

My Home

Sheltered housing newsletter

What's inside

Covid-19 update - Page 3

Festive support - Page 11

Issue 4 | October 2021

Plymouth
Community Homes





WELCOME

Welcome to the fourth issue of My Home newsletter for all our sheltered housing residents. We hope you've had a great summer and that you've been able to see family and friends after our long lockdown last winter.

We all hope that this year we'll be able to see a few more Christmas celebrations happening at our schemes.

As we write, Covid-19 cases continue to be reported as high, including locally in Plymouth, and Government is encouraging us all to reduce the risk of transmission. You can read more about how to stay safe from Covid 19 infection on page 2.

We're all being encouraged to take up the offers of a Flu vaccination as well as the Covid 19 booster vaccination this winter. Find out more about that on page 2 also.

We hope you enjoy the other features in the newsletter. You'll see a lovely feature by Housing with Support officer Jane, telling us all about her love for dogs and the time she spends helping them.

And for cat-lovers, read about our robot cat project and how it's helping people who need a bit of pet-company without the hard work that's usually involved!

Thank you for reading My Home, and remember that we love to hear from you. Send your stories, poems, ideas and photos to housingwithsupport@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk



Covid update

We're delighted that we've been able to re-open most of our communal rooms and facilities following the period of long lockdowns and partially restricted openings. But there are still some rules we have to follow to keep you, our staff and our contractors safe.

With recent rises in coronavirus cases locally as well as nationally, Government guidance on social distancing, hand washing and face covering is still in place. We are advised to;

- meet with others outdoors if we can
- keep indoor spaces where people mix well ventilated
- wash hands more often and for longer
- wear face coverings in indoor crowded spaces

Our communal lounges and other communal facilities are open with some new guidance, equipment and signs in place. Help us to reduce the spread of Covid-19 infection and keep the facilities open by following the guidance.

Covid 19 booster vaccination, and flu vaccination

Government advises us that vaccination is the best way to protect you, your neighbours, and our staff from serious illness. We're being encouraged to get the Covid-19 booster vaccination when we're eligible, but also to get the flu vaccination that is available to everyone over 50 years.

If you've received an invitation for the Covid-19 booster but haven't been able to take up your appointment yet you can book by calling 119 , or book online.

Got to www.nhs.uk and click on 'find out about Covid-19 vaccination'. If you need support with getting your vaccination, please do speak to you Housing with Support Officer.

Flu vaccinations are available from pharmacies as well as some GPs. If you need support with getting your flu jab please speak with your Housing with Support Officer.

PCH services

Routine repairs are taking place, as are most other routine face to face services. Plumer House and our City Centre shop are open.

Housing with Support Officers will be on site more often and you will see more of them.

When our staff visit you they'll be social distancing, wearing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) and following other Government guidance to reduce the spread of coronavirus. Please continue to respect social distancing, avoid crowding or approaching staff, and tell us if you have symptoms or have tested positive for Covid 19.

Working with Public Health Teams to manage Covid-19 outbreaks.

When we have more than two cases of Covid-19 at a time in sheltered schemes, we are required to work with Public Health Teams and take some extra precautions. For example, Public Health ask us to close the communal lounge, put in place extra cleaning of communal facilities, and minimise the contact between staff and residents.

These measures are designed by Public Health to stop Covid-19 outbreaks and prevent infection from spreading. If your scheme is affected, we'll write to you and tell you what we're doing to keep you and others safe. Please speak to your Housing with Support Officer if you have any questions or concerns about Covid-19 outbreaks in your scheme.

A puurrrfect companion



If you live alone, it's nice to still have someone about the house to talk to. Which is why Therapy Cats are becoming more and more popular.

A Therapy Cat is a battery-powered companion that's very similar to a real cat. It comes with none of the hassle of having to take it to the vets, feed it, or clean up any of its mess either.

Therapy cats – which are also known as comfort animals – have been proven to have great benefits to mental health.

Although they are not real pets, they come with all the comfort a real animal brings but none of the messy chores.

Maureen Harvey who lives in Belmont Court says she couldn't do without Scooby, her very own therapy cat. Maureen lives alone in a top floor apartment which wouldn't be suitable for a real cat.

So it's just as well Scooby is on hand to give Maureen a bit of company.

She said: "I had cats all my life, but I had to give one away when I moved. It's so nice to have scooby.

"He doesn't go missing either. When I had cats years ago, I would worry if it was dark outside and they still hadn't come home but I don't have to worry about that now."

She added: "I'd be lost without Scooby."

Maureen said she recommended therapy cats for anyone struggling with loneliness or stress.

If you'd like to find out about Therapy Cats please speak to your Housing with Support Officer.



Communities Worker Ryan Huws explains how coronavirus hasn't stopped the city's Janner Men's Shed from helping men stay in touch during the pandemic.

Supported by Plymouth Community Homes (PCH), Plymouth's largest housing association, the Janner Men's Shed started in October 2017 and since then we've gone from strength to strength. We started off at Plymouth's City Farm. It was a lovely location but members found the terrain a bit rough so after about a year we moved to a large community centre.

We now have 31 signed-up members and around 16 to 18 will turn-up to one of our fortnightly sessions. We're a friendly crowd, new people get a nice welcome and we've always got on really well with each other. We mainly work on wooden items but members are free to follow their own interests. We're lucky to have the Plymouth Woodturners attend who have shown us how to use lathes. Members have helped out with their time and skills with many a community project and have made substantial improvements to the community hall. This means that more community groups now use the venue.

Erik Nystrom and David Anstee from Brock House regularly attend the Men's Shed. David said: "Never done it before and was little apprehensive initially until I got to know the lads. I find it really interesting. I'm learning how to use the lathe and getting use to the tools. It's good for my health and I really enjoy meeting new people and making new friends.

He added: "I really enjoy it."

Although primarily funded by PCH and its contractors, we generate our own income by selling our wooden creations at local car boot sales and craft fairs. We've also been lucky to get the odd grant.

Like everyone else, coping with Covid has been difficult. To keep in touch we set up a weekly Facebook chat group and did the odd quiz, but it's not the same, and not all members use or like social media. Members much prefer doing things together rather than talking on-line.

Our next challenge is going to be about finding a new venue. The community hall is great, but we share it with others which means having to shift heavy equipment and wood at the beginning and end of each session. We need a place that we can call our own and that can be open more often.

If you would like to find out more information on the Men's Shed please call 0808 230 6500 and ask for Rheinallt/Ryan Huws.



Performance update

At PCH we monitor our performance in many areas of service. It's important to us that we're delivering the best services, so we gather all kinds of information every month. We look at that information regularly and by doing this we can see what we're doing well and what we might need to improve on.

In Issue 4 we're focusing on an area of service that is important to our sheltered housing tenants. The call monitoring service that answers your emergency care alarms. This service is provided by Appello. We have set standards that Appello have to meet and report to us about every month. For example, we expect Appello to answer your calls quickly, and we expect them to tell us what they're doing to put things right if they don't meet our expectations.

We've noticed a little dip in call-answering times recently, here's how that looks in numbers:

	July	August	September
KPI 1 - Appello - % of Calls Answered in 90 Seconds	85.97%	72.96%	70.79%
KPI 2 - Appello - % of Calls Answered in 180 Seconds	93.92%	86.74%	88.47%

As a result of this decline in the speed of answering telecare calls, we met with Appello several times, and asked for extra information including an explanation of why performance has declined and of what they are doing to improve.

The figures that Appello provide to us for answering calls include calls to open the main scheme door, test calls that you and our staff make, and some other general enquiry calls. So, one of the first things Appello did for us is to provide figures that are about alarm calls only. Here they are:

	KPI 1%	KPI 2%
Jun21	98.67%	99.57%
Jul21	99.34%	99.77%
Aug21	98.92%	99.68%

You can see that where the call is an alarm, for example if you need emergency help, there performance, the speed of answering the calls is much faster. This has helped to reassure us that Appello are giving emergency alarm calls top priority for fast response.

Appello have told us that they've recruited 14 new call-handlers, and made some adjustments to shift patterns, which they've done to ensure their performance improves.

We're staying in close touch with Appello, we're meeting with them regularly and working with them to ensure that performance improves, and you get the fast response to emergency alarm calls that we expect.

We'll let you know what happens next and hope that we can report an improvement to performance very soon. If you've experienced a long wait time for an answer to an emergency alarm call and would like to make a complaint, please speak with your Housing with Support Officer.



Charity coffee morning, a piece of cake

Residents of Ron King House were treated to a day of tasty home-baked cakes while raising money for a good cause last month.

More than £500 was raised for the Macmillan charity which offers vital care for those living with cancer.

Chief baker for the day was Rob Machin, who recently updated his food hygiene certificate through Plymouth Community Homes.

Rob ran a tight ship and after planning to make just one cake, ended up with enough ingredients to make 3 of them. Rob said it was either that, or waste ingredients, something he would “never allow on his watch.”

“The favourite of the day was definitely the hazelnut black forest gâteau”, said Rob. “We had queues forming for that one even though I also made vanilla and chocolate roulade and a third cake too.”

“There was a real buzz” said Housing Officer, Allyson Hood. “It’s the first thing the residents had organised that brought everyone together since the lockdown.”

She added: “Our communal lounges have either been closed or open with limitations for a long time, so it was so nice to get together without any restrictions in place.”

One of the organisers was resident Lin Thackray. She put the success of the day down to one thing: “the residents.” She said: “Everyone in the block was generous with buying raffle tickets and providing prizes, they went above and beyond.”

She added: “None of this could have happened without them. There was a lot of teamwork and generosity.”

The grand total raised for the charity was £531.50.

FLOWER POWER FROM GREEN FINGERED DUO

The Brock House garden really is a riot of colour thanks to the handiwork of Diane Dingle and Joy Pollard.

The pair spend much of their time – and their own money – buying and planting seeds, plants, flowers, tubs and hanging baskets for the communal space.

Diane said: “Joy and I have been doing it for the last couple of years. We had a man helping us with the hanging baskets although I’ve been doing them a bit more now.”

“Another woman who lives here gave us some money to buy some plants. She said it gives her so much pleasure to sit in the garden and look at them. “During the first lockdown it was a godsend for me. The only thing we had was the garden.”



Puzzles

FILL IN THE BLANKS

4 letters

DROP
POEM

5 letters

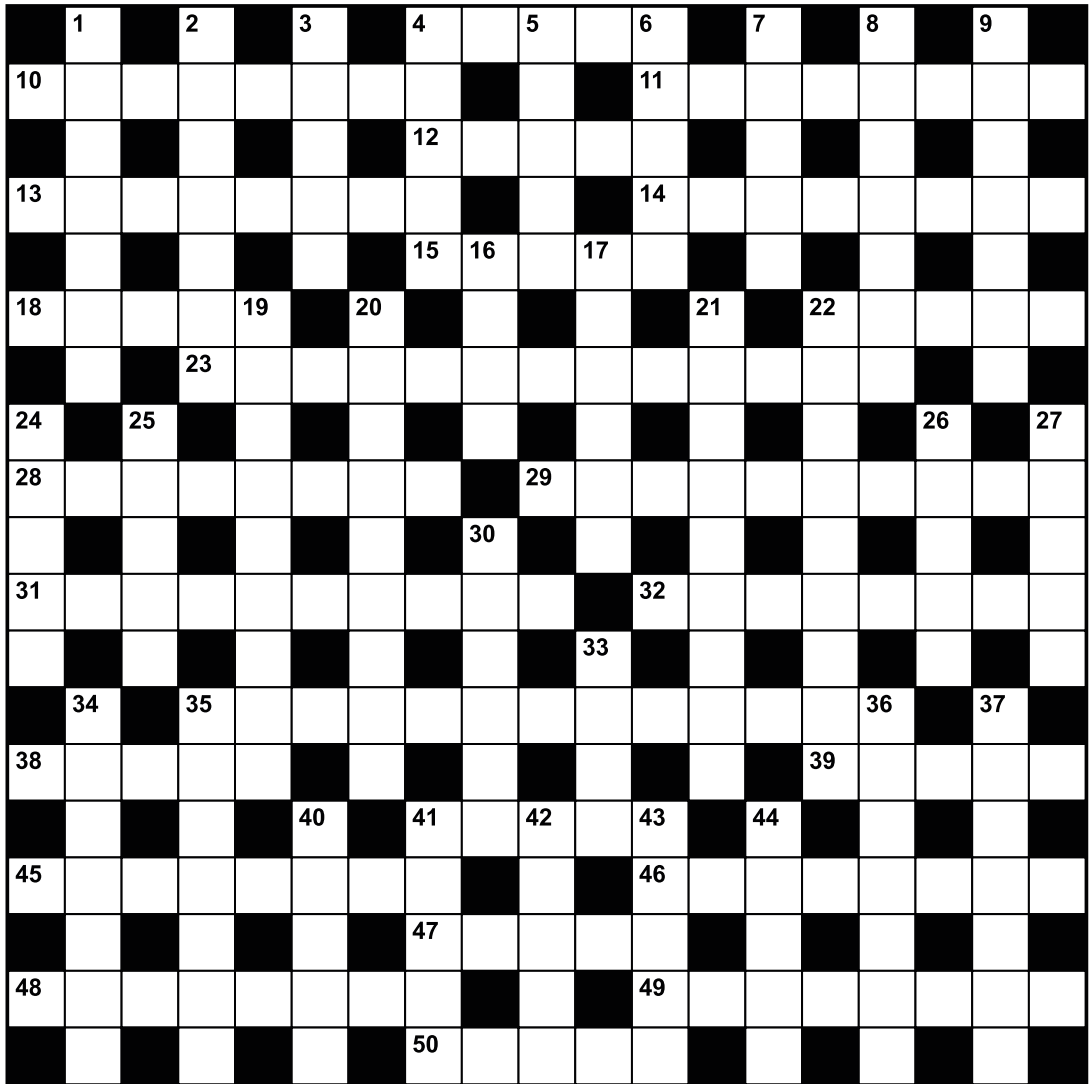
ADOBE
BIRCH
EASEL
ELBOW
EXIST
GUESS
HAYDN
HEELS
HYPOS
NOTES
PASTE
SEEDS
SEVEN
SOLID
SPEND
STAFF
STEPS
STONE
TERMS
TOPAZ
VOICE
WEENY
WHEAT
YOUTH

6 letters

ASPECT
NEWEST

7 letters

CORELLA
COUNTER
FOXTROT
MADEIRA
NOCTURN
PHARAOH



PRETEND
STROKES

8 letters

DISCREET
DOLOMITE
DOORKNOB
EQUATION
FREEWARE
INFINITE
OUTDOORS
PORRIDGE
STASIMON
VERTICAL

9 letters

AGRONOMIC
ASSISTANT
WEDNESDAY
WORKSHEET

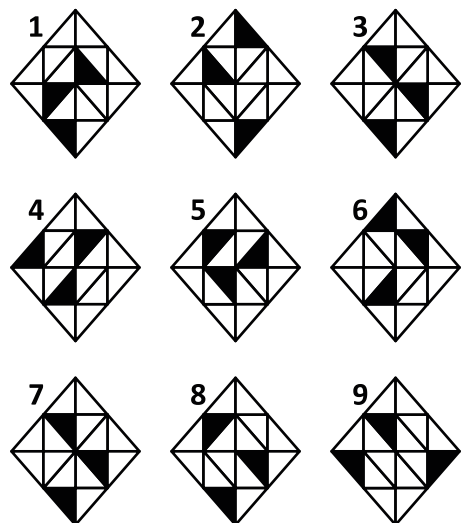
10 letters

ASSIGNMENT
BEACH HOUSE

13 letters

MEDITERRANEAN
TONGUE TWISTER

SPOT THE TWINS



Sudoku

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

Answer

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

What our residents' groups have been up to

It's been a heart-warming few months seeing our residents' groups meet up again. Here is a glimpse at what a couple of our schemes have been up to.

Ron King House

Residents have had several meetings with some new faces joining. The group enjoyed a question-and-answer session with PCH's Arborist Joe, who explained the need for trees, the history of tree planting in the city and what can be done to manage them.

The group have organised fish and chip suppers, bingo and a Macmillan Coffee morning which saw a huge amount of money raised. Read more about it on page 6.

Camels Head

Camel's Head are slowly resuming activities in their communal room with bingo and craft afternoons. Their AGM will be held in November following a couple of meetings to look at what social activities they would like in the future.

A special thanks to Resident, Gaynor who showed her initiative (during times when residents couldn't meet up) and organised a fun and interesting newsletter for the scheme.

The Communities Team can support with advice on running a Residents' group, access to grants for funding and even some practical support. For further information please contact your Housing with Support officer.

Now that we are hopefully heading back to normality, please let your Housing with Support Officer know what you've been up to.

MEET YOUR HOUSING WITH SUPPORT OFFICER

In this edition, we catch up with Jane Hamlyn, who's passion for helping others isn't limited to just people.

Having been with PCH since 2015, Jane says that working with you, the residents, is the best part of her role.

Being a people person is at the very heart of what being a PCH Housing With Support Officer is all about. Jane agreed: "I just like helping out. I'm a people person and I like helping others work through problems by helping them to access services and whatever they need."

As a part-time member of the PCH team, Jane dedicates two days a week to another passion, which is dogs.

As a fully qualified dog trainer, Jane helps poorly behaved pooches and rescue dogs. Through work she does at a dog rescue centre near Newton Abbot, she trains the animals up for their owners, or in some cases new homes if they are rescue dogs.

Although her work between PCH and Devon Dog Behaviour Rehab and Rehome is very different, there are some similarities, Jane explained: "Dog training is as much about teaching the owners as the dogs. Lots of my work focuses on the pets' owners to show them how their decisions can change how an animal acts.

"It's hard work for the animals too, who have to get used to a new way of behaving sometimes."

Some of the animals Jane helps are street dogs from overseas, where people aren't always so nice to four legged friends. Often, street dogs from abroad struggle to get used to life living with people and under a roof. Which is where Jane can help them adapt to a new life.





Support for tenants over the Festive period

The Housing with Support Officers will be talking to you about whether you need support with shopping, prescription collection, hot meals or need to talk to someone over the Christmas period. We have provided you with some information below on how you can get in touch with services across Plymouth in case you would like to contact them yourself.

Festive Food Options

Plymouth Community Meals: can deliver a Christmas lunch on Christmas day and dessert from just £6.50. Order by 6th December - 01752 305140 from 9am to 3pm Monday to Friday.

PIE Club – Hot meals twice a week all year round plus Xmas (Wed & Fri) £5.99 each and delivered to your door. Call Claire on 07983697866 or email plymouthpieclub@gmail.com

On December the 8th PIE Club will be holding our Christmas Lunch at Devonport Park Cafe. It will be open to anyone who wants to join us for some well deserved festivities. It will be at 1pm but guests are welcome from 12.30pm.

For those who can't make it we will also be delivering Christmas Lunch that day. The cost is £6.99 for our gorgeous Christmas lunch with all the trimmings.

Arterne 2020: – contact enquiries@arterne.com or 07554665461 – they have non perishable food boxes and hot meals

Caring for Plymouth - Contact on 01752 668000 and they will be able to direct you – shopping and picking up prescriptions

Food banks

Plymouth Food Bank - call 01752 668000 and select Option 4 to speak to Plymouth City Council

Need to Talk

Arterne 2020 – 07554665461 – can provide telephone support for residents who are lonely and isolated -

every day 9-5pm

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 – 8.00am to 7.00pm.

The Silver Line a free helpline for older people 0800 4 708090 every day 24/7

Mental Health Support The helpline is available 24/7 on 01752 434922

Time to Talk - aims to improve well-being for people with a disability or who are deaf, by reducing loneliness and isolation.

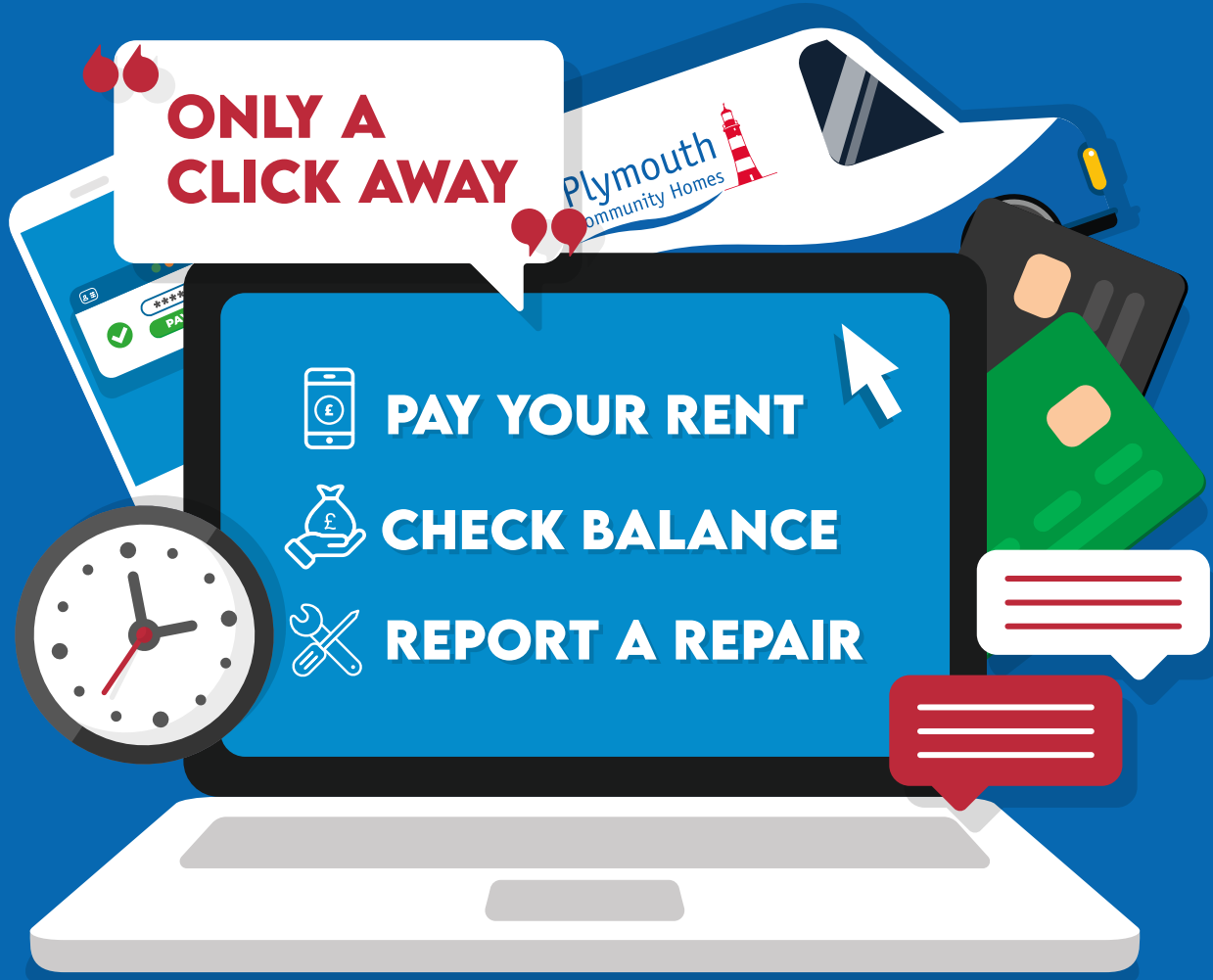
0300 303 3691 (free phone) or text us on 0785 642

There's also a Plymouth charity called Elder Tree, that works with many of our sheltered housing residents. The charity was created to help older people live independently.

Elder Tree also offers a range of services and activities that you are always welcome to join. All sorts of groups and hobbies are available, everything from coffee mornings to exercise groups.

If you would like to find out more you can give them a call on 01752 227447, or contact your Housing with Support Officer. The charity has timetables of all the different events they are hosting.

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
- TW** twitter.com/PlymCommHomes
- F** facebook.com/PlymouthCommunityHomes
- YT** youtube.com/user/plymouthch



Did you know you can recycle me?