

Issue 56 | Autumn

InTouch

The essential magazine for Council Tenants



Inside this issue:

Malcolm is motivated - How one tenant is helping to keep people safe

'And our survey said' - Tenants are satisfied with housing services

Housing essentials

We have another packed newsletter that will help to inform you of just a few of the important goings on in the world of housing, as well as navigate the start of the colder winter months.

Firstly, if you are one of the many pensioners who may no longer receive the Winter Fuel Payment, please read our article on page 16, which provides guidance on how to check if you are eligible to receive Pension Credit and the Winter Fuel Payment. There's also some further support on how you can keep your home warm on page 4.

I'd also like to draw your attention to the article on the opposite page, which shows how almost 85% of tenants are happy with the way that we are providing our housing services.

These statistics were gathered through our first year of conducting surveys that measure how satisfied tenants are across a range of services. The Council is now required to routinely conduct these surveys, called Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and we will continue to keep you updated.

Finally, involving tenants in everything we do is extremely important, and you can learn how one tenant is supporting us with some vital fire safety work on page 6.

Cllr Jonathan Slater
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Estates



It's good to talk

I'm told that my Grandad was able to 'talk the hind legs off a donkey'. I'm also told that I take after my Grandad. I'm not sure if either of these are a total compliment, but it is 'good to talk'.

With this in mind, and particularly for people of my generation, it's refreshing to be able to ring up about a problem and have an actual person answer the phone.

As tenants we are most likely to phone the Council about repairs, but there are so many more avenues for discourse, in more detail in this issue, but I'd like to briefly introduce three really important ones.

If you find that you need any form of support, personal or with your tenancy, the 'Tenant Support and Wellbeing Service' is available 24/7, 365 days a year. It's completely confidential and staffed by real people who can direct you to relevant parties in all sorts of categories, including financial and mental health.

Next, you can 'Be Heard from Home' which does exactly what it says on the tin. This group is especially useful for tenants with mobility issues and, if you struggle with computing, help and advice is always available to, well, be heard from home!

Finally, if you are of pension age please check if you are eligible for Pension Credit before 21st December. As well as getting the Winter Fuel Allowance, you could qualify for other entitlements. Please read the article on page 16 and then give someone a call.

David Smith
In Touch Tenant Editor

Tenants satisfied with our housing services

The Council's Housing Service is performing well according to an independent survey that revealed 84.9% of tenants are satisfied with the way Bassetlaw provides its services.

The survey was conducted by IFF Research on behalf of the Council following the introduction of Tenant Satisfaction Measures – a legal requirement introduced by the Regulator of Social Housing to show how landlords are performing and where improvements can be made.

The perceptions of Bassetlaw's housing services were collected from over 630 telephone surveys with tenants and residents between April 2023 and March 2024, and included feedback on measures including overall tenant satisfaction, the quality of homes, and whether tenants' views are listened to and acted upon.

Cllr Jonathan Slater, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Estates said: "It is welcome news to hear that tenant satisfaction for our Housing Service is positive, with people feeling safe and secure in their homes.

"We will continue to work hard to make further improvements to services, which will further enhance the quality of life for our residents."

The survey has revealed that the Council is performing strongest in making homes safe and secure according to over 89% of tenants and residents, along with over 86% being satisfied with the quality of their home.

A few more highlights are shown below, but you can find the full results at www.bassetlaw.gov.uk

While the results demonstrate the Council is performing well, there are areas identified where improvements can be made, including the repairs service, handling complaints, and communal areas. Action is already being taken in some of these areas with direct input from tenants.

Meanwhile, IFF are continuing to conduct tenant surveys across the district. They will call from **0330 027 0103** asking about the services we provide and it will take no more than 10 minutes to complete. More information about IFF research and this survey can be found at www.bassetlaw.gov.uk.





Green Doctors support tenants in their home

We've been working with the local charity Groundwork Five Counties to provide our tenants with advice on preventing mould, damp, and disrepair in their homes.

The charity's Green Doctor Team have been making home visits to residents across the district helping people save money and use their gas, electricity, and water more efficiently.

Between April and August this year the team, who provide bespoke, high-quality advice and practical solutions, visited 166 properties. If the advice is followed across all households it would lead to approximately £49,797 total savings, along with 97,715kg of CO2 and over three million litres of water per year!

A Green Doctor will also check your home for signs of damp and mould to remedy this as soon as possible, along with anything that needs repairing by the Council. This could be broken windows or doors, leaks, holes, weather damage or other issues.

The scheme works on a referral basis, and tenants should report damp repairs in the normal way to the Council. Should it be deemed appropriate, we will then refer cases to Groundwork Five Counties.

Tenants are urged to regularly check their homes for damp and mould and report this, along with any disrepair, to the Council by calling **0800 590 542**. We'll review each reported issue and find a solution as soon as possible.

Stay Warm and Wise

Age UK Nottingham and Nottinghamshire has launched their 'Warm and Wise' service.

It's totally free and available to those aged 50 years or above and aims to empower and educate people on ways to reduce energy use, cut bills and keep warm.

It includes free energy saving measures such as LED light bulbs and draught excluders, looking at maximising your income through benefit checks, and advising on how much to maintain a healthy temperature at home.

Its energy advisors can offer information and advice through home visits, over the phone or online.

You can find out more by contacting Age UK on **0115 8599 209** or email them at warmandwise@ageuknotts.org.uk



New era at Snipe Park

A new era is beginning at Snipe Park in Harworth and Bircotes with the space once again being used for play and enjoying nature.

Over the summer months Bassetlaw District Council, with help from local charity Groundwork Five Counties, have been working to improve the area.

The charity's Environmental Team has been tidying up the overgrown woodlands, which were previously an eyesore, by removing rubbish and cutting down dense trees and shrubs, allowing the area to be more open and accessible, with people finally able to use the footpaths again.

Cllr Lynne Schuller, Ward Member for Harworth and Bircotes, said: "I'm really pleased that we are working with Groundwork to resolve the long-term issues that we have experienced with the path alongside Snipe Park Wood, and clearing up the wood to bring it back into use as a green space that we can be proud to use."

Since carrying out the work, Groundwork Five Counties have held a series of free children's play sessions at Snipe Park called "Wellies in the Woods", combining play with education and creativity in nature, as well as enjoying their local green space, and making new friends.

The charity is now taking on the problem of annual flooding in the park, which had previously been highlighted as an issue for residents.

Legally, no work could be carried out on the drainage system while birds were nesting in ditches and as an environmental organisation, Groundworks' habitat management experts ensure the protection of local wildlife comes first.

The bird nesting season is now coming to an end, so the team will be clearing out the overgrown vegetation blockages in the ditches, which is causing rainwater to spill over the grasslands and onto the footpaths.

Dense trees and shrubs will be reduced, and these cuttings will be used to create new habitats for the wildlife that can be found in the woods, creating a safe space for them to nest.

It should mean improved access for pushchairs and mobility aids with hopes the footpaths will become less wet and muddy for the many school children who use the route.

Groundworks Five Counties hope to come back regularly to Snipe Park to make sure the area is looked after and prevent another build-up of vegetation and rubbish.



Malcolm is motivated by tenant fire safety

A Bassetlaw District Council tenant is encouraging other residents to get involved with projects that are helping to improve council homes.

Malcolm Pike from Worksop has been a regular member of the Council's Fire Review Working Group, monitoring the performance of safety works being delivered by Ventro, and helping resolve issues raised by tenants as the improvements are made.

Now he has agreed to extend his role to help complete some more formal inspections of fire safety works on behalf of the Council.

Malcolm said: "I've always had an interest in fire safety, my nephew is a firefighter, as are some of my friends. Following the Grenfell fire, I wanted to get involved to make sure residents here are safe.

"Since getting on board, I've been made to feel very welcome and I've a better insight into what the Council does to new and existing properties to make them safer. I feel I am making a difference; you've got to get involved, you can't just sit back and leave it to someone else.

"I don't work for the Council, I am a resident first and foremost, so whatever I say or look at and check is for the benefit of other residents, and I'd encourage others to have their say."

Malcolm's contribution and support to help improve services for other tenants has been welcomed by the Council's Housing Service and the Ventro Group.

Darren Ibell, Property and Development Manager at Bassetlaw District Council said: "Malcolm has been a regular member of the review team meetings for some time now and has provided a valuable contribution throughout, which has been hugely appreciated."

"I am grateful he has agreed to extend his role and work with more of our partners to carry out inspections and provide a valuable tenant perspective."

Over the past 12 months, Bassetlaw District Council has invested £1.5 million in preventative measures that will improve fire safety in communal housing.

There are plans to continue this work over the next one to two years, so all council flats that lead onto communal areas meet the current requirements when it comes to being able to withstand fire, detect it and put it out in a timely manner.

Get involved by contacting our Tenant and Resident Engagement Officers:

Email: anita.fairweather@bassetlaw.gov.uk
joshua.booth@bassetlaw.gov.uk

Tel: 01909 533 263

Be Heard from Home

We'd like to introduce our Be Heard from Home Group, which does exactly what it says on the tin, and offers Bassetlaw tenants the opportunity to have your say without leaving the comfort of your own home.

There's no need to attend a physical meeting and being part of the group will give you lots of opportunities to get involved, including:

- Surveys emailed or posted to your home.
- Opportunity to take part in consultations using Microsoft Teams.
- Access to free online training.
- Take part in online based workshops and scrutiny sessions to help influence improvements to our services.

There will also be other opportunities to Be Heard from Home as the group develops.



If you're interested in being part of this group, please contact your Tenant and Resident Engagement Team at Bassetlaw District Council on **01909 533 263** or email anita.fairweather@bassetlaw.gov.uk or joshua.booth@bassetlaw.gov.uk

Sign up to free newsletter!

Want to find out more about what's going on and have regular information on housing services, but can't wait for the latest In Touch to drop through your letterbox?

By signing up to our digital newsletter, you can keep up to date on the latest housing news, stay informed on upcoming events across the district, find out important information related to your tenancy, discover opportunities to engage with the Council and share your views with us.

There's never been a better time, it's quick and easy to sign up to, and you'll get the latest

information delivered directly to your email inbox on a fortnightly basis.

Go to the homepage of www.bassetlaw.gov.uk and click on 'Sign Up To Newsletter' at the top of the page.

If social media is more your style, you can also connect with us and a community of fellow tenants on our dedicated Bassetlaw District Council Housing Facebook page. There's regular content posted every week and to discover more, search for [@BassetlawDCHousing](https://www.facebook.com/BassetlawDCHousing) on Facebook.



Getting things right for you

Repairing trust

Tenants have an opportunity to provide feedback on repairs and maintenance thanks to a new report called 'repairing trust'.

A 12-week call for evidence was launched by the Housing Ombudsman across the country in August with a deadline of 25th October 2024 to respond.

Tenants can complete an online survey to share their experiences on common housing issues, including whether appointments are kept, if tenants are informed about the progress of repairs, and the standard of the work completed.

Cllr Jonathan Slater, Cabinet Member for Housing and Estates said: "I encourage residents to contribute to this report by identifying common issues, and providing their experiences of housing services."

The resident survey covers four main themes:

- Issues landlords face when contracting services
- Problems residents encounter with maintenance services
- Barriers operatives experience in delivering these services
- Lessons learned from successful initiatives within the sector

As well as highlighting positive changes made by landlords, it will also look at the preparations for the introduction of Awaab's Law, which legally requires landlords to provide repair timescales.

Take part at www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk and click on the yellow banner at the top of the page.

We aim to provide you with the best possible quality services resources allow, but if things go wrong, we want to know so that we can look into what's happened, provide an explanation and an apology, and make improvements.

You can report things to us in a variety of ways starting with a service issue, which may be easy to resolve. You can do this by contacting our Customer Services Team who can talk you through the most appropriate routes for you.

If it's a repeated issue and you're not happy with the way you've been treated or you've experienced further unreasonable delays and remain dissatisfied, you can raise this as a formal complaint.

You can do this on our website by visiting www.bassetlaw.gov.uk where you can also find our Complaints Policy, contact customer services on **01909 533 533** or email customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk

The procedure has two stages should you not be happy with our first response. If you are still dissatisfied, you can refer your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman for them to review.

For more information about the Housing Ombudsman, please visit: www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents

Tel: 0300 111 3000

Email: info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Post: The Housing Ombudsman
PO Box 1484
Unit D
Preston
PR2 0ET



Don't get caught out by disrepair claim farmers

Over the last few months, we've been told about an increasing number of tenants who are getting calls or visited at home about 'disrepair claims' and how some people could be in line for 'compensation'.

These calls are being made by companies who claim to be from the Council's 'Disrepair Team'. However, these calls are often from companies known as 'claim farmers' who fish for information and your personal details, which they will then sell onto No Win, No Fee solicitors without your knowledge or consent.

These No Win, No Fee companies may then encourage you to take legal action against the Council for any disrepair – repairs that you may have reported to the Council but have not been resolved within our timescales or to a high enough standard – and promise compensation.

Should you be contacted by one of these companies, we strongly advise that you do not to give them any of your personal and tenancy details or start the process of any legal action.

In some cases, if a tenant does not wish to go to court or if your claim fails, you could be left to pay large legal or other hidden costs yourself. Some of these companies can also act in an aggressive way should you change your mind.

To claim 'Disrepair', you must have reported the defect to us before, have evidence that we have failed to deal with the work, and to have resolved it in a reasonable timescale.

If you have any outstanding repairs or concerns with the condition of your property, the fastest and most risk-free thing to do is to call the Council's Housing Repairs Team on **0800 590 542** and report the repair to us immediately.

We will then ensure your repairs are carried out as quickly as possible in line with our Repairs Policy.

If you have already reported a repair or have requested an inspection and have not been satisfied with the level of service the Council has provided, as a tenant you are entitled to raise a complaint.

You can do this online at www.bassetlaw.gov.uk or call **0800 590 542**. If you are still not satisfied by our response, you can take your complaint to the Housing Ombudsman, who may investigate on your behalf.

If you have already signed up with a No win / No fee claim company and are worried or concerned about it, we suggest that you contact Citizens Advice who may be able to provide advice and support.



National award recognises housing transformation

Earlier this year we celebrated some national recognition for the work we've done to modernise our Independent Living Schemes and improve the overall experience for residents.

Thanks to this, we collected an AICO Community Award in the 'Neighbourhood Transformation' category, when the event was held in Birmingham in April.

The AICO Community Awards celebrate and recognise excellence within the social housing industry and local community with entries from across the country.

To make this happen, we've been working in partnership with our main contractors Fortem and Make Consultants to transform Larwood House in Worksop and Westmorland House in Harworth and Bircotes, with plans for more in the pipeline.

Cllr Jonathan Slater, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing said: "Projects like these are vital in helping our older residents. It gives them a place to feel safe and reduces isolation whilst also providing them with high quality, good value living.

"We're proud of the work we are doing to improve the standard of the homes at our Independent Living Centres and working with Fortem has allowed us to consider the residents who will call them home, from the start of the project to the finish."

Bright, modern, and welcoming apartments have been created at Larwood House in Worksop, with updated communal areas, and energy efficient measures such as solar panels and air source heat pumps.

There's also spacious and inviting communal spaces including a lounge, kitchen, and accessible gardens, as well as a store for personal mobility scooters, a drying room, and a treatment room for visiting mobile hairdressers.

Craig Taylor, Director of Regeneration and Neighbourhoods at Bassetlaw District Council said: "I am delighted our ambition to transform and invest in our Independent Living Centres has been recognised nationally.

"As well as providing quality independent living for an aging population we are addressing health and wellbeing inequalities, cutting running costs and reducing carbon emissions by installing energy efficient heating systems and insulation."

Since winning the award, residents have moved into Larwood House and major improvement works at Westmorland House in Harworth have been completed.

In the coming year further schemes are planned to make improvements in the district at Conway Gardens in Retford and Swallow Court in Misterton.

House is set to be a home

A new, modern, comfortable, and state of the art residence for older people in Harworth and Bircotes has been completed as part of an ambitious long-term housing project.

Westmorland House Independent Living Centre will soon welcome tenants into its bright, modern, and welcoming building that features 34 energy efficient flats to provide homes for residents over the age of 60 or with a registered disability.

Among the facilities are a fully fitted kitchen, level access bathroom with shower facilities, and gas fired controllable central heating.

Tenants will also benefit from large and spacious internal and external communal areas including an accessible central courtyard and bright communal areas including a lounge and kitchen. Other facilities include a laundry room, storage for mobility scooters with charging facilities, and a secure door entry system with 24-7 digital warden aided technology.

The project is part of significant Council investment in its accommodation for older people as part of a five-year partnership with specialist design and build company Fortem. It follows the completion of Larwood House in Worksop, with work due to start at Conway Gardens, Retford in the coming months.

Cllr Jonathan Slater, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, said: "It is pleasing to see work to transform Westmorland House into a state-of-the-art residence is nearing completion. This investment in our Independent Living Centres is vital in helping our older residents have access to modern and welcoming accommodation of good quality with reduced energy costs."

Energy efficiency measures have also been included at Westmorland such as a future proofed gas heating system that could be upgraded to be fuelled by a gas and hydrogen mix when required, electric heating powered by a solar power PV system, upgraded ventilation and air conditioning to ensure communal areas are as comfortable as possible, upgraded windows and external wall insulation.

Smart monitoring systems will also be installed to ensure the building does not become at risk of damp and mould in the future.

Bassetlaw's Independent Living Centres are a collection of self-contained apartments and flats that specifically cater for older residents who wish to live in a community setting.

The completion of works at Westmorland House follows a £4m renovation of Larwood House, Worksop.



‘Fuel poor’ homes targeted

We’ve been working with our partners Westville to make our homes warmer and greener by delivering home energy efficiency upgrades across the district.

As well as targeting ‘fuel poor’ properties in our own housing stock, those with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D or below, we’ve also been helping to deliver upgrades to privately owned homes.

Among the green technology we’ve been installing are loft or cavity wall insulation, external wall insulation, air source heat pumps and solar panels.

Cllr Jonathan Slater, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Estates said: “Working with our partners Westville, we have made more of our tenants’ homes warmer and greener through these energy efficient upgrades across the district over several years.

“However, at a time when many of our residents face the prospect of living in fuel poverty, we have acknowledged that more needs to be done.

“We’ve increased our levels of investment over the last two years and delivered the necessary improvements to more than 200 council households in the greatest need, a significant increase from previous years.

“In addition, we continue to speak with other local housing providers, with a view of teaming up where possible, to access further external funding streams, as we look to continue to increase the number of residential property upgrades. This helps to reduce the energy costs for our residents, and provide warmer, more comfortable homes.

“Our Vision 2040 has an ambition to improve the efficiency of our housing and wider estates and this work will help us to achieve it.”

This latest work is being supported by a mixture of external funding via the Government’s Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF), and the Council’s annual capital programme allocations.

All this work is part of a commitment to meet a Government target, through the Clean Growth Strategy, for social housing providers across the country to achieve the minimum rating of Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C for rented properties by 2035 (2030 for ‘fuel poor’ households).

This is an important milestone towards the longer term and much more ambitious and challenging aspiration of the Council to make all homes next zero carbon by 2050.



Trial eliminates unsightly algae

Bassetlaw District Council is trialling a new approach to protect the outside of tenant’s homes from developing algae.

The Council, in partnership with a company called Belzona who specialise in protective coatings, have been working on six properties in the Milnecroft area of Retford, which have been suffering with excessive algae growth on the white external rendering.

The algae has been cleaned off and a new clear coating has been applied to the rendering, which is water repellent, breathable and will hopefully provide protection against it regrowing.



It’s thought the unsightly algae has been caused through moisture getting into the original rendering, and it is now hoped this preventative work will keep it at bay.

The work, which also has the additional benefit of improving insulation, will now be monitored over the winter months before plans are looked at to use it on any of our other properties across the district.

If it proves to be successful, it may lead to us applying the coating to all future external wall insulation schemes as a way of preventing issues occurring in the first place.



Are you getting winter ready?

Being winter-ready is more than getting your big coat out as power companies tell us to Prepare, Care and Share.

Your electricity network operator is already prepared having invested millions of pounds every year to improve the network that powers your life and delivers the electricity you buy from your supplier to your door.

But winter can bring severe weather that can cause damage to your local power network, so it’s important you know what to do if your power is ever affected.

What should you do?

PREPARE: Make sure you add **105** – the number to call in a power cut – to your mobile phone and bookmark your local electricity network operator’s website. Visit [powercut105.com](https://www.powercut105.com) to find yours.

CARE: If your medical or personal situation means you could be more vulnerable in a power cut, join the FREE Priority Service Register to get extra help. Visit [theprs.co.uk](https://www.theprs.co.uk) or call **105** to speak to your local network operator and find out more.

SHARE: Tell your friends and family so they know what to do too.

Why not make a grab bag, just in case. It could include torches, batteries, charged power banks, blankets and long-life food and drinks that can be consumed cold.

Visit [northernpowergrid.com/be-prepared](https://www.northernpowergrid.com/be-prepared) to get more top tips.



Opportunities knock

We've been encouraging local students to think about potential career opportunities within the housing sector, property development and surveying.

Thanks to workshops hosted at The Bridge in Worksop, students from North Notts College have been given a flavour of the different roles available in delivering housing services to our tenants in the district.

Earlier this year, alongside our partners United Living, Ventro, and Make Consultants, we led sessions with students studying for T level design, surveying, and planning for construction, looking at areas including fire safety, project management and building works.

Ventro were on hand to provide practical experience of installing fire prevention measures, United Living showcased how they maintain and repair council houses, while Make Consultants discussed the role of surveying and project management.

Mark Scott, Ventro Group Project Manager said: "I was taken aback by how engaging the North Notts College students were. They performed a practical firestopping exercise, showing a real thirst for knowledge and all had a genuine interest and ambition to work within the industry. I'm certainly looking forward to any further collaborations with Bassetlaw District Council."

The event gave students an idea of what is involved in working for the Council's Housing Team. As a result, a number of one day work placements have been offered to learners with the possibility of securing future, more permanent roles.

Digital skills support

A series of basic workshops are being held over the coming weeks at Larwood House and Priory Court in Worksop, Conway Gardens in Retford, and Swallow Court in Misterton.

Those taking part in the free sessions at our Independent Living Centres will learn about basic digital skills, PDFs and websites, Microsoft Teams and importantly how to stay safe online.

If the project proves to be a success and there is funding available, there are hopes it could be extended to other residents in the district.

Meanwhile, Inspire Adult Learning is offering free IT and digital skills courses to local businesses and their employees.

They are providing tailored courses to meet business needs and aiming to help boost productivity, retention, and skills in the workforce. The funding for the training has come from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

If you are interested and want to find out more visit www.inspireculture.org.uk

More residents recycling

More of our residents are getting the chance to recycle their waste thanks to a new trial of smart communal bins.

Around 20 residents living in Cresswell Road flats, which are part of the Sandy Lane estate in Worksop, are now able to separate their rubbish into either general waste or recycling.

The new bin stores, as well as a glass recycling bank, are also helping to smarten up the estate and are part of modernisation plans by the Council. Should this trial be successful, it could be introduced at other locations across the district.

Cllr Jonathan Slater, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing and Estates said: "These new communal bins provide a great opportunity to enable more of our tenants to access recycling opportunities.

"Increasing the amount of rubbish that we can recycle, while reducing the amount of general waste that gets sent for incineration is extremely important. We also continue to look at ways to modernise our estates to improve the quality of life for all our residents."

The new bins will be assessed over an eight-week period and if working well, there are 10 other locations on the estate which could see them introduced over the course of the remaining financial year.

Recycling

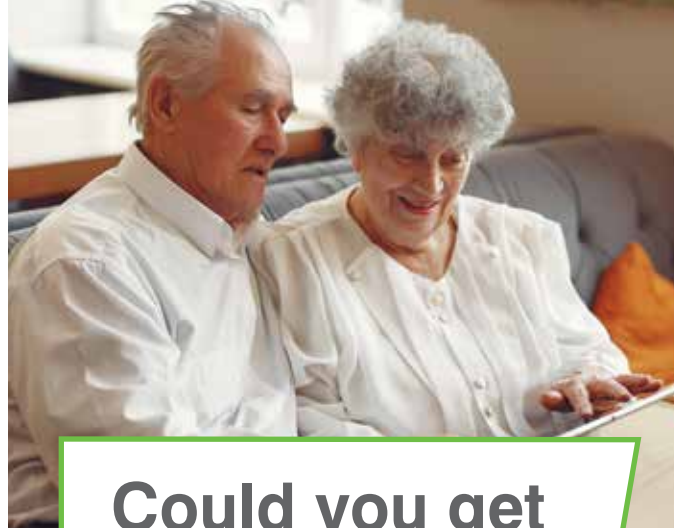
Only certain items can be placed in our blue bins for kerbside collections in Bassetlaw, and these new communal recycling bins. This is because of the limited types of materials that can be sorted at the county's Materials Recovery Facility, which is operated by Veolia. These include:

- **Paper** - newspapers, envelopes, junk mail, magazines, and catalogues (*not shredded paper*)
- **Cardboard** - cereal boxes, egg boxes and cardboard tubes (*Please do not put takeaway pizza / burger boxes as these will be contaminated with food and grease*)
- **Tins and Cans** - food tins, drinks cans and aerosol cans
- **Plastics** - drinks bottles, milk cartons, shower gel and shampoo bottles, cleaning product bottles, yoghurt pots and margarine tubs (*Please do not place food trays or fruit punnets in your blue bin*)

You can also recycle many more items at the Household Waste Recycling Centres and take glass and textiles to our 66 Recycling Points across the district.

For a full list of items that can be recycled, please visit www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling





Could you get Pension Credit top ups?

Pensioners in Bassetlaw are being urged to check if they're entitled to Pension Credit, which could help with their day to day living costs.

Pension Credit tops up pension income, and if eligible, residents may also be able to access The Winter Fuel Payment, get help with rent and Council Tax, a free TV licence for 75-year-olds or over, or help with the cost of NHS services.

Bassetlaw residents are being advised to find out if they can claim by going online at www.gov.uk/pension-credit or by phone on 0800 99 1234.

Cllr Lynne Schuller, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing said: "It's important pensioners make sure they're getting the financial support they're entitled to, and I would encourage them to take advantage of the Pension Credit check by visiting the government website or by calling them."

It is estimated that 880,000 households across the UK are eligible for the support, worth on average £3,900 a year, but are missing out.

People over State Pension age need to apply by 21st December 2024, the last date for making a backdated claim, in order to receive this year's Winter Fuel Payment.

Support service is confidential

Bassetlaw tenants who need additional support and advice with everyday issues, can access a dedicated service, which is provided by our partners Life and Progress.

Over the last few years, the Council's Housing Team has received an increasing number of enquiries from tenants seeking advice on financial issues, legal related issues, mental ill health and other health concerns.

So that we can support tenants further, the Tenant Support and Wellbeing Service is available to provide practical information, resources and counselling that will help you to balance your work, family and personal life.

They are available 24/7, 365 days a year to answer your questions, whatever you may need. They will also refer you to the most appropriate source of support, including counselling, legal, financial, childcare and consumer experts if needed.

There is no cost to use the service and you can use it as often or as little as you wish. It is completely confidential, and no one will know that you have used the service without your permission. In addition, no personal details are given to the Council.

You can call 0330 094 8845 for immediate support, or their website www.tsws-assist.co.uk has lots of useful information. To access the website, you will be asked for a username and password. These are - Username: [bassetlaw](#) / Password: [tenant](#)



Move to Universal Credit

People on benefits who have not yet switched to Universal Credit through changes in their circumstance or by choice, will now be part of a managed move.

Universal Credit is replacing six benefits; including Housing Benefit, Tax Credits such as Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit, Income Support, Income-based Jobseekers Allowance and Income-related Employment and Support Allowance.

Letters, called a Migration Notice, are now being sent out to those affected, with all notices expected to be sent by the end of 2025. The letter explains how you should claim Universal Credit within a three-month deadline, or risk losing your financial support.

On Universal Credit, most people will be entitled to the same amount they received from their previous benefits, or more. However, if the amount you're entitled to on your existing benefits is more than you'll get on Universal Credit, a top up is available. This is called 'Transitional Protection'.

The migration notice will explain what steps you need to take and more information is available online at www.gov.uk/universal-credit

There are also lots of organisations that can help you understand Universal Credit, help you make a claim,

and offer advice and support if you are finding it hard to manage.

You can also contact our Customer Services Team on 01909 533 533 or visit www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/benefits/universal-credit/where-to-get-help-support

Extra week for UC rent payments

If all or a portion of your rent is paid through Universal Credit, you will need to pay a little bit extra each week to ensure that you don't get behind with your rent.

This is because in a normal 'financial year', which runs between 1st April and 31st March, there are 52 rent payment weeks and UC is calculated over a normal 52 week year. However, every few years, extra days fall outside of this period creating a 53 week rent year. As your UC payments don't account for this, it means that your payments for this year are less than the rent you are charged for.

Please speak to your rent officer about paying a bit more each week to cover this extra week and to see if you are eligible for any other financial support. If you already receive Housing Benefit, your payments have automatically been changed.

You can contact us by calling 0800 590 542.



Big fines for fly-tippers caught by CCTV cameras

Four men captured on CCTV fly-tipping in Harworth and Bircotes have been fined and ordered to pay costs, with one of them given 120 hours community service.

In separate cases between August and September 2023, mobile cameras caught William Bradley, Scott Wilcox, Corrie Hitchcock, and Craig Chapman fly-tipping.

In August 2023, Bradley from Galway Road and Scott Wilcox from Moorgreen Way in Harworth and Bircotes, separately dumped soil in a layby on Snape Lane.

Both men pleaded guilty to the offence of fly-tipping at Mansfield Magistrates Court on 9th May 2024, with Wilcox stating he dumped the soil as he didn't realise it was an offence and wasn't aware of the options to dispose of it.

They were ordered to pay fines of between £480 and £1,246, victim surcharges totalling £690 and costs totalling £1,791.

In September 2023, Hitchcock from Thomas Street in Retford and Chapman of Phoenix Street in Grimsby were caught following a review of CCTV footage which showed it had been deposited using a hire vehicle which was traced back to Hitchcock.

Several bags of waste including electrical cabling, light fittings, plaster, and plastic piping alongside a flat screen TV were all fly-tipped in the same location on Snape Lane.

The defendant said he had dumped the waste as he did not have enough time to visit a recycling centre before the hire period for the vehicle ended.

Hitchcock admitted the offence when he appeared before Mansfield Magistrates court on 9th May 2024 and was fined £470, given a victim surcharge of £188 and ordered to pay £972 in costs.

Meanwhile, the mobile cameras revealed Chapman was a passenger in the hired vehicle used to deposit the waste. The defendant, who failed to attend Mansfield Magistrates Court twice in May 2024, was issued with a warrant for his arrest.

Chapman appeared before Magistrates on 27th June 2024 where he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 120 hours unpaid work and ordered to pay costs of £1,372.

You can find more information out about your Duty of Care, report fly-tipping to us and find further fly-tipping information our website: www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/bins-recycling-and-waste/fly-tipping

Dog owners who fail to clean up will be targeted

We're continuing to target irresponsible dog owners who fail to clean up after their pets, after councillors agreed to a renewal of the district wide Public Spaces Protection (Dog Control) Orders.

Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO) last a maximum of three years and we recently sought the public's views on whether the orders should continue for a further three-year period.

This consultation revealed overwhelming support to continue the orders and at an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council on Thursday 8th August, councillors approved the recommendation to renew the PSPO.

Cllr Darrell Pulk, Cabinet Member for Environment and Energy said: "For nearly a decade, the Council has been able to use these powers to make it clear what the Council, residents, and the law expects of responsible dog owners when exercising their pet.

"There has been overwhelming support for the extension of the Order, which sees careless dog owners caught and held accountable for their pets."

Public Spaces Protection (Dog Control) Order 2024

Bassetlaw's original orders were first introduced in 2015, renewed in 2018 and 2021 and, under the Dog Control Order 2024, from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2027, dog owners in the district are required to:

- Pick up their dog's faeces on any land to which the public have access.
- Keep their dogs on leads in specified burial grounds, cemeteries, and churchyards.
- Keep their dogs from entering into specified fenced children's play areas.
- Be able to demonstrate to an enforcement officer that they have a suitable bag in their possession for cleaning up dog faeces.

Under the current Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act, an offence under the Public Spaces Protection Order will be liable for a fine of up to £1,000 or a Fixed Penalty Notice of £100.



Ward boundary response

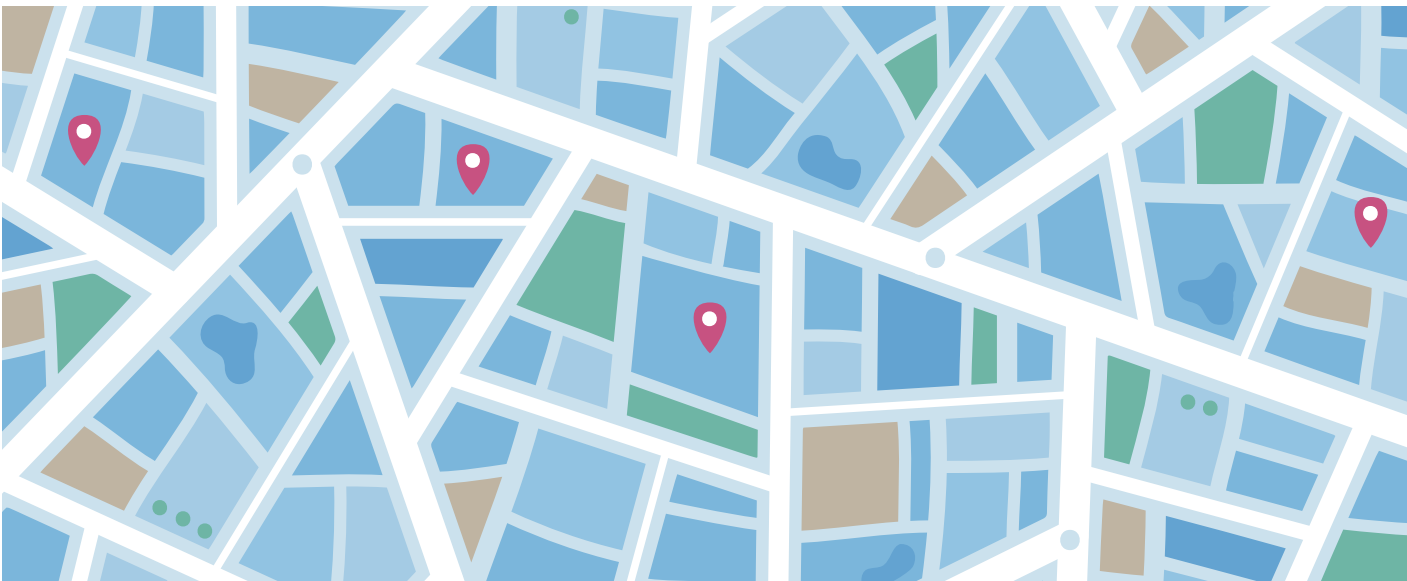
Bassetlaw District Council has responded to the Local Government Boundary Commission’s draft recommendations for new electoral arrangements in the district – which could include redefining ward boundaries and names.

Under the Commission’s proposals, the number of councillors will remain the same at 48, but some Ward Boundaries, areas and names could change to ensure that councillors represent the same number of electors, as well as better reflecting local communities in the future.

The Council, as well as other local organisations and residents were asked to respond to the 10-week consultation before the 7th October as the Boundary Commission sought to understand if residents and local organisations agreed with the proposals, that they were easy to understand, and convenient for local people, before they made their final decision.

In Bassetlaw, 18 of the 26 wards proposed by the Boundary Commission are largely in line with the Council’s earlier submission. But of the remaining eight, the Council did not support a change and has responded to the Commission.

These were on the grounds that they did not reflect natural community boundaries, interests and identities, or provide for effective and convenient government.



The 18 proposed ward changes supported by the Council include:

- Carlton
- Harworth and Bircotes East
- Harworth and Bircotes West
- Trent
- Retford Hallcroft and Central
- Retford Ordsall and Station
- Worksop Kilton
- Worksop North-East
- Worksop Valley
- Blyth and Langold
- Misterton
- Tuxford
- Retford Tilm
- Retford Thrumpton and Spital Hill
- Worksop Gateford
- Worksop Manton
- Worksop South
- Worksop West

While the ward changes not supported by the Council include proposals for Beckingham, Clarbrough, Clumber Park, East Markham, Everton, Leverton, Ranskill, and Walkeringham.

The final recommendations will be published in March 2025, with any changes coming into effect for the Local Government elections expected in May 2027.

For more information visit www.lgbce.org.uk and search for Bassetlaw. You can also read the Council’s response at www.bassetlaw.gov.uk and searching for Local Government Boundary Review for Bassetlaw.



New Bassetlaw leaders excited to get to work

There’s a new political Leadership Team at Bassetlaw District Council after the Labour group - who form the Council’s ruling political administration – elected a new Leader and Deputy Leader.

Cllr Julie Leigh (Worksop South) and Cllr Jonathan Slater (East Retford North) were appointed as Leader and Deputy Leader at an Extraordinary Council Meeting in July.

The new team was announced after Cllr James Naish and Cllr Jo White (former Leader and Deputy Leader) stepped down following their election to Parliament.

Cllr Leigh said: “I am tremendously excited to get to work as part of the new Leadership Team alongside Cllr Slater. I’d like to thank James and Jo for their leadership of Bassetlaw and know that they will be a strong voice in Parliament for their constituencies.”

Cllr Slater said: “It is an honour to be chosen by my fellow Labour Councillor peers to be their next incoming Deputy Leader.

“I look forward to working with and supporting Cllr Leigh, as well as engaging with our elected members to ensure we deliver the highest quality services for all our residents in Bassetlaw over the next three years.”

Cllr Leigh is the first woman and seventh person to hold the position of Leader of the Council since the Bassetlaw Authority was created in 1974.

Due to a change in leadership, there have also been some changes within the Council’s Cabinet. Cllr Charles Adams (Welbeck Ward) has been appointed as Cabinet Member for Business and Skills, while Cllr Steve Scotthorne (Carlton Ward) is Cabinet Member for Identity and Place.

There is also a new Armed Forces Champion for the district with the appointment of Cllr Sybil Fielding, who describes the new role as a privilege and is looking forward to supporting our veterans and their families in Bassetlaw over the coming months.

Cllr Fielding said: “For many years I have been an active member of a major armed forces charity, and a key part of my ongoing role will be to collaborate with veterans’ groups, clubs, and associations. Where individuals need help, my function is to signpost to the best route.”

The Council has committed to a new Armed Forces plan for the next four years, building on the Armed Forces Covenant Commitment, which aims to make sure there is help locally for those who need it.



Langold gets new Changing Places

We've officially opened our latest Changing Places WC at Langold Country Park as we work to modernise the facilities and make it more accessible.

The addition of a Changing Places toilet to the Green Flag award-winning park, featuring specialist equipment such as hoists, changing benches, adapted toilet and extra space for parents and carers, will support a person who cannot use standard accessible toilets.

£140k of funding for the project has been provided by the Council, alongside a £30k shared funding allocation from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, supported by the Changing Places delivery partner Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK).

It adds to our existing facilities in The Canch in Worksop and Chancery Lane in Retford. Meanwhile all visitors can benefit from a new café pod which has been put in place at Langold Country Park.

For more information on locations of Changing Places WC facilities visit www.changing-places.org

(Pictured are Cllr Lynne Schuller, Cllr Darrell Pulk and Mylor Beevers).

Check your details or risk losing your chance to vote

We're urging residents to check their electoral details to avoid the risk of losing your chance to vote on decisions that affect you.

Our Annual Canvas for 2024 is underway and you may have received a text, email (fromelections@bassetlaw.gov.uk) or letter. If you've been contacted and not done so yet, make sure the details on the register for your household are correct and provide updated information if necessary.

Recent home movers in particular are urged to check their details as they are less likely to be registered than those who have lived at the same address for a long time.

If you want to register, the easiest way is online at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Information on registering to vote is available at www.electoralcommission.org.uk

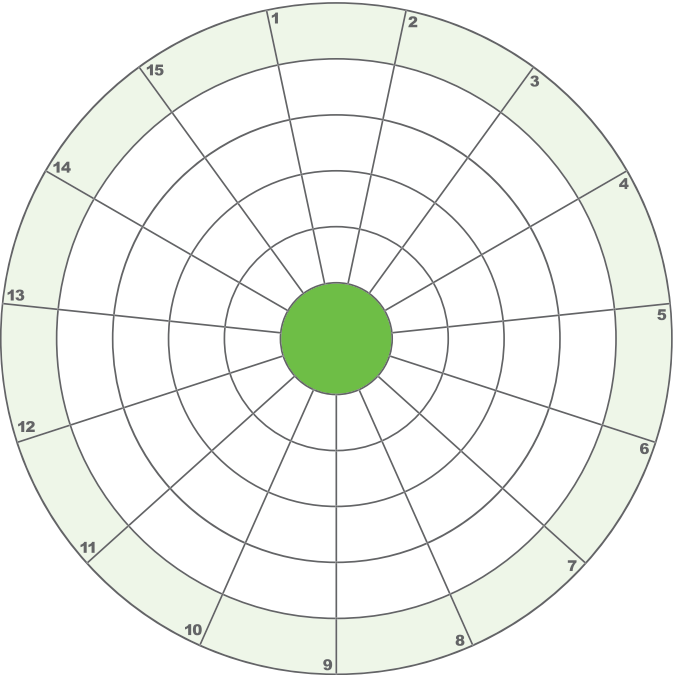
Residents with questions about their registration status can contact Bassetlaw's Electoral Services Team on **01909 533 252**.

Further information on the annual canvass is available at www.bassetlaw.gov.uk



Spiralword

If you can solve our spiralword you could win a £20 Love2Shop voucher. Use the clues to work out the 15 inward answers, then read clockwise around the circle to reveal the name of a famous British seaside destination!



- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Country in the UK | 9. Pan, fictional character |
| 2. Bald, golden or sea | 10. Crocodile Rock singer |
| 3. Opposite of sour | 11. British car brand or dog name |
| 4. High male singing voice | 12. French impressionist painter |
| 5. Recently reformed band | 13. Row, quarrell |
| 6. Tortilla chip & cheese dish | 14. A continuous exchange of shots in tennis |
| 7. Carlos, Ferrari F1 driver | 15. Alpine bottled water brand |
| 8. Mothers brother | |

The seaside town is:

Fill in your details and follow the entry instructions:

Name:
Address:
Telephone:






Bassetlaw District Council will not store your personal data supplied as part of any competition entry and will only use it for the purpose of determining a competition winner. Once a winner has been drawn, all data will be deleted.

Kids Club

If you can complete our Kids Club puzzle, you could win a £20 Love2Shop voucher.

Sea-doku

Complete the puzzle so each column, row, and 4 x 4 box has only 1 fish, 1 starfish, 1 clam and 1 crab in each. Once you have, tell us your name, age, address and phone number, then follow the entry instructions.

Name:	Age:
Where you live:	
Telephone:	

Please send all competition entries to:
Customer Services, Queen's Building,
Potter Street, Worksop, S80 2AH
Or email a photo or scan of the entry to:
customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk
Closing date for all entries is 8th March 2025.

Winners

Congratulations to Marjorie Kettlewell from Ordsall and Logan Crowder from Carlton-in-Lindrick, who were our lucky winners from Issue 55.

Contact us



0800 590 542



www.bassetlaw.gov.uk/housing



customer.services@bassetlaw.gov.uk



Text us on 07860 021 511



Find us on Facebook - BassetlawDCHousing



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Visit us at:

- Retford Office

Nottinghamshire County Council Building,
Chancery Lane, Retford, DN22 6DG

- Worksop Office

Queen's Building, Potter Street, Worksop, S80 2AH

If you need any help communicating with us or understanding any of our documents, please contact us on **0800 590 542**.



Bassetlaw
DISTRICT COUNCIL
— North Nottinghamshire —