

HOUSING



Matters



Autumn/Winter Newsletter 2018

Universal Credit Full Service comes to Barrow

What does this mean for existing Universal Credit Claimants?

From 5th December you will be invited to transfer your existing claim for Universal Credit (Live) to Universal Credit Full service.

Please do not ignore any letters or appointments asking you to change your claim.

If you fail to apply for the full service Universal Credit then your existing claim for Universal Credit will STOP!!

In order to switch your claim to the full service Universal Credit you will need:

- your own email address
- a bank or building society account in your name (or your partner's name if you have a joint claim)
- access to a computer, smartphone or tablet
- ID verification

When you create your new online account you must select:

- 'Yes' to the question "Are you already getting Universal Credit?"
- 'Yes' to the question "Have you received a letter asking you to switch to this new service?"



- 'YES' to the question 'Do you pay rent for your home'

The advantages to Full service Universal Credit include:

- having access to a new online account;
- being able to view your claim online anytime; and
- being able to check your payments or report changes in your circumstances at any time.

People claiming existing benefits i.e Income Support, Employment & Support Allowance, Jobseekers Allowance will not be transferred over straight away.

Please note: Universal Credit only affects people of working age.

If you have any queries regarding Universal Credit, please don't hesitate to contact Amanda Morris our Benefit Liaison Officer on (01229) 876581 or email housing@barrowbc.gov.uk



CHRISTMAS CLOSING

The Town Hall will be closed
from 4pm Monday, 24 December
until it reopens on:
Wednesday, 2 January 2019 at 9am

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RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HOUSING MANAGEMENT FORUM

Have I got housing news for you

Following the departure of Colin Garnett, I am delighted to be writing my first column for the newsletter in my new role as Assistant Director – Housing. Turn to page 12 for our farewell to Colin and a little bit about myself.

From 1st October, following the end of the contract with Liberata and agreement by the Town Hall, your Revenues and Benefits Service is now provided by the Council. The service is now based on the ground floor of The Forum with access via a new entrance door (opposite entrance to Wilkos). See below for contact details.

In the Housing Service we continue with the development of our IT housing management system, known as Cx. The implementation and development has taken considerably longer than initially envisaged, however, it continues to progress. We also continue to work on the facility (Tenants' Portal) which will enable tenants to view their details and report repairs online. Please be assured we will provide the facility online as soon as it proves practical.

The biggest challenge our service faces is the roll out of Universal Credit with Full Service being introduced from 4th December. The Housing Service is self-funded with the rents we receive and, as such, Universal Credit – where tenants are paid a housing allowance to pay their rent – poses a considerable risk to our service in the future.

As with all services, we experience changes in staffing with colleagues moving on and new roles created to reflect the challenges we face. Three new roles have been created, using Central Government funding provided to assist with new homeless legislation introduced in April, 2018 which puts greater responsibility on us to prevent homelessness. There are also a further two new faces in our Mobile Caretaking Team. Turn to pages 12 and 13 for more information on the service's leavers and starters.

Well, it's nearly the end of another year, so it's time for me to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Peaceful New Year.

Jane E. Sharp
Assistant Director - Housing



Below is a summary of recommendations made by members of the Housing Management Forum

Meeting held on 14 June 2018

Hughes Brothers & Sure Group – Third Year Review

Members agreed the extension of the contracts for one year.

Tenancy Agreement Review

Members agreed the revised Tenancy Agreement and the legal requirements for implementation.

Request to Purchase Ad-hoc Land at Conway Gardens

Members declined the request as the land forms part of the larger green area provided for the benefit of the wider community and would have a detrimental impact on the street scene.

Stock Condition Survey

Members agreed a stock condition survey be carried out to 100% of properties; a contractor will be appointed through the Procure Plus Holdings framework.

Meeting held on 13 September 2018

Radon Gas

Members retrospectively approved the cost of installing remedial equipment to 13 affected properties in line with Public Health England guidelines and also cost of re-testing these properties; they also agreed the Radon Gas Action Plan.

Procure Plus Contractor Selection Process

Members agreed that mini competitions be undertaken in conjunction with the Procurement Team at Procure Plus

For more details on these reports visit:

<https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/about-the-council/barrow-council/council-minutes-agendas/housing-management-forum/>

Holdings; the outcomes will be reviewed at next HMF.

United Utilities Contract for the Collection of Water Charges

Members agreed extension of the contract for a further two years. The Assistant Director-Housing will report back on details of good practice by other social housing providers collecting water charges.

Former Garages at 2, 3 & 4 Newton Road: Permission for Appropriate of Lane

Members agreed the land be transferred from the HRA to the General Fund in the current financial year.

Fire Risk Assessments and Periodic Electrical Testing to Shops

Members agreed contractors be instructed to undertake remedial works to emergency shop lighting to ensure electrical installations are safe; individual shops will be referred to the local fire officer who will, if necessary, intervene if owner fails to fully comply. The cost of the work will be met by the Council and where appropriate recovered from the owner during the rent review and lease negotiation process.

Housing Procedures

Members noted new Health & Safety Management procedures.

Performance Information Report

Members agreed to revised reporting periods and table format; information will be provided in a staggered way to ensure only accurate validated information is provided.

Housing Benefit/Council Tax have moved to new offices

Housing Benefit and Council Tax is no longer administered by Liberata. This service is now provided by Barrow Borough Council's Revenues & Benefit Service.

If you need to contact Revenue & Benefits they have moved (from the Town Hall) into The Forum. The entrance is at the side of The Forum – a new door – opposite Wilkos entrance.



The contact telephone number and email addresses remain the same:

Tel: (01229) 404242
benefits@barrowbc.gov.uk
counciltax@barrowbc.gov.uk

MAKE SURE YOU'RE GETTING THE RIGHT SUPPORT WITH YOUR WATER BILLS

We're always on the lookout to make sure you get the right support if you're struggling with your household bills.



That's why we're working with United Utilities to make you aware of how they can help if you're having problems paying your water bill.

Jane Haymes from United Utilities says: "If you're going through a tough financial patch and finding it hard to pay your water bill, please get in touch with the Housing Department. The sooner they let us know you're struggling with your water bill payments, the quicker we can get you the right support to prevent you falling further into debt.

"Also, if your home has more bedrooms than people, it's worth considering a water meter as it's one of the easiest ways to make a big saving on your bill. We fit them for free and you can even switch back to your old bill within two years if for whatever reason you're not making a saving."

Support schemes offered by United Utilities include:

- **Back on Track** – if you owe money on your water bills and receive benefits, they can provide an affordable bill based on your current income.
- **Help to Pay** – receive Pension Credit and struggling with your water bill payments? Then this scheme may help by capping your bills at a fixed amount each year.



- **WaterSure** – if you have a water meter and receive benefits, and use a lot of water due to ill health or having a large family, their WaterSure scheme can cap your annual bill at a set amount regardless of how much water you need to use.

Over 600 tenants are paying reduced charges

Even if you think these schemes aren't suitable for you, United Utilities may have other ways to help depending on your personal circumstances, so please call the Housing Service's money management advisor, Jo Hughes on (01229) 876534 or email: jhughes@barrowbc.gov.uk and she'll contact United Utilities on your behalf.

Currently, over 600 tenants – that's nearly a quarter of our tenants! – are benefitting from reduced water charges. So, if you haven't already made enquiries, contact Jo today - you've nothing to lose!

Abbey Road Baptist Church Abbey Rd (corner of Park Drive)



USUAL OPENING HOURS

Monday – Thursday 11am – 1pm & Friday 11am – 3pm
Tel enquiries: 01229 34 34 36

XMAS OPENING/CLOSING TIMES

Monday, 24 December open 10am – 12noon
Closed from Tuesday, 25 December - will reopen on
Wednesday, 2 January 2019 (11am – 1pm)

In an emergency, contact the Foodbank Manager, Ann Mills on 07920 808 944 over the Xmas period to arrange to collect emergency food parcels.

FOOD DONATIONS WELCOME

Barrow Foodbank welcomes donations at any time. However over Christmas and into 2019 the following items in particular would be much appreciated:

UHT Milk	Tins Custard
UHT Fruit Juice	Tins Rice Pudding
Pasta Sauces	Tinned Fruit
Packet Rice	Tinned Veg
Tins Fish/Tuna/Mackerel	

ARE YOU THINKING OF SWITCHING GAS/ELECTRICITY SUPPLIER?

If you have a smart meter and are thinking about transferring to a new supplier for your gas/electric, please ensure your payment arrangements are in place before the switch-over day in order that your gas/electricity supply continues.

Should you have any concerns on the switch-over day itself, please contact your new supplier direct.

Alternatively, contact our tenancy officer, Simone Singleton who will be happy to give advice on the process – (01229) 876580.



Don't be on your own at Christmas

If you're currently struggling with life – for whatever reason - always bear in mind that nothing lasts for ever and nothing says the same and the fact is Christmas Day is literally just another day. But please remember, if you need support over the festive period don't hesitate to contact one of these organisations...

SAMARITANS

Please don't suffer alone

Contact the Samaritans and talk to someone about what's getting to you - you don't have to be suicidal.

If you need a response immediately, it's best to ring 116 123 – this number is FREE to call and you can speak to someone 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

You can also email them on: jo@samaritans.org

We receive around 5 million calls for help per year and every 52 seconds we hear from someone who is feeling suicidal.

Our volunteers are on hand to offer emotional support any time of the day or night to anyone who needs our help and they will never judge.

Find out why people call Samaritans and how our service changes lives.

visit www.samaritans.org to read other stories of people who contacted the Samaritans and how they helped.

Tel: 116 123



Furness Homeless Shelter

Furness Homeless Support Group would like to welcome anyone to join us over the Christmas period. We are open to all who wish to celebrate with us.

Day Centre opening times:

Christmas Eve: 11am - 1pm

Christmas Day: 11am - 4pm

Boxing Day: 11am - 4pm

27 & 28 December: 11am – 1pm

29 & 30 December: Closed

31 December: 11am – 1pm

New Year's Day - Closed

Re-open as normal on Wednesday, 2 January

A three course Christmas dinner will be served, with all the trimmings...and Father Christmas will of course make a stop off with a gift for all!

If you would like some company at Christmas in warm, safe and friendly surroundings, please come and join us. Everyone is welcome.

You don't have to spend Christmas alone.

Furness Homeless Support Group

27 Bath Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 1NS

Tel: 01229 821134

Salvation Army

Normal opening times:

Monday – Friday: 9am - 3pm

Saturday: 10am – 2pm



Closed for Christmas from Sunday, 23 December

Open on: Saturday, 29 December 10am – 2pm

Sunday, 30 December 10am – 5pm

Monday, 31 December 10am – 2pm

Closed New Year's Day

Re-open on Wednesday, 2 January

For those in genuine need, food parcels can be requested from the Salvation Army over the Christmas period.

When closed, please access facebook/email martin.davidson@salvationarmy.org.uk or tel. (01229) 433550 – someone will respond within 24 hours.

If you would like further information, please ring Lt. Martin Davison on (01229) 433550.



Mind in Furness have an Advice Hub for people with mental health issues. People are welcome to pop in for advice and guidance. There is also a Wellbeing centre for members at School Street.

The centre is a place where people can come and find out information, relax, make new friends and find the support they need; regular weekly activities which include drop in sessions, women's and men's groups, crafts, creative writing, conservation etc are also very popular. If you're interested in becoming a member please call in and have a chat with a member of staff.

Usual opening times:

Monday to Friday: 10am - 4pm.

Christmas opening times:

Monday, 24 December 10am (early close)

Thursday, 27 December: 10am – 4pm

Friday, 28 December: 10am – 4pm

Monday, 31 January 10am (early close)

Re-open as normal Wednesday, 2 January

For further details please ring 01229 827094.

TENANCY AGREEMENT

You will now have received a copy of your new Tenancy Agreement which was hand delivered a few weeks ago.

We listened to your views and produced a new document. The Tenancy Agreement describes the legal arrangement between you, as the tenant, and the Council as your landlord.

Please keep the document in a safe place for future reference.

Should you have any queries about your Tenancy Agreement please do not hesitate to contact us on (01229) 876523 | email: housing@barrowbc.gov.uk

Different ways to report non-emergency issues to the Police

In addition to ringing 101, there are a number of different ways to contact the police about non-emergency issues or to report non-crime related issues - for example, you may want to tell the community team about something.

The best option is to:

- **email** 101@Cumbria.police.uk or
- **complete an online reporting form** (where you can also report non-emergency hate crime). The webpage addresses are:
 - o <https://www.cumbria.police.uk/Report-It/Report-a-Crime/Non-Emergency-Crime-Online.aspx>
 - o <https://www.cumbria.police.uk/Contact-us/General-Enquiries/General-Enquiries.aspx>

Always call 999 if the crime is being committed now, the offender is nearby, or if you or other people are injured or in danger.



POOCH PRESS



When out and about, please remember to keep your dog on a lead at all times, unless in designated or recognised exercise areas.



Please remember that in some of the Council parks it is forbidden to take dogs. This should be indicated by signs at the entrance. Failure to observe this rule will result in a fine of £80.



Failure to place your dog on a lead at the request of an authorised officer of the Council can also incur a fine of £80.

Keep your community clean bag it and bin it

Picking up your dog's mess is an important part of being a responsible owner. The minority of irresponsible dog owners who do not clean up after their dogs give all dog owners a bad name.

Remember:



Always carry poo bags with you. Have a spare at all times - tie one to your lead so you always have a spare.



If you see someone in need of a bag, offer them one of yours (remember, there's one tied to your lead).



Don't discard your used poo bags for someone else to pick up. Dispose of bagged dog mess in your own bin, a designated poo bin or public litter bin.



Keep sight of your dog at all times when in a public space so that you can see when and where they toilet.

Leave it behind and you could get fined!

By not picking up your dog's mess, you're committing an offence. If you are caught, you could be prosecuted and fined up to £1000.

WALK ABOUT WEDNESDAYS



Our Estates Team and officers from the Problem Solving Policing Team got together on 27 July to take part in 'Walkabout Wednesday' - all our Estates Team left the office to seek out any issues in the community.

Caroline Wagstaff, Operations Manager said: "Our message is clear - we want residents to feel safe in their home and community and to instil confidence that we are all doing everything in our power to ensure this happens. We intend to hold more 'Walk about Wednesdays' with our partner agencies to make the area a safer, more pleasant and enjoyable place to live.

"We know that the most successful way to tackle anti-social behaviour and make our neighbourhoods better places to live is to encourage all the agencies who can improve community safety to work together.

"This initiative was a great example of how, when partners unite, we can make a real difference, addressing local issues to improve people's quality of life."

Further 'Walk about Wednesdays' will be held on all our estates to identify and address problems such as:

- Fly tipping
- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Criminal Damage
- Untidy Gardens

During the walkabout staff also noticed the hard work some residents had put in to their gardens - many were immaculate and most areas were clear of rubbish. On speaking with residents many said they were happy with where they live.

We must give credit to our Mobile Caretaking Team who work tirelessly to clear all our void properties and gardens. They also carry out regular estate tidies - always with a smile - to make our estates a better place to live and their help is much appreciated. Many of you will have met members of our 'Caretaking Team' and we now have two new members of staff, Sue and Dave. Turn to page 12 to read more about them.

NEWS FROM THE MAINTENANCE TEAM

Appointment of Contractors

In August this year Procure Plus Holdings finalised a new four-year framework that allows the Council to buy materials such as kitchen units, bathroom suites and central heating boilers at significantly discounted rates.

The new framework also allows the Council to select contractors to carry out improvement works across a range of trades such as joinery, electrical, painting and roofing.

The newly appointed contractors are shown below and will start work on 1st April 2019.

Painting improvements	
Aids and Adaptation works	
Heating improvements	
Window and Doors	
Electrical rewiring and testing	Keith Wilson Electrical Ltd
Re-Roofing works and External works	

Radon Gas

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that comes from the rocks and soil found everywhere in the UK and, in general terms, **does not pose a significant risk to the general public**. There can be occasions, however, where radon gas can build up inside buildings and hence the risk to residents may increase. In view of this, Public Health England advised the Council to carry out a radon test of certain properties in Dalton, Lindal and Askam. Properties in Barrow generally have very low levels of radon gas and hence were not included in the test.

We have now concluded the radon tests in conjunction with Public Health England and a summary of the results is shown below:

- 218 test kits sent out
- 127 test kits returned (58%)
- 4 test results were above the action level (3%)
- 9 test results were above target level but below the action level (7%)
- 91 properties failed to return the test kits to PHE

We have written to all affected tenants advising them if the levels of radon gas in their home were “normal” or “higher than the accepted target/action level”. There were 13 properties above the target/action level and these properties have been fitted with additional air handling units to reduce any future build-up of radon gas.

Public Health England will be sending out further testing kits to the 13 properties affected to ensure the remedial works provided have been effective.

For further information on radon gas, please visit Public Health England (www.ukradon.org) or ring the Maintenance Team on (01229) 876540.

2019 Stock Condition Survey

In March/April 2019 we will be commencing a full and detailed survey of housing properties and associated assets such as shops, garages and community centres to identify a new set of investment priorities for the next five years.



We have appointed a firm of Chartered Surveyors called Michael Dyson Associates to undertake this work and we expect the surveys to be completed by June 2019. **Michael Dyson will write to you in advance to let you know when the survey will be carried out.**

It is important that you allow the surveyors access to your home so that they can record the condition of components such as kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, wiring, windows and doors and other important elements such as the roof and external wall finishes that keep you safe and secure.

If you have any questions about the survey, or require any special provisions to be made about your personal circumstances, please contact Michael Dyson direct using the following contact details:

Tel: 01484 666888 | Web Site: www.mdysion.co.uk

Write to:

Michael Dyson Associates Ltd.
West House
Honley
Holmfirth
West Yorkshire
HD9 6LB



Michael Dyson associates Ltd
 Excellence in Housing Consultancy

REPORTING REPAIRS

There are two different numbers to ring depending on the type of repair:

To report gas related repairs

No heating or hot water?

Boiler not working properly?

Problem with your radiators?

Call our gas contractor, Sure Group, directly free of charge on:

0800 031 6578

Ring this number both during office hours and out-of-office hours

To report any other type of repair

Office hours: (01229) 876578

Out-of-hours emergencies only: (01229) 833311

Cut out & keep

DON'T BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD!

Please pay your rent and don't risk losing your home this Xmas.

If you're having difficulty meeting your rent payments, **please** don't hesitate to contact us as soon as possible - **we're here to help you.**

Andrew High: (01229) 876345 Carol High: (01229) 876397
Emma Johnson: (01229) 876469



WHY WE COLLECT DATA ABOUT YOU

Since 2004 we have been required to complete a CORE (Continuous REcording of Social Housing Lettings & Sales) form which contains information relating to your tenancy, the dwelling you are living in and your household.



Under the new General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), we must advise you why we are collecting this information and how we are using it.

CORE Data is collected on behalf of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for research and statistical purposes only. We do not require the consent of tenants to provide the information but you do have the right to know how and for what purpose your data is being collected, held and used.



We are collecting and sharing your information to help us better understand the social housing market and inform social housing policy. It does not affect your benefits, services or treatments that you get.

The information shared is anonymous and handled with care in accordance with the law.

For more information about this and to read the Private Notice, please visit the Housing Service's home page:

<https://www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/council-housing/>

This information is also displayed in our reception area.

ZERO TOLERANCE

Barrow Borough Council expects our employees to provide a courteous and helpful service to all our customers.

Within the Housing Service we pride ourselves on excellent customer care. In return we expect our customers to act in a reasonable manner towards our employees.

- The Council WILL NOT tolerate violent or verbally abusive behaviour towards its staff.
- People who abuse our staff or premises will be required to leave.
- Any customer who telephones our office and is verbally aggressive to staff will be advised should they continue the call will be terminated.
- If required, the police will be requested to remove abusive customers and we will prosecute when necessary.

We appreciate customers may be dealing with stressful situations and we are here to help. Please remember our staff deal with stressful situations as part of their role being courteous with each other helps make difficult situations less stressful.

RENT STATEMENTS

We must apologise for the fact the rent statements haven't been sent out for quite some time. Unfortunately, difficulties with our new housing management system has meant we've been unable to produce accurate statements in a format that can be easily interpreted. However, we have been working hard with an IT consultant to produce a statement that is accurate and customer friendly and we are now testing this template in the hope that we can provide statements in the New Year, followed by twice-yearly statements.

Also, in the New Year we are hoping to launch Tenant Portal to replace See My Data, which will allow online access to view your account, make payments and report repairs.

Thank you for your patience and we look forward to making progress with the way we provide account information in the New Year.

In the meantime, if you want to know what your rent account balance is or have any queries relating to your account, please don't hesitate to contact a member of our Rent Recovery Team – details on the back page.

Christmas Holiday Refuse & Recycling Collection Arrangements

Normal Collection Date	Revised Collection Date
Monday 24th December	Normal Service
Tuesday 25th December	Thursday 27th December
Wed. 26th December	Friday 28th December
Thursday 27th December	Saturday 29th December
Friday 28th December	Sunday 30th December
Monday 31st December	Normal Service
Tuesday 1st January	Wednesday 2nd January
Wednesday 2nd January	Thursday 3rd January
Thursday 3rd January	Friday 4th January
Friday 4th January	Saturday 5th January
Monday 7th January	Normal Service



Recycle your Christmas tree – put it out with your green waste collection, week commencing Monday, 7 January

Our longest-standing street voice gives an insight on what's involved in being a street voice.

Allan, how long have been a street voice and which area do you cover?

As a Street Voice, I cover the Barrow Island area and have done so since 2002.

What does a street voice do?

As a tenant representative and a member of the Tenants' Forum, a street voice is part of the Council's decision-making process. Street voices help the Council identify what's important to residents and help to find solutions and keep residents better informed.

The Tenants' Forum makes decisions on the allocation of funding for environmental enhancement schemes.

Is there anything that Street Voices don't do?

The role of a Street Voice is not to get directly involved with neighbour disputes or take on the role of an unpaid housing worker; they are not responsible for the management of an area and they can't use their position to raise individual or personal issues.

What meetings do you attend?

All Street Voices automatically become a member of the Tenants' Forum.

I have also been appointed to sit on the following groups:

- Housing Management Forum
- Housing Services Working Group
- Tenant Scrutiny Working Party
- Tenants' Complaints Panel

How often are Tenants' Forum meetings held and where are they held?

It depends on how involved you are. Tenants' Forum meetings are held about every two months with meetings lasting no longer than an hour and a half. Meetings are held in the Town Hall.

Do you get paid?

You don't get paid but you can claim travel expenses and out of pocket expenses. You can also claim costs involved in child care while attending meetings.

Does being a street voice involve a lot of paperwork?

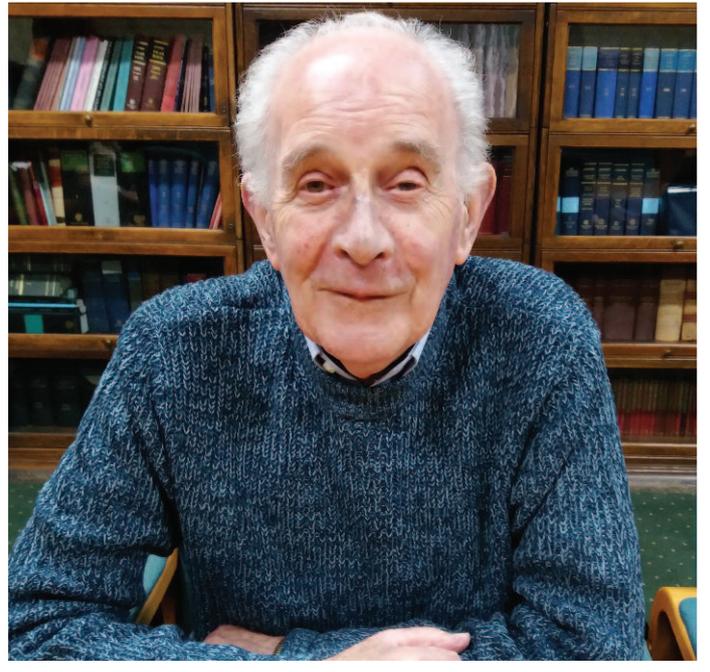
The short answer here is no.

Can anyone become a street voice?

Anyone – either a tenant or a leaseholder - can apply to be a street voice. They must cover an area (or block) of at least five properties. However, if there is already a tenants' association in the area they would be encouraged to get involved with the association.

What would you say to someone who is interested in becoming a street voice?

To be a street voice involves a few hours a month on average. The role is not to directly help neighbours with their problems but rather help direct and contribute to discussions on the



development of policies and procedures. It's great and rewarding to work in partnership with councillors and officers and I do feel that the Tenants' Forum has made a great difference to improving the services that are provided.

How do you become a street voice?

The process is very simple. The person interested in becoming one contacts the Housing Service, who then writes to residents living in the area asking if they have any objections to the person becoming a street voice. In order to be recognised by the Council as a street voice, the person would require the support of a third of their neighbours.

I am pleased to introduce Linda and James who have recently become street voices for their respective areas. Linda is the Street Voice for Brathay Crescent/Levens Terrace/Vulcan Road and James is the Street Voice for Grange & Cartmel Crescent. Their contact details are on the back page.



Linda Craig



James Christie



Griffin Community Centre Community News



Need a place for your celebration?

Griffin Community Centre is available to hire at very reasonable rates (includes use of kitchen/appliances). If you would like to hire the centre for parties, meetings, family functions etc. please ring Barbara Lavender on (0122) 829773.

Defibrillator

There is an Automated Defibrillator Unit situated outside the Griffin Community Centre linked to the North West Ambulance Service and is for public use.



Cotswold Crescent Senior Citizens' Club

The Club meets every Tuesday afternoon at the Griffin Community Centre. Members enjoy many events, including special lunches, shopping trips and, of course, the bingo sessions which are held at every meeting.

New members are always welcome so if you wish to join, and are over the age of 55, please come along to the Griffin Community Centre any Tuesday afternoon. The Centre is open from 1pm and club meetings are held between 1:30pm and 3pm. New members will be given a very warm welcome.



Diamond Wedding Congratulations

The club members wished our Vice Chair-person, Margaret Bartlett and her husband, Ged, many congratulations on celebrating their Diamond Wedding. Their big day was on 25th October and at the meeting held that week, Margaret was presented with a bouquet of flowers by the Chairperson, Barbara Lavender.

Margaret & Ged received a lovely card from The Queen, which she brought for members to see. They later enjoyed celebrations with their family.

Halloween Lunch

The Halloween lunch was enjoyed by the members on Tuesday 30th October, where they all tucked into a meal of pie and peas, which was brought in by an outside caterer. This was followed by chocolate cakes and either tea or coffee. The club meeting followed the meal and the usual bingo session was played.

Christmas Dinner

The members are looking forward to the Annual Christmas Dinner, which will be held at the Griffin Community Centre on Tuesday 4th December.



Devonshire Residents' and Tenants' Association

Friday Night Bingo Club

Friday Night Bingo is not just about playing bingo! It is about involving the community in social events as well. The Committee of the Devonshire Residents' and Tenants' Association, who run the Bingo, try very hard to involve everyone in their endeavours by organising many "special" events.

Friday night bingo is open to everyone aged 18 years and over and we have players coming from all areas in the town. It's a good place to socialise and make new friends and enjoy a nice atmosphere.

We have again, welcomed quite a few new players to the Friday Night Bingo since the last newsletter and we hope to welcome more in the future. Why don't you come and join us? You might go home with more cash than you came with!!

All the ticket prices are paid back in winnings and we have an 8 game book, which includes early and late flyers and a progressive jackpot game. The late flyer house prize is always £40 plus.

Doors open at 6pm with play starting around 7:30pm. The evening concludes at 9pm(ish) and will cost you a maximum of £6 for books, raffle tickets, interval refreshments and entrance fee. Please think about joining us on Friday evenings – we will be pleased to welcome you. Remember – the more who join in – the better the prize money!

Halloween Buffet Supper Evening

The Halloween supper evening took place on 26th October. The bingo session commenced at around 6:30pm when the first game was a free one with a cash prize for the winner. The buffet supper was served during the interval. Following the serving of the refreshments, the raffle was held. The second bingo session concluded around 9pm. All the players said they had enjoyed the evening.



**Tickets now on sale for
Brathay/Corporation/Levens/
Raglan/Vulcan Group**

**Christmas
Party**

**Saturday, 15 December 2018,
2pm – 5pm**

**St. George's Church Hall,
£2 per ticket (your raffle ticket)**

**Raffles - Disco - Magician - Secret Santa
Picnic & Party Food
Family games & lots of fun!**

**Pick up your tickets from:
Mandy Anderson (Chair),
12 Raglan Court
& Linda Craig (Street Voice)
62 Vulcan Road**

**Everyone
welcome**

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18 in numbers...

Here is our annual report which gives information on how we performed during the financial year 2017/18. We hope this information is useful in terms of understanding key costs and our performance. If you've any queries or comments you'd like to make about this report, please get in touch with us on (01229) 876523 or email: housing@barrowbc.gov.uk.

Responsive Repairs

-  £980,283 spent carrying out 7,934 repairs, of which:
-  1861 were emergencies
-  2285 were urgent
-  3788 were routine



- £124 cost of average repair
- 100% customer satisfaction (gas repairs)
- 96% tenant satisfaction (responsive repairs)

Planned Maintenance Works

-  £2.035m spent carrying out major improvements to 1320 properties:

-  43 bathrooms
-  208 central heating
-  127 rewires
-  96 roofs
-  508 external painting

-  100% tenant satisfaction
-  100% properties meet Decent Homes Standard

Rents

-  £81.65 average weekly rent

- £456,583 current tenant arrears
- 19 tenants evicted for rent arrears



Your Home

Gas Safety Checks

- 100% properties have valid gas certificates
- 57 warrants obtained to gain access to properties to carry out gas servicing where tenants refused access
- £7,980 spent on warrants
- £140 per warrant



Aids & Adaptations

- £134,144 spent on adaptations
- 140 aids/adaptations completed
- 100% customer satisfaction



Tenancy & Estates

- 1127 people on Cumbria Choice register
- 255 homes were relet
- 63% properties accepted on first offer
- 21 properties sold under Right to Buy Scheme
- 2,606 properties managed by Housing Service
- 11 complaints received of which:
3 upheld – 0 partly upheld – 8 not upheld



Neighbourhood

- 88 cases of anti-social behaviour reported
- 1 report of Hate Crime (disability)



£100 WINNERS!

Pictured below (on the left) with £100 of Love2Shop vouchers is Karen Hodson. When Karen moved out of her Council tenancy into private accommodation, she completed a Goodbye- Leave it Clean form and, as a thank you for fulfilling the criteria, we were pleased to be able to give her the vouchers. Karen is seen here with her mother.



Congratulations also to Lisa Wilde the latest winner of our Rewarding Good Tenants prize draw. Lisa's seen here collecting her £100 Love2Shop vouchers as well as £50 of vouchers on behalf of her mother who had also applied.



Any tenant who maintains their tenancy in accordance with their Tenancy Agreement can enter the Rewarding Good Tenants prize draw. You just need to complete an entry form providing your name and address. Your housing officer will then do a tenancy check. Eligible entries are then taken to a meeting of the Tenants' Forum where the prize draw takes place. The first drawn receives £100 of vouchers and 2nd and 3rd prize receive £50 of vouchers.



LOVE BARROW,
LOVE RECYCLING

Your recycling bin

Delivered by FCC Environment

✓ Please put the **right material** in the **right bin**
 ✓ Please ensure your **materials are loose**
 ✓ With your help we can all **recycle right!**

X NO recycling in bags
X NO black plastic trays

X NO hard plastic
✓ Clean recycling only

Recycle all these items in your burgundy recycling bin:



Contaminated bins, including those containing items tied up in plastic bags, will be rejected.



If you need help call us on **01229 876 543**
www.barrowbc.gov.uk/residents/recycling-refuse-collection/recycling-guidance

FAREWELL TO... Colin Garnett

There has been significant changes in the Housing Department this year and it is with sadness we say farewell to Colin, our Assistant Director – Housing as he has reached a stage in his life when he has decided to retire and spend more time with his wife, Josie.

Colin has worked for the Council since 1984 when he started as a Housing Officer; he then qualified with the Chartered Institute of Housing and became involved in managerial roles before he left in March 1997. In 2000 he returned to work in the Housing Department as Housing Manager and in 2014 became Assistant Director – Housing.

Colin has been a valued manager over all our services and it is disappointing he made the decision to leave us. However, we are all very pleased he has chosen to start the next stage of his life and we wish him and Josie much happiness in his retirement.



Following Colin's departure, the search was on for someone to take over his role and we are pleased to announce that Janice Sharp, who has worked for the Housing Service for many years, was successfully promoted to the position.



WELCOME TO... new Assistant Director - Housing, Janice Sharp

Hello, following Colin's retirement as Assistant Director – Housing in July, I moved into the role from the previous role as Operations Manager within the department.

I have worked in Barrow Borough Council's Housing Service since 1974, starting as office junior, then working my way up into various roles within the service and also qualifying with Chartered Institute of Housing.

During my extensive career in the Housing Service, I have gained considerable experience of the activities required to manage the Housing Service and I'm committed to ensure our teams provide excellent customer service and maintain a good service wherever possible.

and new Operations Manager, Caroline Wagstaff

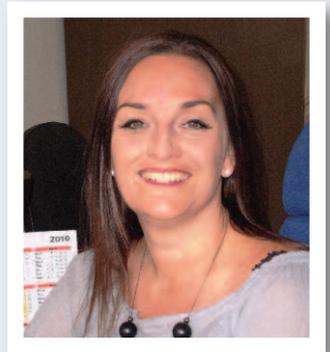
Hi, Many of you will know me as I have worked for the Local Authority for over 30 years - I really can't believe it's been that long! I started working on Housing reception and have had various roles over the years. For the last 12 years I have been the Assistant Operations Manager overseeing the management of our Operations Team.

However, I was recently given the opportunity to take on the role of Operations Manager. My responsibility is to manage the Income and Debt Recovery Team, Estate Management, Housing Options, Tenancy support, Reception services and our Homelessness and Advice Team.

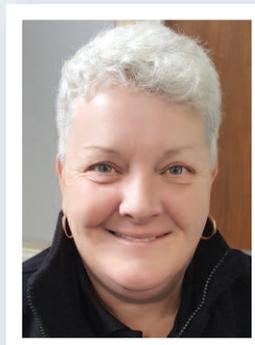
I feel very lucky to work for the Housing Department - every day is different and very multi tasking! I meet lots of people needing assistance with very different problems; many of our customers face very difficult times so to play a part in helping them move forward with their lives is very rewarding.

I am a qualified member of the Chartered Institute of Housing which has assisted me in my role keeping me ahead of changes with legislation and new powers to assist us in dealing with problems on our estates.

In the coming months there are many challenges ahead - we will see full service of Universal Credit on 5 December and we know this will present challenges for our customers. Please remember, if you have a problem with your tenancy the earlier you approach us for assistance the easier it will be to resolve. We've a team of excellent staff who pride themselves on customer care and are here to help.



WELCOME TO... New Mobile Caretakers

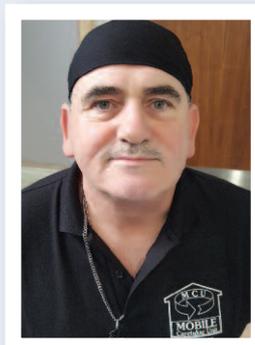


Sue Vaughan

Hi, I'm Sue

I recently joined the MCU Unit having worked previously as a Town Hall Steward. Prior to being a steward I worked at the Council's kennels.

When I'm not in work, I love family time and walking my dog, Myer, at the beach.



Dave Greenhall

Hi, My name is Dave and I have recently started work for the MCU team.

What I like most about this job is the variety of different things we get to do each week.

In my spare time I like to mess about with anything mechanical. I've almost finished building a soap box car which has taken about six months.

This time last year I was working as a motor mechanic with five years in.

I'm also a huge music fan and have thousands of tracks on my Spotify account, but I'm always looking for new ones. When I'm not doing that, I've got lots of Speedway GP box sets which I really enjoy watching.

WELCOME TO... New Members of Our Homelessness Team



Caroline Metcalfe

Hello my name is Caroline. I commenced working in the Housing Department in October as a Temporary Accommodation Officer. Previously I worked as a Letting Agent.

I am looking forward to helping and supporting people with housing needs.

I have a little boy and a dog called Bob who keep me occupied in my spare time.

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome I have received from all of my new work colleagues.



Paul Walmsley

Hi there, I'm Paul

I have joined the Homeless Team as a Senior Advice Officer whose roll is to provide advice and assistance to people presenting as homeless or under threat of becoming homeless.

Prior to coming to Barrow I worked in both the voluntary and statutory sectors in the field of housing advice.

In my spare time I enjoy reading, cooking and films.



Karl Thornley

Hi, my name is Karl Thornley and I am the Private Sector Liaison Officer for the Housing Service.

This is a new role within the Housing Department aimed at assisting the Homeless Team in finding properties within the private sector for those who have either a potential of becoming homeless or who are currently homeless.

This requires searching for and locating private landlords who have available properties and using our own Private Rented Sector incentive scheme. I work with the landlords to guarantee accommodation for homeless individuals and then work with these ones to maintain their tenancy by making sure they are in the best position they can be financially ensuring they are receiving the benefits they are entitled to.



MICHELLE HOSTS COFFEE MORNING

In September, our Business Support Supervisor, Michelle Bradley, hosted her yearly coffee morning to raise funds for MacMillan Cancer Support.



Staff were treated to a delicious range of home-baked cakes and entered a competition to guess the number of pasta shapes in a jar. Combined with a dress-down day, donations for this worthy cause came to £151 and this will be topped up with gift aid.

Andrew High, Senior Housing Officer, seen here with Michelle, also contributed and baked a cake for the event.



For Children in Need 2018, the Housing Department decided to join in the national fundraising event by having a dress-down day with some colleagues wearing their Pudsey ears. We also participated in the annual Duck Race with James Pond being the overall winner.



The event, organised by our money management advisor, Jo Hughes, raised over £80.



RESULTS OF CHILDREN'S SUMMER COMPETITION

Thanks to everyone who entered the Summer competition and congratulations to Ava Shields and Emily Brooke the winners in their age groups - well done to you both!

Christmas Competition

Here's a lovely Christmassy picture for you to colour in. As usual, the competition is split into two age groups: 7 years and under & 8-11 year olds and is open to children and grandchildren of Council tenants / leaseholders.

There are £10 gift cards for the winners of each category. The deadline for entries is Wednesday, 12th December.

Wishing all our younger readers a fantastic Christmas – have fun!!



Ava Shields (under 7 years)



Emily Brooke (8-11 years)



NAME (IN CAPITALS PLEASE)

ADDRESS

TEL NO AGE (The deadline for entries is Wednesday, 12th December)



Tenants please remember it is your responsibility to insure your furniture, belongings and personal possessions. These include your carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, and electrical items. And don't forget your jewellery, pictures and ornaments.

Therefore, we can offer our tenants an affordable home contents insurance scheme where the premiums can be paid alongside your rent and there is **NO EXCESS to pay if you made a claim.**

WHAT DOES HOMES CONTENTS INSURANCE COVER?

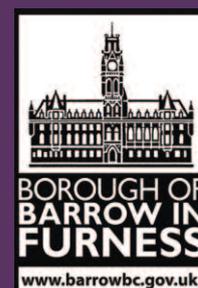
FIRE DAMAGE ~ THEFT ~ STORM AND FLOOD DAMAGE ~ DAMAGE CAUSED BY WATER OR OIL LEAKS ~ LOST OR STOLEN KEY ~ DAMAGE TO EXTERNAL GLAZING

OTHER THINGS COVERED AS STANDARD:

- The contents of your freezer if it broke down
- The damage caused by a leaking washing machine or a burst pipe
- The contents of sheds and garages are included
- Students possessions living away from home
- Optional extensions are available

Underwritten by Allianz Insurance Plc
Limits and exclusions apply, a full policy wording is available on request.

For more information call: **01229 876488**,
email: housing@barrowbc.gov.uk
or visit: www.barrowbc.gov.uk



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR - HOUSING

Janice Sharp (01229) 876523

OPERATIONS TEAM

Operations Manager

Caroline Wagstaff (01229) 876310

RENT RECOVERY TEAM

Housing Officers:

Andrew High (Snr) (01229) 876345

Carol High (01229) 876397

Emma Johnston (01229) 876469

Kelly Lamond (01229) 876352

ESTATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

Housing Officers:

Debbie Cubiss (Snr) (01229) 876423

Jill Burrows (01229) 876479

Cheryl Waite (01229) 876520

LETTINGS TEAM

Housing Officers:

Jackie Rimmer (Snr) (01229) 876550

Alison Horricks (01229) 876403

OTHER SERVICES

Homelessness Advice

Amanda Brierley (01229) 876332

Debbie Reid (01229) 876374

Paul Walmsley (01229) 876507

Private Housing Liaison Officer

Karl Thornley (01229) 876513

Temporary Accommodation Officer

Caroline Metcalfe (01229) 876546

Tenancy Support

Simone Singleton (01229) 876580

Housing Needs Assistant

Lindsay Gedling (01229) 876577

Benefit Liaison Officer

Amanda Morris (01229) 876581

Money Management Advisor

Jo Hughes (01229) 876543

Direct Debits

Georgina Bridgens (01229) 876483

MAINTENANCE TEAM

Maintenance & Asset Manager

Les Davies (01229) 876540

Senior Surveyor

Bryan Walker (01229) 876466

Senior Projects Officer

Nigel Clarke (01229) 876326

Contract Supervisors

Graham Harcourt (01229) 876465

Matt Preston (01229) 876492

Peter Rimmer (01229) 876530

Andrew Hartley (01229) 876531

Gas Technician

Mike Robson (01229) 876522

BUSINESS SUPPORT TEAM

Business Support Manager

Rebecca Halton (01229) 876549

Right to Buy

Michelle Bradley (01229) 876483

Household Insurance

Joanne Worrall (01229) 876581

Recharge Officer

Alison Bathgate (01229) 876333



Email us:

housing@barrowbc.gov.uk



Website:

www.barrowbc.gov.uk



Write to us:

Housing Service, Town Hall, Duke Street,
Barrow-in-Furness LA14 2LD

Office Hours Monday to Friday 9am - 4pm. Tel enquiries: Mon to Thurs 8.30am - 5pm (4.30pm on Friday)

REPORTING REPAIRS

	Office hours	Out-of-hours emergency
NON-GAS	(01229) 876 578	(01229) 833311
<u>GAS-ONLY</u> <u>REPAIRS</u>	0800 031 6578 (Freephone)	0800 031 6578 (Freephone)

Feedback: Your questions or comments regarding this newsletter are very welcome.

Please send your feedback to: Housing Department, FREEPOST RTLL-XUYS-JHZT,
BARROW-IN-FURNESS, Cumbria. Email: housing@barrowbc.gov.uk Tel: (01229) 876543

TOWN HALL
Switchboard:
01229 876523

TENANT/RESIDENT ASSOCIATION CONTACTS

Listed below are Council-recognised tenant/resident associations and street voices within the Borough.

Street Voice for Barrow Island

Allan McIntosh - (01229) 828669

Street Voice for Raglan Court & Corporation Terrace

Mandy Anderson - 07514 417 606

Street Voice for Grange & Cartmel Crescent

James Christie - (01229) 230010

Street Voice for Brathay Crescent/Levens Terrace/Vulcan Road

Linda Craig - 07516 309 159

Street Voice for Devonshire Road

Lisa Webb - (01229) 219787

Street Voice for Eamont Close

David Rollinson - d.rollinson43@gmail.com

Devonshire Road Residents' & Tenants' Association

Jennifer Lord - (01229) 835165 - Griffin Community Hall

North Walney Residents' Association

Steve Thornton - 07856 753 482

Ormsgill Youth & Community Association

(01229) 343405

Hindpool Community Association

Paul Bibby - 07874 649 200