

Inside this edition of **Contact**

3 NEWS

Welcome to your new look magazine! Drop in and see us! 'Like' our Facebook page?

COUNCIL CATCH UP

Mansfield to welcome London 2012 Olympic Torch relay route Brown bins available for all

YOU AND YOUR HOME

Do you need a hand? Pay the easy way Dates for housing repairs

6-7 FEATURE ARTICLE

Make sure your home is safe from fire

COMMUNITY CORNER

Have a Big Lunch over the Jubilee weekend Come and celebrate the Queen's Jubilee Bellamy Bugle's future is secured

HAVE YOUR SAY

Long term support for the elderly - how should it be delivered?

What you thought of Contact magazine

GET INVOLVED

Want to join one of our Tenants and Residents' groups?

10 GREEN ZONE

New gas heating systems for Oak Tree Lane estate

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Bev can offer you a Lifeline

12 WHAT'S ON

12 GET IN TOUCH



Welcome to your new look Contact magazine. I hope that this edition updates and informs you about your Housing service and what's been happening in your communities and across the District.

he next few months will see the start of exciting new projects as well as changes and improvements to some of our services. Below are some projects and services featured in this edition of Contact as well as additional information about services we offer and how we are working to improve the District.

Oak Tree Lane estate heating scheme

We are committed to helping you reduce the cost of fuel. On page 10 you will find information about an exciting new project to replace the District heating systems in the Oak Tree Lane estate area. This will not only improve the resilience of the heating systems but will enable those of you who live in the area to use gas as a source of energy for the first time.

Welfare and financial advice

We are committed to offering welfare support and money advice and would urge anyone who is facing financial difficulty to contact their Housing Officer at the earliest opportunity. We can help you respond to benefit changes and ensure that you don't face issues with your tenancy as a result of arrears. Our Housing Officers will be happy to offer advice and can put you in touch with specialist officers who can give advice and help you manage your finances more effectively.

Long Term Support Service

As I am sure many of you are aware, the services that we have offered as part of the Supporting People Programme are coming to an end this year. I would like to reassure all of you who currently use this service that we are working very hard to establish a new service that will respond to your needs and those of our most

vulnerable residents. We will also be speaking to everyone who currently uses the service to ensure that ongoing needs have been identified. We hope that we will be able to give you more details about this in the summer. Please see page 9 for more details about how you can get involved in shaping the service.

Antisocial behaviour

I would also like to update you on our work to tackle antisocial behaviour and crime in our neighbourhoods, in partnership with Nottinghamshire Police and other agencies. As part of our role in the partnership, we have continued to actively manage our tenancies and enforce our tenancy conditions. This has resulted in a number of tenants being served with enforcement notices, which have in some cases resulted in eviction and/or injunctions. Last year, Newgate, Woodland, Carr Bank and Portland were identified as priority areas that needed specific attention and focus. As a partnership we have seen real improvements in crime levels in these areas. This year, Oak Tree has also been identified as a priority area. We will continue to work with the Police to address problems with the aim of reducing instances of antisocial behaviour and criminal activity.

As always we would like your feedback and involvement. If you would like to get involved with Tenant and Residents' groups or are interested in completing questionnaires or feedback surveys please contact the Tenant Involvement Officers on 01623 463 273/ 463 147 who will be happy to assist.

Welcome to your new look magazine!



Welcome to your new look tenants' magazine, which will now be issued every April, July, October and January.

As well as giving you information about the Council's Housing Service, we would welcome any ideas for articles, including achievements, queries, competitions and community events.

We would like your input into our community pages and are interested in hearing your feedback so we can continue to develop the magazine.

If you would like to get in touch, please contact the Tenant Involvement Officers on **01623 463 273/463 147**.

'Like' our Facebook page?



We are encouraging tenants and residents to 'like' the Council's Housing department's Facebook page, called Our Homes and Neighbourhoods (Mansfield).

The page will have regular housing updates and will also give you the opportunity to be involved and have your say without having to attend meetings. The page is for all Mansfield District residents, not just Council tenants and is available at

www.facebook.com/pages/Our-Homes-and-Neighbourhoods-Mansfield/256356937744363



Drop in and see us!

New drop-in advice sessions offering basic tenancy and housing advice are now available.

he sessions offer a wide range of advice and support including housing and tenancy advice, help with completing forms, reading letters, budgeting and debt advice, benefits advice and information about tenants' rights.

The sessions are run by the Council's Tenancy Support team and are held on the first Wednesday of each month from 1pm to 4pm at Hickling Court Community Centre, Ravensdale, Mansfield.

It is hoped that the sessions will improve access to the Tenancy Support service, tackle problems earlier and potentially help people to stay in their homes for longer and avoid homelessness.

The sessions are for everyone across the District regardless of whether you are a Mansfield District Council tenant, Housing Association tenant, private landlord or homeowner. If you prefer to be seen in a private interview room this can be arranged.

In addition, the Council can make referrals on your behalf to other agencies for advice and support. You can also get advice about developing your personal skills, such as confidence building, assertiveness training and basic literacy. Recruitment specialists, OTR Working Links, will also be attending the sessions to give job search advice and advice about how to access training courses in the area.

It is hoped that the sessions will be rolled out across the District in the coming months. For more information, please contact Senior Tenancy Officer, Vicky Palmer on **01623 463 403** or **vpalmer@mansfield.gov.uk**

Mansfield to welcome London 2012 Olympic Torch relay route

On Thursday 28 June, Mansfield will feature in one of the world's biggest sporting events as the Olympic Flame will be passing through our streets.

he Flame will come into the District via Peafield Lane at 11.38am. It will then travel to the Rebecca Adlington Swimming Centre, before passing through Mansfield Town Centre where street entertainers will line the route. The Flame will leave the District via Southwell Road West at 1.35pm.

People of Mansfield and surrounding communities are invited to welcome the Olympic Flame and share in the excitement.

Many schools across the District and surrounding areas have already expressed an interest in bringing pupils along to the once-in-alifetime event.

A street map showing the route that the Olympic Flame will take within the Mansfield District is available at www.mansfield.gov.uk/torch



Brown bins available for all



rom 1 April the garden waste (brown bin) collection scheme will be available to all households across the District.

Brown bins will be collected fortnightly, with the exception of November to February where they will be collected monthly.

It will cost £25 per year to use this service and once you have paid, you will be issued a sticker for your bin and details of your scheduled collection dates. The scheme will run from 1 April to 31 March and even if you join part-way through

the year the cost will still be £25 – so join now to get the most out of the service.

Please call **01623 463 463** or visit **www.mansfield.gov.uk/ gardenwastepayment** to find out more about the service and how to pay.

If you wish to opt out of the service please call **01623 463 463** or complete the online form at **www.mansfield. gov.uk/gardenwasteoptout** and we will arrange for your brown bin to be collected.

DATES FOR HOUSING REPAIRS

Over the next year, the Housing Repairs team will be carrying out non-urgent external housing work by area as part of their batched repairs programme.

This includes work such as repairs to roofs, window frames and paths.

Please see the calendars to find out which areas the Council's Housing Repairs team will be in over June and July. The dates and areas for the rest of the year will be provided in the next edition of Contact, which will be out in July.

A full list of the streets in each area can be found at www.mansfield.gov.uk/housing

JUNE								
М	Т	W	Т	F	S	S		
				1	2	3		
4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24		
25	26	27	28	29	30			

JULY								
М	Т	W	Т	F	S	S		
						1		
2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
30	31							

- Church Warsop, Meden Vale & Warsop (North of Sherwood Street)
- Warsop (remaining streets)
- Peafield Lane

 Burns Avenue, Oxclose Lane
- & Sherwood Street areas

 Northfield Park area
- Slant Lane & Brown Avenue areas
- Sandy Lane & Ravensdale area
 - Upper Oak Tree Lane & Eakring area
 - Lower Oak Tree Lane

Do you need a hand?

Council tenants who are over 60 or have a disability are eligible to use Nottinghamshire County Council's Handy Person Scheme to help with additional housing repairs that are not covered by Mansfield District Council (MDC).

The scheme provides tenants with approved traders to carry out small jobs such as fixing curtain rails and putting up shelves for a small fee.

You will need to provide materials for the jobs but, if you have difficulty getting what's needed, you may be able to arrange to give money to the person doing the work so they can buy the materials for you.

In addition to this service, MDC is also looking into providing a decorating service for elderly and vulnerable tenants for a small charge. More details about this will be available later in the year.

For more information about the scheme call **08449 80 80 80**, visit **www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk** or pick up a leaflet from your local housing office.



Pay the easy way

Why not pay your rent, Council tax and other tenancy charges by Direct Debit?

Direct Debit is the easiest way to pay your charges as 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.

You will remain in control of your money as we will always give you at least 10 working days notice of any changes we want to make and 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.

Even if you are in arrears with your rent, you can still pay by Direct Debit. However, you must 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 have not already started to pay by this fast and efficient method of payment and you would like to set up a Direct Debit, then please call 01623 463 463

MAKE SURE YOUR HOME IS SAFE FROM FIRE

Last year, 246 people across the country died in house fires and another 7,400 were injured. Just two to three breaths of toxic smoke from a house fire can leave you unconscious and unable to escape. That's why you need to do everything possible to stack the odds in favour of you and your loved ones surviving a fire.

working smoke alarm can buy you the valuable time you need to escape a house fire. In many cases, it can alert you before the fire catches hold.

Whilst the majority of homes in England now have at least one smoke alarm installed, one in four of these are likely to fail in a fire in the home because it is clogged, broken, or most commonly because the battery is flat or has been removed. Having a smoke alarm will only help you if it is working – so it is vital that you test it regularly.

A few simple steps can help keep your home and everyone in it safe from fire, such as making sure that hot pans and candles are never left unattended, putting cigarettes out properly and planning your escape route.

Fire spreads quickly and you could have as little as two minutes to escape so it is important that in the event of a fire you know the best way out to safety. So plan your escape route and make sure that everybody in your home knows about it.

Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service can provide you with valuable advice to keep you safe in your home.

Visit www.notts-fire.gov.uk or www.facebook.com/firekills to find out more.



How the Council can help keep you safe

The Council, as your landlord, has a responsibility to keep you safe from fire. Please see the Frequently Asked Questions below to find out more about gas and electrical safety in your home.



What gas and electrical items is the Council responsible for?

We are responsible for repairing and maintaining gas heating systems and boilers in our properties. We are also responsible for repairing and maintaining the electrical system, which includes the wiring, power points, light switches, lights and electric showers.

We are not responsible for the maintenance of tenants' own appliances and fittings such as light bulbs, cookers, TVs, washing machines, fridges and freezers.



Are tenants given a certificate when they move in to prove that the gas and electrical systems are safe?

When you move into a Council property, you will be given a gas safety certificate to show when the boiler was fitted and that it is in working order. Currently the electrical safety certificate is not given out to tenants, but we are currently changing our procedures and will be giving a copy of the test certificate to new tenants in the near future.



Does the Council carry out regular checks on the gas and electrical systems and if so how often?

We carry out a gas service every 12 months on all appliances within our properties and issue an annual gas safety certificate to the tenant. Electrical tests are carried out every ten years and when a property becomes vacant.



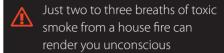
Who should tenants contact if they have any queries about gas and electrical safety?

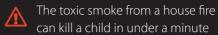
If you can smell gas or suspect a gas leak you should follow this advice:

- ⚠ Turn off the gas at the meter
- ⚠ Do not operate electrical switches
- ⚠ Do not use any naked flames
- ⚠ Open doors and windows
- ⚠ Call the National Grid on **0800 111 999**

If any other gas or electrical fault is suspected, you should contact the Council on **01623 463 463.**

FIRE KILLS: FACTS





Every five days somebody dies from a fire caused by a cigarette

You are four times as likely to die in a house fire if you do not have a working smoke alarm

One in four smoke alarms are likely to fail in a house fire because it is clogged, broken, or most often because the battery is flat or has been removed



WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

In the event of a fire, leave the house immediately via your agreed escape route and call **999**. Never attempt to tackle a fire yourself.

IN BRIEF

Bellamy Bugle's future is secured

Bellamy tenants' groups have been awarded £5,000 in funding to secure the future of their community newsletter the Bellamy Bugle.

The Bellamy Road Tenants and Residents Association and the Bellamy Stakeholders' Group applied to the Coalfield Regeneration Trust for funding to run a training programme to enable volunteers to produce the newsletter online.

The groups are currently looking for volunteers to participate in the training to help produce the online version and to promote it via social networking sites.

Four editions will be produced in the next year to keep the residents of Bellamy informed about what is happening in their area.

Residents will eventually be able to read the online editions on the computers at the Y5 community café on the Bellamy Road Estate.

Have a Big Lunch over the Jubilee weekend



Why not get your neighbours together for lunch as part of the Big Jubilee Lunch celebrations taking place across the country?



ast year almost two million people took part in the annual Big Lunch event, which aims to get as many people as possible across the UK to have lunch with their neighbours in a simple act of community, friendship and fun.

This year the Big Lunch event falls on Sunday 3 June, the same weekend as the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations, and it is hoped

that a record number of people will take part. If you're thinking of hosting a Big Jubilee Lunch event in your area visit **www.thebiglunch.com** or call the Big Lunch team on **08458 508 181** to register your event and receive a pack containing hints, tips and ideas to get your event off the ground as well as posters, leaflets, recipe cards and much more.

Come and celebrate the Queen's Jubilee



Celebration Celebration

A FREE event will be taking place on Saturday 21 April in Mansfield's Market Place from 10am to 4pm to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

Entertainment will include performances from the

Mansfield Male Voice Choir, Pleasley Brass Band, and Irish dancers. There will also be stalls and children's activities throughout the day.

The event is being organised by Mansfield District Council's Tenants' Forum, which is made up of representatives from Tenants and Residents' groups.

Long term support for the elderly - how should it be delivered?

The Council is looking at new ways of delivering its Long Term Support Service due to the withdrawal of its Supporting People funding.



the Supporting People Grant since 2003, however due to cuts in Government spending, the grant will be withdrawn from the end of March 2013.

The Council is still committed to continuing the service, which offers support to older and vulnerable people to help them maintain their independence. Our aim is to continue to provide support for elderly and vulnerable people living in both sheltered properties and their own homes and we are currently researching alternative methods of delivering the service.

Some consultation has taken place and a high percentage of those who responded said they wanted the service to continue in some form. However, changes will need to be made as the Council will not be able to provide the service at its current level.

A focus group was formed in 2000, giving residents the opportunity to be continually involved in reshaping the service. This group has been very active in driving changes. If you are interested in being involved please contact Long Term Support Services Manager, Sylvia Tarrant on 01623 463 341 or starrant@mansfield.gov.uk

WHAT YOU THOUGHT OF CONTACT MAGAZINE

In the September edition we included a survey to find out what you thought of Contact and what we could do to improve it.

Unfortunately we had a poor response with only 0.6% of you sending the survey back.

However, the good news is that what we got back was very positive.

HERE ARE THE RESULTS:

- Do you read Contact? 100% Yes
- Is Contact easy to read? 100% Yes
- Do you find Contact interesting?
 97% Yes
- Does Contact contain enough information for you?95% Yes

We can only improve Contact if you give us feedback.

Thanks to everyone who responded to the survey.
Congratulations to Alison
McFarland from Ladybrook who won a £20 Tesco gift voucher for sending her survey back.

GET INVOLVED

Want to join one of our Tenants and Residents' groups?



If you would like to get involved in our Tenants and Residents' groups or would like more information or dates of meetings, please contact the Council's Tenant Involvement Officers on **01623 463 273** or **463 127.**

Our current Tenants and Residents' groups are:

- Bellamy Tenants and Residents' Association
- Bull Farm Tenants and Residents' Association
- Forest Town Community Council
- New England Tenants and Residents' Association

- North Oak Tree Residents' Association
- North Sherwood Tenants and Residents' Association
- Peafield Community Association
- Priory Community Council
- Robin Hood Tenants and Residents' Group
- South Oak Tree Tenants and Residents' Association
- Three Ways Tenants and Residents' Group
- Pleasley Hill Stakeholders' group

NEW GAS HEATING SYSTEMS FOR OAK TREE LANE ESTATE

The Council is working on a project to replace all three coal-fired District heating systems on the Oak Tree Lane estate. Each property, currently on the District heating system, including the homes of private tenants and landlords, will get individual energy efficient gas boilers, new pipes and radiators.

e are currently finalising the project to determine the level of external funding that is available to help the Council move the project forward. It is planned that work will start in the spring and all work will be completed by December 2012.

The majority of the work will be covered by grants from British Gas and the National Grid. Any shortfall in the funding available will be met by the Council's Housing budget.

The current boilers are reaching the end of their lives and problems with the underground pipe that connects houses to the system can be difficult to trace and repair. The cost to tenants would also be higher if they continued to use the District heating scheme due to rising coal and maintenance costs.

Changing to highly efficient individual boilers will provide tenants with better choice and comfort while helping to tackl

fuel poverty issues. Plans are also being put in place to ensure that the Council will be able to help potentially vulnerable residents with any concerns they may have about the new systems. Advice and information will be available on a number of subjects, including ensuring residents are on the right tariffs for their new gas supply, offering energy efficiency tips, benefits information and how to maximise income.

The benefits of taking up the gas option will be a reduction in CO2 emissions and a more modern, efficient, cost effective and reliable system for tenants.

The current coal fired systems on the estate give off more than 10,000 tonnes of CO2 annually, which would fill 400 hot air balloons. This amount is over half of the Council's annual CO2 emissions. We are required to address climate change and reduce CO2 emissions as part of the Nottingham Declaration on Climate

Change and the Climate Change Act 2008. Tenants on the Oak Tree estate have already received information about the potential plans for the scheme.

Representatives from British Gas, National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions and Mansfield District Council arranged two surgery sessions in February to give residents the opportunity to ask questions, on a one-to-one basis, about the proposed new system.

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



BEV CAN OFFER YOU A LIFELINE

Central Control and Telecare Team Leader, Bev Baugh, is the first port of call when phoning the Lifeline service. She works five days a week alongside a team of seven staff and has been in the role for 13 years.



WHAT IS THE LIFELINE SERVICE?

The Lifeline service is a 24 hour response service run by Mansfield District Council. It works by giving people who live alone the security of knowing that someone is available at the push of a button if they require assistance or support. The system supports independent living and helps vulnerable people to stay in their own homes.

The Lifeline service consists of a unit which is plugged into a socket near your telephone and a light weight pendant that must be worn at all times while you are in your home or garden.

The unit is linked through to the Council's Central Control Centre, where our Central Control team are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. If you need assistance you can push the button on either your pendant or unit and this will put you straight through to the Central Control team. On signing up to the service we will take two contact names and numbers, your doctor's contact details and any health information that we might need to know about in an emergency. This will come up on a screen in the Central Control Centre when you press your button so we know straight away who you are, where you are and who to contact. The unit allows two way speech so we can speak to you directly and it also has inbuilt microphones so we can speak to you wherever you are in your home. We do not specify what calls should be made, anything you feel is important will be responded to. For more information about the Lifeline

service, contact Bev Baugh on 01623 463 341

or bbaugh@mansfield.gov.uk

ABOUT THE CENTRAL CONTROL CENTRE

The Central Control Centre is a 24 hour response centre that provides cover for a variety of Mansfield District Council services such as Lifeline, sheltered accommodation intercoms, out of hours repairs and the dog warden service.

Any calls the Council receives between 5pm and 8.30am are dealt with by the Central Control team and are either passed through to the relevant departments the next day or dealt with by the Council's call out staff.

Calls can be about anything from dead cats in the road and blocked toilets to calling ambulances for Lifeline clients - It's all in a day's work for the Central Control team!

ABOUT BEV

In her day-to-day role Bev deals with everything to do with the Lifeline service, from the enquiry stage through to fitting the equipment. She also manages the team at Central Control.

Bev says the best part of her job is providing people with advice to help them maintain their independence at home and the worst part is getting up at 5am for the day shift!

Bev is always ready to help and support Mansfield's residents. She would like to stress that the service is not just for Council tenants but for all residents in the Mansfield District.

In her spare time Bev enjoys property renovation, playing darts and holidaying abroad. She lives in Sutton in Ashfield with her partner and has two sons, four grandsons, a cat and a dog.

LIFELINE FAQS

Do I need anything special in my home to be able to have the Lifeline service?

You will need a working telephone line and an electrical socket within reach of your telephone socket to be able to use the service.

How long will it take to be fitted?

It will take just under an hour providing there are no problems.

How long will it take to work?

Your Lifeline service will be operational as soon as it is installed.

What do I have to do?

All you have to do is wear your pendant when you are at home or in your garden and test it once a month to check everything is working as it should be.

How do I test it?

Just press the red button and your call will be answered by staff at Central Control. If there is any problem with your equipment we can arrange a visit to resolve it.



What: There was an old lady who swallowed a fly

When: 15 May, 11.30am and 1.30pm Where: Palace Theatre, Mansfield

One of the world's best loved nursery rhymes is brought to life for the very first time in this magical new show.

What: Mansfield Arts Festival

When: 7 – 15 July

Where: Various locations around the District

A celebration of Mansfield through a range of performances, music and art.

What: Warsop Carnival
When: 8 July, 12noon to 7pm

Where: Carrs Show Ground, Church Lane,

Church Warsop

An open air music festival with events and activities including a parade, acts, displays and stalls.

What: Mamesfeld to Mansfield project

When: 14 and 15 July

Where: Various locations around Mansfield

town centre

A weekend of performances which celebrate traditional occupations and activities from Mansfield's past and present.

Housing group meetings



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

19 April 10am -12noon

Civic Centre, Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield

17 May 10am -12noon Civic Centre, Chesterfield Road South, Mansfield

Mansfield District Council's Tenants' Forum

Mansfield District Council's 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

2 May 1.30pm - 3.30pm Stacey Road Community Centre, Mansfield

6 June 1.30pm - 3.30pm Stacey Road Community Centre, Mansfield

4 July 1.30pm - 3.30pm Stacey Road Community Centre, Mansfield

GET IN TOUCH

USEFUL CONTACTS

Mansfield Woodhouse Housing Office	01623 463 275
Mansfield South Housing Office (Sandy Lane)	01623 463 842
Mansfield North Housing Office (Civic Centre	01623 463 129
Housing Repairs Contact Centre	01623 463 500
Ashfield and Mansfield Homefinder	01623 463 402
Central Control	01623 463 341
Housing Advice	01623 463 125
Money Advice	01623 463 451
Welfare Rights Officer	01623 463 450
Right to Buy/Leaseholders Officer	01623 463 062
Tenant Involvement Officers	01623 463 273/463 147
24 hour emergency contact (repairs)	01623 463 050

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.