



THE ELDER



March 2025

Christmas 2024

Meeting The Tenants

St Barnabas Fundraiser

Defibrillators Now Installed

St Barnabas Court Fundraiser East Anglian Air Ambulance

Louise Sullivan and Ann Keable seen here presenting a cheque and receiving the "helicopter receipt" for £800 to / from East Anglian Air Ambulance back in January 2025.

A group from St Barnabas Court fundraise each year for a local charity, coordinated by Louise who organises regular afternoon teas and other events. A monthly quiz is put on with Ann which contributes to the funding pot.

Apart from the fundraising element these activities are excellent social events which continue throughout this year; the local charity is to be Norwich Door to Door.



Are you in receipt of Housing Benefit that is paid directly to you? If so, are you aware that the payment can be paid directly to the Society? If you would like your Housing Benefit paid directly to us, you can request this with Norwich City Council by calling 0344 980 3333.

Complaints, Compliments and Feedback

The Society aims to provide good quality services, but we can only be sure we are succeeding if you let us know. We encourage and value all types of feedback including complaints, compliments and suggestions as it helps us to learn and improve. All complaints and compliments are recorded and monitored.

We operate a 2 stage complaints process which is set out in our Complaints Policy. If a complaint is not resolved within our 2 stage process, then it can be escalated to the Housing Ombudsman. You may complain if you feel you've received a poor service from us, pass on a compliment when we get things right and give us your suggestions for improving our services.

We will ensure that complaints are handled within reasonable timescales and that they are responded to fairly, putting things right and learning from outcomes. The Society's Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report is reported to the Board each year and published on our website together with our Housing Ombudsman Assessment.

Defibrillators now Installed at Eleanor Road and Lanchester Court

Tenants from Eleanor Road all joined together and individually made donations towards a defibrillator for their scheme. Some very generous donations were received from tenants. The Society assisted with topping up the funds and purchased the defibrillator to install at the scheme. Tenants attended a training course in their social room.

Tenants were very impressed with the training that was kindly provided by the son of a resident from Hayden Court. Hayden Court is owned by Housing 21 and is situated next door to Eleanor Road.

Lanchester Court tenants raised over £700.00 and again, the Society contributed and purchased the defibrillator to install at the scheme. The money was raised in various ways, including personal donations from tenants, events, a raffle and a weekly sweepstake.

The generosity shown by the tenants is a testament to the community that our tenants live in. Our tenants are proud of their scheme and have all joined together to make this happen. Having a defibrillator nearby can help save a life. It is as simple as that! St John Ambulance provided training at Lanchester Court. Everyone found the training informative and very easy to follow. Training included how to carry out CPR on children and babies.



Mr & Mrs Setchell, Lanchester Court



Mr Browne & Mrs Cordy, Eleanor Road



St John Ambulance training, Lanchester Court

Susan's Stories

In 1991 I was made redundant from my job at a small family run shoe factory in Europa Way, just down the road from Bracondale where I now live.

Whilst I was unemployed, I found out about an environmental group called The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV). I saw a notice in the paper as did one of my two sisters who suggested I give it a try. As I was still living with my parents in Poringland and dependant on buses to go in and out of the city, I only went once a week and the first ever task I did was to help clear rhododendrons at Holt Hall in North Norfolk. Volunteers met at the BTCV office which was then in Bethel Street and we all went by minibus.

Not long after that, I moved to Norwich and went to live in a flat in Nelson Street. I lived there until I moved to Bracondale in 2023. Being in the city meant I could walk to the BTCV office to go out with the group and found out about other volunteer groups as well. Therefore, I joined another conservation group who worked on the Norfolk Broads. It was here where I met Maggie who then became my friend. She still remembers May 15th 1992, when I first went out with the Norfolk Broads Conservation Volunteers, who on that day, worked at How Hill. As I got a paper each day, I saw that volunteers were needed in the Plantation Garden on Earlham Road. I went to work there on the occasional Sunday. Due to being unemployed, I was able to volunteer with a group who work there on Tuesdays.

In December 2008, I attended a meeting at The Reindeer pub in Dereham Road. The meeting was to discuss the possibility of creating a community garden on Grapes Hill. In 2009 a fun

day was held on the site that would become the garden. The day was organised to invite people to make suggestions as to how it should look. After the building work had been done, the planting could go ahead. I first began to help with the creation of what is now the Grapes Hill Community Garden in 2011, and later that year it was officially opened by the late Will Giles who owned The Exotic Garden in Thorpe Hamlet.

Finally, in 2017, I went to an Easter fair at St. Matthews Church in Thorpe Hamlet where events took place such as going on walks around the area. It was there that I watched a film about Friends of Ketts Heights. It showed what they did. So, on the following Wednesday, I joined them for having given up my part time cleaning job at The Nelson Infant School where I worked for three years from 2014, a few months after losing my job at Remploy who employ disabled people at a factory making cardboard boxes when it closed in 2013. I was there for almost 17 years.



In Celebration of the Life of Geoffrey Barbour

Some of you may remember that six years ago, there was an article in this magazine about the very colourful life of Geoffrey Barbour, the husband of Dawn and resident at Leander Court. Geoffrey was part of the Barbour brothers stilt dancing and puppeteer act, which he joined after National Service. In 1952, he took part in the Royal Command Performance at the London Palladium, alongside such names as Gracie Fields, Vera Lynn and Norman Wisdom. Later, Geoffrey took over the management of his father's theatre, the Arcadia in Lowestoft where he and Dawn first met. Dawn was also able to join Geoffrey when they went on tour, as a dancer. They were married in 1958 and enjoyed 65 wonderful years together, during which time Dawn never heard Geoffrey say a bad word about anyone. He continued to bring joy to many, including appearing as a clown to local schoolchildren, as part of a drive by McDonalds to encourage them to wash their hands.

Sadly, Geoffrey died eighteen months ago after a very long illness, but many years before Geoffrey had made an important and very unusual decision. Not being religious and deciding that he didn't want the fuss of a funeral, Geoffrey chose instead to leave his body to medical science. Whilst this was Geoffrey's dearest wish and although he had Dawn's consent, it meant that their son and family could not say goodbye in the traditional way. They found comfort in the fact that their beloved husband, father, grandfather & great – grandfather had made an important contribution to medical research.

When Dawn received the news that Geoffrey's ashes would at long last be returned to her, Dawn was able to finally share a very special celebration of Geoffrey's life with a few close friends, which was held in the community room at Sangster House on 2nd October 2024. It was a privilege to share a farewell toast to Geoffrey, who gave so much joy to so many and whose precious memory will continue to live on in the thoughts of those who knew and loved him.



Christmas 2024

Here are photos from the St. Barnabas Court Christmas party. A great night was had by residents and friends who danced the night away with music from Roy.



The Almshouse Association was so happy to be able to send Christmas gifts to 693 almshouse residents aged over 90 last Christmas.

The fund is not only a testament to how a gift in a Will, invested well, keeps on giving, but also to the benefits of almshouse living with an ever-increasing number of residents in their 90s and 100s living longer happy lives!

Elizabeth was presented with her voucher on Christmas Eve. We hope you enjoyed spending your voucher!

Rotary Court Residents met for their annual gathering for food and Bingo.





Sangster House and Leander Court joined together in their social room. Entertainment was provided by Sangster House tenant, Nick Walker. More about Nick on page 9.



A staggering 43 tenants from Lanchester Court met with neighbouring scheme, St Barnabas Court for festive fun at the Old Feathers, Loddon Road. An enjoyable lunch was had by all.



The office celebrated their end of year gathering later than usual. It was January by the time we were able to don our glad rags and hit the town.

We all headed to the Cosy Club for food, drinks, a quiz and lots of fun. So much so that we're thinking of returning this year!



Annual Rent, Maintenance Contribution, and Service Charge Review 2025/2026

The Society has completed the Annual Rent, Maintenance Contribution (for Stuart Court residents) and Service Charge Review for all our schemes which will take effect from 5 May 2025. 1 May 2025 for Stuart Court Memorial Charity and General Needs properties.

The total rent charged is made up of the social rent / maintenance contribution (charged for the occupation of your property and covers repairs, maintenance, insurance, and housing management) plus the service charge (actual costs for services provided to you on the scheme).

When setting the social rent / maintenance contribution, we are guided by the Government's Rent Standard, where rents are increased annually by the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) rate for the preceding September, plus 1%.

The CPI is a specific measurement of inflation which measures the average change in prices of goods and services bought by most households in the UK.

As CPI was running at 1.7% in September 2024, the recommended rise allowed for our organisation's properties for this coming year would be 2.7% in accordance with the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard.

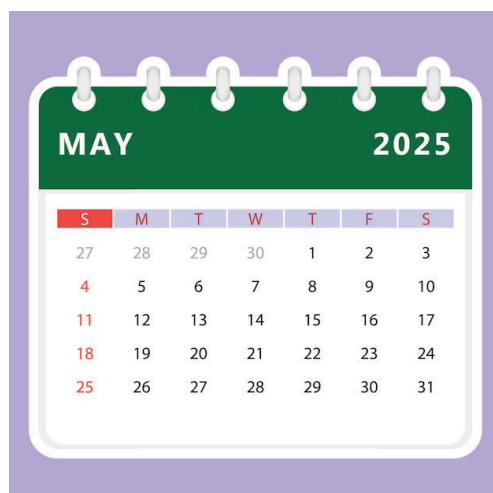
After careful consideration, our Board has decided to apply a social rent / maintenance contribution increase of 2.7% (in line with the Rent Standard). We believe this increase should have no effect upon the services we provide to you.

The service charges will vary from scheme to scheme and are based on a calculation of the actual costs for providing and maintaining communal areas and services. The amount charged is the total cost of providing the services divided by the number of people on the scheme who receive the services.

We will be sending the Annual Rent / Maintenance Contribution Review letters to all tenants at the end of March 2025 which will set out your social rent / maintenance contribution, service charge and total rent for the coming year effective from 5 May 2025. 1 May 2025 for Stuart Court Memorial Charity and General Needs properties.

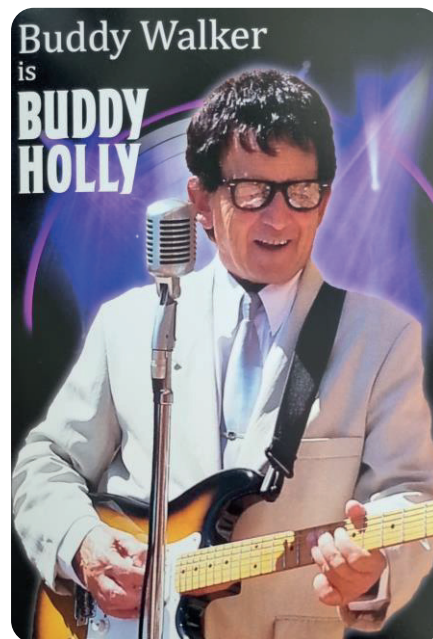
This year the Tenant Advisory Group has had input into the layout and content of the rent / maintenance contribution review documents.

If you have any queries regarding your rent / maintenance contribution and service charge review, you may contact the Bracondale office or alternatively, you can seek advice from Norfolk Citizens Advice (telephone number 0800 144 8848).



Meeting the Tenants

Amongst the many interesting life stories of our tenants, who knew we have a member of The Dreamers (formerly Freddie & The Dreamers) living at Sangster House? Nick Walker (Nick by day, Nicky professionally) is now in his 60th year of gigging as a guitarist, bassist and vocalist, since starting out in 1965 with the Chic Applin Band at the Norwood Rooms on Aylsham Road. Nick was born in Sheringham in 1946 to musical parents, though his baker/hotelier father was also practised at magic! He taught Nick his first chord on the banjolele at the age of 7, an instrument he loved as a big fan of George Formby, who they saw at the Old Windmill Theatre in Yarmouth in 1959. Nick though preferred the music of Lonnie Donegan, who he saw and met more than once, and with whose widow he remains friends to this day.



After becoming a professional musician, invariably for other people as it was so difficult to get your own work noticed, he spent 15 years on the Mecca Circuit, playing the London Ballrooms, Manchester and of course Norwich at the Samson & Hercules until the advent of disco and bingo put paid to that line of work. Fascinated in particular by Buddy Holly, Nick set up as a tribute act to him beginning with 3 trips to Dubai, and his flat in Sangster House is adorned with pictures of people in Buddy's orbit who he's met over the years both in the UK, and on his many trips to the United States. He's visited the Surf Ballroom in Clear Lake Iowa 8 times (only the once in 2022 when it wasn't snowy!) - a "must-play" venue on the rock'n'roll circuit, and the starting point of that fateful day on 3rd February 1959 - the "Day the Music Died" when Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and J.P. Richardson (the Big Bopper) were killed in an air crash.



The story of the unfortunate Winter Dance Party tour and how, why and who ended up on the fated three-seater Beechcraft 35 Bonanza is fascinating and very much available via Google for anyone interested. So many unfortunate sliding doors. Nick took a special trip in 2004 heading for Lubbock, Texas, where he spent 5 days meeting Buddy's family and friends.

Through his interest in Buddy Holly and his music, Nick has played in a stage jam at the Surf Ballroom (meeting Bobby Vee in the dressing rooms), has a photo with Peggy Sue (Gerron) who was involved with Buddy's drummer Jerry Allison (a co-writer of "That'll Be The Day"), and has a lifetime of work not only as a Holly tribute artist, but since 2014 as a member of The Dreamers (formerly Freddie & The Dreamers), a line-up which includes Alan Mosca, who was with Freddie for 37 years as bassist, lead vocalist, comedian and compère. Running his own

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entertainment agency including Vauxhall Holiday Park as a major client, Nick was booking the likes of the Krankies, Cannon & Ball, Frank Carson and Showaddywaddy, and this introduced him to a wide variety of people he's often ended up working with, including a 10 year spell flying back and forth to Spain (and living there for 9 years), playing the regular scene and outdoor festivals. The arrangement there was alternating tribute acts, so as Nick the Buddy Holly tribute would be flying one way, the Frank Sinatra tribute act would be flying the other way to go and stay in the same managed apartment! He's done many a cabaret spot as Nicky Walker, played variety shows, toured Europe and been on cruises with acts such as Duncan Norvelle, Tom O'Connor and Vince Hill of "Edelweiss" fame.

It wasn't easy getting a meeting together with Nick as he's often playing around the country from Dawlish to New Romney to County Durham, with the Midnight Dyamos, The Dreamers, The Everlys & Friends and a Jerry Lee Lewis Tribute Act. He's a very engaging man with a wealth of stories and I thank him for his time, it's another reminder of the many tales we all have to tell!

Gavin Sargent, Board Member

If you find that you have no water, we advise that you check with your neighbours to see if they also have the same issue. If they do, then it's most likely that Anglian Water are in the area and have had to turn the mains water off. This is not a landlord matter, therefore, you would need to contact Anglia Water on 03457 145 145. You can also visit their website, www.anglianwater.co.uk for live updates.

Alterations to your home

Should any tenant wish to change any socket/light switch plate to metal/stainless steel/chrome etc from the ones that are currently in place, then this MUST be carried out by a qualified electrician. Following a recent round of 5-year electrical tests, our contractors found that a tenant had changed their fittings, however, it was not carried out by an electrician and as result there was no earth bonding.

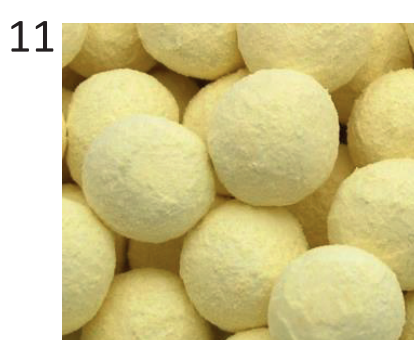
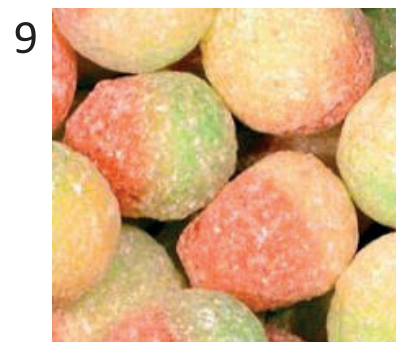
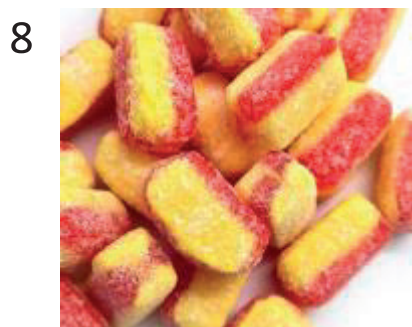
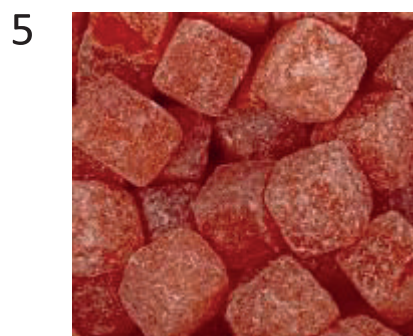
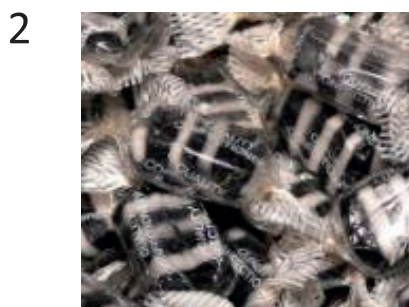
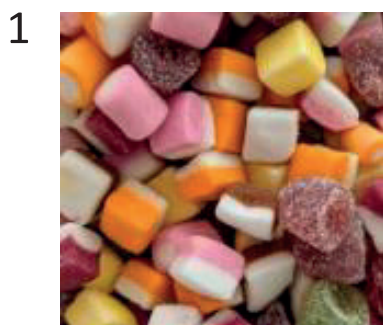
You MUST earth bond metal sockets/light switches to provide a safe path for electricity to flow to the ground in case of a fault. This prevents a potential electric shock if someone touches the metal casing of the socket/light switch, which could become live due to a faulty wire. Essentially, it protects users from an electric shock by ensuring any fault current is directed to the earth instead of through a person's body.

Should you wish to make any alterations to your home, then please write in to the Property Team, to request permission and wait for written confirmation before you proceed.

Thank you, The Property Team

Sweet Quiz

Retro sweets are hugely popular and stir up nostalgic childhood memories for many people, taking us back to simpler, carefree times. Take a look at the sweets below and rekindle some happy memories. If you can name all the sweets, get your answers into the office, and you could be in with a chance of winning a Marks & Spencer voucher. Closing date is Sunday 4th May 2025. Good luck!



Christmas Quiz Answers

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1. Rocking Around the Christmas Tree | 7. Silent Night |
| 2. Last Christmas | 8. I Wish it Could be Christmas Every Day |
| 3. Fairytale of New York | 9. Step into Christmas |
| 4. Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer | 10. Little Donkey |
| 5. White Christmas | 11. Driving Home for Christmas |
| 6. All I want for Christmas is You | 12. Santa Baby |
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Well done to Karl Howard from Westwood House. Karl was very surprised to have won seeing as it was his first attempt at the quiz. Beginners luck we say! You have got to be in it, to win it! Congratulations Mr. Howard, we hope you enjoyed spending your voucher.

We currently have vacancies on the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) for schemes Old School Court, Rotary Court and Cerise House. If you are interested in representing your scheme, then please get in touch with the office on 01603 625078 or talk to your Scheme Manager.

We would really love to hear from you. This is your newsletter so we would love to know what you would like to read about. Please send us photos from gatherings and events you have on your schemes. We'd like to hear about special birthdays and anniversaries. Or you could tell us what it's like to be a Norwich Housing Society tenant!

You can follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn.

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