WELCOME

Since taking up these posts over a year ago, there have been many changes in the Housing department, bringing with them a number of both challenges and opportunities.

In the last year we have been busy working on a number of projects and initiatives within our portfolios.

We are committed to providing residents with a wide range of high quality housing and are proud that Mansfield is one of just a few Councils in the country to have built 44 new Council houses. The Council has worked with private landlords to bring 140 empty properties back into use and has created the Homefinder Service in partnership with Ashfield District Council and Ashfield Homes to give prospective tenants a wider choice of properties to bid for.

A key priority is to continue to help people live independently in their own homes and this year the Council carried out 126 major adaptations to support people with disabilities (54 Council house adaptations and 72 in the private sector). Over 235 private sector property inspections have also been carried out to deal with disrepair and overcrowding issues.

We also wanted to focus on reducing fuel poverty and carbon emissions and the Council did this by investing in new forms of heating technology and successfully completing a project to replace the coal fired District heating system on New England Way with new forms of heating technology.

In the up and coming year there will be many challenges to face including changes to the welfare system in 2013 and changes to the system that allows tenants to purchase their Council property. These may impact upon a large number of tenants so we are currently preparing for these changes to ensure that appropriate advice and support is available for those affected. Options are being considered for offering joint ownership opportunities where tenants can part own and part rent their property and external funding has already been used to purchase five properties with a view to introducing shared ownership options. The Council is also working to identify alternative ways to provide our long term support services after being notified of the withdrawal of the Supporting People funding.

This next year will also see us working on a number of projects including a larger scheme to replace the coal fired District heating systems on the Oak Tree Lane estate with individual energy efficient heating systems. Plans are currently being developed to continue the Council house building programme, which includes building three new bungalows on Bonington Road.

Regeneration work will also be continuing in the Brownlow Road and Pleasley Hill areas and plans to redevelop the Bellamy Road estate are also being considered. The Council will be continuing to support the local economy by creating jobs and apprenticeship opportunities for all of the above schemes.

We are very proud of what has been achieved but are also aware that there are some very difficult challenges and changes ahead. We are keen to meet these challenges and want to ensure that there is the best outcome for all concerned.

If there is anything you would like to discuss with either of us, please contact Cllr Mick Colley, Portfolio Holder for Tenancy Services and Housing Needs on 01623 463 316 or mcolley@mansfield.gov.uk or Cllr Derek Evans, Portfolio Holder for Housing Strategy and Regeneration on 01623 463 315 or djevans@mansfield.gov.uk

Shortly after the last election in May 2011, we were delighted to have been chosen as Portfolio Holders for Housing.

In the last year we have been busy working on a number of projects and initiatives within our portfolios.

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12 GET IN TOUCH
The Council's Money Advice Service provides free and confidential advice on a wide range of issues including budgeting, debt management and maximising income to help you deal with financial difficulties. The service can also help to negotiate affordable payments with creditors on your behalf.

The Council also offers a Welfare Rights Service that can help you claim the benefits you may be entitled to and can support you with any benefits appeals.

Both services are open to everyone in the Mansfield District.

If you feel you would benefit from practical help and advice to help you to deal with any financial difficulties please contact the Money Advice Service on 01623 463 451 or the Welfare Rights Service on 01623 463 450 for more information or to make an appointment. Home visits are also available.

Drop in sessions offering basic housing and tenancy advice also run on the first Wednesday of each month from 1pm to 4pm at the Hickling Court Community Centre, Mansfield.
The Torch came into the Mansfield District at 11.38am on Peafield Lane, Mansfield Woodhouse, where large crowds stood to welcome it.

It then went to the Rebecca Adlington Swimming Centre before heading towards the town centre where it was greeted by crowds of people.

After travelling along Radcliffe Gate and Southwell Road West, the Torch completed its journey through Mansfield shortly after 1.30pm.

To mark the special day, Mansfield District Council has commissioned a film celebrating the London 2012 games and is asking people to upload their pictures and videos from the day’s event to its Facebook page www.facebook.com/mymansfielduk

The best shots and clips will be chosen to feature in the film.

Olympic fever grips Mansfield

Thousands of people braved the rain and thunderstorms to watch the Olympic Torch make its journey through Mansfield on 28 June.

WHAT’S ON THIS SUMMER

A guide to keeping the whole family entertained this summer is now available in schools, leisure centres, libraries and other community buildings across the Mansfield District.

A range of FREE and low cost activities set to take place during the summer holidays across Mansfield District are featured, including:

- A guide to this year’s Summer in the Streets entertainment
- Events provided by Mansfield BID
- Activities at each of the Districts leisure centres and parks, and
- Activities at Mansfield Museum.

The What’s on guide is also available to download from www.mansfield.gov.uk/whatson

Supporting the Good Neighbour campaign

Everyone is being urged to look out for their elderly and disabled neighbours as part of the Good Neighbour campaign, which is being launched across Nottinghamshire.

Mansfield District Council is supporting the campaign, run by Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Adults Board, which aims to reduce the number of people who have falls, accidents or become victims of abuse or crime.

The campaign urges people to take a few extra minutes to get to know those who live around them, particularly if they are elderly or disabled, and to look out for signs that something may be wrong. Tell-tale signs could include milk or bins not being taken in, newspapers stuck in the letter box, curtains drawn, lights left on or homes in darkness when there should be someone at home.

Simple things like offering to go to the shop in bad weather or putting out someone’s bin might make a huge difference, so please do your bit.

Top tips for being a good neighbour will be distributed throughout the county and are available at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/goodneighbour
YOU AND YOUR HOME

The Housing Repairs team are currently carrying out non-urgent external housing work by area as part of their repairs programme. This includes repairs to roofs, window frames and paths. Please see the calendars to find out when the team will be in each area from August to January. A full list of the streets in each area can be found at www.mansfield.gov.uk/housing.

If you have any enquiries about the repairs programme please contact the Housing Repairs team on 01623 463 500.

**DATES FOR HOUSING REPAIRS**

If you pay your rent and other tenancy charges by Direct Debit you are in with a chance of winning a £25 Tesco voucher in the Housing department’s monthly prize draw.

The winners for April, May and June are Mr Wilson from Warsop, Mrs Hymas from The Woodlands estate and Mr Burrows of Forest Town.

There are many benefits to paying by Direct Debit:

1. You don’t have to remember when to pay, as your bank or building society automatically pays the Council on the date the money is due. You can choose from the 7th, 18th or 28th of each month to pay your charges.

2. You remain firmly in control of your money as we will always give you at least 10 working days notice of any changes we want to make in the amount we collect from you. This means you have the opportunity to query the change and even, if you wish, cancel the Direct Debit authorisation.

3. Even if you are in arrears with your rent, then you can still pay by Direct Debit. You must however have an agreement in place with your Housing Officer, to pay an additional amount each month with your Direct Debit to help clear your arrears.

If you are interested in setting up a Direct Debit, please contact your Housing Officer or call 01623 463 129.

Win a prize for paying your rent by Direct Debit

**KEY**

- Church Warsop, Meden Vale & Warsop (North of Sherwood Street)
- Warsop (remaining streets)
- Peafield Lane
- Burns Avenue, Oxclose Lane & Sherwood Street
- Northfield Park area
- Slant Lane & Brown Avenue
- Sandy Lane & Ravensdale area
- Upper Oak Tree Lane & Eakring area
- Lower Oak Tree Lane
- Forest Town area
- Bellamy Road area
- Pleasley & Bull Farm area
- Upper Ladybrook & Abbott Road
- Brick Kiln area & Ladybrook Lane area
- Central Mansfield
Government changes to the welfare and tax system could affect you if you claim benefits. Make sure you know about the changes that will come into effect in 2013.

In April 2013, your housing benefit could be affected by the number of bedrooms you have.

If you live in a Council or housing association home and you have one or more spare bedrooms your housing benefit may be reduced.

This could affect you if:

1. You are 16 to 61 years old, and
2. You receive housing benefit or have made a claim for housing benefit.

You won’t be affected if:

1. You live in a one bedroom flat or bedsit
2. You or your partner receive pension credits (In April 2013 the pension credit age will be around 61 years and 6 months).

How many bedrooms am I entitled to?

Under the new rules if you have more bedrooms than the Government says you need, you will lose part of your housing benefit. The new rules mean you will be allocated one bedroom for:

1. Each adult couple
2. Any other person aged 16 or over
3. Two children of the same sex under the age of 16
4. Two children under the age of 10 regardless of their sex
5. Any other child
6. A carer (who does not normally live with you) if you or your partner need overnight care.
BENEFIT CAP

From April 2013, there will be a cap on the amount of benefit that working age people can receive. The cap will restrict the level of benefit to households that are not in work to no more than the average earnings of working households.

This will include a range of benefits including housing benefit, jobseeker’s allowance, employment support allowance, child benefit, child tax credit and carer’s allowance. If the total benefits exceed the maximum amount allowed, your housing benefit payments will be reduced. The maximum amount of benefit you will be able to receive from April 2013 will be:

- £500 per week for single parents
- £500 per week for couples with or without children,
- £350 per week for a single person without children.

This will not apply if:

- You get pension credit or working tax credit, or
- A member of your household is claiming disability living allowance, attendance allowance or the support element of employment support allowance.

What happens if I have a spare bed?

If you have one spare bedroom your housing benefit will be cut by 14% of the rent you pay every week. If you have two or more spare bedrooms, you will lose 25%. If your benefit is cut you will have to pay your landlord the difference between your housing benefit and your rent.

The Benefit Cap will restrict the level of benefit so households that are not in work will no longer receive more in benefits than the average earnings of working households...

UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The new Universal Credit system will simplify the benefits system by bringing together a range of working age benefits into a single payment. It will replace a range of existing means tested benefits, including:

- Housing benefit
- Income based jobseeker’s allowance
- Income support
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Working tax credit, and
- Child tax credit.

The new system will launch in October 2013. All new claims to the current benefits system will be phased out by April 2014 and existing claimants will be transferred to the Universal Credit system between 2014 and 2017. If you are an existing claimant, the amount of benefit you receive will remain the same unless your circumstances change.

Changes to Council Tax benefit

From April 2013, the national Council Tax Benefit scheme will be replaced with a grant scheme where local Councils will be able to set their own criteria for payments. Mansfield District Council will be creating its own scheme and will issue more information about it as soon as it is available.

HOW WE CAN HELP

If you are worried about any of these changes you should ask for advice now. If you don’t pay your rent you could lose your home, so contact your Housing Officer about the different ways to pay. You can also:

- Contact Homefinder, the Council’s choice based letting scheme, to apply to transfer to a smaller home
- Make sure you are claiming all the benefits you are entitled to – for example, money to help with the costs of a disability
- Contact the Council’s Money Advice or Welfare Rights Service for help with managing your finances and claiming the correct benefits
- Try to find some paid work to increase your income, or
- Get more information about the cap on benefits by calling the Government’s information line on 08456 057 064.
Community groups celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee

Community groups across the District got together in June to celebrate the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee.

The Peafield Community Association organised a Jubilee Celebration in Peafield Park on 9 June. Entertainment included a climbing wall, clown, circus skills workshop and a raffle which raised £75.

The Bellamy Big Lunch event took place on 6 June at the South Mansfield Community Centre. Children could enjoy face painting, go karts and a bouncy castle and there were several stalls including a cake stall, nearly new stall and a raffle. The event was organised by the Bellamy Community Stakeholders’ Group, the Bellamy Tenant and Residents’ Group, the YMCA, Sure Start, St Peter’s Church and the South Mansfield Christian Fellowship Group.

Mansfield District Council’s Tenants’ Forum also held a Jubilee event in Mansfield’s Market Place on Saturday 21 April. The Pleasley Brass Band, Mansfield Male Voice Choir and the Elderly Entertainers performed on the day and £600 was raised for local charities.

Mansfield was proud to celebrate its unsung heroes at the Volunteer Awards in May. The six winners received awards for their commitment and dedication to making their community a better place. To read more about the winners and the reasons for their nominations visit www.mansfield.gov.uk/volunteerawards

The Council has also commissioned a short film called Celebrating Volunteering, which shows the ways that people can volunteer within the Council. To view the film visit www.mansfield.gov.uk/volunteering

Celebrating volunteers

New running project needs volunteers

From September 2012, all Mansfield residents will have the opportunity to take part in FREE weekly 5k timed runs in Manor Park, Kingsley Avenue, Mansfield Woodhouse. The runs will be taking place every Saturday at 9am and are perfect for people of all ages and abilities.

Volunteers are also needed to help with activities such as uploading the running times and helping to marshal the routes.

Please contact Sports Development Officer, Martin Cook on 01623 463 026 or mcook@mansfield.gov.uk for more information.

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING?

There are many ways that you can volunteer at Mansfield District Council and other organisations in the Mansfield area.

Within the Council there are volunteering opportunities for people wanting to get involved including friends of parks groups, tenant and residents’ groups, community groups, sports groups and the Citizens’ Panel, which is made up of residents who agree to receive surveys about Council services, initiatives and events.

If you are interested in finding out more about what volunteering opportunities are available and who to contact, please see below:

For information about tenant and residents’ groups contact Milly Alonso or Helen Jayes on 01623 463 147, malonso@mansfield.gov.uk or hjayes@mansfield.gov.uk

For information about friends of parks groups contact Andy Chambers or Jo Hull on 01623 463 510, achambers@mansfield.gov.uk or jhull@mansfield.gov.uk

For information about sports groups contact Martin Cook on 01623 463 026 or mcook@mansfield.gov.uk

For information about the Citizens’ Panel contact Jeremy Regan or Sioned Dolan on 01623 463 372 or panel@mansfield.gov.uk

For more information about other volunteering opportunities please contact Lesley Watkins at the Mansfield Community Volunteer Service on 01623 651 177 or lwatkins@mansfieldcvs.org
Have your say

Get involved

Do you have an opinion on how we deliver our services? Why not inspect them and work with us to improve them?

The Housing Services Panel allows you to scrutinise Council housing services to make sure we are providing them to the highest standards. It also ensures greater transparency in how the Council operates and allows tenants to have their say.

The panel is looking for more volunteers to get involved and help to maintain the excellent work it has already carried out. If you are interested and can spare a few hours a month or would like more information, please contact the Service Development Officer on 01623 463 485.

Estate walkabouts run every three months to give tenants and residents the opportunity to meet up with Tenancy Service Officers and discuss issues such as fly tipping, graffiti and overgrown gardens.

Members of tenant and residents’ groups, Councillors and other Council staff also regularly participate in the walkabouts. If there are any issues that affect your area or you have an idea or suggestion which you think may improve it, please join in! Dates, locations and times are available below.

Estate Walkabout Schedule 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEETING PLACE</th>
<th>TIME AND DATES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bishop’s Walk Memorial Club, Church Warsop</td>
<td>10am 14/9/12 &amp; 14/12/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-serviceman’s Club, Slant Lane, Mansfield Woodhouse</td>
<td>10am 21/9/12 &amp; 7/12/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northfield Community Centre, Charnwood Lane, Mansfield Woodhouse</td>
<td>10.30am 20/9/12 &amp; 6/12/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandy Lane Surgery, Sandy Lane, Ravensdale</td>
<td>10am 11/10/12 &amp; 25/10/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingham Court car park, Off Jubilee Way South, Mansfield</td>
<td>10am 19/9/12 &amp; 12/12/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reindeer pub, Southwell Road West, Mansfield</td>
<td>10am 16/8/12 &amp; 15/11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrowhill Hill Community Link, Barrowhill Walk, Mansfield</td>
<td>10am 14/11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garibaldi Road shops, Forest Town</td>
<td>10am 21/8/12 &amp; 20/11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuxford Court Community Centre, Off Thorpe Road, Mansfield</td>
<td>10am 22/8/12 &amp; 21/11/12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddies, Peel Crescent, Mansfield</td>
<td>10am 4/9/12 &amp; 11/12/12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What do you think of our housing services?

Do you have an opinion on how we deliver our services? Why not inspect them and work with us to improve them?

There are many ways that you can volunteer at Mansfield District Council and other organisations in the Mansfield area.

Walking about your estates
HAVING WORK DONE IN YOUR HOME?

If you are due to have work carried out in your home you will receive a letter from the Council to let you know when work will be starting on your street. You will need a gas box fitted on your property before work can start. If you do not already have one fitted already, the National Grid will be in touch to install one.

Once this has been installed, you will receive a letter from the Council telling you who your nominated gas supplier is. If you are happy with your nominated supplier you do not need to do anything else as the Council will arrange for you to have a meter installed.

You will then receive another letter asking you to contact your nominated supplier to arrange a property survey. It is at this point they will discuss details about the work including boiler location, radiators and how long the work will take.

Once the work is complete, the Council will be in touch with you if you have a debit or credit on your District heating account and this will be resolved accordingly. A decorating service will also be available if your property has been affected by the work.

Work will soon be starting in the Shirland Drive and Mappleton Drive areas of the estate, eventually taking place at a rate of approximately 50 properties per week.

For further information please contact Paul Barker, Landlord Services Manager on 01623 463 269 or pbarker@mansfield.gov.uk or Helen Bartle, Climate Change Officer on 01623 463 812 or hbartle@mansfield.gov.uk
Milky Alonso and Helen Jayes are Mansfield District Council’s Tenant Involvement Officers and their main role is to get Council tenants involved in improving housing services.

Milly, who has been in the role for eight years, said: “There are a variety of ways that tenants can get involved such as joining their local tenant and residents’ Group which work on behalf of their community.

“Tenants can also sit on various panels, forums and improvement groups, where they can discuss ideas and help to influence decisions made in the Housing department. They can also be involved in armchair volunteering which could involve proofreading, commenting on documents or filling in surveys.

“There are also opportunities for tenants to be trained up as Mystery Shoppers and Service Inspectors who test our services and help us improve them.”

Helen, who has worked at the Council for 28 years and been in her current role for 18 months, adds: “We support all our volunteers by providing training to build their confidence and knowledge of the Housing department’s work. We support groups with grants, administration support and advice on what they want to achieve. We also provide expenses to volunteers so they are not out of pocket and we try and make it fun and sociable.

“Our job is also about helping communities. We can help tenants find funding for projects in their area, help them organise events and guide them on any issues they may have. We also work with other Housing organisations to compare how we work with tenants and share ideas.”

For information about how you can get involved contact Milly or Helen on 01623 463 147, malonso@mansfield.gov.uk or hjayes@mansfield.gov.uk

ABOUT MILLY AND HELEN

Milly lives in Arnold and has two children and three grandchildren. In her free time, she volunteers at her local Rotary Club and enjoys travelling, pilates and eating out at restaurants. Milly says that the best part of her job is motivating people to help others and themselves.

Helen lives in Mansfield and has two children and a grandson. She says the best part of her job is meeting new people.

Both Milly and Helen agree that the worst part of their job is not being able to get as many people volunteering as they would like!
What’s on July 2012 - January 2013

**What: “On the Right Track” - The Story of Sport in Mansfield exhibition**
*Where: Mansfield Museum, Leeming Street, Mansfield*  
*FREE!*

The Museum’s 2012 summer exhibition is all about sport, the Olympics and local sporting clubs and organisations.

**What: Summer in the Streets**
*When: 21 July – 30 August*  
*Where: Market Place, Mansfield*  
*FREE!*

An exciting programme of activities and entertainment will be taking place throughout the summer, including circus skills workshops, a climbing wall and Mansfield’s famous beach.

**What: Snow White and the Seven Dwarves**  
*When: 1 December – 6 January*  
*Where: Palace Theatre, Leeming Street, Mansfield*  

Come along to this year’s Christmas pantomime, which features Tupele Dorgu (Kelly Crabtree in Coronation Street) as the Wicked Queen.

For more events and activities visit [www.mansfield.gov.uk/whatson](http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/whatson)

**Housing Services Panel**

The Housing Services Panel works closely with the Council's Housing department to identify ways of improving how we deliver the service. The panel also monitors the Housing department’s performance and ensures that appropriate action is taken where necessary.

**Housing Services Panel meetings**

20 September  
10am – 12noon  
Oakham Room, Civic Centre, Mansfield  

18 October  
10am – 12noon  
Oakham Room, Civic Centre, Mansfield

**Mansfield District Council’s Tenants’ Forum**

The Tenants’ Forum ensures that the Council helps tenants and residents improve their housing and living environment by giving them the opportunity and support to get involved with housing groups and external organisations.

**Mansfield District Council’s Tenants’ Forum meetings**

5 September  
2.30pm - 3.30pm  
Stacey Road Community Centre, Mansfield  

7 November  
1.30pm - 3.30pm  
Stacey Road Community Centre, Mansfield

**USEFUL CONTACTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department/Officer</th>
<th>Contact Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield South Housing Office (Sandy Lane)</td>
<td>01623 463 842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mansfield North Housing Office (Civic Centre)</td>
<td>01623 463 129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Repairs Contact Centre</td>
<td>01623 463 500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashfield and Mansfield Homefinder</td>
<td>01623 463 402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Control</td>
<td>01623 463 341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Advice Service</td>
<td>01623 463 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money Advice Service</td>
<td>01623 463 451</td>
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<tr>
<td>Welfare Rights Officer</td>
<td>01623 463 450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right to Buy/Leaseholders Officer</td>
<td>01623 463 062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenant Involvement Officers</td>
<td>01623 463 273/463 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 hour emergency contact (repairs)</td>
<td>01623 463 050</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information has been gathered by Mansfield District Council in good faith. Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy at the time of production. We cannot be held responsible for any amendments, changes, alterations or rescheduling of events or meetings presented in this magazine.