

My Home

Sheltered housing newsletter

What's inside

Cost of living advice

A winter wonderland model

How to avoid being scammed

Issue 6 | December 2022



Welcome

We hope you enjoy this edition of My Home, the sheltered housing newsletter.

Lots of people are feeling anxious about the cost-of-living crisis at the moment, which is why we have included advice on where you can turn for help.

There's energy bills advice and further support on the increased cost of everyday essentials.

Although times are hard, we wanted to make sure this edition arrived before Christmas because we've got some positive festive stories to brighten those wintry nights up.

We have a wonderful story about a Ron King House resident who's created a Christmas wonderland, and we have information about where you can enjoy a Christmas day meal, for free, if you don't have company this year. Nobody needs to be alone on Christmas day.

Music was in the air as we met a John, who's been tutoring fellow sheltered resident Dermot on how to play the piano.

Autumn has been unusually warm but as the weather turns colder, it's more important than ever to get your flu and covid booster jabs, there's another reminder inside.

We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and New Year.

Helen Ryan

Head of Communities and Housing with Support

MACMILLAN COFFEE MORNING

Residents got a slice of the action after organising a fantastic Macmillan Coffee Morning in September.

A cake sale and raffle at Ron King House raised a grand total of just over five hundred pounds for the charity.

Residents joined with other coffee mornings around the country on Friday 30 September to raise money for the Macmillan charity, which supports people living with cancer.



Liz Thackray was the chief organiser of the day and was grateful for the support she received from fellow residents. Liz said: “I want to thank everyone that helped organise this, such hard work for which I greatly appreciate.”

Housing with Support Officer Allyson Hood was thrilled with the turnout. Allyson said: “Every year residents and their families get baking or shopping, and all credit to the residents that do the hard work organising it. It’s a win seeing residents come together,

money being raised and everyone getting to eat cake. As always, the residents also hold a raffle and there were amazing prizes on offer this year, so a great day for everyone at Ron King House.”

If you would like to host your own Macmillan coffee morning, speak to your Housing with Support Officer, who can help you with this.



PIANO MAN

A PCH resident who decided to learn the piano aged 85 has now completed a year's worth of regular lessons.

Dermot Cole, a familiar face at Ron King House, decided to take up the piano with regular lessons from fellow PCH resident John Smith, who has been playing for a number of years and was more than happy to meet once a week to pass on his talent.

“He’s a jazz artist in the making,”

said John. “He’s come a long way. It takes five minutes to learn but a lifetime to perfect.”

The lessons happened by chance after John was invited to play at a Christmas do at Brock House. After seeing John play the keys, Dermot felt inspired enough to ask, “can you teach me?” A request that John was more than happy to fulfil.

Dermot who’s currently learning blues and jazz style piano has high praise for John as a teacher. He said: “This gentleman is very patient. He is helpful and has a great sense of humour, which is a must.”

The pair meet every Friday at Ron King House and John says the progress Dermot has made over the last year has been fantastic.

John explained: “I have had the privilege to be Dermot’s piano tutor over the last year. I must admit that I have looked forward to Friday afternoons where I can spend an hour with Dermot with a keyboard and a bottle of orange pop where I teach and play some versions of Chopsticks and some serious jazz.

“I am currently showing him the importance of the 12 Bar Structure as-in the tune by Glen Miller, ‘In the mood.’ His eyes light up and he laughs with joy when he moves up a level and plays well, which gives me a buzz too.

John added: “He is definitely a budding jazz man... I think that next year I will bring along my bass guitar and give him some accompaniment. . . if I can keep up that is.”





HELP WITH THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

Lots of people are having to be careful with their money at the moment. Energy bills have risen sharply and although the Government has stepped in to help, we want you to know there are other sources of help.

What's happening with energy bills?

Energy bills have been rising for everyone, and after Government intervention, everyone will receive £400 to reduce their bills this winter.

Earlier this year, our Incomes team helped a resident who had been underpaid benefits for several years. This resulted in a back-dated payment of around £12,000 to the resident.

We can also put you in touch with **Plymouth Energy Community** (PEC), who are experts in ways to save energy. Or contact PEC yourself on **01752 477117** or email **energyteam@plymouthenergycommunity.com**

If you have any worries about affording food please speak to your Housing with Support Officer. We work with lots of agencies in Plymouth including Foodbanks, and can put you in touch with the support you need.

Plymouth City Council

You may have seen that Plymouth City Council (PCC) must find budget savings now and in the future. PCC are considering savings to services for older people for example. PCC partly fund the cost of care alarms and the support service in PCH's sheltered schemes for residents who receive Housing Benefit. We're staying in close touch with PCC and will make sure we tell you about any changes they decide to make.

Need more help?

If you're worried about the cost of living please do speak with your Housing with Support Officer. And remember that the communal lounge in your scheme is always an open, warm and welcoming space.



BOOST

YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER

FLU + COVID-19 BOOSTER VACCINES

Find out how to book at nhs.uk/wintervaccinations

A TOUCH OF MEN'S SHED MAGIC

Residents of Brake Farm were treated to a touch of flower power after some bespoke planters made by the Men's Shed were installed by a resident.

Gary Yarnall, from Brake Farm Supported Housing Scheme was inspired after joining the Men's Shed group and noticing the planters for sale.

He thought the green area outside his flat could do with a dash of colour, so he purchased them for £40 and took them home.

Gary said: "I saw the planters and instantly wanted them for the green outside my flat. I was recommended to join the Men's Shed and I'm so glad I did. We're now making planters like these and other items that people have ordered to be made by the group like birdboxes."

He added: "Ryan Huws planted the flowers for me, and they look great. But you wait, we're going to be adding more flowers and planters in spring when the flowers come back out."

Ryan said: "The Brake Farm Scheme already have a colourful and welcoming garden area but Men's Shed regular Gary wanted to extend the garden by placing three large flower planters outside his flat windows. . . with a little help from the shed guys.

"Gary placed the planters in place a few months ago, and all the flower plants are thriving. The planters will look even better with colourful blooms come Springtime."

If you would be interested in making things like planters as part of a welcoming group, please speak to your Housing with Support Officer, who can give you the Men's Shed details.



DON'T SPEND CHRISTMAS DAY ALONE



If you don't have plans for Christmas Day, there is a free lunch service available, which can pick you up and drop you home.

The community has your back this Christmas. From 11 – 3pm on Christmas Day, you can treat yourself to a three-course lunch and Christmas quiz at Four Greens Community Hub at Whiteleigh.

This Christmas day service is completely free and open to anyone.

If you want to reserve a place and arrange transport, please contact Jane Delvin on **07585 800 184**, or speak to your Housing with Support Officer, who can make contact on your behalf.



Contact details over the festive period

We have provided you with some information on how you can get in touch with services across Plymouth in case you would like to contact them yourself.

Need to Talk

Arterne 2020 – 07554 665461 – can provide telephone support for residents who are lonely and isolated - every day 9am to 5pm.

Caring for Plymouth – contact for support with loneliness or isolation **01752 668000**.

Age UK Advice Line is open every day including Christmas Day, providing answers and reassurance to older people who have no one else to turn to. Call free on **0800 678 1602** – 8am to 7pm.

The Silver Line a free helpline for older people **0800 470 8090** every day 24/7.

Mental Health Support the helpline is available 24/7 on **01752 434922**.

Red Cross - Coronavirus support line: Feeling lonely? Need practical help? Call free and confidentially, 10am to 6pm every day **0808 196 3651**.

Time to Talk - aims to improve well-being for people with a disability or who are deaf, by reducing loneliness and isolation. **0300 303 3691** (free phone) or text them on **0785 642 6940** during their opening hours or leave a message and they should get back to you.

Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday - 10am - 4pm Open until midday on Christmas Eve and then open from Tuesday 5 January at 10am.

The Samaritans 24/7 - Call free on **116 123**





LYN'S WINTER WONDERLAND

A self-described Christmas addict who decorated her home with an enormous Christmas scene has completed this year's display in record time.

To the astonishment of neighbours, Lyn Tapscott of Ron King House, spends weeks every year creating an enormous winter wonderland in her lounge.

The layout varies from year-to-year and is made up as Lyn goes along. This year's model is made up of three sections, the Christmas village, town square, fairground, and ski slope.

Sometimes the model can take longer if Lyn is not satisfied with the design and has to rethink areas and rebuild.

Lyn normally starts making the model in October, depending on how satisfied she is with the model town's layout.

Lyn keeps an eye out for bargain models throughout the year, and has occasionally picked up models from closing down sales of big stores when Christmas is far from most shoppers' minds.



“The neighbours were gobsmacked when they saw it,”

said Lyn. “It normally takes me around three weeks to make but this year it only took two.”

In years gone by Lyn had placed the model in the window bay until it became too big and made opening windows - without causing a minor avalanche – almost impossible.

When asked if Lyn would keep adding to the model, she replied: “No! This year I haven’t even used all my models. I’ve got an entire basket left aside as I’ve run out of room, so I think that’ll be as big as it gets... for now.”

There is one exception, however. After years of good use, Lyn’s reindeers have lost their antlers and need to be replaced. “Reindeers?”, said Lyn. “They look more like goats now that their antlers have fallen off.”

Lyn added: “I’ll definitely be replacing them!”

SCAMS ALERT

It's important to be vigilant when it comes to scams.

Bogus scams trying to steal your personal information or money have become more sophisticated than ever.

Text messages pretending to be from organisations have been on the rise. Some of these scams can be very convincing and often contain a clickable link, which if used can infect your phone with viruses.

Text message scams that have been on the rise lately, include messages claiming to be from your bank, Apple

Pay, the Government (often under the pretence of coronavirus funds) or from HMRC regarding tax matters. It's important to be very careful about which organisations you give your personal details too. Although your bank will often refund you for money lost to scams, sometimes they could refuse to refund you if you gave your details voluntarily.

Here are some tips about how you can avoid being scammed.

Scam lottery alert

One scam that's been doing the rounds in Plymouth lately, claims that you have won a jackpot on a fake lottery.

Plymouth City Council's Trading Standards team have issued a warning about a rise in scammers sending letters inviting people to claim a winning prize draw. Some letters targeting vulnerable people have said: 'you are a winner' in the hope that unsuspecting people will provide contact details.

If you receive any letters claiming you have won a jackpot, or if you are suspicious about any text messages, letters, phone calls or any other communications, please speak to your Housing with Support officer. Don't give any personal details until you are fully confident you're not being scammed.



How to spot signs of a loan shark

A loan shark is someone who loans you money, only to demand much more back in return and sometimes tries to intimidate you.

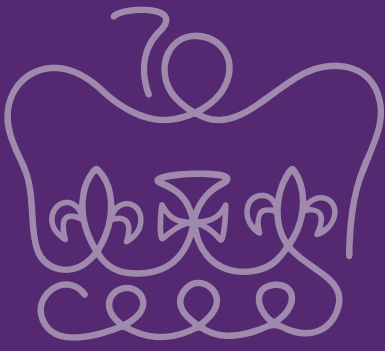
If someone has offered you a cash loan, then answering yes to any of the following questions could mean you're borrowing from a loan shark:

- Did they not give you paperwork?
- Have they taken any of your valuables or identification such as your bank card, benefit card, or passport?
- Do you feel worried about telling people?
- Did they add huge amounts of interest to your loan?
- Have they threatened you or acted in an intimidating way?

If you think you've been approached by a loan shark, please call the Stop Loan Sharks charity on **0300 555 222**.



WARNING WARNING WARN



A FITTING TRIBUTE

A commemorative rose bush to honour Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was planted by residents of Ron King House in September.

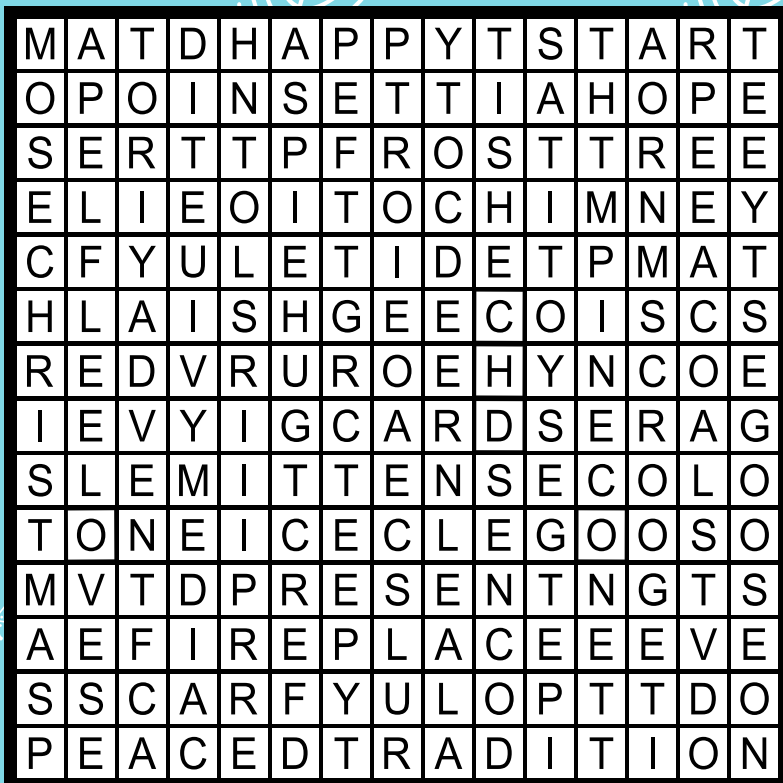
Green fingered residents, Dermot Cole and Norma Spruce have been working together to maintain plants and flowers outside Ron King House.

The group pitched in with the help of David Pharaoh, who did the honours of planting the commemorative rose.

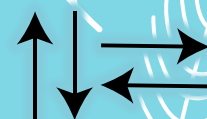
Residents wanted to pay tribute to the life and service of Her Majesty the Queen in a fitting way. As a keen gardener throughout her life, this bush will serve as a reminder for years to come of the duty and sacrifice made by Her Majesty.



CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH



LOVE	TREE
CHIMNEY	HOPE
PRESENT	HAPPY
GOOSE	TRADITION
FIREPLACE	STAR
FROST	PEACE
ICECLE	SCROOGE
PINECONE	CHRISTMAS
MITTENS	COAL
IVY	ADVENT
SCARF	HUG
ELF	TOYS
YULETIDE	DEER
POINSETTIA	PIE
CARD	



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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

-  [0808 230 6500 / 01752 237990](tel:08082306500)
-  info@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk
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-  youtube.com/user/plymouthch



Did you know you can recycle me?

