

Your Newsletter

The tenants' newsletter for Denbighshire Housing



Issue four - Spring 2019

Cause for Celebration!!

Since our last newsletter, we have been celebrating the achievements, commitment and dedication of our tenants and staff!

Announcing this year's Denbighshire Housing Tenant Award Winners!

Our first ever Denbighshire Housing Tenant Awards has celebrated the achievements and participation of you, the work within your communities and projects that are happening across Denbighshire.

Over 80 guests attended this prestigious event at the 1891 Restaurant, Rhyl, including tenants, local business sponsors and key housing and council professionals. For pictures from the night and to see who won, go to page 4!



Gwobrau Tenantiad
Tai Sir Ddinbych
Denbighshire Housing
Tenant Awards

Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) Results 2018/19

We are continuing to raise our standards to the highest possible level and the results of our 2018/19 STAR survey are cause for celebration!

We had over 10% of our tenants respond and the overall satisfaction results increased in six out of the seven core questions. STAR showed that:

- **91%** were satisfied with the overall service provided by Denbighshire Housing.
- **90%** were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.
- **75%** were satisfied that Denbighshire Housing listens and acts.
- **88%** were satisfied with the overall neighbourhood.
- **89%** were satisfied with the rent.
- **72%** were satisfied with the service charge.
- **89%** were satisfied that Denbighshire Housing deals with repairs & maintenance.

For full details of STAR results and what will happen next can be found on pages 16 & 17



Planned Works
Page 6

Nature for Health
Page 8

Repairs and Maintenance
Page 11

Inside this issue

Denbighshire Housing:

Introduction from Geoff Davies

Page 3

Introduction from DTARF

Page 3

Recycling Update

Page 10

Fire Safety

Page 12

Saying Hello – Housing Officers

Page 14

Survey of Tenants and Residents Results 2018

Page 16-17

Investment & Improvements:

Investment Programme 2019

Page 6

Play area improvements

Page 7

Repairs & Maintenance

Page 11

New Build Plans

Page 13

Community & People:

Denbighshire Housing Tenant Awards

Page 4-5

How to get involved?

Page 10

Universal Credit – Managing your money

Page 18

Greenspace:

Nature for Health Project

Page 8-9

Geufron Opening Event

Page 9



Bulletin Board

Careline
0300 123 3068

Customer Services
01824 706000

Out of Hours Emergency
0300 123 3068

Floodline
0345 988 1188

Gas Emergency
0800 111 999

Electricity Emergency
0800 404 090

NHS Direct Wales
0845 46 47



Introduction from Geoff Davies

Lead Officer for Community Housing

Welcome to the latest edition of your newsletter.

This edition is brimming with great news, reasons to celebrate and information on what Denbighshire Housing have been up to, and what we have planned for the next few months!

Thank you to all of those who took part in our biennial Survey of Tenants and Residents 2018 (STAR). We are delighted that your satisfaction continues to increase in all areas, demonstrating the excellent working relationship we have with you and with your Tenants Federation (DTARF). We have compared our results with other, similar landlords, and are pleased to report we are amongst the best performing social landlords in Wales and the UK. As this is based on feedback from you, our tenants, it makes it even more worthwhile.

Of course, there are still opportunities for improvement, and feedback from STAR has shown our repairs and maintenance service is one such area. As a result, over the next few months, we will be running some roadshows (page 11) for you to help us get it right, and to see how we can improve. There are a number of other opportunities for you to get involved

and tell us how we are doing and what we can do better (page 10). We really value your input in helping us shape your services.

We know many of you value the services you receive from your Housing Officer. To improve your customer experience even more, we have changed the way that Housing staff approach their role. This will mean Housing Officers will be out and about more within communities, carrying out courtesy visits, advising tenants and offering support wherever it is needed (page 14).

Finally, we are delighted with the success of our first Denbighshire Housing Tenant Awards (page 4). We wanted to do this to showcase the great work that you and many people in our communities do every day, without reward. We appreciate the support from the sponsors of this event to ensure that we kept costs to a minimum and it was a great evening enjoyed by all that were able to attend!

As always if you have any comments on the newsletter or our service please get in touch with us.

Message from Denbighshire Tenant and Resident Federation (DTARF)



Ffederasiwn Tenantiaid a Throgolion Sir Ddinbych
Denbighshire Tenants
and Residents Federation

Over the last few months, we have had a number of key speakers attend our meetings, including Dylan from Citizen's Advice Denbighshire. He introduced their 'Key to Advice' campaign, and we have asked Denbighshire Housing to arrange some coffee mornings for him to come and have a chat with you. The dates will be available soon.

DTARF monitor services such as grounds maintenance and housing repairs, which have vastly improved since the new housing team have been up and running. Denbighshire Housing keep the group up to date with developments in housing such as new builds

and repairs. If more tenants joined DTARF we could become even more active. Our next meetings are on 20 June & 18 July; locations will be announced on our new Facebook page @ DTARF which will be launched in June.

If you would like to join DTARF, you are more than welcome. Anyone can come along to a meeting as a community voice.

For more information, ring John Woodward on 01745 799083 or e-mail him johnwoodward@hotmail.co.uk.

We look forward to seeing more new faces at the meetings so come along and join us soon.



Gwobrau Tenantiad
Tai Sir Ddinbych
Denbighshire Housing
Tenant Awards

Sponsored by:



JEWSON

8 May 2019, 1891, Rhyl

Tenant Awards 2019

We are proud to announce our first Denbighshire Housing Tenant Awards winners!!

Huge congratulations to:

- **Stuart Nield-Siddall**
Tenant of the Year, sponsored by Liberty Gas
- **The Marsh Community Association**
Housing/Resident Group of the Year, sponsored by AICO
- **Shirley Rippingale**
Denbighshire Housing Customer Service of the Year, sponsored by SC2
- **Bethan Owen**
Young Tenant of the Year, sponsored by G Parry
- **Trem Y Foel Residents Association**
Communal Garden of the Year, sponsored by CAPITA
- **Angela Carrington-Roberts**
Tenant Garden of the Year, sponsored by Greenspace Team
- **Friends of Pengwern**
Community Project of the Year, sponsored by NOVUS
- **Gina Jones**
Denbighshire Housing Award for special recognition

We would like to thank the judging panel of housing professionals and representatives from our Denbighshire Tenant and Residents Association for their time to review and shortlist the nominees. We would also like to officially thank our main event sponsors, Jewson & Roger W Jones, Rhyl and Alliance Leisure and HAGS our reception sponsors for their support.

Jamie Groves, Head of Facilities, Assets and Housing said: "It was an honour to recognise the tremendous amount of work and commitment that our tenants and our own workforce give to their communities. They are great ambassadors and really show how individuals and communities can work together to improve lives. Well done to everyone who were nominated, shortlisted and those that went on to win."

Councillor Tony Thomas, Cabinet Lead Member for Housing, said: "Improving housing is a priority for the Council and hosting our first awards is such a great way of honouring individuals and communities for their commitment. Everyone who was nominated was a winner in my eyes, but my huge congratulations have to go to the winners. They are what make Denbighshire Housing and their communities great! Thank you also to all those who supported the awards through donations and sponsorship, for helping make the awards a memorable occasion. "I can't wait to see what the 2020 awards brings."





Investment Programme 2019



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

In 2019/20, we are continuing to invest a significant amount to maintain and improve the condition of your homes.

We have already met the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS) for our properties, but we are committed to maintaining these standards, in line with the Welsh Government's policy as well as our own, very high standards.

A number of our investment programmes are supported by a £2.4m a year Welsh Government Major Repairs Allowance (MRA).

During 2019, there will be two major programmes of work taking place. These will include:

Internal Improvements

During 2019, we will be investing approximately £1m into internal improvements across our properties. This programme of works will improve homes, where kitchens and bathrooms are reaching the end of their serviceable lifespan, as well as electrical installation upgrades and window improvements. We aim to fully improve a further 75 properties as part of this programme, which is currently being completed by Torus Property Solutions in Rhyl.

External Improvements

This will be our largest project of the year, and will focus on several estates in Denbigh, Trefnant and Ruthin with an estimated value of £1.5m. The works will commence in the autumn, as part of our external enveloping programme of works. This project will see 115 properties externally improved including new roofs, replacement render and roofline upgrades.

A number of smaller projects will also be completed during this year, including works to replace older UPVC windows and roofline products across a number of our homes.

We are also excited to announce that this year is also the start of our energy efficiency programme. This aims to improve the energy efficiency rating of our properties, support the council's corporate target and our commitment to reducing our tenants' future fuel bills. More information will be available in the autumn newsletter.





Have an adventure this summer at one of our improved play areas!



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Due to the success of our recently improved play areas across Denbighshire, we have seen a number of children in our communities learn through play and the community play areas are buzzing again.

This year, will see continued improvement to a further three play areas across our communities. Our play areas are improved annually on a priority basis, and this year we will be investing in the following sites:

Maes Hafod – Ruthin

Sholing Drive – Rhyl

God're Coed, Cynwyd

The investment will see the existing play equipment replaced with modern, innovative equipment designed to be attractive to a wide age range, as well as being fully inclusive.

All three sites will also benefit from replacement fencing and will be able to be used all year round as our new play areas feature wet pour surfacing.

Once the play areas have reopened, we will continue to inspect, monitor and repair them to ensure they remain safe, clean and inviting for the future.

We are also excited to announce that we have been successful in obtaining funding to help fund the new play park in Rhuallt, based on the old school field behind Dyffryn Teg.

Over the past year, we have held consultations with the local community, asking them what they would like to see in the park, and their preferred choice for the green space around the park. We are hoping to be on site by June 2019. For updates and progress, please visit our Facebook page.



Environmental Improvements Nature for Health Programme

With spring in the air, the Nature for Health (NFH) team are busy supporting communities to improve their health and well-being, through accessing the fantastic green spaces we have on our doorstep.

The NFH project, funded by Natural Resources Wales, and delivered in partnership with Denbighshire Countryside Service AONB, is currently delivering in four project pilot areas, Prestatyn, Rhyl, Corwen and Llangollen, offering twice weekly sessions in each area.

Over the past few months, the project team have been working closely with local communities. They have developed and delivered some fantastic opportunities to get out and about, making sure everyone has the chance to get involved.

The project has delivered a number of sessions, and we have a busy timetable of events for the summer -

- Woodland skills, bush craft and breakfast in the woods
- Conservation and gardening volunteering opportunities
- Mindfulness walks, Nordic walking and health walks
- Environmental arts and crafts, including willow weaving, felt making, bird, bat and dormouse box making
- Allotment and food growing sessions
- Trips to local gardens and AONB sites, including Loggerheads, Plas Newydd, Horseshoe Falls, Llangollen Canal, Ty Mawr Country Park, Nant Clwyd Y Dre, Erddig and many more
- Holiday activities for younger people and families



Geufron Community Food Garden

The Geufron Community Food Growing Space is now complete and we had an official opening in March, which was attended by the Mayor of Rhyl, Cllr Win Mullen-James.

She said: "It is wonderful to see that wasteland in Rhyl has been transformed and made available for our Community to use as growing space. Allotment gardening brings lots of benefits like getting active, improving wellbeing, contact with nature and a sense of achievement, as well as the end result giving you fresh local produce, what could be better!"

The project has created 20 allotment spaces, which are available to rent from Countryside Services. There are 10 larger plots (£52 per annum) and 10 raised bed allotments (£25 per annum). If anyone is interested and would like more information, please contact **Sue Peters** on **01824 712757**



The project is currently working with the following groups to create future opportunities where the natural environment is used to improve the health and well-being of our communities:

- The Friends of Pengwern
- South Denbighshire Community Partnership
- The Woodland Trust
- Our Picturesque Landscape Project
- The Phoenix Centre, Rhyl
- The Artisans Collective
- Edyrnion Community Allotment Group
- Denbighshire Arts
- Exercise Referral
- Local GP practices
- Local schools
- And many other partners in the local communities

The environmental improvement project team are currently working on the following in your area:

- **Rhyl**
 - The Phoenix Centre community garden
 - Marsh Tracks tree planting
- **Prestatyn**
 - Morfa Gateway tree planting, community sensory and wildflower garden
- **Corwen**
 - Uwch Y Dre community allotments
- **Llangollen**
 - Pengwern Community Centre outdoor area, and woodland community area

If you would like to take part in any sessions in your local community, or have an idea for a project that utilises the natural environment in your community, please feel free to contact the Nature for Health Team by emailing emily.reddy@denbighshire.gov.uk or telephone **01824 706998**.



Food for thought!

Let's work together to improve our food waste recycling. In 2021, a new waste and recycling service will be introduced.

In the meantime, the Council are starting a campaign to get more people recycling their food waste and encouraging those that do to recycle even more.

Councillor Brian Jones, Cabinet Lead Member for Highways, Planning and Sustainable Travel said: "We are very pleased that so many residents in Denbighshire recycle their food waste and the majority of households have the equipment to do so".

Over the coming months, you will see messages on social media, in the local press and in editions of County Voice, encouraging you to recycle more food waste. We will be sharing information about what goes into the food caddies and we will be following a family from the Vale of Clwyd as they share their experiences of recycling with us.

"It's all about getting more information out there about food waste and now is the right time to do so, ahead of the preparations we are making for the big changes over the coming few years".

To find out more about food waste, go to: www.denbighshire.gov.uk/recycling

Just a reminder

Here's what the new service will offer:

- a weekly collection for recyclables such as paper, glass, cans, and plastic
- a weekly collection for food waste
- a fortnightly collection for clothes and small electrical items

With 64% of waste already being recycled and a weekly recycling collection with extra capacity there should only be small amounts of non-recyclable waste left in the black bin.

The Council is therefore changing the collection of non-recyclable waste to **every four weeks for the majority of households**. Residents can opt for bigger black bins if they need them, but overall, households will have an additional 35 litres of capacity each week in their Trolliboc for recycling packaging waste (including cans, tins, glass bottles & jars, plastic bottles & tubs, paper and card) compared to their current blue recycling bin. They can free up even more space in their black bin by using the new kerbside recycling services for textiles, batteries and where needed, nappy and incontinence waste.

The Council believes that increasing the size of the bins to the new larger ones and introducing weekly and recycling kerbside sort collections, supported by other special collections, should meet the needs of residents.

How you can get involved?



We want all our tenants to:

- have a voice on how our services are delivered,
- work in partnership with us to continue to improve their homes and communities,
- be able to provide us with feedback to improve our services, and

To help us achieve this we are keen to hear from you. If you would like to volunteer and get involved, we have a number of opportunities and working groups including:

- Newsletter editorial
- Tenant feedback
- Digital inclusion
- Financial inclusion
- Community development

If you feel you have any skills that would benefit our commitment to investing in and improving our communities, or want to develop new skills, then please contact us on 01824 708367 or housing@denbighshire.gov.uk



Repairs and Maintenance Update

The 2018-19 STAR Survey results have shown that repairs and maintenance are still one of your top 3 priorities as a customer. As a part of our 'You said, we did', we are going to run some drop in sessions over the summer to talk to you about some improvements that we'd like to propose. These improvements will modernise our approach to repairs to your properties. For example, we would like to introduce scheduled appointment times that suit you.

Please come along to one of our drop in sessions this summer to chat with us about this, and share your comments about the proposed changes. Each event is subject to the weather, so please check out our Facebook and Twitter accounts for more up to date information.

Month	Area	Location	Date	Time
June	Rhyl	Bruton Park, near the pond	4th	3:00pm – 4:30pm
	Bodelwyddan	Coronation Close, near the garages	6th	3:00pm – 4:30pm
	St Asaph	Llys Y Felin Community Centre	10th	2:30pm – 3:30pm
	Corwen	Llygadog Community Centre	12th	2:00pm – 3:00pm
	Prestatyn	South Avenue Play Park	13th	3:30pm – 5:00pm
	Rhyl	Phoenix Centre, Rhydwen Drive (joint with Dogs Trust)	17th	2:00pm – 4:00pm
	Rhyl	Maes Emlyn Community Centre	19th	10:00am – 11:30am
	Meliden	Football Field, near the school	20th	3:00pm – 4:30pm
July	Llangollen	One Stop Shop	9th	10:30am – 12:00pm
	Dyserth	Maes Esgob Community Centre	15th	3:30pm – 4:30pm
	Ruthin	Trem y Foel Community Room	18th	2:00pm – 3:00pm
	Denbigh	Gwaenynog Road, opposite Ysgol Pendref	23rd	2:30pm – 4:00pm
	Denbigh	Cysgodfa Community Centre	25th	10:30am – 12:00pm



Fire Safety for Communal Areas

Fires are extremely rare in our properties. If and when they do occur, the design of the properties in communal complexes allows sufficient protection to ensure that a fire can be contained, and dealt with by the fire service before any significant issues occur.

We have a number of systems in place throughout these types of properties to protect you:

Smoke detectors within your home:

You have a smoke detector which will activate in your home, only if it is triggered by smoke and a heat alarm which is usually located in your kitchen. It will only alarm in the instance of extreme heat. This will only trigger the main communal fire alarm system should any smoke, fumes or heat increase significantly and transfer from your home to the communal area.



Summary

1. If you discover a fire you should always immediately exit the building, activate the alarm if you can when leaving and phone 999 when you are clear of the building.
2. If the main communal fire alarm system sounds you should evacuate the building immediately
3. Assemble in the car park with other residents.
4. The Fire Service will give authorisation when it is safe to re- enter the building.
5. If you hear the fire alarm system and do not feel able to evacuate from your home, you should stay put and await rescue.

For more information, please contact us on 01824 706000.

Communal Fire Alarm system:

If the main communal fire alarm system sounds, you should evacuate the building immediately and make your way to the front of the building and assemble in the car park or the designated fire evacuation point with other residents.

The Fire Service will attend in the event of a confirmed fire and will take control of the situation. The Fire Service will give authorisation when it is safe to re- enter the building.

If you hear the fire alarm system and do not feel able to evacuate from your home, you should stay put and await rescue. If you can get to a window, then do so.

If you have any concerns or you need further information our staff will be more than happy to visit and discuss these with you.





New Build Plans – Housing Development

In the last edition, we gave you an update on our programme to provide 170 additional council homes across the county by 2022.

We had some good news in November, when we got planning permission for our proposed development of apartments off The Dell in Prestatyn. We'll soon be getting a contractor in to do the building works and we're expecting to start on site in the autumn.

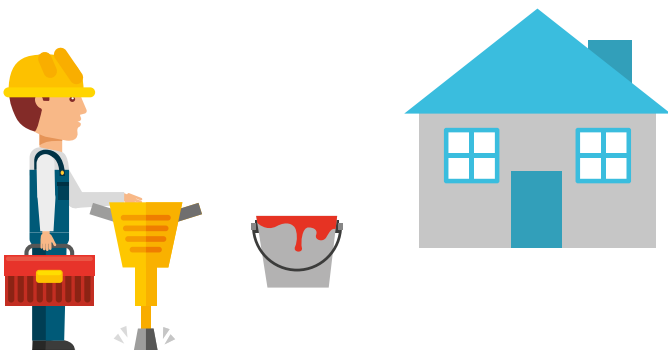
Also in Prestatyn, we've finished repairing the drain, which runs under the site of the old Bodnant primary school. This means we can start work on building new energy efficient apartments on the part of the site where the old school canteen used to be later in the summer.

We've had some money from the Welsh Government to buy properties in Rhyl town centre and convert the unused upper floors into apartments. We've bought the old Next shop

and the old Granite outdoor store in the High Street. We'll be starting work on converting them later in the year. We've almost completed the conversion of the building we bought in Brighton Road in Rhyl into three apartments.

As well as building and converting properties, we have also been buying back some former council homes to add to our stock, including one house and three flats in Ruthin over the last few months.

As you can see, we're making progress with the provision of new council homes and we'll give you a further update in our next edition.



Bodnant culvert works



Brighton Road, Rhyl



High Street, Rhyl proposal

Great news!!

Since our last Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR), we have been looking at how we can improve services and customer experience for you. We want to become more modern and efficient in the future, so we are able to work with you and your communities in creating an engaging and resilient approach.

Previously, our Housing Officers have been focussed on three areas; income, neighbourhoods and community development. Each officer had a 'patch' for their specialist area, which meant looking after about 840 homes each. From April 2019, we are changing the way that some officers work and have created more generic roles, creating general Housing Officers. They will each be looking after about 300 homes on average, allowing officers to get to know you better and support a more engaged approach and better customer service.

To support a more proactive approach, we want to focus on better understanding you, what we can do to support you, embrace the digital world and be more targeted and coordinated. Our Community Development Officers will continue to work to develop opportunities in your communities, for joint working and digital/financial inclusion and work closely with the new Housing Officers.

Our vision is to be modern, create value for money and great customer experience. Our contact centre and new website (launching in Summer 2019) will allow you to interact and engage with us, how and when it suits you, going digital by choice. As well as our new website, we are working on a tenant portal, to enable you to access your information without the need of phoning us up. You'll be able to make payments, report repairs, see your latest rent statement and so on.

We really hope that these changes will support you and your communities better and we can't wait to get out there and meet you soon.





Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) 2018 Results

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

90%

of our tenants said they were satisfied with the overall **quality of their home**.

Up from 86% in 2016.

1st in Wales.
Benchmarked against **15** organisations.



88%

of our tenants said they were satisfied with their **neighbourhood** as a place to live.

Up from 85% in 2016.

4th in Wales.
Benchmarked against **15** organisations.



89%

of our tenants said they were satisfied that their **rent** provides value for money.

Up from 85% in 2016.

3rd in Wales.
Benchmarked against **15** organisations.



75%

of our tenants said they were satisfied that we **listen to their views and act upon them**.

Up from 71% in 2016.

6th in Wales.
Benchmarked against **14** organisations.



89%

of our tenants said they were satisfied with the way we deal with **repairs & maintenance**.

Up from 85% in 2016.

1st in Wales.
Benchmarked against **15** organisations.



91%

of our tenants said they were satisfied with our **overall service**.

Up from 84% in 2016.

3rd in Wales.
Benchmarked against **15** organisations.



Your top priorities are:

- Repairs & maintenance
- Environment
- Listening & acting
- Feeling safe
- Quality of home



You said we did

Based on the results of the 2017 STAR survey, we have invested significantly in the following areas:

Financial & digital inclusion

We appointed an officer to see how we can improve internet access to tenants and support the online move to Universal Credit.



Parking improvements

We have invested over £1million to improve parking in St Asaph and other smaller communities.



Digital platforms

We are in the final stages of developing a new, tenant focussed website which will be launched this summer.

Regularly updated social media accounts.



We now have a Community Development team to:

Improve how we listen and act.
Support a number of projects that improve your health and wellbeing.
Improve our engagement in communities.



What next?

From the 2019 STAR survey, we will be focussing on similar areas to the previous STAR survey results and to measure any further improvements that we can make.

- We will be working with you to look at how we can improve our Repairs and Maintenance service. A series of drop in sessions are planned to show you plans for scheduled appointments and so on. **Please see page 11 for more information.**
- We have changed the way that our neighbourhood and income officers work, to better improve your customer service. The new 'Housing Officers' are more generic roles, allowing us to get to know you and your communities better, support a more engaged approach and be more modern and efficient. **Please see page 14 for more information.**

We will continue to:

- Look at ways of how we can improve access to the internet for our customers.
- Promote health and wellbeing in our communities.
- Investigate parking issues.
- Increase our engagement with you and our communities to ensure you feel that we listen and act.

Universal Credit - Animation video

We are pleased to announce the launch of our new animation video, this spring at www.denbighshirehousing.co.uk to explain how we can help you with the transition to Universal Credit.

As well as this, 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**.