

be

magazine

Bellissimo!

Congratulations to resident Pat who took over our Rowan Village salon Bellissimo.

page 5

Happy people happy homes.

From live and learn course to future scientist - read resident Jasmine's career journey.

page 4

If you're worried about rising costs.

We're here to support you. We can help you manage your money and find ways to support your income.

page 5

Introducing our new West End Village wellbeing hub!

Helping residents and the community recover after the pandemic.

page 11



04

Jasmine's story

Moving on up to a better home and a better future.



Bellissimo!

Take a look inside the new Rowan Village salon.



Creating homes for people leaving refuge.

Take a look around the six new homes created for domestic abuse survivors.



06



07

Giving back to our local community.

Residents and staff have been working on a very exciting project. Find out more on page 7.



08

Rising costs.

If you're finding it hard to keep up with the cost of living we're here to support you.



09



You know our services best.

We'd love to hear what you think about our services. Discover our latest customer involvement groups.



Helping residents recover and reconnect after COVID-19.

Our new wellbeing hub hopes to improve West End Village residents' health and wellbeing.



10



11

The big green summer clean is coming soon!

Exciting plans that will help to improve your local community.

Contact us.

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Let's get social.

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Springing into action.

Hi everyone and welcome to this bonus Be Mag edition.

Our summer edition will still be released later this year but with so many amazing things to share, why not trial a bonus Be Mag? You will have noticed this is also a digital only version. This saves money and has a lower impact on the environment as no printing is needed.



Diane Thompson
Group Chief Executive

As well as amazing residents stories like Pat who transformed our Rowan Village hair salon and student Jasmine who used our live and learn courses to jump start her career we also have lots of important information.

Rising costs are a worry for most of us but we are here for you. Our supportive Money Advice Team

can help you manage any changes to your bills and income. They can also help you make sure you're claiming the right income support and have access to any schemes or benefits you are entitled to.

As we try to find our new normal and live alongside COVID-19 it can feel really scary reconnecting with our local communities.

That's why we've created a new wellbeing hub at West End Village, we're holding coffee mornings at different housing schemes and will be launching a brand new community event this summer.

I hope you enjoy reading this edition of Be Mag and here's to a kind, and with any luck, sunny spring!

Moving on up to a better home & better future.



HAPPY PEOPLE
HAPPY HOMES

Our residents have been able to complete free live and learn courses. These courses have helped boost CVs, gain college or university spaces, rebuild confidence and discover new hobbies. Here's Jasmine's story...

"After my housing officer shared the live and learn courses, I decided to apply for the hand and nail course. I had completed a make up course at college but had since lost my confidence and wasn't leaving my home much. After going along to the course with my neighbour we both enjoyed it so much we signed up for another.

"The new course 'look good, feel good' was a real turning point for me! I felt motivated, empowered and proud for making those first steps to have a better future.

"After completing an adult learning course, I went on to complete the access to higher education course at college. This was originally to pursue a degree in nursing but I soon realised I had a passion for wildlife biology and started studying this at Staffordshire University. "I'm now on track to become an Environmental

Science graduate just before my 30th birthday this year, something I am extremely proud of.

"I am really looking forward to the future now. For anyone thinking about a live and learn course, just do it! It's scary to make that jump but it will be the first step to a bright and powerful future, doing exactly what you want and living your best life every day."

Thinking about your future?

FREE COURSES AVAILABLE!

We have a variety of courses available to all of our residents. Add new office skills to your CV with computers for beginners, Microsoft Excel or a web design course. Or if you're thinking about going back to college or starting university how about psychology or counselling courses?

We also have lots of practical courses such as European Computer Driving Licence, Level 2 food safety and emergency and basic first aid.

British sign language for beginners is now available too!

Find out more at:

staffshousing.org.uk/customer-opportunities

It's never too late to get started on your future.



Just take a look at resident Pat who opened her own hair salon, Bellissimo at Rowan Village.

The salon takeover happened not long after Pat and her husband moved into their brand-new apartment at Lime Tree Court last year.

"Me and my husband moved to Lime Tree Court in November. It's an annexe to Rowan Village with full access to their facilities", said Pat.

"I discovered that there was an on-site salon and I was excited to see if I could volunteer there. Hairdressing is my passion but I had to give it up after a cancer diagnosis. I was gutted but it was the right decision for my health. I've been cancer free now for nine years and was looking for something to keep me busy.

"Once we'd moved in and

settled I decided to speak to Julie the village manager. She told me that the hairdresser had left. At that point I thought it was too good of an opportunity to miss and asked if I could take over the salon.

"I told her about my experience of having my own salon in Cheadle for seven years then we worked together to make it happen.

"My husband used to be a builder so offered to help me spruce up the place to make sure residents could get a relaxing experience when they visited. It's had a fresh lick of paint, a brand-new look and even a new name to go with it.

"I decided to call the salon Bellissimo. I thought it was perfect because it means beautiful in Italian. That's exactly how I want residents

to feel when they leave the salon.

"I'm open three days a week Wednesday, Thursday and Friday until 3.30pm. I have reasonable prices, and residents, staff, friends, neighbours and family are more than welcome.

"I have a lot of regulars who come in to have a chat and it's such a social space. I have residents coming in for a wash and blow dry because they can't do their hair the way they used to. It helps them feel more like themselves.

"It's so lovely when you see residents leave and they get compliments. It lifts people's spirits. I often see customers comparing their hair-do's in the cafe and one customer's daughter said she's never seen her mum's hair so nice!"



Creating forever homes for those leaving refuge.



We have joined forces with fellow Honeycomb Group's domestic abuse charity Glow to create safe and affordable homes for domestic abuse survivors.

Leaving refuge is an incredibly difficult and scary time for many. There's the huge financial cost of finding a deposit, first months rent, white goods and more, but the biggest worry is safety.

After escaping an abusive relationship Polly* moved into Glow's community accommodation. As a hidden location, the home had security, support staff on hand and essentials such as food and toiletries too.

Polly stayed there for a couple of weeks but refuge and emergency accommodation is only temporary. Polly was ready to move on but like many escaping abuse, she

had left her family, friends, home and all of her belongings behind. Financially, she couldn't find a home to fit her new income and more importantly, she couldn't find a place that made her feel safe.

We have supported Glow for the last nine years and although we have provided homes for those leaving refuge, they weren't tailored to fit their specific needs.

Last year, using a local building, last year we created six, one bed apartments. The main priority was safety with secure door entry, CCTV and video doorbells, then the next was making homes affordable.

We realised that many domestic abuse survivors are forced to rebuild their lives from scratch and without the support of friends, family and a stable income - making a home liveable is incredibly expensive.

With this in mind we installed quality flooring and kitchens complete with integrated appliances such as a cooker, fridge and freezer. This helped survivors to move straight in without going into debt or spending months without appliances or flooring.

Polly and others at the scheme can also access additional support to help them with setting up utilities, council tax and other administration. The specialised domestic abuse support worker also helps find employment and volunteering opportunities and advises on support options and safety plans.

*Name changed to protect the identity of the customer.

You can find out more about Glow and safe accommodation in Staffordshire by visiting findtheglow.org.uk

Is your garden competition-ready?

BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

We'll be launching our garden competition again this summer. If you missed out last year, this is your chance to win a £50 voucher and be named best Staffs Housing garden, communal garden, flower display and allotment.



Thinking green.

USE YOUR OUTDOOR SPACE TO SAVE MONEY

With electricity prices rising this month why not swap your tumble dryer for an outdoor drying line? You won't only reduce your electricity bills but help the environment too.

Or how about swapping your light bulbs?

LEDs are the most energy-efficient light bulbs, and use almost 90% less energy than traditional bulbs. LED bulbs can cost less than £3 for one, and some can pay for themselves through energy savings in a few months.



Type	Lifetime	Annual running cost
Halogen	2 years	£8.42
Compact florescent	10 years	£2.04
LED	25 years	£1.71

Giving back to our local community.

We invited local residents and staff members to join a very special, secret project in Fegg Hayes earlier this year. We're hoping to share more with you very soon.



Worried about rising costs?

You are not alone.

We can help you apply for energy support schemes, set up debt payment plans and lots more.

We're all feeling the effects of increased cost of fuel, gas bills and public transport. It can feel really scary not knowing how much our monthly bills are going to rise by.

Sometimes it can be tempting to try and forget these worries or begin missing important payments like rent. If you're worried about paying your bills, rent or have any money worries please get in touch.



Please don't suffer in silence.

Resident Morris*, who is in his late seventies, sadly lost his wife recently. An incredibly difficult time was made even worse as Morris discovered his income as a widower was now much lower. He started to struggle to pay his bills until he got in touch with our Money Advice Team.

Our team were able to help Morris claim additional income through benefits and discount schemes so he can now get by.

*Name changed to protect the identity of the customer.



OUR MONEY ADVICE TEAM ARE HERE TO HELP

We generated over £1m in additional income or reduced debts for residents between April 2021 - March 2022. In lots of cases residents didn't realise they could benefit from schemes like the council tax rebate and winter fuel payments. Find out more below...

Council tax rebate

You could receive £150 by switching your council tax payments to direct debit. Paying by Direct Debit is safe,

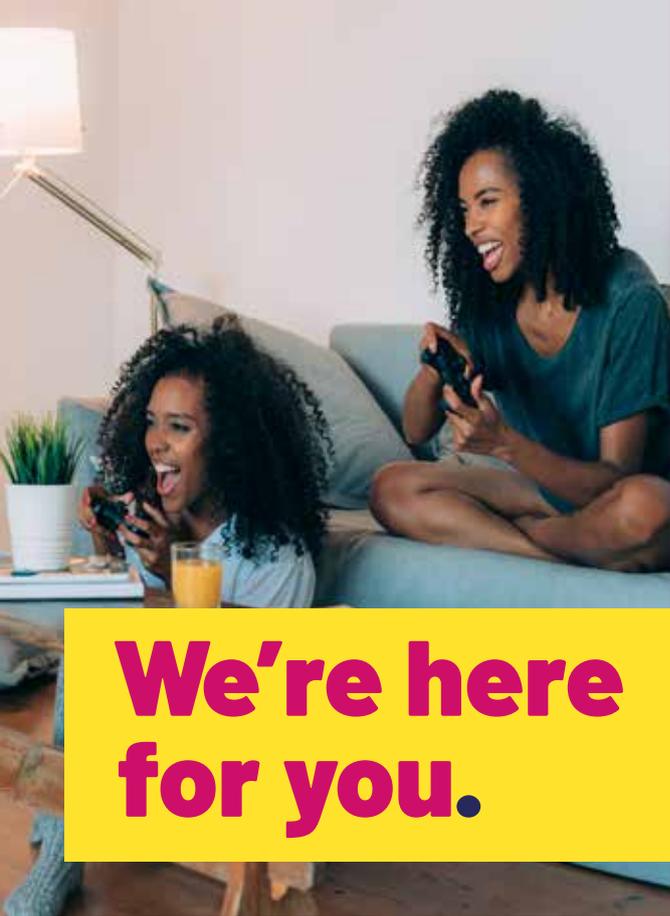
easy and automatic. When setting up your Direct Debit, you can choose which date your council tax is paid directly from your bank or building society. To see if you're eligible for this rebate get in touch with your council.

Winter Fuel Payments

If you were born on or before 26 September 1955 you could get between £100 and £300 to help you pay your heating bills. You will get your Winter Fuel Payment automatically (you do not need to claim) if you're eligible.

Contact our Money Advice Team

☎ 01782 744 533 ✉ hello@staffshousing.org.uk



We're here for you.

Resident Charlie got in touch with us when their friend needed support - here's what happened.

"About six weeks ago, a friend of a friend found herself sofa surfing after being made homeless due to domestic abuse. She was really struggling with her mental health and needed a safe place to live to help her wellbeing."

"I knew that Staffs Housing was part of Honeycomb Group with homelessness charity Concrete and domestic abuse charity Glow so I got in touch with the team. Fast forward to today, the team were able to find an apartment and after a very positive viewing, she now has a safe place to live."

"I'm so happy I was able to help and just wanted to say a big thank you to the team. I always know that the team at Staffs Housing will do their best to help!"

CAN YOU HELP US?

You know our services best. That's why we loved to hear what you think, especially when it comes to repairs and maintenance.

1

MAINTENANCE AND BUILDING SAFETY GROUP

We've created a new maintenance and building safety group to find out how you think our service is performing. We also want to hear about your experiences of our new contract and discuss how we can work with you to keep our properties and buildings safe. Get involved and contact us on the details below.

2

MY HOME GROUP

We're also creating My Home group, a place for you and our team to discuss how we manage homes. The group will discuss policy changes such as tenants' own improvements, the anti-social behaviour policy and the pets policy - to make sure they will work best for you.

Get in touch with the team to get involved

Involve@honeycombgrou.org.uk

Call **07970944442**

Text **07866933764**



Helping residents recover and reconnect from COVID-19.

Introducing the new West End Village wellbeing hub.

This month we're launching a new wellbeing hub at West End Village to help residents and the wider community regain confidence and improve health and wellbeing after the pandemic.



This comes as many older people are still struggling with their confidence, mental and physical health. 70% of over 70s now say they are uncomfortable leaving home because of COVID-19. Nathan Smith, Activities Coordinator at West End Village explains more:

"We found that a lot of our residents and people living in the community were choosing to still stay at home rather than trying to get back to normal after the pandemic.

"It was having a knock-on effect on their overall health and wellbeing. We noticed people's mobility had reduced and they were isolating themselves which wasn't good for

their mental health.

"After a really great turn out for the falls prevention sessions that started earlier this year, we decided to help make it easier for residents to make their health and wellbeing a priority by launching the wellbeing hub."

Residents from West End Village and the wider community will now be able to join new morning, afternoon and evening Slimming World group sessions, digital health workshops, exercise classes like line dancing, thai chi and Groove it or Lose It at the village. Alongside falls prevention sessions also open to residents, to help strengthen muscles to prevent falls.

Find out more at:
staffshousing.org.uk/communityhub

10 FREE home valuations and £750 legal fees discount when you staircase your shared ownership home*.

*T&Cs APPLY

Staircasing is where you buy more shares of your shared ownership home. You can do this until you own 100%.

Are you a shared owner who is ready to staircase?

- You'll no longer pay any rent.
- You can enjoy all of the profit if your home increases in value.
- You can sell your home to anybody with no affordable home restrictions.

Get in touch to find out more

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Independent living for the over 55s.

Two bed apartment at Rowan Village, Meir.



AVAILABLE TO BUY FROM

£84,000

with shared ownership



Find out more or register your interest online at staffshousing.org.uk/RV32

Later this year we're planning an exciting community project to help transform a community space near you. We're looking for customers to get involved. If you'd like to help improve your community get in touch with our customer involvement team:

Involve@honeycombgroup.org.uk

**THE
BIG GREEN
SUMMER
CLEAN 2022**

We'd love to know what you think!

Let us know what you thought about our magazine and if you have any suggestions or story ideas for future editions. Get in touch with our Communications Team on:
communications@honeycombgroup.org.uk



Contact us.

Online staffshousing.org.uk

Email hello@staffshousing.org.uk

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