

Housing

# CONNECT

February 2019 | Edition 9



**New Council House building programme**



**Meet the winners**

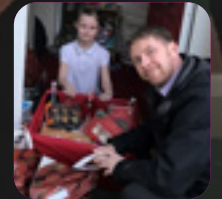
**and much more...**



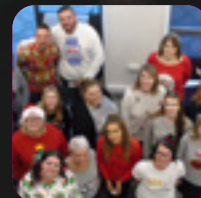
**Around the schemes - Xmas special**



**Future works to your home**



**Results of the Customer Engagement Survey**



[www.darlington.gov.uk/housing](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/housing)

# Meet the Winners!

## Panto Competition Winner 2018!

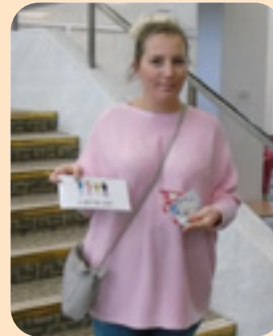
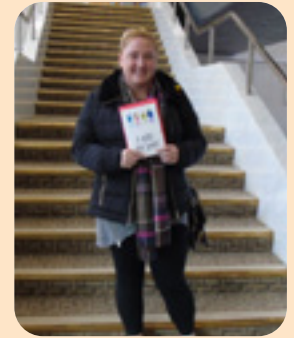
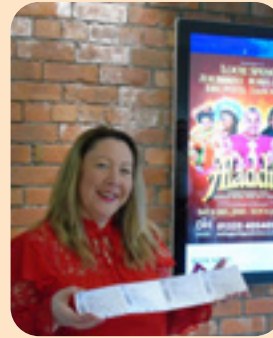
Lisa Clark was the lucky winner of the Housing Connect Panto Competition. Lisa won a family ticket for four and she took her daughter and grandchildren to the Hippodrome - Oh yes she did!!

## Survey Draw Winner

Emily Cooper was the lucky winner of the £50 shopping voucher in the draw for completing the survey in Housing Connect. The results of the Tenant's survey will appear on the Council's Website and in this edition of Housing Connect.

## Word Search Winner

There were two winners of the last special "pantomime" edition of wordsearch £25 shopping voucher prize. They were Aquesyka Natielska (left) and Lynda Harland (right), well done!



# New Council housing building programme announced

The Council is planning to build 1000 new homes over the next 10 years. Darlington is one of only a few Council's that have built new Council Housing in recent years and is one of an even smaller group of Council's that have used its Building Services as the main contractor for the building work. Having completed a programme of 160 new homes over three years the next programme has already got under way with Lancaster Way in Lingfield which will see 30 new homes built. These properties will offer the latest in modern living-all at an affordable rent. This includes 8 three bed houses, 4 four bed houses and 18 two bed flats. We will let you know about future developments as more sites are identified.



**Building  
quality  
homes  
for local  
people.**

To apply for a Darlington  
Borough Council home  
visit  
[www.darlington.gov.uk](http://www.darlington.gov.uk)



# A Day in the life of Lyndsey Robinson

## What does your job entail?

I have recently been recruited as Housing Team Leader responsible for managing the Housing Plus Team, Refugee & Asylum Services and Furniture package scheme. These are additional services which provide, assist and ensure tenants sustain their tenancies. Previous to this role I worked as a Tenancy Enforcement Officer for which I was responsible for dealing with nuisance & anti-social behaviour within council properties. At present I am managing all responsibilities until my last post has been recruited so my work is very varied at the moment.

## Describe a typical day?

Spontaneous, every day is completely different as my role can bring many challenges.

## What do you enjoy most?

I enjoy working within a busy service, thinking on my feet and having to problem solve often complex issues.

## What did you do before joining the council?

I have worked at Darlington for 13 years however previous to my time at Darlington Borough Council I worked for a Housing Association in Middlesbrough managing a challenging and diverse range of housing issues. I also worked as an estate agent which is when I developed my interest and passion for housing related matters.

## Hobbies/Interests

I enjoy spending quality time with my husband and dog which is an English Springer Spaniel. I like watching reality TV and soaps. I also love going on long haul holidays to America and the Caribbean however since getting my puppy I have not been able to travel further than the Lake District.



## Quick Questions

### Fave TV Programme?

Game of Thrones  
(can't wait for season 8)

### What was the first record you bought?

Albums by Roxette and Cyndi Lauper, 80's icons to those people that are fortunate enough to be too young to know.

### What is the item you couldn't live without?

Just one, wow that's hard. I would say my car, I like having my own independence and I am a bit of a car snob.

### Tell us something nobody else knows about yourself?

I was such a big Spice Girls fan back in the day that I cried when Geri (Ginger Spice) left the band.

# Future works to your Home

The Council is finalising its programme of capital works to Council housing stock for the next year. Set out below are the areas of major expenditure and where the work is likely to take place. Once the programme is confirmed by Full Council the programme of work will start in April 2019 and run through to the end of March 2020. Housing Staff will be in touch with affected tenants well in advance of work commencing.

- (a) Adaptations and lifts – £150,000 budget is to deliver adaptations within the Council's housing stock to enable tenants with a disability to remain in their own home and live independently across the Borough and to complete any major works to passenger lifts within sheltered and extra care schemes.
- (b) Heating Replacement - £950,000 to fund new condensing boiler and central heating upgrades. This work will predominantly be completed in the Park Place and Dodds Street areas. There will also be some miscellaneous properties which will be included in the programme.
- (c) Structural Repairs - £500,000 has been set aside to address any structural issues that may be identified within the year.
- (d) Lifeline Services - £50,000 is set aside to continue to provide upgrades to Lifeline equipment.
- (e) Repairs before Painting - £100,000 will be invested in joinery repair works in anticipation of the cyclical external painting programme. This will predominantly be in Haughton, Springfield and Firthmoor areas.
- (f) Roofing – £700,000 for the replacement of roofs, fascia's, soffits and rainwater goods together with the top-up of loft insulation where appropriate. The programme will primarily be in the Geneva Road Area.
- (g) Garages - £50,000 will be invested in improvements to the Council's garage blocks which will include Nightingale Avenue and demolition of low demand garages in poor condition at Rise Carr.
- (h) External Works - £300,000 will be used to provide new rear dividing fences and new footpaths to Council properties in various locations based on condition.

- (i) Smoke Detectors - £25,000 is required to replace existing hard wired smoke and heat detectors where systems are now 10 years old and reaching the end of their recommended lifespan.
- (j) Pavement Crossings - £32,000 has been identified to fund pavement crossings and hard-standings across the Borough.
- (k) Replacement Door Programme - £350,000 will be used to replace external doors with energy efficient composite doors in the Springfield Area.
- (l) Window Replacement - £500,000 has been identified to replace windows across the Borough with double glazed UPVC. These areas will be determined based on those in the poorest condition.
- (m) Internal planned maintenance – £1.980m for the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms, rewiring of electrical systems and heating system upgrades where required. This work will predominantly be completed in Branksome. There will also be some miscellaneous properties which will be included in the programme.
- (n) Communal Works - £100,000 is required to replace communal doors in the North Road area.



# Digital roll out - An update



Work to introduce the new digital option for you to manage many aspects of your tenancy is now due to be introduced during February and March 2019. You will be able to get things done faster and as you can connect to your account outside of office hours. It means you can manage your account at your own convenience.

## What will you be able to do?

- Check your current rent balance and transactions
- Print rent statements
- Make online payments
- Set up direct debits
- Report repairs

## What you will be able to do in the future?

We are looking at introducing a repairs appointment system which will allow tenants to choose their appointment slots. This will form a second phase of development and will be available either later this year or early in 2020.

If you want to know more or want to get involved in helping to develop the new systems Email [customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk)

# Red Hall Survey

A snapshot survey of Red Hall residents has revealed that 76% of residents think that it has got better since the regeneration work took place. Improvements to the Council homes and the new play area were identified as key reasons for the improvement. 12% thought nothing had changed while a further 12% thought Red Hall had got worse.

The survey took place at Red Hall Primary School where they held a Christmas Fair.

If you are a resident of Red Hall, what do you think? Let us know by email at [customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk)

# Red Hall Christmas Hamper Winners



Those who participated in the survey had the chance to win a Christmas Hamper funded by the Council's Community Fund and kindly topped up by North Road Morrison's, here are the two lucky winners with their prizes being delivered by their Management Officer Ricki Hotton. Well Done!



# Around the Schemes - Xmas Special



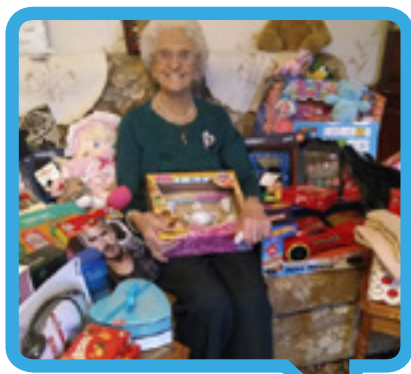
## Branksome Hall Drive

There were a number of Christmas events including a Xmas jumper fund raising event for the Great North Air Ambulance. They have a very active social life at the scheme and welcome people from the wider community to their events:



## Vera

Vera aged 97 is another resident of Branksome Hall Drive and has been an active member of the Salvation Army for over 60 years. Here she is with all the toys and gifts she has collected for the Salvation Army Toy Appeal this year. Well done Vera you're doing an Amazing job!



It was a very busy period in our schemes across the Christmas period so we have produced a Xmas special to record some enjoyable times.

## Branksome Games afternoon

Residents at Branksome Hall Drive held a games afternoon and buffet lunch. There was bingo, a general knowledge quiz and dominoes (with a trophy for the winner).



## Rosemary Court, Lascelles

The residents and staff of Rosemary Court, one of the Council's Extra Care schemes, enjoyed participating in Elf Day. It was a fabulous festive fundraiser designed to get you in the Christmas spirit whilst raising money to help beat dementia. It encouraged people to unleash their inner elf by dressing up, as much or as little as they liked.



Residents also enjoying singing, dancing and getting to know some of the pupils from St. Johns School as they joined the residents to share their Christmas excitement!



## Bridging the Age Gap

Children from Maidendale Nursery on Firthmoor have started a weekly visit to see the residents of Rosemary Court. The 3 & 4 year olds helped residents to decorate the Xmas trees and then sang Christmas Songs. They also wished happy birthday to one of the ladies.



## Tennyson Gardens

The residents of Tennyson Gardens, Skerne Park had a fabulous Christmas lunch made better by the colourful organisers and helpers. For those who could not make the party some of the festive helpers delivered the Xmas meal to their door – so they did not miss out.



## Dinsdale Court

The residents of Dinsdale Court in Middleton St. George enjoyed a Christmas Buffet, which also helped Betty Cochran a resident with her fundraising for the Friends of Darlington Memorial Hospital, she helps raise funds for the charity every year with a Christmas Raffle, a charity very close to her heart.



Residents at Roxby Court and Pilmoor Green, both Firthmoor enjoyed themselves over the festive period with lovely Christmas Lunches.



Roxby Court



Pilmoor Green

## Oban Court's Christmas

Oban Court in Whinfield is one of the Council's Extra Care Housing schemes and they really got in to the Christmas Spirit. They have organised lots of events including a Volunteer day where volunteers from EE came to help put up the Christmas Decorations and Children from Whinfield School performed an afternoon of Christmas Carols.



## Rockwell House, Haughton, Coffee morning

Residents of Rockwell House held a coffee morning to raise funds for the Great North Air Ambulance and after a successful morning, raised £550. The money was received by Deb Gibbs on behalf of the GNAA at a presentation on 9th October 2018.



## Park Place

The residents of Park Place enjoyed a lovely Christmas Lunch, here are the residents enjoying the festivities!



# Results of the Customer Engagement Survey

The survey took place in November 2018 and featured in the last edition of Housing Connect. It was also available electronically. The purpose of the survey was to find out what interest tenants have in getting involved in the way the housing service is delivered.

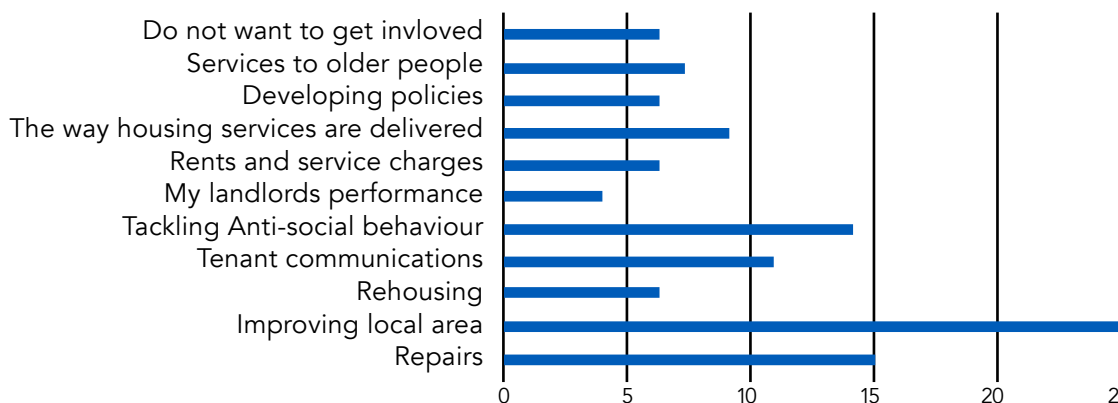
We wanted to know if tenants knew that they could get involved and 70% of tenants said they did know.

The three areas that tenants were most interested in getting involved in were; improving the local area, repairs and tackling anti-social behaviour.

## Did you know that you could get involved?

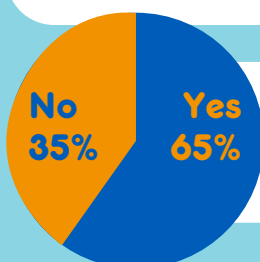
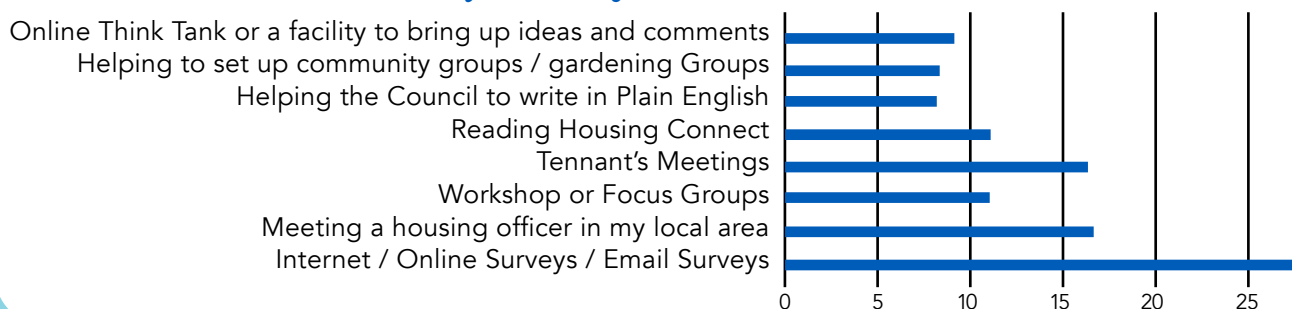


## What subjects are you most interested in?



When asked about how tenants would like to engage with the service by far the largest interest was in the use of digital channels such as Email and the internet. More traditional means of engagement such as meeting the Housing Officer and tenants meetings continue to feature but this clearly signals the ongoing shift in tenant preferences to digital means of communications. However, the results suggest that there will continue to be a need for a balanced range of means of communications but with digital playing an increasingly important role.

## What subjects are you most interested in?



## Would you be interested in getting involved?

Encouragingly two thirds of tenants said they would be interested in some form of involvement.

What do you think of these results? We are sending a full copy of the results to those who provided us with an

Email address. If you would like a full copy of the survey results, have any comments or would like to get more involved please email [customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk).



## Learning & Skills



# Learning & Skills Family Learning & Parenting Timetable Spring 2019



Learning & Skills offers Family Learning and Parenting courses to parents, grandparents and carers to improve their ability to support their child's learning in a fun and safe way.

We have some fantastic new courses available to parents, carers, grandparents and to anyone who would like to learn something new in the New Year.

Course Title	Venue	Day	Start	Finish	Date	Course Length	Fee
Work Ready Skills	St George's C of E Academy	Mon	1pm	3pm	4th Mar	5 weeks	Free
Family Safety and Wellbeing	St John's C of E Academy	Tue	1pm	3pm	5th Mar	5 weeks	Free
Family Safety Level 1	Mount Pleasant Primary School	Wed	1.15pm	3.15pm	6th Mar	5 weeks	Free
Family Safety Level 1	The Coleridge Centre	Thu	9.15am	11.15am	7th Mar	5 weeks	Free
Positive Parenting 0 - 5 years	McNay Street Children's Centre	Fri	12.45pm	2.45pm	8th Mar	5 weeks	Free
Positive Parenting 5 - 11 years	West Park Academy	Wed	9am	11am	27th Mar	6 weeks	Free

### Learning & Skills

If you would further information or to book a place, please phone the Learning & Skills team on: (01325) 405601, email: [l&s@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:l&s@darlington.gov.uk) or text us at: 07932 869325. For course information please visit our website: [www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/learningandskills)



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# Xmas Jumper Friday



Housing Staff got into the Xmas spirit and brought out their best jumpers to help raise funds for charity.



## Festive Firthmoor



Our Housing Staff attended Festive Firthmoor and got Xmas off to a great start by giving away 100 Selection Boxes to children who attended the event. The Selection Boxes were funded through the Council's Community Fund. If you are a Council tenant and want to get involved in our work with communities just email [customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk)

## Community Fund - You can help make a difference in your community.

You could be awarded up to £1,000 for your neighbourhood group, organisation or charity. The funding can support activities that genuinely make a difference to the lives of Darlington Council tenants and the wider community.

Projects vary from supporting community groups to grow flowers and vegetables to helping support community events. The fund has helped community groups to get started and help deliver holiday hunger programmes for children. We provide small amounts of money as well as large.

Applications and more details can be found on the Council Website at [https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/2676/community\\_fund\\_blank\\_application\\_form.docx](https://www.darlington.gov.uk/media/2676/community_fund_blank_application_form.docx)

If you are not sure or need more help Email [customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk)





## New garden waste collection service

The council's new garden waste collection service will be launched in April.

More than 3,100 of you have registered an interest in the 'opt in' service and will now be invited to pay the £35 annual fee online.

When you make your payment, we will deliver a new 240 litre wheeled bin to store your garden waste in. If you have a larger garden, you can buy extra bins, up to a maximum of four per property.

The new service will be self-funding, so there will be no extra costs to the council. We will offer a fortnightly collection for 30 weeks of the year, between April and November.

More information is available online at [www.darlington.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.darlington.gov.uk/gardenwaste) where you can also pay your annual fee.

## Did you know that there is a simpler and quicker way of providing documents?



Darlington Borough Council have introduced a new simple to use scanning station in the Customer Contact Centre in the Town Hall. This allows you to supply documents to us without queuing to see an advisor. A floorwalker will be available in the Contact Centre if you need assistance.

# Spring Wordsearch

Can you find the words in the puzzle below?



BLOSSOM  
BUDS  
BUNNY  
BUTTERFLY  
CHICK  
DAFFODILS  
DUCKLING  
EASTER  
FLOWERS  
GARDENING  
LAMBS  
SEEDS  
SPRINGTIME  
SUNSHINE  
TULIPS

Can you find all the Spring related words in the word search for a chance to win £25 of Love 2 Shop Vouchers.

Send your entry to **Housing & Building Services, Town Hall, Darlington DL1 5QT** or email your entry to: **customerengagement@darlington.gov.uk** please include your contact number.

Entries to be received by 1st March 2019

Name .....

Address .....

Telephone number .....

Email address .....