

# Your Newsletter

The tenants' newsletter for Denbighshire Housing



Issue seven – Spring 2021

## A year of reflection



Over the past year, we have all seen unprecedented times with COVID-19 and the country's lockdowns, family loss, and communities pulling together are just a few things that have happened. A year on, the nation and Denbighshire Housing, is reflecting on the past twelve months; so much has happened. We hope that you are all continuing to stay safe and well.



We have seen amazing stories of our communities pulling together, and we shared with you, in the last edition, a great example of the residents of Maes Menlli, Bruton Park, Rhyl organising socially distanced bingo, quizzes and coffee mornings! There have been so many similar stories across our communities in Denbighshire, and if you have any stories of community spirit during the pandemic, we would love to hear from you!

## Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR 2020)

Last autumn, we asked you to help us shape our services that we deliver to you! We want to continue to raise our standards, to the highest possible level, and need to work with you to achieve this. We saw our best response, with over 381 (12%) completed surveys, of which 262 (69%) were online. Fantastic news!

Highlights from the survey include:

- ♥ Your local community is your top priority
- 👤 Having good neighbours is important
- ⚠️ More awareness of anti-social behaviour

We'd like to thank everyone who took part, as your views and opinions really matter.



Over the next 12 months, we will be focussing on rebuilding our communities, hosting events and improving areas that were identified in our recent tenant survey. For more information about this, see page 6-7.

### Covid Update

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for following the Welsh Government guidance and keeping Wales safe. For more information, see page 12

### Here to help

We are here to help and are committed to providing assistance and advice. For more information, see page 13

### Domestic Abuse

Tackling domestic abuse has been identified as a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan. For more information, see pages 16-17



Tai Sir Ddinbych  
Denbighshire Housing  
Buddsoddi yn ein Cymunedau • Investing in our Communities

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[www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk](http://www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk)

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# Inside this issue

## Denbighshire Housing:

Message from Geoff	Page 3
STAR Survey 2021	Page 6-7
Coronavirus Update	Page 12
New website	Page 15

## Investment & Improvements:

Housing Development Programme	Page 8
Planned works and improvements	Page 9
Repairs & Maintenance Update	Page 11
Environmental Improvements	Page 20

## Community & People:

Getting to know us!	Page 4-5
Tenant Awards Update	Page 10
Tenancy Fraud	Page 10
Did you know?	Page 13-14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Universal Credit</li><li>• Citizen's Advice</li><li>• TPAS Cymru</li><li>• Working Denbighshire</li></ul>	
The Old Oak Tree	Page 15
Domestic & Alcohol Abuse – Our pledge	Page 16-17
Community Development update	Page 18
Spotlight – What libraries can do for you?	Page 19



## Bulletin Board

To report any maintenance issues,  
contact Customer Services:  
Mon-Fri 9:00am – 5:00pm 01824 706000  
Out of Hours Emergency 0300 123 3068  
Galw Gofal (Careline) 0300 123 6688  
Single Point Of Access (SPOA) for support referrals  
0300 456 1000  
Gas Emergency 0800 111 999  
Electricity Emergency 080031 63 105

NHS Direct Wales  
111  
Floodline  
0345 988 1188  
Type talk  
0345 602 6340



# Message from Geoff Davies, Lead Officer, Community Housing

**Denbighshire Housing is proud to present our latest newsletter.**

**2020 was a challenging year, as the Covid Pandemic disrupted much of our plans at Denbighshire Housing. In particular, the lockdowns have affected our ability to deliver our services as usual, but also to enable us to engage effectively with our customers and communities.**

There is so much we have missed delivering this year, including holding community events during 2020. We value getting out and about and talking to the people who live in our communities. The feedback you share with us about your homes and services is so vital.

We were very disappointed that we had to postpone our tenant awards event last year. This was very successful in 2019 and raised the profile of so many amazing people who make our communities what they are. For more information about our next Denbighshire Housing Tenant Awards, see page 10.

2021 will be a challenging year for us all, adjusting to new ways of life and service delivery. We want to continue to improve our services and need your help and support to achieve this. We continue to deliver a significant investment programme in our homes, making sure they continue to meet the standards we all expect. See page 9 for more information.

I hope you managed to take part in our Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) in November, last year, but we are aware of the impact Covid may have had on some of this feedback. This is evident in the comments we've had about how important the local community is to those who responded. You can find out more about the results, and what happens next on page 6.

Finally, we know many people have been affected by the loss of people close to them over the past year. We were devastated to hear that Marion Bryan passed away, suddenly this February. Marion gave so much of her time to represent our tenants and support the

Denbighshire Tenant and Resident's Federation (DTARF) over many years. She travelled around Wales to represent Denbighshire Housing, and was also treasurer for DTARF, which is never an easy job. As well as this, she worked tirelessly for her local community in Denbigh and will be missed very much by many people.

From a personal point of view, Marion was always very supportive but was comfortable to challenge us when she felt something wasn't right. It is vital that we maintain this legacy in memory of Marion.



## Getting to know us

Each newsletter, we want to shine a spotlight on one of our housing staff, and a tenant representative. This edition is spotlighting Melvyn Hughes and John Woodward.

### A day in the life of **Melvyn Hughes** our Facilities Management Contract Officer

#### What is your role with housing?

I manage the operational side of Denbighshire Housing's Grounds Maintenance.

I liaise with contractors who carry out any grounds maintenance work around our estates and housing complexes.

I monitor & make sure our tenants receive a high quality service by our grounds maintenance contractors.

I ensure any fly tipping or litter is dealt with promptly, and reported to the relevant teams to deal with.

I manage the health and safety checks of the play areas that are owned by Denbighshire Housing. To ensure the play equipment is always safe to use, weekly inspections are carried out.

Occasionally I support with our community development events. One of my favourite events was when I was helping children make bird boxes to take home for their own gardens.

#### Describe a typical day in your role?

On a typical day, I would drive around our estates and complexes, monitoring the quality of areas where there has been grass cutting, weed control or hedge and shrub maintenance. I particularly enjoy walking around complexes, talking to tenants, and discussing any of the garden areas that they have, offering them advice. My role covers all of Denbighshire, starting in Rhyl then Prestatyn Meliden and Dyserth, all the way down to Llangollen Corwen and Llandrillo, making sure that all our sites are well maintained.

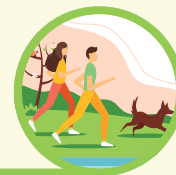
#### What have you missed most during lockdown?

I have missed spending time with my family, especially the garden BBQ's, which we regularly had in good weather. It hasn't stopped us completely, as my wife and I always sit and chat in the garden when the weather is nice. During the colder winter months, we often had our karaoke party for two, which gave us some laughs. I do miss going away on holidays whether it be in the hot sun or just in this country.

#### What is your favourite TV show?

Well my wife is into her soaps, so I normally watch my favourite documentaries, "paint dry" programme, as my wife would say. We always watch the old sitcoms together; just can't get enough of 'Only Fools and Horses' and the 'Royle Family'. We usually prefer to go on long walks and now we are approaching better weather we can start again soon.





## A day in the life of **John Woodward**, Chair of Denbighshire Tenant & Residents Federation (DTARF)

### What is your role with housing?

I am the Chair of the Denbighshire Tenants and Residents Federation (DTARF). This means I chair the monthly DTARF meetings, and work with Denbighshire Housing staff, to represent our tenants and improving services.

I first started going to tenants meetings in Llys-y-Felin, St Asaph about 2008/9 and also attended DTARF meetings.

It was around 2013/14 that I was asked to stand for chair of DTARF, and I have done it ever since.

### Describe a typical day in your role?

A typical day at a DTARF meeting would be to travel to various locations, depending on which community centre the meeting is being held at. Discuss any issues and put forward any concerns that tenants may have.

Then the following week I set aside a day to do a "have to do day" and action anything that has come out of the meeting.

Before lockdowns, we sometimes met with other county associations, groups and attended regional or national seminars. We would travel, with officers, to TPAS Cymru's annual conference, giving us a chance to represent Denbighshire Housing tenants and meet other tenants from around Wales.

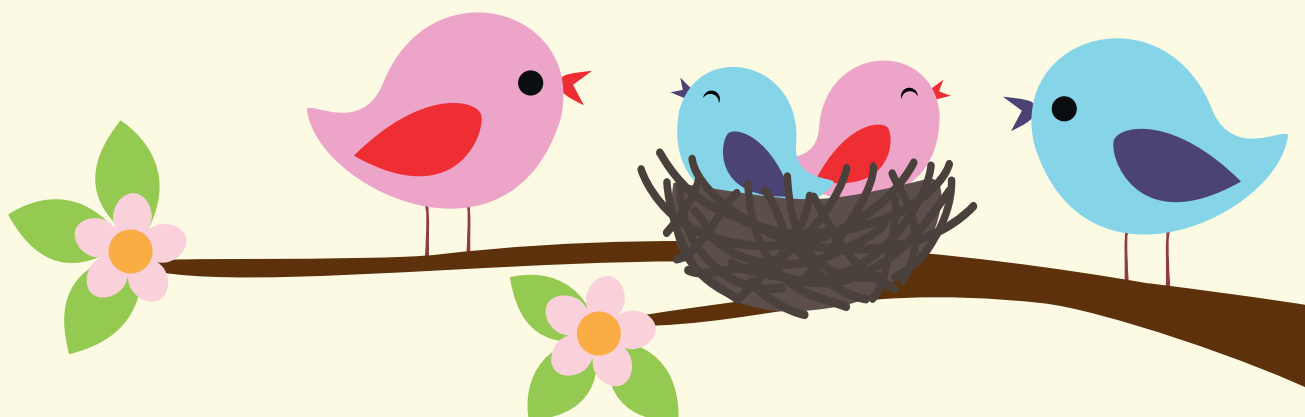


### What have you missed most during lockdown?

Since lockdown, I have missed the grandkids the most, one of which, I have not had the pleasure of seeing yet, (he was born last December). I've also missed going to our caravan for a chill out, and just the simple things like having a "run out" in the car, and not forgetting my passion – football.

### What is your favourite TV show?

My favourite tv shows are "Last of the summer wine" and "M.A.S.H." both by a country mile, and my favourite film "African Queen".

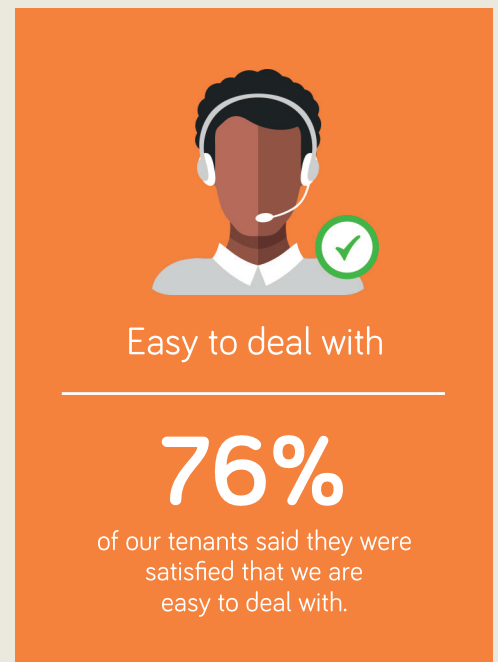


# Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) 2021

Firstly, we'd like to take this opportunity in thanking everyone who took part in our recent survey. We had over 381 (12%), of which 262 (69%) were online, which is fantastic news!

The past two years have seen some significant changes for Denbighshire Housing, our tenants and communities. We want to continue to raise our standards to the highest possible level and we need to work with you to achieve this.

Here are the results of the core questions:





Service charge

**60%**

of our tenants said they were satisfied that their service charge provides value for money.



Repairs

**71%**

of our tenants said they were satisfied with the overall repair service.



Overall service

**79%**

of our tenants said they were satisfied with the overall service we provide.

### Top 3 highlights from the survey include:

- Your local community is your top priority.
- Having good neighbours is important to you.
- You have more awareness of when people aren't acting responsibly.

We'd like to thank everyone who took part, as your views and opinions really matter.

### What next?

From the 2021 STAR Survey results, we will be focussing on:

- Developing our community development plan, by talking to tenants about how we can take the feedback forward.
- Talk with you more about how you can shape our services.
- Look at more ways to work with communities.
- Improve our digital communities by using email and texting being available.
- To keep in line with the local authorities housing sector benchmarking in Wales, and to continue to have your input into shaping our services, we will be sending out our STAR Survey again this autumn for you to complete. We hope that we have an even better response than we did this time.

## Housing Development Programme

**In our last newsletter, we shared with you the work that would be starting on building new, energy efficient Passivhaus homes in Denbigh and Prestatyn.**



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

North Wales based, Brenig Construction, started work on the development in Denbigh in October, we also appointed another local company, Peter T Griffiths Construction, to build four new apartments in Caradoc Road in Prestatyn, and work started there in January. The homes on both developments will be ready for tenants to move in by the autumn.

As part of our commitment to increasing new social housing in Denbighshire, we have been working closely with local builders. As part of the planning process, any large housing development has to include a percentage of affordable homes. A recent development in Dyserth, Cysgod y Graig, saw six affordable homes become available, of which we now own. Our new tenants moved in to the first one just before Christmas!

We are always looking for different opportunities to provide new homes in Denbighshire. We have recently bought an office block, Llys Anwyl in Churton Road, and will be converting it into 12 accessible apartments during the summer.



Also in Rhyl, the Welsh Government is investing to regenerate the town centre. As part of this project, we will be starting work on renovating the former Granite shop in the spring to provide apartments on the upper floor.

We will keep you updated on the progress of these projects, and other projects that are currently going through the planning process at the moment.







Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

## Planned Works

**Over the past year, we have still managed to deliver a number of planned works, within the Welsh Government guidelines to improve homes. These include:**

### Meliden External Major Improvements

Our external enveloping scheme, of 55 properties is currently underway in Meliden. Our contractor, Sustainable Building Services, have delivered a number of similar programmes of work for Denbighshire Housing over recent years, seeing improvements for your homes.

The improvement work represents a significant investment into the housing stock in Meliden. It has been designed to encompass a number of improvements including replacement roofs, replacement render, roofline and guttering improvements.

As part of the investment, we have also been successful in obtaining Welsh Government funding to deliver energy efficiency improvements to these properties. This additional work includes adding solar panels to the roofs, increased external wall insulation and battery storage to harness the energy produced by the solar panels.

This is the first time Denbighshire Housing has delivered such a large scale energy efficiency programme. The results will significantly improve the energy efficiency performance of each home and reduce your fuel bills. We are also installing energy monitoring equipment in our properties to track the energy efficiency of our homes. This will help us to deliver further improvements in the future. The works are due to be completed in May 2021.



### Heating Improvements

As part of our commitment to improve the energy efficiency of our homes, we have successfully installed 130 Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHP). ASHP increases the outside air temperature, which transfers to heated water back into the property, in a similar way to that of a conventional heating system.

The properties selected for this work do not benefit from a gas connection. This project is another first for Denbighshire Housing, and tenant feedback has been very positive. It has proved efficient once set up correctly and residents have switched to a suitable tariff away from their existing dual fuel tariff. If you have recently had ASHP installed and need any advice about your meter/ tariff, or advice on how to get the best performance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We intend to complete a second phase of this programme will be writing to all selected tenants during the course of 2021/22. This work is being completed to reduce fuel bills, improve comfort and to help achieve our targets of reducing the carbon foot print of Denbighshire Housing.

### Window, fascia and Soffit upgrade

Last year we intended to upgrade a large number of windows and roofline materials to our properties. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19 restrictions, we have had to delay the majority of these works. This has been due to lockdown restrictions resulting in supply chain problems across the manufacturing sector in this industry. We hope to review this during the course of 2021/22 in order to reschedule these works. Once we have a clearer indication of when we can recommence our programme of works, we will write to all tenants whose properties have been rescheduled to confirm arrangements.

## Tenancy Fraud



### what to do if you suspect fraud?

Tenancy fraud, for example, is when a tenant has a tenancy with us but lives somewhere else, sublet the home to another person (including family members). It also includes providing false information when applying for housing, or illegally applying to succeed a tenancy of someone who has died.

### Action we take against tenancy fraud

We will investigate all allegations of tenancy fraud, as it is very serious. Where we have sufficient evidence that fraud has taken place, we will take action. This action can include a criminal prosecution and/or a claim for possession of the property through civil courts.

### What can you do to help?

If you suspect someone is committing tenancy fraud please let us know by speaking to your Housing Officer, **call us on 01824 706000 or email [housing@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:housing@denbighshire.gov.uk)**

All reports will be treated in the strictest of confidence and you will remain anonymous to the reported party. You do not have to give us your contact details. However, if you would like us to contact you further regarding your report, please leave your name and contact number.

## Denbighshire Housing Tenant Awards 2021 Update

In our last newsletter, we updated you of our plans to postpone the 2020 Denbighshire Housing Tenant Awards until later in 2021. After much consideration of the ever-changing situation, we feel that it would be safer to postpone the awards until autumn 2022. However, that doesn't stop you from letting us know about all the great things that you, and people in your community have been up to.

We are hoping to launch next year's awards in spring 2022 and the categories will be:

### Young Tenant of the Year

- Community Hero of the Year
- Housing Resident/Community Group of the Year
- Garden of the Year – Tenant
- Garden of the Year - Community

### Tenant of the Year

- Good Neighbour of the Year
- Denbighshire Housing Customer Service of the Year
- Community Project of the Year
- Garden of the Year – Communal area

**So get your nominations ready!**





## Repairs, Maintenance and Essential Works Explained

We thought it would be useful to share with you our current recovery plan for repairs, maintenance, essential works and new builds during the current pandemic, COVID-19. Due to the current situation, and continued advice and guidance from the Welsh Government, our recovery response may change at short notice. The way we will do repairs will change, so we can follow social distancing measures where possible.

Thank you for your patience while we are getting this sorted. For more information visit [www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk/coronavirusupdate](http://www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk/coronavirusupdate) or contact us on **01824 706000**.

This recovery phase was accurate at the time of print.



### WE ARE HERE

#### Lockdown Phase

No non-essential repairs and works undertaken.

- Emergency and urgent repairs only
- Work to void properties
- Gas fuel Servicing, including safety checks and boiler repairs

#### Recovery Phase 1

We are expecting a high demand and long delays while we respond to the backlog of works.

- Emergency and urgent repairs – see website for more information
- Work to void properties
- Short duration routine repairs
- Aids and adaptations
- External works
- New build programme to resume
- Gas fuel Servicing, including safety checks and boiler repairs

#### Recovery Phase 2

We are expecting waiting times to reduce.

- Emergency and urgent repairs
- Work to void properties
- Jobs with a duration up to 1/2 day
- Aids and adaptations
- External works
- New build programme to resume
- Planned improvement programmes
- Gas fuel Servicing, including safety checks and boiler repairs
- All other fuel servicing including solid fuel and oil appliances

#### Recovery Phase 3

Business as usual will resume with new (normal) safety measures in place.

- Full return to business
- Emergency and urgent repairs
- Work to void properties
- Non-essential routine repairs
- Aids and adaptations
- External works
- New build programme to resume
- Planned improvement programmes
- Gas fuel Servicing, including safety checks and boiler repairs
- All other fuel servicing including solid fuel and oil appliances

Please ensure you stay at least **2 metres** away from any trade operatives whilst they carry out repair work in your home.



We want to thank you for all your support so far, and for keeping us and everyone safe. We continue to ask when a trade operative or officer visits your home, please can you follow the guidance and keep windows and doors open during our visit.

## Coronavirus Update

**The past 14 months have been a huge adjustment to all of us, our communities and our way of life as we knew it. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you for following the Welsh Government guidance and keeping Wales safe.**

In our autumn 2020 newsletter, we updated you on new measures we have put in place to continue delivering our services to you. These measures will continue to be in place to keep you, our staff and communities safe. We want to reassure you that we are continuing to do all we can to help support you through these uncertain times, as well as starting to look forward.

We are continually monitoring any advice or changes to the Welsh Government guidelines, especially regarding social distancing, and help support the reduction in the transmission of coronavirus.

It is important that we protect you and our workforce. If, at any point, we think either our staff or anyone in your home is being put at risk by not following the 2-metre rule, we will politely remind you to maintain social distance and if this continues, we will have to apologise and end the visit.

It is really important to us to keep everyone safe as much as possible.

Things will be different in order to keep everyone safe. Where possible:

- Appointments will be made in advance.
- We will call you in advance of our visit and you will be asked to confirm that you are not showing any symptoms or self-isolating 24 hours before your appointment. We will let you know what to expect during your visit.
- If you have symptoms of COVID-19, you must tell us before we visit or when we arrive so that we can rearrange the appointment.
- When answering your door, please check who it is, open the door, move back into your property. The officer will remain 2 metres away from your door.
- If we need to enter your home, please make sure you keep 2 metres away, or enter another room so we can safely enter your home.
- We will ask you and others in the house to wear a face covering, unless you or anyone is exempt for medical reasons.
- We will not be able to shake hands.
- In most situations staff will wear personal protective equipment (PPE)
- We will ask all other people to remain in a different room, unless they are joint tenants or essential for support.

Please ensure you stay at least **2 metres** away from any Housing Officer when they visit your home.





# Did you know...?

**Denbighshire Housing is here to help and is committed to helping with the transition to Universal Credit.**

We can provide assistance and advice with the following:



Digital Support and getting online



Information on organisations that can provide low cost IT equipment for use at home



Budgeting support & managing your money



Debt management



Applying for Council Tax Reduction



Applying for Free School Meals



Arrears management and managing your tenancy



In some instances, with your consent, we may refer you to other providers for assistance.

**For more information you can contact the housing team on 01824 706000.**

# Citizens Advice Denbighshire

**Denbighshire Housing work closely with Citizens Advice Denbighshire (CAD), providing a dedicated caseworker, Peter Eastham, who refer tenants to us for assistance. We are able to refer to Citizens Advice for benefit, debt and energy advice, but we are also able to refer tenants for other areas of advice and support.**

One of the projects that we can refer to is the Pre- Payment Meter (PPM) voucher project. At the moment, CAD are able to provide eligible tenants with £49 PPM vouchers if they have been affected by Covid-19 and are struggling to top up their meters.

Citizens Advice also has a new legal project, called North and Mid Wales Law Clinic. This helps people who don't qualify for legal aid and can't afford a solicitor. The project provides advice around 3 areas of law:

**Family:** Divorce, Contact, Mediation, attending court

**Community Care:** Specifically Power of Attorney and Deputyship

**Employment:** Grievances, Dismissal, Redundancy, Employment Tribunals

Citizens Advice are currently working with Denbigh Carnival Committee to prepare for the uniform exchange, which will be taking place again this summer. They will advertise details of this locally and on Facebook nearer the time.

Last summer, CAD ran a project called Eat Well Cook Slow, many of our tenants benefited from this project and received a slow cooker, recipe booklet and starter food box to cook the first recipe. We are pleased to be working with Citizens Advice on another slow cooker project over the next few months. Citizens Advice will be contacting the tenants we've referred to them about the project.

For more information about how we can help, get in contact with your housing officer in 01824 706000.

### TPAS Cymru



TPAS Cymru is an organisation that works with landlords and tenants in Wales to help shape housing services. They offer a wide range of training and engagement opportunities across North Wales and draw on the expertise of other like-minded organisations.

If you are interested in seeing what events are available, please visit: [www.tpas.cymru](http://www.tpas.cymru)

#### What is Tenant Pulse?

Do you want to make housing better?

Tenant Pulse is the voice of tenants in Wales. It has been created by TPAS Cymru and is supported by Welsh Government. Their main aim is to find out what matters most to tenants in Wales.

The results of their surveys are used by Welsh Government and landlords to create housing policy which works for tenants, and which makes housing in Wales safer and fairer.

**Have your say by joining the thousands of tenants already registered at [www.tpas.cymru/about/tenant-pulse](http://www.tpas.cymru/about/tenant-pulse)**

### Working Denbighshire - How can they support you?

In addition to how we can help you, Working Denbighshire is an employability service, which aims at supporting Denbighshire residents, aged 16 and above, who are at risk of poverty.

We offer support with a range of different barriers you may face, like,

- Help with finding a job
- Finding a work or volunteering placement
- Training and further qualifications
- Confidence building and motivational support
- Creating or improving a CV
- Interview skills and techniques
- Filling in application forms
- Developing basic IT skills
- Help to understand your benefit entitlements
- Help with funding for equipment, interview clothes and certificates
- Funding of travel costs to interviews, work placements and training (at the discretion of your mentor)



If you sign up, you will be assigned a mentor, who will support you with reaching your desired goals. You can discuss any kind of barriers that you are facing in improving your personal situation.

Within Working Denbighshire, they have Employment Coordinators. They engage with various employers across Denbighshire and beyond, providing you with a list of job opportunities available to our participants that are offered exclusively to our team.

Working Denbighshire work closely with many different organisations, including Job Centre Plus, Careers Wales, North Wales Training, Youth Services, us, Supporting People and many more.

**If you feel that Working Denbighshire can offer the support that you need, please contact them on: Tel: 01745 331438 / 07342 070635 or email: [workingdenbighshire@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:workingdenbighshire@denbighshire.gov.uk)**



## Have you taken a look at our new website?

In the last newsletter, we announced that our new website was live!! The new website is a great source of information for you, to find out about services we deliver, how we can help you, what is going on, and so much more!

We'd love to hear what you think about the website, or what you'd like to see on the website in the future, so let us know by emailing us at [housing@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:housing@denbighshire.gov.uk)

A few ideas that we are working on for the next phase include:

**A tenant portal** where you can access your latest rent statement, pay your rent, view letters and other documentation we have sent you, up to date notifications, surveys, track a repair and so much more.

**Texting & emailing** you with, for example, up to date information about events, visit

reminders, rent payment direct debits and surveys.

**Live chat** as an alternative way for you to get in touch with us. We are conscious that not everyone likes to talk on the phone, wait a response from an email, or a call back.

**Tenant app** designed to improve our communications with you and give you quicker access to your tenant portal and account.

If there is anything that you would like to see us develop digitally, then please let us know, as we would love to hear your ideas. We are particularly keen to engage with our younger tenants.



<https://www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk>

## The Old Oak Tree – A piece of history

**Over the winter, we were asked to look at a tree in Bodelwyddan, and after undertaking an assessment, we estimated the tree was around 400 years old! It is unusual for us to have a tree, of this age, growing on housing owned land. Oak trees live for roughly 1000 years so it just about entering middle age. It is likely that the tree was planted in approximately 1620, in the hunting grounds surrounding Bodelwyddan Castle, which was built around 1460.**

Oak trees have a rich history in the British landscape, and provide food and habitats for many different species of birds, insects and animals, in fact more than most other native trees. In a 40 year period, an oak tree can absorb 1 ton of CO<sub>2</sub>, which is equivalent of a return air journey from Paris to New York!

Since the tree was planted, there have been many changes in and around the town including the building of St Margaret's Church



“the Marble Church” (1856-1860), and in the 1970's and 80's the building of Glan Clwyd Hospital and the A55.

The tree has lived through some very interesting times, including Shakespeare, the industrial revolution, Queen Victoria, the suffragette movement, 2 World Wars, Martin Luther King and now the Covid 19 pandemic. We wonder how many other amazing trees we have out there?!

## Domestic & Alcohol Abuse

Tackling domestic abuse has been identified as a key priority in the Council's Corporate Plan.



Domestic Abuse Myth	Domestic Abuse Fact
<p>“Domestic abuse is a ‘crime of passion’, a momentary loss of control.”</p>	<p><b>They are very much in control.</b> Abusers are usually selective about when they hit their partner, for example in private or when the children are asleep. They choose not to mark their face or other parts of the body which show. They never “lose their temper” with other people. Many abuse their partners emotionally and psychologically, without ever using physical violence.</p>

If you or someone you know is affected by Domestic Abuse or Violence, please call the Live Fear Free 24/7 helpline - 0808 80 10 800 or visit [www.gov.wales/live-fear-free](http://www.gov.wales/live-fear-free)

Here is a statement from Councillor Mark Young, who is the Cabinet Lead Member for Planning, Public Protection, Safer Communities and Domestic Abuse.

“Ending domestic abuse is so important to us as a Council, that we have made it one of our priorities in our Corporate Plan.

“Violence against men and women affects all of us and it is more important than ever to tackle it and as such, the Council is developing a county-wide approach to reducing domestic abuse against women and men as part of its Corporate Plan as well as supporting the North Wales strategy to tackle all aspects of violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.

“Work is now under way to raise awareness of domestic abuse with staff and service users; providing training and development for staff to recognise the signs of domestic abuse and support for children affected by domestic abuse.

“This project is expected to continue as we aim to contribute to the reduction of domestic abuse across the county. So look out for our messages on social media. We also have lots of useful advice on our website along with links to other organisations who are there to help you.

“In Denbighshire, we know that during the current pandemic that the figures have risen sharply.

“Can I just end by saying to anyone out there, you may not even be aware that you're the victim of domestic abuse – it doesn't always manifest itself in a bruise. Please don't suffer in silence – there are people out there who can help you. If you need help, please ring the Live Fear Free Helpline on 0808 8010 800 7 days a week, for free advice and support or to talk through your options, or of course, if you are in immediate danger, you can ring North Wales Police on 999.”



Domestic Abuse Myth	Domestic Abuse Fact
<p>“Domestic abuse only happens to women and it's always carried out by men”</p>	<p>Domestic abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of gender. Abusers can also be any gender.</p> <p>Statistics show that in the UK, 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will be affected by domestic abuse in their lifetime.</p>

If you or someone you know is affected by Domestic Abuse or Violence, please call the Live Fear Free 24/7 helpline - 0808 80 10 800 or visit [www.gov.wales/live-fear-free](http://www.gov.wales/live-fear-free)

**YOU ARE NOT ALONE.**

**#MakeThePromise**

**#NoExcuseForAbuse**





# Alcohol Abuse and Domestic Violence

**When you look at alcohol abuse and domestic abuse, it is easy to see that there are connections between the two behaviours.**

Often the violence in the home is accompanied by excessive drinking of alcohol over a long period. While the drinking is not usually the cause of the violence, it can make the situation more volatile, increasing the severity and frequency of the abusive episodes.

While drinking can make the violence worse, it may also become an escape for the abused person, which in turn escalates the cycle of domestic abuse even further. This violence can affect any children exposed to the situation in many negative ways.

Alcohol abuse combined with domestic abuse often results in increased injury to the battered spouse, and everyday drinking is one of the leading risk factors for domestic abuse.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, you can go ring the Live Fear Free Helpline on **0808 8010 800**

Anyone in immediate danger should call **999**.

**#LiveFearFree #Youarenotalone**

You can also visit the Alcoholics Anonymous website for help and also find your nearest group.

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Home>

## Our Pledge:

Domestic abuse is one of the biggest issues we face. In 2019, Denbighshire Housing made a pledge in support of people experiencing domestic abuse. A large proportion of domestic abuse goes unreported, but studies suggest millions of people are affected every year. Tragically, two women are killed every week by their partner or ex-partner.

Our pledge is focused on four commitments that we are agreeing to make to provide support for people experiencing domestic abuse. These include:

- Putting in place and embedding a policy to support our tenants who are affected by domestic abuse.

- Making information about national and local domestic abuse support available on our website and other relevant places, so it is easily accessible.
- Amending or putting in place an HR policy, to support staff who may be experiencing domestic abuse.
- Appointing a champion, at a senior level, to own the activity of what we are doing to support people experiencing domestic abuse.

For more information about our pledge, please visit <http://www.cih.org/makeastand>

## Useful helplines:

The National Domestic Violence Helpline is a free, confidential helpline run by Women's Aid and Refuge for anyone experiencing domestic abuse and it is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can contact them on **0808 2000 247** or visit [www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationaldomesticviolencehelpline.org.uk)

Women's Aid provides a range of information and support on domestic abuse, including support for people experiencing domestic abuse, and people who are concerned that others may be. You can contact them on **0808 80 10 800** or visit <https://www.welshwomensaid.org.uk>



## Community Development Update

Although we have been unable to run our face to face events, we have still be engaging with our communities through coronavirus!

### Armchair Exercise:



During reduced restrictions, we piloted armchair exercises, led by Denbighshire Leisure at Trem Y Foel. Everyone that attended was really grateful, and we had some great feedback, including:

"It was so nice to get out the flat and socialise safely."

"It was nice to get a bit of exercise and coordination back in my life."

### Art & Craft:



Over the Christmas period, we worked with Denbighshire Arts to put on art sessions in Llygadog and Trem Y Foel.

During the sessions, a local artist played Christmas music on the Cello. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed getting out of their

flats and getting into the festive spirit safely. The tenants were shown what to do and were able to take an art pack home for them to do. At Cysgodfa, we organised for music to be played in the courtyard for people to listen from their own homes.

As well as these sessions, 55 festive, family art packs were delivered, safely, across Denbighshire to be enjoyed ready for Christmas.

### Digital Champions:

In January, our Housing Officers attended an online Digital Champions session, run by Digital Communities Wales. This training will enable our Housing Officers to provide help and support getting you online. During the session, officers learnt what is meant by digital inclusion, understand the need to improve the digital inclusion skills of adults and young people, and understand the barriers that may prevent a person engaging with digital inclusion. We can't wait to see how this training can help you.



### Pengwern Community Centre:

Great news!! We have secured a £71,000 grant from the Rural Futures Lottery, to run a community project in Pengwern.

The Rural Futures project will focus on making a positive impact with the community of Llangollen by:

Providing the space and resources to deliver co-production activities and services. This will help a network of support that people can access to meet their basic needs.

Increasing opportunities to raise skills and aspirations.

Increasing opportunities to connect and give back to others.



Building social capital within the community, and co-production with other related services, to ensure that we provide a network of support for the community.

The funding for this project will enable us to do this by:

Demolishing two garages to create room for:

- 3 bespoke units of the community's chosen design
- To enhance existing & recently improved facilities
- Provide confidential meeting space
- A well-resourced community workshop space to help address rural poverty and isolation and the overall wellbeing of the community.

Employing a part-time centre co-ordinator to:

- Increase uptake and usage of the centre
- Develop links with stakeholders to maximise opportunities
- Deliver services that address isolation
- Improve access to services and activities to develop skills
- Provide training and skills based learning opportunities.

We hope that this project will help a longer-term change needed to engage, enable and empower residents to end the cycle of generational poverty, and improve life chances.

We are providing the match funding and have worked closely with South Denbighshire Community Partnership, Friends of Pengwern and Severn Wye on the development of this project.

## Spotlight – What Library Services can do for you?

Each newsletter, we want to shine a spotlight on local services that you can access in your local community. This edition is spotlighting Denbighshire Library Services, including:

### Memory bags:

Denbighshire Libraries is offering a new collection of memory bags which are available to borrow from your local library.

They contain a collection of books, poems, artefacts and smells designed to stimulate the senses and promote reminiscence and discussion.

They have been designed specifically for people living with dementia, and are part of the Reading Well for Dementia Scheme.

The Memory Bags have been created by Denbighshire Libraries in partnership with Life Story Network CIC and the Active Communities team within Denbighshire Leisure Ltd and funded by the Dementia Aware Community Led Grant.

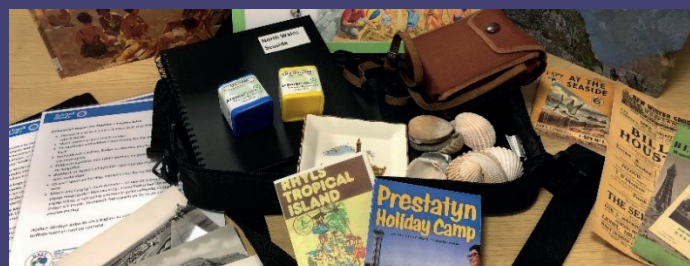
### Digital downloads & Click/Collect:

There is a huge range of eBooks, e-audiobooks, newspapers and magazines available online to download for free.

You can also order a book online and collect it at a later date by visiting <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/leisure-and-tourism/libraries>. If you have any questions, contact your local library or online.

### Bookstart:

For young families, Bookstart are doing loads of activities, songs and fun things for young children online. If you follow Dechrau Da Sir Ddinbych Denbighshire Bookstart on Facebook and YouTube you can see all the live rhyme times and recorded videos of songs and rhymes to do at home with your little ones.





## Environmental improvements

### Llangollen

We have been working with Friends of Pengwern and Countryside Services, to organise the planting of a community orchard on the Pengwern estate. The orchard will be planted with Welsh Heritage trees including Denbigh Plum. The area will also include a wildflower meadow to improve pollination, seating and a path. The tree planting and path will be completed this spring and we hope that we can involve the community in planting the wildflower meadow later in the year when it is safe.



### Gellifor

With help from Denbighshire Housing and Keep Wales Tidy Cymru, the Llangynhafal Community Council and local volunteers have started transforming a piece of waste land in the village of Gellifor, into a lovely and much appreciated community garden.

Along with local residents, we have worked hard during the autumn and winter months in creating a permanent "nature space", to be full of rare trees (including Heritage Apple & Denbigh Plum), plants, flowers and wildlife. Response and support for the garden are already really positive. When restrictions are lifted, the community council are hoping the garden will not only provide a haven for wildlife, a tranquil place for people to sit and enjoy, but will also help build a greater community spirit. Volunteers range from those with excellent gardening skills and knowledge, through to those with none, but keen to get involved and learn.

A rota of volunteers is being created to carry out more planting and development work during the spring, with plans for seating and tables with disabled wheel chair access. If you would like to get involved, please contact Iola Quinn on Iola Quinn [iola.quinn@btinternet.com](mailto:iola.quinn@btinternet.com) or 07722124323.



### Nature for Health

Due to the amazing success of last year's programme, we are currently working with Countryside Services to put together a similar programme of sessions this year. We hope to be able to run sessions over the summer months. These will include walking, volunteering, environmental art and mindfulness to name a few. The sessions are a great way to keep fit and healthy, learn some new skills and meet new people.

We are really looking forward to getting back out there and hope that you are too. Please keep an eye on the Denbighshire Housing and Countryside Services social media pages for updates.