



the Community Edit

Spring 2024

Your community newsletter from the Neighbourhood Team

It's been a busy start to 2024 with two different types of survey underway. We're running our first Tenant Satisfaction Measure survey, as required by the Regulator of Social Housing (details on page 3) and we've also started a stock condition survey of all our rented homes and blocks. This will help the council prioritise its planned maintenance and improvements work.

There's information on the new government regulations for owning an XL Bully dog on page 2 and an update from your Residents Panel on page 3.



Residents at Mead House in Hatfield enjoyed getting to grips with their Smartphones, thanks to a recent course we ran with Oaklands College

You said, we're doing...

In the last edition of the Community Edit, we asked you what type of courses/workshops you'd like. Arts and crafts was the most popular choice so we teamed up with Step2Skills to run a Brilliant Boxes session at Woodhall Community Centre.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with one participant saying: "I really enjoyed it. I learnt a new skill. my children were very impressed with what I made!"

We will be running more courses and workshops across the borough throughout 2024.



**WELWYN
HATFIELD**

Council Housing Pet Policy

Your tenancy agreement states that you must get permission from us to keep a pet but to give clearer guidelines on how to do this, we have introduced a pet policy.

We know that having a pet offers significant health and wellbeing benefits to residents so we will not unreasonably refuse requests. However, we will take action where pet ownership is causing a breach of tenancy.

If you require a guide dog or other assistance pet, we will not withhold permission but you still need to let us know they are in your home.

For more information see our website www.welhat.gov.uk/policies or contact the Neighbourhoods team on **01707 357796** or neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk



XL Bully Dogs

Owners of XL Bully dogs must now have a certificate of exemption to legally keep their pet.

If you are a council tenant and already have written permission from us to own an XL Bully, providing all the Government's conditions are followed the dog can be kept at your property.

Anybody who hasn't sought permission from us to keep an XL Bully should contact the Neighbourhoods team immediately on neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk or **01707 357796**.

The new regulations also state XL Bully dogs must be:

- Microchipped
- Neutered
- Kept on a lead and muzzled when in public
- Kept in a secure place so it cannot escape.

Owners must be over the age of 16 and have third party public liability insurance against their dog injuring other people.

Failure to hold a certificate of exemption will be a criminal offence and a breach of your tenancy agreement.



Stock Condition Survey

Between now and the end of the summer, the council will be carrying out a stock condition survey of all its rented homes, blocks and communal areas.

The survey is a visual inspection of the inside and outside of your home and will help us prioritise our future maintenance and improvement work.

You will receive a letter from the council's contractors, Savills, about the survey. But for more information scan the QR code or see our website www.welhat.gov.uk/stocksurvey

Please help us by allowing the surveyor carrying out the stock condition survey access to your home.





Update from the Residents Panel

2023 was a busy year for the Residents Panel, working with the council behind the scenes on issues that we know affect you as tenants & leaseholders. In addition, we have been out and about trying to meet as many of you as possible whether on Community Days around the borough or at various events.

We are all aware that the council has an ageing housing stock and with that in mind, it is undertaking Stock Condition Surveys (see opposite page) across ALL its properties, inspecting them internally and externally to determine what is needed in terms of repair/refurbishment/replacement or renewal and when. From this, the council will be able to establish clear priorities for the ongoing planned maintenance programme.

To enable this, it is essential that the council's appointed contractor, Savills, is allowed access to carry out these surveys. We understand that many of you are working or have commitments during the day and so if the suggested appointment is not convenient, you can contact Savills to rearrange it.

We hope you will understand the importance of this work and see how it will benefit us all going forward.

Chris Andrews
Chair – Welwyn Hatfield Residents Panel



Neighbourhood Improvement Bids

We've been working with the Council's Landscape and Ecology team to provide some accessible planters for the green-fingered residents at Cole Green House.

The planters are high enough to be worked on while standing or when sitting on a chair. The residents were involved in choosing the location and will take over the planting and maintenance of them. We can't wait to see the planters in full bloom!



Tenant Satisfaction Measures

As your landlord, we want to know where we're doing well and where we can do better.

The Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) have been introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing to show how providers of social housing in England are performing.

We are required to survey our tenants each financial year. Our survey is being conducted by specialist company, ARP Research and will be completed by the end of February.

ARP Research will randomly select a sample of our tenant households and send them an invitation to take part via email, text or post. This is a recommended way of doing a survey like this.

If you have not been invited to take part this time, you can still fill in the survey by registering at www.arpsurveys.co.uk/welhat.

The data from the survey will be sent to the Regulator and published in the autumn.

Electric bikes and e-scooters



If you have an e-bike or e-scooter, make sure you know how to keep it safe. Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service warn there have been reports of the lithium batteries contained in these items catching fire.

It's important to follow the manufacturer's instructions when charging and storing your e-bike/scooter.

- Ensure your charger and battery meet UK safety standards
- Never cover your charger and unplug it when not in use
- Never leave your bike or scooter charging unattended or while you're asleep
- Never block an escape route with your bike or scooter.

More safety information can be found on the fireengland.uk website.

E-scooters are currently only allowed to be ridden on private land in Hertfordshire.

Keep it safe, keep it clear

Everyone is responsible for keeping communal areas clear of personal items and rubbish. They are a fire hazard, can block escape routes in an emergency and slow down firefighters trying to enter the building.

Communal areas are spaces everyone has access to and can include:

- Entrance halls
- Corridors
- Under stairwells
- Shared grounds

Storing items in a communal area is a breach of your tenancy and you may be charged for the removal.



Help us keep you safe

We carry out regular fire risk assessments, but you can help us by:

- Not wedging open entrance doors or communal internal doors
- Disposing of your rubbish properly
- Keeping the outside of your home clean and tidy
- Not storing any items in gas or electrical cupboards.
- Regularly testing the fire alarms in your home

Get Involved

If you'd like more information about how to get involved, including joining our Residents Panel, our Virtual Panel or becoming a Neighbourhood Champion, email us at neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk or call **01707 357796**.

Contact us

In an emergency

T: 0800 111 4484

To report a repair

T: 0800 111 4484

E: housingmaintenance@welhat.gov.uk

Neighbourhood Team

T: 01707 357796

E: neighbourhoods@welhat.gov.uk

Income Management Team

T: 01707 357088

E: housingincome@welhat.gov.uk

ASB & Tenancy Enforcement Team

Telephone: 01707 357000

Email: asb@welhat.gov.uk



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