

Living here!

January 2021

Wallasey

Biggest-ever survey of tenants starts

In November last year, the Government published plans to improve services for tenants of housing associations.

The new Charter for social housing residents will speed up the time it takes to deal with complaints as well as making landlords more accountable.

This month, local councillor Ian Lewis is writing to residents across Wallasey, including tenants of local housing associations to ask for their views.

While the standards for most tenants have improved since the days when the Council was the landlord, for some tenants, there are issues with anti

social behaviour, the time it takes for repairs and how communal areas - in flats and some gardens - are looked after.

Due to Covid-19, local councillors Ian Lewis, Lesley Rennie and Paul Hayes have not been able to call door-to-door to meet residents, but residents have been contacting us with problems and we've done our best to help.

That's why we're carrying out this survey. A lot has happened in the last 12 months and there may be issues that residents and tenants want to tell us about now. We'll treat every reply to our survey confidentially and do our best to help.

£1.2 million given to Council for hardest-hit

Following the campaigns by footballer Marcus Rashford, Wirral Council has been given an extra £1.2m to support children and vulnerable families this winter.

The cash is part of a national £170 million Winter Covid Plan.

Speaking after the cash was announced, the England striker said: "I very much welcome the steps that have been taken to combat child food poverty in the UK."

Now, with all party support in the Town Hall, Wirral Council has published its plan on how the cash will be used.

Councillor Ian Lewis supported the plan: "Those who are hardest hit need

extra help. The Government should have recognised this sooner.

"However, the cash that has now been given to Wirral Council will help our most vulnerable residents."

Community associations in Wallasey are among those that have been given grants, using Government cash, to support residents in their area.

Details of how the council is using £1.2 million can be found on page 2 of this newsletter or at our website: www.wallaseyconservatives.com/winterplan

Local community news:

Calls for new council housing

Wirral's new Housing Committee is going to decide if the council can build new council homes, on brownfield sites, to help the 9,000 families on the waiting list.

Fire and carbon monoxide alerts

A new campaign could see more smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors installed by housing associations. Local councillors are backing the campaign.

New Social Housing Charter

A new charter will speed up complaints procedures and make housing associations more accountable to their tenants. More details on our website.

Veterans to be given priority

The Government has announced better access to social housing for members of the Armed Forces and veterans suffering from mental ill health.

All homeless found accommodation

Following a national campaign when the pandemic started, Wirral Council has confirmed they have found a place to live for everyone: [Page 2](#)

Tell us your views: take part in our new survey

Accommodation found for all Wirral homeless and rough sleepers

It has been confirmed that all those who were sleeping rough in Wirral at the start of the pandemic have been found accommodation. In 2018, there were 16 people sleeping rough in the Borough.

The news follows a directive from the Government to get 'everyone in' and, with the cash to support it, Wirral Council, housing associations, charities and housing advisers have delivered.

In addition, a further 774 people have been found short term or permanent housing, including people at risk of becoming homeless, since the Government instructed all councils to act on 23 March.

Mortgage lenders were instructed to support homeowners struggling to pay and more protections for people who rent were introduced.

Wirral has also been advised that the grant the Council receives for supporting homeless and rough sleepers will be increased again – from £301,000 last year to £513,000 this year.

Help for people in Wallasey:

This is how the £1.2 million from the Government will be spent to support the hardest-hit residents in Wirral, following a plan agreed by all parties in the Council.

Food & activities holiday provision:

This project will provide breakfast and lunch over the Christmas school holiday and February half-term for over 6,300 local children, targeted at families with children who normally receive free school meals and more than 1,100 nursery school aged children. The application process is being led by Neo Community - phone 0151 647 5981, email info@neocommunity.org.uk

Community groups funding:

38 local community and voluntary groups have been awarded funding to a combined total of £255,570. These groups have until 31 March 2021 to spend their grant to support vulnerable residents.

Help with energy and water bills debt:

This project will provide crisis support for vulnerable households who are having severe difficulties with water and energy bills. Around 400 households, who have suffered due to the impacts of COVID-19, will be helped to break the cycle of debt and avoid acute problems over the winter months. Ask Us Wirral can be reached on 0808 278 7848.

Financial support with crisis energy costs:

The project will provide emergency fuel vouchers to those in crisis, receiving referrals from the Council - call 0151 666 5050 or www.wirral.gov.uk/welfaresupport

Financial support with welfare needs:

This project will provide emergency support for people in crisis, offering financial help towards specialist food, clothing and other essential items such as cooking appliances and washing machines. It will also allow the project to cover the cost of winter school shoes for the first time. Call the Coronavirus helpline 0151 666 5050.

Emergency Heating Engineer:

This project will help around 120 households in financial crisis who need to call out a heating engineer or plumber in emergency circumstances over the winter months.

It will help vulnerable people who are at risk of being left without heat and householders turning to unqualified or unscrupulous tradespeople and loan sharks, adding to existing debt. Referrals can be made through the Coronavirus helpline 0151 666 5050.

Crisis support with essential white goods:

£30,000 has been allocated to provide white goods, such as cookers and washing machines, to vulnerable households; this support will be delivered by organisations such as St Vincent de Paul Society.

Referrals can be managed through the Coronavirus helpline 0151 666 5050, but professionals such as family support workers and social workers will also be advised of the scheme so they can promote it to those they are working with.

More information, including hyperlinks to websites can be found at www.wallaseyconservatives.com/winterplan



Post Office update

Two years ago, more than 1,000 residents signed our petition calling for the Post Office in Wallasey Village to reopen.

Eventually, the Post Office was re-opened but, sadly, it closed again at the start of the pandemic. Councillors Ian Lewis, Lesley Rennie and Paul Hayes have been in touch with the Head Office of the Post Office. He has advised that the negotiations between the postmaster and the Post Office are still

ongoing and that their respective legal teams are still in discussions.

We have also contacted the Postal Affairs Minister to ask for his support to have this branch reopened.

A national inquiry has been set up in the wake of the 'Horizon' IT failure, which saw some post office managers wrongly prosecuted. The Inquiry will look at what went wrong in relation to Horizon and ensure that there is a public summary of the failings that occurred at Post Office Ltd to avoid any repeat.