



CBHnews

AUTUMN 2022

Meet apprentices Jack and Wilson

Happy Green Halloween!

Cost of living help, hacks and more...

FREEPHONE 0800 408 0000
VISIT cbh.org



YOU SAID... WE LISTENED...

You told us in our quarterly survey run by Acuity it can be difficult to keep track of appointments – we listened and have gone live with handy text reminders to your mobile phone.



What does this mean for me?

When you book, or cancel a repair appointment you will receive a message confirmation on your phone as well as a reminder 24 hours before we visit.

Please make sure we have your most up to date mobile number so you don't miss our messages. You can let us know via your MYCBH app at portal.cbh.org or give us call on 0800 408 0000.

Your views matter and help us improve so we can continue to provide you with excellent customer service. Keep talking to us, visit page 9 for more information.

HAVE YOU SEEN STEVE?

We're green with envy, Steve who works for our gas contractor PH Jones is helping make Cheltenham greener with his fantastic, clean, green, fully electric van.

Steve is using the new green machine on his visits to keep homes across Cheltenham safe and secure with annual gas servicing.

If you see him out and about, be sure to give him a wave. We're loving the picture, Steve.

Watch this space – when our vans are up for renewal, we'll also be looking at opportunities to help make Cheltenham greener.



COVER PHOTO: We're excited to welcome two electrical apprentices, Jack and Wilson, to the CBH family. Read about them on page 10.



WELCOME ON BOARD...

We're delighted to welcome Martin Surl, who joins the CBH family as an independent non-executive director and Chair of the Board. He brings with him a wealth of relevant experience to help him lead, develop, and provide positive challenge and support to the Board.



Some words from Martin:

"I was born and raised in Gloucestershire where my family have lived for generations. I am proud to have served in the police force for 30 years and am passionate about communities because I strongly believe that everyone deserves to live in a neighbourhood where they feel safe and can thrive.

"When the role of Chair of the CBH Board came up, I knew I couldn't pass up on this unique opportunity to make a difference. Not only can I embrace my passion for helping people and the local area but I can use my skills and expertise to benefit CBH and its customers.

"I am really looking forward to building those positive relationships with the very people who live and breathe CBH including the customers, volunteers, partners and the amazing people who everyday go above and beyond to transform lives."



Steve Slater, CBH chief executive said:

"Martin demonstrated an excellent understanding of the communities within which we operate and a real passion for helping the people and families that live within them. I am confident that Martin will add huge value to CBH and help us continue to forge ahead in the post-pandemic world and take advantage of all the opportunities that exist. I am really looking forward to working with him!"



Councillor Victoria Atherstone, cabinet member for housing at Cheltenham Borough Council said:

"We are delighted to share the news that Martin will be joining the board as non-executive director and chair. Jason has achieved an incredible amount during his time as chair and Martin, with his experience and commitment to local people and their communities, will continue to ensure that CBH offers the highest quality of service to its tenants, as well as offering a fresh perspective to the board."

BRINGING MORE AFFORDABLE HOMES



Alison Salter, head of development, CBH

Alison shares how we're bringing more affordable homes to the town to make Cheltenham a better place to live for everyone.

"Since 2006 we have been working with communities across Cheltenham to regenerate neighbourhoods and build affordable homes in places where people want to live now and in the future.

"In partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council and a range of local contractors we continue to build new properties across Cheltenham, made possible via the council's £180m investment to increase the supply of housing and to help communities thrive, making Cheltenham a better place to live for everyone.

"To support Cheltenham Borough Council's response to the climate emergency, on sites we own and where we are in control of the designs, all new homes will be delivered to be net zero carbon, exceeding building regulations standards and providing highly energy efficient and sustainable homes.

"We're passionate about creating communities and providing spaces for them to thrive and are designing homes to have a positive impact on the environment, bring people together and boost biodiversity where possible."



You can view more details of the affordable homes at cbh.org/about-us/our-projects/regeneration-and-new-build

GOLD STANDARD HEALTH AND SAFETY



We've won a gold award for our approach to health and safety. Not for the first time though – this is the eighth year in a row that we've struck gold!

The award is important because it shows we are always working hard to create a safe environment for customers and colleagues. So, whether you're visiting a CBH office or living in one of our properties, you can be confident that we are going above and beyond to keep you safe.

The award is presented by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA). It recognises CBH's continued focus on improving health and safety standards to protect everyone's health and wellbeing.



WORKING TOWARDS STRONGER, SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

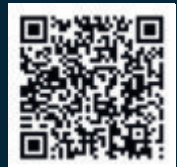
We understand the importance of feeling safe and secure in your neighbourhood and sometimes there are things you need to tell us about.

We have a dedicated team of colleagues who work in your neighbourhood providing support to help build strong communities. Occasionally, you may also need their assistance because a neighbour is doing something that causes a genuine issue, like being very noisy late at night.

There are many ways you can contact our dedicated team if you need to tell us about anti-social behaviour (ASB).

You can report at www.cbh.org/do-it-online/report-an-asb-issue or by email at asbteam@cbh.org

We work in partnership with Gloucestershire Police, Cheltenham Borough Council and others to tackle ASB. We do everything we can to protect victims, affected residents and witnesses. We'll investigate and take action, where necessary.



MYCBH: KEEP IN TOUCH

MyCBH is a great way to get in touch with us from a laptop, phone, or tablet. It's a quick and easy way to update your mobile number (see page 2) check your rent statement, make a payment, book repairs, request benefit and money advice, and contact your tenancy manager or ASB officer.

It only takes a few minutes to sign up. You just need your tenancy number (on your rent statement), email address and date of birth.

You can find out more on the **Do it Online** page of our website. If you have any questions, just message us at housing@cbh.org or call **0800 408 0000**.



KEEP CONDENSATION AWAY

Condensation is the most common cause of damp in homes of all ages, shapes, and sizes. It happens when warm, moisture-filled air hits a colder surface, like tiles or a window. It's important to try and stop condensation because it can cause mould.

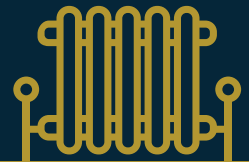
Showering, bathing, cooking and washing can all cause condensation. The easiest fix is to open windows so warm, moisture-filled air can get out. In winter that's not always practical, so here are a few tips about how to reduce condensation.

Try and keep a steady temperature of between 18-21C in your home if you can.



Dry washing outside if possible. Otherwise, use a drying rack or hang clothes from a curtain pole in a sunny room, open the window slightly and keep the door closed.

Avoid draping washing and wet towels over radiators.



Keep air vents open and make sure airbricks aren't blocked.



Close the kitchen door while you're cooking and leave lids on pans to reduce the amount of steam in the room. Put the extractor fan on if you have one.



Open bathroom windows while you bath or shower (and until the steam has dispersed).



Wipe down wet tiles, windows or walls and mop up any moisture on window sills.



HAVE A GREEN HALLOWEEN!



Halloween is just around the corner. It's thought to have started to keep ghosts away but it's now a celebration of all things ghoulish!



Around 15 million pumpkins are sold in the UK in the run up to Halloween. They're great fun to carve into spooky faces and an easy way to show that you are happy for trick-or-treaters to knock on your door. But if you've bought decorations and costumes in the past, only to throw them away after Halloween, here are a few tips to help save money and be kinder to the environment.



Save money and the planet by visiting charity shops – they might not have exactly the Halloween outfit you had in mind but there will be plenty of black clothes that can be transformed into a witch or bat outfit with a bit of imagination.



Consider cooking up the inside of your pumpkin rather than putting it in the bin. Using the flesh to make soup is a great way to knock up a cheap and easy meal. See the Love Food Hate Waste website for recipe ideas.



Encourage children to decorate and use an old ice cream tub (or something similar) as a bucket to collect their sweets in.



Check the recycling labels – decorations made from paper are much better for the environment. Tissue and crepe paper can't be recycled, nor can shiny paper or foil.



Remember to remove the candles from your pumpkin before putting it in the food waste or green bin!



You'll find tons more tips about how to have a green Halloween here...



recycle-more.co.uk/blog/recycling-news/a-green-halloween



cheltenham.gov.uk/info/5/bins_and_recycling



KEEPING YOU SAFE FROM FIRE

Protecting you and your family from fire is a priority for us. We need your help to keep you, your visitors, and your neighbours safe.

Smoke Detector

Your home has a smoke detector connected to the mains power. We check it annually, but you should test it monthly yourself and report any faults to us so we can fix them.

Fire Doors

If you live in a flat, your home will have fire doors. They stop the spread of fire, smoke and toxic gases. But they can't do their job if they are propped open, have been altered (maybe to attach a safety chain or put up a coat hook), or if the closing mechanism is broken. If there is any damage to your fire door (however small) contact us.

Keep Exits Clear

Make sure you keep communal corridors and stairways clear so it's easy for you and your family to exit the building if a fire breaks out.

Safety Improvements

We are improving the fire safety measures in some properties, which may mean we need to do some work in or near your home. If anyone from our maintenance team needs access to your property, we'll let you know in advance and our colleagues will always have their ID with them.

Tell us!

If you have any concerns about fire safety, let us know as soon as possible. We can offer advice, carry out repairs, or arrange for Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service to make a free Safe and Well visit.

For any faults or damage contact us as soon as possible at housing@cbh.org or on 0800 408 0000 and we'll get it sorted.

STOPLOANSHARKS
Intervention . Support . Education

NOT SURE WHAT A LOAN SHARK IS?

If you can answer yes to one or more of these questions you might be borrowing from a loan shark:

- > **Did they offer you a cash loan?**
- > **Did they not give you paperwork?**
- > **Did they add huge amounts of interest or APR to your loan?**
- > **Have they threatened you?**
- > **Are you scared of people finding out?**
- > **Have they taken your bank card, benefit card, passport, watch or other valuables from you?**

All you need to do is visit **stoploansharks.co.uk** or contact the Illegal Money Lending Team on their free confidential line on **0300 555 2222**.

We're here to help too, get in touch with us at **bma@cbh.org** or freephone **0800 408 0000** if you think you may be the victim of a loan shark.



WE NEED YOU!

We share the same passion as you and believe everyone deserves a home they can enjoy and where they feel safe and secure. Through your feedback and your shared experience, together we can make sure we address the things that are important to you.

This is why we recently launched our customer involvement and engagement plan to outline the things we are doing to help you feel connected to your community. When you get a moment, grab a cuppa and check it out here:

[cbh.org/publications](https://www.cbh.org/publications)

You know best what you need, which is why we need your help to shape, influence and scrutinise the quality of your home and the way our services are run. If you would like to join us, all you need to do is register your interest by contacting **communityinvestment@cbh.org** or call **0800 408 0000**



MEET OUR NEW RECRUITS, JACK AND WILSON



In September we welcomed two new electrical apprentices, Jack and Wilson to the team.



Jack and Wilson will be spending one day a week at Gloucestershire College and the remaining four days working alongside two of our most experienced electricians, Paul and Pete. We're excited to support them on their career journey. If you see them out and about, be sure to give them a wave.

Jack who joined straight after completing his GCSE's said:

"CBH is great at bringing people together and I've met loads of people. It's different from school but in a good way! I'm treated as an adult and I have a lot more freedom, plus I really enjoy working and being hands-on. I knew about CBH and I always wanted to follow a trade, so this seemed like the perfect opportunity"

Wilson, who is enjoying being part of the CBH family, said:

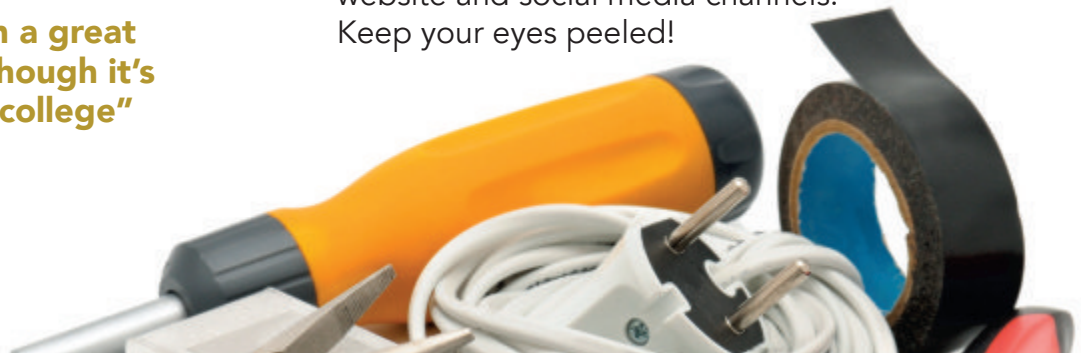
"Joining CBH has been a great experience so far, although it's a big transition from college"

Learning for Life

Mentors, Paul and Pete, explain that Jack and Wilson (like all electricians) will be on a never-ending learning journey. The industry is constantly changing, especially with sustainable technologies (like solar panels and electric vehicle charging points) now being fitted to many new build properties. Paul said:

"No matter how qualified we are, we're always learning new skills and adapting, so Jack and Wilson aren't on their own. No two days are the same, but I think we all love doing something different every day. We never know what to expect"

If you, or someone you know, is interested in an apprenticeship with us, we'll be advertising another opportunity next spring on our website and social media channels. Keep your eyes peeled!



DID YOU KNOW...

...here at CBH we have a dedicated training and employment team to help you find work, education and training opportunities?

Gayna (left), Janine (right) and Lorna know the world of job seeking inside and out and run group or individual sessions for jobseekers of all ages – from school students to older workers returning to the workplace after a long break. They can help draft CVs, job applications and covering letters, and they can even help brush up interview skills, set up work placements, or arrange training in construction, food safety, and much more.



Gayna and her team work with students too!

They've recently had the pleasure of awarding four students at Pittville School an ASDAN Certificate in Employability Skills Development. The students joined a four-week 'Thrive' course designed to develop their skills and knowledge regarding the world of work before they went on work placements.

Asked for feedback, students said: "don't change anything on the programme, it was really good" and "can we do it again?"

Please get in touch if you would like support with training or getting into work. We would love to hear from you.

For more information email tes@cbh.org, visit cbh.org or call **0800 408 0000**

PROVIDING GREENER HOMES

In our spring edition of CBHnews we told you we are receiving grant funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) as part of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1 programme.

The £800,000 grant is helping us improve the energy efficiency of 59 homes with an EPC rating of D or below, across a variety of tenures, including leasehold. We are now on-site starting works to install improvements to 34 non-traditionally built homes through the installation of external wall insulation and loft insulation upgrades.

A further 25 homes are also having improvements followed by new low carbon heating systems. These new heating systems are powered by ground source heat pumps

(GSHPs) which are extremely efficient, and, if run using green/renewable electricity, produce zero carbon emissions. They will provide customers with more control over their energy usage and the amount they spend on their energy bills.



To find out more about Cheltenham Borough Council's ambition to be net carbon zero by 2030 visit: cheltenham.gov.uk/sustainability



ONLY A CALL AWAY...

We believe everyone deserves an affordable, warm, safe and secure home. With the cost of living rising, we want to remind you we're here to help.

If you're worried about paying bills, or simply want to check you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to our friendly team are on hand to help. What you share with us is completely confidential and free of charge for CBH customers.

Remember, you don't have to struggle on your own. We are here to help – and we are only a call away.

Grant, Suzanne, Lianne and Jo all offer advice on welfare benefits and day to day money management.

They can:

- Check you're getting all the benefits you are entitled to.
- Help identify appropriate external support for your circumstances.
- Help with DWP or HM Revenues & Customs appeals.
- Support with back dating benefit claims.
- Offer budgeting tips.
- Calculate the impact of changed work hours on overall income.
- Explain benefit changes.



Grant (in picture above) said:

"If you have any concerns or need support – however big or small – we're here for you. Share your financial challenges and we can help you plan future rent payments and protect your tenancy."



Contact the team on bma@cbh.org, freephone us on **0800 408 0000** or visit **[cbh.org/services/help-support/benefit-and-money-advice](https://www.cbh.org/services/help-support/benefit-and-money-advice)**



Our colleagues at Cheltenham Borough Council have pulled together a useful list of support available for you and your family here: **[cheltenham.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support](https://www.cheltenham.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support)**

“Hello, I’m Sharon and I provide benefit and money advice for residents within Cheltenham. This can include homeowners, those who are privately renting, and tenants of other social landlords.

If you know of anyone or have friends or family who are not a CBH customer, but who could do with some support, let me know. You can contact me at benefitstakeup@cbh.org or call **01242 387618**”



Sharon can give advice and signpost schemes offering financial assistance and support to help with rising costs. Some of these include:

Broadband Support

Broadband providers have been asked by the Government to offer and promote social tariffs, including cheaper broadband and phone packages – Ofcom.



Find out more here: ofcom.org.uk/phones-telecoms-and-internet/advice-for-consumers/costs-and-billing



Energy Bills Support



Support is available to help with your energy bills: cheltenham.gov.uk/energy-bills-support

You'll also find information about #WarmCheltenham, a project offering warm spaces – somewhere to grab a hot drink, use the Wi-Fi, recharge your devices, read a paper, or seek advice.



Here is some information about steps you can take to reduce your energy bills: cheltenham.gov.uk/info/9/housing/80/energy_efficiency



Food Support



If you're struggling to afford food, help is out there. To find out more about your local food bank and how to get a referral visit: cheltenham.gov.uk/food-support

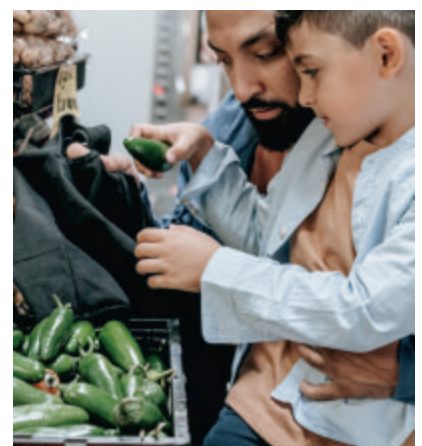
For more information on useful schemes and grants available visit:



cheltenham.gov.uk/money-advice



cheltenham.gov.uk/benefits-financial-support





COOKING UP WAYS TO KEEP BILLS DOWN

With winter coming and gas and electricity costs rising, we're all on the lookout for ways to keep our energy bills down. It's not always easy to know what the best money-saving hacks are – and what's practical for one person might not work for another. But there are a few quick and easy changes that might help keep those energy bills in check.

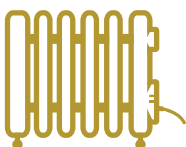
Here are a few tips:



Try and limit use of the appliances that use the most energy – like electric showers, immersion heaters, tumble dryers, fan heaters and cookers. Little measures like taking shorter showers or batch cooking can have a big impact.



Think about quick savings you can make. That might be washing clothes at a lower temperature, taking showers instead of baths, turning appliances (including lights) off if they're not in use, and not leaving TVs and other devices in standby mode.



Turn down radiators in rooms you use less and close the door. It is better not to turn the heating off completely because colder rooms develop mould more easily.



Be smart in the kitchen. There are lots of little things you can do to save energy while you're cooking. Leave lids on pans, don't put warm food in the fridge, try and keep your fridge full – all these things will make a difference to your energy consumption.

For more help with energy bills visit:



helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/help-with-your-bills



warmandwell.co.uk



KIDS SUMMER OF PLAY 2022



It was great to support Cheltenham Borough Council and their partners to bring the Summer of Play to Cheltenham again this year. It's a spectacular mix of free activities – from music workshops and street dance to spray painting and football sessions. We hope you enjoyed it as much as we did!

The Summer of Play brings young people and their families together in the holidays to socialise and have fun. More than 140 children joined the CBH sessions this year, each one attending two or three sessions on average, with some trying out new activities for the very first time.

Everyone was kept well-fed too – 582 healthy snacks were gobbled up, 153 meals eaten and 96 pints of milk drunk! All free of charge to anyone taking part.

We had some great feedback, with young people rating the CBH sessions they attended a massive 9.5 out of 10. Here are some comments about **Summer of Play**:

"I was very grateful for the Summer of Play and it was good for her to have a structured and variable day during the long holidays."

"Both my children loved the activities they went to and learning new things they never done before."

"The volunteering adults were great with my daughter who has additional needs."

"Just like the opportunity to say thank you... for the children to have something to look forward to made the holidays seem that little bit easier."

We'll be back next August. If you and your family didn't get a chance to take part this year, we'd love to see you in 2023. Keep an eye on our @cheltborohomes Facebook 'What's-on' groups for more information or contact communityinvestment@cbh.org or call **0800 408 0000**

A fun and easy way to support local causes



Cheltenham
Lottery

Play the lottery knowing exactly where your money goes.
You could win up to £25,000!
Everyone's a winner!



Buy your ticket now at
cheltenhamlottery.co.uk

Follow us:
@CheltenhamLotto

