

Issue 47 | Spring

InTouch

The essential magazine for Council Tenants



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Coronavirus updates - How our services have been affected by Covid:19

Communication is Key - Tenants sign up for Housing Liaison Group



Stay home, save lives

On the evening of Monday 23rd March, I sat down with the wife to watch the announcement from the Prime Minister Boris Johnson as he told the nation to stay home and save lives as a consequence of the Coronavirus pandemic.

I'm sure that like me, you were watching that broadcast and realised that our own little worlds as we know them would change in a way that has not been seen before in peacetime.

At the time of writing this column (a couple of weeks on from that announcement), a national lockdown has taken a little getting used to. But we must remember why the PM has asked us to drastically change our lifestyles and why we must do everything we can to help stop the spread of Coronavirus.

Those people who know me will know that I'm a very sociable person and, on a few occasions and in the right company, have even been known to be a bit of a party animal!

Having to stay at home and not go to the pub, or not go round to friend's houses to help them out with things has been a very difficult concept to accept. But the whole idea of staying at home is to protect the vulnerable, to protect our family, and to protect our friends and loved ones from contracting Coronavirus and putting their lives at risk.

It may seem an enormous thing to ask, but we must follow all of the advice from the Government so that people can stay safe. If we all do this, we can return to our normal lives as quickly as possible, free from the fear of Coronavirus. And when that day comes, I'll see you at the bar!

David Smith
In Touch Tenant Editor

Coronavirus affects Housing Services

Over the last few weeks, the Coronavirus pandemic has greatly affected everyone's lives.

As a Council and a Housing Service, we have been doing everything we can to ensure that we continue to provide essential services to residents and tenants, whilst following the most up to date advice and guidance from the Government, Public Health England and the NHS.

I would ask all tenants to continue to follow the latest advice in order to delay the spread of the virus and help to protect yourselves, your families and your community.

While the way in which we provide some of our services may have changed and evolved over the last few weeks, I want to reassure tenants that we are here for you.

The best way to stay up to date on how all Council services have been affected by Coronavirus is at www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/coronavirus

The majority of this magazine was written before the restrictions to prevent the spread of Coronavirus were put in place. Every effort has been made to keep the articles as relevant as possible, while still providing essential information that tenants will find helpful.

Cllr Steve Scotthorne
Cabinet Member for Housing



STAY AT HOME 

PROTECT THE NHS

 **save lives**

Services hit by Covid:19

Since the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID:19) pandemic and the 'stay at home' instructions from the Government, the way in which we provide many of our services has changed.

The main housing services that have been affected are listed below and were correct at the time of writing. For the latest information on all Council Services, please visit www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/coronavirus

Please also follow the most up to date guidance from the government, at www.gov.uk/coronavirus

Repairs

We are attending Emergency and Urgent repairs only; subject to screening questions. Please tell us if you or a member of your household are displaying symptoms of Coronavirus or if you have chosen to self-isolate.

Emergency repairs are – Where a situation poses a danger to the occupants or public, or if left unattended could cause serious damage to the building.

Urgent repairs are – Where there is a risk to health and safety, but no immediate danger to the occupants, public or property, and works that need to be carried out quickly in order to overcome serious inconvenience and damage to the property.

To Report an Emergency Repair, call **0800 590 542**.

Gas repairs – Our gas contractor Sure Maintenance is attending planned services and emergency repairs; subject to screening questions. For gas repairs, please call Sure Maintenance direct on **0800 083 3743**.

Wardens & Independent Living Centres

We have replaced our daily physical visits with phone calls to protect vulnerable and older adults.

Housing Officers & Caretakers

Our Housing Officers are available to contact via phone and email. Please call **0800 590 542** or email customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk

Caretaking Teams – Our Caretaking Teams will continue to be out in your communities.

Housing Needs & Homelessness Support

These essential services continue to operate and all enquiries can be made by calling **01909 533 533**.

Gas Servicing & Safety Certificates

These appointments will continue through Sure Maintenance subject to screening questions. If you were due to have a gas service or safety visit and have chosen to self-isolate, please contact us and this will be arranged for you as soon as your isolation period has ended or you are feeling well again.



Communication is key

The newly formed Housing Liaison Group is an extremely important way for tenants and the Council to communicate with each other as we all work together to improve housing services.

In order to get to know the tenant members a little better, and to find out why they decided to put themselves forward to be part of this group, we sat down for a chat with Nina Thiedeman, Graham Bacon and Roy Coombes (pictured above L-R) - who will be first tenant members.

What interested you about the joining the group?

NT: I've been involved in social housing for 15 years with a number of different Local Authorities and Housing Associations. I thought this is a great opportunity to put my experience and skills to use so that I can help to provide tenants with a better service and help the Council understand the full impact their policies and services have on tenants.

From a tenant's view, what would you like to look at first?

RC: Personally, I'm a new tenant and have a fresh experience of the tenant journey. From bidding for a property to moving in, reporting repairs and seeing how they are done. I think that the whole process has room for improvement. I have a background in engineering and have owned my own businesses, so hopefully I can bring some new experience and offer a tenant's view of how the housing service is run.

NT: What I'd like to focus on is the Council listening to their tenants and the communication flow both ways. The worst thing for a tenant is asking for something from the Council and hearing nothing back and not knowing where to go to get some feedback. I think there are some little changes that could make a big difference.

How important is it that tenants get involved on any level and make a difference to people's everyday lives?

GB: It's extremely easy and important that people come on board and share their views with us. Personally I want to contribute to the whole system and give something back.

NT: Tenant's personal and work life experience is invaluable. I work part-time and being involved doesn't take up too much time, but the rewards from doing it are great and you get a lot of satisfaction. You can do as much or as little as you like and for younger people, with the training opportunities that are available, it means that you can learn new skills that you can take into work and boost your career opportunities. There is a lot of knowledge to be shared both ways.

Are you all looking forward to the experience?

RC: We're really excited about it. The Council is looking for something from their customers and we're looking forward to helping the Council achieve its goal of improving services.

Tenants at core of HLG

When housing was brought back under the responsibility of the Council in October 2018, forming a consultation group that had tenants at its core was one of our main ambitions. The Housing Liaison Group has now been established and here's everything you need to know about it.

The Housing Liaison Group is Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Cllr Steve Scotthorne and in addition to the tenant members, Graham Bacon, Nina Thiedeman and Roy Coombes, includes Cllr Claire Plevin, Cllr Lynne Schuller, Cllr Josie Potts, Cllr Michael Quigley and Cllr Hazel Brand.

Role of the group

- To provide a regular method of consultation and engagement between the Council and its tenants
- To help maintain and improve housing services
- To relay information back to tenants through the Bassetlaw Tenants Forum and to maintain good relations between the Council and its tenants
- As such the Housing Liaison Group is not a decision-making body.

Membership

- The Housing Liaison Group will be Chaired by the Cabinet Member for Housing and will consist of six councillors representing the Council's main political parties, as well as three tenant members
- All of the members of the group, apart from the Cabinet Member for Housing, will be appointed on an annual basis and can be re-appointed to that position for a maximum of four years.

What will the group do?

- It will provide consultation on matters that directly affect tenants and residents, for example; the ongoing maintenance and management of Council Houses and the services that are provided to tenants by the Council
- Monitor how the housing service is performing and look at issues that have been highlighted by the Bassetlaw Tenants Forum
- Identify areas for the Service Review Group to look into so that improvements to services such as repairs, allocations, tenant engagement and customer care can be recommended.

Service Review Groups

As tenants, you have first-hand experience of the services that are offered by Bassetlaw District Council, how we deliver these services and the way they impact on your lifestyle and the community in which you live.

That's why we are asking tenants to be part of a number of new groups that will work with the Council's Housing Team to review the services we offer and suggest recommendations of how they can be improved.

We are looking for dedicated tenants to be part of a number of Service Review Groups who are able to donate a small amount of spare time to help improve services for their fellow tenants.

If you think you have the necessary skills, time and dedication to be part of these groups, would like an application form or would like more information, please contact our Tenant and Resident Engagement Officer, Anita Fairweather on **0800 590 542** or email her at anita.fairweather@bassetlaw.gov.uk

Rent increase revealed



At the end of February we wrote to all tenants to tell you that, for the first time in four years, your rent was going up.

From 6th April your rent for the next financial year - April 2020 to March 2021 - will increase by 2.7 per cent.

The Government sets the amount of rent that we are allowed to charge along with any increases or decreases that take place on an annual basis. For the next financial year, it has said that rents will increase in line with the Consumer Price Index*, which is 1.7 per cent, plus another 1 per cent.

This means you may have noticed that your rent has gone up slightly. However, with the introduction of a new 52-week rent year, your rent increase may not be as noticeable. This is because we have asked you to pay a smaller amount of rent each week over a slightly longer period.

You might also be asking yourself, why hasn't my rent gone up in the last few years?

This is because the Government introduced the Welfare Reform and Work Act in 2016 which, among a number of measures, told social housing providers, including Councils, that they must reduce their tenant's rent by 1% each year for the next four years.

This was linked to the Welfare Cap and the introduction of Universal Credit and ensured that rent levels were still affordable in line with the reductions in welfare payments, such as Housing Benefit, that the Government were making.

We hope that this helps you to understand why your rent has gone up, and if you would like to talk to someone about your individual circumstances, please contact our Rent Team on **0800 590 542**.

*The Consumer Price Index is an average of the amount that the prices of a number of household products and services have risen by.



Rent spread over 52 weeks

Bassetlaw District Council has changed how it calculates your weekly rent and how often it is collected following a consultation at the beginning of this year.

Previously, the annual rent paid by Council Tenants was broken down into 51 weekly amounts, with a payment not taken over the Christmas period.

During January and early February this year, tenants were asked if they supported a proposal to change to 52 weekly payments.

As part of the consultation 1,853 tenancies responded, which is around 28 per cent of tenancies. From these responses 93 per cent of people said they understood why the proposal was being made and 85 per cent agreed with the proposal.

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing at Bassetlaw District Council, said: "I would like to thank tenants for taking part in the consultation and sharing their views with us. As the majority of tenants were in favour of this change, we will now collect your rent over 52-weeks of the year.

"This change reflects the modern methods of rent payment and will assist tenants who receive Universal Credit on a monthly basis, meaning they will now have sufficient income to cover their rent and will not automatically fall into arrears.

"More than 50 per cent of tenants already spread their payments equally over the course of the year and pay their rent by Direct Debit, and they should see no change to their payments. I would also like to reassure residents that this change does not mean you will be paying additional rent – but you should see your weekly payments decrease a little."

How does the rent change work out for me?

Changing to a 52 week rent year does not mean that you will pay more rent over the year. For example, if your weekly rent is £80 and this was paid over 51 weeks, the total amount of rent paid for the year is £4,080.

The Council's change means that we will collect the annual rent of £4,080 over 52 weeks, which works out at £78.46 per week. Meaning that the amount of rent paid each week will be less than previous payments.

If you would like to discuss your personal rent payments or switch to Direct Debit, please call **0800 590 542**.

Living at Priory Court



New homes for over 60s

Priory Court, Bassetlaw District Council's new state of the art Independent Living Centre for the over 60s is officially open and has welcomed its first residents.

Located in Worksop on the former site of the Abbey Grove Sheltered Scheme, Priory Court features a total of 52 modern apartments that cater exclusively for the elderly, with the addition of 'Extra Care' support provided by Nottinghamshire County Council, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

It has been more than two years in the making and the Chairmen of Bassetlaw District Council and Nottinghamshire County Council joined residents, staff, partners and fellow councillors to celebrate the official opening of the building – along with a very special guest.

James Forrester, a former resident of Abbey Grove and one of the first residents of Priory Court, helped to cut the ribbon and officially open the building after returning to the site of his former home earlier this year.

"It's a fantastic place," said James. "The best bit is the people. Everyone is so lovely and it's nice to be back with some of the other people who lived at Abbey Grove. When I had to move out, I lived in one of the

bungalows across the road, so I've seen the place being built from scratch. It's a wonderful home and I'm very happy here."

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing at Bassetlaw District Council said: "We are extremely proud of the outstanding facilities that we are now able to offer our over 60's residents in Bassetlaw.

"At the start of this project we had a vision to improve people's lives by creating a brand new state of the art home for residents who need a little extra support. I can confidently say that we have realised that vision.

"This type of accommodation will provide joined up services that will allow elderly residents to live as independently as possible in their own home, with the reassurance that care is onsite for them 24 hours a day if needed. I have no doubts that the future residents of Priory Court will be very happy here."

In addition to providing accommodation for the Over 60s and Extra Care, there are also a total of 10 assessment apartments.

If you would like to live at Priory Court, you will need to complete a Housing Application Form, even if you are currently a tenant. You can apply by visiting www.a1homefinder.org.uk

Priory Court has a total of 52 apartments that are available to tenants over the age of 60. Of these apartments, 27 include Extra Care services provided by Nottinghamshire County Council.

Extra Care is an extension of our Independent Living Centres and allows residents to live as independently as possible with the reassurance of support whenever they need it.

As part of this additional service, residents are able to live in their own home but have access to care staff 24 hours a day to help with personal care needs. This can include things like: help with washing, dressing,



getting to and from the toilet, reminders to take medication, preparing snacks and heating up meals, laundry and some domestic tasks.

All of these care staff are highly professional and receive ongoing training and support to ensure they deliver the highest quality care.

In order to live in Extra Care accommodation, you will also need to have a care and support assessment to see if you are eligible and if you are able to receive financial support.

To learn more about Extra Care housing, please visit www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk and search for Extra Care.

Assessment Apartments

The Assessment Apartments will provide temporary accommodation for residents who require an assessment of their care needs within a homely, supported environment.

It will allow Nottinghamshire County Council's Adult Social Care Team, in addition to social workers and occupational therapists, to understand how residents may continue to live at home as independently as possible.

The apartments are fully furnished and include assistive technology equipment to help residents

to regain the skills and confidence they need to live as independently as possible and return home.



Could you be the voice of your community?

The Council has Tenant and Resident Associations and Tenant Voices in the following areas that represent the community, provide assistance and organise events.

TRAs

Workshop Area

- Balmoral - 01909 475 671

Retford Areas

- Ordsall - 01777 711 642
- Tuxford - 01777 870 478
- Mattersey Thorpe - 01777 817 716
- Harworth & Bircotes - 01302 746 393



Tenant Voices

Workshop

Manton East

- Graham Bacon - 07403 739 094

Prospect

- Barbara Hopkinson - 01909 532 192

Larwood & Kilton

- Susan Haydock - 07739 465 536

Sandy Lane

- John Paul Simpson - 07789 971 458

Retford

Conway Gardens

- Mr & Mrs Constable - 01777 470 556

Harworth

Westmorland House

- Brenda Eccles - 01302 744 055
- Wendy Lavin - 01302 746 455

Rural

Sturton Le Steeple & Leverton

- Kate Bishop - 01427 880 386

Dunham on Trent

- Nina Thiedeman - 01777 228 611

We're also looking for Tenant Voices to represent the following areas:

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| • Carlton in Lindrick | • Sandy Lane |
| • Costhorpe & Langold | • Thievesdale |
| • Rhodesia & Shireoakes | • Misterton |
| • Central Retford | • Hallcroft |
| • Retford Rural Villages | • Walkeringham |

If you would like to become a Tenant Voice or would like to know more about TRAs in general, please contact our Tenant & Resident Engagement Officer, Anita Fairweather on email: anita.fairweather@bassetlaw.gov.uk or call **0800 590 542**.



Nominate your tenant heroes for 2020

Great tenants are what help to make Bassetlaw the place it is. That's why each year we like to recognise those individuals who go the extra mile to help their neighbours or make a difference for local people in their community.

We have begun our search to find the new tenant champions of 2020 by asking for your nominations in the following categories:

- Community Champion
- Good Neighbour
- Tenants' Champion

If you know of a fellow tenant who deserves an award for the work they do by helping others and making a difference in their community, please send your nominations by email to anita.fairweather@bassetlaw.gov.uk or call us on **0800 590 542**. Nominations should be received by Friday 31st July 2020.

Awards will be presented to the winners of all three categories at the Tenant Conference. A date and venue will be announced when restrictions around Coronavirus have been lifted.

Come along and meet our team

Each year we like to give all of our tenants the chance to come and talk to Council staff about the services we provide and hear about how we have performed over the last 12 months.

The annual Meet the Team event and Tenant Conference will be back in 2020 and is the perfect opportunity for Bassetlaw Housing Tenants and Leaseholders to learn more about the services we provide such as Adaptations, Tenancy Support or Repairs. You can also chat to some of our tenant groups over a cup of tea and learn how you can get more involved in shaping the future of Housing in Bassetlaw.

Unfortunately these events have been postponed following the Government's instructions on preventing the spread of Coronavirus. Once a new venue and date for these events has been arranged, we will advertise these on our website and Facebook page.

Spaces at the Tenant Conference are limited. If you would like to attend, email customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk with Tenant Conference in the subject box, or telephone **0800 590 542** and ask for Anita Fairweather.





Keep on top of those little jobs

Maintaining your home on a regular basis can prevent little jobs turning into big ones and now is the perfect time to give your home a bit of a spring clean, inside and out.

Below is a checklist of some simple and easy jobs that if done on a regular basis, could save time and money later in the year.

- Wipe down windowsills and frames to remove condensation and prevent mould.
- Flush through your sink, bath and shower wastepipes with a clearing solution.
- Clear out any leaves or rubbish from gullies and covers.
- Use a lubricating oil like WD40 to keep your hinges and locks moving freely.
- Check that your stop-taps and gate-valves can be easily turned off.
- Check your roof to see if there are any tiles or slates loose or missing.
- Tell us about any leaking, broken or blocked gutters and downpipes.

Keeping it current!

Improving electrical safety in your homes is a major priority so, just like our dedication to gas safety, Bassetlaw District Council has a programme of electrical checks to ensure that everything electrical in your home is working as it should.

This service is part of our commitment to safety and every five years we will carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) in your home which takes account of things like lighting, sockets, switches and fuse boards.

We will be working with our contractor Aaron Services Ltd to conduct these EICRs and over the next 12 months, we'll be visiting around 2,200 properties across Bassetlaw.

Just like our annual Gas Safety Checks, you will receive a letter from Aaron Services Ltd informing you of a date and time when the EICR will take place. You'll then have the opportunity to rearrange this appointment to a date and time of your choosing should you wish.

These appointments will start to take place within the next few weeks and all engineers will abide by social distancing while they are in your home. If you are due to have an EICR but would prefer to wait until the stay at home restrictions are lifted, please contact Aaron Services Ltd when you receive your letter.



Serious about safety

The Council is serious about safety, especially when it comes to the safety of your home. This is why we have a number of checks and inspections that we carry out on a regular basis in many different areas.

These areas are listed below, including the measures that we take to ensure that tenants' homes are safe to live in and visit, and to ensure that we comply with regulations that mean that we uphold the highest possible safety standards.

We are also responsible for the work of companies who carry out these checks on our behalf, so we monitor their performance and keep records of the work that has been carried out.

All of these areas come under the term 'compliance'. These areas are:

Gas and Carbon Monoxide Safety – Annual Gas Safety inspections. These are a legal requirement and we have a 100 per cent record of checking gas installations and appliances in all our properties every 12 months.

Heating - We also carry out annual safety checks and inspect heating systems. These include: Solid Fuel, Oil, Ground Source, Air Source and Electric Heating.

Water Safety – These checks are incorporated into the annual assessments of heating and water systems and will highlight high-risk homes.

Electrical Safety – We have a five-year safety inspection programme which checks elements like your main and lighting circuits and fuse box.

Fire Safety – Annual safety inspections take place in your home to ensure there are working smoke alarms. If you do not have a working smoke alarm, we will fit one. We also have an annual inspection programme for fire safety in the communal areas of flats.

Asbestos Safety – By the end of 2025 we will have carried out an Asbestos Survey to every home built prior to the year 2000.

Lifts, Access and Equipment – We regularly service and inspect lift equipment and adaptations. This includes hoists, stair lifts and lifts in the home, in addition to lifts in communal areas.



Planning for the future

Over the next 30 years, Bassetlaw District Council will be spending hundreds of millions of pounds on the maintenance and repairs of your home to make sure that they are kept in a decent condition.

In order to get a clearer picture of how much we need to spend and in what areas, we asked property experts Savills to conduct some research into the current condition of a cross section of your homes.

This research, called a Stock Condition Survey, found that over the next 30 years we will need to spend a total of more than £200million on areas such as; Kitchens (£31m), Bathrooms (£25.6m), Electrics (£21m), Heating (£42.2m), Walls (£8m), Windows and Doors (£23.6m), Roofs (£25.6m) and areas outside of your home including communal areas (£4.5m).

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods at Bassetlaw District Council, said: "Continuing to invest in your homes is a major part of what we do and this research is vital to the success of ensuring that you have decent, warm and energy efficient homes to live in. Thanks to this information we can be pro-active and plan for the future both in terms of finance and how we can improve your homes."

As part of their research, Savills surveyed 1,112 houses, flats and bungalows, which is just 17% of the approx. 6,700 housing properties that the Council owns, in addition to all of the communal areas of properties such as flats and Independent Living Centres.

“**Thanks to this information we can be pro-active and plan for the future, both in terms of finance and how we can improve your homes**”

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing

Not all properties were surveyed and in some cases, where properties are very similar and in the same area, for example flats and bungalows, we will use these findings to inform us about similar properties so that we will have accounted for around 30% of our properties.

Next year (2020/2021) we will be surveying another 30% of our properties in order to update this information, followed by a further 30% during 2021/22.

Investing in your homes



Over the next 12 months, Bassetlaw District Council will be investing around £10 million in its properties to ensure that they are safe and efficient homes to live in and meet the same high standards set by the former Decent Homes Programme.

The Government's Decent Homes funding ended in 2014, but the Council has continued to invest in its properties and we'll be spending around £3.2 million on installing approx. 200 kitchens and 120 bathrooms, 100 doors and 1,470 windows, and re-tiling 150 roofs.

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, said: "It's vital that we continue to invest in our properties so that tenants have decent, warm, and energy-efficient homes to live in. We'll be carrying out this work at hundreds of homes across Bassetlaw over the next year."

Homes that require upgrades over the next 12 months through this funding have already been identified.

United Living or one of their partners will carry out the work on behalf of Bassetlaw District Council and if work is due to take place at your property, you will be notified by letter weeks in advance.

As well as installing things like kitchens, bathrooms and windows, our budget for 2020/21 will also include boiler and heating replacements, external wall insulation, fire protection work, electrical testing and rewires, disabled adaptations, environmental works, new parking provision and new house building at Radford Street in Manton.

Are you covered?

Did you know that in the event of a flood, fire, burglary or burst pipes, Bassetlaw District Council is not responsible for replacing your damaged or stolen items?

For these reasons we advise all of our tenants to take out Home Contents Insurance, which means that in the event of something unfortunate happening, the contents of your home are insured and can be replaced at little or no cost to yourself.

You can find the right level of cover for yourself by using one of the online price comparison websites. You can also consider a number of policies that are available from our partners Thistle Tenant Risks.

They offer flexible, regular, Pay-As-You-Go payment options as well as paying no excess on your claim. To find out more, visit www.crystal-insurance.co.uk

Town Centres are protected by PSPO

Since 2016, Worksop and Retford Town Centres have been covered by legal powers to prevent anti-social behaviour taking place, along with a number of other activities.

Bassetlaw District Council introduced Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO), which prohibits public drinking and the control of other nuisance activity in the town centres, such as the use of psychoactive substances and urination in public. It also deals with anti-social behaviour such as shouting, swearing and behaviour that could cause nuisance, annoyance, alarm or distress.

Breaching the order is a criminal offence and it allows the Police or the Council to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £100. However, should the matter be taken to court and following a successful conviction, magistrates have the power to order the offender to pay a fine of up to £1,000.

“We want to ensure that members of the public feel safe when visiting our town centres

Cllr Julie Leigh, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods

This was highlighted in November 2019 when a Worksop man faced court action after throwing litter from his van and verbally abusing a member of the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team.

Daniel Hagerty pleaded guilty at Mansfield Magistrates' Court in November 2019 to the breach of a PSPO, which took place in July 2019. After failing to pay the initial Fixed Penalty Notice, he was fined £200 and ordered to pay £200 in costs, £100 compensation and a £35 victim surcharge. A total of £535.

Cllr Julie Leigh, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods at the Council, said: “We want to ensure that members of the public feel safe when visiting our town centres and we will take action against any individuals or groups who cause a nuisance or distress to others.”



ASB Round-Up

Between October 2019 and March 2020, the Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Team has taken the following action:

- 75 Community Protection Warnings and 16 Community Protection Notices issued to individuals whose behaviour had an adverse impact on a community.
- 25 formal warning letters issued, 11 of which are Council tenants.
- 4 Council properties issued with formal notices, the final step before a decision is made to evict a tenant.
- 4 Properties have been taken back by the Council and the tenants evicted.
- 3 Properties subject to Closure Orders.
- 31 Referrals made to partner organisations such as Notts County Council Adult Social Care and Children's Services and Victim Support after visits by ASB officers.

Flats taken back

Bassetlaw District Council has taken possession of two properties in Worksop and Retford after the tenants had breached the conditions of their tenancies.

The Council was able to take back the flats at Colbeck House, Worksop and Westhill Road in Retford following applications to Mansfield County Court in December 2019 and January 2020 respectively.

“The Council will not hesitate to use legal powers to get possession of properties

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing

The flat at Colbeck House had previously been the subject of a Closure Order after the former tenant, Anna Millington had been banned from entering the property following a prolonged period of Anti-Social Behaviour and criminal activity at the address.

In a separate case, Miss Ann Fitzpatrick the former tenant of a flat at Westhill Road, lost her tenancy after building up rent arrears of more than £2,000 and breaching a number of terms in her tenancy agreement, including being jailed for theft on two occasions.

Both former tenants have been ordered by the courts to pay the Council's legal costs of almost £500 for each case.

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing said: “The Council will not hesitate to use the legal powers available to take back possession of properties from tenants should they fail to abide by the law and the conditions set out in their tenancy agreements.

“We are pleased that the Courts saw fit to grant us possession so that these properties can now be allocated to tenants who are in need of Council Housing and who will value their new home.”



Fly-tippers fined after support from public

A pair of fly-tippers who illegally dumped tyres and household items have been prosecuted for their crimes thanks to vital evidence provided by Bassetlaw residents.

In two separate cases, photos, information and evidence supplied by members of the public to Bassetlaw District Council's Environmental Health Team helped to secure convictions, resulting in the offenders being fined and the Council being able to recover a significant amount of legal and clean-up costs.

David Hughes of Cheapside, Worksop was fined £200 and ordered to pay costs of £500 and a £30 victim surcharge by Mansfield Magistrates Court in December 2019 after he pleaded guilty to fly-tipping and failing to respond to a Section 108 Notice.

The offence took place in February 2019 when Mr Hughes and two accomplices were spotted offloading two fridge freezers, two mattresses and a table from a flatbed vehicle into a Council owned residents' communal bin store on Northumbria Close in Worksop.



A member of the public was able to take pictures of the fly-tipping, as well as the vehicle registration and a DVLA search of the vehicle's registration number which revealed Hughes was the legal owner.

In a separate case, 31-year-old Craig Tinker of North Anston was spotted dumping five car tyres in a farmer's field off Great North Road, Tuxford in January 2019, and then two lorry tyres off Doncaster Road, Costhorpe in April 2019. (Pictured)

Mr Tinker pleaded guilty at Mansfield Magistrates Court in November 2019 and was fined £1,066, ordered to pay costs of £1,000 in addition to a victim surcharge of £53. A total of £2,119.

Cllr Julie Leigh, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods at Bassetlaw District Council said: "It would not have been possible for the Council to secure these prosecutions without the vital evidence supplied by members of the public. I would like to thank the residents for being so proactive and for helping the Council to combat fly-tipping in Bassetlaw.

"These cases highlight the invaluable role that residents can play to ensure that fly-tippers are held to account for their crimes.

"If you see a fly-tip taking place, please try to collect the date, time and location of the fly-tip, the registration number and a description of the vehicle, and a description of the person dumping the waste.

"Collecting this information safely and reporting it to the Council can really make a difference and together we can tackle fly-tipping in our district."

Residents can report fly-tipping in confidence on the Council's website, www.bassetlaw.gov.uk or by calling the Environmental Health team on **01909 533 533**.



Calling on tenants to inspect your estates

Throughout the year we carry out Estate Inspections in all our communities and we'd like you to join us!

Estate Inspections involve a walk around your estate, which normally takes about two hours, and help to spot things like graffiti, overgrown gardens, illegal parking, and broken walls and fences, so that we can help to improve your neighbourhood.

“Everyone should have a feeling of pride about their local community and having a well-maintained estate is part of this.”

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing

Cllr Steve Scotthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing at Bassetlaw District Council said: "Everyone should have a feeling of pride about their local community and having a tidy and well-maintained estate is the first step towards this. We have a comprehensive programme of Estate Inspections to help keep on top

of issues and we would like to invite residents to join us and help us to identify any issues that we might not be aware of. If you have a little time to spare, please come along."

There is always at least one Estate Inspection per year for your community and they are led by the Housing Officer for that area. They are often accompanied by officers or councillors from Bassetlaw District Council, Nottinghamshire Police or other agencies.

This means that we have people on hand who can address any specific problems – but we also need tenants and residents to join us, after all it's your estate and nobody knows it better than you.

If you would like to know when your next estate inspection is due to take place or if you would like to join us, please visit www.bassetlaw.gov.uk - You find all the information in the Council Housing section, under 'Tenancy information' and 'Estate inspections'. You can also call **0800 590 542** to join your next estate inspection.

Tough sentence for fraudster

A Retford woman who owned two rental properties and had almost £124,000 in the bank has been handed a 40-week suspended sentence and ordered to pay more than £9,000 in costs after pleading guilty to fraud.

Manju Prince of Lound, pleaded guilty at Nottingham Magistrates Court on 29th January, 2020 to making two false Council Tax Reduction claims and a false application for Council Tax Relief between 13th March 2017 and 25th October 2018.

“
Ms Prince knowingly and wilfully provided the Council with false statements.
 ”

Cllr Kevin Dukes, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

Magistrates heard that Ms Prince, on three occasions, knowingly provided Bassetlaw District Council with false information about her personal circumstances and finances in order to apply for Council Tax Reduction and Council Tax Relief.

As part of Ms Prince's false claims, she signed declaration forms that stated she had no savings or income from other properties.

Evidence submitted by the Council showed that at the time of the claims, Ms Prince and her husband Ian Prince had a total of 19 bank accounts and, at the time of the final claim, these accounts held a total balance of £123,593.63. Ms Prince also owned two rental properties, which were tenanted and paying rent.

As such, Magistrates handed Ms Prince a custodial sentence of 20-weeks for each offence, to run consecutively (a total-of 40-weeks), suspended for 18-months, in addition to ordering her to pay the Council's full prosecution costs of £9,250.19.

Cllr Kevin Dukes, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services said: “Ms Prince knowingly and wilfully provided the Council with false statements and information in an attempt to reduce her Council Tax bill. Put simply, Ms Prince did not want to pay her fair share of Council Tax which is used to fund essential services provided by District and County Councils, the Police and Fire and Rescue services.”

“The tough sentence handed down by the Magistrates in this case shows that neither the Council nor the Courts take fraud lightly and will impose severe penalties to people who attempt to cheat the system and deprive residents who are most in need.”

Team to investigate fraud

Bassetlaw District Council has an investigation team whose role is to detect and stop fraud taking place against the council.

The team is made up of specially trained staff who investigate cases of suspected and alleged fraud and identify any Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction payments that are being made to people who are not entitled to receive them.

The team work closely with the Department of Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue

and Customs involving cases of fraud with other state benefits, but also work closely with other council departments to investigate other types of fraud such as Single Person Council Tax Discount, tenancy fraud, planning fraud, grants and false insurance claims.

If you suspect that someone is committing any type of fraud against the Council, you can report it in confidence by calling **01909 533 731** or via **www.bassetlaw.co.uk** under the Benefit Fraud Section.



New scheme in place for Council Tax Reduction

If you are on a low income or currently claim Universal Credit you may be entitled to extra help with your Council Tax.

Council Tax Reduction (CTR) is a local discount scheme that is available for people who need additional help to pay their Council Tax and, for this financial year, there have been some changes for working age claimants.

Due to the continued roll-out of Universal Credit and the fluctuation of payments to some claimants, under the old scheme, just a £1 change in income triggered a re-assessment of CTR and therefore a new bill and instalment plan. This has caused some confusion and hardship for some claimants.

Following a consultation with residents, from 1st April 2020 an income-banded scheme will apply to both new and existing claims for CTR. This is a

straightforward discount based on the level of eligible income that you and your partner (if you have one) receive each week.

The table below shows how much discount you are entitled to based on your household income.

If you would like more advice or information about the changes, please visit **www.bassetlaw.gov.uk** and the information can be found in the 'Benefits' section under 'Council Tax Reduction Scheme'.

You can call the benefits helpline on **01909 533 710**, email us at **customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk** or, if you would like to talk to someone about the payment of Council Tax, please call **01909 533 234**.

If you would like to speak to one of our Money Advisors about arrears or if you are worried about paying your Council Tax, please call **01909 533 744**.

Income Band	Income Level / Household Type	New Discount
1	Eligible for a Severe Disability Premium or SDP transitional award	95%
2	In receipt of Maximum Universal Credit, Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment Support Allowance or weekly income less than £80.75	88%
3	Other households with weekly income between £80.76 and £181.00	65%
4	Other households with weekly income between £181.01 and £240.00	45%
5	Other households with weekly income between £240.01 and £328.00	25%



Garden Waste collections are back for 2020

The 2020 season of Garden Waste Collections is back and helping Bassetlaw residents to recycle their garden waste more easily.

More than 8,500 households have already started to receive this season's collections, but there is still time to subscribe and get fortnightly collections at just £32 per season, which run until the end of November.

This fee includes the use of a 240 litre wheelie bin per subscription, in which you'll be able to place grass cuttings, hedge trimmings, leaves, small branches and twigs, dead plants, weeds and flowers.

Cllr Julie Leigh, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods said: "Our Garden Waste Collection Service continues to grow year on year and it's great that so many people are recycling their garden waste."

Last year, more than 9,000 Bassetlaw residents helped to recycle almost 3,340 tonnes of garden waste during the Council's 2019 season of collections – the equivalent weight of about 232 fully grown Oak trees.

While the Government is asking residents to stay at home in order to prevent the spread of Coronavirus, new applications to this service have been suspended. If you would like to sign-up for Garden Waste Collections once the restrictions have been lifted, please call **01909 534 524** or visit www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/gardenwaste

Foster homes are needed in Notts

At Nottinghamshire County Council, we are in great need of over 200 foster placements for children in care, who need loving and stable homes.

By becoming a foster carer, you can make a real difference to a child's life. Giving children roots of stability in a safe and caring environment is immensely important to their development.

As the number of children looked after by the council continues to increase, we need more foster carers so that we can find good homes for local children.

We offer exceptional training and benefits to ensure our foster carers feel fully supported, and we have a fantastic recruitment team who are there to support you through your initial enquiry and application process.

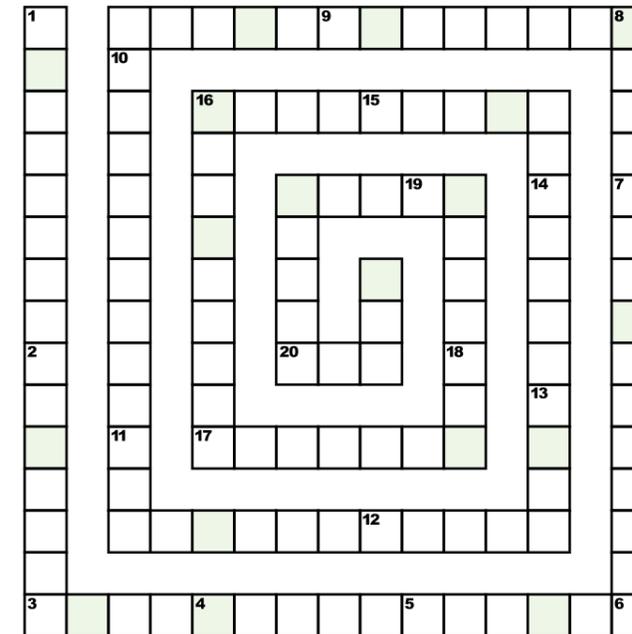
If you think you or a loved one could make a great foster carer, we'd love to hear from you. Come and join us at one of our informal monthly information evenings to learn all about fostering with Nottinghamshire County Council. You'll be able to meet some of our foster carers, ask the team any questions you have about fostering and take away an information pack.

Visit www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/fostering to find the up-to-date list of information evenings.



The Chain

If you can solve our chain you could win a £20 Love2Shop voucher. Use the clues to work out the answers and put them in the grid. The last letter of the first answer is the first of the second and so on. The shaded squares spell out a classic TV show.



- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. WWII US President | 11. City state south of Malaysia |
| 2. Northern African Country | 12. Big grey land mammal |
| 3. A mixture of two metals | 13. Sport with net and racket |
| 4. A sunny colour | 14. Sports may be played here |
| 5. Grid patterned pancake like food | 15. Third month of the year |
| 6. Famous Parisian landmark | 16. Birth based future forecast |
| 7. Cowboy competition | 17. Scottish capital |
| 8. In Dulci Jubilo artist, Mike ____ | 18. To be truthful |
| 9. Author of The Cat in the Hat | 19. Largest Canary Island |
| 10. London department store | 20. Heartbreak Hotel singer |

The TV Show is:

Fill in your details and follow the entry instructions:

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Bassetlaw District Council will not store your personal data supplied as part of any competition entry and will only use it for the purpose of determining a competition winner. Once a winner has been drawn, all data will be deleted.

Kids Club

If you can complete our Kids Club puzzle, you could win a £20 Love2Shop voucher and a goody bag.

What am I?

Below are four zoomed in pictures of animals, but what are they? Can you identify them?

Once you have identified all our animals, tell us your name, age, where you live and a phone number. Then, follow the instructions at the bottom of the page.



Name:

Age:

Where you live:

Telephone:

Please send all competition entries to:

Customer Services, Carlton Forest House, Hundred Acre Lane, Worksop, Notts S81 0TS

Or email a photo or scan of the entry to: customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk

Closing date for all entries is 4th September 2020.

Contact us



0800 590 542



www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/housing



customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk



Text us on 07860 021 511



Find us on Facebook - BassetlawDCHousing



Twitter @BassetlawDC



Visit us at:

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17B The Square, Retford, DN22 6DB

Worksop Office

Queen's Buildings, Potter Street, Worksop, S80 2AH

Carlton Forest House

Hundred Acre Lane, Worksop, S81 0TS

All offices are open: Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5:00pm

If you need any help communicating with us or understanding any of our documents, please contact us on **0800 590 542**.



Bassetlaw
DISTRICT COUNCIL
— North Nottinghamshire —