

InTouch

Issue 53 Winter 2023



Sell out show for Janner legends – page 4

Our work to improve energy efficiency – page 8

Jack Leslie statue unveiled – page 19

WELCOME

Welcome to the winter edition of InTouch. We hope you enjoyed the Christmas break and New Year celebrations.

I'm delighted to be appointed as Chair of the PCH Board – see page 12 to find out more.

The New Year is a great time to make positive changes or take on new challenges, and we've got the latest training and employment opportunities with the Skills Launchpad. There's also information on training available for women in the construction industry. PCH's city centre shop is now open for residents to use.

The shop can provide some of the same services as our Plumer House headquarters, only in a more convenient location for some residents.

Some PCH residents have been starring in their very own – and sold out – play at the Theatre Royal. We catch up with some of the cast.

We have our Plymspirational interview with Hip-Hop extraordinaire, Toby G, who speaks about his life and the amazing work of his Street Factory organisation.

We catch up with a Stonehouse police officer who's been working with PCH to prevent antisocial behaviour in the area.

And we've got a great story on PCH residents and staff who were VIPs for the unveiling of a statue of the first black Argyle football player at Home Park.



Valerie

**Valerie Lee,
Chair of the Board**



COMMUNITY PUTS DOWN ROOTS

Nobody knows how to add a touch of beauty to an area more than the local community.

That's why PCH was thrilled to work with residents of St Elizabeth Close in Plympton, to add some pretty features to a communal green.

The green is a shared space in the centre of the close which is part of a sheltered housing scheme.

PCH's Communities team asked for residents' thoughts on how they could improve the communal area. Everyone in the close agreed, the grass needed more colour!

After hearing from residents, the green at St Elizabeth Close in Plympton has benefited from cheery trees and shrubs installed which are now blooming.

A dwarf cherry tree and rose garden have been planted and new benches installed, for everyone in the area to enjoy.

Communities Worker, Ryan Huws said: "It was great to be able to hear the views of everyone in the close. It was agreed by all that the area needed something more on the grass, so seeing those views put into action was just brilliant."



Sell out show for Janner legends

A group of PCH residents known as the Barbican Legends performed a sell-out play over two nights in November.

The Quizzy Rascals was based on a monthly pub quiz held at the Fisherman's Arms pub on the Barbican.

The show was interactive, with the audience taking part in a quiz about the legends' lives.

The entire theatre was decorated as a pub to create the perfect atmosphere as teams paid close attention to fascinating stories of the legends' lives, on which they were later quizzed.

The audience heard about stories of legendary parties over years gone by. Gill Chapman, one of the Barbican Legends who starred in the play was very happy with the performance.

“The Legends were brilliant. It was a fantastic experience for everyone involved and I’m so proud of what we achieved together.”

Gill said: “It was nerve racking but very fun. We were legendary in the city for being known as liking a party or too, but we’re a bit too old to be partying now.”

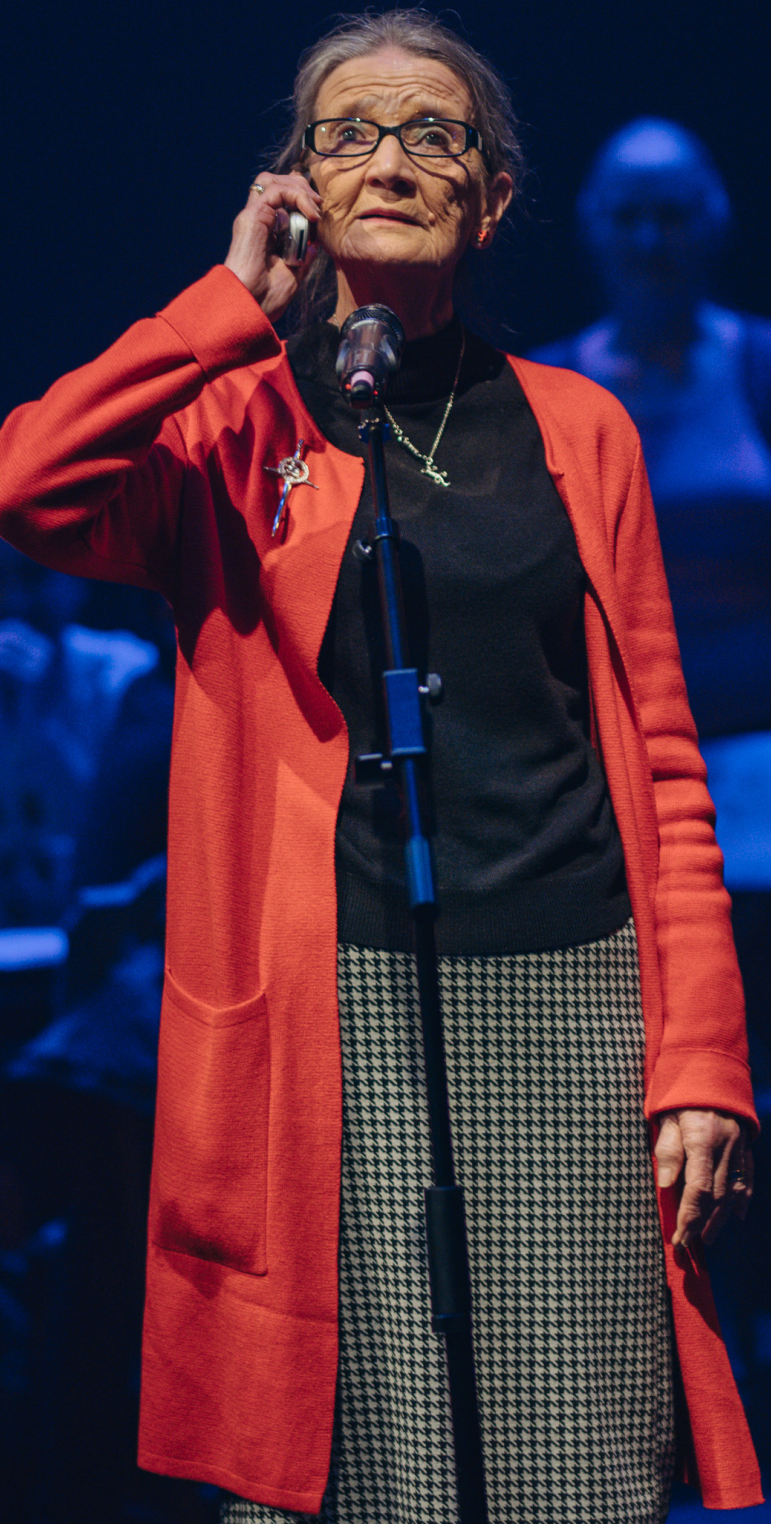
Gill explained that planning for the show had been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Gill said: “The performance has been in the making since before lockdown and we would meet up on Zoom for a while, then we got down to the hard work.

“I must say the weeks in the run up to the show were exhausting, but now I think I would be tempted to do it all again.”

Communities Worker Hazel Alexander has been working with the group. Hazel said: “It’s been wonderful to work in partnership with the Theatre Royal on such an exciting project.

“The Legends were brilliant. It was a fantastic experience for everyone involved and I’m so proud of what we achieved together.”





WE WANT RESIDENTS' BRIGHT IDEAS!

If you would like to have a say on what stories and topics we cover in these pages, then we have just the ticket.

As a PCH resident, we want to be sure that In Touch stays relevant to you. This is why we are looking for residents to form a virtual panel that helps decide what this magazine covers.

Being part of a virtual panel would involve having a video call with PCH staff at least once every three months. This way, you can have your say from the comfort of home.

We would work with you to collect feedback and hear suggestions in a relaxed and informal way.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please contact news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk or phone **01752 237990** and ask for the Communications team.



Police praise for community work

A Police Sergeant has praised the work of the community and PCH in tackling antisocial behaviour (ASB) in the Stonehouse area.

Through regular meetings between PCH Housing Officers and local police, a number of ASB behaviour issues in the area have been resolved promptly.

Sergeant Bradley O'Dee who works in the Stonehouse area, has praised the diligent work of PCH Housing Officers for having their finger on the pulse of the local community.

“We work with three Housing Officers in the area and I’m so grateful for this working relationship.”

Sgt Bradley said: “As the largest social housing association in the Stonehouse area, I’m thrilled to see cooperative working happening between the police and PCH.

“Through working closely and sharing information, we can help crack down on ASB. Some cases which have been flagged by the community via Housing Officers in the area have led to successful prosecutions.

“We work with three Housing Officers in the area and I’m so grateful for this working relationship.”

PCH Housing Officer for the Stonehouse area, Marissa Maloney said: “We enjoy working closely with the Stonehouse Policing Team to carry out proactive work in the areas we manage. Partnership working, good communication and working as part of the team is essential to tackle and reduce crime and anti-social behaviour effectively.

“A positive piece of work is to increase reporting of crime and anti-social behaviour in the area.

“We hold regular meetings with the police team, sharing relevant information. Police and Housing Officers attend neighbourhood residents’ meetings organised by the North Stonehouse Community Group and other agencies to promote resident involvement.”

If you have experienced issues with ASB in your community, it’s important to let your Housing Officer know. There are a number of powerful tools at the disposal of local authorities which can help put a stop to it.



E-SCOOTER SAFETY

With the increasing popularity of e-bikes and e-scooters which mostly use a lithium battery, the National Fire Chiefs Council have published the following important tips to make sure that these products are charged safely in your home.

CHARGING

- Charge batteries whilst you are awake and alert using a manufacturer approved charger for your product, so if a fire should occur you can respond quickly.
- Do not leave your batteries on charge after the charge cycle is complete.
- Do not overload socket outlets or use inappropriate extension leads and ensure your smoke alarms are working.

FIRES INVOLVING LITHIUM BATTERIES

- In the event of an e-bike, e-scooter or lithium-ion battery fire – do not attempt to extinguish the fire. Get out, stay out, call 999.

STORAGE

- Avoid storing or charging e-bikes and e-scooters on escape routes or in communal areas of a multi-occupied building. If there's a fire, it can affect peoples' ability to escape.
- Store e-bikes and e-scooters and their batteries in a cool place.

- Follow manufacturer's instructions for the storage and maintenance of lithium-ion batteries.

BUYING

- Buy e-bikes, e-scooters and chargers and batteries from reputable retailers.
- Register your product with the manufacturer to validate any warranties – batteries are usually included in warranties. This makes it easier for manufacturers to contact you in the event of safety or recall information.
- Check any products you have bought are not subject to a product recall. You can do this by checking Electrical Safety First's website or the government website.

DAMAGE AND DISPOSAL

- Batteries can be damaged by dropping them or crashing e-bikes or e-scooters. Where the battery is damaged, it can overheat and catch fire without warning. Check your battery regularly for any signs of damage.
- **If you need to dispose of a damaged or end of life battery, don't dispose of it in your household waste or normal recycling.** These batteries, when punctured or crushed can cause fires. Your e- bike or e- scooter manufacturer may offer a recycling service. Alternatively check with your local authority for suitable battery recycling arrangements in your area.



PCH IS DISABILITY CONFIDENT

Plymouth Community Homes has become the first Plymouth employer in the city to earn the highest validation from the Government's Disability Confident scheme in recognition of how well it supports disabled people

PCH has been named as a Disability Confident Leader with a Level 3 employer award following a recent submission and self-assessment process, which was independently validated.

The Disability Confident scheme recognises employers who make the most of the talents which disabled people can bring to an organisation. The Level 3 Leadership award is the highest award available, and PCH is the first employer in Plymouth to earn the validation.

PCH on the high street

Following the coronavirus lockdown, PCH has now reopened its city centre shop for residents.

From our Frankfort Gate store, residents can find many of the services we offer from our Plumer House headquarters.

The shop is in the heart of the city and is a more convenient point of contact for residents who live nearby.

Located at Frankfort Gate, the shop is open **Tuesday to Thursday 9am – 1pm** for residents who wish to talk to either our Incomes Team about their rent, or a member of staff from the Tenancy Management team.

This means that if you have any queries about your rent or tenancy, the shop is a point of contact for you. Staff also have a direct line to the repairs Call Centre and can offer advice on other PCH related queries.

Frances Sandercock, Senior Housing Officer said: “We still encourage residents to sign up to any digital methods of contact, but we are available if residents need to drop in to talk to us.

“You can pop in with or without an appointment if you have a query regarding your PCH tenancy.”



Plymouth Community Homes (PCH) residents living in blocks of flats in Devonport could save money on their energy bills this winter after a £1.5m refurbishment project was carried out to help improve the building's energy efficiency.

The refurbishment project of 44 homes in Keyham Road and St Leo Place took 11 months to complete, and the work was undertaken while residents remained in their homes.

The project included replacing windows, external doors and roof coverings. As well as this, external access was improved, the internal common areas were modernised and new, energy-efficient insulation was installed to the external walls. The works also included the installation of a colourful render which has enhanced the local area.

People living in the Devonport flats, including resident David Templeman, are delighted with the results of the refurbishment in relation to energy efficiency, which has been especially noticeable as the weather gets colder.



Our work to improve energy efficiency

PCH resident David Templeman said: “The works that were carried out are a great improvement to Keyham Road and St Leo place. I have not yet had to put the heating on in my home.”

PCH is Plymouth’s largest social housing landlord, and provides homes for more than 35,000 people across the city. Through its Environmental Strategy, PCH is committed to reducing its carbon footprint, and is investing in its homes with objectives to achieve net-carbon zero across the business by 2050.

“The works that were carried out are a great improvement to Keyham Road and St Leo place.”

The PCH Asset Management Team planned, designed and delivered the project for Devonport, and appointed Kendall Kingscott as principal designer and contract administrator with Classic Builders (SW) Ltd delivering the work for PCH.

Stephen Morgan, Programme Delivery Manager at PCH, said: “We are proud to have completed this vital refurbishment project of 44 homes in Keyham Road and St Leo Place. Although the project took a little longer to design than anticipated, the additional time in planning has certainly benefitted the scheme overall. The building looks fantastic now, and we feel it has transformed the Keyham area for those living locally.

“The project team worked extremely hard to complete the project. Classic Builders (SW) Ltd carried out the works, and Tracy Harrison, Classic Builders Resident Liaison Officer, provided amazing support, ensuring residents were included on the journey to completion, while Kendall Kingscott was also extremely supportive and created a great product.

“Plymouth Community Homes’ very own design and delivery team also worked with the leasehold team, neighbourhoods’ team and safety and environmental services, providing specialist help and advice throughout the project.

“Classic Builders has been nominated for an award within the industry for the project by Mapei, the manufacturer of the EWI (external wall insulation) materials.”

Adam Brimacombe, Director at Classic Builders, said: “We were delighted to be appointed by PCH to successfully deliver the building improvement works at Keyham Road and St Leo Place.

“This project provides a huge benefit to the residents of the properties and the building’s energy performance and efficiency has significantly improved. Aesthetically the building has improved the local surroundings, which the residents are now proud to call their home.

“Plymouth is a special place for us, it’s our home city and we employ a lot of local people, being able to play our part in improving the quality of housing in the city is a privilege.”



Toby G is a household name to many Plymothians. Through his innovative Hip Hop focused community work, he has revolutionised the lives of so many people across the city, and his outstanding community contribution has opened the door to many accolades, such as an MBE honour and international exposure. Through his Street Factory organisation, he uses Hip Hop culture to impact positive change. "Hip Hop culture is often misunderstood, being seen as a negative, but I break down these barriers and show it's actually used as a tool for social change," said Toby.

The road to success was paved with challenges for Toby. He fled Poland as a refugee, and his Roma Gypsy heritage meant he endured rampant discrimination, so his family had to flee to the UK.

The feeling of being excluded has never left Toby. He now calls upon painful memories of the past to ensure nobody faces the discrimination he once went through,

and that every person that walks through Street Factory's door feels valued, seen and Heard. "I struggled most of my life", he said. "I know what's it's like not to have things. Not to have the right support, not to have much of anything. But I wanted to become what people needed me to be. This led to me setting up Street Factory to give people the opportunity to change their lives, a place to belong and a place to be."

Toby arrived in Plymouth in 2001. He went to school, soon made friends through dance, and received support. He met his wife Jo working in the Theatre Royal – "a local Plymouth girl" with whom he would set up his Street Factory organisation with 17yrs ago.

Toby's tireless campaigning had humble beginnings. Toby and Jo rented a local church hall, and opened a free Saturday session and within weeks had over 100 people attending. They soon realised there was a strong need for their services, people wanted a safe space to dance,

socialise and build community spirit, and Street Factory became the place to do this. People from all walks of life, different cultures, and abilities, came together and built friendships, leading to their own strong community.

Street Factory is an open-door community project that encourages people to express themselves through Dance, Rap, Graffiti Art, DJing & knowledge of self. From their venue in Millbay they get together every day to share their love of Hip Hop culture or just sit together and talk. The community discover their genius with Street Factory, they have a space where they are mentored, valued, heard and seen, a place to transform their lives.

There are plenty of success stories from Street Factory. One boy Max, who attended from the age of 10 years old, went on to win the BBC Young Dancer show in 2019. Others have gone on to work in major theatre companies, touring the world. These journeys aren't limited to the arts however. One story that stands out for Toby is that of a young woman who had a childhood dream of becoming a bus driver. Toby explained: "She shared memories of being very young, jumping on the bus and thinking it was a spaceship. I told her to go to the library and do some research on how to become a bus driver."

Eventually the young woman came back saying she'd been hitting a brick wall. But Toby reached out to CityBus. Today the young woman is a successful bus driver. Toby said: "It was her dream, and that's what we're passionate about, helping people fulfil their dreams. She discovered her genius with us. It's not just about driving the bus, she's always chatting to people, passengers often ask her 'why are you always smiling', and she always replies 'because I love my job.'"

The communities' need of the services that Toby has provided has highlighted something he feels is needed in society, this is social connection and in person contact. The rise of digital technology and social media is, he feels, sometimes driving a wedge between people who need to be connected in person.

"The biggest issue we come across is that people are very disconnected, isolated, we think smartphones are our main connection to the community but they can lead to the biggest disconnection. How often do you spend hours and hours scrolling on the phone but never actually speaking to anyone. These devices do connect us to the world but we also need human connection. . . I work in different countries and the issues are the same everywhere."

Toby also recognises that social media is a two-sided coin. "It has the power to bring people through Street Factory doors, people have watched our daily videos, and then felt they can come and see us, people in need of company, mentoring, or a creative outlet."

The results of Toby's work have not gone unnoticed. His work was recently featured in a BBC documentary called Hip Hop Family. And in 2018, he was formerly awarded an MBE honour by Prince William on behalf of the HRH Her Majesty The Queen.

Toby has fond memories of when he first received a letter with news of this recognition, and at first it was not obvious exactly what this meant. "That's quite the story" he explained. "Every Sunday with my family it's blankets, movies and snacks. My wife Jo was downstairs opening a letter and started screaming and jumping around. I was excited because I play the Postcode Lottery and I thought for her to be jumping around after opening a letter must have meant we won."

"Jo made everyone in the family sit down. She read the letter to me, and all I could think was how many zeros!?" She started mentioning the Queen and I wondered what the Queen had to do with the Postcode Lottery. I didn't really understand what the letter meant, all these terms like 'Esquire' just confused me."

Eventually Toby realised that he had not won the lottery, but this was so much more, this was life changing. After three months of having to keep the news strictly to himself, he travelled to London to accept his award - an experience he described as "mind blowing."

On the big day Prince William left a lasting impression on Toby. "I was really impressed; Prince William knew all about Street Factory, he knew all about me, my wife, and my work, he was so real, kind, and honest. I've invited him to the opening of our new building when it's ready, wow can you imagine."

"I want to say the biggest thank you to Plymouth for being the first place I have felt safe, and giving me a place to call home. My community is now my family, and if you want to join us reach out and we are here."

www.streetfactory.co.uk

"I wanted to become what people needed me to be. This led to me setting up Street Factory to give people the opportunity to change their lives."



MEET OUR NEW PCH BOARD CHAIR – VALERIE LEE

PLYMOUTH COMMUNITY HOMES (PCH) IS DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE THE APPOINTMENT OF VALERIE LEE AS THE ORGANISATION'S NEW CHAIR OF THE BOARD, STARTING HER ROLE THIS WINTER

Valerie has been a Board member at PCH since joining in September 2020, a role she took on after leaving a full-time executive position in London to return to the South West region.

Having grown up in Plymouth from the age of six to 21, Valerie attended Plymstock School, where she was once Head Girl, before leaving for university in Warwick. Her time spent in the city means Valerie is passionate about giving something back to Plymouth.

Valerie said: "It is a real privilege to become the Chair of the Board for Plymouth Community Homes and I am really impressed by the excellent team, and the services that PCH provides to help support the lives of people across Plymouth.

"The position offers a fantastic opportunity for me to make a real difference to the lives of people across Plymouth, an area I know really well, and there is a lot that I want to contribute, as well as continuing on the great work carried out by the team to date."

We caught up with Valerie to ask her what PCH tenants could expect from their new Chair.

WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES TO ADDRESS AS CHAIR OF THE PCH BOARD?

1. To look after Plymouth Community Homes' current homes and tenants, and to play my part to help through the difficult times we are facing with growing cost-of-living pressures. We need to make sure that our homes are warm, safe and secure, and our existing residents and customers are safe and have access to the services they require. As well as this, it's critical we ensure fire safety, building safety, and that we listen to residents about anti-social behaviour (ASB), working to solve their issues, carry out repairs, and keep homes fit for purpose.

2. To keep working on the development pipeline of new housing, as there is an ever-increasing number of people needing to move into a safe home. We know that there is a huge housing shortage across Plymouth and the number of people who will be looking for social housing or affordable homes across Plymouth is going to increase because of the cost-of-living crisis. We have

ambitious plans, and we are doing our utmost to keep the development of new homes going as fast as we can to meet housing targets.

3. To help PCH play its part in building a more sustainable world. We are aware that it is also important to our residents to make our homes green and sustainable. We will be doing our part to make our homes and business as sustainable as possible.

HOW ARE YOU GOING TO INVOLVE RESIDENTS IN THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE?

There are going to be difficult decisions that we will have to make in the coming years, and we are going to ensure that we involve residents, tenants, staff and customers in the majority of those choices and helping to shape them our plans.

I am keen to work with residents who feel that we should be doing more, and we need to hardwire their opinions into the actions that we take. I am conscious that residents are extremely busy individuals, and it is probably low on a priority list to give feedback to an organisation when you have other things to worry about. But this feedback is a gift, and it is really crucial for us, so we need to take care to handle it to best effect.



Your views on your homes

The annual South West Resident Design Conference had a great turnout at Plumer House in November.

PCH residents were joined by tenants and representatives from housing associations including Westward Housing, Teign Housing, LiveWest and remotely Coastline housing from Camborne.

The event is held every year and offers an opportunity for housing associations to hear resident feedback on the build, design and quality of new homes.

The annual conference is part of PCH's pledge to the Together with Tenants initiative, which aims to strengthen relationships between tenants and housing association landlords.

The theme of this year's event was cost inflation, discussing cost of heating and lighting for residents, as well as construction costs for new build developments.

Residents were given the task of working out which specification items they considered the most important in case savings need to be made on future housing projects. If savings have to be made in future, Project Managers can select those items which residents felt to be less important.

It was an especially good event for PCH, as the Phase 5 development of North Prospect was named as the highest scoring resident satisfaction scheme. PCH Manager Nicola Daniel collected the top prize on the day.

Nicola said: "It's great to have won this award. It has been a challenging scheme, ranging from decanting residents pre-demolition to a Covid lockdown mid-build.

"To know residents are happy with their homes makes it all worthwhile."



"To know residents are happy with their homes makes it all worthwhile."

Dealing with damp, mould and condensation

We take damp and mould issues very seriously.

It's important for your health that any damp and mould problems in your home are reported to us as soon as possible so we can act.

This is especially important as the weather gets colder over the winter.

There are steps that you can take that can help to limit the amount of moisture in the air, which can help prevent a build-up of condensation and mould.

Here are some helpful tips to help tackle condensation and mould:

- Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles
- Cover boiling pans when cooking
- Cover fish tanks to stop water evaporating
- Dry clothes outside when possible, or in a small room with the window open
- Make sure tumble dryers are ventilated to the outside
- Open windows or use extractor fans to let cooking steam escape (and do this for 20 minutes after cooking)
- Open windows for a while each day, or use trickle vents
- Leave a space between furniture and walls so air can circulate
- Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes, so there's space for air to flow
- Keep air vents free from obstructions
- Maintain a low heat in your home when it's cold or wet
- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when you're cooking, bathing or washing

Sometimes damp can be caused by external factors such as guttering or roofing.

If you're already following our guidelines but issues surrounding damp persist, you may have a damp problem. This can be caused by things like:

- Leaking pipes, wastes or overflows
- Rain getting in where a roof tile or slate is missing
- Spillage from a blocked gutter
- Water entering around window frames

If you think you have a damp problem, please contact us so we can book an inspection.

If you have concerns about damp or mould, or think that a persistent issue may be caused from water outside leaking into your home, please contact your Housing Officer or call our contact centre.

For further information and advice about ways to help condensation and mould, visit our website where we have a special information section including a video, a damp and mould advice leaflet, and a link to our new Damp & Condensation Policy, which sets out PCH's approach to dealing with these issues, and what residents can expect from us.

Visit www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk and follow the links on the homepage.

You can report any damp problems to us:

By calling us on 0808 230 6500

Through a MyPCH account

On our website

Through our social media channel



PL Kicks – a hit with the kids

A six-week trial to get children in Stonehouse playing football after school has been extended due to its popularity.

PL Kicks takes football to the people and hopes to keep kids in the area out of trouble through impromptu matches and coaching from professionals.

A weekly get together at Flora Court play area was initially trialled for a six-week period to test the water.

During those first weeks, around 30 children showed up to most sessions. Kids attending were treated to free refreshments to keep their energy levels up on the pitch.

“We had around 20 children from the get-go, which was nice to see that kids in the area are keen to get active and have a kickabout.”

Scott McCann, football fanatic and Community Engagement Officer for Plymouth Argyle was thrilled with the turnout.

Scott said: “This is the third week we’ve run this open-door session in Stonehouse. The first week we had around 20 children from the get-go, which was nice to see that kids in the area are keen to get active and have

a kickabout. Children are welcome to come down, just turn up, no need to book.”

He added: “We can’t make any promises, but we occasionally have the odd pair of Argyle tickets to giveaway too.”

Marissa Moloney, Housing Officer for the area said: “Following discussions with young people in the area around the challenges they faced and increased antisocial behaviour, there were a number of those we spoke with who would not leave their immediate vicinity or make use of the communal spaces Stonehouse has to offer. With the help of North Stonehouse Community Residents Group, my Assistant Housing Officers Derry and Alice, and the Community Engagement Officer for PL Kicks, the sports sessions were created at Flora Court.

Marissa added: “PL Kicks have provided occasional free Argyle tickets and refreshments for the sessions, and this has benefited the young and their families who may not otherwise have been able to attend the Argyle matches.”

“I am delighted to hear that PL Kicks Argyle Community is being extended at Flora Court for the football/sports free sessions. Sessions will continue every Thursday with a one-hour slot from 4-5pm through the winter months. This will be reviewed in the Spring when we hope to extend the times and sessions further for the community.”

FEELING READY FOR A NEW START IN 2023?

Want to get a job, but not sure where to start?

Working but looking to make a change?

Looking to brush up on your maths skills and become more confident with numbers?

Skills Launchpad Plymouth is ready to help connect you with skills, training, education, careers and jobs www.skillslaunchpadplym.co.uk

Led by Plymouth City Council working in city-wide partnership, this free service supports those who are facing redundancy, job seeking or changing careers through the Adult Hub aged 25 years+ and offers targeted support for young people aged 16-24 years including those with additional needs through the Youth Hub.

Supported in-kind by Barclays Plymouth in the city centre, Skills Launchpad Plymouth is home to both the Youth Hub and Adult Hub, providing face to face coordinated services for young people and adults, and a range of activities are delivered at Barclays Bank and through community outreach each week including sector specific Job Shops for construction, and health and care, 'Military Tuesdays' providing tailored support for veterans, those related to HM Armed Forces including their families, and engagement activities targeted at young people not in employment, education or training.

Skills Launchpad Plymouth offers you FREE:

- access to impartial careers information, advice and guidance
- 1:1 skills assessments (face to face or on the telephone) to help inform your next steps including applying for jobs, changing careers or taking steps towards education or training
- help to job search, develop your CV and prepare for interview
- support for mental health and well-being to get you in a better head space
- advice to overcome barriers to starting work including access to financial support for work clothing, initial travel to work costs as well as guidance on benefits calculations

To get better informed and take steps towards your new start sign up as a FREE member today at www.skillslaunchpadplym.co.uk

Keep up to date with all the latest news and events by following on:

FB LinkedIn Instagram @SkillsLaunchpadPlymouth
Twitter @PlymLaunchpad

Case study: Tammy

Plymouth Community Homes tenant, Tammy (35), was referred into Skills Launchpad Plymouth by the Wolseley Trust's Social Prescribing service. Looking to gain some learning and progress on to university, she met with Community Lead Coordinator James and spoke about her ideas.

James met Tammy in the community and chatted about her plans and learning aspirations. They discussed a few routes into education with particular mention of City College Plymouth and The Open University. Following their meeting, Tammy contacted City College Plymouth about possibly enrolling in an Access Course leading on to university and has since been offered an

interview. She has also requested a prospectus from The Open University.

When asked about her experience, Tammy said "Meeting James helped me by finding my way and guiding me with the right ideas and links I need to get back into studying next year."

She explained that she was "...nervous at first but, after meeting James, confident and empowered to do what I need to do", describing Skills Launchpad Plymouth's support as, "welcoming, fun and knowledgeable."

Case study: Rebekah

Plymouth Community Homes tenant, Rebekah (22), was connected with Skills Launchpad Plymouth via the recommendation of her temporary employer. She arranged to speak with Community Lead Coordinator James to discuss ideas which could support her future work options.

James and Rebekah spoke on the phone around the development of English and maths skills which would enhance her employability and also explored the free courses available through On Course South West such as the Business Administration Level 2 Certificate which she recognised would help in her current and future job roles. In addition, Rebekah was looking for support to improve her CV and for advice around personal statements.

Following further conversations and ongoing support from James, and some really positive action on Rebekah's part, she was able to find new employment and is really happy in her new role. Rebekah said: "Skills Launchpad Plymouth have really helped with directing me for support in drafting a suitable CV and personal statements for job applications. James has

been particularly helpful, keeping in touch with me around my work related queries and always asking if there is any more help I would benefit from."

When asked how she feels about her next steps Rebekah said: "I feel pretty confident that whatever comes my way next, in terms of employment opportunities, I will feel more prepared for any future job prospects. I know Skills Launchpad Plymouth will always be there to guide me if I need it."

When asked to describe the support she received through Skills Launchpad Plymouth, Rebekah said: "All round - perfect!"



NEW YEAR, ADD NEW NUMERACY SKILLS

Skills Launchpad Plymouth's partner, On Course South West, are now able to offer all adults who want to improve their numeracy access to **FREE flexible courses that fit around their lives**. Multiply courses can help you brush up on your maths skills and help you become more confident with numbers.

Courses include:

- Money Matters - supporting parents to improve financial management skills
- Eating numbers - practical help with shopping, budgeting, cooking and staying healthy
- Primary Maths - supporting parents of nursery and primary children to understand the syllabus
- Easy maths helpline – how to manage your bills, budgeting or if you want to improve your potential at work

Other FREE courses from On Course South West include English, Employability, Digital skills, Wellbeing and Business Administration Level 2. Find out about these and many more at www.oncoursesouthwest.co.uk or call 01752 660713.





Discount offer comes 'roaring back'

Following the success of our last offer, PCH residents can now get 25 per cent discount on all tickets from 6 January to 28 February, excluding February half term, which is 11 – 19 February.

Dartmoor Zoo is on the outskirts of the National Park, only 15 minutes' drive from Plymouth and accessible by bus.

Open 7 days a week, the zoo that inspired the Hollywood film 'We Bought a Zoo' is home to hundreds of exotic animals, some of which are sadly classed as endangered or close to extinction.

From reptiles and birds to wolves and wallabies, Dartmoor Zoo is also home to the largest variety of Big Cats in the Southwest.

Visitors can experience nature at its best in 33 acres of natural woodland, offering truly wild and inspiring experiences.

There are daily animal talks and opportunities for a once in a lifetime experience with some of our most popular animals including our tiger, meerkats, otters and many more.

The Jaguar Restaurant has ample seating and offers a wide selection of meals, snacks and drinks sourced from local suppliers.

The number 59 bus operates from Monday to Saturday. The 59 leaves Royal Parade (stop A13) in Plymouth City Centre takes around 30 minutes

To book tickets, head to www.dartmoorzoo.org.uk - quote PCH25 to claim your discount. Proof of residency must be shown on entry.



JACK LESLIE STATUE UNVEILED

A statue dedicated to the first black Plymouth Argyle player has been unveiled at Home Park thanks to the work of a dedicated group of campaigners which includes a PCH staff member.

Jack Leslie was denied the chance to play for England in the 1920s due to racial discrimination.

After being selected for the national squad while playing for Argyle, Jack was then denied the chance to play against Ireland for the national team in 1925.

“THIS WAS A GREAT CAMPAIGN RUN BY ORDINARY PEOPLE PASSIONATE ABOUT FOOTBALL, HISTORY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE.”

PCH Communities worker, Hayley Kemp, was involved with the campaign which sought to right the historic wrong of Jack's treatment due to his heritage.

On the day of the statue's unveiling, attended by the PCH History Group, campaigners were thrilled to learn that Jack had been posthumously awarded his rightly deserved England cap by the Football Association.

A crowdfunding campaign to raise funds for the statue received raised over £140,000 from more than 2000 individual donations.

Star guests – including former Argyle players from ethnic minorities – attended a ceremony to unveil the statue. Jack's granddaughters were among family members who were there on the day and helped remove the cloth to reveal the statue in all its glory.

Argyle legend Ronnie Mauge gave a touching tribute, moving some in the audience to tears.

A poem about Jack written by spoken word artist, Big Scoop, lifted spirits before a countdown to the unveiling by children from Stoke Damerel Primary School.

The plinth of the statue features a revolutionary design featuring QR codes. These can be scanned by smartphone cameras transporting visitors to an online selection of photos and stories about Jack and his career.

The sculpture was created by Andy Edwards, who - through his work - was chosen to immortalise Jack. Andy was in the crowd to watch the unveiling. He said: "I'm excited. . . in a way this statue has already achieved its mission by bringing people together with a single cause, by celebrating the life and career of Jack Leslie.

"Statues should be the beginning of something, not the end."

PCH's Communities Worker, Hayley Kemp said: "It really has been an amazing process that I was privileged to be part of.

"With my local knowledge and community work I was able to get black, and minority-ethnic community groups, such as Hope FC, involved with the project. The highlight though was obviously the unveiling where I took the PCH History Group as VIPs on the day.

"This was a great campaign run by ordinary people passionate about football, history and social justice."

“STATUES SHOULD BE THE BEGINNING OF SOMETHING, NOT THE END.”

PCH resident Virginia Lee was invited along with other members of the history group. As VIPs, the group were lucky enough to have reserved seating to watch the statue unveil.

Virginia said: "It was fantastic to see the unveiling, as part of the history group we're going to be doing some research on Jack.

"It's about time they did something for Jack, and it was really nice to come today."



ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY OUTREACH HUBS



Are you a Veteran in need of
Support?

Fancy a Brew and a biscuit ?

Starting in November

2nd Thursday of the month - 15:00- 19:00

Chaddlewood Farm Community Centre.

3rd Wednesday of the month- 09:00 - 19:00

Plymouth Veterans and Family Hub, Ernest English house.

Last Wednesday of the month - 16:00 - 20:00

Four Greens Community Hub.



**Supporting Veterans
and serving members
of H.M Forces
and their families.**

Brought to you by a collaboration of Military charities
from across the city of Plymouth.

HELP FOR PLYMOUTH HEROES

An innovative new service dedicated to supporting veterans has launched in Plymouth.

Sadly, military veterans have a higher chance of suffering from poor mental health which in turn, can have a devastating impact on lives.

But several Armed Forces charities in the Plymouth area have joined together to launch a series of new outreach hubs, the first of which opened its doors for the first time in November to great success.

The hubs can be found in different areas of Plymouth with high levels of former servicemen.

The move has been driven by the local community team from Help for Heroes, in tandem with the Armed Forces Community Social Prescriber for Plymouth, Improving Lives Plymouth Veterans and Families Hub, Op Courage (the veterans' mental health service from the NHS), Veterans UK, Royal British Legion, Team Endeavour Wheelchair Rugby Club, and Armed Forces champions from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Help for Heroes' Case Manager, Paul Mouncher explained what the scheme was all about: "We have all come together to drive a better veterans' community connection in the Plymouth area.

"Often, veterans aren't sure where they can go to speak to someone who will understand, or who knows what's

available for them and where. And, crucially, where they can find help and support.

"The outreach hub is there to bridge that gap for them: a one-stop shop with all the charities and organisations together in one place, so veterans can come for a chat and a cuppa and enquire about the available support in welfare, clinical, mental health, employment, housing and social and sporting activities."

Multiple charities and organisations will be present at each outreach hub to show service personnel, veterans and their families what support is available in the City and most importantly that they are not alone.

You don't need an appointment, just drop by if you or someone you know has served in the armed forces and needs help with day-to-day tasks or mental health, or just a bit of company with a cup of tea.

If you would like more information about the outreach project, please contact Plymouth Veterans and Families Hub on 01752 241057.

Becky Ormrod, who helped organise the regular event was thrilled to see it become a success.



We support ex-forces personnel who have been arrested or are at risk of arrest.

Our team works with men and women who have served in Her Majesty's Armed Forces. Project Nova provides support to those who are facing difficulties.

We work with you to understand what you need and support you to make changes.

NEW YEAR, NEW SKILLS

Calling all women! Are you looking to gain some DIY skills to use around the home? Are you eager to get an introduction to key skills such as bricklaying, plastering, painting or tiling? Are you simply wanting to get out of the house and engage with other women in the community? We have some fantastic options for you.

If you are interested in gaining some DIY skills, why not book on to our brand new 6-week course, attending just one day per week from 9.30am-2.30pm.

Vistry have two opportunities to learn fantastic trade skills as well as some useful DIY tips to use around the home.

Get in touch today, register for our upcoming course in the new year, it would be great to hear from you.

Vistry will work with our candidates on a suitable starting date, hours of course to run around school hours so no limitations are presented to any candidate that might be interested.

Tasmin, who recently completed the course, said:
"The reason I wanted to do the course is to learn skills in the construction industry so I could kick start my career. I have really enjoyed the experience, the skills it has equipped me with, and I am ready to become an advocate of women in construction.

"I believe more women should be represented within the industry, and I have now gained the confidence and the minimum requirement to progress into employment. I am hoping to become a bricklayer and make a career of it. Vistry Partnerships and Train4All have really assisted me throughout I would recommend any taster course to any women that might be unsure or sitting on the fence."

Certification will be provided on completion and further pathways into further training to obtain specific industry ticket or pathways into employment will be facilitated. A tool bag worth over £200 will be donated by Jewson to the best learner to kick start their DIY journey on completion of the course.

NEW

Vistry Partnerships Women in Construction

If you are interested in gaining some DIY skills, why not book onto our brand new 6-week course, attending just one day per week from 9.30am-2.30pm.

We have two opportunities to learn fantastic trade skills as well as some useful DIY tips to use around the home.

Attend in Somerton or Plymouth, choosing from either:

● Introduction to Bricklaying and Plastering

OR

● Introduction to Painting and Tiling

Courses will be **FREE** to attend if you are over 19 and unemployed or

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit and take-home pay is less than £345 per month as a sole adult in your benefit claim or £552 if a joint claim.



To register your interest, contact us today by messaging us via Text or WhatsApp **07456 641058** or contact us via www.train4all.co.uk

Train4All
Construction & Engineering

Vistry 
Partnerships

WARM, WELCOMING SPACES

If you need a warm space this winter, there are a number of public spaces with open doors during winter months. You do not need to call ahead, simply turn up and warm up, if you need to. Some spaces will also be offering refreshments.

Below are just a few places that are registered as Warm, Welcoming spaces this winter.

St. Budeaux Baptist Church Hall - 11am -1pm

The Salvation Army - Devonport Morice Town -
Wednesday to Friday: 9am to 4pm
Sunday: 10am to 1pm

Efford Library - Monday: 11am to 5pm,
Thursday: 11am to 5pm

Plymstock Library – Tuesday to Saturday,
9am until 5 -6pm.

Plympton Library – Monday, Tuesday,
Thursday 9am – 6pm (Saturday: 10am to 1pm)

There are lots more
public spaces online at:
[www.plymouth.gov.uk/
warm-welcoming -spaces](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/warm-welcoming-spaces).

if you don't have internet
access, please speak to
your Housing Officer who
can make enquiries on
your behalf.




HM Government

NHS



I SHOULD'VE GOT THE VACCINE INSTEAD I GOT REALLY ILL

If you're unvaccinated, you're about
8 times more likely to be hospitalised
with Covid-19 than if you've had both
doses of the vaccine and the booster.

GET VACCINATED NOW

 [NHS.UK/COVIDVACCINATION](https://www.nhs.uk/covidvaccination) 

SIGN UP TO MYPCH



Use MyPCH to quickly and easily check and pay your rent, report a repair and update your contact details anywhere, anytime.

mypch.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

We're always keen to hear what you're up to, so if you'd like to tell us about something we can include in In Touch, we'd love to hear it.

Email news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

T 0808 230 6500 / 01752 237990
E info@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk
W plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk
Twitter twitter.com/PlymCommHomes
F facebook.com/PlymouthCommunityHomes
YouTube youtube.com/user/plymouthch



Did you know you can recycle me?