

Mid Devon Housing News



Autumn
2024
Edition
10

Welcome to the Autumn 2024 issue of Mid Devon Housing News, where we provide the latest updates on our housing services and the work we have been doing in our communities.

We have had a busy few months completing our delayed spring walkabouts and recently finishing our autumn batch too. We hosted our first rural roadshow across the district, a damp and mould demonstration day, completed our new development at Shapland Place whilst continuing to prepare for changes in regulation.

This newsletter is designed for you, and we welcome your suggestions for articles, photos, columns or applications to become a



Shapland Place is now complete!
Head to page 6 for more development updates

Publications Champion. Reach out to the tenant involvement team to participate in the next edition; the contact information is provided at the end of the newsletter.

Anti-social behaviour survey

We have recently launched a new anti-social behaviour (ASB) survey to better understand your views on ASB and what we can do to improve your experience when reporting ASB to us. Your responses will help us to identify if there are any gaps in the service and whether you have any suggestions on ways in which we can improve our approach to ASB. Scan the QR code to take the survey or visit letstalk.middevon.gov.uk/anti-social-behaviour



REQUESTING THIS NEWSLETTER IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT

Do you need this newsletter in large print? Does your neighbour need a translated copy? Please contact our Tenant Involvement team on 01884 255255 or tenantinvolvement@middevon.gov.uk

Damp & Mould

Are you suffering from damp and mould?



Reporting damp or mould helps us to ensure your home is safe and healthy.

Report it to us by scanning the QR code and completing our online form, call Repairs on 01884 255255 or email repairs@middevon.gov.uk

Where does the moisture come from? (pints)

Two people active for a day
Cooking and boiling a kettle
One bath or shower
Washing clothes
Drying clothes
Penetrating or rising damp

DID YOU KNOW?

If you open a window on the side of the home receiving the least wind wider than an open window on the opposite side, pressure will remove stale air from the home without feeling so draughty. This is called cross ventilation.

Damp & Mould Demonstration Day Success

During Damp and Mould Awareness Week (28th October - 3rd November), we held our first damp and mould demonstration day at a void property in Tiverton, and it was a huge success.

Tenants came to discuss issues in their home and understand how they can tackle damp and mould better, receiving expert advice and free damp and mould kits. The day featured:

- How to effectively use extractor fans, window vents, thermostats and water isolation valves.
- Live demonstrations of inspections
- Rising damp salts analysis experiments

Like bacteria, mould spores are in the air and surfaces of our homes all of the time in generally harmless amounts, and only become visible if it has enough 'food' and water. 'Black' mould is part of the fungus family and is a living organism. Appearing as a patch of small dark spots on any surface, this mould prefers pure condensed water, so it's a good sign that the problem is probably condensation rather than other forms of dampness.

There is water in the air (lots of it) all of the time. If there wasn't, we wouldn't survive. So, it's not about getting rid of water or condensation, but managing it, so that it does not become a problem.

Because it's a fungus, general household cleaning products, especially bleach, may make it worse. Using a dedicated mould wash or spray is the most effective treatment.



Rural roadshow success

We recently held our first Rural Roadshow across 5 locations; Bampton, Hemyock, Lapford, Newton St Cyres and Bradninch. It was great to see tenants drop in to speak to Housing staff, raise complaints, repairs and speak to Exeter Community Energy, South West Water, Devon & Somerset Fire & Rescue, CHAT, Devon & Cornwall Police, Victim Support and Learn Devon. A huge thank you to all those who were involved and tenants who came to visit us. Do you want us to visit you? Let us know using the details at the end of this newsletter.



Autumn walkabouts

Our Autumn walkabouts took place during September and October which saw our Neighbourhood Officers out and about in their usual areas, meeting with tenants, checking for repairs and logging any issues.

Thank you to everyone that got involved or said hello to us on the way! We will be back again in Spring 2025. Don't forget you can book a door knock if you would like to speak to your Neighbourhood Officer on the next walkabout. Email tenantinvolvement@middevon.gov.uk or call 01884 255255 to book this.



COMMUNITY CUPPAS

We host a series of coffee mornings and afternoons where tenants can drop in, speak to a member of the team and enjoy a free cuppa. Report repairs, raise complaints or pop by to meet your neighbours.

The Tiverton times and locations are on a trial basis, keep an eye out in the next newsletter or Facebook for any changes

CREDITON

First Wednesday of the month

10.30am - 12.00pm

Elephant on The Green
14 St Lawrence Green,
Credton,
EX17 3LL

TIVERTON

2nd Thursday of the month

1.30pm - 3.00pm

Heathcoat Community Centre
81 Kings Street Tiverton
EX16 5JJ

4th Thursday of the month

1.30pm-3.00pm

Sunningmead Community Centre
Lazenby Road
EX16 4AL

CULLOMPTON

1st Friday of every month

10am-11.30 am

Cullompton Community Centre
Pye Corner
Cullompton
EX15 1JX

Tenant Time

In our last newsletter we asked you to send in your stories so we could feature all the great things our tenants do. From volunteering, sports, painting, writing, helping your community or even baking. We want to know what you are proud of.

Tenant gives back

A tenant of MDH has set up their own independent advice Facebook group! (Not attributed to the Council). After they left work as a Homeless Officer, they decided to give something back and in 2013, started *Housing Advice Independent*. Having helped advise and support many people and being supported by their own admin team, who all offer their time for free, the group has grown to 17,000 members!

CONTACT US

Share your story!

Do you have a story you would like to share in our winter newsletter? Perhaps there is something you are proud of?

Get in touch using the contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Green fingers in Crediton

A tenant in Crediton has been working hard to make their garden a lovely relaxing space to be in. We especially love the hollyhocks! Hollyhocks provide plenty of nectar and are loaded with pollen for bees.

If you have a garden you are proud of, don't forget our garden competition will open again in Spring 2025!



Welcome to My Mid Devon

📍 #MyMidDevon



Your new customer portal for personalised online MDH services and information

We've made it easier than ever for you to keep track of payments and pay online

Register here



my.middevon.gov.uk

Up to 880,000 households across the UK may be missing out on Pension Credit

Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit is separate from your State Pension. You can get Pension Credit even if you have other income, savings or own your own home.

It's worth, on average, £3900 a year.

People who claim Pension Credit may also be able to get:

- The Winter Fuel Payment and other help with heating costs
- Help with rent and Council Tax
- A free TV Licence for those aged 75 or over
- Help with the cost of NHS services, such as NHS dental treatment, glasses and transport costs for hospital appointments.

You could be eligible for Pension Credit if your weekly income is below £218.15 or £332.95 if you have a partner who lives with you.

Check your eligibility at [gov.uk/pension-credit](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit) or by calling **0800 99 1234**

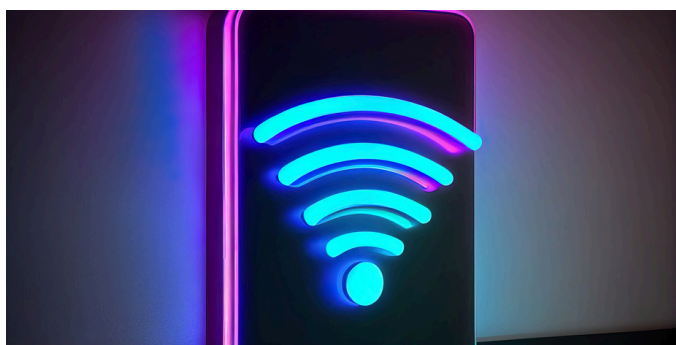
Eligibility criteria apply
*or the equivalent in Scotland.

**DON'T
MISS
OUT!**

Social tariff broadband

If you're on Universal Credit, Pension Credit, or certain other benefits, you might qualify for a social tariff—broadband for as little as £13.99/month with no price increases mid-contract. Sounds good, right?

Here's the thing: 95% of eligible households aren't claiming these savings. It's the same great broadband, just at a lower price. Why not give your provider a quick call to check if you're eligible? Or check out this advice from Ofcom which list providers who offer these tariffs: www.ofcom.org.uk/phones-and-broadband/saving-money/social-tariffs/



Household Support Fund OPEN!



**Funded by
UK Government**

Mid Devon District Council has been given more funding from the UK Government to help support those who are struggling to afford food and energy bills this autumn/winter. When the funding has been spent, the scheme will close. The fund runs from the 28th October 2024 until the 31st March 2025. You can only apply once in this period. You can apply for the funding online www.middevon.gov.uk/do-it-online/benefits/household-support-fund/ If you need help completing the form please contact:

Navigate CIO: 01823 299050
Housing or Benefits Team: 01884 255255

Developments

Complete

Shapland Place, Tiverton

Shapland Place in Tiverton has been completed, the units were finished in October 2024.

This development comprises of 4 x 1 bedroom, 3 x 2 bedroom, and 1 x 3 bedroom flats.



In progress

Crofts Estate, Sandford

The Crofts Estate project in Sandford is set for completion in mid-January 2025.

This development will include 4 x 1 bedroom flats and 1 x 1 bedroom two-storey property.



Up next

Beech Road, Tiverton

The Beech Road development is set to complete in April 2025, with demolition already underway. Once the site is cleared and prepared, the units will be transported and assembled.

This development will include 4 x 2 bedroom flats and 4 x 1 bedroom flats



Development plans can be subject to delays, the information in this newsletter is correct as of 11th November 2024

New



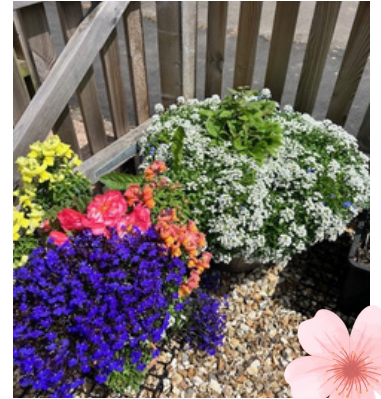
Mid Devon Housing are pleased to introduce our brand new Development Hub, where you can find all the information on current and proposed development sites.

Head over to
letstalk.middevon.gov.uk/mdh-development-hub



Mid Devon in Bloom 2024

A big congratulations to all of our winners and runners up of this year's Mid Devon in Bloom competition! We saw some fantastic entries, from Minions to vegetable patches to beautiful hanging baskets. If you want to be in with the chance of winning a £50 Love2Shop voucher make sure you enter next year. Competition opens in the spring. Keep an eye on the spring newsletter or Facebook for updates.



Help us keep drains clear and together we can reduce costs and prevent blockages

We all play a part in keeping our homes and neighbourhoods running smoothly, and something as simple as how we use our drains can make a huge difference. Did you know that in the south west, over £4.5 million a year is spent clearing blockages caused by wet wipes, 'flushable' wipes and other unsuitable items? These costs ultimately get passed back to all of us through higher water bills.

To help avoid this, we kindly ask that only human waste and toilet paper be flushed down your toilet, and that only water goes down other drains. This simple step can prevent costly repairs and unwanted disruption. Please remember to never flush or pour the following down your drains: wet wipes (even 'flushable' ones), makeup wipes, condoms, cigarette ends, pet litter, nappies, sanitary products, fats or food.

Hot water bottle safety

As we head into the colder months you might be reaching for your hot water bottle, but did you know it has an expiry date? The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents states that a hot water bottle's expiry date is two years after the date of manufacture. You can check the manufacturing date of your bottle by searching for the symbol that looks like a flower/ daisy. The date in the middle is the year and the segments represent the 12 months of the year. If you use it for longer than 2 years, the rubber can perish which can lead to severe scalds and burns.





Are you winter ready?

Use our handy checklist to make sure you're ready for winter. If you need assistance with any of the below please contact us on 01884 255255.

- Have you turned on and tested your heating?
- Do you know where your stop tap is?
- Do you know how to tackle frozen pipes?
- Have you reported any damp, mould or condensation in your property?
- Have you reported any outstanding repairs?
- If you're eligible, have you registered for the Priority Services Register?
- Have you applied for the Household Support Fund? More info on page 5
- Have you booked a heating familiarisation visit if you need one?

Priority Service Register

Did you know energy suppliers have a Priority Services Register? This is a free support service that makes sure extra help is available to people in vulnerable situations. For example, getting priority help in a power cut or help with reading your meter. Find out if you're eligible here: www.ofgem.gov.uk/energy-advice-households/join-your-suppliers-priority-services-register or contact your energy suppliers




If you're unsure how to get the best out of your heating, contact us to book in a familiarisation visit by emailing repairs@middevon.gov.uk or call 01884 255255

Residents' Survey 2024

The Mid Devon Residents' survey is back! Let Mid Devon District Council know how you feel, what you would like to see prioritised, what service you'd like protected and much more.

Don't miss your chance to have your say. Scan the QR code below to take the survey or visit Let's Talk Mid Devon. The survey is open until Wednesday 11th December.



Residents' Survey 2024
Let's Talk Mid Devon
letstalk.middevon.gov.uk/residents-survey-2024
30 October to 11 December

Recipe Corner

Do you have a recipe you'd like to share in a future edition of the newsletter? Reach out using the contact information provided at the end of this newsletter. For our autumn newsletter we are sharing Zoe's smoked sausage and bean stew and an easy lemon posset.

Smoked Sausage & Bean Stew

If you can't find smoked sausage, chorizo is a good alternative.

Method:

1. Heat a dash of oil in a large casserole dish or saucepan over a medium heat. Add the sausages and cook for a few minutes until starting to turn golden/brown. Remove from the pan.

2. Add the leek, mushrooms and garlic with a splash more oil if needed. Cook for about 5 minutes until softened, then add the smoked paprika, sage, beans and their liquid, and the tomatoes. Add 300ml water, season with salt and pepper, then simmer for 30-35 minutes

3. When the stew has roughly 10 minutes left, add the sausage back into the dish and bring a pan of salted water to the boil. Add the cabbage, simmer for 4 minutes, then drain and toss with the butter, salt and pepper.

3. Serve the stew with the cabbage on the side and some buttered bread if you wish! Enjoy!

INGREDIENTS / SERVES 4

- Half a packet of mushrooms chopped
- 350g smoked sausage, roughly chopped
- 1 leek, finely sliced
- 4 garlic gloves, finely chopped
- 1/2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/2 tsp sage
- 400g tin of white beans such as butter beans
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 1 small savoy cabbage, roughly chopped
- Knob of unsalted butter
- Bread to serve (optional)



Easy Peasy Lemon Posset

Maybe the easiest dessert you'll ever make! This recipe makes a delicious lemon mousse. Garnish with some chopped pistachios or some crushed shortbread if you fancy.

INGREDIENTS / SERVES 2

- 100ml double cream
- 50g sugar
- 1/2 lemon, finely grated zest and juice (about 2 tbsp.)

1. Put the double cream and sugar into a pan over a low heat. Dissolve the sugar by stirring constantly and gently bring the cream to the boil. Simmer for around 3 minutes then remove from the heat and leave to cool.
2. Add the lemon juice and zest and whisk well.
3. Pour the mixture into two small cups or dishes and refrigerate for three hours.

Just for fun...



How many words can you make using the letters below?

E	B	S	L
T	H	A	W
G	Y	N	I
P	K	R	F

Easy 1

Sudoku - 14

8	9		7	3		4	6	
	4		2		8	3	5	7
7		3				8	9	2
4	6	9	3	5	7	2		8
			9	8				5
5	1		4				3	9
6	8				9		7	
	7	1	8	4	3			6
	3	5	1				8	4

Autumnal Word search



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

BASKET

LEAVES

ACORN

PUMPKIN

TREES

APPLES

WIND

BOOTS

HARVEST

SCARECROW

MUSHROOMS

CRANBERRIES

Get Involved

We want residents to be at the heart of everything we do. There are a number of ways you can get involved with MDH. Some take more time and effort than others but there should be an opportunity for everyone to get involved at a level that suits them. Please use the contact details below to get in touch with our Tenant Involvement team if you have any questions or would like to volunteer.



The quickest way you can get involved? Follow us on Facebook. Here we advertise our events, share news, updates and helpful information each day from Monday-Friday.

Tenant Resident Associations

A TRA is a group of residents who come together to represent the shared interests of those who live in a local area or community. Do you want to set one up in your area? Get in touch using the details at the bottom of this page

Tenant Champion roles

Champion roles provide tenants with the opportunity to drive service change, from personal experiences or from their desire to promote positive service development. We have 4 Champion roles available (more than one person can be involved in each role).

PUBLICATIONS

The role is to work with our teams on our resident publications including our Housing Newsletter and Annual Report.

COMPLAINTS

Review our approach to complaints from our tenants, residents and leaseholders. Ensure we are being fair, are putting things right and learning from outcomes.

ESTATES

Monitor grounds maintenance, and if applicable, communal cleaning and communal fire alarm testing, in your area. Carry out inspections and report back to MDH once a month.

ZERO CARBON

We're looking for people who care about the future and are willing to support us in making green improvements to their home and community.

Consultations

Did you know we have an online consultation hub on our website where you can comment on our policies before they go to our Homes Policy Development Group?

www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/mid-devon-housing/your-community/consultation-hub/

Help us write your newsletter

Write a column, proof read the newsletter, suggest content or simply provide feedback. We are looking for tenants to get involved with future editions of your yearly newsletter. Contact us using the details below to register your interest or provide your feedback.

Getting in touch

Your feedback is important to us

If you would like to discuss anything featured in this report or you'd like to get involved in a future issue, please get in touch



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