




# CBHnews

**WINTER 2021**



**Win £50 vouchers**  
**Hamper Scamper is a success!**  
**Rise above the damp in your home**

**FREEPHONE** 0800 408 0000  
**VISIT** [cbh.org](http://cbh.org)





# A HAMPER SCAMPER SUCCESS!



## Helping families get into the festive spirit

Things have felt a little different this year due to COVID-19, but that didn't stop us spreading a little festive cheer throughout December.

We supported the CCP's (Caring for Communities and People) Hamper Scamper local charity appeal to help provide gifts and food hampers to families who struggle to afford food and heating bills, as well as anyone who may be isolated during the festive season.

It was a huge success, as we dusted off our elf hats to help the fantastic cause.

We're thrilled to announce our fantastic colleagues raised £610 for food donations and brought 44 gifts for local children.

**A HUGE thank you to everyone who fundraised, donated or gave up their time to help make the appeal such a success.**

# Win £50 vouchers!

**We know that Christmas is an expensive time for many, which is why we are starting 2021 with an opportunity for you to win one of three £50 high street vouchers.**

This will also give us a better idea of how many of you enjoy reading CBHnews.

There are a range of different brands you can shop from, so why not give your bank account a chance to recover by taking part. It's simple, read through this edition of CBHnews and let us know the answers to the following questions:

- 1 How many baking and crafting packs did our volunteer Lou deliver to families over Christmas?
- 2 How do you avoid condensation when cooking in the kitchen?
- 3 Which page will you find the following quote "....It is really lovely to have such kind and helpful staff that actually talk to you."

Remember you've got to be in it to win, so what you waiting for? Email your answers by the 28 February 2021 with your name, address, email and number to **comms@cbh.org** or send to Communications Team, Cheltenham House, Clarence Street, Cheltenham, GL50 3JR.

All terms and conditions available on our website at **cbh.org**



**COVER PHOTO:** Our amazing volunteer Lou (left), receives her baking pack from our Community Investment Officer, Alexis (see page 12).

# DEVELOPMENT UPDATE – HOT OFF THE PRESS!

In December we were pleased to hand over the keys to, two two-bedroom flats and a two-bedroom house for shared ownership at Prestbury Road; it is great to have these handed over before Christmas for people to settle into their new homes.

We have also completed on an exciting property acquisition in the centre of town, that will contribute towards our ambition to provide high quality homes for all and be our first acquisition solely for the private rented sector. More details will follow in the new year... watch this space.

## PARTNERSHIP WORKING PROVIDES EIGHT, NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES READY FOR FAMILIES BEFORE CHRISTMAS

Holy Name Hall, a former church hall, built in the early 1960's on Pennine Road, Cheltenham has received a major transformation to help meet the affordable housing need in the town.

Cheltenham Borough Homes purchased the church hall which had been closed for a number of years, on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council, from the Diocese in February 2019.

Architects were able to design eight, two-bedroom affordable houses for rent

on the site as part of Cheltenham Borough Council and Cheltenham Borough Homes' £180m investment in quality homes and thriving communities.

The name Ingleborough Mews came from the fact they are situated on Pennine Road, as Ingleborough is a place located in the Pennine Hills.

Eight families were given the keys to their new homes in the weeks leading up to Christmas so they could be settled in time for Christmas.





# OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Your valuable feedback has guided us and is at the heart of our priorities for the future, along with our promise to make Cheltenham a better place to live.

Below are some of the highlights and achievements.

## GREAT HOMES:

**Continue our close working partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council to meet demand for more affordable homes.**

We were extremely pleased to hear that

**87%**

of you are happy with the quality of your home and a fantastic

**92%** of you feel safe.

We believe everyone deserves a safe and secure place they can call home, so we're working with CBC to bring

**500**

high quality, affordable homes to the town over the next 5 years.



Our new development at **Monkscroft Villas** will provide **27** new homes and on the former site of **Holy Name Hall** on Pennine Road the keys to 8 homes were handed over to the new tenants at the end of 2020.

We also buy homes on the open market which are then rented out to CBH tenants. In 2019/20 we purchased **27** properties, another way to help provide more, much needed housing.

**We're committed to supporting the council's Carbon Strategy**

We will look to make the new homes we build more energy efficient to support the town's drive to reduce carbon emissions.



## INSPIRED PEOPLE:

**Provide our colleagues with more development and training opportunities, inspire the right people to join the business so we can continue to look after our customers and provide them with the services they need.**

We couldn't do the work we do without our amazing colleagues.

Their caring and neighbourly approach to see the person, not the tenancy and go the extra mile, is what makes CBH so unique.



## STRONGER COMMUNITIES:



**Enhance the way we engage with our customers, through the expansion of online services, to make it easier for you to get in touch with us.**

The disruption of recent months has meant we've had to change the way we work so we can safely move towards a 'better normal.'

While our reception areas are closed due to lockdown, we are no longer taking payments in cash.

This has proven to be a real success with positive feedback from you and we're reinvesting the savings made from doing this into alternative payment options and developing a CBH app to improve access to our services.

**Continue to provide a high level of customer service, using your feedback to continually shape the services we deliver.**

**90%**

of you told us you are happy with CBH and

**85%**

are satisfied we are listening and acting upon your views.

It's great to see you're happy with what we are doing, but don't worry we know there's always room for improvement and will continue to talk to you to find out how we can do things better.

**Provide our customers with the support they need for a better quality of life and create neighbourhoods that thrive.**

We will deliver services tailored around individual needs.



Continue to invest and support the Action on ACE's project to help young people and their Families.

Work closely with CBC and our partners to:

- Support families who are struggling financially
- Assist Adults and older people who need extra help with their health and care needs
- Tackle any loneliness or isolation, particularly during these difficult times
- Help people find employment and get the training opportunities they need to thrive

**Help families secure and sustain a long term place they can call home.**

On average we've prevented

**150**

people from becoming homeless each year.

We work proactively with local partners to come up with solutions to prevent homelessness.

Last year, our Housing Options Team helped people across Cheltenham claim a life-changing

**£1.5m**

in additional benefits.



# COME ON BOARD!

We're on the lookout for new Members!

Make a difference in 2021 by joining our Board



Jason Langley, shares why he enjoys his role as Chair of the Board:

"I was living in the US and returned to the UK in 2013 to live in Cirencester. At the time I was studying and looking for voluntary work and wanted to find something in the housing sector. I have always felt quite strongly that everyone deserves a decent home. I don't know how people can flourish without one - so that led me to CBH where I applied for a Board position and the rest is history.

At CBH we have always tried to be one step ahead by looking at creative, innovative and agile ways to respond to opportunities and challenges within social housing. This of course requires us all to be resilient, which is the number one priority for CBH. Without that we wouldn't be able to deliver the strong service everyone deserves in the sustainable way we do.

Although we have achieved a great number of milestones during my time on the board, I think that the biggest achievement is the replacement of CBH's entire IT system. Although it doesn't seem that exciting, it's put CBH way ahead of the pack. It's one of the most significant projects ever undertaken and is helping us to be fully informed so we can better understand your needs, challenges and wishes, helping us to 'do more, with less.'

CBH to me is a family, a team and a community that I'm very grateful to be a part of. I work with wonderfully talented, committed, and purposeful people and that is incredibly rare. The CBH board is a key part of that family and we work together by being collaborative and willing to ask difficult questions. CBH has provided me with an opportunity to contribute to do some incredibly important work, to learn and enjoy it all at the same time."

**INTERESTED?**

Please contact  
[rhian.watts@cbh.org](mailto:rhian.watts@cbh.org)  
for more  
information

## YOUR RENT-FREE WEEKS

Wondering when your rent-free weeks are? We've got all the information you need on [cbh.org](http://cbh.org)

Don't forget, if you are behind on your payments, we will expect you to pay in rent free weeks to reduce them. If you're struggling financially, let us know as soon as possible as we're here to help, give us a call on **0800 408 0000** (see back page)



## REPLACING YOUR BATHROOM OR KITCHEN

Ever wondered when your kitchen and bathroom is going to be replaced?

This question was flagged up from you in the recent survey (see page 8). To answer your question, we've pulled together some information on how long we would expect these to last.

When replacing your kitchen and bathroom, we always try to offer a neutral and modern colours.

We would look to replace your:



**Kitchen**  
– every 20 years



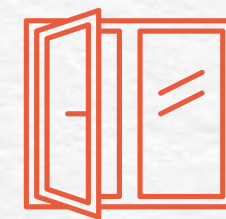
**Bathroom**  
– every 30 years



**External doors**  
– every 30 years



**Boilers**  
– every 15 years



**Windows**  
– every 30 years

If you're experiencing problems, please let our repairs team know. If you're unsure how old your kitchen and bathroom is, give us call on **0800 408 0000** and we can let you know when it was installed and when it's due to be replaced.



**YOU  
ANSWERED,**

**YOU SAID  
AND**

**THIS IS WHAT  
HAPPENED  
NEXT...**

### A big thank you to everyone who has taken the time to take part in our quarterly telephone survey.

So far this year we have had around 500 responses to the telephone survey carried out by Acuity.

Your responses are helping us to understand how happy you are with our services, and give us a better understanding of where we can improve.

We've done 300 amount of calls so far this year to address any issues raised and how we've fixed these.

Although our satisfaction levels are high, your brilliant feedback has helped us to adapt and respond to your needs by making some changes.

They are excellent. I like the personal approach. Everything is so automated these days. It is really lovely to have such kind and helpful staff that actually talk to you.

They helped me out of a very tricky situation following a divorce six years ago, they have given me a home and let me live as if it is my own. They have always been quick to respond if I have had an issue. I am very satisfied.

### See how your views are making a difference to our services below:

#### ASB Team

We received feedback following concerns about drugs in communities and the best way to raise this.

Our ASB team have pulled together information to explain the process and the best way to report this – please see page 10.



#### Your kitchen and bathroom

A common question that has popped up during the survey is lifespan of your kitchen and bathroom and when these can be replaced.

To help answer this, we've outlined some information on how long we would expect these to last – see page 7.



#### Contractors

Some of you raised some concerns about our contractors. We picked this up and thanks to your feedback have made some changes to enhance the services we deliver.



#### Housing Support

We have continuously followed Government guidelines so that colleagues can work safely in our independent living schemes during this current pandemic in order to keep you safe.

Whilst colleagues were unable to work on site during the first lockdown, there were weekly welfare calls made to our more vulnerable residents and help was given to those needing additional support with food and prescriptions.

You told us that having your housing support officers on site made a huge difference. Once we were able to return to each site in a Covid secure way, we made sure that our colleagues were present at our independent living schemes.



#### Condensation

We received requests for more information on preventing condensation.

We approached our repairs team who have pulled together some top tips to help you rise above the damp – see page 11 for more information on this.



CBH has really helped my client out during the current COVID situation. She is anxious in general and the team really made her feel relaxed.

Keep talking to us as your views really do matter and make a difference to the way CBH is run. You don't have to wait for our call, you can let us know how we are doing anytime at: [cbh.org/complaints-compliments-and-comments/](https://www.cbh.org/complaints-compliments-and-comments/)



# KEEPING YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFE

Our anti-social behaviour (ASB) team play a key part in keeping your communities safe. They work with a number of agencies, and independently, to highlight and deal with issues that affect you.

They receive many different requests for support, but recently we were asked about how we support individuals and communities combat issues surrounding illegal drug use.

Illegal drug use or dealing is both a breach of tenancy and a criminal matter. If there are reports of illegal drug activity within any of the homes we manage, we actively support the police with their investigations and, in cases where criminal activity is in breach of



your tenancy and puts you at risk of losing your home.

Our ASB Team are on hand to advise you through the process so, if you're unsure let us know. We are happy to report any issues to the Police on your behalf if you are unable to do this yourself.

If you have any concerns about illegal drug activity in your area, please report it by contacting one of the below.

Police via **101**, Crimestoppers via **0800 555 111** or let the CBH ASB Team know via **0800 408 0000** or email **asb@cbh.org**

## Talk to us – we can help!

Most disputes can be resolved through initial ASB officer visits, warning letters and by making sure the right support is put in place for both the victim and the perpetrator.

Find your local ASB officer below:



**SEAN WOODS**

Arle, Arle Farm, Hesters Way West, Hesters Way South, Fiddler's Green & Springbank, St Peter's, The Moors



**WENDY JOSEPH**

Whaddon, Town Centre, St Paul's, Alstone, Hesters Way East



**DEREK ROBERTSON**  
(Mon-Weds)

Prestbury, Lynworth, Priors, Charlton Kings, Leckhampton, Rowanfield, St Mark's, Hatherley, The Reddings, Warden Hill



**CHRISTINE SHILSTON**  
(Thurs-Fri)

If you are a victim or witness ASB you can let us know by calling **0800 408 0000** or online at **cbh.org** by filling in the 'contact us' form or through the tenant portal (see page 15)

# DON'T PUT A 'DAMP'ER ON YOUR HOME

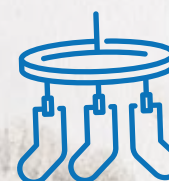
Condensation is something we all try to avoid, but this can be tricky, especially during the colder months.

Now winter is here, many of us will be turning up the heating and shutting the windows to keep out the cold air, unfortunately this can lead to issues with condensation.

**Our repairs manager, Mike Scourfield provides a few things we can all do to help prevent it:**

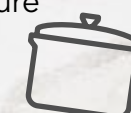
"Condensation is a common problem, if ignored it can turn your home into a damp unpleasant place and increase your heating bills. Here's my tips you can take to stay warm, and keep your home free from damp:

If you can, hang washing outside to dry and avoid drying on radiators



If you have to dry washing inside do this in the kitchen or bathroom, so the window can be left open and/or extractor fans switched on to help remove moisture

Cover pans when you're cooking



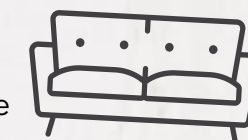
Don't leave kettles and pans boiling for longer than necessary and use extraction fans where possible

Keep the kitchen and bathroom doors closed to stop moisture moving around your home



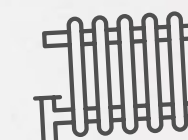
**Mike Scourfield**

Keep your furniture away from the walls to allow air to circulate



Keep trickle vents on your windows open at all times

Open all windows for 20-30 minutes every morning to ventilate your home – make sure curtains and voiles are out of the way while doing this



Keep your heating on a low level throughout the day rather than blasting it for short periods

Open kitchen and bathroom windows during cooking and washing for at least 30 minutes after to help disperse moisture



Keep extractor fans on and clean any fan filters regularly (at least once a month)

If you are experiencing problems with damp, after trying these tips, remember we're here to help, please call **0800 408 0000**

Don't forget you can also find out more information on condensation at **cbh.org/services/your-home/repairs/#condensation**



# Say hello to Lou...

Since the start of lockdown our live videos found on our Facebook 'What's-on Groups' have gone from strength to strength. Run by our community investment officer Alexis with support from our volunteers and partners, these online sessions including the free baking and crafting packs provide new opportunities and experiences.

Meet our amazing volunteer Lou, she shares her story below:

"I first came across the Facebook Lives run by CBH in the Summer when they delivered crafting packs along with video tutorials. This was one of the many lifesavers for me when I had the kids at home during the first lockdown. I live with Myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME) and every day I'm faced with symptoms including chronic fatigue, aches or pains, sleep disturbance, cognitive impairment and intense physical or mental exhaustion. As you can imagine this affects my overall wellbeing and it makes it hard for me to do basic things like housework, admin and schooling. If I overdo it, I run the risk of suffering more symptoms.

When I came across the online sessions run by CBH, I was really pleased to find that the activities were not too complex, all supplies were provided and having a 'virtual adult' to do it with was so helpful. The designs we made together as a family were exhibited in The Wilson - Cheltenham Art Gallery & Museum, as part of the Art in YOUR Quarter project, and we felt a great sense of achievement.

Once lockdown ended, my husband went back to work and the kids went back to school, I felt a massive sense of loneliness, so I signed up to the weekly craft and baking packs and they did not disappoint! I posted my signature and very simple to bake - cinnamon rolls, see page 13 for the recipe. Little did I know this would be the start of a beautiful friendship with Alexis who runs the sessions.

After discovering a sense of achievement again, at being able to start and finish something in the comfort of my own home without suffering the consequences, I kept in touch with Alexis to help with more crafting and baking ideas. As a Cheltenham resident I'm passionate about supporting my community, I'm a volunteer at St Paul's Church and felt we could make a difference to more people this Christmas by joining forces with CBH and other local partners. Together, we're using all our different connections to provide a unified approach to help others. Over Christmas we delivered 70 baking and 151 crafting packs to spread the festive joy.

Without Alexis and CBH I would not be doing this. I would not have the funds, energy, motivation or confidence to do these things alone. These packs are so much more than free resources, they have helped with my mental health and my physical wellbeing".



Our Community Investment Officer Alexis (right) delivers a baking pack to Lou



## In her own words, Lou shares her recipe below:

**Why not put your baking skills to the test and check out my super easy and delicious cinnamon swirls below:**

- Mix 50g demerara sugar (I didn't have demerara so used light brown), with 50g of butter and 1tbs of ground cinnamon. Put in a small dollop of aldi biscoff spread because I love it!
- Unroll your room temperature puff pastry and spread the mixture on, leaving 1cm along the longest side
- Carefully roll up, use the paper to help if needs be. Before you get to the end, wipe the 1cm with egg wash to help it stick
- Cut (roughly) 2cm (you should get about 17/18) and put them onto a baking tray with baking paper on it. Leave a gap between them. I managed to get 9 on a chip tray. Brush with egg wash if you have an egg

- Pop the cinnamon rolls in the oven and cook them at 170 fan for 20 minutes
- You don't have to cook them all instantly, the remaining cut rolls will keep in the fridge 3-5 days, or you can keep them in the freezer for 1 month, so you can cook them fresh another day

If you would like to get involved, or find out more about our volunteer opportunities we'd love to hear from you, contact the community investment team on **0800 408 0000** or email **communityinvestment@cbh.org**



## DON'T WASTE IT! RECYCLE

Did you know you can recycle any cooked or raw food scraps? Make sure you remove all packaging from your food waste, especially plastic before adding to your green caddy. For more information on this and what happens to your food waste visit: **cheltenham.gov.uk/food-waste**





# OLLIE CONTINUES TO 'THRIVE'

One of our star recruits, Ollie, who took part in our Thrive programme last year has gone on to secure an exciting new apprenticeship.

During his time on Thrive Ollie successfully secured his ASDAN Careers and Experiencing Certificates and received lots of great feedback during his work experience placements with our responsive repairs team and contractors.

After graduating from the Thrive programme, he continued to work hard to secure the qualifications he needed to become an apprentice.

Ollie enjoyed his time during Thrive with CBH and Cheltenham Flooring so much he stayed in contact, so he could grab any opportunity that came his way to work with them. He also enrolled to study as an apprentice at one of our Thrive partners, Gloucestershire College.

In September he received the exciting news a position had come up with CBH and Cheltenham Flooring to join as a property maintenance apprentice. His strong work ethic continues to shine through, and he is doing exceptionally well in learning and developing his flooring and multi trades skills. He's also enjoying college life and is working hard to achieve the qualifications he needs to reach his career goals.



Ollie said:

"I love doing my apprenticeship, it's better than I thought it would be. I enjoy working with Cheltenham Flooring and CBH. I get treated very well. I even like going to college, it's going really well. Thank you all very much."

Ollie has received lots of positive feedback from our partners at Cheltenham Flooring, our colleagues and everyone involved in supporting him with his apprenticeship. It's great to see that he is enjoying his exciting new career opportunity.



## INFO SPOT

### Get in touch through our portal

If you're looking to make a rent payment, book your own repair (non-emergency), check you rent statement or even view your own account details you can do this in the comfort of your own home.

All you need to do is visit [portal.cbh.org](https://portal.cbh.org) and register using your tenant number, email address and date of birth. It will only take a few minutes, but if you need help give us a call on **0800 408 0000**



### CBH SERVICE CHANGES JAN 2021

We have reviewed services and are working hard to keep services running in a COVID-safe way for you.

#### WE WILL CONTINUE



SUPPORTING THOSE FACING HOMELESSNESS



TAKING RENT PAYMENTS ONLINE OR ON 0800 408 0000



CARRYING OUT EMERGENCY /URGENT REPAIRS & SOME ROUTINE REPAIRS



CARRYING OUT ESSENTIAL SAFETY CHECKS ON HOMES



PROVIDING A LETTINGS SERVICE



0800 408 0000

SUPPORTING CUSTOMERS & PROVIDING SERVICES OVER THE PHONE

#### WE ARE NOT



RUNNING FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS



OPENING COMMUNITY HUBS OR RECEPTION AREAS

For more information, visit [cbh.org](https://cbh.org) [f @cheltborohomes](https://www.facebook.com/cheltborohomes) [@CheltBoroHomes](https://twitter.com/CheltBoroHomes)



DON'T LET THE  
*Lights* GO OUT

BRIGHTEN UP

YOUR RENT ACCOUNT  
BY MAKING A PAYMENT

Struggling with money?

Keep your light shining and talk to us.

We're here to help! Call us on:

**0800 408 0000**

