

HOME!

**CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL
FOR TENANTS AND LEASEHOLDERS**



ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18



CITY OF
Lincoln
COUNCIL

Together, let's deliver
Lincoln's ambitious future



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RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT CHECK:



The Annual Report was created in partnership with our editorial panel made up of tenants and our production team.



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City of Lincoln Council – Housing

WELCOME TO THE 2017/18 ANNUAL REPORT

Last year we launched Vision 2020 that sets out our priorities for City of Lincoln Council and the city. One of these is 'Let's deliver quality housing' and this report will show you how we have been achieving this.

We have made good progress in a number of areas of housing and in particular have been working hard to address the lack of affordable housing in the city, as this is a key issue for residents.

Vision 2020 states that we will deliver and facilitate at least 400 council enabled new homes by 2020. Supporting the Local Plan, these will be built across the city by both the council and other housing providers and will be built to various sizes, types and tenures to meet housing need. In 2017/18 we made a start on the programme and completed the building of 12 properties at Blankney Crescent.

Over the next year we plan to build 172 properties at several locations around the city.

The report includes information about how well we have performed as your landlord from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018. Members of Lincoln Tenants' Panel have interviewed managers to find out how their service has performed and how they plan to improve their service in the future.

However, it's not just about what we have achieved as a council, which is why we have included articles about some of the fantastic communities we have in the city. Their hard work and dedication help to make Lincoln a better place for everyone to live.

In conclusion a big thank you goes to Councillor Peter West who was the Portfolio Holder of Housing during the period covered by the report and has now stepped down after many years of involvement with housing in the city.

*Cllr. Donald Nannestad,
Portfolio Holder for Housing*

IT HAS BEEN ANOTHER BUSY YEAR FOR LINCOLN TENANTS' PANEL (LTP) AND WE HAVE ONCE AGAIN WORKED HARD TO ENSURE YOUR VIEWS ARE REPRESENTED AT THE COUNCIL. OVER THE LAST YEAR THE PANEL HAS:

- Helped the council to achieve accreditation for its anti-social behaviour service
- Monitored performance on areas including, rent, repairs and customer services
- Discussed all housing related Executive Committee reports and informed the decision making process
- Attended Housing Scrutiny Committee meetings to ensure tenants' views were considered
- Carried out activities to recruit more tenants and to publicise the work of the panel.

The year ahead is going to be an important one because of the Housing Green Paper that was recently launched by the government. It contains proposals on a number of areas that will affect residents and LTP will make sure your voices are heard at the heart of government.

At a local level we will continue to review all housing policy changes put forward by the council to ensure these are right for residents. We also plan to keep holding service areas to account where performance has been falling short of target during 17/18.

One area of focus will be the council's performance around dealing with anti-social behaviour, as we know this is a priority for residents. The service greatly improved last year, however we will continue to monitor and make sure the improvements from the ASB accreditation are implemented.

On an estate level, the panel is aware that residents are concerned about the number of untidy gardens and how these make their neighbourhoods look uncared for. In response to this we will look into the council's policy on dealing with untidy gardens and monitor how effective this is with tackling the problem.

I hope you enjoy reading this report and if you would like to join the panel please contact christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk or telephone 01522 873398.

Debbie Rousseau,
Chair of Lincoln Tenants' Panel

REPAIRS



WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE	HOW DID WE DO IN 2017/18?	WHAT WAS OUR TARGET?	DID WE ACHIEVE OUR TARGET?
All repairs carried out within timescale	97.5%	97.5%	● ● ●
Emergency repairs completed on time	100%	99.5%	● ● ●
Average number of days to complete a repair	7 days	8 days	● ● ●
Tenant satisfaction with repairs surveyed after work complete	96.22%	95%	● ● ●
Getting repairs right first time	90.21%	90%	● ● ●
Average time to re-let a property	27 days	25 days	● ● ●

MICK BARBER & CHRISTINE LAMMING CAUGHT UP WITH OUR MAINTENANCE MANAGER, MATT HILLMAN, TO FIND OUT HOW WELL WE HAVE PERFORMED IN TERMS OF REPAIRING OUR PROPERTIES AND HOW HE PLANS ON IMPROVING THE SERVICE.

Q) What service does your team provide?

- A) We carry out all day-to-day repairs, excluding heating work, that are the council's responsibility. This includes, plumbing, joinery, bricklaying, plastering, painting and electrical work. The team also deals with properties that have been vacated and refurbishes them so they are ready to let to the next tenants.

Q) What's been the biggest achievements for repairs?

- A) We have committed to an extensive training plan within the service which has seen our repairs team and office staff undertake several key training programmes. This includes increasing our multi-skilled repairs operatives, who can complete lots of different jobs, by seven employees.

In addition to the improved service, we have also managed to reduce costs and made a surplus for the second year running. For example we have set up in-house stores that are run by Travis Perkins. This arrangement allows us to save money and makes it easier for the workforce to get the parts they need. Any surplus we make goes back into providing services for council tenants.

Q) How well has the repairs service performed?

- A) Housing Repairs Service continues to improve performance across the board and last year we met all of our targets, apart from void re-let times. Most notable is our first time fix rate which is the best it has ever been, with over 93% of repairs being completed at the first visit.

Q) What do you want to improve in the future?

- A) Currently, when installing windows we must pay to have the completed work inspected and signed off. Therefore we are working towards getting FENSA accreditation which will mean we can sign off our own window installations. It will help to further lower costs and make the process faster, saving staff time.

LAST YEAR WE CARRIED OUT:

3,335 EMERGENCY REPAIRS

1,474 URGENT REPAIRS

17,602 NON-URGENT REPAIRS



TOWER ACTION GROUP (TAG)

IN THE MID-2000s, THE RESIDENTS OF THE TOWER ESTATE FELT THE AREA HAD BECOME RUN DOWN AND HAD LOST ITS SENSE OF COMMUNITY.

It was this that drove the residents to set up the Tower Action Group. Their aim? To make Tower a community again!

The first task was to find a venue to hold activities because Tower didn't have a community centre. The residents worked with the council and in 2010 took over the lease of a former flat on Roman Pavement. It was agreed to let them use this on a rent free basis.

Since then they have set up several different activities for the residents including bingo, daily coffee mornings and a newly set up session where anyone can come along to learn to knit and sew.

Last year was again very busy for TAG and they included 50 residents a week in activities. Some of the activities TAG helped to arrange included:

- Arranging a coach trip to the seaside
- Organising table top sales
- Holding the knitting and craft club every Friday
- Signposting and supporting individuals with any queries they may have
- Helping residents by being there to listen and talk to others
- Working with police, councillors and the council to tackle issues on the estate
- Creating new promotional leaflets for the office.

Thanks to the work completed by Tower Action Group, the estate has now vastly improved and a sense of community has returned. If you would like to join the Tower Action Group or find out more about community groups in your area, please contact the resident involvement team by email LTP@lincoln.gov.uk or telephone 01522 873398.

BLOOMING MARVELLOUS

IN AUGUST A GARDEN COMPETITION WAS ORGANISED BY IGNITE ELIM CHURCH TO HELP RECOGNISE AND CELEBRATE SOME OF LINCOLN'S BEST GARDENERS. PASTOR DARREN EDWARDS TOLD US ALL ABOUT THE COMPETITION IN THE ARTICLE BELOW.

"This summer, Ignite Elim Church teamed up with several local community groups and Pennells Garden Centre to run the 'Lincoln in Bloom Competition'

The competition was held in Birchwood, Ermine, Moorland and St Giles. On each of these four estates we had a prize for the winning garden and a prize for the most outstanding garden. The contestant with the most outstanding garden received a special prize for the garden that stands out most in its street, improving the aesthetic feel of the area. In addition to this, we had a city wide category, for the best garden from all of the entries.

It was a real privilege to be able to host such a lovely event in the city and this year it was really hard to pick the winners because we had so many fantastic gardens to choose from." The winners were:

Birchwood in Bloom: Winner

Robert Kalenczuk.

Most Outstanding:

Richard Whillock.

Ermine in Bloom: Winner

Y Carr.

Most Outstanding:

Mr Myers.

Moorland in Bloom: Winner:

Beata Gabinska.

Most Outstanding:

Michael Stevens.

St Giles in Bloom: Winner:

Denise Hinch.

Most Outstanding:

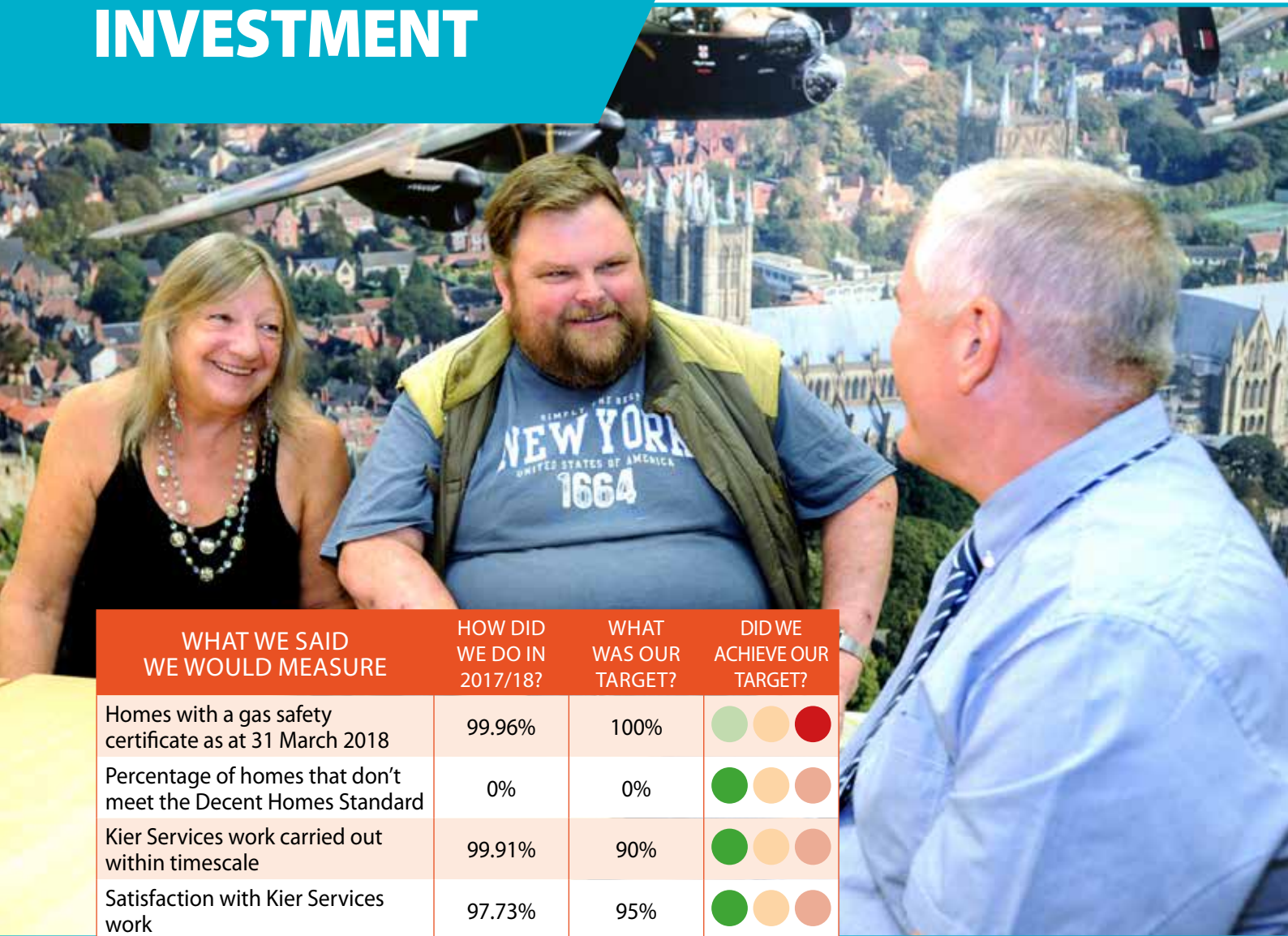
Jane Murphy.

And finally, congratulations to the big winner of Lincoln City in Bloom, Denise Hinch.

The Lincoln in Bloom is a great example of how we highlight some of the outstanding communities we have in Lincoln and it's nice to see them gain recognition. If you would like advice about organising your own community event or competition please contact the resident involvement team, email LTP@lincoln.gov.uk or telephone: 01522 873398.



INVESTMENT



WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE	HOW DID WE DO IN 2017/18?	WHAT WAS OUR TARGET?	DID WE ACHIEVE OUR TARGET?
Homes with a gas safety certificate as at 31 March 2018	99.96%	100%	● ● ●
Percentage of homes that don't meet the Decent Homes Standard	0%	0%	● ● ●
Kier Services work carried out within timescale	99.91%	90%	● ● ●
Satisfaction with Kier Services work	97.73%	95%	● ● ●
Aaron Services work carried out within timescale	99.40%	98.5%	● ● ●
Satisfaction with Aaron Services work	98.82%	95%	● ● ●

KATHY HILL & JOHN RANSHAW SAT DOWN WITH OUR INVESTMENT MANAGER, KEVIN BOWRING, TO ASK HIM ABOUT HIS TEAM'S PERFORMANCE AND THEIR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

Q) What service does your team provide?

A) The Investment Team has a wide remit that includes planning all improvement works to properties, for example, installing new kitchens, bathrooms, central heating, doors, windows, roofs and new electrics. We also deliver a programme of ongoing works including external painting, gas servicing and boiler repairs. The work is carried out by different contractors including Kier Services and Aaron Services. It's our job to make sure they complete work on time and to a good standard.

Q) What has been the biggest achievements for Investment?

A) We have delivered a number of initiatives to make heating properties more affordable for residents. This included replacing older boilers with new more efficient ones, upgrading older windows with triple glazed units and fitting insulation in walls and lofts.

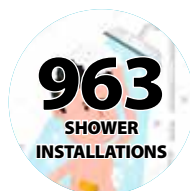
Q) How well has the Investment Team performed?

A) With the support of our partners, Kier and Aaron Services, we delivered improvements to over 2,200 homes last year. This work included fitting new bathrooms, kitchens and windows. That's improving 6 properties every day!

Q) What do you want to improve in the future?

A) We aim to visit all of our properties at least every five years to complete a 'stock condition survey', an assessment of when key components such as bathrooms, kitchens, doors and windows need to be replaced based on their present condition. By doing so, we can ensure we prioritise the 'worst first' and target resources to those customers who need them most. Whilst we undertook approximately 1,500 surveys this year, we need to continue to improve our stock data to ensure our replacement service is delivered in a more fair and efficient manner.

IN 2017-18 WE SPENT £4,969,079 IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF YOUR HOMES. WORKS COMPLETED INCLUDED:



TENANCY SERVICES



WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE	HOW DID WE DO IN 2017/18?	WHAT WAS OUR TARGET?	DID WE ACHIEVE OUR TARGET?
The percentage of ASB cases closed that were resolved	98%	94%	● ● ●
The average number of days to resolve cases of anti-social behaviour	66 days	70 days	● ● ●
Rent collected against rent due	99.68%	100%	● ● ●
The level of arrears against total rent due	2.11%	2.15%	● ● ●

STEVE BEARDER SPOKE TO OUR TENANCY SERVICES MANAGER, DAVE WARD, TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HIS TEAM.

Q) What does the Tenancy Services Team do?

A) The team carries out a number of different tasks. These include managing tenancies, tackling rent arrears, processing mutual exchange requests, investigating complaints of anti-social behaviour (ASB), managing high rise blocks and cleaning communal areas in blocks of flats.

Q) What's been the biggest achievement for the team?

A) Our biggest achievement was gaining accreditation of our anti-social behaviour service by Housemark, demonstrating how much the service has developed and improved over the last two years.

Q) How well has the team performed?

A) For the second successive year, we kept rent arrears low, achieving 2.11% outstanding rent of all rent due for collection in year, against an overall target of 2.15%. The total amount of arrears fell to £574,426 from the previous year's

total of £611,687 but we are working hard to collect all outstanding rent.

In terms of anti-social behaviour, 98% of our ASB cases were resolved against a target of 94%.

Q) What do you want to improve in the future?

A) We want to keep helping vulnerable tenants when they claim Universal Credit. To do this we plan to build on our current working relationships with DWP and other support agencies. This is important to ensure these tenants can sustain their tenancies.

The other area to keep improving is how we respond to anti-social behaviour. Firstly, we plan to provide more support for victims and witnesses of ASB. Secondly, to publicise the availability of our service more effectively through our website and social media. Lastly, to make tenants more aware of our performance figures and success stories by publishing this information more widely.

FACT BOX-PROVIDING VALUE FOR MONEY:

By 2020 we will have reduced the cost of your rent by one percent each year, in accordance with government regulations. Despite this reduction we have improved the service we offer and continue to make improvements to your homes. Average weekly rents for council properties are now £69.13. For your rent payment you receive:

- Repairs to your home
- Annual gas safety checks
- Dedicated customer services and housing team
- Improvements to your home to keep it at a decent standard
- 24/7 emergency repair line
- Certain emergency repairs made safe within 24hrs
- Boiler break downs attended within 24hrs during the winter
- ASB complaints investigated.

NEW BUILDS

We are making progress on delivering much needed social housing in Lincoln and building is underway on several sites around the city, with some already complete.

The programme will see at least **400 affordable homes** facilitated or built by the city council **by 2020**. These are a mix of 2, 3 and 4 bedroom homes. The properties will be built in the following areas:

- ◆ **ERMINE**
- ◆ **MONKS ROAD AND STAMP END**
- ◆ **MOORLAND**
- ◆ **ST GILES.**



To find out more about these properties and apply please visit our website <https://www.lincoln.gov.uk/housingbrochures/> or call us on **01522 873333**.

TONY HIGGS AND ERMINE RESIDENTS

Tony Higgs is a resident of the Ermine Estate in Lincoln and has spent the last nine years getting involved with his community to help other residents. His CV on volunteering is impressive and includes being a member of Lincoln Tenants Panel (LTP), tenant inspectors and the Ermine Board. Prior to this he spent 20 years serving the country as a Royal Engineer.

His focus recently has been the Tuesday Club and Tony tells the story below.

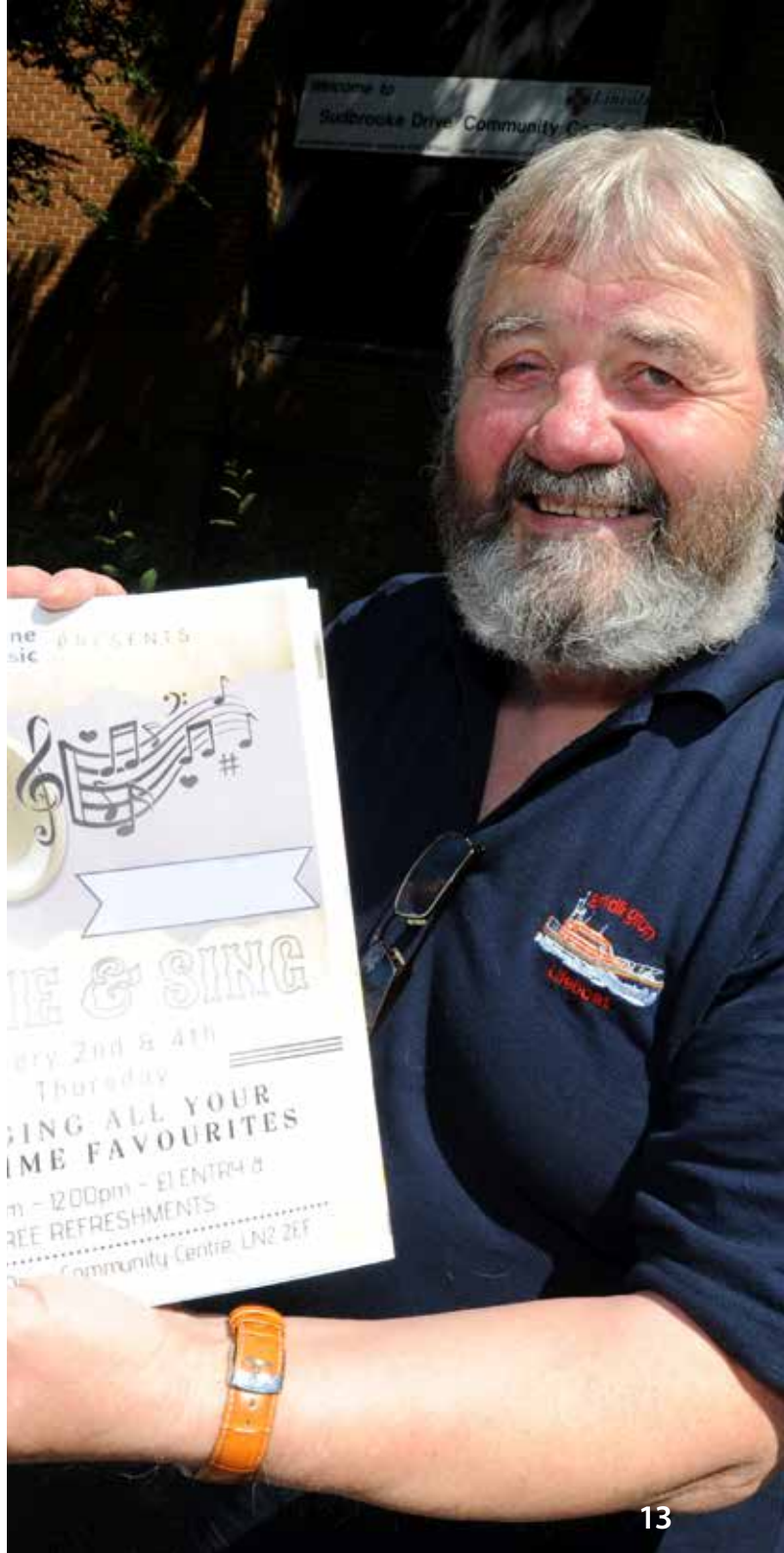
"I noticed that on the Ermine there wasn't much for older residents to do and there were some who felt lonely. I decided to help run the Tuesday Club, which aims to provide low cost entertainment.

There's a lot that we do including quizzes, tombola, cards, guest speakers and curling. However the most popular activity is bingo as everyone can be involved including individuals with impairments. We are constantly looking for new ideas.

I have also set up the Ermine Singalong that aims to bring budding singers from across the area together."

I enjoy volunteering because you get to meet different people, get involved, support and help others. I also enjoy organising and planning events and activities for everyone involved."

If you would like to join the Tuesday Club or the Ermine Singalong please contact Tony on 07807023003. The Tuesday Club is held every week at 2pm and costs £5 per month. The Ermine Singalong is £1 per session and is held on a Thursday between 10am-12pm. Both are located at the Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre.





COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

To help communities in Lincoln we have set up a Community Investment Fund.

Community groups and charities can apply to the fund for help delivering their projects. This includes funding for materials and labour. For more information about community investment, email the resident involvement team LTP@lincoln.gov.uk or telephone: 01522 873398.

To date we have helped with several projects, the support included:

- ◆ Installing benches in the courtyard at St Clements Court. New benches were provided, bushes were removed and new paving slabs put in.
- ◆ Supplying materials for Boutham Park Regeneration Project. This involved providing parts for the weir that will help to improve the water quality of the lake.



- ◆ Renovating parts of St Barnabas Hospice. We have refurbished the kitchen and renewed the paving to the garden. This has made it a more accessible space for patients and their families.
- ◆ Fitting a new kitchen at Abbey Access Centre. This is a community facility, which provides a café, meeting room and training courses for residents.
- ◆ Renewing a shrub bed at Derek Miller Court. The residents wanted a space to garden at the court and approached us for help. Through the fund we removed the old shrubs, provided top soil and flower bulbs.
- ◆ Providing funding the Hillside Garden. Local charity, Green Synergy, has developed a garden that will be used to provide a range of therapeutic, educational and skills based projects. To support the project, funding was provided to buy a gate for the entrance to the garden.
- ◆ Helping the Moorland Local People Project with local improvements. We have installed a bench, path and notice board on Turner Avenue. This was requested by residents to make the area a nicer place to visit.

ALLOCATIONS AND SHELTERED HOUSING



WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE	HOW DID WE DO IN 2017/18?	WHAT WAS OUR TARGET?	DID WE ACHIEVE OUR TARGET?
Offers accepted first time	75.05%	85%	

SHEILA WATKINSON GOT CHANCE TO SPEAK TO CLLR. DONALD NANNESTAD, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING , TO ASK HIM ABOUT THE ALLOCATIONS SERVICE AND THE CONTROL CENTRE.

Q) What service does the team provide?

A) The allocations team is responsible for dealing with applications for housing. We also work to prevent homelessness and deal with people who are homeless. The control centre takes emergency calls from vulnerable residents who have activated their life line system. We can then give them advice, call a relative or an ambulance if needed. Sheltered housing provides accommodation for older residents across the city.

Q) What's been the biggest achievement for the teams?

A) We have changed our lettings policy to make the allocation of homes fairer customers. These changes included reserving 25 per cent of homes for current tenants who want to transfer. Then there was our new website that we launched following feedback from residents that said the old site was slow and would often crash.

Q) How well have the teams performed?

A) This year has been challenging for the team with a number of vacancies affecting the performance.

Q) What do you want to improve in the future?

A) We are planning to review all processes and make them simpler, look at staffing levels and provide further staff training.

How do I apply for council housing or apply to transfer to a different property?

If you want to apply for housing in Lincoln or North Kesteven, you will need to either register with www.lincshomefinder.co.uk/Lincshomefinder online or contact us on telephone **01522 873333** or in person at our offices located at City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln, LN1 1DD.

Have you thought about a Mutual Exchange?

The process allows council tenants to exchange homes. If you would like to move, this may be quicker and easier than applying for a transfer. To find out further information and to register for a Mutual Exchange please go to: www.homeswapper.co.uk/ or contact us on telephone **01522 873333**.

CUSTOMER SERVICES



WHAT WE SAID WE WOULD MEASURE	HOW DID WE DO IN 2017/18?	WHAT WAS OUR TARGET?	DID WE ACHIEVE OUR TARGET?
% of calls answered within 60 seconds	63.91%	80%	● ● ●

CAROLINE COYLE-FOX SAT DOWN AND SPOKE WITH JO CROOKES, CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER TO ASK HER ABOUT THE TEAM'S PERFORMANCE

Q) What service does customer services provide?

A) Customer services is responsible for many of the first line enquiries made to the council. The team run the main reception and enquiry centre in City Hall as well as taking telephone and email enquiries about a wide range of issues. These include Housing Benefit and Council Tax, applying for housing, rent enquires, tenancy issues, environmental health, rubbish, recycling and garden waste collections.

Q) What's been the biggest achievement for the team?

A) Customer feedback is very positive and we receive many compliments about the professional yet caring approach that the team take to our customers. The team work incredibly hard in what are sometimes very difficult circumstances, for example during extreme weather events or speaking to and helping people during traumatic life events. I am grateful to the team for their ability to deal with anything that the day presents in a calm and composed way, putting the needs of the customer first.

Q) How well has customer services performed?

A) We are incredibly busy and answered more than 137,000 calls last year. On average the calls were answered in under a minute, which compares well with the wait times experienced when calling

other businesses and public sector bodies. Of course we concentrate on quality and resolving the issue during the call wherever this is possible, and staff are encouraged to ensure that they give each call the time required to deal with it effectively. Housing Helpdesk and the Repairs line are extremely busy. In 2017-2018 we answered 40,032 calls to housing helpdesk and 22,347 repair calls. This accounts for 92.7% of the calls made to these numbers. The average waiting time for callers was 63.4 seconds. Many calls get through very quickly but we often have a very high peak of calls and these calls can wait much longer to get through. For example many people call in on Monday morning. Similarly when there is a mail shot or other council communication the phone lines can be inundated with calls

Q) What do you want to improve in the future?

A) We are pleased that so many of the routine calls we used to take are now being handled electronically which means that we can spend our time dealing with more challenging issues and supporting those residents who need our assistance the most. In common with all areas of the council we are looking at providing the best possible value for money and cutting expenditure. Our next project will be to help tenants pay their rent by Direct Debit where possible because the plastic payment cards used at the Post Office are very costly to operate indeed.



ASK THE **HOUSING OFFICER**

Your Housing Officer is there to give you advice about your tenancy. They are also responsible for ensuring the tenancy agreement is complied with and for things like investigating anti-social behaviour complaints. If you need to contact them, you can send an email to tenancy.support.team@lincoln.gov.uk or call them on 01522 873333.

You can find out who your housing officer is online at www.lincoln.gov.uk/housingofficer

Further reading

Homes England is a non-departmental government body that sets out the service we must provide to you in a regulatory framework. One of the requirements is to publish an annual report each year.

For more information please see their website www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-standards or contact us by emailing **christopher.morton@lincoln.gov.uk** or by calling **01522 873398** to request a copy.

Obtaining copies in alternative formats

If you have difficulty in understanding anything in this document, please go to City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln or any other council office, and an interpretation service will be provided.

French

Si vous avez besoin d'éclaircissements au sujet de ce document, veuillez vous rendre au City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln ou tout autre Council office, où nous pourrions faire appel à un interprète par le biais du National Interpreting Service.

Polish

Jezeli masz trudnosci ze zrozumieniem tego dokumentu, zglos sie do urzedu miasta w City Hall, Beaumont Fee w Lincoln lub do innego urzedu nalezkiego do rady miejskiej, w którym wezwiemy tłumacza z National Interpreting Service.

Portuguese

Se tiver dificuldade em compreender qualquer coisa neste documento, por favor dirija-se à City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln ou qualquer outra repartição do município, onde poderemos chamar um interprete para si através do Serviço Nacional de Interpretação.

Turkish

Bu belgeyi anlamakta zorlanırsanız, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln Belediyesi'ne ya da herhangi başka bir belediye meclisi ofisine gidin. National Interpreting Service aracılığıyla size bir çevirmen sağlanacaktır.

This publication can also be made available in large print, or electronically.

Please call: 01522 873333