

Leicestershire Rural Life

The residents' newsletter for
**Leicestershire Rural
Housing Association**

SUMMER 2018

www.leicestershirerha.org.uk


Leicestershire Rural
Housing Association Ltd



New neighbours!



facebook

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

Fern Hudson has had plenty of help moving into her first home of her own – as her dad lives next door!

The 22-year-old says she already feels “100 per cent happy” in her first floor flat in Breedon on the Hill. She says: “My dad knew the previous tenant was moving out and he kept encouraging me to apply. I’m so pleased I did - it’s just perfect for me.”

Read the full story at www.leicestershirerha.org.uk

BANK HOLIDAY CLOSING

Please note that the office will be closed on
August Bank Holiday Monday and Tuesday (27th and
28th August).

UNIVERSAL CREDIT U-TURN

The Government has changed its mind! Now, all 18 to 21 years olds will be entitled to claim support towards their housing costs within Universal Credit. You don't have to meet certain requirements any more. And anyone starting to claim UC receives support from day one of their claim, which is great news.



FREE SCHOOL MEALS

There are new regulations regarding free school meals. A household must now have an annual net income of no more than £7,400 to be eligible. Children already receiving free school meals may be protected if certain social security benefits are claimed.

BEDROOM TAX

WHAT IS A BEDROOM?

It's been decided that before applying the bedroom tax, a local authority must assess whether a bedroom can actually physically fit in the number of children expected to sleep in it as a bedroom.

PIP APPEALS

A new pilot service has been launched for submitting personal independence payment (PIP) appeals online. It's available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in certain areas and online appeals will reach the DWP quicker than a postal appeal. For more information, visit www.gov.uk/government/news/submit-your-personal-independent-payment-appeal-online

TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

Local authorities will be required to help all eligible applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, under the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which came into force in April.

The Act says that a local authority must take reasonable steps to help a person keep their current accommodation if they are threatened with homelessness. And if a person is already homeless, it has to help them secure accommodation for six months and draw up a plan.

TV LICENCE FEE INCREASE

Enjoy watching TV? Don't forget that the cost of the TV licence fee increased to £150.50 (colour fee) and £50.50 (black and white) in April. The over 75s still get their TV licence free. If you pay for your licence on an instalment scheme, such as a monthly direct debit or weekly cash payment, you won't have to pay the increased fee until your licence comes up for renewal.

BENEFITS CHECK

Are you receiving all the benefits you're entitled to? If you'd like a full benefits check, either over the phone or via a home visit, call your Housing Officer, Monique Witham, on **0300 1234 009**.

FIND A JOB

Universal Jobmatch, which lets people search and apply for full or part-time jobs, has been renamed 'Find a Job'. The free government recruitment service will continue to connect jobseekers with thousands of employers across the UK.



HOW TO...

Keep your paths nice

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

During the Summer months, weeds can get out of control on paths and drives. Here's how to keep them at bay.

1. Cut grass back to a neat edge using a weeding knife or lawn-edging tool so grass and weeds don't spread across a path.
2. Tackle weeds quickly before they have chance to release seeds.
3. Get a sharp knife and push it as deeply as possible into the gaps in the path to hook out weeds, roots and soil.
4. Use a stiff broom to collect the moss, weeds and soil.
5. If you have a gravel drive, push a hoe back and forth to remove weeds.
6. Apply weedkiller. If you need to dilute it, use a separate watering can just for chemicals, not for watering.

YOU'RE NOT ALONE

A free, confidential helpline is available for people aged over 55, 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Set up by Esther Rantzen, the Silver Line helpline provides information, friendship and advice, and can link callers to local groups and services, as well as befrienders.

Call **0800 4 70 80 90** anytime or visit www.thesilverline.org.uk

PERFECT PETS

If you're thinking of getting a pet, please ask us for permission first.

- Be mindful of your neighbours, especially if you own a larger pet, such as a dog.
- Make sure you clean up after your dog, both in your own garden and when you're out and about.
- Exercise your dog regularly – at least twice a day.
- Try not to leave a dog at home for long periods of time as they may bark or whine and disturb your neighbours.
- If you go away on holiday, make arrangements for your pet to be cared for.
- Check your garden is secure so any pets can't escape.



Summer's here!

Enjoy your Summer and let your neighbours do the same!

- It might still be light but neighbours' kids could be in bed, so don't make too much noise outside.
- Tell your neighbours if you're planning a party.
- If you've opened your windows in the warm weather, any household noise will be amplified.
- Remember not everyone is on holiday – your neighbours might be getting up early for work.
- Try not to let the kids' noise get out of hand in the garden.

PRIVACY PROTECTED

We respect your privacy and manage your personal information carefully. New laws regarding data protection came into force in May so please read our new privacy policy on our website. More information about the new laws can be found at ico.org.uk or speak to your Housing Officer.

We will be calling you to make sure we have your correct details.

Ask us ...

Joe asked: If you find a wasps nest, who should you speak to?

David Krause, Development and Maintenance Manager says:

You can contact your local council if you have a problem with any pests in your home or garden. Some councils offer free pest control services, but others may charge. You might be able to deal with some pests yourself, such as slugs or ants. Have a look at the products on offer in your local supermarket or garden centre.

Have you got a question about your home or the services we provide? If so, ask away! We'll be answering one of your questions in every newsletter. Simply email them to sue.haywood@midlandsrural.org.uk



FEELING LONELY?

Community Champions volunteers are offering a befriending service to older residents in the Harborough District who are feeling lonely or isolated.

The charity's volunteers can call you regularly, come and visit you at home for a chat, or help you to get more involved in your community. Call **01858 439262** or visit www.vasl.org.uk

NEW CONTRACTOR

J. Tomlinson replaced MD Building Services as our new repairs contractor in April. They will carry out all reactive repairs excluding gas, renewables and electrical works. If you have a repair to report, contact the Customer Care Team on **0300 1234 009** or email enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk



GET COVERED

We want you to be safe and secure, so we insure the structure of your home against fire, storms and floods.

But if your personal belongings, carpets and furniture got damaged, could you afford to replace them? It's important that you take out your own contents insurance so you don't have to pay for any damage.

Did you know the average cost for home contents insurance is around just £11 per month? Don't put it off!

HOW WE'RE PERFORMING

The service we provide for you is very important to us. This is how we've done during the past financial year:

- No formal complaints were received.
- 92% of calls were answered within 20 seconds and more calls were resolved at the first point of contact compared with last year.
- Overall repairs satisfaction was 74%.
- Our perception survey showed that 88% of residents think we have friendly and approachable staff and 76% feel we give them the opportunity to make their views known.
- We were pleased that 76% of residents would recommend LRHA to others.

WINNER!

Congratulations to the winner of our Spot the difference competition in our last issue. The lucky resident from Croft, who won £50 of 'love to shop' vouchers, said: "Thank you so much for the vouchers. I was thrilled at winning. I've just booked my holiday so I'll be spending them on sun cream and something to wear I think."

Service standard

We will monitor service failures on a monthly basis and formal complaints on a quarterly basis.

OWN YOUR HOME

If you're a shared owner and have lived in your home for a while, it could be time to consider 'staircasing'. This means buying more shares of your property so you own a greater proportion of your home and pay less rent.

Try using the free online calculator at www.shareto-buy.com to see whether you can buy more shares, or call us on **0300 1234 009**.



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Did you know... Our website had 2,631 new visitors during the last financial year and we reached 8,117 people via Facebook.

