

Warwickshire
Rural
Life

The residents' newsletter for
Warwickshire Rural Housing Association

SPRING 2015

www.warwickshirerha.org.uk



Remembering Nellie

Residents in Ettington are enjoying chatting and relaxing outside their homes while remembering Nellie Rooke.

A bench was placed at the heart of the village as part of our 25th Anniversary celebrations. It commemorates Nellie who died last summer aged 92.

Nellie was born and raised in Ettington in the 1920s. She later lived in the village with husband, George, and was known throughout the community. The bench now proudly stands outside their home in Ivy Lane so all residents can meet together.

• Read more at www.warwickshirerha.org.uk

**Universal
Credit roll-out
underway**

- see inside for details

Universal Credit

It's been talked about for a long time but now it's happening – Universal Credit is being rolled-out nationally for single people making new claims.

So, what does this mean to you?

All single households have already received a letter and information leaflet from us explaining more.

Universal Credit is a new benefit for people who are on a low income or are out of work. It will help to ensure that people are better off in work than on benefits. This single benefit will replace Income Based Job Seekers Allowance, Income Based Employment Support Allowance, Working Tax Credits, Child Tax Credits, Income Support and Housing Benefit.

When can I claim?

Universal Credit is only currently available for new single claimants. If you lose your job, go straight to the Job Centre to make a claim as payments cannot be back-dated. You also need to let us know by calling

0300 123 4009.

How can I apply?

You must apply online, but your local Job Centre Plus will help you to do this or call **0345 600 0723** for help.

How will Universal Credit be paid?

It will be paid monthly in arrears from the date you submit your claim, straight into your bank account. It will take up to 6 weeks to receive your first payment.



**FOR YOUR
BENEFIT**

The roll-out has begun!

How do I pay my rent?

When you receive Universal Credit, it will be your responsibility to make sure your rent is paid in advance in line with your tenancy agreement. The easiest way to do this is to set up a direct debit from your bank account.

What if my circumstances change?

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit and your circumstances change or your rent increases you must tell your local Job Centre Plus.

Don't be afraid to ask for help. For advice and support, call the national Universal Credit helpline on

0345 600 0723

visit our website or speak to your housing officer.



NEW NUMBER

Want to speak to us? Call

0300 123 4009

You can now call one number for all your queries – and it's cheap! If you're calling from a landline, it's just the standard call cost, and if you're using a mobile, it can be included in your free minutes.

Give us a call!



Repairs reminder

If you need a repair doing, please report it straightaway by calling 0300 123 4009. Don't wait until you have a whole list of jobs to be done!

This does not apply to shared owners, who are responsible for their own repairs.

Ditch the damp

Find out how you can prevent damp and condensation in your home by visiting www.warwickshirerha.org.uk/living-in-your-home/the-property/damp-and-condensation/

There's some useful advice and top tips, plus an information leaflet to download.



Share your views

What do you think about our new website? What can we do to make it even better?

Please visit www.warwickshirerha.org.uk/website-survey/ and answer our quick online survey. All your feedback will be used to improve the site for residents.

Bursary winners

The five residents who've been awarded 25th Anniversary Bursarys are set to make a real difference to their own lives and their communities. Here we meet the first three.

Anna Harper from Harbury is helping young people with disabilities to socialise. In 2013, Anna, who uses a wheelchair, set up *Friends Connect Friends*, a support group for young people with additional needs.

Snitterfield resident, Jenny Yates, applied for the bursary to help with the increased costs of her degree course in counselling and psychotherapy. "After my parents both passed away when I was a teenager, I received bereavement counselling," says Jenny. "I've decided to pursue it as a new career and hope to be able to offer services locally."

Studley mum, Mariah Clarke, is determined to build a positive future for herself and young son, Harley. Having gained a place on an Access to Nursing Course, she applied for the bursary to help with the training costs. Mariah hopes to go on and qualify as a nurse and build a career.

A new Broom!

We've exciting plans to build affordable properties in the villages of Wootton Wawen and Broom for the first time, as well as new homes in Long Compton. Stratford District Council has awarded almost £1 million for the three schemes.

Service standard

We offer different ways for you to pay your rent and issue a rent statement each quarter.

It just gets better

Our planned maintenance programme will see us improving your homes further over the next 12 months.

During 2015/16 windows will be replaced at 22 properties and heating upgraded at 23, making homes more energy efficient. Eighteen homes will have new kitchens fitted and tenants will be able to choose from a selection of styles and colours of units, worktops and flooring, plus a limited choice of sinks and taps. New doors will be fitted at 151 homes.

This does not apply to shared owners.

Need a translation?

If you need a copy of Rural Life newsletter in another language we will happily provide a translation for you. All you have to do is call the office on **0300 123 4009** with your request.

Small rise

To try to keep rents as affordable as possible for residents, we've only increased them by 0.5% from 6th April. You will have already received your formal rent increase letter, but don't forget you will need to alter the amount you pay if you use a standing order or swipe card.

Please remember you need to pay in advance to keep your account in credit.

If you are a shared owner your increase will be linked to the Retail Price Index as detailed in your lease agreement.



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