

Home Matters

WINTER 2017

www.circle.org.uk

Get your spending
back on track

New year, new home
with House Exchange

Circle
Housing™

Enhancing Life Chances

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WELCOME

to the Winter issue of
Home Matters.

This edition is packed with useful tips to help you stay on track with any New Year resolutions.

Inside you can find out more about our new look website, plus our top tips for saving energy and money on page 7.

If you're feeling the pinch take a look at how Circle Housing Money can help get your finances back on track. We've even thrown in Dave's simple budget planner to start off your money make over.

We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to receiving your under the sea themed word search competition entries.

Happy Reading!

Congratulations...

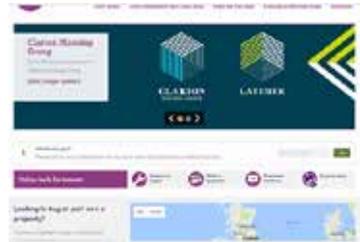
Last editions wordsearch winners are:

- Alison Shearman
- Mr G Bowring
- Shereen Gilley
- Thelma Smith
- J Williams

New postcode finder on website

You may have noticed we have been improving our website and you can now search for your local area by using the postcode finder on the homepage.

Type your postcode into the box and hit Go to see your local information such as; news, events, opportunities and courses in your area, plus other local services. Once you've entered your postcode it will automatically remember your location every time you visit the website. Have a look around and see what's new.



Would you like to volunteer in your community as a Digital Champion?

- Are you reasonably confident with using computers, tablets and the internet?
- Would you like to develop your own digital skills?
- Being a Digital Champion is a great way of making a real difference to other people's lives. You don't have to be an IT whizz, you just need a bit of spare time and enthusiasm to support others with using digital technology.

Digital Champions will get free training and support with self-study courses and teaching resources. You will get the chance to meet and work with other Digital Champions in your community, as well as immense personal satisfaction that you've helped people to get connected!

If you would like to find out more about our Digital Inclusion Offer please contact your Digital Inclusion Officers:

Jo Coxford

Tel: 07827 882802 / 0203 7844719

Email: jo.coxford@circle.org.uk

Mirca Morera

02037843736 / 07876390258

Email: mirca.morera@circle.org.uk

Competition winner: Congratulations to Miss Scanlon from Kings Lynn, Norfolk for winning an Amazon Fire Tablet. We still have 2 Amazon Fire Tablets on offer, closing date of the next competition - 31 January 2017. Simply contact Jo or Mirca to find out more.

Changing our structure

In the last edition of Home Matters, we let you know about the progress we had been making to bring all individual housing associations into one single landlord – which will be known simply as Circle Housing. Circle Housing Circle 33, Circle Housing Mercian and Circle Housing Wherry were the first transfer into Circle Housing, followed by Circle Housing South Anglia in December and Circle Housing Roddons earlier this month.

We are continuing with these changes this year, and discussions continue about Circle Housing Merton Priory, Circle Housing Old Ford, Circle Housing Mole Valley and Circle Housing Russet. All consultations with customers have finished, with Circle Housing Merton Priory's consultation concluding at the end of November last year.

Many of you might be wondering whether these changes will be impacted by the fact that we have now merged with Affinity Sutton and become part of Clarion Housing Group. The answer is that at the moment, they won't be. We are still aiming to bring all individual housing associations into one single landlord – which will still be known as Circle Housing.

Circle Housing is now part of The Clarion Housing Group.

Circle Housing will continue to provide you with housing and associated services and there are no changes to your tenancy.





Meet the new neighbours

Three Circle Housing customers from the East, London and South Regions were invited to attend an Affinity Sutton Resident Engagement Day at the Oval Cricket Ground in October this year.

It was a great opportunity for Sue, Alison and Andy, to talk to Affinity Sutton's staff and involved residents to learn a little bit more about Affinity Sutton as our two organisations head towards merger.

Sue Curtis has been working with Circle Housing for many years and remains heavily involved in Repairs and Maintenance at a strategic and contractual level. Alison Hill was the Chair of our Resident and Service User Panel before it was disbanded in July this year. Andy Pountney, is an actively involved customer in his community and Repairs & Maintenance.

All three continue to be very committed to driving service improvement and along with other Circle Housing customers, have helped us to develop the Customer Involvement strategy and consultation regarding Resurgence and Merger.

They were very impressed at the format of this event, especially the openness and approachability of everyone they met. They felt reassured that the new merged organisation would be resident focussed.

Closure of looking local service

As part of our continuing efforts to provide greater value-for-money, and help more customers online into secure digital services, we've looked at our digital offering, and have decided to close our Looking Local service.

Through consultation and feedback, we decided to spend more money on services our customers have requested, and actively use. So, while the Looking Local service will shortly close 27 March 2017 services we will invest more in include:

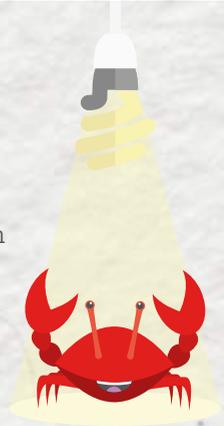
- 1** Our website – we recently relaunched our Circle Housing website www.circle.org.uk in a more user-friendly design that responds to any mobile or tablet device, and gives you local content – news, events, opportunities – by simply entering your postcode. We will continue to improve this site to fit customers' needs.
- 2** A customer portal – we will provide a 'my account' customer portal in summer 2017, to enable customers to view their rent account, their repairs history and status, and request services from us by simply logging on.
- 3** A Customer Relationship Management system – which means our staff will know the status of all your service requests in an instant. This should help us act more responsively to your needs, and provide better customer service.

We will keep you updated on improvements to all our services!

Save energy and save money

Here are our top tips for saving money and energy this Winter.
For more tips and videos on how to cut energy bills visit
www.dothing.org.uk

- Choose LED lights when decorating your home this Christmas as they use less electricity.
- Use a timer for your lights so they are not on when you are asleep or aren't there.
- Try and bake in big batches or cook different things at the same time. This means you only have to turn the oven on once.
- Opening the oven door when cooking lowers the temperature by 25 degrees, which increases cooking time and wastes energy. Shine a torch through the glass instead.
- Get your Christmas jumper out! Wear that embarrassing jumper, resist the urge to cringe and watch your heating bills fall.
- Turn the thermostat down when you have guests, extra bodies in the house generate extra heat - especially if you are all in one room.
- Defrost food overnight rather than microwaving it, and ensure warm foods cool down before placing them in the fridge.



- Consider turning the heating down or off whilst you cook Christmas dinner. The excess heat from the kitchen will help warm surrounding areas.
- Make sure that radiators are not obstructed by decorations, Christmas trees or re-arranged furniture so warm air can circulate around the room.
- Plug-in electric heaters are expensive to use, it is cheaper to use central heating and turn the radiators valves off in rooms you don't occupy.

You can also speak to one of our Energy Advisors for free advice please email:
energyadvisorservice@circle.org.uk

**DO1
THING**
org.uk



Competition time



To win, tell us which word cannot be found in the grid below. Send your answer to:

Name:

Address:

Phone number:

Karen Rowley, Circle Housing, 6 Central Avenue, St Andrews Business Park, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 0HR or email the answer and your details to homematters@circle.org.uk

The closing date is 25 February when nine winners will be chosen.

One of these words cannot be found in the wordsearch grid:

seahorse
coral
fish
reef
shells
waves

seaweed
crabbing
boat
birds
sand
water



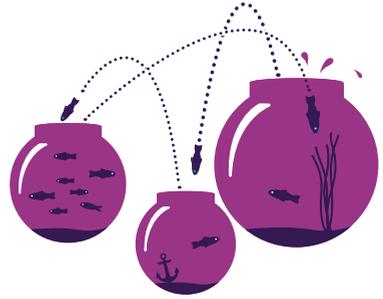
S	E	B	N	I	W	H	T	E	V	W	P	O
E	L	H	Q	U	S	A	H	B	I	R	D	S
A	Z	F	I	S	H	R	O	Q	P	L	E	P
W	F	R	D	X	E	B	D	S	A	R	F	T
E	K	J	C	V	L	A	R	T	D	L	H	K
E	B	T	Y	A	L	G	H	Q	P	W	N	C
D	U	C	W	R	S	Y	C	O	R	A	L	W
J	L	V	R	O	I	D	T	U	R	L	Z	X
F	G	H	S	A	Y	R	N	F	M	S	N	I
G	T	R	O	P	B	S	C	W	A	V	E	S
A	C	N	B	V	S	B	O	A	T	D	P	L
U	R	E	E	F	X	O	I	P	M	X	A	W
Q	P	R	W	Z	A	T	U	N	Y	I	Z	S
H	W	A	T	E	R	E	Q	L	G	O	H	T

Missing word: _____



New Year...new home!

Have you been thinking about moving home? It could be for a new job, a bigger home for your family or simply to be closer to friends and family. Whatever the reason, House Exchange can help you. The service is designed to bring people together who are interested in swapping their homes. Currently over 100,000 people are looking to swap their properties around the UK, so your ideal home could be only a few clicks away.



Enter your details at www.houseexchange.org.uk and the site will match you up with other would-be-swappers. There's also a free app, so now you can search on the move too.

Important things to consider:

Add photos: You can have up to five photos of your property on your advert, this increases your chances of finding a swap, so make sure each room looks its best in the pictures.

Include a description: We've introduced a fantastic tool that allows you to create a description by selecting options that apply to your home. You can find this in the 'Edit my advert' area.

Get in touch: Once you're registered start messaging the properties you're interested in, arranging viewings is a great first step in your House Exchange journey.



House
Exchange

GET YOUR SPENDING

BACK ON TRACK

Have you spent more than you planned at Christmas and are looking to make a fresh start with your finances this New Year? Setting a budget can help you take control of your money.



Draw up a monthly budget which covers all your outgoing costs such as rent, food, mobile phones, travel etc. The Money Advice Service have a quick and easy Budget Planner that puts you in control of your household spending. It's already helped hundreds of thousands of people. All you need to do is go online at www.moneyadvice.org.uk/en/tools/budget-planner

Circle Housing Money, our partnership with Leeds Credit Union have a range of products that can also help you plan ahead. Their Bill Paying Account is a great budgeting tool you can use to arrange for your rent and bills to be paid from one account. With their Christmas club plan you can save as much as little as you want from now to October. Even better, you can only access the money you've saved from 1 November, so you could have enough put aside to make next Christmas the best ever.

For more details, visit www.circlehousingmoney.org.uk or call 0800 902 0021.

All Leeds Credit Union savings accounts are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme that protects individual savings up to £75,000 (Credit Unions have the same protections as Banks and Building Societies in respect of savings protection). Terms and conditions apply to savings accounts and loans. Leeds Credit Union Ltd is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority- firm reference number 213369. This information may be checked by visiting www.fca.org.uk or www.bankofengland.co.uk/pru.

Dave's simple budget planner

Designing a budget sounds complicated but it's actually really easy to do. Simply fill in the gaps to make your very own budget.

Money coming in each month

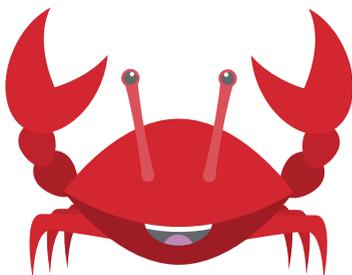
Pay	
Partner's wages	
Universal Credit	
JSA/ESA	
Working Tax Credit	
Child Tax Credit	
Child Benefit	
Other benefits	
Housing Benefit	
Pensions	
Other income	
Total:	£ <input type="text"/> per month

If the total going out is less than the amount coming in, good for you! But you would still benefit from looking at your expenses to see where you can save money. If you spend more money than you have coming in, we have experts on hand who can give you free, confidential advice and help you to get back on track.

www.circlehousingmoney.org.uk

Money going out

Rent and service charges	
Council Tax	
Water	
Gas and electricity	
TV Licence	
Contents insurance	
Car insurance	
Other insurances	
Internet and/or TV package	
Debt repayments	
Mobile phone	
Grocery shopping	
Travel costs	
Childcare costs	
Other expenses	
Total:	£ <input type="text"/> per month



Contact information

Circle Housing (formerly Circle Housing Circe 33)

Tel 0300 456 3000 or 0800 073 0417
Email customerservices@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk

Circle Housing (formerly Circle Housing Mercian)

Tel 0300 500 8000
Email customerservices@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk

Circle Housing Merton Priory

Tel 0300 500 3000
Email contactmph@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk/mertonpriory

Circle Housing Mole Valley

Tel 0800 634 9876 or 0300 333 0001
Email mvha.info@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk/Mole_Valley

Circle Housing Old Ford

Tel 0300 500 8000
Email old.ford@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk/old-ford

Circle Housing Roddons

Tel 0300 500 8000
Email customerservices@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk

Circle Housing Russet

Tel 0800 197 2880 or 0300 500 4444
Email russet@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk/russet

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Tel 0300 500 8000
Email customerservices@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk

Circle Housing (formerly Circle Housing Wherry)

Tel 0300 500 8000
Email customerservices@circle.org.uk
Website www.circle.org.uk

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