

IN TOUCH

A big thank you!: PAGE 3



Message from the InTouch Editorial Panel

The editorial panel is a group of involved residents working in partnership with the Resident Involvement Team to keep you informed on issues that affect tenants and leaseholders of North West Leicestershire District Council. If you would like to make any comments or contribute to the magazine, please contact the Resident Involvement Team on 01530 454605 or resident.involvement@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

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Spotlight: Sharon Cole

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About me

My name is Sharon Cole, and I am the new Resident Involvement Team Leader. I began working for the council at the start of this year, and even though I am still finding my feet, I already know I love my job.

I have been working in housing since I was 16 and worked 21 years at South Derbyshire District Council as a community engagement officer, I have a passion for housing and making people's lives better, which is why I have chosen to work in the sector ever since leaving school.

Being a mother of three teenagers, I don't have a lot of spare time once 'Mum's taxi services' are done! However, I still manage to go to the gym four or five times a week to keep my energy levels up and as my way of relaxing.

I am a busy lady! A typical day for me involves leaving the house early to drop off children, then at work, collecting children from various activities, doing my own voluntary work with my local theatre group and finally getting home at around 9pm. Not a lot of time to watch any films or TV, but when I do get chance to binge, it's usually something soppy...and sends the rest of the family out of the lounge!

My role at NWLDC

I love the variation in my role here at NWLDC, no two days are the same. One day I could be at a tenant's association or planning an event, researching information, delivering tenant training with TPAS and then I could be at a landlord consultation forum the next.

I love working with different volunteers and giving tenants the opportunity to influence the way we work. By working with, listening to, communicating with, feeding back to tenants about what the council is doing, I hope to make a big and positive difference in our district.

I work in a small team of like-minded people and all of us are excited about the opportunities coming about this year, making positive changes to how we collaborate with tenants.

I do want to invite all our readers and tenants to get involved this year. Please do get in touch with me, I am more than happy to help get a good idea off the ground and to improve your experience of our services. It doesn't have to take up hours of your time, but it could make such a big difference to you or your neighbourhood.

Sharon has replaced Justin O'Brien who left the service in June 2023.

A big thank you!

Every year, the Housing Service hosts a thank you event for all our tenants and residents who have contributed to the development of their communities through Tenants Associations and those that have helped to improve our service through working groups and tenant scrutiny.

On Friday 8 December, almost 50 people attended a party night at IMGE in Coalville. Feedback from those who attended was positive and it was great to see our tenants from across the district come together to celebrate what they have done to improve communities and the housing service, and to have a bit of fun too!



Get involved! Contact our Resident Involvement Team for a chat about the different options - 01530 454680 | resident.involvement@nwleicestershire.gov.uk

Megastrikers' mega success

Written by Christian Dyke

Since January 2023, 'Megastrikers' have been holding a weekly youth club every Thursday for young people in Greenhill – it's a safe, warm environment to socialise and engage in sports and activities.

Since starting at Greenhill, the group has hosted a Halloween party where young people took part in apple bobbing, decorating the youth club room and dressing up in fancy dress. All the children made a lot of effort and it made for a fun, and sometimes, spooky party.

The group has made muffins, pizzas and toasties and tried out new foods including fruits and vegetables. They've played snooker, dodgeball, Nerf-wars, laser tag, handball, Twister and other board games. The children have created different arts and crafts pieces, including masks for the Halloween party, paper chains, paper fortune tellers, drawings and colouring.

In the future, there are plans for the police and community officers to come in to talk to the group and show them a police vehicle.

Ben Mackness, founder of Megastrikers, said: "After running this youth club, the children have formed a social bond with the other children in their area. We aim to provide fun sessions for a variety of ages and backgrounds; hosting sessions that include children from different year groups and, in some cases, different schools too."

Here are some of the things the kids have said:

- "It's cool because the instructors are nice."
- "It's very fun because we can play games."
- "It's perfect for kids because there are friends to play with and food to eat."
- "It's fabulous because it's free."
- "It's lovely because there's a variety of games to play. We all enjoy it because it occupies all of us."

This is what the parents have said:

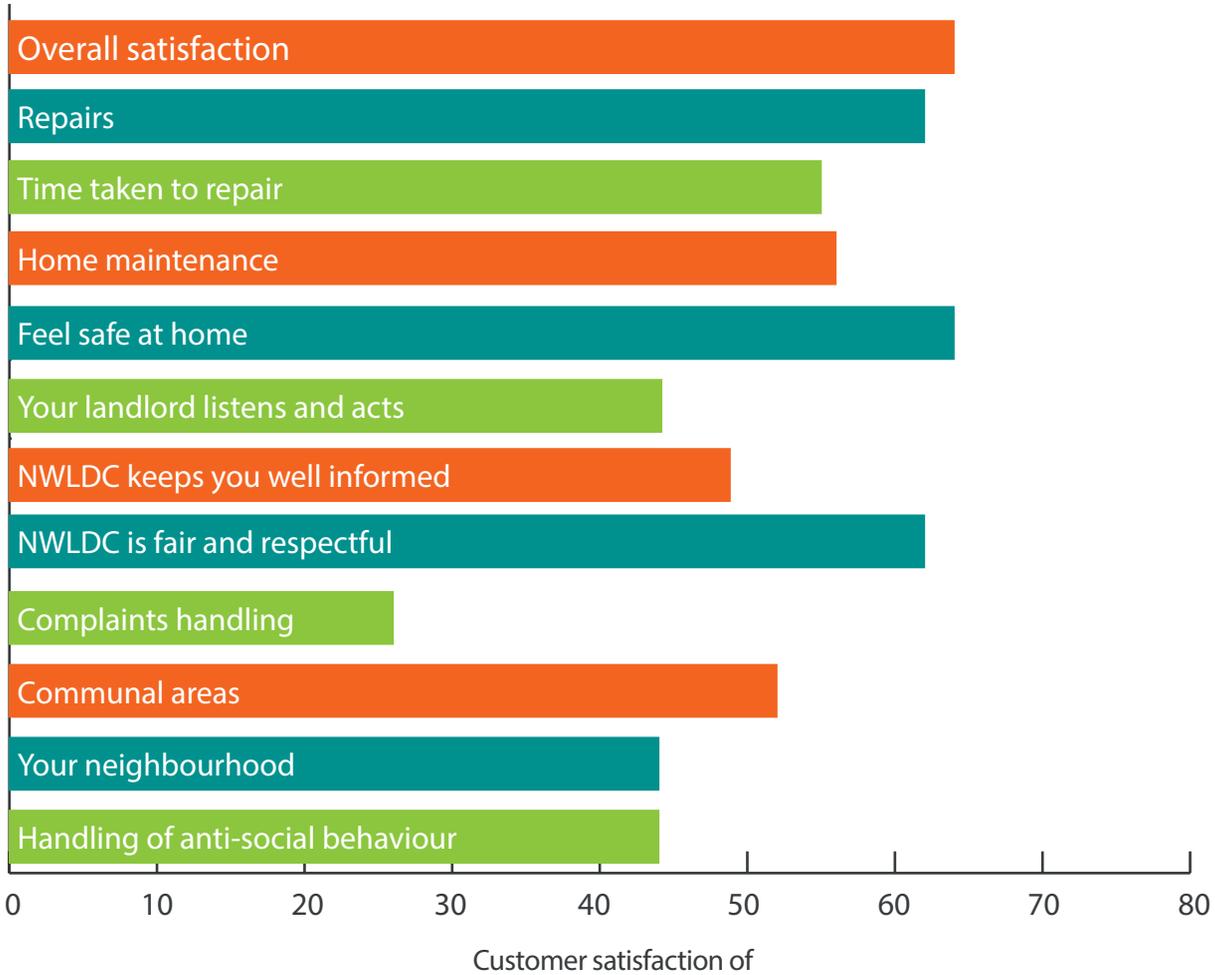
- "Christian and Nathan [the club leaders] create a loving, positive environment for our children to attend."
- "My child always comes running out of the youth club excited to tell me what she has done on that day!"
- "Children fed, entertained and come back tired... perfection!"

Megastrikers sessions are for anyone from 7 to 11 years old. To book and for more information visit: www.megastrikers.com

Customer satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is very important to us and we are always looking for ways to improve.

In June and July 2023, we had more than 1,100 survey responses to our first survey. The results from which are shared below:



We will run the survey again in 2024, so please watch out for it. The more responses we receive, the more influence on actions you will have.

Expect positive changes: task and finish group

Responding to feedback from our satisfaction surveys, we are making a number of changes to improve things.

Following an internal review, we will:

- Award nine contracts worth £25.6 million to help get through the backlog of repairs
- Develop a new damp and mould policy and process
- Improve communication with our tenants about the causes of damp and mould
- Improve the IT systems within Housing and Repairs Teams.

Our Head of Service, Jane Rochelle, said: *"This is great news for all of us and will allow us to catch up on the backlog of repairs and planned investment for roofs, kitchens, bathrooms, windows, heating and insulation that our tenants have been waiting for."*

"It feels as though we are now able to support the work our internal trade teams do and cut the waiting time for repairs. It also means we are making important improvements to homes which make them warm, safe, cheaper to heat and reduce our carbon footprint."

"Buying in this additional support also means we can invest in our own people with training and development programmes to ensure our workforce is fit for the future. I'm aware that previously we haven't been able to complete work fast enough, or sometimes to a satisfactory standard, and our tenants deserve better. We are now moving in the right direction."

"We are always committed to providing the best service for our tenants, and I am looking forward to seeing more positive feedback in the future."

Customer feedback: How we are addressing your complaints

We are always open to hearing your feedback and working on how we can provide a better service to you.

In 2023, our Housing service responded to 498 complaints, relating to 295 of our properties:

- **289** councillor enquiries
- **157** stage 1 complaints
- **53** stage 2 complaints.

We saw the highest number of complaints received by our Housing Repairs Team at 41%.

What have the most common complaints been?

- Taking too long to complete repairs
- Services not provided or being done wrong
- Unhappy with our policies
- Environmental nuisance and anti-social behaviour
- Poor communication
- General requests for help.

This feedback has inspired us to make a difference to our processes.

Contractor for repairs: We heard you loud and clear about repairs taking too long. This is why we're teaming up with a national contractor to supercharge our repair service. They're set to dive into outstanding repairs, starting with the oldest ones.

Process overhaul: We're revamping our processes to make sure the services that we provide are right every time and we keep our promises to you.

Policy review: We're reviewing eight of our policies, starting with repairs. Want to be part of the change? Call our Resident Involvement Team to become part of our consultation forum at 01530 454680 or email us at resident.involvement@nwleicestershire.gov.uk.



or scan the QR code.

Tenancy audit progress: We've already audited 14% of our housing stock and aim to visit everyone. This will help us understand who all household members are, identify any concerns or support needs and enhance communication.

Your voice matters: Get ready for customer satisfaction surveys re-launching soon. Your feedback will help us make changes to our processes before issues arise.

Our Customer Experience Team Leader, Kerry Spiers, said: ***"We appreciate your feedback, and it's helping us make positive changes to our services. We've teamed up with our Housing Service to look closely at what you've shared in 2023."***

"Your comments help shape our journey to improve. As part of this journey, we want to share these valuable insights with you and let you know what changes are happening within Housing."



Scan the QR code, visit www.nwleics.gov.uk/complaints or speak to our customer services team on 01530 454545.



Recycling container survey – choose your favourite!

We're reviewing the way we collect recycling – have your say!

Head online to

www.nwleics.gov.uk/binreview - to complete our survey and tell us what your favourite option is:

- Two bins – Two wheelie bins for separated recycling
- Stackable recycling trolley – Three separate boxes stacked on a wheeled frame, you would be given two of these
- A Quatro bin – A wheelie bin separated into four sections for different types of recycling.



The survey closes on Sunday 14 April.

Protection and security: Keeping your shed or garage safe and secure

An opportunistic burglar will try to break into a shed or garage first because they can find the tools they need to break into the main house. Sheds also house expensive items such as bikes, tools or even cars so it gives burglars even more of a reason to target them.

Help to secure your shed and outbuildings:

- Use a good padlock on the door with no exposed screws
- Consider a battery-operated shed alarm. They respond to movement or door contact with an extremely loud siren
- Hide lawn mowers or bikes by draping a sheet over them
- Secure your bike to the ground or a lockable stand. Visit www.soldsecure.com to search for ground anchors and other locks designed to fix to floors and walls.

A locksmith belonging to the Master Locksmiths Association (www.locksmiths.co.uk) can advise you on the most secure shed and garage door security. They can also help you install it.



Gardening - April showers and spring-themed flowers

As weather begins to warm and rain increases its fall, spring brings the perfect opportunity to start thinking about your garden.

Whether you're a gardening guru or just beginning your cultivating campaign, here are some gardening tips from the Royal Horticultural Society's (RHS) website to help you make the most of your April environmental endeavours:

- Sow herbs, hardy annuals and wildflower seeds outdoors
- Protect soft fruit from frost by using a fleece cover overnight
- Keep weeds under control
- Regularly cut your grass and hedges

You can read more April gardening tips on RHS's website www.rhs.org.uk/advice/in-month/april



Power outage and flooding

Staying safe and be prepared

With storms becoming a more common occurrence in Leicestershire, it is important that you prepare yourself for different weather extremes.

Power outages

Power outages can happen unexpectedly when we go through storms with high winds so it is important that you get ready in case this happens.

The National Grid have created a web page that explains everything you can do to prepare for a power outage such as:

- **Keep a lantern / torch somewhere easy to find**
- **Listen to local radio for updates on the weather**
- **Keep a power bank or solar charger in the house for your mobile phone or tablet**
- **Install a surge protector so that your valuable electrical equipment isn't damaged from surges of electricity during a power cut.**

If you need electricity for medical support or have any other special needs, register yourself as a vulnerable person on the Priority Services Register with the National Grid. You can do this at www.nationalgrid.co.uk/customers-and-community/priority-services/priority-services-register



Remember, you can call the National Grid on **105** or **0800 6783 105** to report a power cut or speak to someone for advice.

More information about power cuts can be found at www.nationalgrid.co.uk/power-cut-information/power-cut-advice/being-prepared



Flooding

Many locations in Leicestershire are prone to flooding, so preparing yourself is very important.

We ask our council tenants to:

- **Keep drains clear of leaves and other litter to allow the rainwater to drain away**
- **Report to our Repairs team if your guttering or downpipes are blocked**
- **Contact us if you feel your property is at risk of flooding during extreme weather conditions and take the flooding advice to protect your belongings.**

More advice about flooding can be found on our website www.nwleics.gov.uk/flooding

Insurance

We encourage our tenants to have contents insurance to ensure you are covered for any damage caused to your personal belongings by an insured event such as fire, flood, storm, or theft.



Elections – Police and Crime Commissioner – Thursday 2 May

On Thursday 2 May, the polling stations will open to vote for the next Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire

- Here are some things to remember:
- Make sure you're registered to vote by Tuesday 16 April – www.gov.uk/register-to-vote
 - The deadline to apply to vote by post is Wednesday 17 April (I.D. required)
 - The deadline to vote by proxy is Wednesday 24 April.

Find out more about the Police and Crime Commissioner for Leicestershire at www.leics.pcc.police.uk

Voter I.D.

Remember to take photo identification with you to vote.

Accepted I.D. includes a driving license, provisional driving license, passport, Blue Badge, bus passes, Proof of Age card.

If you don't have I.D. and would like to vote, you can apply for a voter authority certificate – just apply online at www.electoralcommission.org.uk or contact us to apply in person or using a hard copy application. The deadline to apply for a certificate is Wednesday 24 April.

Elections team

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www.nwleics.gov.uk/elections

Spring word search

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

- SNOWDROP
- FLOWER
- SPROUT
- BUTTERFLY
- GARDEN
- SUNSHINE
- RAINY
- DAFFODIL
- UMBRELLA
- BLOOM
- THAW
- CATERPILLAR
- LEAF
- LILAC
- APRIL
- SPRING
- NEST
- PICNIC
- HATCH
- PLANT
- RAINBOW