



ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023

INTRODUCTION

Hello there and a very warm welcome to Freebridge Community Housing's Annual Report for tenants.

This document will reflect on the 2022/2023 financial year, which was the second of our five-year strategic plan – which we like to call Building Better Futures.

As per that plan, our key objectives are to provide excellent customer service, to create homes, communities, and local spaces to be proud of, to offer a balanced local housing market, being a great place to work and to address the climate challenge.

Over the course of this document, we'll inform you of:

- how we performed in 2022/2023
- the launch of our digital engagement platform myFreebridge
- how we've been making changes to improve our repairs service
- completed our Stock Condition Survey, *and...*
- how we're helping with what is important to you – including sizeable support with food and energy costs through our Support Fund

OUR FIVE KEY OBJECTIVES THAT WE MEASURE AGAINST ARE:

TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

TO CREATE HOMES, COMMUNITIES, AND LOCAL SPACES TO BE PROUD OF

TO OFFER A BALANCED HOUSING MARKET

TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

BEING A GREAT PLACE TO WORK



SUPPORTING YOU

You, our customers, are at the centre of everything we do at Freebridge.

We appreciate that the previous year proved to be a difficult time for many, with the cost-of-living crisis and rising energy costs applying pressure to families up and down West Norfolk.

We've done our best to support you whenever and wherever we can, with our Support Fund providing more than £67k of assistance to customers in 2022/23 by way of more than 1,300 vouchers to support with food and energy costs.

Distributing vouchers is not the only support we've been able to offer you, though.

As part of our Tenancy Sustainment Plan, many Freebridge tenants were also referred onto Tenancy Independent Living Skills courses last year – with 80 per cent in attendance reporting an increased knowledge of housing options available and 60 per cent gaining an increased confidence in managing money.



£67k

of support given
to customers in
2022/2023



1,300

vouchers to
support with food
and energy costs



AN NEW WAY OF ENGAGING WITH YOU

Launching our new digital engagement platform myFreebridge – something we told you was a key aim last year – was an important moment for us in 2022/23.

We're delighted that the myFreebridge platform is now live. It's a modern and accessible digital platform for engaging with and hearing your voice as customers.

This gives you the opportunity to be heard on issues such as anti-social behaviour and complaints, with lots more in the pipeline as we welcome more and more of you to the platform.

Likewise, our Service Champions and Customer Ambassadors – who are part of

our customer engagement service – have a direct line into Freebridge's Leadership Team and work on issues that are important to all of our customers.

These views are made apparent through important processes such as the Tenant Satisfaction Measures Survey, which we conduct twice a year.

This provides you with dedicated space to tell us what you want and expect, from Freebridge, helping us work towards offering you excellent customer service.

myfreebridge



TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

TO CREATE HOMES, COMMUNITIES, AND LOCAL SPACES TO BE PROUD OF



2,800

homes were visited as part of our annual Out & About

GETTING OUT & ABOUT

We're pleased to have had the opportunity to engage with our customers on our annual Out and About programme – which we hold in different areas of your community every year.

We get to meet and speak to hundreds of you in your own homes, which allows us to get direct feedback but more importantly gives you the opportunity to raise any concerns directly with us.

This programme also supports two of our key strategic objectives – to provide excellent customer service and creating homes, communities, and local spaces to be proud of - by encouraging engagement with you to ensure that we are delivering the services we provide in a way, and to a level, that you expect.

Last year, we visited more than 2,800 homes as part of the initiative.

2022/2023 IN NUMBERS



We received
113
compliments
in respect of
the services we
provide and how
we provided them



Our dedicated
team dealt with
238
complaints over
the year, which
is down 30.81%
from 344 last year



65%
of those
complaints we
received were
dealt with within
the time set out in
our policy



78
new properties
on Salter's Road,
King's Lynn are
being developed in
conjunction with the
Borough Council
of King's Lynn
and West Norfolk
(BCKLWN), along
with Lovell Homes



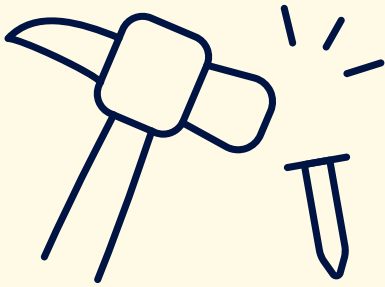
We took
ownership of
37
new properties
across West Norfolk
including homes
in Clenchwarton,
East Winch, Gayton,
Marshland St
James, Runcton
Holme, Terrington St
Clement, Thornham
and Walpole St
Andrew



We completed

4,100

repairs during the year
– and that's on top of the
additional time spent
clearing our COVID-19
induced backlog



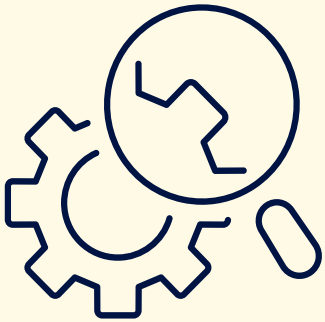
82.2%

of our emergency
repairs were
completed within
four hours



79.1%

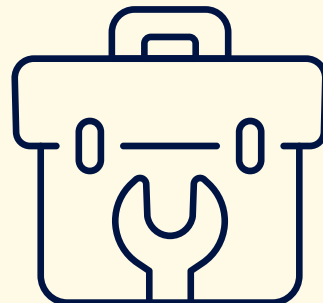
of our urgent
repairs were
completed within
24 hours



We spent

£3.86M

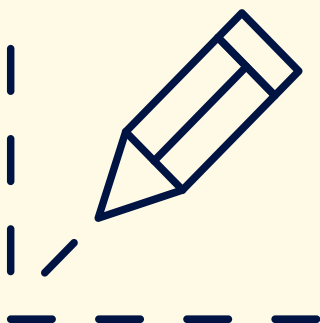
on major repairs
and maintenance



We spent

£7.67M

on routine repairs
and maintenance



We spent

£1.65M

on planned
repairs and
maintenance

TO CREATE HOMES, COMMUNITIES, AND LOCAL SPACES TO BE PROUD OF

OFFERING A HELPING HAND

We're proud to confirm that we granted £5,000 to local charities and community groups through our Community Fund.

After all, we're not just about building homes at Freebridge, we're all about building lives too. Indeed, the work we do within the community is often bigger than just building and maintaining your homes.

Those benefitting from our Community Fund 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 purchasing 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.





HILLINGTON SQUARE IS ALMOST THERE

The last year also saw us move towards the conclusion of our flagship Hillington Square project.

A viable refurbishment scheme was contracted for phase five, which got under way in July.

Plans have also been submitted for the sixth and final phase of the development, which will provide 66 new homes and purpose-build community spaces.

We also made moves to ensure that our customers, both at Hillington Square and beyond, were kept warm in the winter.

With energy prices a major concern for all over the past 12 months, we moved to create an Affordable Warmth Plan, in partnership with our Independent East colleagues.

Along similar lines, we were proud to be able to provide winter warm hubs from our Discovery Centre.



66

new homes and
purpose-built
community spaces

TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE

STOCK CONDITION SURVEY

One of the chief aims of the Affordable Warmth Plan was to undertake a full stock condition survey of our existing properties, which is now complete.

Having undertaken the survey, we now have the data to be able to ensure all properties with an energy performance certificate

rating of 'F and G' are targeted with actions to ensure they are brought up to a rating of 'E' or above.

The Affordable Warmth Plan also committed us to ensuring that you are receiving all of the benefits that you are entitled to in a bid to reduce fuel poverty.



TO ADDRESS THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE



£2.7M

secured to go
towards energy-
saving measures in
your homes

OUR FUNDING COMMITMENT TO YOU

We know how much housing contributes to the carbon load and have already expressed that we are keen to support the net zero carbon agenda moving forward.

As a member of Independent East, we received funding from wave two of the Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

The funding will help ensure the installation of energy-saving measures, such as loft insulation and new windows, in your homes.

And we have promised to match the money we've received from our own maintenance budget to ensure that we can provide thermally efficient homes for you.

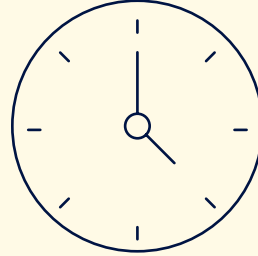
We received £1.323 million worth of funding, with our commitment making this piece of work worth around £2.7 million in total.

STATS THE WAY WE DO IT



100

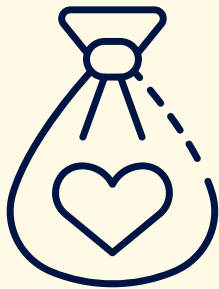
food parcels were given out to customers who were accessing our Support Fund



A total of

6,935

hours were hired out across our Discovery Centre and Providence Street facilities



£157

was raised from our annual Christmas Grotto for the King's Lynn Food Bank



Our Placeshaping Team delivered

136

Easter eggs to tenants accessing the Support Fund



We started a Ukranian donations box in March and it is still at our Discovery Centre collecting items now



In partnership with BCKLWN, we held consultations for our Gaywood and Fairstead Neighbourhood Plan

TO PROVIDE EXCELLENT CUSTOMER SERVICE

BEING A GREAT PLACE TO WORK



CHANGES TO OUR REPAIRS SERVICE

In our previous report, we spoke to you in great detail about our repairs service.

We realise how important that is to you – and we've taken major steps to improve the service we offer to you over the past 12 months.

We have restructured the team that delivers your repairs and created a new department, called Home and Community Maintenance.

We have changed the way the team works, where they work and how they access

materials in a major overhaul that will ultimately lead to a move to more modern methods, making Freebridge more sustainable and offering you excellent customer service.

These changes are also bringing new skills and specialties into Freebridge long-term.

TACKLING DAMP & MOULD

It'd be wrong of us to talk about our repairs service without touching on damp and mould.

This issue has been very prominent in the social housing sector, and we launched a damp and mould plan alongside our previously mentioned stock condition

survey, which aimed and succeeded in reducing the number of damp and mould cases identified in your homes.

We've also been on a strong drive to help you, our customers, understand how you can prevent damp and mould appearing in your home.





BUILDING BETTER FUTURES **MOVING ON TO YEAR THREE**

It's clear that we all face challenges in the current climate, but we want you to know that we'll always be here to help you.

That will always be our priority.

As we enter the third year of our five-year plan, we'll look to continue to deliver

on our key objectives that will help build better futures for all of you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document and we look forward to updating you on next year's progress.