

Warwickshire  
**Rural**  
*Life*

The residents' newsletter for  
**Warwickshire Rural Housing Association**  
**AUTUMN 2018**  
[www.warwickshirerha.org.uk](http://www.warwickshirerha.org.uk)



*Win an  
Amazon Fire!  
See page 3*

# *Fit for a Princess*



  
**facebook**  
Remember to like  
us on Facebook  
and see all our  
latest news.

**We were honoured to welcome HRH The Princess Royal to officially open our eco-friendly development, Keyte Gardens in Wootton Waven.**

The Princess met many new residents and even called round to visit two of the new homes which have been designed and built to be as energy-efficient as possible so that residents can save money on their bills.

Four-year-old Annabel Crowe, who moved to Keyte Gardens with her family in August, proudly presented a posy to the Princess.

Find out more at [www.warwickshirerha.org.uk](http://www.warwickshirerha.org.uk)



## PENSION CREDIT CHANGES

The age to claim Pension Credit continues to rise. From November, you won't be able to claim until you're 65. Next February there will be a further change. If you have children, your Pension Credit will include an amount for them, rather than you claiming a separate Child Tax Credit.

## FREE ADVICE

Iasa has launched Advicelocal, a free service offering advice on a host of issues including welfare benefits, debt and money advice, employment and work issues. Visit [www.advicelocal.co.uk](http://www.advicelocal.co.uk) and enter your postcode to get tailored information for your area.

## CHILD BENEFIT

Child Benefit stops on 31st August after a child's 16th birthday if they leave education or training. If they are planning to stay in approved education or training, parents must tell the Child Benefit Office during their last year of school. Call **0300 200 3100** or visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

## HELP TO SAVE

A new Help to Save scheme is being trialled by the government to help people become regular savers. The scheme is available to people who are receiving Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit or claiming Universal Credit and have a monthly household income of £542.88 or more. Help to Save account holders can save up to £50 a month and will receive a 50% bonus on their highest balance after two years. Call **0300 322 7093** or visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

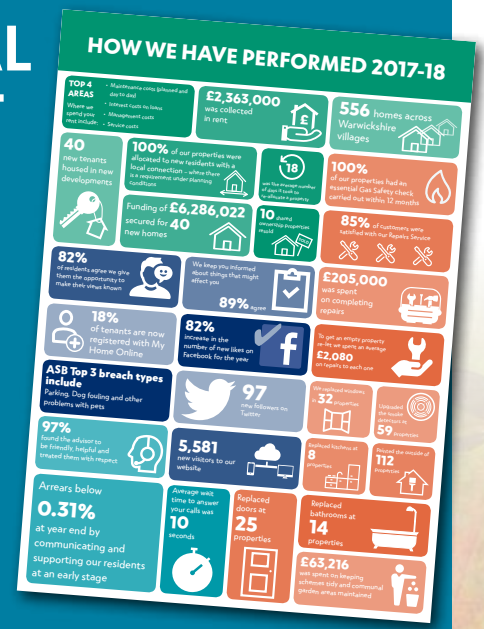
## RIGHT TO BUY

A Voluntary Right to Buy 'regional pilot' will be taking place in the East and West Midlands and it is up to individual housing associations whether to take part. The National Housing Federation and the Government recognise that smaller housing associations, such as us, may face practical barriers to participation and will choose to opt out.

Due to our size, the barriers we would face, and the fact that many of our homes cannot be sold due to their rural location, we have decided not to take part in the VRTB pilot scheme.

## ANNUAL REPORT ONLINE

Look out on our website for this year's Annual Report which shows how we're committed to delivering a first class service for you.





## HOW TO...

# Defrost a condensate pipe

*Here's the latest guide in our 'How to...' feature to help you keep your property looking great and running well.*

If your condensate pipe freezes in the cold weather, your boiler will shut down, but it's easy to get it running again.

1. The condensate pipe is usually a white or grey plastic pipe which travels from your boiler through the wall to your outside drain.
2. If you think it has frozen, run your hands along the pipe to see if a section feels colder than the rest. This will be the blockage.
3. Use a jug or watering can to pour warm water along the pipe until it has thawed. Don't use boiling water as it can damage the pipe.
4. Restart your boiler.
5. To prevent the pipe from freezing again, wrap it in old towels or buy some foam pipe insulation from a DIY shop.



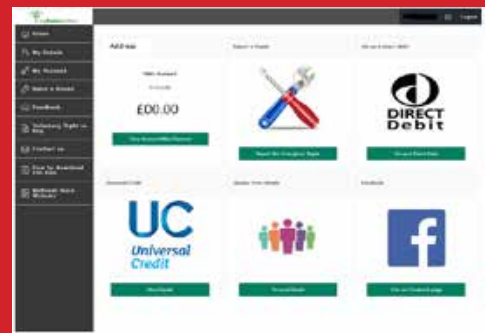
# A TABLET!

Have you registered with myhomeonline yet? If you do so before 31st

October, you'll be entered into a free prize draw and could win an Amazon Fire tablet.

The easiest way to access our services is now online through myhomeonline. Once registered you can:

- Pay your rent
- Set up a direct debit
- Report a repair
- Report anti-social behaviour
- View your account
- Send us a direct message
- Update your personal details



It's quick and simple to register via [www.warwickshirerha.org.uk](http://www.warwickshirerha.org.uk) but only 18% of residents have registered so far. You just need your tenancy number and national insurance number. If you need any help, speak to your Tenancy Services Officer to arrange a home visit. Sign up today and you could be a winner!

## NEW NUMBER?

Have you updated your phone number or email address? If so, please tell us! It's really important that we have up-to-date contact information for residents so that we can get in touch, for example, if we need to carry out any work to your property.

To change your details, simply log on to myhomeonline, speak to your Tenancy Services Officer, call us on **0300 123 4009** or email [enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk)

## TELL US

What do you think of our website? What else would you like to see on there? We're looking for ideas and suggestions for how we can improve our website so it fully meets residents' needs. Please tell us what you like about it and what we could do better. Email [sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk)



# ON THE MOVE

We've said a couple of goodbyes recently, as well as welcoming some new faces to our team:

- After 25 successful years with the Association, Company Secretary, **Craig Felts**, retired at the end of August. We all wish him a very happy retirement.
- **Richard Mugglestone**, who has been with the Association for the past 13 years, has become our new Company Secretary. He will be using his extensive housing expertise to ensure that more rural affordable homes can be provided where they are most needed.
- We've also said goodbye to Maintenance Surveyor, **Jamie Stevenson**, and wish him all the best.
- **Beth Willars** has been welcomed as Development & Maintenance Assistant. If you've had work completed at your home, Beth will give you a call to check that you're happy with it.



## ALCESTER CLEARS UP!

Residents in Alcester helped to tidy up their community thanks to our Skip Clearance Day. Two huge builders' skips were filled to capacity with unwanted items from residents' homes, gardens and local alleyways. A collection service was also provided for residents with reduced mobility. If you'd like your street considered for a skip day, give Philippa or Naheeda a call on **0300 1234 009**.

## ANNUAL SURVEY

The annual asbestos re-inspection surveys are now taking place and all residents who this affects have been sent a letter. This is just a visual inspection but we will need access at some properties. If we do need to enter your home, we'll contact you first to arrange a convenient appointment.

## FURNITURE HELP

If you're struggling to furnish your home, Roundabout, an Evesham-based charity, uses donated furniture and household items to help those in need. They're also looking for volunteers to help out in their warehouse, office and shop. To find out more, visit [www.roundaboutevesham.org.uk](http://www.roundaboutevesham.org.uk) or call **01386 833030**.

## Service standard

We would like you to get involved and work with us to help improve our service. You can do this by joining our Resident Involvement Board. Please contact [theresa.chamberlain@midlandsrural.org.uk](mailto:theresa.chamberlain@midlandsrural.org.uk) to find out more.



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## HEATING CHECK

It's already getting colder, so don't forget to turn your heating on to check that it's working properly before you really need it. Give us a call if there's a problem.

