STREETS AHEAD

THE MAGAZINE FOR FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY HOUSING CUSTOMERS



Understanding your service charges

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Changes to garden assistance scheme

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Damp & mould prevention

Page 15: Looking at ways to prevent damp & mould in your home this winter.

FREEBRIDGE COMMUNITY FUND PROVIDES A RECORD £50,000 TO LOCAL CAUSES

Take a look at page 6, where we award several local groups a record £50k to fund projects that benefit communities local to West & North Norfolk

Freebridge COMMUNITY HOUSING

WELCOME TO STREETS AHEAD

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How to report a repair:

You can log your repair easily by heading to freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/repairs. You can scan this QR code to access our repairs page quickly and easily. We also have a dedicated damp & mould reporting form too.

Have an emergency? Call **03332 404 444** and choose option 1



A message from the CEO



Anita Jones
Chief Executive

As we head into autumn and the days begin to feel cooler, I hope you're keeping warm and well. This time of year brings a sense of change, and there's a lot changing across social housing at the moment too.

We're now getting ready for the next stage of Awaab's Law, which comes into force on 30 November 2026. It will cover emergency hazards and serious damp and mould, as well as serious risks linked to excess cold or heat, falls, structural problems, fire, electrical faults, pests, drainage and sanitation. The law sets clear timescales for landlords to investigate concerns and make homes safe. Put simply, when you tell us something isn't right, we need to listen, take it seriously and act quickly.

We also want to make it easier for you to see how we're doing. STAIRs, the Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements, will help you find information about us, understand how we're performing and see where we're improving.

We've also received our latest regulatory judgement. We kept our G1 rating for Governance and V2 for Viability and received our first C2 rating for Consumer. We're really pleased with the outcome, we are a well-run organisation, that has made significant progress that still has things it wants to achieve for its customers.

Customers played an important part in the assessment too. The regulator observed a meeting of our Customer Insight Panel and spoke directly with customers. The Panel brings customers together to share their experiences, look at feedback and performance, challenge us and help shape our services. What the Panel tells us is shared with senior leaders and our Board, helping to keep customers lived experience at the heart of our decisions. We're also recruiting new Board members with lived experience, so our decisions are shaped by people who understand first-hand the communities and services we're here to support.

For me, all of this comes back to the same Four clear priorities: **A reliable customer experience** – services that work first time, homes that are safe and well looked after, and communication that's straightforward and honest. **Growth** – putting money back into the homes we already have and building new affordable homes where they're needed most, being a great place to work and offering **Value for money** – spending wisely, using good data, and making sure Freebridge stays strong for the long term.

I'm proud of how far we've come, but we know there is more to do. We'll keep listening, learning and working with you to make our homes and services better. Please keep telling us what's working, what isn't and what matters most to you. Your voice keeps helping us shape what we do next.

Anita



Understanding your Service Charge statement

If you are a Freebridge customer who pays a service charge, you should have received your annual statement by now.

This statement compares the service charges we estimated you would pay during the year with what it actually cost to provide services to your building and communal areas.

What does this mean?

Each year we estimate the cost of providing services to your building and communal areas.

At the end of the financial year, we review the actual costs and compare them with the estimates.

This statement shows:

- What we estimated services would cost
- What the services actually cost
- Any difference between the two figures

Why do the costs change?

Some costs are difficult to predict accurately at the start of the year. For example:

- Electricity prices may increase or decrease
- More repairs may be needed than expected
- Contractor costs may change
- Weather conditions can affect grounds maintenance requirements

What happens next

If actual costs are:

- Lower than estimated

The difference will help reduce future service charge calculations.

- Higher than estimated

The difference may need to be recovered through future service charge calculations.

Please note that this statement is for information only. It is not a bill and you do not need to make a payment.



If you need help understanding your statement, or you have questions, you can take a look at our webpage where we have lots of information, including answers to frequently asked questions.

If you would like to speak to someone, you can give our Income Team a call on 03332 404 444 (option 3).

freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/about-my-home/paying-your-rent

Bonfire Night advice from our Fire Safety Team

Each year on 5th November, people across the United Kingdom come together to celebrate Bonfire Night.

It's likely that there will be a host of organised bonfires and firework displays to mark the event, which is also known as Guy Fawkes night.

Of course, we understand that many Freebridge customers will want to get involved with the festivities at your own homes.

While we strongly advise against having bonfires in your garden space, if you are thinking of using fireworks our Fire Safety Team suggest that you should:

- Ensure you only buy fireworks with a CE mark
- Buy from a reputable retailer, not from car boot sales, markets or the side of the road
- Keep fireworks in a closed non-combustible box and store them safely
- Follow the instructions carefully
- Never go back to a lit firework

Advice when it comes to disposing of unused fireworks:

- It is recommended to soak fireworks in water for at least 48 hours before disposal. This helps to ensure that the explosive materials are rendered inactive.
- After soaking, you can dispose of the fireworks in your general waste bin. Ensure they are placed in a sealed plastic bag to prevent them from drying out.

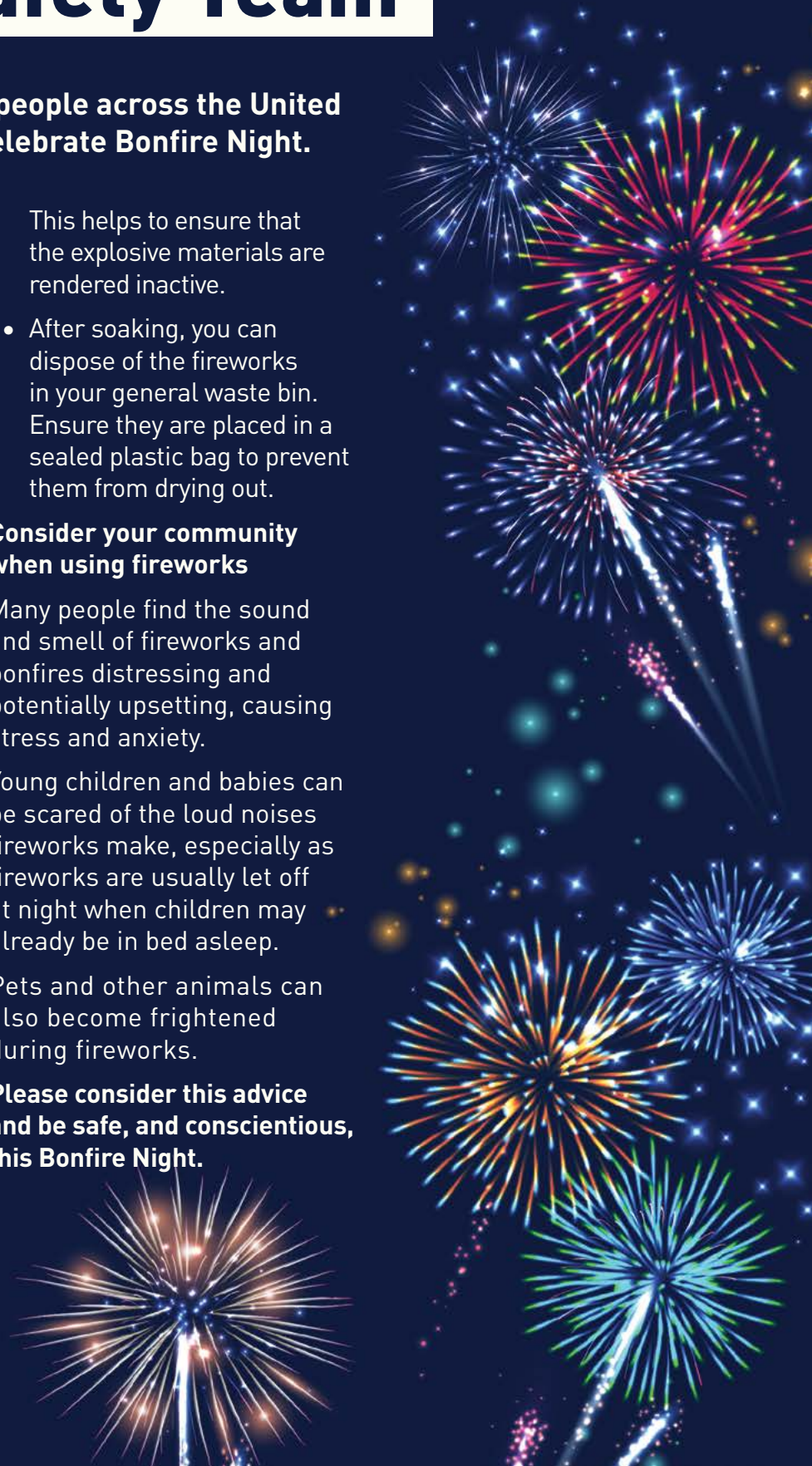
Consider your community when using fireworks

Many people find the sound and smell of fireworks and bonfires distressing and potentially upsetting, causing stress and anxiety.

Young children and babies can be scared of the loud noises fireworks make, especially as fireworks are usually let off at night when children may already be in bed asleep.

Pets and other animals can also become frightened during fireworks.

Please consider this advice and be safe, and conscientious, this Bonfire Night.





Our Community Fund provides a big boost to local causes

A record total of £50,000 from Freebridge's Community Fund has been split between 14 great causes across the area.

Charities and community groups delivering projects that make a difference in West and North Norfolk had been invited to apply for access to this year's fund, which offered £10,000 more than in previous years to mark our 20th birthday.

Grants of up to £5,000 were available per application, with priority given to projects that benefit Freebridge tenants and the communities they serve.

With support from Norfolk Community Foundation, a total of nearly £90,000 was requested by multiple applicants this year.

It was then up to our Customer Insight Panel (CIP) to review these and decide which projects were granted funding at their September meeting.

The following projects were successful in their bids:

8:56 Foundation (£5,000): To deliver a free men's wellbeing weekend retreat for 25 people, including adventure activities, mental health workshops, and peer support.

Eternity Downham Market (£5,000): To support the running costs of the Downham Market and District Foodbank.

Hanseatic Union (£3,401.50): To support additional staff time for their advice and guidance work relating to families with children with SEN.

Norfolk and Waveney Mind (£2,500): To expand Community Connections, an early intervention outreach mental health service, to 60 Freebridge tenants and local residents in West Norfolk.

Norfolk Community Law Service (£5,000): To continue providing outreach and legal advice to Freebridge tenants in the West Norfolk area.

Purfleet Trust (£5,000): To open a community café for Purfleet Pantry members and other residents, supported and run by volunteers.

Snettisham Beach Sailing Club (£2,160): To deliver 48 accessible sailing sessions between April – October 2027.

The Harding's Pits Community Association Ltd (£4,630): To provide seasonal activity workshops at Harding's Pits to engage 70 local residents.

West Norfolk Autism Group (£4,320): To support the running of gymnastics sessions for children, young people and adults with autism in King's Lynn.

Melody Allsorts of Downham (£2,000): To support the venue hire, musical scores and licensing costs associated with the delivery of their 2027 theatre productions.

Docking Playing Field Association (£537): To purchase benches for the pavilion's changing rooms.



Friend in Deed (£2,951.50): To run three intergenerational community events.

King's Lynn Night Shelter (£5,000): To support the costs of running the Night Shelter for nine months.

Open Road Norfolk Trust (£2,500): To contribute to the Motor Vehicle Maintenance workshops for 60 young people who are NEET and excluded from mainstream education.

Freebridge thanks the Norfolk Community Foundation and our CIP for helping ensure that so many good causes were supported by this year's Community Fund.



Sharing positive news from our in-depth assessment

Freebridge is delighted to share the positive outcome of our recent in-depth assessment (IDA) by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH).

Following a detailed assessment earlier this year, the RSH has graded Freebridge G1 for Governance, V2 for Viability and C2 for the Consumer Standards.

The G1 grade confirms that Freebridge meets the RSH's governance requirements.

The V2 and C2 grades confirm that we meet the relevant standards, while recognising areas where we can continue to strengthen our approach.

Anita Jones, Chief Executive of Freebridge Community Housing, said: "We are incredibly proud of this outcome. It is a strong result for Freebridge and, most importantly, for our customers.

"The assessment was thorough and wide-ranging. The outcome reflects the commitment, care and professionalism colleagues across Freebridge bring to their work every day. This is a team achievement, and everyone has played a part.

"I would also like to thank our involved customers who gave their time and shared their experiences as part of the inspection; their contribution was invaluable.

"G1 provides strong assurance about our governance. We are also clear that V2 and C2 are not the end of the journey: they give us a great foundation and a clear focus for the next stage of improvement.

"For our customers, this judgement provides assurance that Freebridge is well governed, financially resilient and meets the Consumer Standards. We will keep listening to customers, acting on what they tell us and improving the services that matter most to them."

What do these gradings mean?

The RSH publishes regulatory judgements and IDA outcomes for housing associations and local authorities that own more than 1,000 homes.

The RSH awards grades from 1 to 4 across Governance (G), Viability (V) and the Consumer Standards (C). Grade 1 is the highest grade; grades 1 and 2 are compliant, while grades 3 and 4 indicate that improvement or regulatory action is required.

Governance (G) considers the quality of leadership, oversight, decision-making and risk management.

Viability (V) considers financial strength, resilience and the capacity to manage risks and economic pressures.

The Consumer Standards (C) consider how well landlords keep homes safe, provide effective services, listen to tenants and act on their views.



Upcoming changes to Garden Assistance support

We wanted to let you know about some upcoming changes to our Garden Assistance Service.

As part of our ongoing review of our services, we are looking carefully at how we can best support our customers while continuing to deliver services in a fair, consistent and sustainable way.

Following this review, the current Garden Assistance Service will come to an end later this year while we consider future options and how support may be provided in the longer term.

We know this service has been important to many of our customers over the years, and we understand that this update may feel worrying or disappointing.

Please be assured that this decision has not been taken lightly. We are actively exploring what future arrangements could look like, although we are not yet able to confirm any details yet.

We will keep you informed as our plans develop and will contact affected customers again before any changes take effect, with clear information about what this means for you and any support or alternative options that may be available.

While we review future arrangements, you may wish to explore other sources of gardening support available locally, including:

- Local community groups and volunteer organisations
- Parish councils and community networks
- The Borough Council's LILY service
- Trust a Trader and other approved local directories
- Local gardeners advertising through community noticeboards and social media groups

We appreciate that this change may be disappointing, and we remain committed to supporting customers through the transition and keeping you updated as our review progresses.

If you would like to speak to us about this change, please contact your Communities Advisor. Don't know who that is? Visit the 'I'm a Freebridge Customer' section of our website and then click on the 'Communities Team – Find Your Advisor' tab, or you can scan the QR code below.





Bake events raise vital funds for Breast Cancer Now

Freebridge colleagues, customers and members of the local community came together to help raise an incredible £438.20 for Breast Cancer Now through two successful fundraising events held in King's Lynn over the summer.

A bake sale held at Juniper House for Freebridge colleagues was followed by a public-facing event at the Discovery Centre in North Lynn, with both events attracting fantastic support from colleagues, visitors and local businesses.

Together, **the events raised £438.20 for Breast Cancer Now**, the UK's largest breast cancer charity, which funds life-saving research and provides support for people affected by breast cancer.

The Juniper afternoon tea saw colleagues come together to enjoy homemade cakes and refreshments, while the bake sale welcomed members of the public to the Discovery Centre, with a wide selection of sweet treats available throughout the afternoon.

The event was supported by generous donations from local businesses Cream Me Up Scotty and Smiths the Bakers.

Breast Cancer Now estimates that every 10 minutes someone in the UK is diagnosed with breast cancer. The charity provides support for those affected by the disease while also funding research to improve prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

If you got involved, we thank you very much for your support!

In aid of BREAST CANCER NOW

Have you visited our updated policies page?

At Freebridge, we're always reviewing and updating our policies.

On our website, we've broken down our many policies into much more palatable sub-sections, which we hope is much easier for you to navigate.

These policies help ensure transparency and consistency in how services are delivered across our communities.

Since we last spoke to you in Streets Ahead, we've uploaded six new policies to this area. They are:

- Good Neighbour Policy
- Pet Policy
- Property Disposals Policy
- Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) Policy
- Non-Access Policy
- Shared Ownership Policy

Did you know that you can play an active role in shaping our polices at Freebridge?

We will always put appropriate policies out for consultation on myFreebridge and will take all feedback offered by customers on-board before finalising them.

Please do visit freebridge.org.uk/who-we-are/our-policies to see all of our current policies.

AT THE DISCOVERY CENTRE, COLUMBIA WAY, KING'S LYNN PE30 2LA

HALLOWEEN PARTY

THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER

12-3PM

JOIN US FOR ARTS & CRAFTS, AND A SPOOKY DISCO

• BEST FANCY DRESS COMPETITION •

FREE EVENT!

Freebridge COMMUNITY HOUSING











Community comes together for Summer Fun Day

This year's Summer Fun Day at The Discovery Centre proved to be another resounding success, bringing together hundreds of local children, families and community partners for a day packed with free activities and entertainment.

The Discovery Centre, run by Freebridge Community Housing, welcomed visitors from across West and North Norfolk to its annual celebration on Friday 14 August.

Held at the North Lynn community hub, the event offered something for all ages, with activities including arts and crafts, sports and games, cycling activities, family support information, emergency service demonstrations, and opportunities to meet local charities and community groups.

Organised and delivered by Freebridge's Placeshaping Team, the event reflects the housing association's ongoing commitment to creating strong, connected communities by working alongside local organisations to provide opportunities, support and experiences for local people.

This year's Summer Fun Day was made possible thanks to the support of a wide range of partners, including Leah's Little Faces, Alive Leisure, Alexis Smith Family Hub, Tech Skills for Life, West Norfolk Autism Group, Early Childhood and Family Service, Evolution Health and Wellness Centre, RISE Community Group, The Beacon Church, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, Cats Protection, and Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service.

The event provided families with the chance to enjoy a fun-filled day during the school holidays while learning more about the services and support available within their community.

To find out more about activities and events at The Discovery Centre, follow their Facebook page.

Join us at the Discovery Centre on 29 October for our 2026 Halloween Party.

A free event, families are welcome to attend between 12pm and 3pm for an afternoon of spooktacular fun!

The party will include face painting from Leah's Little Faces, a disco, a best dressed competition, as well as other fun party games – including arts and crafts and a word hunt.

We look forward to seeing you there at the Discovery Centre, which can be found off Columbia Way (PE30 2LA).

Please note that there is limited parking at the venue.

Finding my voice: My experience at the TPAS National Tenants Conference 2026



Freebridge Customer Insight Panel (CIP) member Abi recently attended the 2026 TPAS National Tenants Conference.

She was accompanied by Andrew from our Communications Team for the two-day event at Nottingham's East Midlands Conference Centre and has put together a blog to share her thoughts with you all.

Following the TPAS National Tenants Conference in Nottingham, I'm honestly still buzzing with ideas and inspiration.

Before attending, I expected a couple of days of presentations and discussions. But what I experienced was so much more.

The Conference brought together tenants from across the country who all share one thing in common: a passion for improving their communities and making sure tenant voices are heard.

It reminded me that tenants have far more influence than we sometimes realise. The event was set over two days with keynote speakers, practical workshops and evening entertainment.

Getting down to business: The Workshops

The workshops were where things really clicked for me. They weren't just interesting, they gave us practical skills that we can actually use to make differences in our own neighbourhoods.

We attended: Communicating with confidence, chairing successful meetings, challenging social housing stigma, and passing knowledge on.

One of the most important messages from the conference was that learning shouldn't stop when the event ends.

Networking and the Future

Between the sessions, I spent a lot of time at the exhibitor stands. It was great to learn about the new tech and projects being rolled out to help with things like repairs and heating and the latest developments in housing standards and regulations.

It feels like there is so much going on to make things better for us all. I admit, I came away with bags full of freebies too! But for me, the biggest takeaway was the opportunity to meet with other tenants.

Talking to people over lunch, hearing what's working for them, and commiserating over the same frustrations was incredibly validating. You start to realise you're not just an individual tenant dealing with an issue but you are part of a much bigger movement.

Once the work was done

While I wasn't able to stay for the evening entertainment, I heard plenty about it afterwards. The informal setting gave tenants another opportunity to connect, share experiences and continue conversations long after the workshops had finished. Sometimes the best ideas come when the name



badges are off and the dinner plates are out.

Bringing ideas home

I came home with a notebook full of ideas, plenty of new contacts and, more importantly, renewed confidence. Being an active member of the Freebridge CIP has shown me that tenants really can make a difference when we are given the opportunity to share our views and influence change.

We're not just people living in houses. We're community builders, problem solvers and advocates for where we live.

If this Conference taught me one thing, it's that every tenant voice matters, and together those voices can create real positive change.

Abi

Freebridge Customer Insight Panel member

Becoming part of the Freebridge Team

We're always looking for more customers to join our Customer Insight Panel (CIP) – a group of residents who help shape services, influence decisions and make sure customer voices are heard.

The panel plays an important role in holding Freebridge to account and provides customer assurance that services meet the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

Here's CIP member **Sarah** on why you should think about getting involved:

"The CIP gives you an opportunity to discover how Freebridge works, build relationships with the staff, and find out how they are trying to build their organisation and offer better service to us as tenants.

We have the chance to discuss certain areas and offer solutions. You become part of the Freebridge 'Team', it is not a case of 'them and us'. You are working to improve the overall tenant and landlord relationship and to improve both sides of the relationship.

You also meet and work with other tenants, build-up friendships and often find that you are all thinking along the same lines!

You do make a difference and Freebridge do listen and take on board the CIP recommendations – they may not be instantaneous, but real progress is being made.

I would highly recommend joining the CIP. You gain a sense of achievement, and you also have opportunities for training, as well as visiting seminars and meetings with other groups of housing associations.

And most importantly, you get to have a say – it is not about personal issues – but helping Freebridge plan and respond to tenant needs, ideas and identifying possible future ideas and solutions.

I feel privileged to be on the CIP, and it is great to see the progress that we all have made."



If you'd like to let us know you're interested, please scan the QR or head to freebridge.org.uk/who-we-are/join-the-customer-insight-panel

ACCESS TO YOUR HOME

Keeping you safe in your home is of the utmost importance to Freebridge.

When it comes to you giving us access to your homes, it is vitally important that you allow us to carry out key inspections - such as electric and gas checks, damp and mould investigations and fire door appointments - when we need to.

When denying us access by not keeping an appointment you have made with us or simply not letting us in when we arrived for these inspections, you are putting your own safety at risk.

Of course, we understand that you all lead busy lives and that you can't agree to every appointment that is offered to you. So, it's important that you let us know when an appointment doesn't work for you so we can reschedule – and make sure your home is safe at the earliest opportunity.

So, if you can't be there, please let us know and we'll come another time!



Smoke alarms can save lives

Smoke alarms are crucial for alerting you to a fire in your home.

Our Fire Safety Team recommend that you test them regularly, in line with advice from Norfolk Fire and Rescue's "Test It Tuesday" campaign.

Being sure to have your smoke alarm in good working order can help prevent the biggest cause of accidental fires in Norfolk homes – smoking.

As well as following that advice, you can follow these simple steps to prevent this type of fire from happening at your home.

You should always:

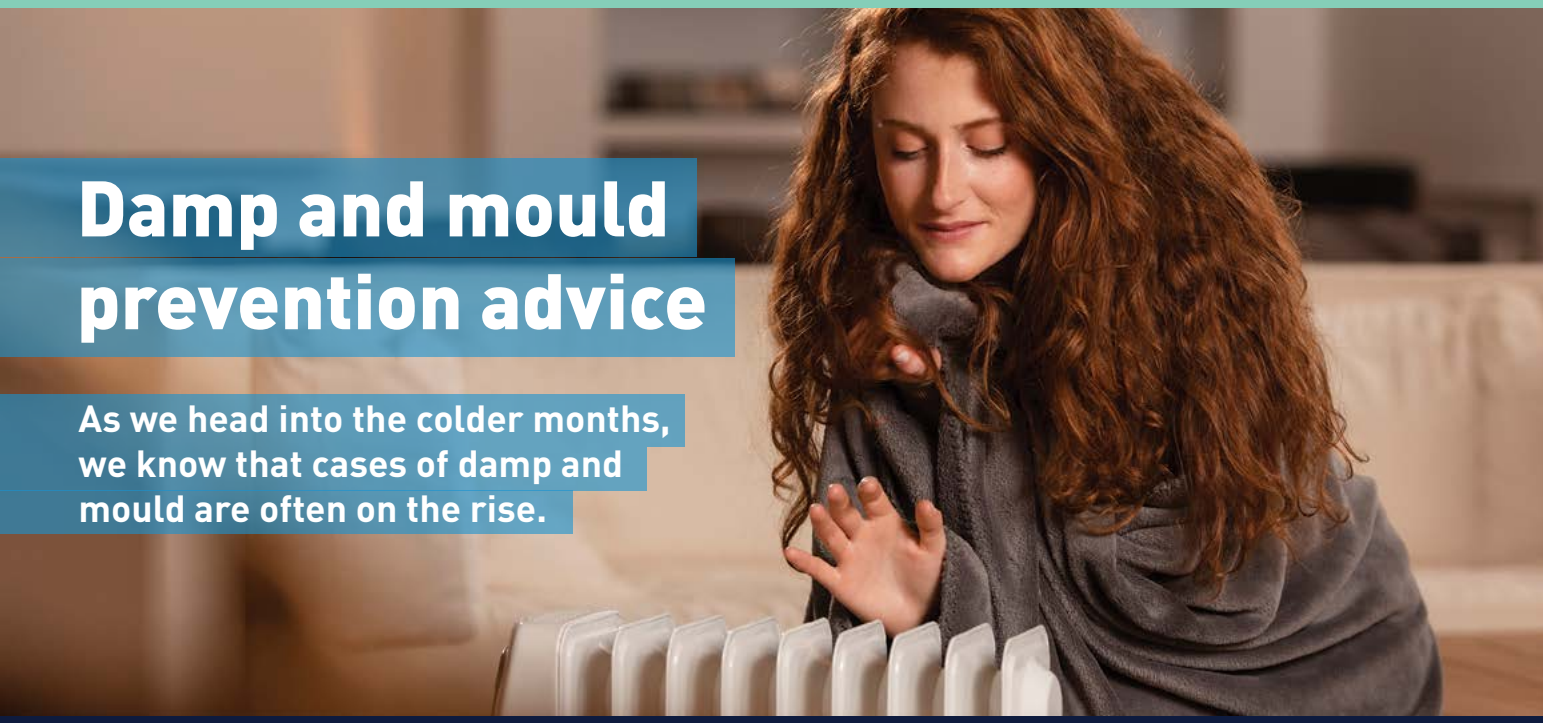
- Double-check that cigarette ends, cigar butts and tobacco from your pipe are not still burning when you've finished with them. It's best to wet them and dispose of them in a metal bin outside the house
- Use a proper ashtray - make sure it is heavy and can't tip over and is made of a material that will not burn

You should never:

- Smoke in bed, as numerous deaths are caused when people fall asleep whilst still holding a lit cigarette
- Tap your ash into a wastepaper basket. Please use an ashtray or empty metal bin

Please don't:

- Smoke if you feel sleepy - or if you've been taking prescription drugs
- Leave a lit cigarette, cigar or pipe unattended. As they burn down, they can end up on the carpet and start a fire
- Leave matches or lighters lying around where children can reach them
- Leave your ashtray on the armrest of your chair. At the end of the day, make sure you empty them outside and into a metal container.



Damp and mould prevention advice

As we head into the colder months, we know that cases of damp and mould are often on the rise.

We wanted to let you know that there are some simple steps you can take as a tenant to help prevent the development of condensation, and spread of mould, in your home.

We understand that the cost of living continues to rise – and that some of these tips for preventing condensation, damp and mould in your home may not be financially viable.

But we hope they are helpful guidelines for you, nevertheless.

You can ventilate your home to help stop the build-up of moisture by:

- Drying any surfaces, including wet windows and frames regularly
- Keeping trickle vents open in window frames
- Opening windows, even if only slightly, twice a day (and on both levels if your home has two floors)
- When washing, drying clothes, and bathing, open windows and keep interior doors closed
- When cooking, open windows and keep pots and pans covered with lids
- Drying clothes outdoors if possible, and use a ventilated tumble dryer if drying indoors
- Ensuring all extractor fans are used when necessary - particularly when showering or bathing
- Leaving a gap between walls and furniture to allow the air to flow
- Don't overfill cupboards and wardrobes - make sure there is enough space for air to flow
- Don't block air vents, air bricks or trickle vents - these help to keep the air moving
- Heat your home effectively. It is best, where possible, to have a constant, low background heat which helps to create warmer surfaces and reduces the chance of damp, condensation, and mould (18-22 degrees centigrade is optimal)

Remember, if you've seen signs of damp and mould in your home, it's vitally important to get rid of it as soon as possible.

Please treat signs of damp and mould as an emergency and contact us immediately. If you feel that the damp and mould poses an immediate health risk (e.g., severe respiratory issues) or makes a home uninhabitable this must be reported to us immediately by telephone on 03332 404 444.

You can also report damp and mould via this form, which can be accessed via our Repairs section of our website (freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/repairs)



During this year's programme, we:

Visited **2,418** homes

Spoke to **1,106** customers

Helped you raise **533** new repairs

Arranged **177** follow-up calls

Completed **47** support referrals

Another year of getting Out & About in the community!



We've wrapped up our 2026 Out & About programme after visiting over 2,400 Freebridge homes across west and north Norfolk.

But Out & About isn't simply about knocking on doors. It's about listening.

We know that the best way to understand what matters to you is to get out into our communities and talk to you directly. These conversations help us understand what's working well, where we could do better and what you need from us as your landlord.

They also give us an opportunity to make sure the information we hold about you is up to date. Having the right information helps us understand your needs and provide the right services and support when you need them.

Listening and taking action

When we visit, there's no set agenda for what you have to talk to us about. It's your opportunity to tell us what matters to you.

That might be a repair you need to report, concerns about anti-social behaviour, something happening in your neighbourhood or simply something that doesn't feel quite right. We can also carry out small repairs on the same day as part of Out & About. Where we can help there and then, we will, and where something needs further attention, we make sure it is followed up.

And those conversations make a real difference.

It means Out & About isn't just about hearing what you have to say. It's about turning those conversations with you, into action.

Bringing Freebridge to you

We also set up a central base in each area we visited, giving you another opportunity to drop in and speak to Freebridge colleagues while we were in your community

This year, we started in Thetford and the surrounding areas, followed by King's Lynn and nearby villages. We then headed to Swaffham and surrounding communities, before visiting North Norfolk and finishing this year's programme in South Lynn and the surrounding areas.



This year 178 Freebridge colleagues took part, spending more time in the communities we serve.

What happens next?

The conversations don't stop when Out & About finishes.

What you tell us helps us build a better picture of your experiences and where we need to focus our attention. Just as importantly, we want you to be able to see how your feedback leads to change.

We'll share our 2027 Out & About schedule in a future edition of Streets Ahead, so keep an eye out for when we'll be visiting your area.

And if we miss you when we're Out & About, you don't need to wait until our next visit. You can always get in touch with us on 0332 404 444 or email us via customervoice@freebridge.org.uk



Working together to tackle fly-tipping

We have seen an increase in reports of fly-tipping across our communal spaces, particularly in the Fairstead area.

Fly-tipping is illegally dumped rubbish and often includes household waste that has been presented incorrectly.

It is important to understand that legal action can be taken against offenders where appropriate. If found guilty, offenders can face unlimited fines, while the courts can also give out community service orders and custodial sentences in extreme cases.

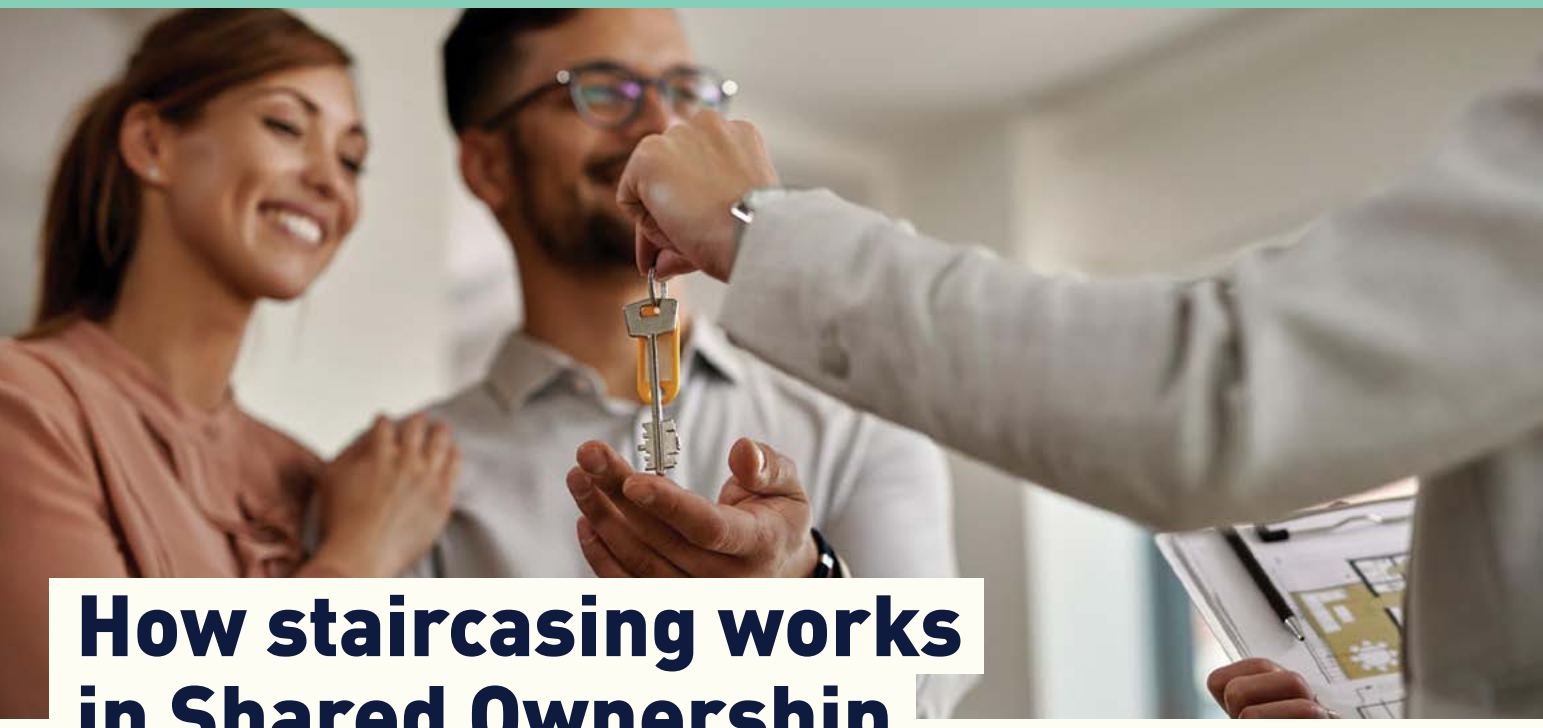
It not only makes our neighbourhoods look untidy but can also create health and safety concerns - not only for our tenants, but also Freebridge colleagues who live and work in the area.

Unfortunately, while some incidents will involve Freebridge tenants, a significant amount of fly-tipped waste is left by people who do not live in our communities or our homes.

We are working closely with the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk (BCKLWN) in a bid to tackle this issue and keep our public spaces clean and safe.

If you find rubbish illegally dumped on Freebridge land, please email CXsupport@freebridge.org.uk or call 0332 404 444.

The BCKLWN will also clear fly-tipped waste from their land and you can read more about that process on their website here.



How staircasing works in Shared Ownership

If you are a shared owner of a Freebridge home, we wanted to take some time to talk to you about staircasing.

Did you know that staircasing is the process of buying additional shares in your shared ownership home after your initial purchase?

As your ownership share in your home increases, the amount of rent you pay to Freebridge decreases. This is because rent is only charged on the portion of your home that you do not own. Staircasing also allows you to build more equity in your property and benefit from any increase in its value.

Shared owners can usually staircase all the way to 100 per cent ownership (please check your lease to understand your eligibility) and there are two main ways to do this:

Gradual staircasing (1% shares)

If you purchased your home through the 21-26 Affordable Homes Programme you have the option of buying an extra 1 per cent share each year, for the first 15 years of ownership.

These purchases are based on the original value of your home, adjusted using the UK House Price Index (HPI).

Housing providers, like Freebridge, do not charge an administration fee for 1% purchases. A Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) valuation can be used instead of the HPI if requested, although the person requesting it must pay the cost.

Please note, unused annual 1 per cent purchase opportunities cannot be carried forward.

Standard staircasing (5% or more)

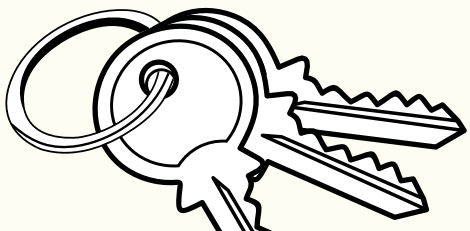
You can usually buy larger shares of 5 per cent or more at any time.

The cost here is based on the current market value of your home, determined by a valuation from a RICS-qualified surveyor. You will normally need to complete the purchase within three months of the valuation or obtain an updated valuation. Please note, there is an administration fee payable to Freebridge to carry this out.

Be aware, you may need a solicitor to update your lease when purchasing additional shares and will be responsible for your own legal costs, while Freebridge covers ours.

In short, staircasing can be a flexible way to increase your ownership and reduce your rent over time

Have questions? Email our team at HomeOwnership@freebridge.org.uk, who are happy to help and guide you through this process.





See our competition on page 23, for your chance to win tickets!

Written by Chris Jordan Directed by Hannah Boyce Choreographed by Laura Dawn Pyatt

8 December 2026 - 3 January 2027

kingslynncornexchange.co.uk

Box Office: 01553 764864

ALIVE Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

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Our transformative retrofit works at Summerwood Estate

Freebridge Community Housing is committed to improving the energy efficiency of our homes, with a target of achieving Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) D across all homes by 2030 and EPC C by 2035.

With that in mind, we are carrying out energy efficiency improvements (often referred to as retrofitting) at many of our homes across north and west Norfolk.

We appreciate that the thought of having extensive works done on your home can be worrying, so we'd like to shine a light on the works we've undertaken at the Summerwood Estate in Great Massingham to show what can be achieved.

The Summerwood Estate is one of Freebridge's larger housing estates, comprising approximately 60 homes. All of which had EPC ratings of D or below prior to the works commencing.

Given the poor energy performance of the homes, the estate was identified as an ideal location for a programme of full-house retrofits.

The scope of works, as informed by detailed Retrofit Assessments, was an investment averaging around £25,000 per home.

Thanks to this, the Summerwood Estate has become one of Freebridge's flagship retrofit hot-spots, with approximately 50 of the 60 properties (around 80%) now fully retrofitted.

This demonstrates how whole-house improvements can transform homes, reduce carbon emissions and help residents manage their energy costs.

The improvements are expected to save approximately 100 tonnes of CO_2 emissions every year, while also helping residents enjoy warmer, healthier homes that are cheaper to run.

The project highlights the positive impact that targeted investment and government funding can have when delivered on an estate-wide scale.

Here's Freebridge's Retrofit and Sustainability Manager Jacob Medlock's view the Summerwood Estate programme:

"The Summerwood Estate demonstrates the transformative impact that strategic capital investment and funding obtained from central government can have on communities.

"By improving the energy performance of an entire estate, we are creating warmer, healthier and more sustainable



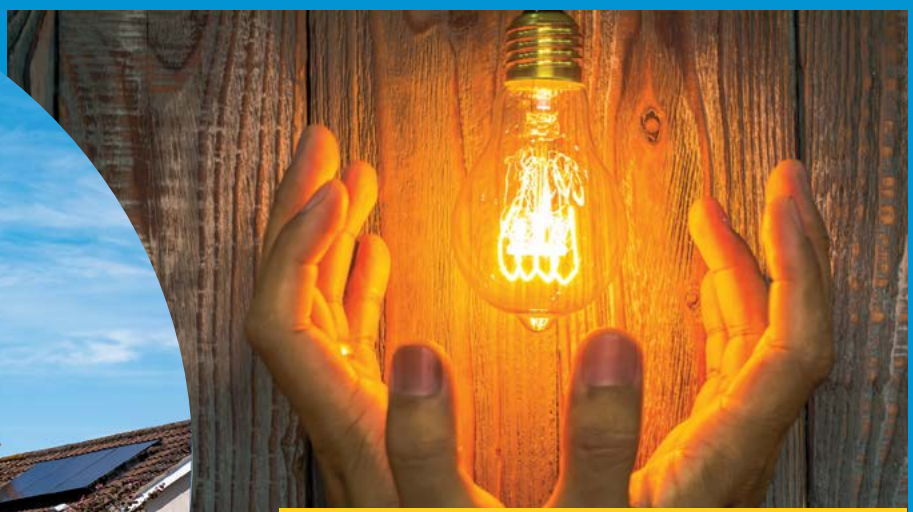
homes for our residents while helping to reduce carbon emissions for the future.

"The positive feedback we've received from tenants, alongside seeing the scale of the improvements from the air, is a real testament to the success of the programme and the commitment of everyone involved."

Please note, this is something Freebridge will contact you about if your home is eligible - we are unable to take requests.

If you have a question about this, please do email communications@freebridge.org.uk.

If you'd like to see the case study on our works at Summerwood Estate, you can find it on the 'Our News' section of our website.



Energy support sessions at our schemes

We held energy support sessions on two of our sheltered schemes over the summer.

These sessions, which were free for Freebridge customers to attend, were designed to provide guidance on how best to reduce energy usage, how to manage monthly bills, and how to improve home comfort.

Held in partnership with Community Action Norfolk, the sessions at Waterside (King's Lynn) and Sutton Lea (Burnham Market) were well attended, with topics covered on the day including energy-saving tips and behavioural changes, understanding bills and tariffs, and using heating systems efficiently.

This was particularly helpful for our customers at Sutton Lea, given the extensive retrofit work that we have undertaken on many of the homes at the scheme.

Our Retrofit and Sustainability Manager Jacob Medlock said: "The drop-in sessions provided residents with an opportunity to ask questions, understand the planned improvements to their homes and receive practical advice on reducing energy use and improving comfort. Open engagement like this is vital in ensuring residents feel informed, supported, and involved throughout the retrofit journey."

If you feel your community would benefit from energy support sessions, please do let us know by emailing communications@freebridge.org.uk.



Swap Homes with ease: Free HomeSwapper access for Freebridge customers



We're pleased to be able to announce that we've partnered up with market leading mutual exchange service HomeSwapper.

We know that many of our customers may be looking to move to another area, or to get a larger or smaller home that better meets the need of your household.

We're pleased to share that all Freebridge customers can now register for a free account with HomeSwapper – and if you already have an account, this will automatically convert to a free account once your current deal expires.

Since its launch in 2007, HomeSwapper continues to grow with, on average, more than 14,000 new tenants joining every month.

It offers a straightforward self-service tenant facing functionality system alongside a landlord facing functionality system.

For Freebridge tenants, HomeSwapper prides itself of being easy to use and offers you the following benefits:

- It's a self-service tool, and is intuitive and simple to use across all platforms for landlords and tenants
- A highly-rated mobile app is available
- A suite of tenant-focused user guides and self-help videos provided
- Round the clock tenant support
- Active peer support community
- A Facebook page, tenant guide and dedicated support website

Want to know more about HomeSwapper? Scan this QR code to view a Tenant Welcome Guide that will help you set up and account and get started, or head to their link homeswapper-tenant-welcome-guide.pdf.

You can also visit their website by scanning this QR code or heading to homeswapper.co.uk.



Win a family ticket for four, to see the Sleeping Beauty Pantomime at Alive Corn Exchange between 28 December 2026– 3 January 2027

Subject to availability, no cash alternative, usual T&C'S can be found on the entry form

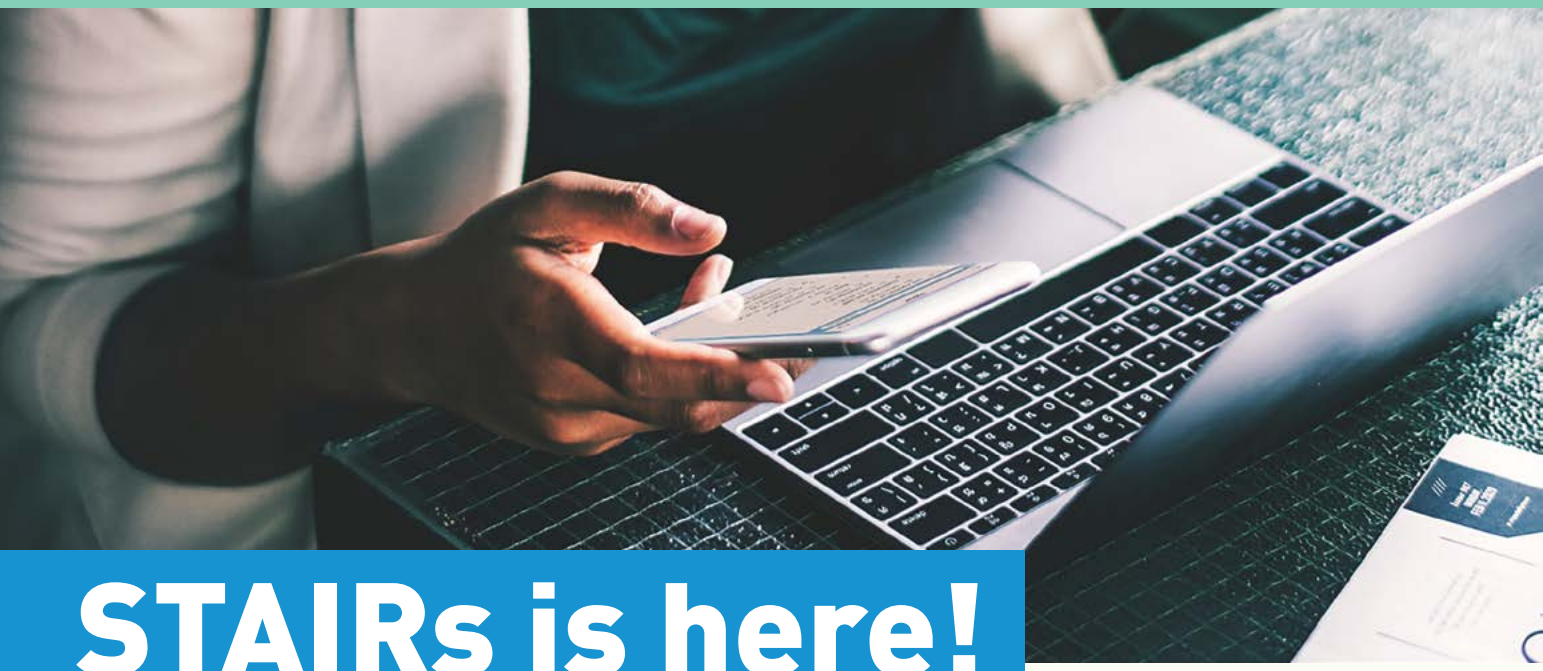
A DREAM of a pantomime for all the family as Sleeping Beauty comes to the King's Lynn Corn Exchange this Christmas from 8 December 2026 until 3 January 2027, from the team behind this year's smash hit production "Jack and the Beanstalk"!

Scott Cripps returns as funny man, Chester The Jester and Harry Hart returns as Nurse Nellie, alongside a fabulous cast, who together, have a dragon to slay!

This year's fairy-tale pantomime will take you on a magical journey for the whole family - so **WAKE UP** and book your tickets now! You **SNOOZE**, you lose!

To enter, scan our QR code with the camera on your mobile phone, or head to: forms.cloud.microsoft/e/jPR9z8PK6W

For more details and to buy tickets, you can head to the the Alive website:
kingslynncornexchange.co.uk/theatre/whats-on/childrens/sleeping-beauty/



STAIRs is here!

The Social Tenant Access to Information Requirements (STAIRs) give social housing customers greater access to information about how their landlord manages homes and delivers services.

STAIRs are designed to strengthen transparency, accountability and customer influence, helping customers better understand how decisions are made by landlords and how services are delivered.

At Freebridge, we are committed to being open, honest and transparent.

We want it to be easy for our customers to find information about the services we provide, how we spend money, how decisions are made, and how we perform.

We will make information clear, accessible and available in a range of formats where needed.

You should also be aware that customers can now nominate a representative to act on their behalf when requesting information. This could include a family member, advocate, councillor, MP, solicitor or another trusted representative.

Information relating to organisations that provide housing management services on behalf of Freebridge may also be available where it falls within the scope of STAIRs.

When it comes to STAIRS, we want you to be aware of two key dates:

From October 2026, Freebridge will publish key information about how we manage our homes and services through a dedicated STAIRs section of our website.

From April 2027, customers and their representatives will be able to request specific information about how Freebridge manages its social housing services.

We're currently preparing and publishing information in line with the new STAIRs requirements.

Find out more about STAIRs at this link, or scan the QR code: freebridge.org.uk/freebridge-customer/social-tenant-access-to-information-scheme

If you would like to request information about how Freebridge manages its homes and services, please contact us using the details below.

Email:
STAIRs@freebridge.org.uk

Telephone:
03332 404 444

Write to us:
Freebridge Community Housing, Juniper House, Austin Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1DZ



CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR OPENING HOURS

Please note that our reception at Juniper House will be closed from 12 noon on Thursday, 24 December 2026 until it re-opens on Monday, 4 January 2027 (8.45am).

During this time, you will still be able to call us on **03332 404 444** for any emergency or urgent repairs that you may have.

This can include problems with serious anti-social behaviour (ASB), domestic abuse, homelessness, flood or fire.

We will, however, not be able to reply to messages sent on social media.

You can also contact us if you're in need of emergency support, as we will have colleagues available to help during this time.

It's a little early, but as this is our final Streets Ahead of 2026, we hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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 of our customers to 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 current mailing list.

To opt-out of receiving a paper copy, you can fill in our digital form by scanning the QR code below, or you can email your name and address to communications@freebridge.org.uk

Scan me to opt in to receive a digital version of Streets Ahead!

COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS AT FREEBRIDGE



It's vitally important to us that we're able to offer you the best customer service that we possibly can.

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

via our website: housing-ombudsman.org.uk

or by post at: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

We do understand that there will be times when you as a tenant find yourself unhappy with situations at home or within your community.

We recognise that you'll want to let Freebridge know about this - and it is your right to tell us how you believe we can improve the service that we are offering to you.

We'd encourage you to contact us if you have an issue or an official complaint and will always be happy to hear from you.

If you'd like to praise our service or if members of the Freebridge team have gone above and beyond to help you, we'd really like to know about that, too.

We are always analysing our performance - and your feedback is a key part of that.

So, your complaints, comments and compliments are important as they allow us to better shape our service.

At Freebridge, we are committed to providing excellent customer service, which means we must always look at ourselves and how you feel we are performing.

You can contact us by emailing feedback@freebridge.org.uk.

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE

Quarter two: July - September 2026

21
New Homes Completed

69.8%
Overall Satisfaction
Target: 70%
Figure taken from our latest TSM Score 2025-26

74%
Non-Emergency Repairs completed in time
Target: 70% or more

88%
Emergency Repairs completed in time
Target: 98.3% or more

TBC
Void Loss %
Target: 0.91% or less

99.9%
Gas Safety Checks complete
Target: 100%

100%
Fire Risk Assessments complete
Target: 100%

54
Average days homes are empty
Target: 36.85 or less

This figure wasn't available just yet; but as soon as we have it we'll update it on our website: freebridge.org.uk/who-we-are/performance

97.9%
Stage 1 Complaints responded to on time
Target: 100%

100%
Stage 2 Complaints responded to on time
Target: 100%

£1.47m
Current tenant rent arrears
Target: £705k



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: freebridge.org.uk

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/freebridge

X: @freebridge

WEST NORFOLK

member tpas

James Banks, Head of Safety is the nominated lead for Health and Safety as detailed in the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023.

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.

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Freebridge COMMUNITY HOUSING