

# Contact

THE MAGAZINE FOR MANSFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL TENANTS

## INSIDE:

**Tenants' Annual  
Report 2018/2019**  
Pages 2-7

**Honour for  
Town View**

Page 11

**300 new homes**

Page 12



## Tenants' Annual Report 2018/2019

**6,501**  
properties managed

**228**  
employees

**£25.5m**  
rental income

**£2.6m**  
other income

### Main items of expenditure

**24%**  
general repairs  
and maintenance

**11%**  
building new properties

**10%**  
borrowing and loans

**4%**  
repairing properties when  
tenancies end, getting them  
ready for new tenants

**10%**  
improvements, including  
bathrooms, kitchens,  
property adaptations  
and improving energy  
efficiency of properties.

The remainder (41%) was spent on general running costs, including staffing costs for support services, housing allocations, tenancy services and tackling anti-social behaviour.

## Looking forward to a bright future



**Cllr Marion Bradshaw**  
Portfolio Holder for Housing

### Welcome to this latest edition of **Contact** which features the results of Mansfield District Council's Annual Report for tenants.

This report is something we produce every year to enable our tenants to hold the council's housing services to account and shows how well we performed as a landlord during 2018/2019.

I'm happy to report that the authority achieved encouraging results again, delivered, at times, under testing financial circumstances - for both tenants and the council.

Following the roll-out of Universal Credit and new homelessness reduction legislation, the council has continued to focus on trying to prevent tenants from falling into arrears and eviction.

The council now employs more officers dedicated to preventing homelessness and helping tenants keep on top of their rent. If you are facing difficulties paying your rent, it is vital you contact us as soon as possible so we can put help in place to avoid you losing your home.

Improving the energy efficiency of our properties by replacing the old district heating schemes with individual gas boilers is one of the ways we have tried to help our tenants manage the

rising cost of living more easily.

The council has also been giving some of its properties fire safety upgrades and this edition contains important advice about how to keep yourself and your neighbours safe in blocks of flats and what to do if fire breaks out.

Finally, it was great to see our Town View complex reach the finals of prestigious national awards. It shows how we build, and will be continuing to build, high quality social housing in this district, helping to give more and more people a decent and affordable roof over their head.

The council is accelerating its programme with a plan to build 300 new council homes over the next five years.



### Meeting your needs

We may be able to provide this information in larger print, in Braille, on audio tape, on CD or in another language. If you'd like to find out more please contact **01623 463463**, minicom **01623 463444** or email **mdc@mansfield.gov.uk**.

# Improving your homes

**We continue to deliver a programme of investment in council owned properties.**

## Our pledge

We will ensure our homes meet your standards by continuing to replace or upgrade kitchens and bathrooms.

Whilst most properties have now been completed as part of the Decent Homes work, we will continue to carry out upgrades on properties where the work has previously been refused.

We will also continue to improve the environment you live in by upgrading or removing drying areas and improving communal areas in blocks of flats.

## What we installed

- 95 new kitchens
- 51 new bathrooms
- 469 external doors
- 50 window upgrades
- 134 properties had new uPVC soffits and fascias
- 50 properties had new roofs
- 107 central heating boilers

# Repairs and maintenance

## Our pledge

We will ensure our repair and maintenance service meets your standards by continuing the drive to improve the quality of repairs and the time it takes to carry out those repairs.

The average number of repairs completed per property was 3.3 and it took an average of 6.6 days to complete a repair.

We now have an even more efficient way of working after introducing mobile technology for our repairs teams. They receive work, order parts and sign off repair jobs on their mobile devices, replacing the need for paper job tickets. This helps drive down costs and complete more repairs in less time.

## Did you know?

**96% of repairs** are completed on the first visit



## What we did

- 8,850 emergency repairs
- 4,460 urgent repairs
- 10,949 routine repairs

# Your Tenancy

## How we let your homes

When we let our properties we ensure that we prioritise people who are deemed at the time to be in the greatest need.

We aim to make the best use of our housing stock by reducing overcrowding, tackling under occupation and making the best use of adapted properties for those with a disability.

The council has an agreed standard which all of its properties should meet before we let them to new tenants. We continually check to ensure that this standard is being achieved.

**There are currently 7,640 households on the housing register. This is 980 more than in 2016/17.**



Number of properties by bedroom	Average weekly Social rent	Average weekly Affordable rent
47 bedsits	£56.96	N/A
2,378 one-bedroom properties	£66.72	£82.23
2,064 two-bedroom properties	£74.00	£92.54
1,899 three-bedroom properties	£79.92	£108.20
118 four-bedroom properties	£85.42	N/A
2 five-bedroom properties	£88.42	N/A

### What we did

We let 468 properties, of which 50 were let to new households in housing need. A total of 118 existing council tenants were transferred into more suitable housing, either downsizing into smaller properties or moving from overcrowded homes.

### Our pledge

We aim to regularly refresh our housing list to ensure that it is more accurate and removes people who no longer require a home so that housing is allocated to those in most need. We will also ensure that those on the list are in the correct band according to their need.

We will also ensure that it reflects the requirements of the new Homeless Reduction Act to help those people who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness.

## Did you know?

We own  
**6,501**

properties and average re-let time to bring a property back into use is 23.31 days. 88% of properties are accepted on their first offer.



# How we manage your tenancy



The money we get from renting our properties is used to pay for the management and maintenance of your homes and neighbourhoods. It is therefore important that we collect all the rent that is due.

The Government told us that we had to reduce the amount of rents people pay by 1% each year from 2016/17 to 2019/20.

This means we have had less money to spend on the management and maintenance of your home.

Next year, for the first time since 2016/17, the council will be able to slightly increase rents to help fund the essential services the housing department provides.

Our Housing Income Officers are available to discuss any financial difficulties you may be having. It is important that you contact them straight away if you are having problems paying your rent.

## What we did

Following the restructure of Landlord Services, the emphasis of work continued to focus on income collection, income maximisation and the prevention of homelessness.

In particular we made better use of the Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme to help those tenants with specific, short-term financial need.

## Our pledge

We will work with you to try to make sure you do not fall into debt and will continually monitor housing allocations to ensure that properties are affordable for the incoming tenant.

We now also have three Financial Inclusion Officers who can help you if you are experiencing difficulties in paying your rent. They can also assess if you are accessing all the benefits you are entitled to claim.

## Did you know?

We collected  
**over 99% of all rent that was due.**

We served in excess of 700 Notices of Seeking Possession and unfortunately had to carry out 29 evictions on people who did not pay their rent.



# Your neighbourhood and community

**Maintaining safe communities where people are able to enjoy their homes is a key priority for the council – and it is never a one-size-fits-all approach.**

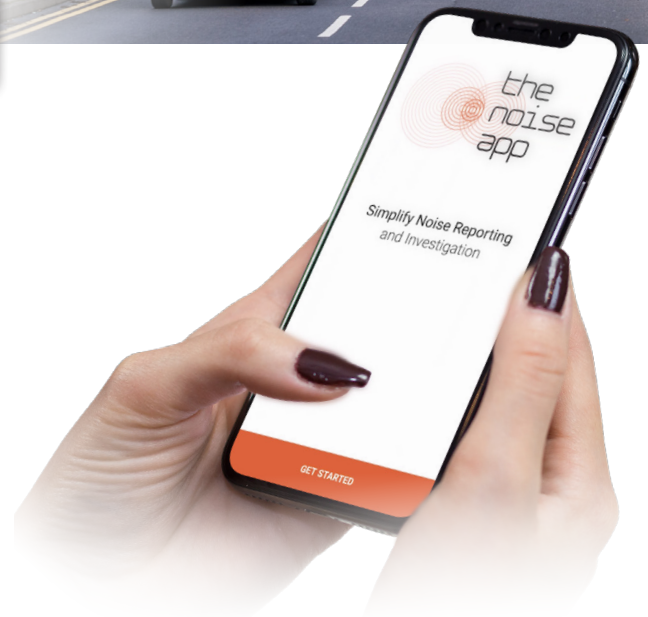


## What we did

The council continues to work closely with the community police teams, Community Safety Officers and partners from other agencies, to achieve solutions to a variety of problems by using a full range of legal powers.

We removed a number of unused drying areas which were seen as a magnet for anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.

The council has state-of-the-art noise monitoring equipment to help resolve noise nuisance issues. It allows us to gather essential evidence, rather than having situations where it is one person's word against another.



## Our pledge

We are introducing a phone app that tenants will be able to use to record any noise-related issues.

This will support the council's own noise monitoring equipment. It allows us to gather essential evidence, rather than having situations where it is one person's word against another.

We will continue to use all available legal options that are available to us, through either direct action, or action through one of our partner agencies, to improve neighbourhoods that attract fly tipping, to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and to reduce the fear of crime.

## Did you know?

**During 2018/19 the Housing department dealt with 446 reports of anti-social behaviour, of which more than 80% were resolved.**



# Working with you

## Tenant scrutiny



The Housing Services Panel (pictured) is our tenant led scrutiny scheme and is made up of a group of volunteers who work together to challenge and improve the services delivered by the council in its role as landlord.

This year the council held a number of tenant roadshows (pictured below right) across the district to give advice about various services that are available. They also gave the council an opportunity to discuss the role of the Housing Services Panel and to recruit new members from across the district.

## Want to be a street or block champion?



Being a street or block champion is all about wanting to help make a difference in your local neighbourhood and being proud of where you live.

You only need to put in as much time and effort as you want and you'll get our full support.

### You can help us in the following ways:

- Being an important voice in your local area
- Making your neighbourhood a better place to live
- Getting involved in the delivery of local projects or events
- Providing support and information to your neighbours about council services
- Reporting local issues
- Supporting other people to get more involved.



### Our pledge

We will continue to work closely with the Housing Services Panel and other community groups that work to improve the neighbourhoods that they live in.

**If you are interested in becoming a street or block champion or would like further information, check out [www.mansfield.gov.uk/getinvolved](http://www.mansfield.gov.uk/getinvolved) to complete an application form.**



**If you cannot come to meetings, you can get involved via social media or online surveys to help improve services.**

# Staying safe in blocks of flats

## ✓ DO

- Keep communal areas clear of all items at all times (bikes, pushchairs, mobility scooters etc).
- Place all rubbish into the bins provided.
- Report any fly-tipping around the flats to your area housing officer. Dumped rubbish provides arsonists an opportunity to start fires.
- Test your smoke alarm weekly.

## ✗ DON'T

- Smoke in any enclosed communal areas (this includes the use of e-cigarettes and vapes).
- Prop or wedge open any doors in the communal areas; closed doors slow down the spread of smoke.
- Leave bags of rubbish in communal areas or outside bin stores.
- Remove internal doors or door closers inside your flat.
- Place or store any items or belongings, such as bikes and pushchairs in any communal electric/gas meter cupboard that you have access to.

## If there is a fire

**DO** leave the building if safe to do so and alert neighbours.

**DO** close the doors and windows behind you as you evacuate by the stairs.

**DON'T** re-enter the building until the fire service have given permission.

**DO** call 999 and then Mansfield District Council on 01623 463050 (24-hour number).

**DON'T** try to leave your flat if it is not safe to do so; stay by the window where you can be seen and place damp towels or bedding around any door frames.



## Upgrades at sheltered homes

**The council has been involved in a major programme of repairs and upgrades to improve the safety of its sheltered housing.**

The work has been done as a result of fire risk assessments of council home complexes.

It has included full rewires, installation of new fire alarm systems, plus new lighting and emergency lighting. In addition, the complexes have also had ceilings replaced, redecoration work and an overhaul of communal areas.

In some cases, tenants have had to move out temporarily while their flats were rewired, redecorated and had new carpets laid.

### Current and future works

Work at Willingham Court started in March and will continue into next year. So far, 28 properties of the 38 have been revamped.

At Sherwood Court, work on 16 properties has been completed since July. A new boiler house is being built to continue to run the communal heating within the complex.

Work at Roston and more works at Willingham Court are planned to start this winter with work at the rest of the complexes planned for 2020/21.



# How we help find you a home

**The Homefinder lettings system is operated by Mansfield District Council and Ashfield District Council.**

There are currently about 12,400 households on the joint register with about 7,640 of those in Mansfield.

The waiting list is spread across five priority bandings, number one being those with the most urgent need and bands four and five having no priority need.

Each application is assessed according to the Homefinder Lettings Policy to work out which households have the greatest need.

One of the criteria is that every applicant must have a connection to Mansfield.

We check an applicant's history for anti-social behaviour and applicants with medical issues must provide supporting evidence from their GP or consultant.

They can also let us know about any exceptional circumstances, such as financial hardship or moving to give or receive support.



## Village homes available

Does the idea of living in a village appeal to you?

If so, the council has several first floor one-bedroom flats at its Pleasley Springs complex available. They have been recently refurbished with new kitchens and bathrooms. The homes are aimed at people over 60 but we also accept bids from younger people with extra needs.

As well as a community centre, which holds regular activities including a lunch club and breakfast club, the complex also has some parking for residents.

It is situated close to the heart of Pleasley, a quiet village about three miles from Mansfield, and benefiting from a regular bus service.

**Find out more on Homefinder or call 01623 463402.**

## Property bids

Once we have allocated an applicant to a band, they can then bid for up to two eligible properties a week.

Anyone in bands two to five can bid within both the Mansfield and Ashfield areas. Those in band one are restricted to properties within the area of the council that administers their application form.

Bidding is usually done on the Homefinder website. The website has been made user friendly and allows applicants to upload documents and amend details if circumstances change.

The shortlists for properties are done weekly. They take into account band priority, how long an applicant in that band has been waiting and suitability of the property. Users of the website can see where they rank on the shortlist for each property.

**Join the register online at [www.amhomefinder.co.uk](http://www.amhomefinder.co.uk). There are paper application forms available for those with no access to the internet.**

# Meet the team

## Housing Income Officers



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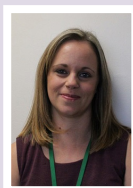


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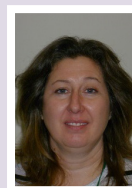


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**Maria Griffin**

**Financial  
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## Housing Management Team



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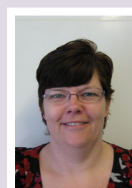


**Geoff Lomas**

**Anti-social  
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**Helen Howis**

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## Get in touch

Poppy Fields Extra Care  
**01623 463076**

Housing repairs  
**01623 463463**

Out of hours  
emergency repairs  
**01623 463050**

Homefinder  
**01623 463402**

Central Control  
**01623 463341**

Housing advice service  
**01623 463125**

Financial inclusion officer  
**01623 463451**

Right to buy/  
leaseholders officer  
**01623 463360**

Tenant involvement officer  
**01623 463363**



# Homes in award final

**Town View, the council's flagship development of 54 homes for the over-55s, made the final for a major award.**

The £9.1m complex was shortlisted for the Best Older Person's Development category for developments of more than 50 homes, in the prestigious Inside Housing Development Awards 2019.

The Town View senior person's living scheme has 42 apartments and 12 bungalows for over-55s, six of which are in shared ownership.

The secure gated development, set around a "village green" garden with outdoor fitness equipment, includes ten apartments provided through Nottinghamshire County Council Adult Social Care that aim to enable older people, needing additional support, to live independently for longer.



## Helping you to live independently

Council support is available to help disabled residents live independently in their own homes.

Adaptations can be made to your home to make it safer, and more accessible and easier to use the bathroom and kitchen. It could be as simple as adding hand rails or altering the heating and lighting controls to make them easier to reach.

We can also provide equipment such as stair-lifts, ceiling track hoists, through-floor lifts, accessible shower facilities and wash and dry toilets.

Tenants are assessed by Nottinghamshire County Council's Occupational Therapy (OT) service who work out how best to help a tenant and make recommendations to Mansfield District Council about what equipment and/or adaptations are required.

**Tenants who feel their home requires adapting should contact the county council's OT service on 0300 500 8080.**



## Lifeline at push of a button

Another way to help vulnerable people to live independently is the council's Lifeline service. This gives people who live alone the security of knowing that someone is available at the push of a button if they require assistance or support.

**For more information on the Lifeline service, including how to apply, contact the ASSIST team on 01623 463076 / 01623 463341.**





# Plans for another 300 council homes



**Mansfield District Council has approved ambitious plans to build another 150 affordable and energy efficient council homes to rent over the next four years.**

The Full Council approved the £51.9m plan which expands on a major building programme agreed by the council last year to build 147 homes at a cost of £21.4m.

For many years, councils have been restricted in how much they could borrow to fund the building of new council homes. Last year, the Government changed the rules and the cap on how much councils could borrow against their own housing assets to fund new homes.

The properties will be built in line with the council's climate change agenda by being

sustainable and energy efficient, and the construction of them will provide employment and training opportunities for local people.

They include family homes to rent, shared ownership properties and at least 100 new homes in an expansion of its acclaimed Poppy Fields development for older people.

Bungalows and ground floor accommodation will be included in the housing mix.

An estimated 80 homes will be provided through acquisition, development and renovation as part of a masterplan for the town centre and other strategic sites.



## Why we need more properties

**Figures show the district's ageing population increased by 22 per cent between 2006-2016.**

Studies have also shown that Mansfield also has a higher-than-average proportion of lone parent households and higher-than-average numbers of people with disability, mobility and long term health conditions.

There are currently more than 3,500 households in some form of priority need (Bands 1, 2 and 3), on the council's housing register in Mansfield.

**The council's new proposed Local Plan estimates that the district will need 6,500 new homes between now and 2033.**