

STEPPING STONES

December 2011

The Newsletter for Supported Accommodation



Inside

- 1 Winter Fuel Payment
- 1 New staff
- 2 Christmas Tips
- 2 Olive Branch
- 3 Family Santa Trail
- 3 Customer Stories
- 3 Coffee Mornings
- 4 Contacts
- 4 Domestic Abuse
- 4 Opening Hours



Winter Fuel Payments

Most people who are entitled to a Winter Fuel Payment do not need to make a claim.

If you get State Pension, Pension Credit, Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Disability

Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, Carer's Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance or a Bereavement Benefit, and you are getting one of these benefits in the qualifying week, you do not need to make a claim.

A Winter Fuel Payment will be made automatically. If you successfully claimed a Winter Fuel Payment the previous year and your circumstances have not changed, you also do not need to make a claim.

If you are not getting one of these benefits in the qualifying week and you have not

successfully claimed a Winter Fuel Payment before, you will have to make a claim.

The Department for Work and Pensions may get in touch with you anyway and send you a claim form. If this does not happen, you can get a claim form by telephoning: 0845 915 1515 or see your Independent Living Manager for assistance.

Staff leaving and new staff

As many of you may know Sheltered Housing Manager Heather Wilson and Senior Support Worker, Tina Hope, left Tamworth Borough Council on the 30th November to seek pastures new.

Tamworth Borough Council wish Heather and Tina well and all the best for the future.

Mrs Lee Birch has taken on the role of Housing Options Manager and has overall responsibility for Voids and Allocations team as well as Sheltered and Supported Housing. Lee has more than 18 years' experience within Local Authority Housing and has a vast range of skills and experiences with which to move the Authority forward.

Mr. John Coombes has taken on the role of Support Officer and has responsibility for 12 members of staff within both Sheltered and Supported Housing. John has more than 11 years of experience within the Housing sector that includes both Local Authority and Housing Associations and has worked for Tamworth Borough Council for more than six.

If you have any issues or concerns, please raise these in the first instance with your Independent Living Manager who is on site Monday to Friday each week.

Lee can be contacted on 01827 709 474 or email lee-birch@tamworth.gov.uk
John can be contacted on 01827 709 436 or email to john-coombes@tamworth.gov.uk

Your checklist for a pain-free Christmas



Christmas always sees a dramatic rise in the numbers of fires and accidents in the home. Many of those happen in the kitchen during food preparation, while putting up decorations, or worse, as a result of faulty fairy lights or unattended candles.

So here's some top tips for a safe & happy Christmas

- 1. Mind the steps:** Falling off a stepladder while putting up Christmas decorations is one of the most common accidents, according to ROSPA. Many people end up in A&E after using a faulty stepladder or reaching too far with the tinsel. Check your steps aren't faulty, ensure they're on an even surface and get someone to hold them steady.
- 2. Tree daze:** The joys of decorating the tree can also end in tears. More than 1,000 people injure themselves each year by falling off a chair while putting the fairy on top of their tree or by cutting themselves when sawing off branches.
- 3. Fairy safe:** It is essential to check your fairy lights, particularly if you've had them a few years, for loose, frayed or bare wires, broken bulbs and cracked plugs. Faulty tree lights result in about 350 people needing hospital treatment for burns and electric shocks each year, including children who swallow or cut

themselves on broken bulbs. If you're in any doubt about the safety of your lights, treat yourself to some new ones.

- 4. Candle watch:** Injuries and fatalities in fires caused by candles are on the rise. Never be tempted to light candles on Christmas trees, put them on top of TV sets or other electrical appliances, or leave burning candles unattended, and always ensure you put them out before you go to bed.
- 5. Full fat:** Grappling with the bird and roasting potatoes slathered in goose fat requires your full attention. Cooking Christmas lunch for your clan can be stressful enough without anyone suffering cuts and burns. Hot fat, boiling water, sharp knives and cluttered work surfaces can spell disaster, so keep guests – especially children – out of the kitchen to give you the space and concentration you need.
- 6. Pudding alert:** One in 10 Britons manage to burn themselves while attempting to flambé their Christmas puddings.
- 7. And finally...** To make sure you and your guests don't come a cropper, clear away wrapping paper, boxes and any other clutter begging to be tripped over.

Stay safe and have a cracking Christmas



Olive Branch

Olive Branch Training targets people who are in contact with, or visit, vulnerable members of communities within Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

It encourages them to identify potential fire hazards and other risks in the home.

In addition it highlights how to refer vulnerable people on to Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service for a FREE Home Fire Risk Check. During October 2011 all the Independent Living

Managers and Sheltered Housing Officers received the relevant training and will be discussing any issues with you when they visit your property.



Family Santa Trail

Saturday and Sunday: 10th, 11th and 17th and 18th December
Venue: Tamworth Castle. Times: 10.45am – 5pm.

Step into Tamworth Castle's magical Victorian Christmas and join in the festive fun. Meet the Victorian household readying themselves for Santa's annual visit. With the help of Victorian servants, explore the Santa trail before entering Santa's grotto to receive a surprise gift.

Admission: Child: £5.50 & adults: £2.50 (ratio of 1:5 adults to children)

Booking: **Pre-booking is necessary** please contact the Tourist Information Centre.

For more information please contact Tamworth Tourist Information Centre on 01827 709581/709618
 Fax: 01827 709582
 e-mail: tic@tamworth.gov.uk

Coffee Mornings

A coffee morning was held at Annandale Sheltered Scheme on Friday 4th November.

There was a good turn out and Donja, the Teen Spirit worker for Surestart, did a craft activity of decorating space ships. This was enjoyed by the service users and their children.

A representative from the Credit Union gave a quick talk about the benefits of the Union. Quite a few of the service users completed application forms at the meeting to join the Credit Union. Additional leaflets were given to the Support Workers to discuss with service users who did not attend.

There was a free raffle which Terri and Katie won, well done! There were also toys available for the children to play with and refreshments were served.

Future dates for Coffee Mornings at Annandale Sheltered Scheme, beginning at 11am:

Dec 2nd 2011, February 3rd 2012, March 2nd 2012, April 6th 2012.

Customer stories

Katie and Lauren

I can't wait to move on from Supported Accommodation. I have been through so much and always received the help and support from the team. Looking forward to moving but am also nervous.

Lauren is now enjoying nursery which I did not want her to go to, but my worker encouraged me to send her and she loves it. What a difference, she is now potty trained, talking more and mixing with other children.

Terri & Lucian

When my baby son was six weeks old I enrolled on the Baby Sign course with Surestart, which we are really enjoying.

This encourages language development, and is also proven to reduce tantrums as children get older. The babies learn how to do various signs to communicate before they can talk.

Lucian enjoys the music & rhymes. I have met new friends, and because I am breastfeeding, I do not feel uncomfortable in front of other people as some of them are too.

I would really recommend this course to anyone as you would get so much out of it.

Domestic Abuse

Many turn to friends or family for help. Although in many cases this can provide valuable support, friends or family may struggle with knowing what to do for the best.

They may also not know what professional support is available or the victim's legal rights.

The organisations which can help include:

- the police. In an emergency where you are concerned for your own or someone else's safety, always dial **999**
- Staffordshire Police domestic abuse officers, **101**
- 24-hour (Staffordshire) Pathway Project domestic abuse helpline, **01543 676800**

National 24-hour domestic abuse freephone helpline **0808 2000 247**. This helpline can also be e-mailed at helpline@womensaid.org.uk

or contacted by post at Women's Aid Federation of England, Head Office, PO Box 391, Bristol, BS99 7WS

- Arch North Staffs helpline on **01782 205500**, answerphone out of hours
- Pathway (Lichfield, Tamworth and Burton) 24 hour helpline **01543 676800**
- Staffordshire Women's Aid (Stafford, Cannock, South Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands) **0870 2700 123**
- Men who have experienced domestic abuse can call ManKind on **01823 334244**
- Male survivors of sexual abuse or assault can call Mankind UK on **01273 510 447**
- Karma Nirvana (Asian women's helpline) **0800 5999 247**

- Southall Black Sisters can be contacted Monday to Friday from 10am to 5pm (closed Wednesday from 12:30pm to 1:30pm) on **0208 571 0800**

- Broken Rainbow helpline on **08452 604460** a UK-wide specialist confidential service for lesbians, gay men, bisexual and transgender people experiencing homophobic or transphobic domestic abuse. Monday and Thursday 2pm-8pm and Wednesday 10am-1pm. Alternatively e-mail: mail@broken-rainbow.org.uk

- the male advice and enquiry line for men experiencing domestic abuse on **0808 8010 327**

If you require this document in an alternative format or language please contact the Tenant Participation team on: 01827 709709 or email: tenantparticipation@tamworth.gov.uk

Tamworth Borough Council Christmas Opening Times 2011

Date	Time
23rd December	8:50 to 17:05
26th December	Closed
27th December	Closed
28th & 29th December	8:50 to 17:10
30th December	8:50 to 17:05
2nd January 2012	Closed
3rd January	Normal Hours

Note! These hours are the main office hours at Marmion House, your scheme may have different operating hours and these will be advertised on the notice board in your scheme.

Contacts

Trudy Welch, Support Worker:
07528 630059

Louise Worrall, Support Worker:
07528 630058

Police/Fire/Ambulance
(Emergencies only): 999

Police (non Emergencies):
03001 234 4556

Morrisons: 08001 830 044
(open 24 hours)

Tamworth Borough Council:
01827 709 709

Tamworth
Borough Council