

# RESIDENT NEWSLETTER



Housing People

Creating places that people love to come home to  
December 2023 Issue



Eloise  
Age 6

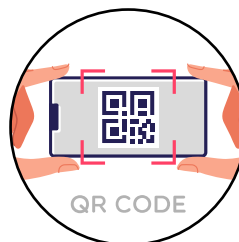
Great Places, Great Service, Great Business and Great People  
*Inside this Issue*



OPENING HOURS



FUN FREE THINGS TO  
DO THIS CHRISTMAS



QR CODES



SUPPORT OVER  
WINTER

## CONTACT US



**Postal**  
Cornerstone House  
Western Way  
Exeter  
EX1 1AL

Please note our office is  
appointment only



**Customer Service**  
01392 273462  
(Option 3)

[mail@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:mail@cornerstonehousing.net)



**Repairs**  
01392 273462  
(Option 1)

[repairs@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:repairs@cornerstonehousing.net)

We are open Monday to Friday  
from 9.00am – 5.00pm.

### What you can do on our website

- Report an ASB Incident
- Report a repair
- View your tenant handbook
- Apply for a mutual exchange
- Make a complaint, give feedback or a compliment

## WELCOME FROM JANET

Hello everyone, I do hope you are all enjoying the run up to yet another busy festive season. I will chat about the business side of things first.



Please, please remember that whilst we enjoy buying presents for our family, we also need to make sure that the rent is paid and that we are all safe, warm and comfortable.

There is an article about Hot Water Bottles, and who does not like to cuddle up to one of these on a cold winter's night? But be warned! They do get old and can burst.

The Residents Engagement Panel, were busy right up to this week, we engaged with various reviews and planned our 2024 year, with Cornerstones Tenants Handbook being revised and updated to help you all.

Back to the fun and frolics; Inside is an article on what is going on during the school break, which and free and things to do. Enjoy this month's bumper packed Newsletter, and the REP's will be back on Wednesday January 10th 2024 working hard on your behalf.

*Janet Gale*

Janet Gale  
Chair, Residents Engagement Panel.



## ANNUAL REPORT TO RESIDENTS

Our annual report to residents is now live for 2022/2023 highlighting the work we have achieved over the 12 month period

[www.cornerstonehousing.net/annual-report-to-residents/](http://www.cornerstonehousing.net/annual-report-to-residents/)

# Merry Christmas



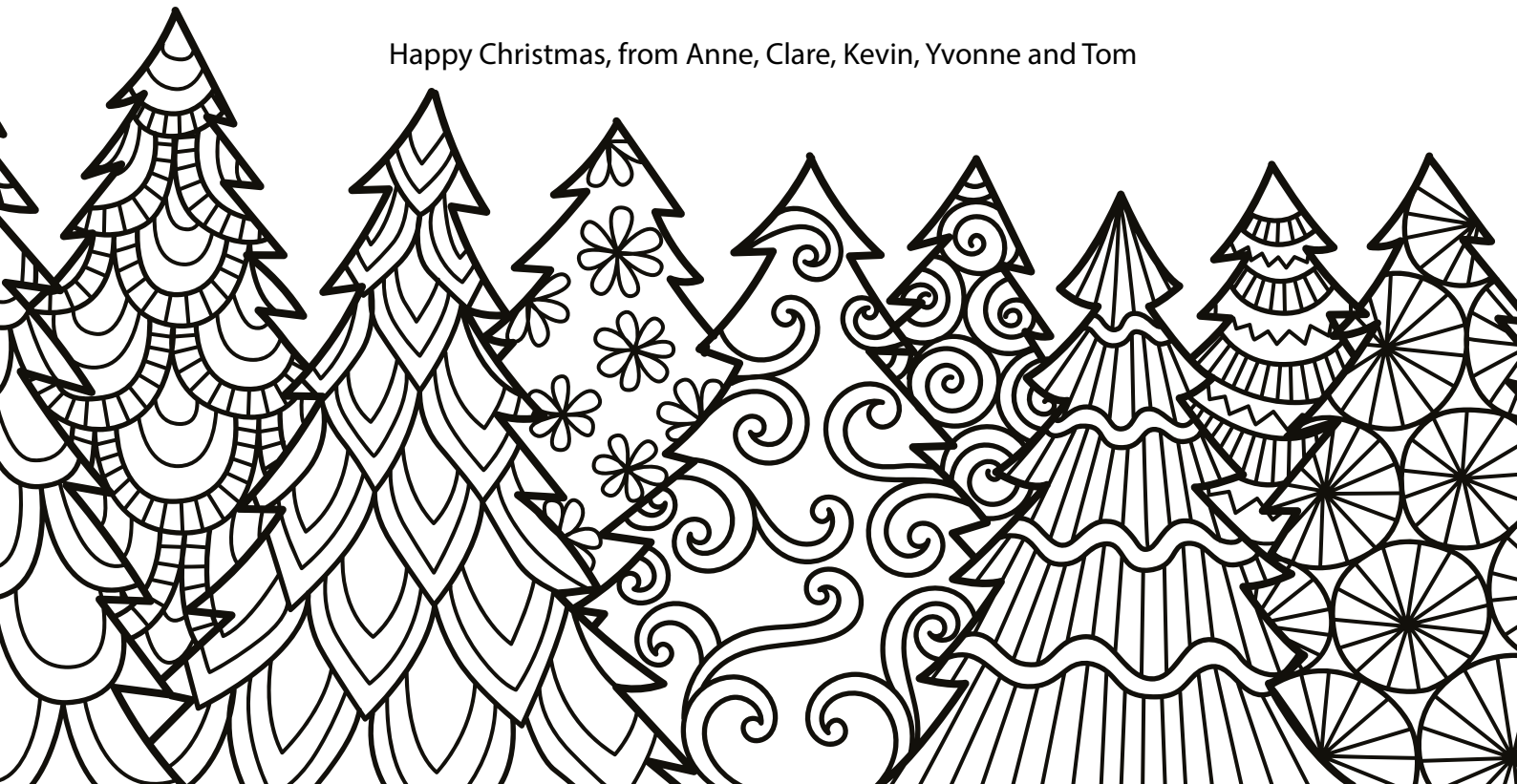
From all members of the Cornerstone Executive Team, have a very happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

Thank you so much to so many residents for responding to surveys during the year, and giving your time in other ways, to tell us what you think about our services. Listening to what you say, means that we can keep on making improvements to how we work.

In spring next year Tom Woodman, our Chief Executive, will be moving on to another housing association. We have already started recruitment for the role and there will be no impact on any of our services. We wish Tom well for the future. The board will be making sure that they recruit a replacement who has the same commitment to high-quality services and to involving residents.

Here's to a great 2024, keeping on providing warm, safe, affordable homes and quality services across our area.

Happy Christmas, from Anne, Clare, Kevin, Yvonne and Tom







## ENJOY THE FESTIVE PERIOD

We want everyone to enjoy the festive period but please be mindful of the dangers. Firefighters are called out on Christmas day twice as often than normal.

- Only use fairy lights that have been certified for use – this can be identified by the European Standards Symbol (represented by a CE) and the British Standards Kitemark.
- Don't hang flammable decorations on or above lights or heaters.
- Don't overload sockets or plug multiple extensions into each other.
- Don't leave fairy lights on for long periods, overnight or when you are out – this could increase the risk of fire and overloading.
- Christmas dinner – keep an eye on your cooking!
- Christmas trees are highly flammable, keep them in a well-ventilated area away from heat sources and don't leave them unattended with
- Use only non-flammable the lights on decorations or wreaths on doors in communal areas.

## FESTIVE FOOD FOR PETS

Skinless and boneless white meat such as turkey is okay for dogs and cats, but be careful that it's not covered in fat, salt, or gravy. It's best to keep your pets eating their normal appropriate food.

Festive food is delicious to us but to our pets much of it is highly toxic and dangerous. Take a look at the list below to ensure you're not giving treats that can make your pet unwell:

- Chocolate
- Mince pies
- Christmas pudding
- Onion gravy
- Alcohol
- Bones from carcasses are a dangerous choking hazard

For more information visit [www.rspca.org.uk](http://www.rspca.org.uk)







# OPENING HOURS OVER CHRISTMAS

Our head office and repairs service will close at 1pm on 22nd December 2023.

25th December - 2nd January - Emergency repairs only  
Call 01392 273462 option 1.

An emergency call out is something which has the potential to:

- cause danger to someone's health and safety or
- cause immediate serious damage and destruction to a property, home or building.

See [www.cornerstonehousing.net/tenant-handbook](http://www.cornerstonehousing.net/tenant-handbook) for more information on what is classed as an emergency and what is classed as routine.

Customer Services - 01392 273462 option 3

Phone lines are open 27th December – 29th December - 9am till 5pm.  
2nd January all services return to normal.

You can make a rent payment, report a routine repair, or make an anti-social behaviour report via our website 7 days a week.



# OUR WORK IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOODS

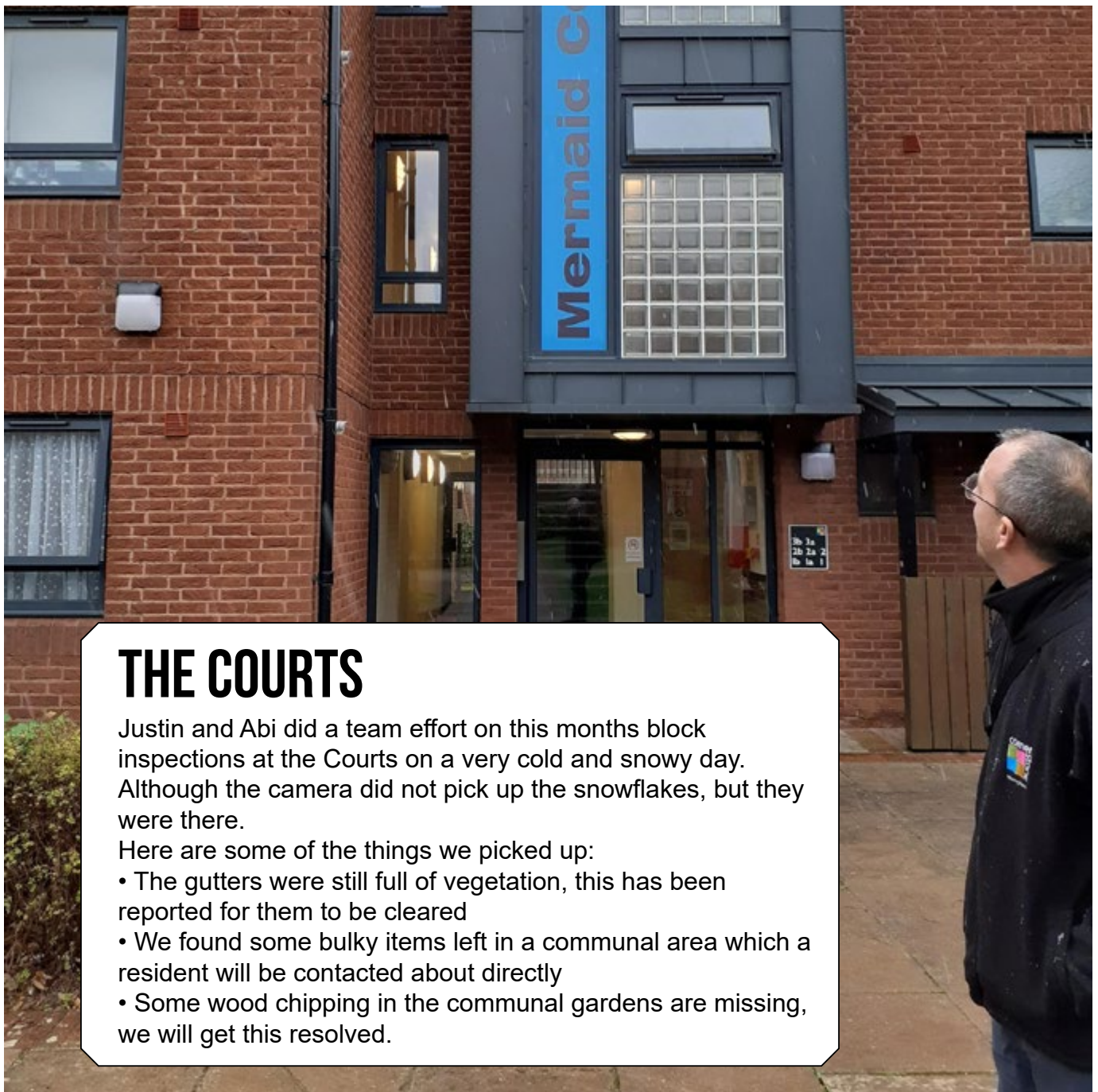
Walk around with Justin and Abi in November

Abi and Justin are two of our Housing Officers. If you would like to join a Housing Officer on future walk around please let us know by emailing

[mail@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:mail@cornerstonehousing.net)

Abi is the housing officer for Mid Devon, St Davids, Uffculme, Whipton, Wonford

Justin is the housing officer for Teignbridge, Mount Dinham, St Thomas, Redhills, Alphington, Exeter City Centre



## THE COURTS

Justin and Abi did a team effort on this months block inspections at the Courts on a very cold and snowy day. Although the camera did not pick up the snowflakes, but they were there.

Here are some of the things we picked up:

- The gutters were still full of vegetation, this has been reported for them to be cleared
- We found some bulky items left in a communal area which a resident will be contacted about directly
- Some wood chipping in the communal gardens are missing, we will get this resolved.



# CHRISTMAS COLOURING COMPETITION

Thank you everyone who has entered our colouring competition this year. The windows at our office on Western Way is looking as festive as Ever!

Below are some of our favourite entries!



Jake Age 6



Arlo Age 6



Finch Age 7



Albi Age 10



# HOT WATER BOTTLE

Do you have a hot water bottle?

There are a few things you may or may not know about hot water bottles.

Hot water bottles have a shelf life, have you checked how old yours is? The recommendation is to replace your hot water bottle every 2-3 years for safety reasons. Hot water bottles are made from rubber or PVC, Rubber does degrade over time and with use.

## How to check your hot water bottle

Every hot water bottle sold in the UK should have a 'flower wheel' on the funnel somewhere, which shows the date it was made.

The number in the centre of the wheel shows you what year it was made. For example, if it says 21, it was made in 2021. There are also 12 segments around the centre of the wheel. Usually, the number of these segments that have dots in show you what month it was made. So, if there are dots in four sections, the bottle was made in April.





## **How to use your hot water bottle safely**

Here are a few more tips on how to minimise the risk of burns...

### **Filling the bottle**

#### **Do:**

- Fill with a mixture of cold and hot water - Boil half the water needed and add cold water to the kettle or jug before filling the bottle.
- Fill the bottle over the sink - Pour water into the bottle carefully to avoid spills.
- Screw in the stopper until hand-tight - Ensure the stopper is securely in place.
- Check the bottle for leaks - Regularly inspect the bottle to ensure it is in good condition.

#### **Don't:**

- Don't use if cracked, worn, or leaking - Ensure the hot water bottle is in good condition before use.
- NEVER fill with boiling water - Using boiling water can cause damage and lead to the bottle bursting.
- Don't use the microwave or oven - Avoid heating the hot water bottle using these methods.
- Don't fill more than two-thirds full - Unless the bottle is designed to be fully filled, avoid exceeding this limit.

### **Using the bottle**

- Don't place in direct contact with your skin, always have a cover, towel, or clothing.
- Don't put pressure or weight on the bottle, it's not designed for you to sit or lie on it.
- Don't sleep with the bottle in bed overnight, remove it once the bed is warm before you go to sleep.

# SHARED OWNERSHIP APPLICATIONS NOW OPEN

Indio Fields, Bovey Tracey, TQ13 9BG

1 x Two bedroom semi detached  
1 x Three bedroom semi detached

If you would like to apply for one of these new homes, visit  
[cornerstonehousing.net/properties-coming-soon](https://cornerstonehousing.net/properties-coming-soon)



**AVAILABLE SUMMER 2024**



**SHOP SMART  
NOT SHARK**

**£7000**

IT COSTS A LOT MORE THAN THE PRICE  
TAG WHEN BORROWING FROM A

**Report Today**  
0300 555 2222

**LOAN SHARK**

**STOPLOANSHARKS**  
Intervention . Support . Education

## MAKE YOUR RENT A PRIORITY

Make rent a priority and prevent Christmas arrears. It is easy to get carried away in pre-Christmas spending and forget about rent, especially if your rental payment date is towards the end of the month.

An easy way to avoid missing a rent payment is to set-up a direct debit from your bank account.

If you would like to set up a direct debit or if you find yourself in financial difficulty, then please contact us for help and advice. Email us at [mail@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:mail@cornerstonehousing.net) or phone us on 01392 273462 Option 3.



# 12 DAYS OF SUPPORT



Mind - If you find Christmas a difficult time of year, Mind have some tips to help you cope:

- Plan ahead - think about what might be difficult about Christmas for you, and if there's anything that might help you cope.
- It's ok to prioritise what's best for you, even if others don't seem to understand.
- Consider talking to someone you trust about what you need to cope.

For more information visit [mind.org.uk](http://mind.org.uk)

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Qwell is free digital mental well-being support for adults, via chat, community support or self-help guides. It is completely anonymous; you don't need to give your name or email address to access the services they provide.

The chat is open from midday to 10pm on weekdays and 6pm to 10pm on weekends. For more information visit [www.qwell.io](http://www.qwell.io)

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The Moorings offer mental health support in a welcoming, safe, comfortable, non-judgemental, and non-clinical environment. Their team is available to provide emotional, social and practical support if you are in crisis or feel you are heading toward a crisis.

Wonford House, Dryden Road, Exeter, EX2 5AF.  
Monday-Friday 10am-midnight Saturday-Sunday & 12pm-midnight  
For more information call 07990 790 920 or email [devonexeter.mhm@nhs.net](mailto:devonexeter.mhm@nhs.net)

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The Proud2Be project supports LGBTQIA+ people to thrive, be free and safe and proud to be themselves offering regular online groups, social evenings, family friendly Saturday socials as well as many other events across Devon.

For more information visit [www.proud2be.org.uk](http://www.proud2be.org.uk)

# childline

Available online, on the phone any time of the day, Childline is available 365 days a year for anyone under the age of 19.

They cover a wide range of services from bullying, staying safe, abuse, worries about school or being neglected, they are available to give support and advice.

Call 0800 1111 or chat online, post on a message board.

For advice and help visit [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

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Age UK - Is open 365 days a year, including Christmas day, providing answers and reassurance to older people who have no one else to turn to. If you or someone you know needs support, call them free on 0800 678 1602, 8am to 7pm.

For more information visit [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

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Inclusive Exeter offers a weekly Drop-In Support Service for those from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities to provide informal help with form filling and IT. They recognise that people from BAME backgrounds can often face challenges like language and social barriers.

Our Drop-In Support Service is held at The Mint Methodist

Church Centre, Fore Street, Exeter, EX4 3AT on:

Tuesdays from 10. am to 12.15 pm.

Wednesdays from 10 am to 1.30pm

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Beat Eating disorders helpline is open 365 days a year. Christmas can be a difficult time for people with eating disorders. Changes to routine, whether one developed as part of the eating disorder or one that is helping you in recovery, can be difficult.

They offer a range of advice to get you through the festive season

For more information visit [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk)





**FEAR**

**FREE**

**BREAKING  
THE CYCLE  
OF ABUSE**

FearFree are working to break the cycle of domestic abuse, sexual violence and stalking across the Southwest.

They offer support, which is tailored to the person's needs and experiences, helping them right from crisis intervention, through to recovery sessions.

For more information visit [www.fearfree.org.uk](http://www.fearfree.org.uk)

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**kooth**

Kooth offer mental health support for teens and young adults is very important with 1 in 5 suffering from mental health illness in any given year. Kooth offer a variety of online mental wellbeing support in a free, safe and

anonymous community. You can read articles, join discussion boards, chat with the team and write in a daily journal, all from within the kooth app.

Kooth is available from age 10 till 18. For more information visit [www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

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**Staying Safe**  
from suicidal thoughts

Staying safe is support if you are struggling with suicidal thoughts. If you are not sure what to do in a moment of darkness, they can help you create a safety plan to support you. (A safety plan is emotional health version of putting on a seatbelt)

For more information visit [www.stayingsafe.net](http://www.stayingsafe.net)



Food banks are available to support all our residents throughout the year. Our customer service team are able to issue a referral code to any resident in need.

#### Exeter

Mint Methodist Church - All week - 11am - 2pm

Beacon Centre - Wednesday/Friday - 10am - 12.30pm

For information on opening times call 07818 226524 or email [info@exeterfoodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@exeterfoodbank.org.uk)

#### Mid Devon

The Manse - Crediton Congregational Church

Monday 6pm - 7 pm

Tuesday and Friday 10am till 12 noon

For information on opening times call 07740202721 or email [help@creditonfoodbank.org.uk](mailto:help@creditonfoodbank.org.uk)

#### Exmouth Food bank

Salvation Army Hall,

Tuesday/Friday between 1:30pm - 3pm

For information on opening times call 07749 322 291 or email [help@exmouthfoodbank.org.uk](mailto:help@exmouthfoodbank.org.uk)

# SOLAR PANELS AT ROCKFIELD HOUSE

A year ago, we installed Solar Panels at Rockfield house in Exeter. A resident has recently been in contact to let us know how it has been going.

“It’s been a year since we enjoyed solar panels at Rockfield house.

Apart from cutting electric costs by about 30% daily when the weather is good across the year, the summer 6 months brings a credit of £100. Which in my case equals a whole month of free winter usage. The winter feedback varies due to lower sunshine but it’s still a credit amount worth having.

I don’t know if my neighbours have bothered to submit their paperwork to their suppliers but from my experience it was well worth the trouble. I calculate that I benefit to the tune of about £300 p/a which is a significant amount in a single household, and I want to thank Cornerstone for the installation.”



## GRITTING

The recent cold spell really highlighted the dangers of ice and snow. Cornerstone, as much as we would like to, are not able to grit all our neighbourhoods. However, we have instructed a company called Ground Control to grit the following sites when there is a high risk of ice.

- Mount Dinham
- The Courts
- Cordery Road (including Cherry Barton)
- Norwood house

These sites are being gritted as they have been assessed as high risk for accidents in slippery conditions. There will also be grit bins provided at these sites.

If you are concerned about the conditions in your neighbourhood, please contact us to discuss how we can help.



# TAX CREDITS ENDING

Tax credits are coming to an end, and most people will need to apply for Universal Credit instead, this is called Managed Migration.

Managed Migration for people living in Devon will not start until after 8 January 2024 and you will receive a Managed Migration Notice letter from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) telling you when you need to make a claim.

Before you make a claim check with a benefit advisor such as Citizen's Advice Bureau or use a benefit calculator as you do not need to do this yet and could be worse off.

You do not need to apply until you get this notice as Under Managed Migration, if you are worse off on Universal Credit, you will receive Transitional Protection.

It is important you do not apply until you have received the Managed Migration Notice. If in any doubt, please contact us and we can signpost you for advice. Check out our Guide here [www.cornerstonehousing.net/move-to-universal-credit/](http://www.cornerstonehousing.net/move-to-universal-credit/)





# INTERNATIONAL MENS DAY November 19

Staff at Cornerstone came together to celebrate International Men's Day on 19th November 2023 with a focus on raising awareness of male suicide.

Suicide is the highest cause of death among men under the age of 45, with the highest suicide rate in the UK recorded for men aged 40 – 44. Our designated "Mental Health First Aiders" (Housing Officers Rosie Le Page & Justin Ryan and Finance Manager Kate Cook) talked to staff about the support they provide to anyone in Cornerstone or our residents.



We were also joined by Bill Hill, a volunteer with Andy's Mans Club who talked about his commitment to supporting the amazing Andy's Man Club suicide prevention groups across the City and nationwide. The groups are a confidential space for men to talk about any issues that are causing them concern.

If you are worried about your own, or anyone's, mental health and would like to find out about the support available please call or email us or see the support hub on our website.





# ANDY'S MAN CLUB

## #ITSOKAYTOTALK

ANDYSMANCLUB is brotherhood - it is about getting to know that guys around you have your back and are willing to listen.

ANDYSMANCLUB is compassion - feeling as though you're not alone in what you're facing and knowing your story can help others.

ANDYSMANCLUB is openness - they welcome any male over the age of 18, with no need to sign up, pay any fees or receive a referral.

ANDYSMANCLUB is nationwide - whether we're online or in one of our 155+ locations across the country, they have something available for you.

ANDYSMANCLUB is optimism - the groups help 3700+ guys every week realise that tomorrow can be better than today.

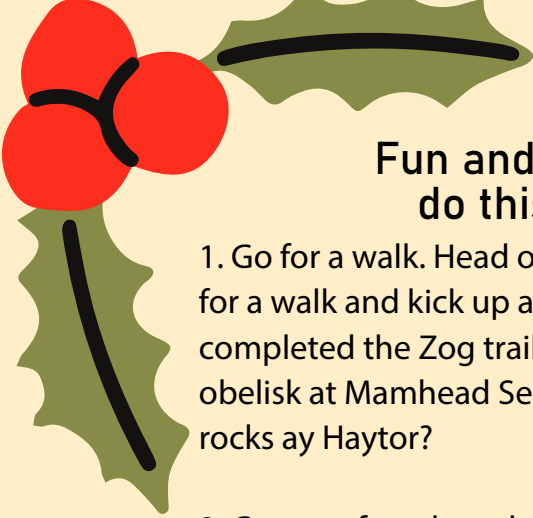
ANDYSMANCLUB is life-changing - sessions are available Monday nights (excl Bank Holidays) from 7pm

Locations:

- Exeter City Football Club
- Newton Abbot RFC
- Honiton Library
- Eat That Frog - Torquay


#ItsOkayToTalk






## Fun and free things to do this Christmas

1. Go for a walk. Head out to your local woods or park for a walk and kick up all the Autumn leaves. Have you completed the Zog trail at Haldon Forest? Discovered the obelisk at Mamhead Sensory Trail? Have you climbed the rocks at Haytor?
2. Create a fun obstacle course. Indoors or outdoors, test your skills in a friendly family competition. Is the floor Lava?
3. Write a story or play and act it out. Get the whole family or use your toys to bring your story to life.
4. Create a time capsule. Put things in it that are happening right now and then open it in 12 months and see how things have changed. You could create a sheet of questions that you answer annually and see how your ideas change as you grow. They could be favourite bands, foods you like, friends, goals etc.
5. Make a den. Make a den using blankets/duvets, cushions, and chairs for props.



We'd love to see photos of you taking part in these activities. Email your photos to [mail@cornerstonehousing.net](mailto:mail@cornerstonehousing.net) don't forget to put your name and address and we may feature you in our next newsletter.



# THOVERTON NEW BUILDS

Last month we completed two highly energy efficient ('A' rated) houses on a new estate in the village of Thorverton, near Exeter.

These properties feature solar panels and air source heat pumps, parking spaces and spacious gardens. Both properties were rented to families already living within the village, allowing one family to upsize and one family to downsize.







# 4 Rs PROJECT



***Recover, Restore,  
Re-use, Re-cycle!***

Exeter Community Transport Association



# 4 Rs PROJECT

- Recover:** Unwanted and abandoned Mobility Scooters and Mobility Equipment.
- Restore:** All Mobility Equipment will be restored to an acceptable standard.
- Re-use:** Newly restored Mobility Equipment will be available to buy, at low cost, for people on low incomes.
- Recycle:** Donated Scooters will be recycled and all usable parts will be sold at low prices to disabled people on low incomes to help maintain

**Exeter Community Transport Association**

8-10 Paris Street, Exeter EX1 1GA

01392 494001

[info@exetercta.co.uk](mailto:info@exetercta.co.uk)

[www.exetercta.co.uk](http://www.exetercta.co.uk)

Exeter Community Transport Association is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England.

Company number: 6874791

Charity number: 1129560

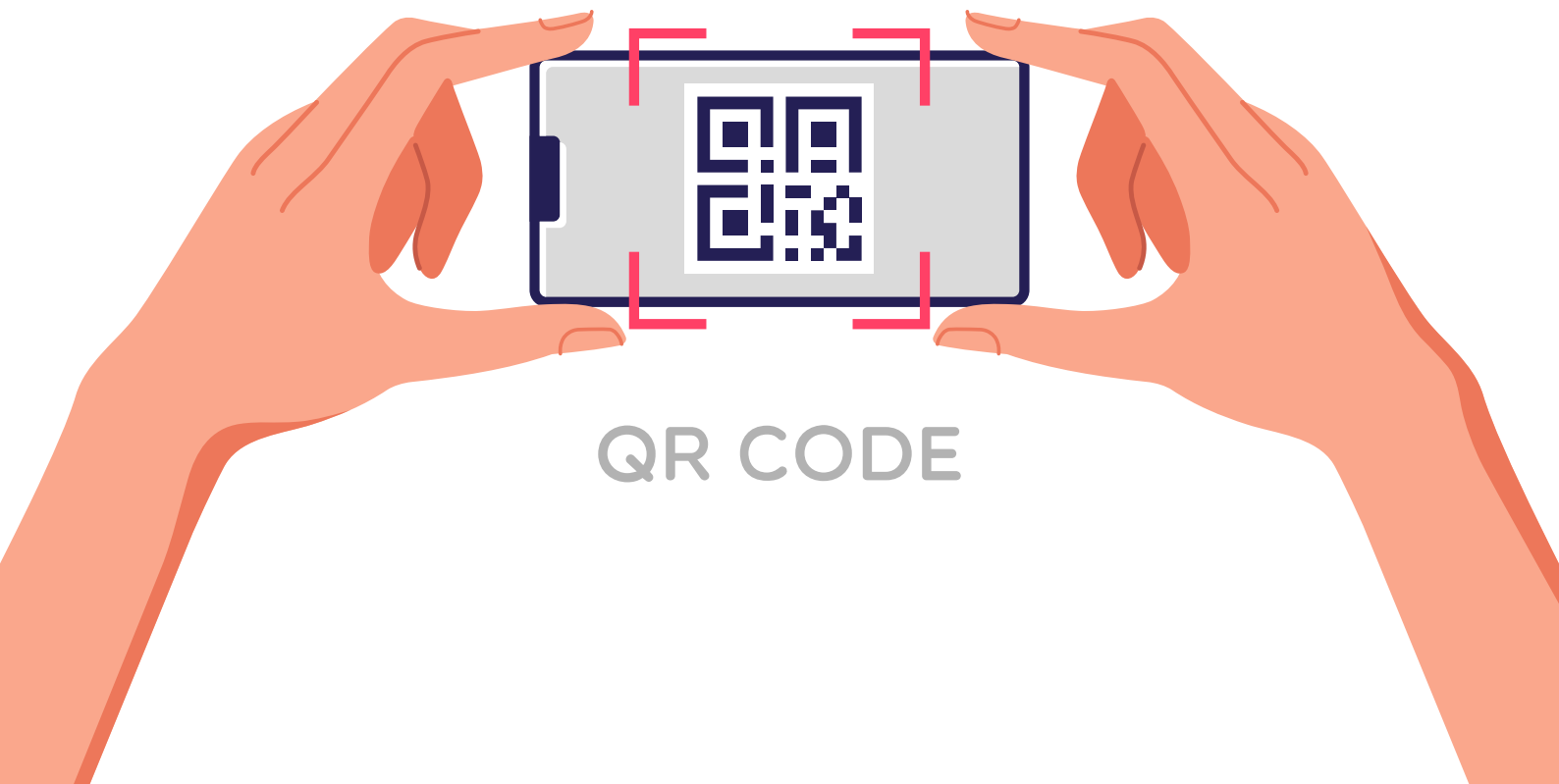
# QR CODE SCAMS

Please be aware of scams involving QR codes. The scam works by people sticking their own fake QR code over a genuine one, when the fake QR code is scanned, they are taken to a similar but fraudulent website and payment details are taken by the criminals.

Be wary of QR codes that you may need to scan at various locations, such as paying for a carpark, ordering items or services. Look out for any tampering or alterations to QR codes this might be bogus QR codes stuck over the genuine one.

If you believe a scam is taking place with a potential suspect still close-by, please phone 999. If you come across a fake QR code and no suspect is present, please report it to Action Fraud and revia the Devon & Cornwall Police website or by phoning 101.

Cornerstone do not use QR codes to ask for any type of payment.



QR CODE