



# Key News



**Volunteering skills**  
Check out the new programme

**Community grants**  
See which local groups have benefitted



**July 2019**

## We're now over halfway through the year, and there have already been loads of positives.

Out in your neighbourhoods, The Arc in Westcliff has recently celebrated its first birthday which was a really successful event. **Thirteen local community groups and good causes** have also been chosen to receive a share of our Community Grants scheme, and a range of Big Lunch events have been held with our tenants and staff – you can find out more on pages 18 and 19.

**We are continuing to build new homes** across our region as part of our Corporate Plan to build in excess of 200 homes per year – I am especially proud of the recent Albert Marson Court regeneration. We have a number of exciting projects beginning - check out some of our developments and the difference one of these homes has made to David, one of our new tenants in Brigg, on pages 10 and 11.

**Work continues to get our governance rating back to G1** after the downgrading earlier this year. We have formally submitted a voluntary undertaking and action plan to the Regulator of Social Housing, and we are talking to them on a regular basis to keep them updated. These conversations have been positive, and they are supportive in us regaining a compliant status as soon as we can.

**The Ongo Carnival is fast approaching on Wednesday 7 August** - it is always one of my favourite days in the calendar. Take a look at page 14 to find out what's on, and keep a check on our Facebook and Twitter pages for further information ahead of the big day.

Finally, I did a Facebook Live session on Wednesday 5 June where people sent in questions and I was there to answer them – these covered a wide-range of topics. Just under 400 people participated so it proved to be very popular. **I will be taking to Facebook again on Wednesday 21 August between 9.30am-10.30am** so, if you want to ask me anything Ongo related, pop onto our Facebook page on the day and get your questions in.

Happy reading!



# In the know

We love to hear from you - get in touch with your stories

editor@ongo.co.uk

OngoHomes

@OngoUK

## Age restrictions

Consultation was held at the beginning of July to discuss a proposal to remove age restrictions for some of our homes.

**Find out more...**



## Community champions

Do you know of somebody who deserves to be recognised for the work they do in the local community?

**Click for more...**



## Party time

A garden party was recently held for the tenants living at Karen Court in Scunthorpe.

**Read more...**



## Pride event

The Pride flag was raised in Scunthorpe on Monday 1 July to mark the beginning of month-long celebrations.

**See more...**



# Have you ever thought about volunteering?

## A new project has been launched

The Ongo Volunteering Programme is a referral service that gives people training in a range of areas including health & safety, equality & diversity, and professional boundaries.

With this new knowledge and skill-set, people will then be ready to volunteer and will be supported to find such opportunities in the local area.



Find out why Scott Stalgis (far right of photo), our Volunteer Programme Co-ordinator, is excited about the project

### To find out more or to sign up:

employmentsupport@ongo.co.uk

19 Cole Street, Scunthorpe, DN15 6QY

Employment Support  
from Ongo

@OngoCommunities

# Tenant takeover

## With Rachel Woodliffe

In each edition, we talk to a tenant volunteer to find out what they do in their community. This time we talk to Rachel about her involvement, why she loves it, and how it has led to a new job.



*I first got involved in my community...*

*I then began to help out...*



*I also did a couple of courses...*



*Recently I've got a job...*

*What my volunteering has given me is...*

Click on each phrase to find out Rachel's story.

## About me

Want to get involved and make a difference in your community?

Check out the **Customer Engagement handbook**

Fill out an online **Menu of Options form**

# Here to help

**“I wouldn’t be where I am today without them - they saved my life.”**

A year ago James, by his own admission, was at “rock-bottom”.

He was experiencing harassment, he had needed major surgery for an ongoing large hernia in his stomach, he was suffering from severe depression, and his anxiety meant he had “no confidence to leave the house whatsoever.”

James says that “things couldn’t have been much worse.” He had even contemplated suicide.

However, help was there.

Our Support team helped to find a potential new home for James through the Ready to Rent brochure on our website – he soon was able to look round, all his questions and concerns were answered and, within a matter of weeks, he was moving into new surroundings.

**Most importantly, he was moving “into a new life”.**

“My new home is perfect – it’s peaceful, it’s relaxed, and it feels so different to how things were before.

“My depression and anxiety, though still there, is so much better than it was – I feel a lot more confident in everything I do now.

“I’m still receiving support, and it really helps to know that the help is always there no matter what.

“I cannot thank everybody from the Support team enough. My entire outlook on life has changed for the better, and there’s no looking back now - only forwards.”



The Support team

# A day in the life of...

**Sophie Windle, Support Services Assistant.**

**When did you start working for Ongo?**

**What does your job involve?**

**What is your favourite part of the role?**

**How, and in what ways, can the team help tenants?**

**What would your message be to any tenant who may be needing help and support?**



**About me**

**Click on each question to see Sophie's answers...**

**We are here to help and support. To find out more, or to request support, visit:**

[ongo.co.uk](https://ongo.co.uk)

[OngoHomes](#)

[@OngoUK](#)

# Apprenticeships announced

## There are seven new exciting apprenticeship opportunities

Seven new apprenticeships have been announced across the organisation.

These opportunities are in ICT, joinery, plastering, plumbing, hospitality, recruitment, and HR.

42 people recently attended an event held at Ongo House for the potential apprentices to meet the teams, to find out more about the roles, and how to apply.

Shortlisting of the applicants took place at the end of July, and those successful will be contacted in the next couple of weeks.

Levi Sumner, who lives in one of our homes, attended the event and said: "I really enjoyed the morning - I learnt more about the apprenticeships available and the company as a whole.

"I'm glad I went, and **it's fantastic how much there is on offer** not just through these apprenticeships but through other employment support and opportunities too."



Kirk Murray, Maintenance Area Manager, giving more information at the July event



Some of our past and present apprentices

**Keep up-to-date with the latest job opportunities:**

[ongorecruitment.co.uk](http://ongorecruitment.co.uk)

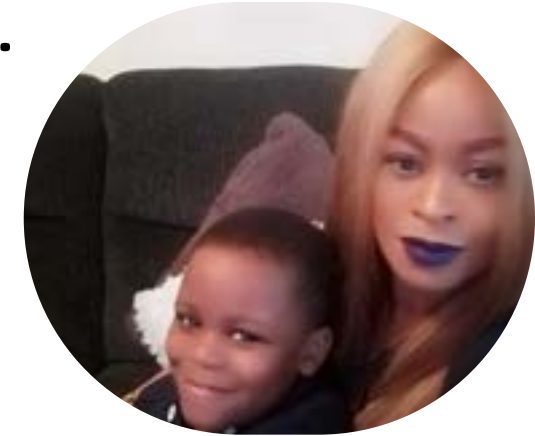
Ongo Recruitment

@OngoRecruitment

# From nothing to everything

**"I have no home, no money, no future... What am I going to do?"**

This was the question racing through Louisa Hodibert's mind shortly after moving to the area from Belgium last year. She began living with a friend and working a zero hour contract at a coffee factory, but she soon became homeless and was unable to get more hours at work to support her young son Lamed.



Not knowing where to turn, Louisa was initially referred to the Next Level team to improve her job skills.

"I've always wanted to work in education and, no sooner had I started on the course, I began training to be a Teaching Assistant. I loved it from the very beginning – it improved my confidence, and I am now on the verge of completing my Level 2 qualification."

Alongside her training, Louisa did a placement with North Lindsey College to further enhance her experience. She also secured a part-time job with our Recruitment team as a Personal Assistant.

Whilst all this was happening, she was living in a hotel and then a shared apartment. However, she wanted something more long-term – a home where she could provide for her son and give him "everything he deserves".

Soon, with support from the Communities team, Louisa was moving into a home in the Scunthorpe town centre.

**A new home, a new job, new skills, a new life for her and her son – all in the space of six months.**

"I have to pinch myself that all of this has happened in such a short space of time.

"I feel like a true role model to my son now, and much more in control of our future. We have so much to look forward to."

# New homes

## Albert Marson Court

27 new homes have been completed as part of the Albert Marson Court regeneration.

The development has seen 23 three-bed and four four-bed homes built in just under two years.

**Find out more details...**



Some of the completed homes



Gainsborough development

## Northholme View

A development at Northholme View in Gainsborough is nearing completion.

Four houses have been finished in recent months, with new tenants already moved in. The final 12 homes, which are a mix of two and three-beds, will be completed in the late summer.

**Check out some other developments...**



An artist's impression

## Rochdale Road

16 Rent to Buy homes have begun to be built on Rochdale Road in Ashby.

The development is due for completion in summer 2020, and it will be the second Rent to Buy project following the development of 14 homes on Collum Avenue.

**Read more...**

# New life

**“My health was getting worse, and I was being taken advantage of - something had to change.”**

David Millson, 54, had been in his previous home for ten years when things began to take a turn for the worse. His health began to deteriorate meaning he was in severe pain everytime he used the stairs. Also, some people had been preying on his vulnerability leaving him scared and not knowing what to do.

His Housing Officer Andrea, the Lettings and Support teams, and his support worker Mel worked together to help David to register his interest in the flats at Poplar House. Completed at the beginning of the year, these are supported one-level homes that are designed specifically for people with learning difficulties.

**Soon David was moving in. Five months on, he could not be happier.**

"Everything is so much better now. It's nice and relaxed, and there is a really nice community spirit in the area with everybody knowing each other and getting on.

"Most importantly I feel safe, secure and settled. I now feel able to go out into the community more by volunteering every Sunday at The Lord Nelson pub in Brigg - I even get a free roast dinner for helping!

"I still have support in place - Tracey from the Support team comes to visit me once a week. She, Mel, and my new Housing Officer Denise also work closely to make sure that the support is always there.

"I've got everything I could possibly need and more."

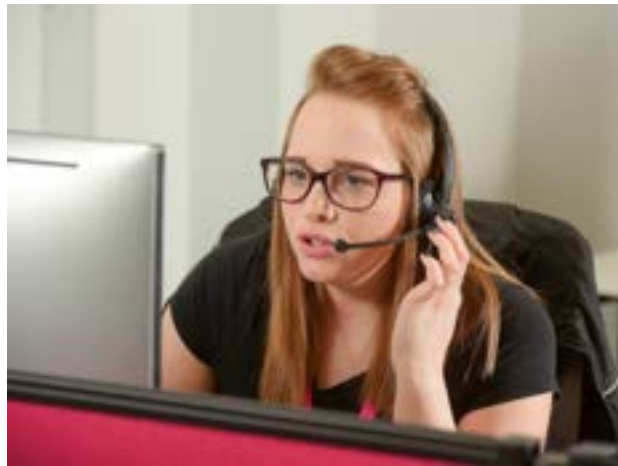


# Did you know?

## There's a new way to pay your rent

You can now ring our contact centre and pay straight away through an automated service. It means you no longer have to wait for a Customer Advisor to take the call and to process your details.

Not only is it a quicker way to pay, but it also helps us to spend more time speaking to people that really need us. It means we can help more people, and invest further in local communities.



Just under 300 tenants have already used the new method of paying rent.

We have gained valuable feedback from users through text messaging surveys to find out what you like about it, and how it could be improved.

Based on what you have said, we continue to make improvements to make sure you receive the best possible service.

**To pay your rent this new way, simply ring 01724 279900 and press '1'.**

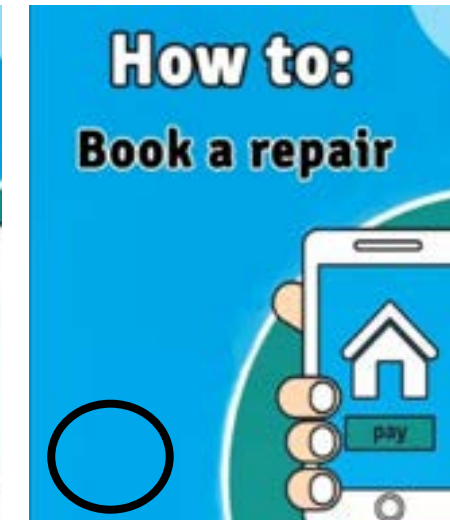
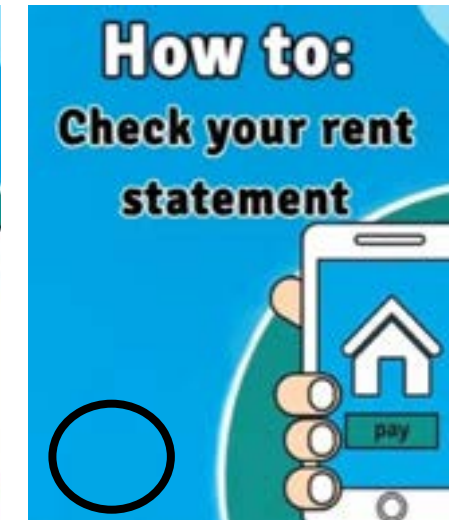
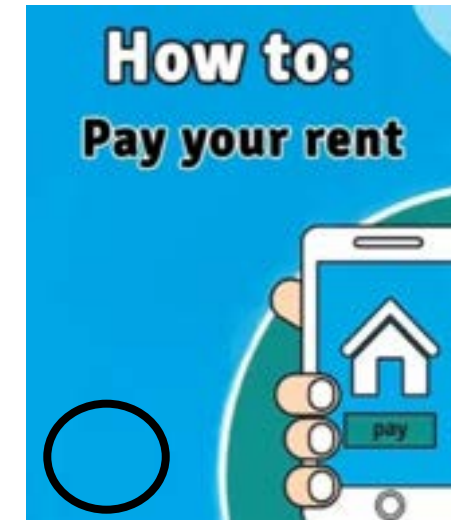
You can also pay your rent, check your balance, and view recent transactions on My Home.

# Save time, do it online

We love talking to you, but we don't want to keep you from doing the things you really want to do. If you have called us recently, it's likely that you were placed in a queue to speak to us. In fact, the average waiting time is one minute and 49 seconds.

This doesn't sound long but, while you were waiting, you could have booked a repair *and* paid your rent on My Home.

Don't believe it? Take a look at these short clips to see how easy it is:



Not only can you pay your rent and book a repair, there's much more you can do on My Home anytime and anywhere. These other features include:

- **Checking the status of a repair** that you've previously reported
- **Benefits advice** - whether that be support with budgeting, debt advice, or checking your entitlement to benefits
- Letting us know about a **change to your personal details**

Register by using your tenancy ID or some personal information, and you can then log on straight away.



# Carnival countdown

There's not long to wait until the 2019 Ongo Carnival!

Wednesday 7 August 2019  
11.00am - 3.30pm



**Where:**  
Manor Park,  
Burringham Rd,  
Scunthorpe

**What's going on:**  
Information stands, demonstrations,  
games, activities for all ages  
& lots more.

[ongo.co.uk/carnival](http://ongo.co.uk/carnival)



Come and join in a great **FREE** day out!

## Competition time

We love seeing your photos from the day so remember to post your best ones on Twitter using **#OngoCarnival19**, or in our Facebook event **Ongo Carnival 2019**.

You'll be in with a chance of winning a £30 Love to Shop voucher (terms and conditions apply).



**What to look out for:**

# Lindsey Lodge garden

## Work on a brand new memorial garden for Lindsey Lodge Hospice has been completed

The garden will give patients and their families the opportunity to spend time outside at the hospice, as well as providing a space where bereaved families can remember and cherish loved ones.

The area will be accessible for local school children and new community initiatives such as a gardening club.

Volunteers, along with our Neighbourhood Services and Communities teams, have worked tirelessly to give their time to make the garden as special as possible. It includes features such as a large wheelchair friendly patio area, planting areas and a wooden lodge donated by Threadgolds Funeral Home.

A number of other suppliers including GS Kelsey, PBS Construction, Trent Valley Electrical, Silica Lodge and Buildbase, also provided donations to the project.

Andy McFadden, Neighbourhood Services Team Leader said: "This is another great example of local organisations coming together to do good for the community. Without the hard work of everyone involved, it wouldn't have been possible."



Take a look at some more pictures by clicking on the photo.

Never miss out on what we're doing in the community by checking out our **Facebook** and **Twitter** pages.



# Tenant testers

## Tenants took part in two focus groups to help develop our services

### Website

The first focused on our website – in particular how easy it was to use, the content, and what improvements could be made.

You said:	We will:
<p>“I want to be able to find the content I want easily – ideally within three clicks.”</p> <p>“I want to know what’s going on in my community and how I can take part.”</p> <p>“It took around six weeks to get someone round to carry out a repair. I had to submit my request multiple times due to no confirmation.”</p>	<p>All the feedback has been collected and has helped to develop a plan that will be worked upon in the coming months.</p> <p>This plan will be used in designing an improved website, and will lead to an enhanced user experience.</p>

### Chatbot

The second group looked at testing an automated live chat system (basically, an online tool that generates an answer to any query based on key words) that we are looking to pilot on our website and Facebook page soon.

Claire Thurston, who participated, said: “It was really fun, and it was nice to have an input – this chatbot will definitely make things easier.”

If you would like to be involved in future testing opportunities, complete the [online form](#)

# Have your say

## At Ongo there are various ways to be involved and have your say. Do you want to help us shape and influence the future?

We recognise that excellent services are achieved through the active involvement of all tenants.

We want to give you the chance to tell us what you think about the services you receive, and to help make your homes, neighbourhoods and futures the best that they can be.

Your voice is crucial. No matter what spare time, what skills, what ideas, and what other commitments you may have - there are ways in which you can get involved that suits you.



We are always looking to improve the opportunities that are currently available. To do that, we want to find out your thoughts.

[Keep a check on our website, and on Facebook and Twitter, for an upcoming survey.](#)

All entries will be in with a chance of winning a £30 Love to Shop voucher.

**Check out our current involvement opportunities:**

[Customer Engagement handbook](#)

[Menu of Options form](#)

# In the spotlight

## Take a look at some events in the community

### Birthday celebrations

The Arc celebrated its first birthday at the end of May with a fun community party.

The celebration, which nearly 100 people attended, had a local entertainer, party games, cake and goodies to take away.

There was staff from our Housing Management and Employment Support teams, North Lincolnshire Council and CatZero, available to talk about any issues in the area plus job and training opportunities.

Since opening, the community centre has welcomed thousands of visitors and has increased its workforce from three to 17 staff and volunteers.

You can find more pictures from the event on The Arc's Facebook page.

#### Check out some reaction

##### See what else The Arc has to offer:

arcwestcliff.co.uk

TheArcWestcliff

@ArcWestcliff

arcwestcliff



## The Big Lunch

A range of events took place at the beginning of June to celebrate the Big Lunch project.

What is the Big Lunch?

What does it aim to achieve?

Where were the events held?

Any reaction?

Click on each question to find out more



A Big Lunch event at Broadlands House, Bottesford

## Community grants

Thirteen North Lincolnshire community groups and good causes have received funding from the latest round of community grants.

In total, £10,150 has been given to support local groups doing great things in the community.

The grants will go towards the groups hosting more activities, supporting with running costs, buying new equipment and paying for improvements to their facilities.

A panel was made up of Ongo staff, tenants and Board members to decide which groups would receive funding.

Find out what two successful groups said



We want to hear your stories of what's happening in your community:

OngoHomes

@OngoUK

# Fancy winning a £30 shopping voucher?

## We hope you enjoyed this edition of Key News.

Your feedback is really important in shaping how your future Key News look.

We had over 150 responses in the survey competition to the May edition - this helped to influence the content and layout of this issue.

Congratulations to Gail Weekes from Scunthorpe who was selected at random as the winner of a Love to Shop voucher.

If you would like to be in with a chance of winning a £30 Love to Shop voucher, **complete this survey** and include your email address at the end to be entered into the prize draw.

Alternatively, you can complete the survey at [surveymonkey.co.uk/r/keynewssurvey](https://surveymonkey.co.uk/r/keynewssurvey)

Any personal information you provide to us will be treated in accordance with current UK data protection law and our data protection policies, procedures and privacy notices in place from time to time. For full details visit our website.

Entries must be in by Friday 30 August 2019.

The winner will be drawn from all completed surveys. The Editor's decision is final.

You can find terms and conditions on our website.

**The next printed edition of Key News will be out on:**

15 October 2019

**If you have any other feedback...**

editor@ongo.co.uk

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