



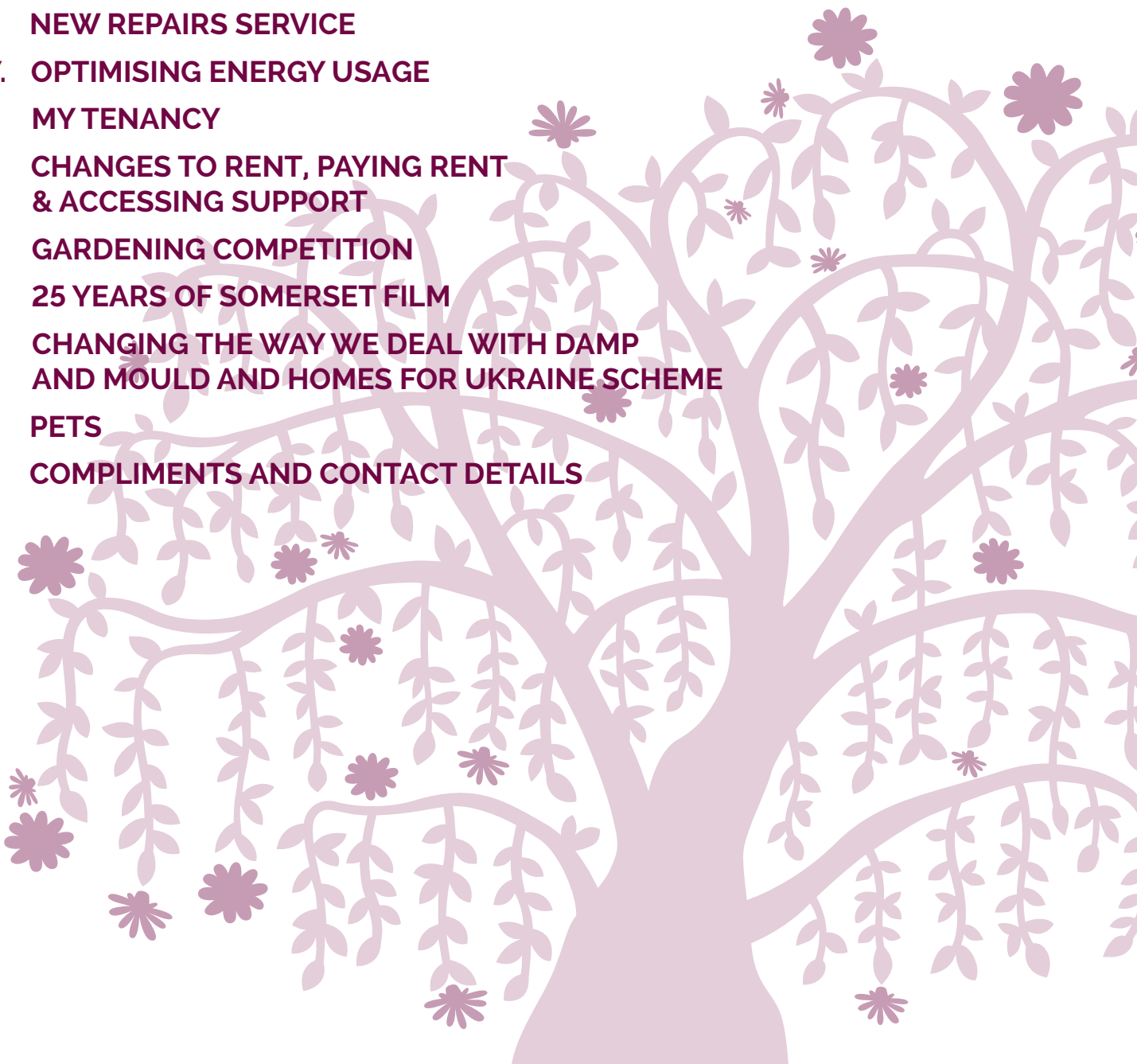
Willow Tree **Housing Partnership**

NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2022

CONTENTS

2. **OUR COLLEAGUES**
3. **STOKE ST GREGORY OPENING**
4. **NEW DEVELOPMENTS COMING SOON**
5. **NEW REPAIRS SERVICE**
- 6 & 7. **OPTIMISING ENERGY USAGE**
8. **MY TENANCY**
9. **CHANGES TO RENT, PAYING RENT
& ACCESSING SUPPORT**
10. **GARDENING COMPETITION**
11. **25 YEARS OF SOMERSET FILM**
12. **CHANGING THE WAY WE DEAL WITH DAMP
AND MOULD AND HOMES FOR UKRAINE SCHEME**
13. **PETS**
14. **COMPLIMENTS AND CONTACT DETAILS**



EXEC TEAM



DONNA JOHNSON
CEO



CATHERINE DAVIES-GALLAGHER
Finance Director



CALLUM TURNER
Head of Development & Asset Management



MARTIN CARNEY
Interim Head of Operations

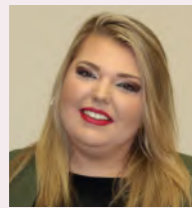


SUE SPARKS
Head of Corporate Services

THE TEAM



AIDAN TRUELOVE-SPIERS
Asset Project Surveyor



ALEX SMITH
Housing Officer



ANGELA DERRY
Shared Ownership & Rent Plus Officer



CADHLA GERAGHTY
Finance Manager



DAISY GRACE-WESTBROOK
Business Support Manager



DAWN KIRBY
Maintenance Officer



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Housing Officer



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Development Assistant



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Development Project Manager



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Rent & Income Management Officer



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MARK JOHNSON
Business Support Administrator



MOLLY RICHARDS
Income & Expenditure Officer



NEIL BUCKLAND
Asset Manager



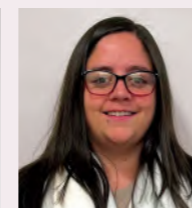
PAUL RAEBURN
Operations Manager



AMY BROWN
Income & Expenditure Officer



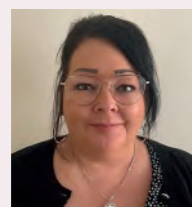
RIA GILLINGS
Trainee Development Project Officer



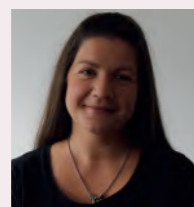
ROXANNE SWEETING
Business Support Administrator



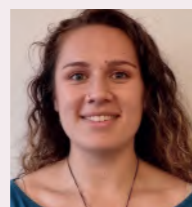
SARAH PURDY
Business Support Administrator



CLAIRE HOLYDAY
Business Support Administrator



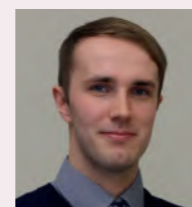
SARAH WOOLVEN-ALLEN
Housing Officer



SONJA LEWIS
Financial Analyst



STEVE AUSTEN
Housing Officer



WILL LLOYD-JONES
Finance Manager

STOKE ST GREGORY OPENING

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) is proud to have been part of the high quality new development at Broomfield Park, in the village of Stoke St Gregory, Somerset. In delivering this project WTHP have provided much needed accommodation to those who are in need and that live locally.

We held an opening ceremony in February which was attended by many who helped to make the scheme possible, including Parish Councillors, representatives from Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC), Otter Construction, and our employer's agent, NRP. Members of WTHP Board, the CEO and staff were also present to celebrate.

There are seven rented properties and two shared ownership properties with a range of home sizes to meet the needs of local people in the village. The whole scheme, built by Otter Construction, has been constructed with renewable energy heating systems and Electric Vehicle charging points have been supplied to all WTHP properties.

contributing further to our commitment to reducing carbon impacts of our developments.

CEO Donna Johnson said, "It is wonderful to see this scheme come to fruition and serving the local community, this is why we do what we do and this is a wonderful example of partnership working".

Cllr Fran Smith, Executive Member for Housing at SWTC, said: "The Council is committed to working with Parish and Town Councils, and housing associations to increase the number of affordable homes in our rural communities".

"More affordable homes in villages like these will make a real difference to the quality of life for some of our eligible residents; allowing local people of all ages to live and work in rural areas while supporting the creation of sustainable communities."





COMING SOON

QUINSTONE MEADOWS, CRAPSTONE

We are excited to announce this rural development situated on the edge of Crapstone, within Dartmoor National Park, Devon. The scheme will provide eight new affordable homes, including six for affordable rent and two shared ownership; a much needed mix to meet the demand of the local area. There are also thirteen open market homes for sale.

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) is dedicated to helping those in the rural low income areas to access homes that would otherwise be beyond their means and these homes will play a fundamental part in achieving this. Working to an anticipated completion date of December 2022, we are aiming to have residents in their new homes by Christmas.

The scheme will include 1 x 2 bed and 1 x 3 bed shared ownership homes. These will be marketed through Lang Town & Country and launched in the Spring.

Please register your interest in shared ownership with them on <https://www.langtownandcountry.com> or on **Telephone number - 01752 256 000.**

There will also be 2 x 1 bed maisonettes, 2 x 2 bed maisonettes, along with 1 x 2 bed house and a 1 x 3 bed house for affordable rent. The rented homes will be advertised on Devon Home Choice so interested parties should make sure they are registered - <https://www.devonhomechoice.com> or call us on **Telephone number - 01934 750 780.**



Through a collaboration with Classic Builders and West Devon Borough Council, WTHP are utilising the fabric first approach to create these high standard homes, which are affordable to rent as well as run and will include Electric Vehicle charging points.

HIGHWOOD GARDENS, TIVERTON

We were also delighted to be working with Burrington Estates on their scheme at Highwood Gardens, just off Post Hill in Tiverton. Burrington are providing WTHP with 1 x 2 bedroom house and 1 x 3 bedroom house which will be available for affordable rent. Burrington have 18 homes in total available for sale on the scheme.

The homes are due for completion at the end of June 2022. Anyone interested in one of the homes should register their interest with WTHP on:

Telephone number - 01934 750 780

and with Home Finder Somerset at -

<https://www.homefindersomerset.co.uk>



NEW REPAIRS SERVICE

Willow Tree Housing Partnership are looking to secure a new repairs service. The tender process is about to start, with new contracts commencing on October 1st 2022. Residents are central to this and in addition to carrying out a survey, they will be taking part in the interviews.

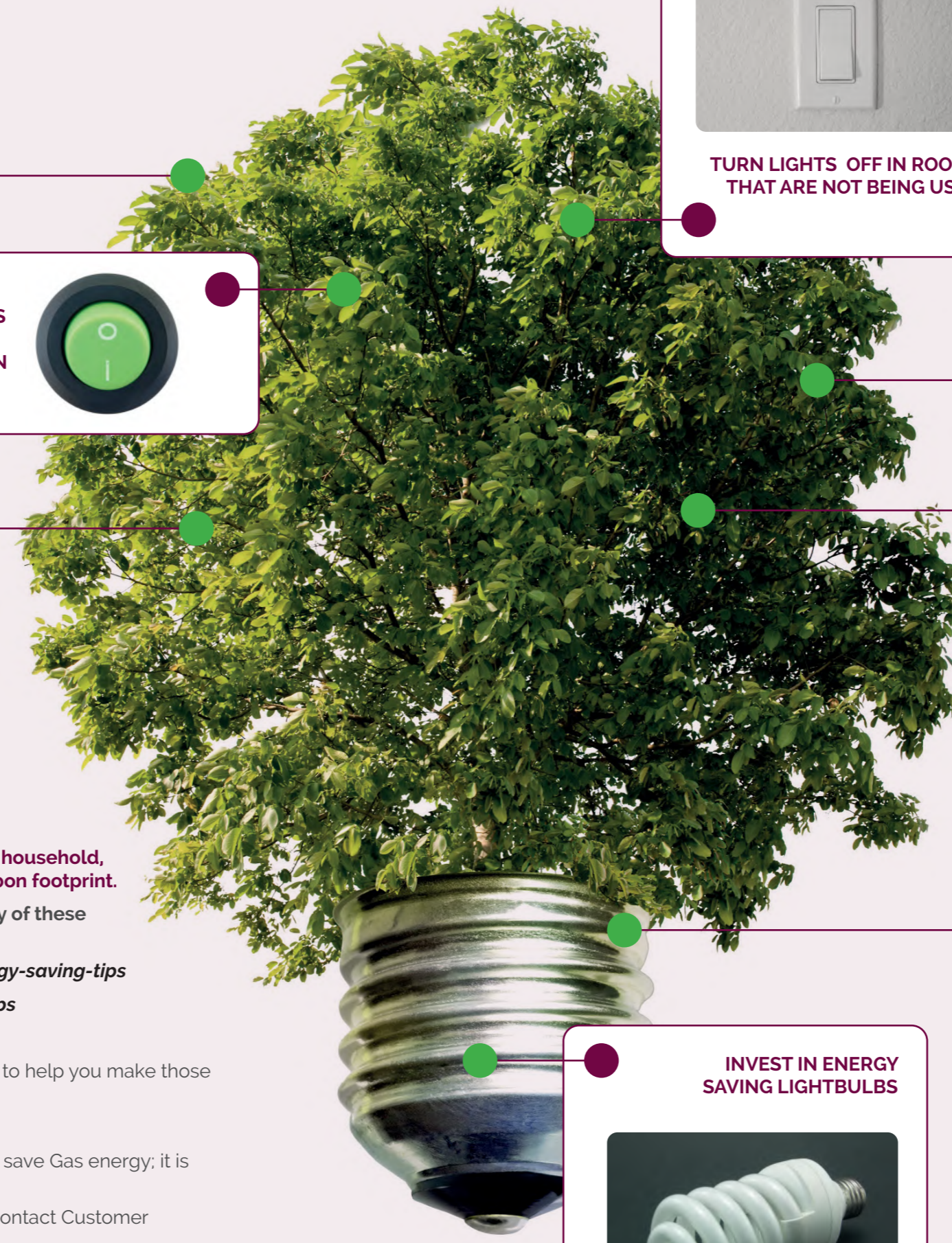
There will be one contract for heating and renewables across the whole area of operation. Day to day repairs will be broken into two contract areas: one that will cover Plymouth, Cornwall, West Devon, South Hams, Teignbridge and Torridge; whilst the other contract will cover the remaining areas where we have properties.

By splitting the day to day repairs into two contract areas, we aim to encourage a range of different sized contractors to bid. You will be updated on progress of the retender and be given all the information you need by the start of the new contracts.

If you would like any further information please contact Customer Services on **Telephone number - 01934 750 780** Alternatively, you could **Email us on - customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk**



**OPTIMISING ENERGY USAGE
– TIPS AND SIGNPOSTING**



**REQUEST A
SMART METER
FROM YOUR
GAS AND
ELECTRIC
SUPPLIER TO
DIGITALLY
TRACK YOUR
DAILY USAGE**

**TURN
APPLIANCES
OFF AT THE
WALL WHEN
NOT IN USE**

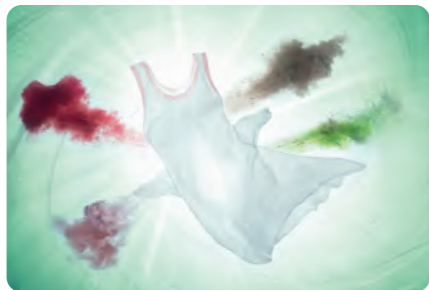


**TURN LIGHTS OFF IN ROOMS
THAT ARE NOT BEING USED**



**BUY MORE ENERGY
EFFICIENT APPLIANCES**

**DO A FULL LOAD OF
LAUNDRY, DON'T LEAVE IT
HALF FULL**



**ENSURE FURNITURE ISN'T
BLOCKING YOUR RADIATORS
OR STORAGE HEATERS**



It is crucial to know how much energy you are using within your household, you can make simple changes in your home to reduce your carbon footprint.

For more suggestions on how to save energy, you could visit any of these helpful websites

<https://www.moneysupermarket.com/gas-and-electricity/energy-saving-tips>

<https://www.smartenergygb.org/smart-living/energy-saving-tips>

<https://energysavingtrust.org.uk>

It's important to know how much electricity you are using, in order to help you make those small but crucial changes!

Making savings on Gas

Before you look at making any possible changes you can make to save Gas energy; it is important to know how your heating system operates.

If you require more information on this, please do not hesitate to contact Customer Services on **Telephone number - 01934 750 780** or drop us an

Email at - customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk

**INVEST IN ENERGY
SAVING LIGHTBULBS**



**BRING THE TEMPERATURE
DOWN ON YOUR
THERMOSTAT- A REDUCTION
OF JUST 1 DEGREE CAN MAKE A
REAL DIFFERENCE**



MY TENANCY

www.mytenancy.co.uk is an online portal where you can view information related to your tenancy and because this service is online, you can check whenever you like –24 hours/7 days a week.

As an existing tenant with Willow Tree Housing Partnership, you will have received an email with a link to the portal. All you need to do is click on the link, set your own password and an account will then be created for you.

Once you have completed setting up your account you will be able to:

- View your recent Rent Statement
- Make a payment
- Receive notifications on information documents that have been uploaded to your files
- View the latest Willow Tree Housing Partnership Newsletter
- Access repairs and emergency repair contact numbers
- View Tenant Handbook leaflets

If you are unsure if we have a current email address for you, or if you would like to provide a new email address to be able to access this service, please contact Customer Services on –

Telephone number - 01934 750 780 or via **Email at - customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk**



PAYING RENT & ACCESSING SUPPORT

At Willow Tree Housing Partnership we are aware how difficult it can be to make sure all your bills are paid on time. Your rent will be one of your main outgoings and is an important cost to keep on top of.

The best way to ensure you don't miss a rent payment, is to set up a Direct Debit. This enables your rent to come out of your bank account at an agreed date each month and you can rest easy, knowing that your rent will be paid on time.

You may however wish to pay your rent in other ways and we offer a range of methods, these include:

- Payment cards – these can be used at 'allpay outlets' and where you see the 'paypoint' sign; in shops, garages and post offices.
- A Standing Order – these can be arranged with your bank
- Pay online at www.allpayments.net or download the app.

Some of our tenants will receive benefit payments to assist with their rental obligations, either by way of Housing Benefit or via Universal Credit.

Please remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that these payments are being made and it is important to address any issues/respond to queries raised by benefit providers; to ensure that there is no break or delay in your payments being received.

We understand that sometimes people will have difficulty paying their rent due to personal circumstances such as - loss of employment, other income or changes with who lives at the property. There are also occasions when someone may have a range of debts, with rent arrears being just one. In these incidences, it is really important that you talk to us and keep those lines of communication open.

We can assure you that we will treat such matters sensitively and in confidence. We can offer our advice and support; we can also make referrals to other agencies who may be able to assist with debt management. We are here to help!

Please contact us by **Email on - customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk** or **Telephone number - 01934 750 780**

SEEKING SUPPORT

We all need a little help from time to time, whether that be with a debt, moving home or matters relating to our mental health. At Willow Tree Housing Partnership we understand that sometimes it is difficult to know where to turn. We take your wellbeing seriously and encourage those who may need some assistance to get in touch; we may be able to offer support, advice or guidance on a situation.



We work with a number of agencies and can make referrals to them if the support that you require is such that we cannot provide it ourselves. For example, we may make a referral to social services, mental health teams (including if there is a crisis) or support services if you are experiencing domestic abuse or the police if they are needed.

ANNUAL RENT CHANGE 2022/2023

Tenants of Willow Tree Housing Partnership will have received a letter from us about the change to the annual rent increase. Depending on how rent is paid, you may need to take some action as detailed below:

Direct Debit Payment – No action required as your payment will be adjusted automatically.

Standing Order Payment – You will need to contact your Bank to advise them of the new payment amount.

Housing Benefit – You will need to contact your local Housing Benefit department to advise them of your rent change.

Universal Credit – You will need to log onto your online account to advise of the change in your rent.

If you need any further information or clarification of how your rent is paid then please don't hesitate to contact us.



25 YEARS OF SOMERSET FILM

2022 marks Somerset Film's 25th anniversary and 19 years since their media centre in Bridgwater, The Engine Room, opened its doors. During that time, they have achieved incredible community projects and initiatives, film productions, art installations and exhibitions. They are an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation and are partnered with the British Film Institute to deliver BFI Film Academies to young people.

They are still wholeheartedly committed to their core mission of empowering individuals and communities through film and digital technology. Over the years,

Somerset Film have provided training and opportunities to help individuals gain valuable experience in creative industries and many of their Alumni have gone on to work in the media industry with great success.

They regularly hold activities, events and workshops at The Engine Room in Bridgwater and other locations across the county. As a charity, Somerset Film try to ensure most of what they offer is subsidised or free of charge to remove any boundaries for individuals wanting to access their training.

Somerset Film are also a fully functioning production house, producing content for local organisations and exploring a wide range of subjects through both factual and scripted filmmaking.

Somerset Film recently worked on a production with Willow Tree Housing Partnership, filming the development of their Bakers Field site in Brent Knoll over a number of years. Upon viewing the final cut of the film, Donna Johnson - Chief Executive of Willow Tree Housing Partnership - shared that "The cost compared to the added value that we get from Somerset Film is just phenomenal".



They are a team of high impact visual content specialists that have a wide range of experience and expertise in film production. Their specialists work with businesses, charities and organisations, using talent from across Somerset to create highly creative visual solutions that engage audiences.

Whether you're looking to produce a film for release or TV, or incorporating film or explainer video into your communications strategy, Somerset Film will help you make an impact that connects better and lasts.

If you are interested in learning more about Somerset Film and the activities they have coming up at The Engine Room, please visit:

www.somersetfilm.com



WATCH THIS SPACE!

Gardening Competition

Spring is a wonderful time when fresh new bulbs poke up through the soil and bring a lot of colour to our lawns, borders and containers.

In the Summer, we will be advertising our Annual Gardening Competition on Social Media - keep a look out on our Twitter and Facebook pages for it.

There will be the same categories as last year, Best Garden and Best Hanging Basket or Container.

The winners will be awarded a Gardening Voucher to spend on some more delights for their garden.

Take a look at the entries from last year for some inspiration.

CHANGING THE WAY WE DEAL WITH DAMP AND MOULD

Willow Tree Housing Partnership is looking at how we respond to reports of damp and mould.

In October 2021 the Housing Ombudsman issued a report "It's not lifestyle", which examined how social housing providers respond to damp and mould in their properties. Among its recommendations was for housing providers to carry out a review of their approach to the problem.

We held a meeting on February 17th 2022 involving 5 residents, which took a co-production approach. This highlighted that residents' experiences are of central importance to our understanding of the problem. We worked with this group to identify solutions to the problem and jointly agree a way forward.

An important outcome of this meeting was that improvements in communication with residents was needed, as well as providing them with regular updates on the progress of works. Moving forward, our initial response will be one where we work together with the resident to address damp and mould problems.

The group decided that we will appoint a Specialist who will visit residents upon any report of damp and mould. We also plan to carry out a survey which will be open to all residents, so we can pinpoint where mould is occurring and for example; identify an estate where there may be a problem with the buildings and take a co-ordinated approach.



The residents will be working with our staff to develop a survey which should be going out later this year. The results of this survey will help us identify as many properties with potential damp and mould issues, so that we can understand the problem and start tackling it.

If you would like any further information. **E-mail us on - customerservices@willowtreehousing.org.uk**

PETS

Willow Tree Housing Partnership (WTHP) recognises that pets can be a great source of companionship and are important for many families. While we understand that you may want to keep a pet we also have to consider the impact your pet may have on your neighbours and your property.

You will need to ask WTHP's permission before keeping a pet (as set out in your tenancy agreement).

We expect pet owners to be responsible, to look after their pets and to ensure that they do not cause a nuisance to neighbours or foul the communal areas.

Pets Policy

You are responsible for the behaviour of your pets at all times.

A maximum of one cat or dog will be allowed per property, except for flats owned by South Western Housing Society where access is through a communal area.

In flats, where dogs are permitted, only small dogs (under 10kg when adult) will be allowed. A list of suitable breeds is available on our website at - www.willowtreehousing.org.uk

Dogs must not be allowed to foul communal areas.

Dogs must be kept on a lead while in the vicinity of the property or in any communal area.

If you wish to fit a cat flap in your property you will need to seek WTHP's permission first. Cat flaps are not permitted in UPVC doors, communal doors or flat doors unless the door leads straight outside.

Caged or tanked animals, such as birds, fish, rodents or reptiles are permitted subject to approval.

(Please note that in some flats, where Tamar Housing Society is not the head landlord or that are owned by South Western Housing Society, pets are not permitted under any circumstances). Please speak to your Housing Officer before getting a pet to check if pets are allowed in your home.

Assistance Dogs

Assistance dogs are permitted, but would count as the one pet per property. For flats, the size restriction of a maximum of 10 kg is waived for assistance dogs, so long as evidence is produced to confirm their status.

Poultry

Keeping poultry may be permitted but only in properties with a larger garden and only in limited circumstances. If you would like to keep poultry you must contact us. You will also need to check any local bylaws and planning restrictions.



IMPORTANT NEWS FOR SOCIAL HOUSING & SHARED OWNERSHIP TENANTS

The government is keen for social renters and shared owners to take part if they want to. The good news is, that tenants can take part in the scheme without it affecting their benefits.

If you would like to find out more about the scheme then go to <https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/>

You may also find their FAQs page useful: www.gov.uk/.../homes-for-ukraine-scheme

As humans we all have a desire to feel safe and have a roof over our heads, this scheme enables us to get involved and provide somewhere safe for those who need it.

HOMES FOR UKRAINE SCHEME

Many people want to help those who are fleeing the conflict in the Ukraine. The government has launched the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme to enable people living in the UK to host Ukrainian individuals or families for six months.



Willow Tree Housing Partnership

Tenants daughter

"Thank you so much for all of your help today, it has really been appreciated by all of us. Please can our compliments be passed on to your Manager - your customer service and urgent attention to this matter has helped reduce a very stressful situation and I feel that you should be recognised for going above and beyond"

Ms S

"I am very happy and impressed with the repair carried out and found the operatives were very polite"

Mrs H

"Keith the Engineer who carried out the work did a first class job and had an eye for detail. He even cleaned up after himself each day"

Ms T

"One of our residents wanted to say a special thank you to Claire in our Business Support Team, in relation to some drainage issues at the property. She said that thanks to Claire, she now has Dale attending her property next week and she wanted to thank her for sorting all this out so efficiently and taking the time to listen"

Mr C

"I would like to thank Andy from Dale. He repaired our toilet cistern earlier today. Very polite, friendly and efficient. Job well done"

Mrs S

"Just spoke to our customer and she said that Andy from Gregor Heating has just attended to carry out the boiler service. She said that he has done a brilliant job, was very professional, thorough and she was really pleased with the service received from him"

Somerset Office

Eastbridge House
Pill Road
Rooksbridge
Somerset
BS26 2TN



**southwestern
housing
society**
Delivering More

Devon Office

Studio 5 - 11
Millbay Road
Plymouth
Devon
PL1 3LF



**TAMAR
HOUSING**

Telephone number: 01934 750 780

Telephone number: 01752 250 902

South Western Housing Society Registered with the Homes & Community Agency L2424. Registered as a co-operative and community benefit Society with Charitable Status 12664R.

Tamar Housing Society Registered with the Homes & Community Agency L2209. Registered as a co-operative and community benefit Society with Charitable Status 17390R

Why not join in on social media, give our pages a like? We are active on Facebook and Twitter with updates on the work we do and regular posts with hints and tips on resident safety #maintenancemonday, #wellbeingwednesday and #safetysaturday

Is there something you'd like to see, let us know!

www.willowtreehousing.org.uk



Willow Tree Housing Partnership



@willowThousing

DELIVER & GROW