

TenantVoice^{magazine}

Summer 2026



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for flats in
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CHELTEMHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Housing services



**QUALITY
HOMES**



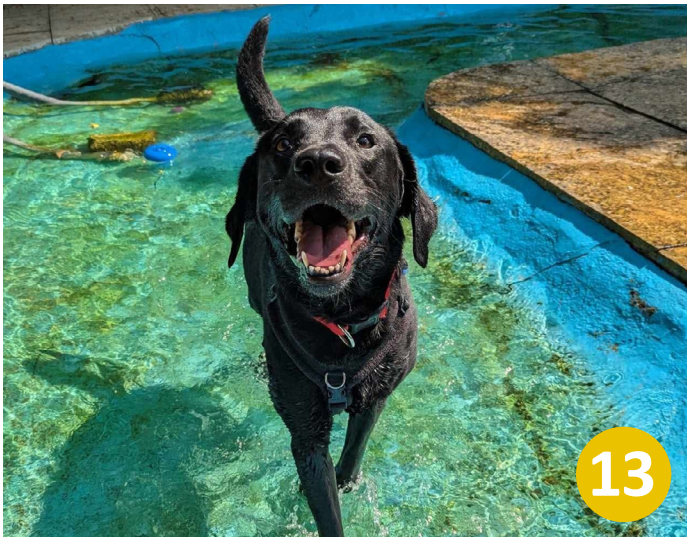
**SAFE AND
STRONG
COMMUNITIES**



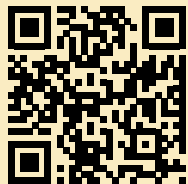
**LISTENING
AND TAKING
ACTION**

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Did you realise you can watch the **Cheltenham Borough Council YouTube channel** for live meetings or to catch up on previous meetings. Scan the QR code or search for us @CheltenhamBC



Foreword



Welcome to the summer edition of **Tenant Voice**. We want to share with you the news that £1.27m worth of work to improve three blocks of flats in Hesters Way and St Peter's gets underway this summer (see page 4). As part of the work the flats will benefit from a new exterior insulation which will not only transform the look of the buildings but help improve energy efficiency.

Supporting tenants and helping you with your household finances is an area our teams dedicate a lot of time too. It's uplifting to learn of the success of our benefits, money and advice team who've helped secure £1.8m through benefit checks, Universal Credit advice and charity funding and grants (see page 8).

We are aware of companies operating in the area who are encouraging you to make housing disrepair claims. We take a closer look at the issue (see page 9) and while pursuing legal

action may be an option, we would encourage you to make contact with the team in the first instance to give us an opportunity to put things right.

You've helped cook up a storm with our community cook book which is full of simple yet delicious recipes from around the world (see page 14).

Finally, we want to bring housing services closer to you by expanding our customer-facing presence. We have some ideas how to do this but want to hear your views (see pages 15 and 16).

Rowena and Claire

Cllr Rowena Hay,
Leader Of Cheltenham Borough Council.

Claire Hughes,
Director of Governance, Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive).

Cllr Flo Clucas, cabinet member for housing and customer services



Hello, I'm Flo, a Cheltenham councillor with special responsibility for housing.

In May the borough council held an election. Afterwards there was a cabinet reshuffle. Thankfully, I remain cabinet lead for housing and customer services. That's important to me because I believe passionately about housing.

I want to make our housing services as good as they can be and that's why it's important that you have your say and help us in our journey.

If you want to help improve the lives of our tenants please do get involved.



Major £1.27m improvement works announced for flats



Work will start this summer on providing new insulation wraps to three blocks of flats in Hesters Way and St Peter's as part of a £1.27m improvement programme.

Once completed the buildings will not only have a fresh, contemporary new look but they'll also be much more energy efficient, potentially resulting in household energy savings.

Three five-storey blocks at Arle Road and Grevil Road, both off Princess Elizabeth Way, St Peter's and Orchard Way, also off Princess Elizabeth Way, Hesters Way will be refurbished as part of the works programme.

Contractors Cardo (Wales and West) are expected to complete the work this winter. Other repairs include upgrading of bathroom ventilation, flue pipe extensions and repairs to concrete walls and balconies. Scaffolding will also be erected and the existing wall insulation will be removed.



Before and after images of the flats at Arle Road, Grevil Road and Orchard Way.

Helen McEgan, operations manager, said: "Alongside the new insulation work, we're also carrying out a range of essential repairs and upgrades to ensure homes remain safe, comfortable and fit for the future.

"We fully appreciate that work of this nature does cause an inconvenience and we have taken a number of steps to minimise this disruption as much as possible. However, we would like to apologise in advance for any disturbance and inconvenience."

Party in the Park is back

More details have been released as excitement builds ahead of this summer's Party in the Park at Pittville Park on Wednesday August 5.

The family fun event, returning for the third year, is free and packed with activities for little ones and their parents.

Live music, dance and theatre performances by children are just some of the highlights of this year's programme.

Starting with a quiet hour from 10am, offering a calm start for those who would benefit from a quieter environment, with suitable activities available during this time. The full programme then kicks in from 11am - 5pm.



Children enjoying last summer's Party in the Park in Pittville.

Lucky residents sneak peak of Wilson Museum

Lucky residents have had a guided tour of the Wilson Art Gallery and Museum.

The visit, part of a wellbeing club called Enrich, involved handling rare and interesting items as well as learning how museum staff acquire and catalogue new items.

As part of the visit residents also shared their experiences of living in Cheltenham which museum staff will use to help shape future exhibitions.

Enrich holds sessions at Goldfoot House, Griffith Avenue, on Tuesday mornings between 11am – 1pm. Feel free to drop in.



Residents visit The Wilson Museum.

Looking after our homes together

Our homes are places to feel safe, warm and happy. That's why our housing services team is here to help when something needs fixing.

If something breaks or stops working, it's always best to tell us as soon as you can. Reporting repairs early helps stop small problems turning into big ones. You won't get in trouble for asking for help - that's what we're here for.

Helen Sheriff, team leader, said: "Everyone deserves to feel safe and comfortable in their home. If something isn't working, please let us know as soon as you can."

"The sooner you tell us, the sooner we can help"



Ash Creswell, supervisor, discusses repairs with a tenant.



Louis Fletcher, multi-skill operative, repairing a bathroom tap.

"Small problems are often much easier to put right if we know about them early. For example, a small leak under a sink might just need a simple repair, but if it's left for weeks it could lead to damp, damaged flooring or even affect neighbouring properties."

"The sooner you tell us, the sooner we can help, and in many cases we can prevent a minor issue from becoming a much bigger one. You won't get into trouble for asking us to fix something - that's exactly what we're here for."

Top five most common repairs

- Lock changes: People locking themselves out.
- Electrical sockets: Broken, damaged or swapped back to the original fitting.
- Shower hose or head: Broken or damaged through wear and tear.
- Blocked drain or sink: Food waste, wipes or blocked through soil and debris.
- Internal doors: Damaged or broken.



An example of our housing.

Insure your home

Remember, you need to purchase your own home content insurance. Did you know that we administer Aviva home contents insurance exclusively for our tenants and leaseholders? This low-cost insurance offers benefits that beat the normal high street insurers. Benefits include:

- New for old cover.
- No excess.
- No increase to premium payments if you make a claim.
- Locks and keys.
- Accidental damage to glass in doors and windows.



For more information on insurance email home.insurance@cheltenham.gov.uk
To notify of a repair needed in your home please phone **0800 408 0000** or email housing@cheltenham.gov.uk

Supporting families and tenants through the cost-of-living crisis



Our team has helped secure £1.86m for some of the most vulnerable families and tenants in our community.

This money has helped households manage rising living costs, sustain their tenancies and improve financial stability during a particularly challenging time.

Most of the money comes from securing legally entitled benefits although tens of thousands of pounds have also been awarded from charities and grants.

Lianne Hearn, benefits and money advice team leader, said: “The team continues to make a significant difference to the lives of so many people in Cheltenham and we are committed to supporting tenants ensuring that those most in need receive the help and advice they are entitled to.”

The service, which is free and confidential, offers support with:

- Navigating the welfare system.
- Benefit entitlement checks.
- Universal Credit advice.
- Appeals and reconsiderations.
- Budgeting and energy advice.
- Backdated claims.
- “Better off in work” calculations.

Drop-in sessions are available at:

- Hesters Way Community Resource Centre, Cassin Drive, GL51 7SU.
- Oakley Community Resource Centre, Clyde Crescent, GL52 5QJ.

Sessions in the community are available at:

- Cheltenham Job Centre every **Wednesday 10am – 2pm.**
- Hesters Way Resource centre alternate **Thursdays 10am – 12pm.**
- Ron Smith Pavillion in Spring bank **alternate Thursdays 9am – 11am.**



For more information visit our website and search for benefits, money and advice, email BMA@cheltenham.gov.uk or call (freephone): **0800 408 0000.**

Meet the team: Lianne Hearn

Lianne Hearn and the benefit and money advice team are making a positive impact on tenants’ and families’ lives.

As benefit and money advice team leader, Lianne Hearn and the team have been behind many initiatives that have driven life-changing improvements to tenants and their families.

The school uniform scheme has seen 91 families use the voucher scheme in the past year. The team developed the programme in partnership with the local school uniform supplier - enabling families to visit the shop and purchase uniforms without being seen as needing a hand-out.

The team also delivered the council’s home starter kits, which were offered to individuals moving into their homes for the first time. They contained basic items such as bedding, towels, cutlery and crockery, as well as a slow cooker, air fryer or microwave. The scheme was so successful that it used the full allocation of funding within six months.

Under Lianne’s leadership in 2025-26, the council’s benefits and money advice team also secured more than £1.8m (see page 8) in legally entitled benefits and some charitable grants.

The team’s work has been recognised after Lianne won an award at the Inside Housing Management Awards 30 marking innovation, positive change and excelling services.



The team work from Hesters Way Community Resource Centre.



Lianne Hearn, benefit and money advice team leader.

To find out more please email tes@cheltenham.gov.uk or contact **0800 408 0000 (freephone).**

Keeping your home safe, warm and well-maintained

Did you know we sometimes visit homes to do a survey? A survey is when we access your home to check that everything is safe, warm and working properly.

We may check things like windows, heating, kitchens, bathrooms and walls. This helps us make sure homes meet the right standards and stay comfortable for you and your family.

The survey is important because it helps us spot problems early before they become bigger. It also helps us plan future improvements, so homes can stay in good condition for many years.

To do this, we need access to all our properties. Our friendly team will work carefully and respectfully while visiting your home.

Our team will arrange a visit with you and you'll receive confirmation of this by letter through the post. **For more information including any queries or questions please contact us on 0800 408 0000.**



Examples of our housing that we are accessing to map repairs.



Terry Pyle-Corney is a building claims surveyor and is keen to help you keep your home safe and warm.

"You said, we did"



- Your tenant handbook has been refreshed, we've listened and engaged with the tenant panel to ensure that it's easier to read and simpler for you to use.
- Engagement with young residents, providing them with opportunities to develop their skills to become youth mentors and act as a voice for young people in shaping communities in Cheltenham.
- Provided more opportunities for older adults to shape services so we can make sure we're meeting their needs.
- Reached out to residents in St Paul's to get their views on how we can tackle anti-social behaviour.

Before you sign up to a claims company, give us a call

If you need a repair in your home, our housing services team should always be your first port of call. We're here to help and will work with you to get problems sorted as quickly as possible.

You may see adverts, social media posts or people knocking on doors encouraging you to make housing disrepair claims. These companies are businesses and may promise compensation or quick results, but they can sometimes charge fees or take part of any money awarded. Starting legal action too early can also slow down repairs and make issues harder to resolve.

Before agreeing to anything, please speak to us first. In most cases, we can deal with repairs directly and support you through the process.



You can report repairs online, by phone or through our website:

www.cheltenham.gov.uk and searching for 'repairs and maintenance service.' Alternatively you can call us on **0800 408 0000**.

If you are unhappy with a service you have received, please tell us through our complaints process, also on our website by searching 'comments and complaints,' so we have the chance to put things right.



Housing colleagues Helen McEgan, operations manager and colleague Lucy McDermott, resource planning assistant (disrepair), are on hand to help handle repairs to your home.

Keep hallways clear and safe

In blocks of flats and shared buildings, hallways are important escape routes. If there is a fire, everyone must be able to get out quickly and safely.

Leaving bikes, pushchairs, shoes, bags or boxes in communal hallways can be dangerous. Clutter can block the way, cause trips and falls and help fire spread faster. Smoke can also build up around objects, making it harder to escape.

New fire safety laws now say that keeping clutter in communal hallways is not allowed. This means items left in shared areas must be removed to help keep everyone safe.

Fire crews also need clear space to move equipment and help people in an emergency.

You can help by keeping all shared hallways clean and tidy. Store personal belongings inside your home or in the correct storage areas.

A clear hallway could save lives. By working together, we can make our buildings safer for everyone.



Hallways that are clear are safe.

Keep safe this summer



Trampolines, paddling pools and garden furniture can be hazardous.

Gardens are great places for families to enjoy, but everyday items can become dangerous if not used safely. Trampolines can cause serious injuries, especially without safety nets or adult supervision. In high winds, trampolines, garden furniture and play equipment can also blow over, causing damage to homes, fences and nearby property.

Paddling pools can be another hidden risk. Toddlers can drown in only a few centimetres of water, so children should never be left unattended near a pool, even for a moment. Pools should always be emptied after use.

Before installing large garden equipment such as trampolines, sheds or pools, tenants should contact us for advice and to check any tenancy rules. Taking simple precautions can help keep children, neighbours and homes safe all-year round.

You can contact us by emailing housing@cheltenham.gov.uk or phoning **0800 408 0000** (available 24 hours a day for housing enquiries and emergencies).

Helping hand for animal shelter

Builders have swapped bricks for biscuits by helping out at a popular animal shelter.

The team rolled up their sleeves to carry out repairs at Cheltenham Animal Shelter, Gardners Lane, off Swindon Road.

The voluntary work, carried out as part of our social value promise with building contractors Speller Metcalfe, included cleaning of the dog sensory garden, mowing, weeding and planting.

The dog sensory garden is designed to provide enrichment to the dogs, so they are stimulated. It contains plants and activities such as a tunnel and house that the dogs enjoy. It also contains a pool which some dogs enjoy on hot summer days.

Speller Metcalfe are currently building 24 new homes at 320 Swindon Road.

Cheltenham Animal Shelter cares for dogs, cats, rabbits and other pets that may be lost, poorly treated or without a home. The shelter helps animals get healthy again and finds them loving new families.



Mowglie enjoys the garden.

Albie enjoys the doggie paddling pool.



Builders joined our team to make improvements to animal shelter.

Bright and colourful pictures lift building site

Bright and colourful pictures designed by children have been emblazoned on boards surrounding a new building site.

The drawings, designed by youngsters of Gardner's Lane Primary School, have been displayed on the boards surrounding 320 Swindon Road development. The impressive design features important safety construction information.

The work was part of a social value promise between Cheltenham Borough Council and construction company Speller Metcalfe who are currently building 24 new homes at 320 Swindon Road. As part of the development a mixture of apartments and houses for social rent and shared ownership will be built.



Welcoming pupils from Gardners Lane Primary School to our 320 Swindon Road development.



Children's drawings on the hoardings of the building site.

Cooking up a storm

Families from St Paul's have been cooking up a storm as part of classes aimed at introducing the pleasures of cooking.

Josie has been teaching children and their parents how to make simple, nutritious and low-cost dishes.

Popular dishes including mac and cheese, chicken curry and stir fry have all been on the menu.

Monthly family cooking sessions with Lets Cook with Josie, form part of the Energy afterschool health and wellbeing project running on Wednesdays at St Paul's Community Hub, in Manser Street, from 3:45pm – 5:15pm. Sessions are held during term-time and in the school holidays.

For more information visit the Facebook page 'St Paul's and St Peter's' or email ali.english@cheltenham.gov.uk.

(Left to right) Maddie, mum Hayley, Josie Houghton from Let's Cook with Josie, Phoebe and Evelyn.



(Left to right) Dad Howard enjoying cooking sessions with daughter Bramble.



Cooking with love

We're teaming up with you to share recipes that have been tried, tested and loved by our community.

Our community cookbook will feature some of your favourite foods reflecting the wide range of cultural influences in our communities and cooking.

From Jamaican jerk chicken and Polish dumplings to spaghetti bolognese and the humble cottage pie, the most important ingredient of all for this cook book is a love of food.

Eyvonne has submitted her Jamaican jerk chicken for the book. She explained: "I love Jamaican jerk chicken. It's really easy to make and it tastes delicious. I hope people enjoy making it."

Ali English, community support officer, added: "We want to create a cookbook that has recipes from our own community. They are very simple to make and are packed with flavours."

The community cookbook is currently being compiled ready for print later in the year. It will be made available via St Paul's Community Hub in Manser Street. The team will also be sharing their secret recipes at this year's Cheltenham Literature Festival in October when they will take to the stage to demonstrate a recipe and share the new book.



Eyvonne and Jenny are helping create a new community cook book.

Help us shape your housing services – we'd love your feedback

We're currently reviewing our housing services to make sure they continue to meet your needs and deliver the best possible experience for you and your family.

As part of this, we're inviting you to share your thoughts on how we support you. Let us know what's working well and where we could do even better. Your feedback will help us understand what matters most to you and ways we can improve our services going forward.

You can get involved by:

- Completing our quick online survey (see back page) for a chance to win a £100 shopping voucher.
- Finding a CBC housing services member of staff at one of the following events:

Some of the sessions taking place over the summer:

- Party in the Park, Pittville Park, Wednesday 5 August, 10am - 5pm.
- Benefit and money advice school uniform event, Oasis Centre, Hesters Way, Thursday 11 August, 9:30am - 12pm.
- Gardners Lane Children's centre family day, Gardners Lane, Tuesday 18 August, 12 - 3pm.



For more information or a full list of upcoming dates visit our website at: cheltenham.gov.uk/cbc-housing-services/have-your-say email community.involvement@cheltenham.gov.uk or call us on 0800 408 0000.

Need to see us?

We're currently reviewing our housing services to make sure they continue to meet your needs and deliver the best possible experience for you and your family.

From October, we'll be expanding our customer-facing presence bringing housing services closer to you making it easier to speak to staff face-to-face.



Oakley Community Resource Centre.

We'll be providing regular drop-in sessions at locations across Cheltenham including Hesters Way Community Resource Centre employment and training room, Barlow Road, Oakley Community Resource Centre digi den, Popes Close, Wallace House, Lynworth Court, Gilbert Ward Court, St Pauls Community Hub and the main reception at the Municipal Offices.

These drop-in sessions will be the main way to access face-to-face support for general enquiries. You'll be able to speak with a member of our team, ask questions, seek advice and discuss routine housing matters.



Hesters Way Community Resource Centre.

If you need more detailed support, help with a specific case or assistance from a particular team, we'll arrange an appointment to ensure you receive the right support from the person best placed to help.

Details of drop-in locations, dates and times will be published nearer to October.

You can also contact us by emailing:

housing@cheltenham.gov.uk calling 0800 408 0000, or visiting our website at cheltenham.gov.uk/cbc-housing-services

Have your say!

Your voice matters

Help shape the future of your home and services.

We want to know:

- ✓ What matters most to you.
- ✓ How we're doing.
- ✓ What you'd like to see next.

 Takes just 5 minutes

Share your view today and help us improve the way we deliver our services.

You'll be automatically entered into our prize draw to win a **£100 Shopping voucher**.

If you would like a paper copy of this survey call us on **0800 408 0000**, email **community.involvement@cheltenham.gov.uk**

Competition terms and conditions are available at:
cheltenham.gov.uk/cbc-housing-services/have-your-say



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