group dining
- **Health & Wellbeing** – sporting or wellbeing activities, supporting positive physical and mental health/wellbeing
- **Volunteering activities** – possible opportunities to "befriend" or "connect" someone to the wider community to offer practical help or friendship/company

If you want to come on this exciting journey with us, please get in touch... connecting people and creating opportunities.

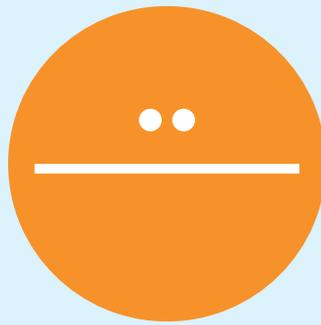
If you would like more information then please contact Tracey Breadmore-Lammas on T.Breadmore-Lammas@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk

Performance Indicator - Quarter 3 - 2017/18

(01 October - 31 December 2017)



On or Above Target



No Change



Below Target

MHA use a traffic light system to easily identify whether we are performing well or not in certain areas (above).



-0.52% of rent is owed by current tenants to MHA.

Target - 1.3%



86.13% of tenants were satisfied with the repair work done in their property.

Target - 98%



95.96% of repairs were completed right first time.

Target - 95%



There were **16.76** of new ASB cases per 1,000 tenancies.

Target - 18 cases



96.62% of repairs appointments were kept.

Target - 97%



75% Customers satisfied with the outcome of their complaint

Target - 70%



98.57% of emergency repairs were completed within target.

Target - 98%



61.54% customers satisfied with the handling of their complaint

Target - 80%



88.59% of urgent repairs were completed within target.

Target - 98%



90.1% of tenants satisfied with the overall services provided by MHA (taken from tenants annual Satisfaction Survey 2017/18).

Target - 90%

DEALING WITH ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Behaving in a reasonable and considerate manner is a requirement of anyone living in an MHA property and every single tenancy agreement we have contains a clause which sets out this requirement. Those who cause nuisance and annoyance to others by their behaviour or who use their property for an unlawful purpose may be in breach of their tenancy agreement. MHA offer the facility for those who are suffering from the effects of

the anti-social behaviour of others to report the matter to us for investigation and possible sanction should the breach of tenancy be proven.

Our New Homes Team investigate low level anti-social behaviour which involves a tenant within the first twelve months of tenancy, our Neighbourhood Team deals with other low-level anti-social behaviour and we have a specialist community safety team who deal with higher level, persistent cases which may require court action against the person responsible or a tenancy.

For those suffering the effects of anti-social behaviour, in some circumstances depending on the nature of the behaviour, thought should be given to having a quiet word with the person causing the problem. Often, they may not realise that what they are doing is causing a problem and will act to rectify the issue. For those cases where that approach fails or is not appropriate, New Homes or Neighbourhood



Respect Your Neighbourhood



Heddlu
Gwent
Police



officers will deal with complaints in a timely manner, where there is evidence to support the claim.

Noise nuisance is the biggest category of complaint that MHA receives, generally due to inconsiderate behaviour of others by playing music or TV's too loudly, loud voices or banging doors. These are generally dealt with by some form of mediation between the parties and advice being given. In extreme cases we may use specialist equipment to record loud noise which can then be used for enforcement action.

There are some cases where all informal attempts to address poor behaviour don't work and in a minority of cases legal action is needed either against the person behaving badly by securing a court order called an injunction to prevent them continuing the behaviour or against their tenancy to either to reduce their security of tenancy or to take away the tenancy altogether in extreme cases. Over the past two years alone, the Community Safety Team have secured eleven injunction orders against individuals and taken thirteen actions either to end tenancies or reduce their security. Much of the information used in these cases is information shared by partner agencies like the Police and local council who have a similar interest in addressing anti-social behaviour. In some complex cases a multi-

agency approach has been found to work well where information, resources and powers can be shared in addressing a particular problem.

As well as taking enforcement action, the Community Safety Team at MHA does a good deal of preventive work and where there is a need has erected CCTV cameras and additional lighting. These are a visible deterrent and effective in preventing poor behaviour in an area. The Team has done some education work in local schools in relation to the impact of drugs and alcohol misuse on holding a tenancy and is currently looking at delivering education sessions in some of our sheltered schemes aimed at preventing the exploitation of vulnerable people.

Any resident experiencing the effects of anti-social behaviour is able to report their complaint to us in person, by telephone, via our online reporting system which is on the **MHA website, Livechat, Facebook, Twitter** or in writing at our headquarters in Mamhilad.



Let's Go Digital

Our new online community



VIRTUAL VOICE
YOUR LANDLORD - YOUR SAY

This is a place where we offer MHA tenants the chance to give their views on our services, discuss with other tenants and help us make better decisions. All from the comfort of your own home. With regular competitions you'll be rewarded too!

Let us know what prizes and incentives would encourage you to get involved? This could be anything from Shopping Vouchers, Cinema Tickets and local shopping vouchers?

Register now by logging onto Facebook and searching MHA Virtual Voice

If you would like further information you can contact Carol Smith MHA Engagement Officer on 01495 761114 or email carol.smith@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk

Once registered don't forget to agree to our terms and conditions.



Find us on Facebook
Search **MHA Virtual Voice**



Send us your email address to be in with a chance of **winning a £50 voucher!**

If you are an MHA tenant and would be happy to provide your email address to us so that we can use it to contact you, let us know by:

- Emailing insight@monmouthshirehousing.co.uk
- Phoning us on **0345 677 2277**
- Direct messaging us on our Facebook or Twitter pages
- Filling in the 'update your details' form on the website

If you provide your email address to us, together with your name and address **by 31st July 2018** you will be entered in to a prize draw and you could win a £50 voucher!

We may use your email address to contact you about events in our communities, surveys and about our work.

PUZZLES

SUDOKU

MEDIUM

	1	2	3				9	5
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		8			4		3	2
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	9		7		8	3		
	3		5	9			6	
						5		6
	5	7		2		1		8
	2		6	4				

HARD

	3	5					7	1
			8					4
			3					9
				5	4			
3	9						2	
7		6			9			
1		7		6			4	
			5		2	7		
	6						3	9

WORD SEARCH

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

- avocet
- lapwing
- turnstone
- snipe
- oystercatcher
- knot
- redshank
- phalarope
- stilt
- sanderling
- greenshank
- ruff
- curlew
- dunlin
- godwit
- plover
- sandpiper
- whimbrel
- dotterel
- stint
- woodcock

KIDS CORNER



TENANT
MATTERS

COLOURING COMPETITION

DEADLINE 31/08/2018 • PRIZE: £20 HIGH STREET VOUCHER



Name: Age:

Address:

Please return completed colouring to **Jacob Richards, Monmouthshire Housing Association, Nant Y Pia House, Mamhilad Technology Park, Mamhilad, Monmouthshire, NP4 0JJ**



Congratulations to **Jenna Marie Hull (aged 6)** from **Chepstow** who won our Autumn edition colouring competition. Jenna wins a £20 highstreet voucher.