

CITIZENS news

AUTUMN 2023

LOOKING BACK AT THE CORONATION

BCHA celebrates the Coronation of
King Charles III and Queen Camilla

RESIDENTS' SURVEY

Your views matter



Bedford Citizens
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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**A copy of
Citizens News
in large font
or different
languages can
be requested.**



Bedford Citizens
HOUSING ASSOCIATION



WELCOME



Welcome to the autumn 2023 edition of Citizens News, this year has certainly been a busy one so far.

In this edition of Citizens News, we meet our new Chair of the Board, Richard and find out some more about him and his experiences working in housing.

We take a look back at the Coronation celebrations across BCHA with all of you and focus on some of our services and your feedback from our customer survey.

You can find out more about our new rent statements and how we've updated these to make them more customer friendly following your feedback.

We also have a focus on health and wellbeing and information about some services available for our residents.

Marie Taylor Chief Executive



GOVERNANCE UPDATE

Introducing our new Chair of the Board - Richard Pettifer



Richard has extensive experience in social housing in leadership and customer facing roles and currently works for Clarion as their Director of Customer Experience. Richard takes some time to talk to us about the role of Chair of the Board,

‘I am extremely excited to be Chair of the Board and to work with all of you and our staff team to make sure we have a bright future at BCHA.

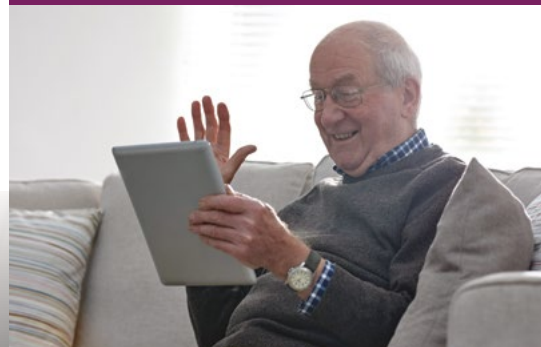
This year, we have launched our new values and I would like to thank all of you who took part in the consultation. Listening to your views and delivering great service is really important to me and everyone at BCHA and in this issue of Citizens News we take a look at some of the ways we do this.’

We’re recruiting for new board members. If you are interested in applying, please contact Gareth Tindall with an expression of interest by 7 December at garethtindall@bchal.org

RESIDENT AND TENANTS MEETINGS

We have quarterly tenants and residents meetings across all our schemes so that everyone can get involved. We will be in touch and publicise the dates of the meetings for the coming quarter.

In the meantime, if you’re interested in finding out a bit more about resident involvement opportunities here at BCHA, please contact Lisa Brennan on 01234 321 400.



RELATIVES MEETINGS

We will continue to offer hybrid virtual and in-person relatives meetings. To find out more about these, please contact us on **01234 321 400.**

LOOKING BACK AT THE *coronation*



The Coronation of Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla took place at Westminster Abbey earlier this year. It was the first Coronation in nearly 70 years.



The history of the Coronation

In England, the Coronation service can be traced to the ceremony by Saint Dunstan for King Edgar's crowning at Bath Abbey in 973. Then the first English Coronation to take place at Westminster Abbey was that of William the Conqueror in 1066.

The invitation for the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla was designed by the heraldic artist, Andrew Jamieson. Central to the design was the motif of the Green Man, an ancient figure from British folklore, symbolic of spring and rebirth, to celebrate the new reign.

The King's Procession left Buckingham Palace mid-morning on 6th May with the King and Queen wearing their respective Robes of State.

The robe worn by the King had been used by King George VI at his Coronation in 1937, while that worn by the Queen was originally made for Queen Elizabeth II in 1953.

As is tradition, the St Edward's Crown was used to crown the King. The Monarch was crowned while sitting in the St Edward's or Coronation Chair, which was made more than 700 years ago from Baltic oak and first used at the Coronation of King Edward II.

BCHA CELEBRATES THE CORONATION

We were delighted to see so many of you celebrate the Coronation and here are some photos of your celebrations back in May.





DAMP AND MOULD

We want all our residents to have warm, safe and dry homes. By understanding some of the causes of damp, we can work with you to help prevent these occurring in your home. There are four main causes of damp in the home and these are:

Condensation

This comes from moisture produced by everyday activities and can be made worse by not having enough ventilation and also by cooler temperatures.

Rising Damp

This is unusual because a damp proof course prevents this issue. But if you are worried you have rising damp, it can usually be seen by a tide mark above the skirting board.

Penetrating damp

This is usually caused by a problem with the fabric of the building which means rainwater is able to get through the walls, roof, windows or doors.

Plumbing faults or broken leaking pipes

Rising damp and penetrating damp can usually be easily identified at the early stages. A leaking pipe can be more difficult to identify. If you suspect you may have a leaking pipe then this should be reported to BCHA on **01234 321 400** as soon as possible.

Getting in touch with BCHA about damp and mould

If you are still worried about damp and mould issues in your home, please get in touch with us by calling **01234 321 400** or emailing **enquiries@bchal.org**. As part of the tenancy service, we visit all residents and so you will also have the opportunity to discuss any concerns at this point too.

Help and support

Bedford Citizens Advice Bureau can provide information about the help that may be available with energy costs.

Their website is **www.bedfordcab.org.uk** and they can be contacted by telephone on **01234 867 944** between 9.45am - 1pm Monday to Thursday.

Bedford Borough Council has information about Benefits and Grants and this can be found on their website **www.bedford.gov.uk/benefits-and-support** or you can contact **01234 267 422** for further information.



KEEPING YOUR HOME *condensation free*

1. Windows - Open windows frequently to allow air to circulate around your home, particularly after a shower or bath or when cooking. Wipe moisture from windows and sills when it appears.

2. Drying clothes - Dry your clothes outside if and when you can. Avoid covering up radiators with clothes. This increases moisture levels and reduces the air temperature as the radiators are warming the clothes, not the room.

3. Furniture - Leave a gap between your furniture and the wall and try to position large furniture on internal walls where you can. Don't pile things up against walls or overfill cupboards - allow air to circulate as much as possible.

4. Heating - If your home is too cold, condensation is likely to occur and you may also be increasing your risk of health problems. Try to keep your home between 18-21°C.

5. Kitchen - Keep the windows open and extractor fans on when cooking. Use lids on pans to reduce the amount of steam released into your home.

6. Ventilation - Always use extractor fans in kitchens and bathrooms and keep vents open.

7. Bathroom - When using the bath or shower, open the window and put the extractor fan on. Wipe down baths, showers and tiles after use. Use a mould and mildew remover spray (not bleach or soapy water) if you see black mould on the walls, ceiling, tiles or grout.

100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS



Back in March, we were lucky enough to be invited along to celebrate a 100th birthday!

Della from Madenbury House told us that the advice she would give is to stay young at heart.



YOUR RENT *statement explained*

Here's a breakdown of what your account statement.

HOMEMASTER
HomeMaster, 11 Whittle Court, Davy Avenue, Milton Keynes, MK5 8FT
t: 0333 0021250 e: info@designersoftware.co.uk w: www.homemaster.co.uk

Statement of Account

Mr Adam Murdy
36 HomeMaster Street
Kenilworth
Hullbridge
PA14 KEN

Account Ref: 20012
Property Ref: DS1
Start Date: 24/09/2020
Housing Officer: Mr Chris Prime
As at: 27 June 2023

ACCOUNT SUMMARY

Balance on Account:	£127.06	In Arrears
Last Payment Made:	£421.06	02-Jun-2023
Regular Account Charge:	£494.61	

Please refer to the following pages for the full statement.

Payment Options

By Allpay rent card - this card can be used at any paypoint outlet.
By Bank giro credit - use this pay in book at any bank.
By Standing Order - set up a regular payment through your bank.
By Telephone - call the office to pay by card.

Get in Touch

Designer Software Ltd, 11 Whittle Court, Davy Avenue, Milton Keynes, MK5 8FT
Phone: +44 (0)333 0021250
Email: info@designersoftware.co.uk
Website: www.homemaster.co.uk

HomeMaster, 11 Whittle Court, Davy Avenue, Milton Keynes, MK5 8FT
t: 0333 0021250 e: info@designersoftware.co.uk w: www.homemaster.co.uk

- Tenancy start date
- Invoice date
- In Arrears - Money owed
In Credit - Money not owed
- Rent / Fee change
- How to Pay
- BCHA Address

Tenant / Residents' Address

HOMEMASTER
HomeMaster, 11 Whittle Court, Davy Avenue, Milton Keynes, MK5 8FT
t: 0333 0021250 e: info@designersoftware.co.uk w: www.homemaster.co.uk

Statement of Account

Mr Adam Murdy
36 HomeMaster Street
Kenilworth
Hullbridge
PA14 KEN

Account Ref: 20012
Property Ref: DS1
Start Date: 24/09/2020
Housing Officer: Mr Chris Prime
Overall Balance: £127.06 In Arrears
As at: 27 June 2023

Date	Transaction Description	Payments	Charges	Balance
02/06/2023	Allpay - Cash	£421.06		£127.06 Arrears
01/06/2023	Rent Charge 01/06/2023 to 30/06/2023		£494.61	£548.12 Arrears
25/05/2023	Housing Benefit	£30.00		£53.51 Arrears
02/05/2023	Allpay - Cash	£421.06		£83.51 Arrears
01/05/2023	Rent Charge 01/05/2023 to 31/05/2023		£494.61	£504.57 Arrears
25/04/2023	Housing Benefit	£30.00		£9.96 Arrears
02/04/2023	Allpay - Cash	£421.06		£39.96 Arrears
01/04/2023	Rent Charge 01/04/2023 to 30/04/2023		£494.61	£461.02 Arrears
25/03/2023	Housing Benefit	£30.00		-£33.59 Credit
02/03/2023	Allpay - Cash	£421.06		-£3.59 Credit
01/03/2023	Rent Charge 01/03/2023 to 31/03/2023		£471.06	£417.47 Arrears
25/02/2023	Housing Benefit	£50.00		-£53.59 Credit
02/02/2023	Allpay - Cash	£421.06		-£3.59 Credit
01/02/2023	Rent Charge 01/02/2023 to 28/02/2023		£471.06	£417.47 Arrears
Totals:		£2245.30	£2425.95	

HomeMaster, 11 Whittle Court, Davy Avenue, Milton Keynes, MK5 8FT
t: 0333 0021250 e: info@designersoftware.co.uk w: www.homemaster.co.uk

Pages in this Statement: 2/2

Latest balance at the top

Money owed

Not owed

Carried forward

TENANTS' SURVEY

your feedback

Your views matter and hearing from you about the things that we do well and those things we could do even better is really important to us at BCHA.

To help us with this, we recently ran our regular resident satisfaction survey and through this you told us how things are for you and shared your ideas about how we can improve services.

Some of the things you said we do really well are:

- Value for money
- Listening to views
- Quality and safety of home
- Care and support

96% of residents are satisfied with our services, with a quarter of residents being very satisfied.

Over **88%** of residents in our housing for older people service were very satisfied that we provide you with a safe and secure home, with over **88%** either very or fairly satisfied that BCHA provides a home that is well maintained.

We know that we don't always get things right and some of the areas you said we could improve on include:

- Listening to and acting on your views
- Communications
- Explaining key documents such as rent statements

We have been using your feedback to develop a customer service improvement plan and this focusses on:

- Communications
- Explaining services and documents
- Reviewing how we handle complaints

As a thank you for taking part in the survey, everyone who took part was entered into a prize and there was a winner from each scheme.

Congratulations to our four prize winners and thank you to everyone who took part in the survey.





WHEN WE DON'T GET THINGS QUITE RIGHT

We recognise we don't always get it right and when this happens, we want to make it as easy as possible for you to tell us and for us to be able to put things right.

BCHA strives to have a positive complaint handling culture to make sure that we:

- Effectively resolve disputes
- Learn from these and improve the quality of the service we provide
- To have a positive relationship with our residents

If you are unhappy with our service or want to talk to us about a particular issue, then you can talk to a member of the team or get in touch via our main number **01234 321 400** or you can write to us at **enquiries@bchal.org**

We will always let you know the outcome of complaints or feedback and if we are not able to change how we do something for example because of policy or regulations we will explain why this is.

BCHA will always look to use complaints as an opportunity to identify issues and introduce positive changes in service delivery.

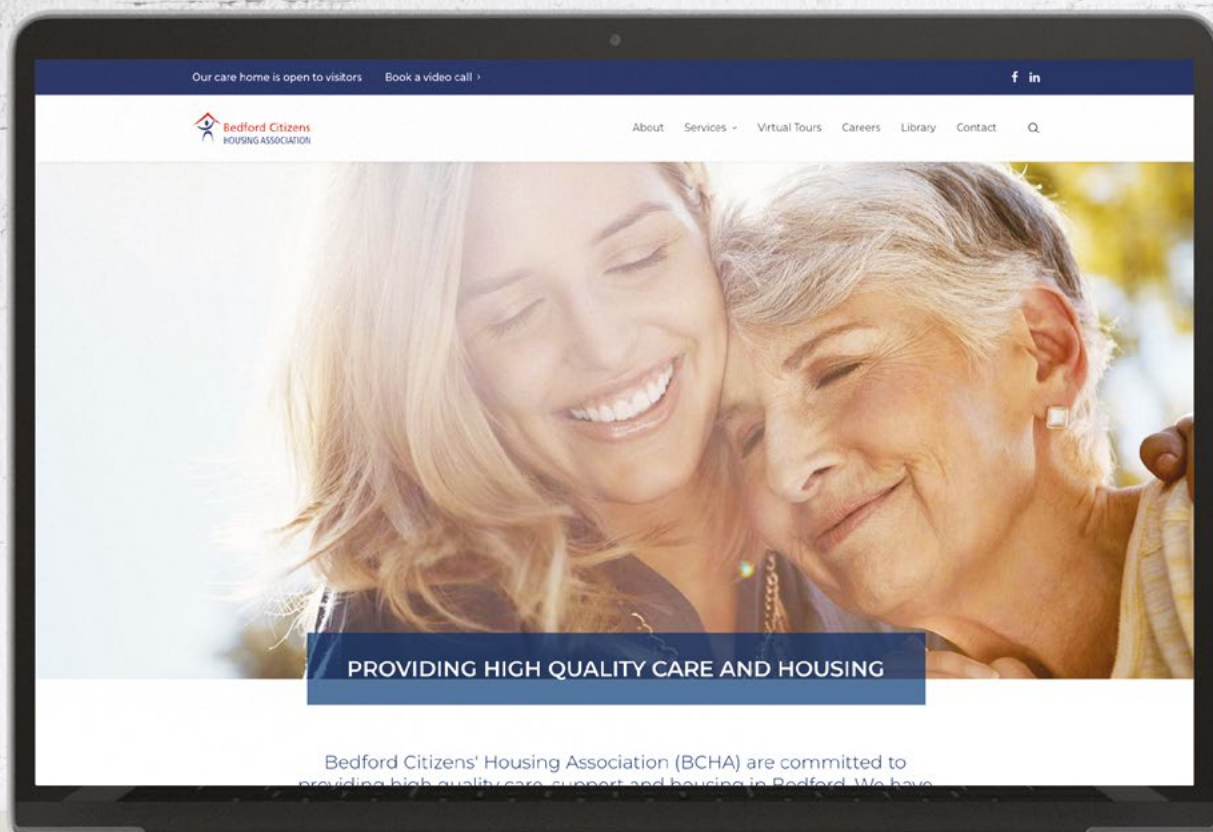
We have been working with our Board to review our approach to complaints and as a result we have updated our complaints policy and how we analyse and learn from what you tell us.

Tenant Involvement

If you're interested in finding out a bit more about resident involvement opportunities here at BCHA please contact **Lisa Brennan on 01234 321 400.**

NEW BCHA WEBSITE IS NOW LIVE!

We're very excited to share that our new website has gone live. The new site makes it easier for you to find publications like Citizens News and useful information about our services, as well as providing news articles and regular updates. Visit our new website at www.bchal.org



NEW BCHA TENANT PORTAL COMING SOON

Our new tenant portal will be launching this year and we will tell you more about this and how it will help you access services very soon.

HEALTH AND *wellbeing*



Friends for Life is a charity, working to support residents in care homes across Bedford.

Friends for Life understand the negative impact that loneliness can have on our wellbeing. They work with volunteers who join the team to offer friendship and company to care home residents.

The organisation was founded in 2007 and has grown from a small local initiative to a charity with over 50 volunteers, supporting 32 care homes across Bedfordshire.

They have recently expanded further, offering an Outreach Service. The aim is to build intergenerational relationships and provide residents with a variety of activities; they do this by connecting local care homes with community groups, businesses and schools.

The Bedfordshire Wellbeing Service

This service is available to residents who experience mental health issues including depression, anxiety, sadness and other issues which might be affecting you or holding you back.

The service provides one to one sessions and or group workshops. The Bedfordshire wellbeing service is based at Gilbert Hitchcock House on Kimbolton Road, Bedford. You can contact the service by phone on **01234 880 400** and the opening hours are 9am - 5pm.



Age UK Bedfordshire

Age UK Bedfordshire offers a wide range of services including information and advice, a telephone befriending service and accompanied shopping.


The team at Age UK are experienced and friendly and offer impartial, confidential information and advice on a wide range of issues.

This can be anything from referral to local services and groups through to more in depth advice, for example, on benefit entitlements, housing issues, health and social care needs and money worries.

They also assist in the completion of complex official benefit claim forms, Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Attendance Allowance (AA), and Universal Credit.

Age UK are based on Bromham Road in Bedford, but if you are unable to get to their office, then they may be able to arrange a home visit.

You can contact Age UK on **01234 360 510** or via Email: **enquiries@ageukbedfordshire.org.uk** or you can visit their website **www.ageuk.org.uk/bedfordshire**



CORONATION QUIZ TIME

1. How many rooms are in Buckingham Palace?
2. Which Scottish location did Queen Elizabeth II famously retreat to during the summer?
3. What is King Charles III's favourite flower?
4. Which member of the royal family purchased Frogmore House in 1790?
5. How many garden parties were held at Buckingham Palace during the Queen's reign?
6. Before George IV ascended the throne in 1820, what was Buckingham Palace formally known as?
7. How many dogs did the Queen own during her reign?
8. What year did the Queen and Prince Philip celebrate their Platinum Wedding Anniversary?
9. What year did Prince Harry and Meghan Markle get married?
10. What two crowns did the Queen wear on her Coronation in 1953?
11. Where do the royal family traditionally spend Christmas?
12. What is the oldest and largest occupied palace in the world?
13. How much did it cost to build Clarence House?
14. Who is the longest-reigning monarch in British history?
15. Which famous king lived at Hampton Court Palace?

12. Windsor Castle
13. £22,232, although this was more than double what had originally been estimated, the Royal Collection Trust reveal
14. Queen Elizabeth II
15. Henry VIII

7. More than 30 dogs
8. 2017
9. May 2018
10. St Edward's Crown and the Imperial State Crown
11. Sandringham House

1. 775 rooms
2. Balmoral Castle
3. Delphiniums
4. Queen Charlotte
5. 180
6. Buckingham House

THISTLE

CONTENTS INSURANCE



Have you got your home insurance in place? If not, why not have a look at the My Home Insurance Scheme for tenants and residents to insure the contents of their homes.

The My Home Contents Insurance Scheme is a specialist insurance scheme provided by Thistle Tenant Risks.

The policy covers the contents and personal belongings for tenants in social housing against loss or damage from specific events (for example, fire, theft or escape of water).

The My Home Scheme can cover most of your household goods and contents whilst in your home, such as furniture, TV, clothing, carpets, electrical items and general household goods.

It does not cover property used or held for business or professional purposes. Full details of the policy cover and exclusions are available on request before you apply for cover.

The insurance also covers replacement of external locks if your keys are lost or stolen and the contents of your fridge and freezer (excludes damage caused if the electricity supplier deliberately cuts off the supply to your home).

There are also additional cover options which you can add to the standard policy.

CONTACT DETAILS

General enquiries

Monday - Friday 9am - 5pm

0345 450 7288

myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk

Postal address

Thistle Tenant Risks,
Thistle Insurance Services Limited,
Southgate House, Southgate Street,
Gloucester, GL1 1UB





A copy of Citizens News in large font or different languages can be requested.

📍 1B Kimbolton Road, Bedford MK40 2PU

☎ 01234 321400

✉ enquiries@bchal.org

www.bchal.org

