

# STREETS AHEAD

THE MAGAZINE FOR FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING TENANTS



**HOW WE'RE HELPING YOU THIS WINTER**  
**THE TENANT CUSTOMER CHARTER**  
**MYFREEBRIDGE**

DEVELOPING HOMES AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR PEOPLE WITHIN WEST NORFOLK

**Freebridge**  
COMMUNITY HOUSING

# WELCOME TO STREETS AHEAD

Anita Jones  
Chief Executive  
of Freebridge  
Community Housing



Hello, and welcome to the last issue of our Streets Ahead magazine in 2022.

A lot has been going on in the world since I last spoke to you, with a new King taking his place following the sad passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and a new Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak.

One of the things we've been concentrating on at Freebridge in the last few months is repairs. In the last issue of Streets Ahead, I spoke about the progress we'd made in tackling the repairs that had built up last year. So I'm very pleased to be able to tell you that the progress continues - and we're well on our way to meeting our target to clear the properties we've been able to get access to by the end of December.

**We need your help though, because to clear all the repairs that are still to be done we need you to allow us access to your homes! Without this we just can't get the work done.**

As well as the progress we've made with repairs we're also making great progress against the priorities we've set in our corporate strategy, Building Better Futures, which you can read in full on our website.

We know there's still plenty of work to do though, and our

teams will continue to work hard on improving the service we provide.

One of the other big pieces of work that's been happening here is the launch of our new customer engagement platform **myfreebridge** which I know many of you have already got involved in.

It's incredibly important to us to know what you think about the services we provide so please do take the time to read about what we're introducing and how you can get involved because your feedback helps us shape how we'll work in the future.

Finally, everyone here at Freebridge realises that this winter is going to be a difficult one for many people given the rise in the cost of living - with energy prices in particular going higher than many people expected. So the team have worked on collecting together

a variety of information and advice which we hope will help you over the next few months.

I hope you and your families have a good Christmas and I look forward to speaking to you again in the new year.

And please don't forget that if you're struggling we're here to help the best we can.

*anita*



## CHRISTMAS OPENING HOURS



Fri 23 Dec	8.45 - 16.45
Sat 24 Dec	Closed
Sun 25 Dec	Closed
Mon 26 Dec	Closed
Tues 27 Dec	Closed
Wed 28 Dec	8.45 - 17.15
Thur 29 Dec	8.45 - 17.15
Fri 30 Dec	8.45 - 16.45
Sat 31 Dec	Closed
Sun 1 Jan	Closed
Mon 2 Jan	Closed
Tues 3 Jan	8.45 - 17.15



# LISTENING TO THE CUSTOMER VOICE AT FREEBRIDGE

**Customers need to be at the heart of any business and as I write this update having been in my role for just over 12 months, it's clear that there's a whole host of work happening at Freebridge to make sure this is the case.**

Having customers at the heart of what Freebridge does is incredibly important to us, as it helps us to understand when we have done well, when we could have done better, and what we could do differently to help you and your community.

One of the best examples of this at Freebridge is the regular Out & Abouts we run where we get to meet and speak to hundreds of you in your own homes.

We have also been working closely with a number of other housing associations across Norfolk and Suffolk to see how we can work together

to create a wider customer voice platform. Romeeza, a Freebridge tenant kindly volunteered to get involved with this particular project and you can read more about it over on page 22.

Listening to your views and acting upon them is key to positive change and to improving the services we offer everyone. Over the last couple of months, we have conducted our first independent tenant satisfaction survey. Currently, BMG, the external company we used to carry out the survey, are busy collating all the responses and we look forward to talking to you about the results in a future issue of Streets Ahead.

What will be really useful about these results is that they'll provide a robust and accurate point for the teams at Freebridge to track increases in satisfaction, as they make improvements to the services

they deliver to you. We will be running the survey again in February and every six months after that.

Lastly, but very much not least, **myfreebridge** is by far the largest customer-focused project we've delivered this year and we have dedicated a couple of pages on this so you can understand exactly what's involved (see pages 6 & 7). We do hope that you see the value of this initiative, and the more people we get involved the more use it will be!

## So what's next?

Well, we need to get more people joining as Community Voices, to make sure that the customer voice is heard loud and clear. So if you're interested do join us and encourage your neighbours too! We will also be settling in our Customer Ambassadors and Service Champions over the next few months.

Finally, before the end of the year, we're looking to develop a new digital engagement platform - to make it even easier to engage with us in the future.

If you want to get ahead of the game, please do let us know your email address when you next call to speak with the Freebridge team, and you'll be able to make sure you're one of the first people to join this new digital movement!

Thank you for reading.

**Bex**

Freebridge's  
Customer Voice Lead

# my freebridge



myfreebridge is a new way of engaging tenants, leaseholders, and members of the wider community with Freebridge. With this framework, we'll be able to see how we can move forwards together to bring about positive change. You will be able to get involved as much or as little as you want, at times that best suit your needs.



service champions



customer ambassadors



community voices

Our Service Champions will be keeping an eye on our tenant satisfaction levels to ensure that where dissatisfaction is identified, they reach out to our Community Voices to find out why. We are still looking for our Service Champions, so if you feel that you have a passion for ensuring an excellent service is delivered then please register your interest on our website.

This group of people form our Customer Voice Panel who will be working alongside the Board, ensuring that the Customer Voice feeds into strategic decisions. Our Ambassadors:

- Will ensure that everyone has been given the opportunity to speak and outcomes are communicated back to everyone.
- Will be people who want to help strengthen communities, who love to engage and communicate with all of our tenants.

Again if this sounds like you, please do register your interest with us.

At the heart of everything are our Community Voices. These are people who have expressed an interest in getting involved in some way, whether it be answering a quick online poll to completing a survey or meeting other community voices in a focus group. This group of people will be the first point of call for our Service Champions when they want to investigate a service provided by Freebridge or if they want to establish new ideas for ways in which Freebridge can improve.

**For example, one of the first projects we will be reaching out to our Community Voices is feedback on Streets Ahead! If you want your views to be heard, please do express an interest in joining our Community Voices.**



# my freebridge

If you're a Freebridge tenant, live with a Freebridge tenant, own a Freebridge property or live or work in a Freebridge community, come and join the hundreds of people who want their voice to be heard, and to make a difference.

From armchair advisors to Customer Ambassadors every voice has a place in *my freebridge*, so we're inviting you to be a part of this change and give the Freebridge customer voice volume!



### Why should you get involved?

Everyone plays an important part in bringing myfreebridge to life. Customers want Freebridge to communicate about things that matter to them so join myfreebridge and start sharing with us the things that matter to you. Give the customer voice volume and be heard!

**If you have any questions please do email Rebecca at [customervoice@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:customervoice@freebridge.org.uk)**

Scan here to find out more  
- or visit our website at  
[www.freebridge.org.uk](http://www.freebridge.org.uk)





# PURFLEET PATHWAYS

## UPCYCLING WORKSHOP

During September Purfleet Trust had a group of clients and volunteers come along to an upcycling workshop at their Pathways Centre in North Lynn. The workshop was run by Michelle of Recycled Crafts, a local Heacham based company that make all sorts of beautiful handcrafted and upcycled items and also run craft workshops.

Michelle taught the group techniques for chalk painting and stencilling and clients were able to upcycle a piece of furniture that they could take with them when they move to their own accommodation.

These workshops are a great opportunity for Purfleet to get different members of their community together to share a

fun activity and a really good way for clients to learn a new skill and make something to treasure for their new homes.

Purfleet are going to be running regular upcycling workshops and hope the community and their supporters can become more involved. There will be an opportunity to purchase a piece of furniture from our warehouse and upcycle it at a workshop.

**If you would like more information on this or you have furniture to donate or you have an upcycling skill you would like to share with a group, then please do get in touch by emailing [joywylie@purfleettrust.org.uk](mailto:joywylie@purfleettrust.org.uk) or calling 01553 871375.**

**Purfleet Pathways has a ten week training program to help people to get back into employment.**

**If you would be interested in joining the next course or would like further information then please contact [kevanecrane@purfleettrust.org.uk](mailto:kevanecrane@purfleettrust.org.uk) or call us on 01553 871375.**

Pictured on the page opposite (from l-r) Jason Nicholls - Contracts Manager, TM Browne, Councillor Colin Manning, Andy Walder - Chair of the Freebridge Board, James Wild MP, Darren Browne - Managing Director, TM Browne, Anita Jones - Chief Executive at Freebridge, Paul Newbold - Director of New Homes and Communities at Freebridge, and Keiran Wintin - Site Manager at TM Browne





# JAMES WILD MP OPENS NEW DEVELOPMENT

**Freebridge were delighted to have had its development of new homes in the village of Gayton officially opened by MP for North West Norfolk, James Wild, at the beginning of October.**

The development built at Draper Gardens in the centre of the village is comprised of 24 new properties - with two further homes at Pampas Cottages at the front of the site - which altogether totals 16 homes available for rent alongside 10 new shared ownership properties.

The 16 homes available for rent include:

- one 4-bedroom property,
  - seven 3-bedroom properties, and
  - eight 2-bedroom properties,
- with the 10 shared ownership properties including:
- two 4-bedroom homes,

- four 3-bedroom homes, and
- four 2-bedroom homes.

Andy Walder, Freebridge's Board Chair: "In our current five-year strategy document – Building Better Futures – we pledged to invest millions of pounds to provide more homes and more choices to meet the growing need for good-quality affordable housing throughout the whole of West Norfolk, and this new development in Gayton is very much part of that pledge.

"We know that we also need to invest heavily in our existing homes – we invested £5.9 million in the last financial year - while at the same time building more affordable homes in areas where there is the biggest demand, both in King's Lynn and the surrounding villages like Gayton.

"It was great to have James here to officially open this development today, and we look

forward to welcoming those moving into the completed homes over the next few weeks."

James Wild MP said: "It was a pleasure to open Freebridge's new Draper Gardens housing development in Gayton. More affordable housing is needed in North West Norfolk and these new homes, made possible in part with government investment, will provide much-needed rental and shared ownership properties helping local people.

"By taking a forward-thinking approach and installing air source heat pumps, they are setting an example other developers should follow."



**Free food sessions to help King's Lynn residents trying to make ends meet, due to increasing food costs, returned recently to the Discovery Centre.**

Lily, a service that is owned and managed by the Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk, organised interactive sessions with Freebridge and the College of West Anglia from funding received from The East Coast Community Fund.

'Food for thought' sessions were held at Freebridge's Discovery Centre to help residents cook healthy and nutritious meals on a budget as well as tasting sessions and blind taste tests, comparing alternatives to some of the costly big brands.

Sophie Bates, Director of Customer and Communities at Freebridge Community Housing, added: "Earlier this year Freebridge published our first Neighbourhood Plan – the North Lynn Community Plan – which outlined a number of commitments we have made to help improve the health and wellbeing of residents in North Lynn.

"Through the plan, we have agreed actions that we can deliver together with our partners to achieve significant and meaningful benefits for the community, and the work we're doing with Lily, the borough council and the College of West Anglia is a great example of this."

## SUPPORTING A SAFE, STABLE PLACE TO LIVE

Last year Freebridge launched its first Tenancy Sustainment Plan. A plan that was designed to:

- ensure that every new tenancy has the best possible start,
- minimise the number of tenancy failures,
- reduce property turn over and the associated costs to the organisation,
- support customers to live safe, fulfilled lives,
- empower customers to take responsibility for maintaining their tenancy, and
- support sustainable communities.

The plan detailed our commitment to doing all that we reasonably and practically can to ensure as many tenancies as possible are successfully maintained, and following the original plan published last year, we've now produced a report that outlines all that we have done in working towards this commitment in the plan's first 12 months. To read the document in full, please visit: [freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/welfare-and-support/tenancy-support](https://freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/welfare-and-support/tenancy-support)







# WE HAVE NOW LAUNCHED OUR TENANT CUSTOMER CHARTER!

The Tenant Customer Charter is a living, breathing document that will be regularly updated based upon feedback from customers, contractors, and colleagues. And we will regularly update you on our performance against the commitments we have promised to deliver to in future Streets Ahead magazines and on our website.

Please visit our website to read you the Tenant Customer Charter in full at [www.freebridge.org.uk/address](http://www.freebridge.org.uk/address) or scan the QR code here.

And if you have any questions about the charter please contact Rebecca at [customervoice@Freebridge.org.uk](mailto:customervoice@Freebridge.org.uk) or call her on 03332 404 444.



## Surveying the properties we own at Freebridge

Over the next few months, you'll receive a letter from MLCS3, who are carrying out stock condition surveys on all of the properties at Freebridge.

The survey will take around 30 minutes and will record details in your home such as the age of your kitchen, bathroom, windows and doors, what materials the roof, windows and doors are made of, and the location of any gas and electric meters. They will also measure each room to produce a layout plan of your home, making it easier for us to respond to repairs in the future.

The letter will let you know when a surveyor from MLCS3 plans to visit your home. If this is not convenient, please call the freephone number to rearrange.

**Freebridge**  
COMMUNITY HOUSING

**MLCS3**  
Software | Surveys | Support

If you have any questions regarding your survey appointment, you need to change the date, or require a time slot, please call our

**Freephone number  
0800 321 3982**

Always ask for identification before letting someone into your home.

# WAYS WE'RE HELPING YOU THIS WINTER

We know how hard things may be for the majority of our customers going into the winter months this year, so we've put some things in place to try and lessen the strain for some of those more vulnerable households.

Please have a read over the next few pages for more information on the help available to you, and if you need additional help please do contact our Tenancy Support Team at [tenancysupport@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:tenancysupport@freebridge.org.uk) or call us on 03332 404 444.



We're holding some events at various points in the day at our Discovery Centre in North Lynn to provide a warm hub for people to visit - see over the page for more details



warm meal packs to be provided to those that need them



hygiene packs to be provided to those that need them

We'll be making things such as tinned soups and blankets available in the communal rooms at all of our sheltered schemes



energy packs to be provided which include energy efficient lightbulbs, draught excluders and energy saving information



## DISCOVERY CENTRE COMMUNITY FRIDGE

We're in the process of setting up a community fridge in our Discovery Centre community fridge - keep an eye on our facebook page [facebook/discoverycommunitycentre](https://www.facebook.com/discoverycommunitycentre) for when this launches



We'll be contacting all vulnerable customers by calling them to check in on their wellbeing



We'll be working with Radio West Norfolk's Toy Appeal to make sure no children go without Christmas presents this year by providing gifts in December



## WINTER WARM HUB

We'll be opening up our Discovery Community Centre in North Lynn every Thursday from 17th November, through to the 23rd February from 10am to 12noon and every Thursday evening from 6pm - 8pm, to provide a safe warm space.

**THURSDAYS 10am - 12noon**

Drop-in coffee and cake morning

**THURSDAYS 6pm - 8pm**

There will be various activities available such as bingo, crafts and warm meals.

For more information visit our facebook page [facebook/discoverycommunitycentre](https://www.facebook.com/discoverycommunitycentre) or you can call us on 01553 667777.

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PRIORITY SERVICES REGISTER?

You can sign up to a Priority Services Register (PSR) to receive extra help from your energy or water company in case of any outage. It's free to sign up and you could be eligible if you:


- have reached your State Pension age
- are disabled or have a long-term medical condition
- are recovering from an injury
- have a hearing or sight condition
- have a mental health condition
- are pregnant or have children under 5
- have extra communication needs, such as if you do not speak or read English well

For extra support if you have a power cut:




 [ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority](https://ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority)

 [psr@ukpowernetworks.co.uk](mailto:psr@ukpowernetworks.co.uk)

 Call 0800 169 9970

For extra support if your water goes off:



 [anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/water-care/priority-services](https://anglianwater.co.uk/help-and-advice/water-care/priority-services)

## IF YOU ARE STRUGGLING FINANCIALLY PLEASE SPEAK TO US

We don't want to see any of our customers struggling, so through our Support Fund, we have provided help to those of you that need it with food parcels and vouchers, fuel, phone top-ups, energy credit and more.

If you need help from our Support Fund, you can refer yourself by contacting:

 [tenancysupport@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:tenancysupport@freebridge.org.uk)

 03332 404 444 and ask to speak to our Tenancy Support Team

# OTHER HELP AVAILABLE



## Do you qualify for a broadband 'social tariff'? Some cost £15 a month

Comparisons list deals that are priced hot for a year, but after, to keep it cheap you need to ditch and switch. Yet if you're on a lower income, for example, claiming universal credit, there are tariffs that are cheap for longer-term. Some looking for work are even eligible for six months' free broadband.

## Over 800,000 qualify for state pension top-up



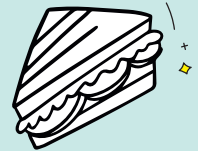
Pension credit is a tax-free, means-tested benefit aimed at retired people on low incomes – and it can be worth £1,000s a year. Plus it's a gateway benefit that may make you eligible for council tax discounts, free TV licences for over-75s and more.

## Get £1,000 in help towards childcare costs



Whether you have a wee tot or a big teen, childcare costs can be huge. Yet 100,000s of working parents are missing out on £1,000s of help with this expense. It's worth checking the Government website to see if you're eligible for extra help.

## Grab free food from bakeries, supermarkets and neighbours



Free food and drink-sharing app **Olio** offers leftover grub for nothing! Instead of binning surplus food, people sign up to the app and offer it to their local community. It's not just people clearing out their kitchen cupboards, as major supermarkets and retailers such as Tesco – as well as independent outlets – have also jumped on board. Another app to try is **Too Good Too Go**.



## If you pay Council Tax and are on a low income

You may be able to claim Council Tax Support. You can check with the Borough Council website for more information.



## It is estimated that 500,000+ people in the UK aren't claiming Universal Credit, or any alternative benefit/tax credit, when they could be.

You can apply for Universal Credit online at [www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit) or if you cannot access the internet, by telephoning the Universal Credit Helpline on 0800 328 5644.

## £400 towards energy bills



This came into place in October and there is no need to sign-up, this will be automatically applied to your energy account or refunded to you, depending on how your energy provider is handling it.

## Pensioners will receive a £300 one-off cost of living payment

This will be automatically applied as a top-up to the winter fuel payment.



**The cost of TV licenses has been frozen** at £159 a year until 2024

# MONEY SAVING BOILER CHALLENGE

**You could cut your gas use by 6 to 8% by changing a single setting on your combi boiler.**

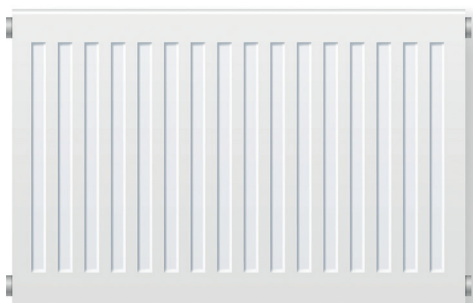
We have a guide available on our website which shows you how to change a single setting on your gas combi boiler to make it more efficient.

It only takes a few minutes, and it can be changed back instantly, so there's nothing to lose by trying it.

A combi boiler provides both heating and hot water. If you have a combi, you won't have a separate hot water tank.

If you have a separate hot water tank, or you aren't sure if you have one, we don't recommend you make this change yourself. This is because water stored in a tank needs to be hot in order to stop bacteria from growing.

To access the guide, please scan the QR code below, or visit [freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/about-my-home/energy-in-your-home](https://freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/about-my-home/energy-in-your-home)



## Does your heating use oil?

**thinkingfuel**  
community oil buying

**ThinkingFuel is Community Action Norfolk's collective oil buying scheme**

Members save an average £120 a year on their oil bills. It's FREE to join and there is no obligation to buy.

For more information and to register call **01362 698216** or visit **thinkingfuel.org.uk**

# BINGO!

**JOIN US AT  
DISCOVERY CENTRE**

**TUESDAY 20 DECEMBER**

**DOORS AT 6PM**

**EYES DOWN AT 6.30PM**

**PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL TO BOOK YOUR SLOT!**  
01553 667777 or [placeshapers@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:placeshapers@freebridge.org.uk)

**SAVE £120**  
a year on your  
oil bills



# THINGS YOU CAN DO TO KEEP ENERGY COSTS DOWN

You could save almost 6% (£150 a year on average) by **using your radiator thermostat** and turning it down in rooms you are not using.



Try **drying your clothes on an airer**, but make sure you leave a window open, as it can cause damp in poorly ventilated homes. On dry days, you can dry them outside

It can be useful to know what your devices are using. These are rough estimates as it will vary between different models of appliance, but the prices are based on the new energy prices that were put in place from 1st October.



**Use 'eco' mode on appliances where possible.** For most appliances, 'eco' mode means operating at a lower speed, and often, heat. It's frequently an option on washing machines and dishwashers.



If you can **use your microwave instead** of the oven to cook certain foods, do. They use less energy than ovens because they only heat the food, not the air around it.

To take the example of a jacket potato, we calculated that cooking it in the microwave uses 25% of the energy it takes to cook it in the oven.

Appliance	kWh (1)	Cost per hour (2)
Tumble dryer (3,000W)	3	£1.02
Oven (2,000W)	2	68p
Kettle (1,800W)	1.8	61p
Electric hob (1,700W)	1.7	58p
Vaccum cleaner (1,400W)	1.4	48p
Microwave (1,200W)	1.2	41p
Toaster (1,200W)	1.2	41p
Dishwasher (1,200W)	1.2	41p
Air fryer (1,000W)	1	34p
Washing machine (700W)	0.7	24p
Electric clothes airer (250W)	0.25	8.5p
Slow cooker (225W)	0.225	8p
Electric blanket (250W)	0.1	3.4p
TV (30W)	0.03	1.02p
Fridge (28W)	0.028	0.95p
Light bulb (10W)	0.01	0.34p

(1) kWh (kilowatt hours) are the units used to measure how much power is used by an appliance. It works out as the watt power of an appliance divided by 1,000 (when used for one hour). (2) Prices based on 1 October 2022 price guarantee rate of 34p/kWh.

COME & VISIT

# SANTA'S GROTTO

JOIN US AT  
DISCOVERY CENTRE

£2 PER CHILD  
(PROCEEDS TO  
THE KING'S LYNN  
FOOD BANK)

MONDAY 19 DECEMBER  
10AM - 4PM

AT THE DISCOVERY CENTRE

PLEASE CONTACT US TO BOOK  
A 5 MINUTE TIME SLOT

SEE OUR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS  
[facebook.com/discoverycommunitycentre](https://facebook.com/discoverycommunitycentre)

## DISCOVERY CENTRE CHRISTMAS PARTY

JOIN US AT  
DISCOVERY COMMUNITY CENTRE  
TUESDAY 20 DECEMBER  
12PM - 3PM

COLUMBIA WAY, KING'S LYNN, PE30 2LA  
• Tel: 01553 667777  
• E: [placeshapers@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:placeshapers@freebridge.org.uk)

**Discovery Centre**  
A PLACESHAPING COMMUNITY CENTRE

# COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS AT FREEBRIDGE

We want the services our customers receive from us to be of the highest standard, however, we realise there will be times when people may want to complain, tell us how we can improve our services, or perhaps compliment us on something we have done well.

The complaints, comments and compliments we receive are important to us as they help us

improve and shape the services we provide.

Between the 1<sup>st</sup> of April and the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, we logged 42 complaints cases which represents a small increase on the same period in the previous year.

We remain committed to continuing to improve the services we provide, and the complaints and compliments



April 2022

07

compliments received

11

complaints received

Reasons for complaints

05	property condition
03	Freebridge staff
02	complaints handling
01	occupancy rights

May 2022

14

compliments received

15

complaints received

Reasons for complaints

07	property condition
03	Freebridge staff
01	complaints handling
01	data management
01	health & safety
01	moving to a new home
01	resident involvement

## Housing Ombudsman Service

We can help if you have a problem complaining to your landlord.

**Contact us:**

**by telephone on:**  
0300 111 3000

**by email:** [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

**via our website:** [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

**or by post at:** Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ





we receive from you help us to do this.

We use the learnings we gain from your feedback to help us work with managers to make changes to our processes.

Finally, we have recently submitted an updated version of our Housing Ombudsman self-assessment report - and this can be located on our website at [www.freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/your-feedback](http://www.freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/your-feedback)



# CALLING US AT FREEBRIDGE

If you've not made a telephone call to us for a while, you might not be aware that we've made some changes to help you get through to who you want to speak to more quickly and easily.

Now when you call us on 03332 404 444 you'll be offered a number of options to choose from:

**choose option #1**

to talk to us about repairs needed to your home or garage

**choose option #2**

to make a payment for your rent or service charges using our automated service

**choose option #3**

to talk to someone about a payment, your rent, or service charges

**choose option #4**

to talk to us about moving into or out of a Freebridge home, or to make a change to your tenancy

If you have a query about something that doesn't fit any of the options above - like garden assistance, anti-social behaviour or tenancy related issues - just hold the line and someone will be available to help direct your call to the correct team.

June 2022

12

compliments received

16

complaints received

Reasons for complaints

06	property condition
04	Freebridge staff
03	occupancy rights
01	anti-social behaviour
01	estate management
01	moving to a new home

# KEEPING WEST NORFOLK A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

**Something that we can all probably agree is that West Norfolk is a great place to live, with so much beautiful countryside surrounding us.**

And to try and make sure that this continues to be the case Freebridge have been working closely with the Borough Council to deal with - and where possible, reduce the number of - fly tipping incidents in the area.

Discarded domestic waste or bulk household items can have a significant impact on the quality of life for residents and can also present a risk to people's health and safety. And perhaps most importantly it's also a criminal offence where significant fines can be incurred, and in extreme cases custodial sentences handed out.

If any identified tenant fails to clear the items as requested, we will pass the matter onto our Tenancy Team to consider taking action given

that a breach of the tenancy agreement has taken place, this will be in conjunction with the Community Safety Team at Borough Council King's Lynn for enforcement action. The part of your tenancy agreement that talks about this can be found on the right.

Details of your bin day and other advice on how or where to dispose of waste can be found on the Borough Council's website at [www.west-norfolk.gov.uk](http://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk)

## From your tenancy agreement:

You must keep the garden and any land associated with your home tidy and free of rubbish, including cutting lawns, removing weeds, trimming trees and hedges. You must not store rubbish, scrap, furniture or appliances (other than that awaiting collection) in your garden area, or against the outside walls of the property or in any yard or parking area. You must dispose of all rubbish securely and hygienically in accordance with the household waste collection arrangements that apply to the property (details of which will be provided by the Council and/or us). You must put bins and/or bags out for collection on the relevant collection day."

Freebridge working in partnership with

Borough Council of  
**King's Lynn &  
West Norfolk**



# GOT A REPAIRS APPOINTMENT BOOKED WITH US?

NOT GOING TO BE IN FOR US TO COMPLETE THE REPAIR?  
**WHEN YOU GET OUR REMINDER TEXT MESSAGE**

# CALL US! TO RESCHEDULE

## A STAKE IN FREEBRIDGE: HOW TO BECOME A SHAREHOLDER

Freebridge Community Housing is inviting its tenants to become shareholders. Shareholders have the right to attend the Annual General Meeting and vote on major issues in the running of the organisation.

Shareholding is designed to increase tenants' stakeholding in their housing provider and is a way to become involved in what Freebridge does.

If you need more information about how to become a Freebridge shareholder or just want to know more contact the Governance Team on 03332 404 444 or email [shareholderenquiries@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:shareholderenquiries@freebridge.org.uk)



If you have an appointment booked with us to carry out a repair in your home but the time is no longer convenient for you, please make sure that you let us know. We will remind you with a text message leading up the appointment.

By doing this it will mean that our time will not be wasted, we'll be able to use your original slot to complete someone else's repair, and we'll be able to reschedule your repair for a time that *does* work for you.

**Thank you!**

# YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



Welcome to our questions and answers page. Thank you to those who responded to our recent call out for questions.

Some of the questions we received were specific to individual tenants - and where that was the case we've responded directly to those individuals, and some of the questions were intended for our Annual General Meeting and those have been submitted to the Governance Team who will answer them. Which leaves just a couple that that we've answered on the right.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please do contact Rebecca our Customer Voice Lead who will be happy to help.

**"What can I do about my neighbours who constantly leave unwanted household items in their gardens? I take great pride in my garden space, but I often see this happening."**

**Maureen**

We're sorry you are experiencing this in your immediate community.

As you are probably already aware this is a tenancy breach, and the condition of the garden has to be maintained. You can contact the Tenancy Team on 03332 404 444 and make us aware of the issue.

The team will then investigate and work with your neighbours to resolve the issue. You can remain anonymous throughout the process - what is important is that everyone adheres to their tenancy agreement and if they cannot, for whatever reason, they receive the support needed to enable them to.

**"Given how much we are told to save water and electric and energy why are Freebridge not upgrading the bathrooms with showers considering it's the cheapest option for people to save money and cut costs down? And why are only certain properties are getting the upgrades?"**

**Michael**

We're committed to making improvements in all of our existing homes - and as part of this we are trialling installing showers in homes when properties become empty.

Each element of a property has a lifespan and we usually only install upgrades when these lifespans have been exceeded or when a property becomes empty, and this means that even neighbouring properties will receive upgrades at different times. We appreciate this might be frustrating, but we need to ensure we have plans that we work too for the replacement of elements in your homes.

## CHANGES TO OUR PRIVACY NOTICES

Our Privacy Notice for Tenants has recently been updated.



The key change to the Privacy Notice is the addition of the following clause:

e) in the first table in section 6.3, to say that we will share contact information with third parties who undertake market research on our behalf

to enable service delivery improvements.

The notice, alongside our all our Privacy Notices, can be read in full on our policies page of our website at [www.freebridge.org.uk/who-we-are/our-policies](http://www.freebridge.org.uk/who-we-are/our-policies)



# FREEBRIDGE FUND CONTINUES TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

Earlier this year Freebridge was delighted to be once again able to donate £5000 to ten community groups across West Norfolk through the Freebridge Community Fund.

Each year Freebridge invite charities and community groups to apply for up to £1000 for projects that will have a positive impact on health and wellbeing, the environment, support residents or bring communities together.

As always, the fund received a high number of deserving applications, with the final selection being made by a judging panel comprised of Freebridge tenants and colleagues.

This year the recipients and the projects they applied for grant funding for were:

- **21st King's Lynn Scout Group**

To contribute funds for the purchase of a new mess tent.

- **9th King's Lynn RC Scout Group**

To contribute funds towards new tents and solar lighting.

- **Docking Playing Fields Association**

To make improvements to their play area.

- **Downham Market Arts**

To hold a number of singing sessions for the hearing impaired.

- **King's Lynn Winter Night Shelter**

To contribute towards the cost of renting their building.

- **St Michael's Church Lane Nursery**

To support buying items to go into a sensory garden.

- **The Gaywood Community Centre Management Committee**

To contribute towards the refurbishment of their disabled toilets.

- **Volunteering Matters**

To fund a 10-week healthy eating course for people with learning disabilities.

- **West Norfolk Carers**

To contribute towards an activity day for young carers.

- **West Norfolk Riding for the Disabled Association**

To support the running of events in their activity programme.



# BUILDING A TENANT VOICE FOR THE EAST

Late last year Freebridge joined together with four other leading social housing providers in Norfolk and Suffolk - Broadland Housing Association, Havebury Housing Partnership, Orwell Housing and Saffron Housing Trust - to form a new, informal alliance called Independent East, to support each other in delivering better services to our tenants and local communities.

One of Independent East's first projects has been to start working with a small group of tenants from each organisation to look at the possibilities for creating a new **Residents Voice for Norfolk and Suffolk**.

One of that small group of tenants was Romeeza, a Freebridge tenant who wanted to get involved with the work to see if a region-wide group would help tenants build a stronger collective voice. So, let's see what Romeeza thinks of this vision:

## **How long have you been living in a Freebridge home?**

"I've lived in a Freebridge home for over three years now - and I love where I live. When we moved into a Freebridge home it was already painted and clean, it was such an easy transition to make. We love our home and the community it's located in - it's brilliant - and our neighbours are absolutely lovely."

## **What do you do?**

"Currently I support children in a residential setting. And being able to support these children who find themselves in vulnerable situations is something that is incredibly rewarding."

## **Why did you want to help Freebridge and get involved with this project?**

"When I moved into my home I often spoke to my neighbours when I saw them in their gardens. We spoke about concerns they had about the services that Freebridge provides but it was clear that these concerns were going no further and that their voices were not being heard. So I

thought it would be good to get involved to help ensure that this changed.

"Working with Freebridge and Independent East is the first project I have been involved with and I felt it would be a really good opportunity to see what other housing associations were doing. When we had our first meeting there were tenants from across the east who clearly had issues where they live, as the additional support offered was nowhere near as good as that offered by Freebridge. I felt very lucky to be living in a Freebridge home.

"Also, it's important for me to get involved as I'm a lone parent, who's not originally from England so I feel my voice may resonate with people in similar positions.

"If I can, I also want to help be a voice for those people who are unable to get involved in work like this."

### **How much of your time has this project taken?**

"Over the space of three months approximately five hours, and that's just for this project – when you think about it, it is nothing really. But it has been very rewarding!"

### **What has been discussed so far?**

"Various things have been discussed so far, such as making sure:

- that there is a sense of community for those who have a social landlord
- that landlords empower tenants' to have a voice
- that the tenants voice is heard, through whatever means
- that the associations can

work together and share good practice

- that improvements are made to the standard of people's homes
- that tenants are part of a wider community across the region."

### **What benefits do you see in creating a new residents' voice for Norfolk and Suffolk?**

"I think to have that sense of belonging and being a part of something. And we can learn from each other in terms of what works well and what doesn't."

### **How do you see this fitting into the myfreebridge framework?**

"myfreebridge is all about giving people a voice. Being a part of a wider county community voice we will be able to share with everyone what has been discussed. This means sharing what Freebridge does well and also where it needs to do better, and it will also help show that Freebridge isn't alone in facing the many challenges that occur. This can only help the Service Champions and Customer Ambassadors in the work they do."

### **Would you encourage other Freebridge tenants to get involved?**

"100% yes! There's no point in just complaining about a situation, you need to be involved, to have a voice and get things done!"

**Interested in getting involved? If you are, turn to page 6 to find out how!**

# THANK YOU AND FAREWELL TO THE FREEBRIDGE TENANT PANEL

**The introduction of our new customer engagement framework myfreebridge means that because of the changes we're making we're saying goodbye to the Freebridge Tenant Panel.**

As you'll hopefully know the Tenant Panel was a small group of volunteer Freebridge tenants that we've worked with for a number of years now - they've helped scrutinise and challenge the services we provide as a landlord, and as a result have helped bring about a number of improvements for all our customers.

As well as the work they've done to help us get better at what we do they've also helped us judge competitions, been involved in our complaints process, joined us on our Out & About events meeting tenants across West Norfolk, and sat on the Community Fund decision making panel.

So now that the Panel has met for the last time, we wanted to say a big thank you to all those tenants past and present who have worked so hard over the years and we welcome them to join us in the new and different ways of getting involved through myfreebridge.

*Thank You!*

**from everyone at Freebridge Community Housing!**

# FAMILY FUN PAGE

## CHRISTMAS COLOURING COMPETITION

As Christmas is just around the corner, we thought we would run another one of our colouring competitions for all of our younger (12 or under) Streets Ahead readers - with the best one winning a prize for their efforts!

All entries can be sent to Freebridge to the

**Communications Team,  
Freebridge Community Housing, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1DZ**

or you can take a photo and email it to us at

**communications@freebridge.org.uk**



Congratulations to Harley, aged 11 for winning our Summer Colouring Competition, we hope you enjoy your £20 gift card!

### Christmas Word Search

HOLLY  
REINDEER  
SANTA  
GIFTS  
STOCKING  
MISTLETOE  
FAMILY

G	H	O	H	T	K	O	W	F	O
D	X	O	H	E	B	F	W	A	Z
Y	I	S	L	I	O	G	L	M	I
T	R	D	T	L	W	X	E	I	P
Z	M	W	Y	F	Y	H	G	L	T
R	E	E	D	N	I	E	R	Y	S
R	M	R	O	X	J	G	R	A	D
E	S	T	O	C	K	I	N	G	U
B	E	O	T	E	L	T	S	I	M
A	K	X	Q	B	A	F	R	U	G



# STAR BISCUITS!



Another recipe for you to try, this time something you can make that's quick, easy, and good to eat!

## Ingredients

- 250 g self-raising flour (plus extra for rolling out)
- 125 g cold butter cut into 1cm cubes (plus extra for greasing)
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ginger
- 125 g caster sugar
- 1 egg beaten

**Step #1:** Grease 2 large baking sheets with a thin layer of butter. Preheat your oven to 200C / 180C fan / gas mark 6 / 400F.

**Step #2:** Place the flour in a large mixing bowl and add the cubes of cold butter. Rub the butter and flour between your fingers until it resembles breadcrumbs.

**Step #3:** Add the sugar and spices and stir. Then add the beaten egg and stir again. Gradually the mixture should start to come together as a dough, but if it doesn't all stick together, add a tiny bit of water to help it come together. Squish it together into a ball.

**Step #4:** Sprinkle your work surface with a little flour then roll out the biscuit dough to a thickness of about 5mm. Using a star cutter, cut out your stars and gently lay them on the prepared baking tray. Put the biscuits in your preheated oven for 10-15 minutes, until the stars are pale gold on top and just a little bit darker round the edges.

**Good luck and enjoy!**

# OPT IN TO RECEIVE A DIGITAL COPY OF STREETS AHEAD



**Streets Ahead is sent to you every few months as you are a customer of Freebridge Community Housing.**

We send the magazine to all our customers so we can tell you about the services we provide and the work we're doing as a registered provider of social housing.

If you no longer want to receive a paper copy of Streets Ahead delivered to you, and want to receive a digital copy instead, just let

us know, and we will arrange for you to be removed from our mailing list.

To opt-out of receiving a paper copy, you can either call us on 03332 404 444, or email your name, address, and preferred email address to [communications@freebridge.org.uk](mailto:communications@freebridge.org.uk) or you can complete the form below and send it to the Communications Team, Freebridge Community Housing, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1DZ

please sign in this box

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

# CHANGES IN MEASURING TENANT SATISFACTION

Usually towards the back of each issue of *Streets Ahead* we provide some information about how we perform as a landlord. However, this issue we've set aside some space to tell you about changes in how tenant satisfaction is measured.

In 2020, the government published the *Charter for Social Housing Residents Social Housing white paper*, which set out ways to improve things for people living in social housing. Some of these were the responsibility of the Regulator of Social Housing.

And one of the responsibilities they had was to introduce a set of tenant satisfaction measures, measures which they said should:

- let tenants see how well their landlord is doing, *and*
- give the Regulator an idea of which landlords might need to improve things for their tenants.

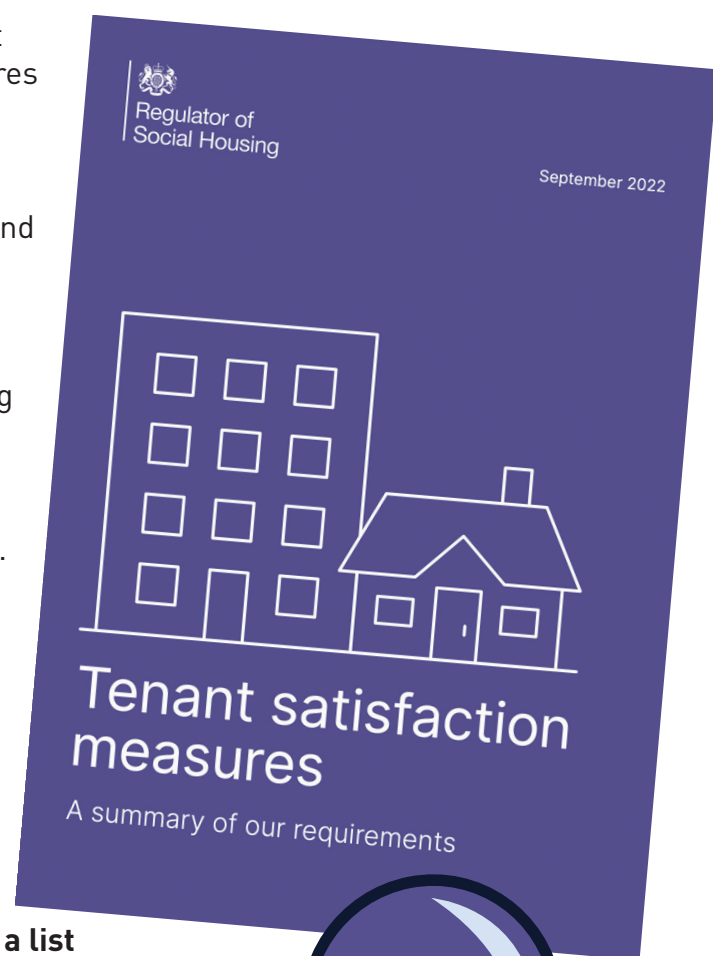
Following a great deal of consultation with a range of stakeholders, including tenants across the country, a final set of tenant satisfaction measures have now been published in the document shown on the right.

The document states that: "Tenant satisfaction measures are intended to make landlords' performance more visible to tenants, and help tenants hold their landlords to account.

"The Social Housing white paper stated that we need to design the measures carefully.

"Looking at all the measures together, they should also work as a package to show how well a landlord is doing in some key areas."

**On the page opposite you'll see a list of the tenant satisfaction measures in full, however if you want to read more about the background to tenant satisfaction measures then you can visit the Regulator of Social Housing's website which can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing>**



The measures that have been agreed by the Regulator are split into two sets. The data for the first set of measures will be obtained through tenant perception surveys, where we'll ask you questions about:

- your overall satisfaction with Freebridge as a landlord
- how satisfied you are with our repairs service
- how satisfied you are with the time taken to complete your most recent repair
- how satisfied you are that your home is well maintained
- how satisfied you are that your home is safe
- how satisfied you are that we listen to your views and act upon them
- how satisfied you are that we keep you informed about things that matter to you
- how satisfied you are that we treat you fairly and with respect
- how satisfied you are with our approach to handling complaints
- how satisfied you are that we keep communal areas clean and well maintained
- how satisfied you are that we make a positive contribution to your neighbourhood, *and*
- how satisfied you are with our approach to handling anti-social behaviour

And the data for the second set will be taken from the management information we hold at Freebridge, and will include details of:

- the number of complaints we have registered
- the number of complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales
- the number of anti-social behaviour cases relative to the our size
- the number of our homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
- the number of repairs completed within target timescale
- the number of outstanding gas safety checks
- the number of outstanding fire safety checks
- the number of outstanding asbestos safety checks
- the number of outstanding water safety checks, and
- the number of outstanding lift safety checks.

The measures don't officially go live until April 2023 however we're already collecting a lot of the data needed anyway (such as the safety check data below), and over the next few months we'll be working on making all the remaining information outlined available to you in a clear and easy to understand way.

### Safety check information as at the end of September 2022

#### Gas safety

<b>99.3%</b>	of our homes had a valid landlord gas safety certificate.
--------------	---

#### Fire safety

<b>100%</b>	of fire risk assessments have been completed.
-------------	---

#### Asbestos safety

<b>97.4%</b>	of our homes have a completed asbestos management survey.
--------------	---

#### Water safety

<b>100%</b>	of the testing regime and risk assessments have been completed.
-------------	---

#### Lift safety

<b>98.2%</b>	of stairlifts have been serviced on time. <b>100%</b> of passenger lifts have also been serviced on time.
--------------	---

#### Electrical safety

<b>96.7%</b>	of our homes has had a completed electrical inspection certificate.
--------------	---

# HOW TO CONTACT US

## **VISIT or WRITE TO US at:**

Juniper House, Austin Street,  
King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 1DZ

We're open between:

8:45am - 5.15pm (Monday-Thursday)

8:45am - 4.45pm (Friday)

and closed on Saturdays, Sundays and  
Bank Holidays.

**TELEPHONE:** 03332 404 444

We've been made aware that some mobile  
phone providers now charge for calling numbers  
beginning with 0333, if your provider is one of  
these you can also contact us on 0800 1691694 -  
which is free from all numbers.

Out of office hours our main number diverts to  
our 24 hour emergency service.

**WEBSITE:** [www.freebridge.org.uk](http://www.freebridge.org.uk)

**FACEBOOK:** [www.facebook.com/freebridge](http://www.facebook.com/freebridge)

**TWITTER:** @freebridge



[www.carbonbalancedprinter.com](http://www.carbonbalancedprinter.com)  
Barnwell Print - Reg. 2102  
CBP009705

By using Carbon Balanced Paper  
through the World Land Trust on this  
publication we have offset 334kg of  
Carbon & preserved 64sqm of  
critically threatened tropical forests.

**Carbon Balanced Paper.** One of the most sustainable forms of communication that  
will reduce your carbon foot print and promote CSR. [www.carbonbalancedpaper.com](http://www.carbonbalancedpaper.com)

This magazine is wrapped in 100% compostable  
film. Mailing film certified as biodegradable and  
compostable to the European standard EN13442.

## **TREATING EVERYONE FAIRLY**

Freebridge treat everyone fairly. We promote equality of opportunity and value the differences between our customers and everyone who works for Freebridge Community Housing. All our employees, contractors and consultants must treat colleagues and customers with politeness, tolerance, and respect, regardless of their age, colour, disability, ethnicity, sex or gender identity, marital status, nationality or national origin, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities or any other unjustifiable reasons.

**We will not tolerate unfair discriminatory behaviour of any kind and we encourage the reporting of any such behaviour. We will act upon all complaints appropriately.**

The views expressed in this publication are those of contributors, and not necessarily those of Freebridge Community Housing. This entire publication is under copyright, and is not to be duplicated or reproduced in any way without permission.

**IF YOU NEED ANY HELP TO UNDERSTAND THIS NEWSLETTER PLEASE GET IN TOUCH**

**Freebridge**  
COMMUNITY HOUSING