

# RESIDENTS' NEWSLETTER

Information and news from Christchurch Housing Society



## A WARM WINTER WELCOME...

I hope the latest edition of my newsletter finds you well. I trust you all enjoyed a glorious summer spending it at home or with family and friends around the country.

My drive into work gives me lots of opportunities to take in the scenery and appreciate what a beautiful part of the country we live in, especially during the summer months. Seeing the scenery change as we move into autumn and winter is just as spectacular.

Like the seasons, there has been some change at the Society. Hopefully this edition will bring you up to speed with what has been happening and what you can look forward to next year and beyond.

You have a new Maintenance Manager, John Slater who started with us in the Spring. I have been working closely with John on our investment plans following the stock condition survey last year. We have already been busy completing some major work and this will continue into next year. I will highlight some of the work we have already completed later in this edition.

Several of our workforce have retired sadly but I have been very lucky to recruit some exceptional new staff members. More on that later.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.



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THIS YEAR  
CYNTHIA  
MOSS WAS  
AWARDED  
FOR 50 YEARS  
OF SERVICE  
TO THE  
SOCIETY, 25  
YEARS AFTER  
HER MOTHER  
RECEIVED THE  
SAME  
ACCOLADE.

## NEED TO KNOW CONTACTS IN THE OFFICE

DOUG FURLONG

CEO

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### HOUSING

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The Head Office at 96 Purewell is open weekdays from 9.00 - 16.00 should you require any assistance or wish to speak to somebody detailed above. There is on street parking outside as well as lots of local bus routes to. Do speak to a member of the team if you require any assistance getting to us.

A reminder that our offices will be closing on **Wednesday 24 December at 12.00pm and will reopen at 9.00am on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2026**. During this time if you have an emergency repair then please call our out-of-hour telephone number on **020 3885 7245**.

Alternatively, if your query is not an emergency, email [info@xhs.org.uk](mailto:info@xhs.org.uk) and we will deal with your enquiry on our return.

**01202 483243 | [www.christchurch-h-s.co.uk](http://www.christchurch-h-s.co.uk)**

## TEAM UPDATE

You may be aware that three members of the maintenance team have retired since my last newsletter. These were David Cummings (decorator), Gary Yeates (carpenter) and Richard Godber (plumber) I wish them all a very well-deserved and happy retirement. We will miss them.

The great news is that we are continuing to grow the maintenance team. Joining us are:

- Matt Vorley – Decorator
- Karolina Wojciechowska – Decorator
- Mark Mitchell – Carpenter
- Arthur Mitchell – Apprentice Carpenter
- Richard Ambler – Gas Safe Plumber



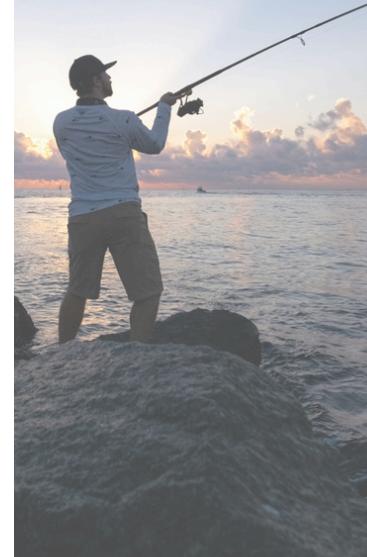
Left to right - John Slater, Mark Mitchell, Arthur Mitchell, Marek Szmyd.

Sharon Hemmingfield, Tenancy Support Officer, has left the Society and I am currently recruiting a replacement.

All our staff now carry ID badges when on site and visiting your homes. If you are unsure, please ask them to show you their ID badge before you let them into your home. On this note any contractor working in your home should carry a letter of authority from the Society. It will be on headed paper and signed by either myself or John Slater. If you are unsure of the identity of someone claiming to be working for the Society, please call the office number to check.

John

A HUGE BIG CONGRATS TO GRACE WHO GOT MARRIED IN OCTOBER, BE SURE TO SAY HELLO TO THE NEW MRS DIMENT NEXT TIME YOU SEE HER.





## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY - METER READINGS IN 2026

Myself or Grace will attend on the set date between 10am and 12 noon. We will read your meter and explain to you how many units you have used and the total cost of your bill. If you are not available on the day, please leave your meter reading on the door. Alternatively, you can call the office on 01202 483243 and provide your reading.

We carry a card machine so if you wish you can pay immediately, we will give you a receipt as proof of payment. We will then print off your electricity invoice within 3 days and hand deliver it to your flat. If you wish to pay over the phone, you will need your credit or debit card handy.

Greystones Day 1 (Frances, Rosemary, Stella) **Friday 9th January 2026**

Greystones Day 2 (Penelope, William) **Wednesday 14th January 2026**

Greystones Day 3 (Alan, Kenneth) **Friday 16th January 2026**

St Catherines Court **Thursday 22nd January 2026**

Twynham Court **Monday 26th January 2026**

Stour and Avon Court **Friday 6th February 2026**

Priory and Stanley Court **Friday 13th February 2026**

Grove and Fairmile road **Friday 20th February 2026**

Winston and Kenilworth **Thursday 26th February 2026**

Dorset Grange **Friday 27th February 2026**

Homelands Day 1 (Ramsey, Tynwald, Perrin Lock) **Wednesday 4th March 2026**

Homelands Day 2 (Peel, Mary Mitchell, Hepburn) **Thursday 5th March 2026**

Homelands Day 3 (Clementina, Benton, Hereford, Nelson) **Monday 9th March 2026**

Homelands Day 4 (Dowden, Miller, Douglas) **Wednesday 11th March 2026**

Lansdell Court **Wednesday 18th March 2026**

You can now see a list of meter reading dates on our website by clicking the "more" section.

Mark



## POLICIES AND SERVICE GUIDES

I have written several policies since my last newsletter. Each policy is reviewed by the members of Residents Voice at our quarterly meetings. Policies are then taken to the committee for approval.

Policies ensure consistency, helping staff understand what is expected of them and tenants what they can expect.

You will find copies of our approved policies on our website, or we can send you a copy if you would like one by contacting Grace at the office.

The policies that have been approved by the committee this year are:

- Allocations Policy
- Response Repairs Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Income Recovery Policy
- Electrical testing policy
- Anti-social Behaviour Policy
- Legionella management Policy

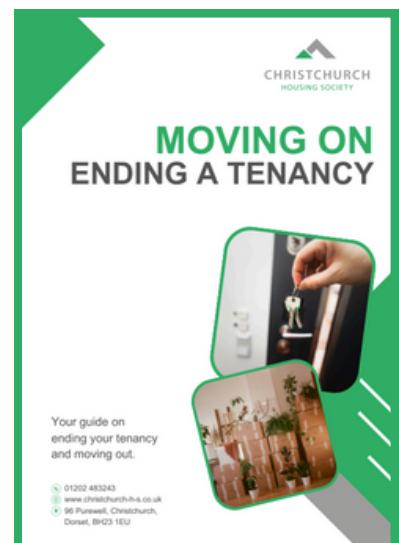
I have also produced a couple of information guides. These were also reviewed by Residents Voice and are now on our website. These are:

- Repairs - Guidelines for tenants
- Moving on - Ending a tenancy

I will be adding to these next year.

If you have an idea for a useful information guide, please let me know.

Jez



IN 1946 TWO  
YEARS AFTER IT  
WAS  
OFFICIALLY SET  
UP, THE  
SOCIETY'S FULL  
NAME WAS  
CHRISTCHURCH  
OLD PEOPLES  
HOUSING AND  
WELFARE  
SOCIETY...

## BUILDING INVESTMENT UPDATE

This year I am pleased to showcase some of the major works we have completed. I used the data obtained from the stock survey completed last year. It helps me give tenants more notice of work we are aiming to do in the coming years such as lifts, front doors, insulation works, windows, heating systems etc.

Here are some of examples of the work completed so far this year:

### New lifts at Twynham Court, Priory Court and St Catherine's Court



BEFORE



### New doors at Twynham Court and St Catherine's Court

AFTER

DOUGLAS COURT

## External wall insulation at Douglas Court and Peel Court



BEFORE



AFTER

Jez

THEN WHEN  
PEOPLE  
STARTED TO  
PAY BY CHEQUE  
YOU COULDN'T  
GET ALL OF THE  
NAME ON ONE  
LINE SO IT WAS  
SHORTENED TO  
CHRISTCHURCH  
HOUSING  
SOCIETY.

## GREYSTONES LUNCHES

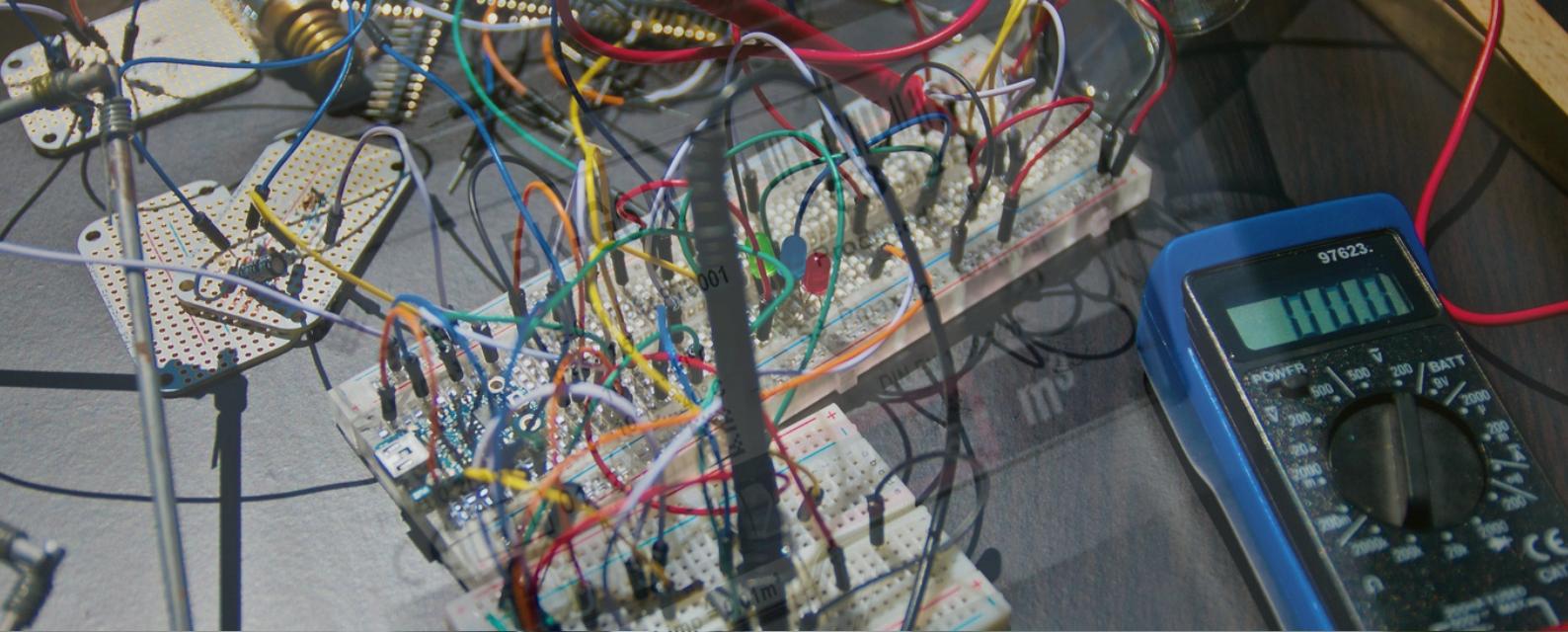
Did you know that we run a lunch service from Greystones Hall every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 12.30pm?

**Enjoy a tasty main and delicious dessert from just £5 per person.**

This friendly group is a great way to socialise, chat about local happenings whilst indulging in home-cooked food. It's not a club as such so no need to join, just pop along as and when you want to. **Takeaway and delivery available to those living on Greystones.**

**Contact Elaine, Adele or Jo on 01425 277106 to find out more.**





## KEEPING YOU SAFE

All properties must have an electrical safety inspection carried out every five years. So far, 70% of these inspections have been completed. The remaining 30% will be carried out during the remainder of this year. These safety inspections take a couple of hours to complete and are important to make sure that the electrical wiring in your property is safe. Please help us when we contact you to give us access to complete this work.

Your smoke detectors should last a minimum of 10 years. Each detector should have an install date on the outer casing that helps us work out when they were manufactured. As part of the electrical safety inspection work, we will change your smoke detector if it was manufactured more than 5 years ago. So far we have replaced more than 300 with new smoke detectors.

Please remember it is your responsibility to regularly test your smoke detectors. We accept no responsibility for any defective smoke alarms / detectors or any damage or injury which may result from their failure to operate properly or at all. You do this by pressing the button as indicated in the picture below.



Please ask a relative or neighbour to test your alarm if you are unable to or you are unsteady on your feet. You could also ask any of the team here to do it if they visit your home, but I am sorry we are unable to make a special visit. Please contact the office immediately if you do find your smoke detector is not working and we will arrange to replace it. You must contact us if you cannot hear your smoke alarm. We can install a different type of alarm for you free of charge.

John



## FIRE DOORS

Our Fire Risk Assessor has now inspected most of your front doors to check that they meet current regulations. We do not always need to replace your door but may need to ensure the gaps around the frame are acceptable. Please work with us to allow our carpenters Marek, Mark and Arthur access when we ask to do the work.

Always ensure you close your front door when you leave or enter your home. And please, never prop open the communal doors. If you find the communal front doors propped open regularly then please contact the office.

## MANAGING TREES



Our trees are regularly inspected. If a tree is unhealthy or has become too large and our contractors recommend we remove or prune them, then we will act on this recommendation. Sometimes it's not just the trees that need attention. Their roots can cause damage to tarmac areas as well.

Some of our older trees have TPO's (Tree Preservation Orders) on them. To manage these trees, we require planning permission first before we start work. This means it will take longer.

We have recently completed some tree work at Twynham Court and Homelands estate. We pruned the trees and repaired the damage to the tarmac caused by the roots.

**John**

Resurfaced footpath at Homelands.



## RESIDENTS VOICE UPDATE



The “Residents Voice” is a group of 10 volunteer residents that meet up with me once every three months. We don’t talk about local events, but we do discuss topics that affect everyone. For example, the group were very keen to see policies being developed as well as information guides; so that’s what I have done. The group sees draft documents and comment on these before they go to the committee for approval. I also update the group on other topics, and these help me decide which items they think everyone would be interested in hearing about.

I would like to extend my thanks to those of you who attend these meetings. You make a difference. We are always looking for more volunteers up to a maximum of 15 participants. Anyone interested in being involved can do so by emailing me at [jez.morris@xhs.org.uk](mailto:jez.morris@xhs.org.uk). I’d love to hear from you!

## COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

I set aside a small amount of money each year as I was keen to support residents improve our local communities. This support is in the form of funding, donations or sponsorship for a variety of local events, projects, groups, organisations, charities and services.

Below are some examples of the sort of projects we continue to support.

- Benches (see picture to the left)
- Sheds
- Replanting
- New notice boards

### As a reminder this is how you can apply?

Firstly, speak to a few of your neighbours if you have an idea, to see if they will support it. For a project to be considered for funding it must meet at least two of the following criteria:

- Benefit residents.
- Improve your local community.
- Raise our profile by working in partnership with our partners in the area.

Applications will be assessed against the above criteria by a small group of involved residents. Decisions will be taken monthly and led by the Housing Manager. For more information, please contact Mark Johnson or visit our website for an application form.

Jeze





## SERVICE CHARGES – COMMUNAL CLEANING AND CLEARANCE

We employ two cleaning companies to clean your communal areas. They visit once per week. We also remove unwanted items left in communal areas ensuring these areas are safe and clean.

### Who are they?

Clean Sweep cover Priory Court, St Catherines Court, Twynham Court and Lansdell Court. AM Mosley Cleaning Services cover all other blocks. We have used the same cleaners for many years. They are happy to receive feedback whilst on site or you can contact the office if you want to pass on your own personal experience.

### Annual cost to the Society

The cleaners cost around £40,000 per year to clean all our blocks once a week. We also deal with the cost of one-off cleaning and repairs to the carpets and removing rubbish. Last year the total cost of the service was in the region of £50,000.

### What we charge you...

We charge all tenants who have communal cleaning £6.71 per month or £1.55 per week. For this year that will generate just over £51,000 in income.

### What you can expect:

- A weekly visit
- Hoovering and mopping communal hallways, staircases, and entrance areas
- Cleaning internal glass (entrance doors and internal windows) Every 4 to 6 weeks
- Wiping down handrails, skirting boards, and ledges
- Dusting light fittings (where permitted) and removing cobwebs
- Cleaning internal entrance matting
- Cleaning external porch areas

### What you told us in May 2024:

80% of you stated that the communal areas were clean and well maintained. However, some of you mentioned that you had an issue with the quality and frequency of the cleaning. I have changed the cleaners in some of these areas (for example at Lansdell Court); let me know what you think at [jez.morris@xhs.org.uk](mailto:jez.morris@xhs.org.uk).

If anyone is unhappy with the standard of communal cleaning, please speak up. We only know about these things if you contact us. Please call Grace in the office if you have any questions or queries. We can then pass your comments onto the cleaners.

DID YOU KNOW  
THAT THE  
SOCIETY BUILT  
DRUITT HALL IN  
1953 FOR THE  
QUEEN'S  
CORONATION. IT  
WAS DESIGNED  
SO THAT  
PEOPLE COULD  
MEET AND HAVE  
A CUP OF TEA,  
IT IS STILL USED  
FOR SOCIAL  
GROUPS TO  
THIS DAY.



Jež



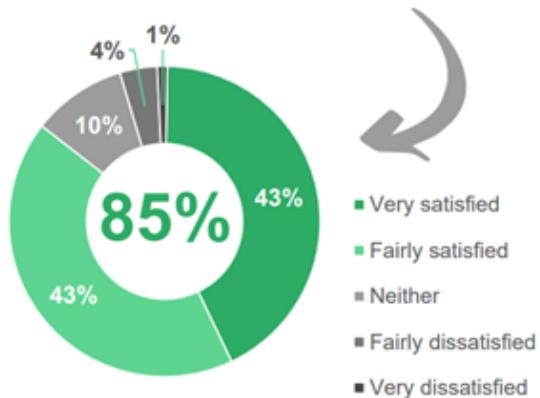
## TENANT SURVEY 2026

In May 2024 I used Acuity Research and Consultancy to carry out a tenant satisfaction survey. This helped me understand what you think of our services compared with other housing organisations of a similar size. Overall this is what you thought of us.

### Overall Service



Six out of seven residents are satisfied with the overall service provided by Christchurch Housing Society (85%).



In May 2026, I will be doing a similar survey asking the same questions. This will help me see whether our services have improved or got worse compared to previous years. It will also help me compare to other organisations of a similar size.

I will send out more information to you nearer the time and put posters on our noticeboards.



If you would like further information, please contact Christchurch Housing Society via the website or by calling 01202 483243



Jeze

	Satisfaction With Overall Service	Well Maintained Home	Safe Home
<b>CHS</b>	85.3%	84.7%	90.9%
<b>Sector Average</b>	72.7%	71.2%	77%
<b>Rank out of 93 other Landlords of a similar size</b>	1st	1st	1st



## HOUSING UPDATE

### Quarterly Estate Visits

I have started booking in quarterly estate inspections. I will attach a poster like the one opposite on the notice boards telling you the date and time I will be coming. If you are about, please come and join me. So far, I have visited Lansdell Court, Woodlands, Stour Court and Avon Court. Thank you to everyone who came out and saw me. The sort of things I have actioned following my visit include:

- New signage.
- Coordinating communal seating using the community investment fund.
- Sorting the bike sheds at Avon and Stour. Tenants have been asked to mark their bikes as we have a full shed of old bikes. Bikes without marks which appear to no longer be owned will be donated to a cycling charity.
- Organising landscaping works at Lansdell, this will improve the front elevation and will include two new seating benches.
- Tenants at Greystones have come together to form a gardening group to look after a patch of overgrown land.

For tenants living at Homelands Estate and Greystones Estate; these inspections will be carried out with block reps following the block meetings. Please let your block rep know if you have anything you wish to raise.

### Parking Permits

Following the launch of new parking permits at Greystones Estate, I am starting to roll these out on a scheme-by-scheme basis. The next schemes where we will issue new parking permits are Homelands (including the implementation of a one way system), Stour Court and Avon Court.

As a reminder a maximum of one parking permit will be issued per household. New permits will only be issued where a member of the household can provide their old permit, their logbook and a copy of their current insurance document relevant for the car they are applying for a permit.

Mark



SOME OF THE BLOCKS AT HOMELANDS ARE NAMED AFTER PROMINENT FOUNDING MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE SUCH AS MARY MITCHELL.

## TRANSFER AND EXCHANGES

I receive regular enquiries from tenants wishing to transfer to another Society property, usually on the same site. Generally, tenants want to move to a larger flat or a flat in a nicer position or with a better view. Whilst I totally understand why tenants wish to do this, with such a limited supply of properties we offer, it is not possible to agree to this unless there are exceptional circumstances.

All our properties are similar, and nearly all are served by a lift. Larger one-bedroom properties are usually reserved for couples. Smaller and studio properties are usually reserved for single persons.

We will consider a swap involving you and another tenant if you both agree to the move. This is called an exchange.



There are circumstances where we will consider a transfer, but these are exceptional. Such as:

- **Medical.** Where your current property significantly impacts on your health and where Christchurch Housing Society have other properties available more suitable to your needs. For example should occupational health recommend disabled adaptations but where your current home cannot be adapted.

It is unlikely that a nicer view or larger property will be the determining factor in their assessment.

- **Support.** To give or receive support from a family member. That is likely to require a move to a different estate.

Mark



## PRAMA - OUR LOCAL CHARITY PARTNER

Prama, a Dorset based charity whose aim is to provide support services which tackle social isolation and lead to increased personal independence, self sufficiency and dignity. They run a range of age friendly and dementia friendly clubs, carers' support groups, community based, inter-generational activities as well as offering a furniture recycling programme, see more on their poster below.



If you have any furniture to get rid of why not give them a call.

## CALLING OVER LUNCHES

Some residents have experienced difficulties in getting through to us at certain times of the day. We struggle to answer your queries between 12.30pm and 2.30pm when some of the team take their lunch break. If you can avoid the lunch period, then that would be much appreciated.

Alternatively, you can email us at the email addresses detailed on page two. Please direct your query to the relevant person and they will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Jez

THE SOCIETY ORIGINALLY ONLY HOUSED FEMALES. THIS WAS DUE TO A LARGE NUMBER OF THEM BEING WIDOWED AS A RESULT OF THE WAR AND THE LOCAL COUNCIL REQUIRING THEIR LARGER HOUSES BACK TO HOUSE FAMILIES.



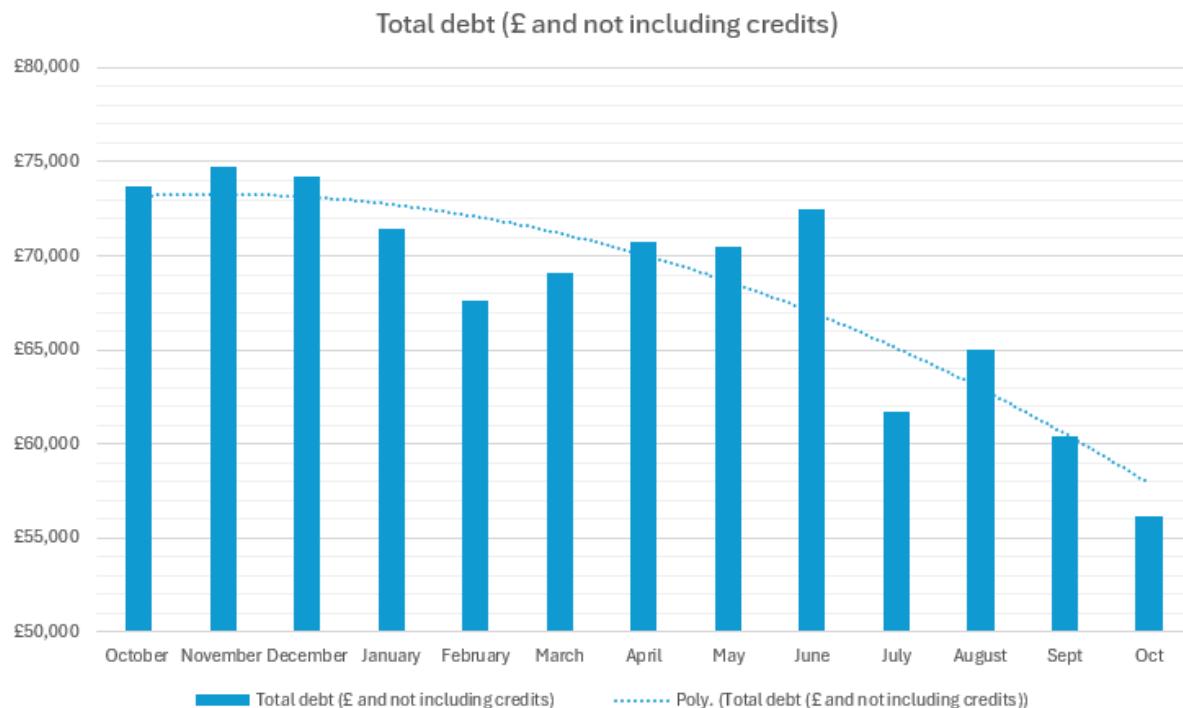


## HOW WELL ARE WE DOING? RENT ARREARS

Each month I review our performance in some key areas and thought I would give you some of the information that I use to see how well we are doing.

Each month I try and review rent accounts and contact tenants who have not paid. The total amount owing to the society is on a downward trend and over 90% of you have a clear rent account. Thank you for paying your rent on time. This enables us to continue to do all the great work.

If anyone is struggling to pay, then we can help signpost you to someone who can offer you support or come to a repayment agreement with you. Please call the office if you would like to talk about your rent.

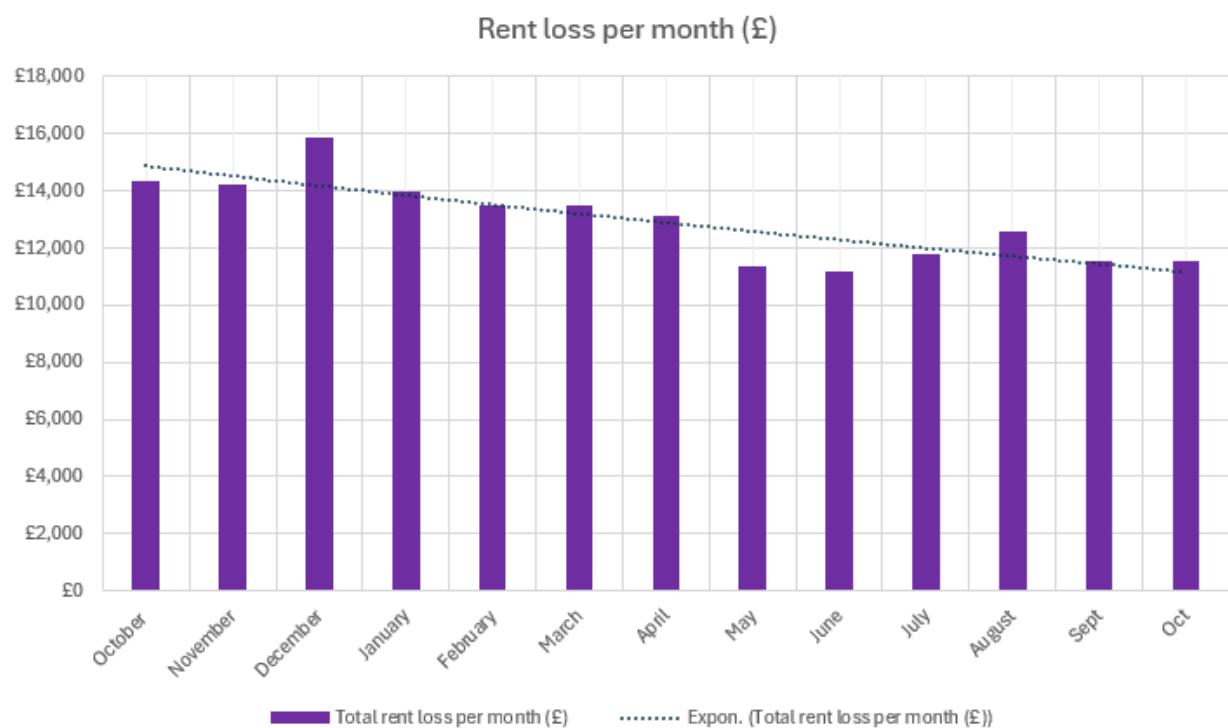


Mark



## OUR EMPTY HOMES

We have about 60 empty homes per year. When tenants move on, we will usually refurbish their home. When a property is empty, we lose rent. We want to keep this rent loss to a minimum whilst balancing the other work we have to do such as repairs and finding a new tenant. It is important that we let our properties to the right tenant and that the property is right for them. I do set targets to reduce rent loss, and you can see from the chart below that the trend has been reducing over the last year. Our rent loss has reduced by over £20k this year compared to the previous year.

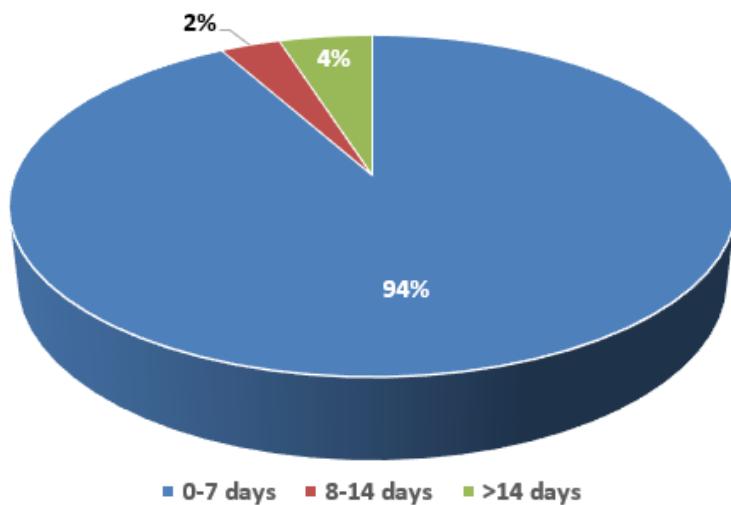


THE HIGHCLIFFE  
COMMUNITY  
ASSOCIATION  
LEASE  
GREYSTONES  
HALL AND RUN  
OVER 45  
DIFFERENT  
CLUBS AND  
GROUPS.

## REPAIRS, DID YOU KNOW...

We complete about 2,000 repairs jobs every year. That's nearly 3 repairs per property. From 1<sup>st</sup> July to 1<sup>st</sup> September 2025 we completed 267 repairs. The average time to fix these fault is 1.7 working days. I have not received any complaints during this period. Here is a table that shows completion times for repairs that you request.

Days to Complete A Repair



	Satisfaction with the repairs service in the last 12 months	Satisfaction with the time taken to complete your last repair
Christchurch Housing Society	88.5%	86.5%
Sector average	75%	72%
Rank out of 93 other Landlords of a similar size	1 <sup>st</sup>	1 <sup>st</sup>

Of course, we know that sometimes things do not go as planned, but I am hopeful that the service we are providing continues to meet your needs.

## COMPLAINT HANDLING

According to our complaints policy I received 3 formal complaints in the year October 2024 to September 2025. This is a very small number. Of course no one wants to complain, but I do encourage feedback good or bad. It's really the only way we learn. Please see our website for our complaints policy. As a reminder, the tenants survey carried out in May 2024 said that only 33% of tenants were satisfied with the outcome of their complaint. This is not where I want us to be.

Jeze



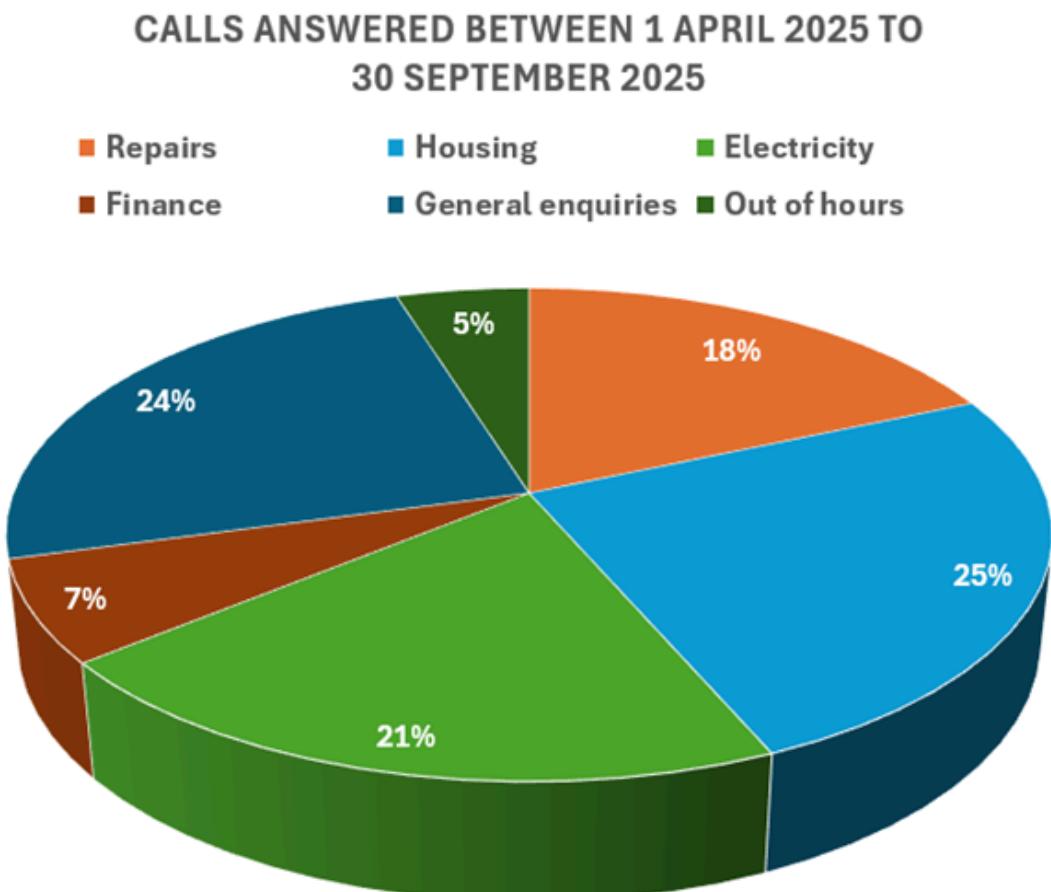
## OFFICE TELEPHONE CALLS

When I first joined Christchurch Housing Society tenants told me loud and clear that it was hard to get hold of anyone in the office. I changed the way we took calls, removed voice mail as an option and introduced new clearer categories. This gave me some valuable data as to the types of calls we receive.

In the 6-month period to 30 September 2025 we answered 4450 calls, around 35 per day. Unfortunately, on average we miss 4 calls per day. However, this is still a big drop as more than half your calls were going to voicemail before I changed it.

Of the four calls we miss per day, on average two of these calls are made between 12.00pm and 2.00pm. This is when staff take their lunches so there are less of us to answer the phones.

Jez



IF YOU HAVE  
ANY FACTS,  
FUNNY STORIES  
OR IDEAS FOR  
OUR NEXT  
NEWSLETTER  
PLEASE DO LET  
US KNOW.

WE WELCOME  
CONTRIBUTION  
FROM THOSE  
WHO WILL READ  
IT AND ENJOY  
THIS STYLE OF  
INFORMATION  
SHARING.



# MEET JANINE, SILVERWAYS HOME MANAGER

A huge welcome to Janine, our new Home Manager at Silverways Nursing Home. Janine brings with her a wealth of knowledge, from working her way up through the industry to sharing first hand awareness of caring for close family members during their final years. Her door is always open and Janine welcomes new thoughts and ideas on all of the aspects of care offered at Silverways. Be sure to say hello when passing.



## SILVERWAYS WINS NATIONAL AWARD

We are thrilled to announce that Silverways Nursing Home has been awarded a national Gold Standards Framework (GSF) Quality Hallmark Award in recognition of the excellent end of life care they provide.

We proudly received the award at the GSF annual conference and awards ceremony on Friday 26th September at East Side Rooms in Birmingham - a celebration of the UK's exceptional health and social care providers for care in the final year of life.

Silverways Nursing Home was one of 172 organisations from across the country receiving the award in Birmingham (139 care homes, 1 primary care team, 10 domiciliary care agencies, 3 retirement villages, 1 prison healthcare team, 1 hospice team and 17 hospital wards).

"I am delighted that our hard-working team have been recognised for their dedication to compassionate, person centred care. Our home is so much more than just a nursing home, it is a place where new friendships can be made, wishes granted, stories told and memories created. All of the team here are thrilled to have received Platinum Status for our Gold Standard Framework practice, a true marker of the highest standards of care offered to residents receiving palliative care." Janine May, Home Manager.

## SAVE THE DATE...

We're delighted to announce that our much loved summer fete is back for 2026! Save Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July for a fun packed day, think ice creams, BBQ, raffles, tombolas, balloon modelling and more. Fun for all of the family, free entry.

We are busy booking suppliers, designing fun packed stalls, painting handmade signs and promoting the event around the local community, so keep your eyes peeled for our brightly coloured posters and flyers! If you would like to volunteer to run a stall, or know someone who would like to make a donation to our raffle then please email Ann on [Activities@xhs.org.uk](mailto:Activities@xhs.org.uk).

Janine

