

KEY
NEWS



IN THE COMMUNITY

Inspiring stories from a range of areas.

An important announcement

A potential merger with Lincolnshire Housing Partnership.

Investing in services

A look back at 2022/23 and what we have done to improve.



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us

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We record all calls for training and research purposes

My Home



Log in or register at:
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Or to download the app, search
'Ongo My Home' in your app store



Throughout Key News we include QR codes. To use them, open the camera on your smart phone or device and point it at the QR code, tap the banner that appears and that will take you to the page.

We know some of you may not have a smart device, so for all links included in this edition, head to: ongo.co.uk/keynews

Update on repairs

We've seen a 20% increase in the number of jobs completed, between March and June 2023.

In this time, we completed 12,380 jobs, showing a significant increase from the 10,241 completed in the same period last year.

There has been substantial investment in the number of contractors carrying out work to support our internal teams and again, this has seen the number of jobs completed by them increase too.

We are still working hard to drive down the average wait, and are seeing improvements in this, now below the 28-day target for many of our standard jobs.

We introduced new priorities at the beginning of June. The initial data is positive and we're confident this will contribute to a better customer journey.

Whilst we're seeing improvements, we are aware further work is needed to deliver the service expected by our customers and we would like to thank you for the patience you have shown.



Financial support



In 2022/23 we carried out 29,608 repair jobs and spent £4,904,000 compared to £4,424,000 in 2021/22. 84% of our customers were happy with the quality of the repair and 77% were happy the repair was done right first time.



Damp and mould progress

We are still experiencing a higher volume of damp and mould reports than we've had in the past.

Although we are now in a better position to deal with these and more timescales are being met, we are still not where we'd like to be.

We're continuing to make changes that will improve timescales, reduce jobs and provide you with a better service.

Our recently appointed Contractor Co-ordinator, Hayley, is working closely to monitor performance and work with our increased number of contractors.

Augmented reality (AR) technology is being used wherever possible, helping us to see issues over smart devices, without needing a face to face visit, saving time and resources.

This makes assessing the severity of the work and allocating the job to the right person, for the right amount of time, easier, and where possible, avoids the need for follow-up visits.

To read further information on different types of damp, mould and condensation, or to report this in your home, go to: ongo.co.uk/damp



Samantha, Citizens Advice

Specialist advice

Did you know? As a tenant, you have access to dedicated and expert support at Citizens Advice.

Specialist advisor, Samantha, will provide guidance on energy suppliers, extra money you may be entitled to, costing and debt advice, plus making contact for additional support.

Visit citizensadvice.org.uk today to benefit from the help.

£372,633 of additional income was secured for tenants in 2022/23.



Self-help tools

There are a vast amount of grants available that could support you with:

- Energy costs
- Food
- Cost of living payments
- Household items
- Broadband & internet packages
- Occupational support
- Many more including budgeting tools, benefits calculators and extra credits

Scan the QR code to find out more



A potential merger



We are exploring a potential merger with Lincolnshire Housing Partnership (LHP), a housing association based in Grimsby and Boston. The merger would be equal between both of our organisations and we believe that by combining our strengths, we could offer even better services to you.

If the merger goes ahead, your rights, repairs, rent, and charges would not be affected. We believe that the only changes you would see would be positive ones. Our vision is to create a “local and large” organisation with strong community roots and a greater ability to be able to deal with future change.



This is not something that we have decided on lightly. We have spent a lot of time getting to know LHP and how we would work together. We believe that this move will create more opportunities for the combined area and further improve the communities in which we serve.

So, what's next?

We have entered due diligence with LHP to look into all the legal and financial requirements to make sure we are a good fit for one another. This is expected to take two to three months. If all goes to plan, we will aim to launch our combined organisation in 2024.



What does this mean for your existing services?

Our frontline teams would be larger and cover a wider area. We would also have more specialist colleagues across the organisation. This would allow us to provide even better services to you.

We would continue to invest in our existing homes, estates, and regeneration plans. We would also continue to build and acquire new homes as we have set out in our current plans.

We believe that this merger could increase the quality of our homes, choice, and mobility for our tenants and customers across Greater Lincolnshire.

Where can I find out further information?

More information about the merger will be available on our website and in future issues of this magazine. We will also get in touch with you directly when we know whether the merger will go ahead as we hope.

LHP

If you have any questions, please get in touch via ongo.co.uk/merger, social media, My Home or by calling us.



In the community

Over 200 of you enjoyed our summer activities

We were awarded a Fuelled fund of £7,357 to run even more events at our community hubs, The Arc (Scunthorpe) and Viking Centre (Barton). Most of these included a free meal.

In total, over 200 people attended our 24 events which included craft and pizza-making, parties, a trip to the beach and so much more.

Targeted improvement work

We've been working to improve the Market Hill area in Scunthorpe. So far, we have:

- Relocated one of the bin stores that was directly outside a high-rise block (this has reduced fly-tipping)
- Relocated the compound area where residents can take bulky items for collection from North Lincs Council
- Added new bins around the neighbourhood to combat litter
- Renovated a previously unused and overgrown gated garden which now has new seating, a pergola and designated planting area

Before



After



Before



After



Helping a village

Our Neighbourhood Services team have recently been out to Maurice Close, Horkstow to replace old timber and reduce any safety risks.

The project was to strip back all rotten timber, rub down all metal support and update handrails as part of the restoration. This has helped to make the area safer for all residents.



Lincoln Court celebrates an anniversary

In August residents held a party to celebrate 60 years of Lincoln Court.

There was food and lots of activities to enjoy such as a raffle, photo booth and the grand unveiling of a new commemorative bench in tribute to three residents.

// Days like this are so important to keep the community going, and especially for older people who can so easily fall into isolation. I'm a huge advocate for involving people and I'm delighted with how it's gone. //

- Carol Whittingham, tenant who helped organise the event



Myos House second birthday

August marked two years since we opened the doors and invited the first residents into our dementia independent living scheme, and there's been so much going on in that time.

We celebrated birthdays, enjoyed tea parties, held summer events and raised money for different special causes.

Visit our website to find out more about Myos House.



New homes

40 new homes in Winterton

The site includes two and three-bed houses and bungalows, along with a large communal green space for families to enjoy. These are for affordable rent and Rent to Buy, making getting on the property ladder more accessible.

The build was awarded Secured By Design (SBD) Gold status for its specialist crime-cutting layout.

Neighbourhood transformation

Work continues on 16 new homes to regenerate the Ashtree Close (Belton) neighbourhood.

The development includes 12 bungalows which are a mix of one and two-beds, with three completed in September. The remaining two and three-bed homes are due to finish in February 2024, with 11 more to then be started.

They are being built to provide much-needed specialist housing, to help improve the community and allow existing residents to remain living in the area.

Bungalows nearing completion

10 one-bed bungalows will soon be completed in an ideal setting between Gainsborough and Lincoln.

Based on Stow Park Road in Marton, the homes are on the edge of a peaceful village with nice surrounding views. Wet rooms will be installed in each bungalow, with tenants due to move in before the end of the year.

Progress in South Yorkshire

We have recently built seven new homes in Hatfield (Viking Way), and 48 are also being built in Armthorpe (Hatfield Lane) and Doncaster (Lakeside, Carolina Way).

The Doncaster build will feature 10 maisonettes and six houses (four for Shared Ownership), while the Hatfield development will contain 32 two and three-bed houses.

We built/acquired 100 new homes in 2022/23 and started on 143 new homes during the year.



Check out the latest news on all our new developments here



Featuring Coates Avenue, Winterton



// We needed a bungalow due to ill health, this one came up and it's beautiful. I can't believe how lucky we've been, it's made such a difference. //

- Anne, Winterton tenant

Hatfield Lane, Armthorpe



Ashtree Close, Belton



Improve your *wellbeing*

We provide free mental health support, to raise your confidence and help you create a brighter future.

Unsure how the support could benefit you? Check out the difference it made to one of our tenants...

Alan first accessed support to rebuild his confidence during tough personal circumstances. He completed volunteer training, gaining a Level 1 Health and Safety certificate along with other qualifications, and had the opportunity to go on day trips including a river cruise.

Alongside the sessions, he was supported to find a home allowing him to live independently. He is currently completing a volunteer placement to enhance his search for work, plus develop his social skills.

Alan said: "I used to be a happy, outgoing person, but then things changed – I became shaky, panicky, not wanting to do anything or to see anyone. That's when I knew that I needed help and went to Ongo.

"It's helped me to rediscover myself and, though I'm still on the journey, I now have a much more positive mindset and have everything in place to enjoy a happy future."

What does the support include?

- A counselling service tailored to your needs
- Access to training and days out to boost your skills and mindset
- Additional support such as helping you into work and financial guidance

/// I was a broken man before, but I'm in a much better place now. I will never forget what they've done for me. ///

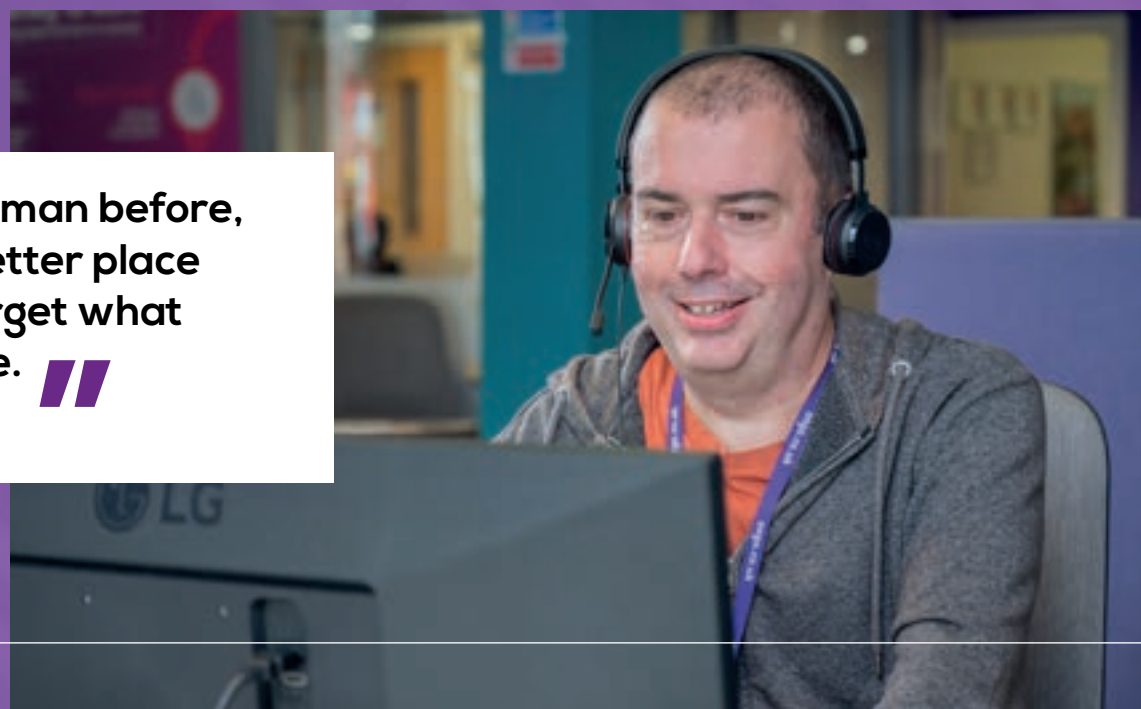
- Alan



Read the rest of his inspiring success story



Alan, accessing support



From the Annual Report

Each year we invest over £1million of our profits into projects that improve communities and make a difference to people's lives.

Last year 1,289 customers accessed employment, coaching and training support, with 39 apprenticeships filled.

A stepping stone into a career

Do you think that an apprenticeship is only for young people who have just left education?

The answer is no – they are available for everyone at any stage of life. They are an ideal way to gain qualifications and develop skills.

If you receive Universal Credit, you can also get a top-up to add to your apprenticeship income.

Our Recruitment team can help you to access apprenticeships and will provide tailored support. That could be general guidance, CV building, interview preparation or help with job applications.

Hear from two current apprentices:

/// It's a fantastic opportunity if you are considering a career change, and to be paid as you train is great. The apprentices are from different ages and backgrounds but we all support each other. ///



- Phil Baker, 55

/// The knowledge and skills that an apprenticeship has provided in a working environment is far beyond what any education establishment has given me. ///



- Adam Bacon, 28

The support we provide is available for any tenant. Email skillsandpersonaldevelopmentteam@ongo.co.uk, message us on Facebook or call 01724 279900 (option 6) to start your journey towards a happier life today.



Involved with Ongo

You have helped to revamp our website

A tenant focus group assessed the previous version and highlighted improvements to be made in the design, accessibility and layout.

The updated website went live in July. Andy Mumby, a tenant involved in the group said: "I really like the changes that have been made."

"Searching the website and finding what you want is easier, plus it looks brighter and more appealing than before."

Head to ongo.co.uk to have a look.

Influence improvements anytime, anywhere

Tracey only moved into her new home in February, and she is already benefitting from the range of opportunities to make a difference.

She said: "Living outside of Scunthorpe in a surrounding village, I wasn't sure if there were ways for me to help improve Ongo's services and support my community."

"However, I've quickly learned that there's loads that I can get involved with. I can give as much or as little time, it fits in around my other commitments and there's always the option of providing feedback digitally from the comfort of my own home."

What I like most is that there are no specific skills needed and no barriers. If you want to improve the homes we live in as tenants, the communities we're a part of and the services that we receive, then there's something for you.

- Tracey Borrill, new tenant volunteer



Previously, we were under-represented in getting feedback from younger people. In 2022/23, 9.7% of tenants that we engaged with were aged 30 and under (up from 8.81% the previous year).

Hear from Tim Mills, involved tenant, on key 2022/23 highlights



We need you!

We are looking for more people to join two tenant groups - the Tenant Inspectors and Property Services Panel.

Tenant Inspectors carry out checks of green spaces, estates, ready-to-let homes and the standard of cleaning at retirement schemes and high-rise blocks. They report any issues and work is then carried out.

The Property Services Panel focus on repairs and maintenance, investment in existing homes, new developments and empty properties. They discuss the current situation, any recent trends and help make improvements to each area.

Tracey Bain is on both groups and commented: "This is a great way to be part of change and to make sure everything is the best it can be for us and other tenants."

Email customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk or go to the 'Involved with Ongo' section on My Home to find out more.

Annual Report involvement



Many of you have provided feedback on drafts of the 2022/23 Annual Report to help create the final version.

The report focuses on our performance over the previous financial year, looking at what we achieved, the challenges, and what we will do to improve.

Scan the QR code to read it in full



A spotlight on... Ashby



In each edition we're featuring a different area and the fantastic people and local businesses that help to make it such a great place to live.

This time we're focusing on Ashby in Scunthorpe and Chapman's Fruit and Veg.

Ashby has always been a very popular area for leisure, shopping, cafes and bringing people together, and is well known for its weekly market.

It has seen huge investment over the last few years with more homes and new businesses opening up, creating a real mix of independent shops and larger chains.

Just this year we began work on 40 fantastic new homes, due to be complete next summer.

Scan the QR code to learn more about these new homes



Chapman's Fruit & Veg

Chapman's opened up earlier this year, bringing a welcome new family greengrocers to the area. They specialise in quality produce at affordable prices and we wanted to tell you more about them.

Tell us about you and your team?

We're a family business, owned by Ollie and Levi Chapman. We also have Daren, Taylor, Sophie and Seth who are part of our fantastic, friendly team who work in the shop Monday to Friday.

What inspired you to open the shop?

We remember growing up with a greengrocer in Ashby and felt it was a big loss not having one anymore.

We've had another business for some time (1660 Menswear) and know it's a great place for people to do their shopping, with plenty of free parking and other great businesses nearby.

How is shopping with you better for the environment?

With so much loose produce available, there is no need for an excessive use of plastic packaging. We use paper bags in-store and, for deliveries, cardboard boxes which can be recycled or reused.

We also source our produce from local suppliers and farmers, requiring less travel and a lower carbon footprint. This also means that by buying from us you're not just helping one local business, but lots.

What has been your favourite part about opening and running the shop?

The amazing feedback and response from customers, who regularly tell us that they have enjoyed being able to hand-pick fresh ingredients, without needing to throw away food they haven't been able to use.

Save on your shop

Shop local, be healthy, spend less!



10% OFF VOUCHER FOR ALL ONGO TENANTS. SIMPLY CUT THIS OUT AND BRING IT INTO OUR STORE OR QUOTE 'ONGO' FOR ONLINE ORDERS. ONE TIME ONLY

Open 8am – 4pm, Monday – Saturday.
We also accept NHS Healthy Start vouchers.

chapmansfruitandveg.co.uk

The offer is valid from Friday 6 October to Saturday 4 November and can be redeemed by presenting the voucher, or quoting the code online. Visit ongo.co.uk for the full terms and conditions.



Win a *fabulous* food hamper

All you need to do is scan the QR code, learn more about our net zero aims and answer three simple questions.

All entries will go into a prize draw to **win a £50** sustainably sourced food hamper. Entries close on **Friday 27 October**.



Scan to enter!

In each edition we will focus on a different theme to help you save money and live greener. Here are a few small, easy tips to reduce your water usage:

- ✓ **BATHROOM:** Showering for just one minute less saves around 10 litres of water and could save up to £120 per year (family of four)
- ✓ Only fill the kettle with the amount of water that you need. It could save around £6 a year on your energy bill
- ✓ Flush your toilet less frequently to reduce water usage - one flush can use up to nine litres of water
- ✓ **GARDEN:** Use an old bucket, bin or container to collect rain and then use to water plants
- ✓ **KITCHEN:** Use a bowl to wash food like fruit and veg instead of running the tap. This could save up to 12 litres of water each time
- ✓ Make the most of home composting by recycling your fruit and veg scraps, eggshells and other organic materials. It's the most environmentally friendly way of dealing with kitchen waste

Check out ongo.co.uk/water-saving-tips for more handy hints.



Complaints focus

In 2022/23, we received more complaints. We also had an increase in stage 2 escalations and a higher number of Housing Ombudsman investigations, with three determinations finding service failures and maladministration.

From this, all orders were complied with, and a full root cause analysis of each conducted to ensure we prevent any future risks and potential service failures.

Despite the higher demand, we have achieved 91% of all stage 1 complaints in target, and with six new members of the team, we are now starting to see improvements.

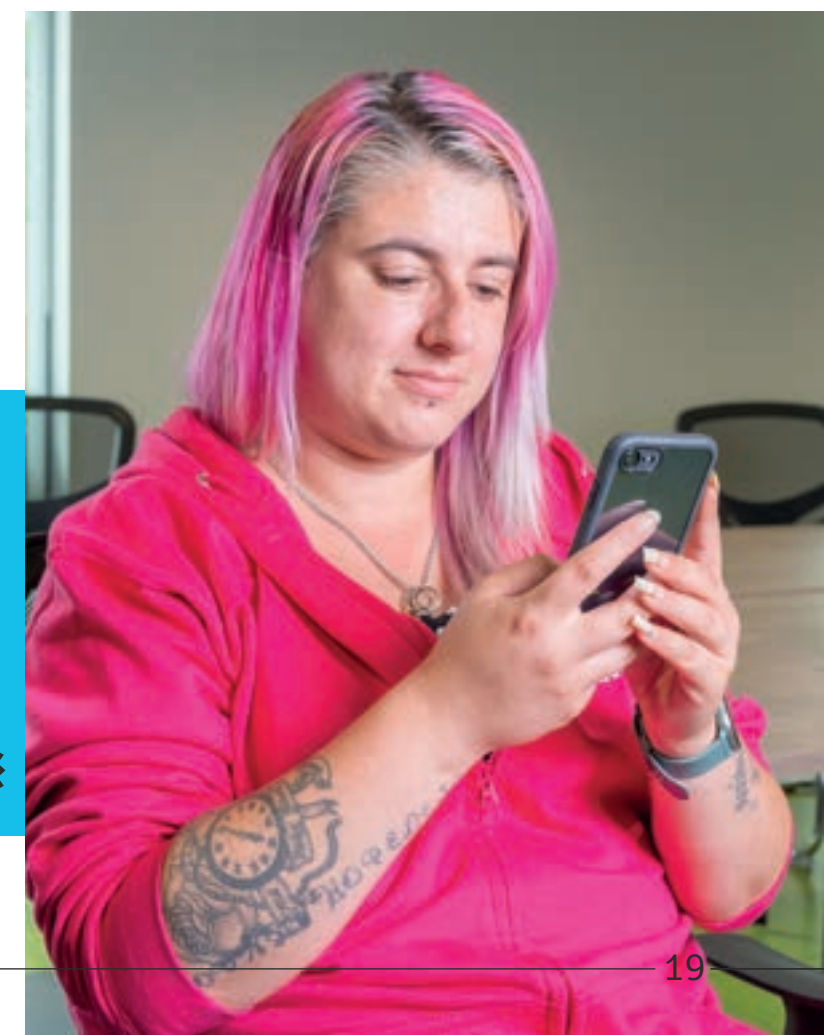
More information on our complaints process and performance can be found at: ongo.co.uk/complaints

Have your say

Our Complaints Panel help to improve the whole process from start to finish. They identify themes, plus look at recent cases so learning can be gathered and improvements made.

Head to ongo.co.uk/getinvolved to sign up.

60% of tenants were satisfied their views were listened to and acted upon in 2022/23. Though this was an increase on the previous year, we will continue to make improvements.



A successful year of *building safety*

We want to thank you for another successful year of **100% safety checks**.

The majority of these checks rely on you providing access to your home. We currently have a first-time access rate of 81.3% for annual gas servicing, and would like to remind you of the importance of allowing access to keep you safe.

The Council for Registered Gas Installers (Corgi) average for work correct is 91% and correct documentation held 84%. During their last audit in February 2023, we were at 100% for both.



Along with this work, the introduction of new legislation has meant refocusing priorities and implementing procedures to ensure we are in line with changes.

Partnerships with Humberside Fire and Rescue have continued to strengthen, with information sharing and work demonstrating a real joined up approach.

Search 'Health and Safety' at ongo.co.uk to learn how you can keep safe in and around your home.

We have launched our first-ever Building Safety Resident Engagement Framework.

Scan the QR code for further information



Making communities safer

As part of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Awareness Week in July, we carried out several walkabouts with Humberside Police, Safer Neighbourhoods and spoke with hundreds of residents.

Issues such as fly-tipping, external repairs and safeguarding were identified, with plans made to tackle these.

William Smith, who lives at Beauchamp Walk (Scunthorpe), said: "It was nice to speak with different colleagues, it certainly put my mind at ease. As a result we're looking into forming a community group to be a voice for the area and access funding."

Based on this, we are in the process of planning future work and we will share more in the December Key News.

In 2022/23:

- 2,382 cases of tenancy breaches logged, with 1,972 (83%) successfully resolved
- Percentage of customers satisfied with how their ASB case was dealt with was below our target

We are working to ensure that customer satisfaction with ASB increases, which includes holding themed focus groups to listen to your concerns.



Improved communication during a case and ensuring long-lasting change are just two main ways in which we aim to improve. Read the latest Annual Report to find out more.



Improving where you live

Action days have taken place in Crowle, Scunthorpe and Lincoln to carry out improvement work, plus provide games and activities for children with an environmentally friendly theme.

Outcomes included:

- Tidied up pathways and removed weeding
- Collected litter and fly-tipping
- Referrals made for employment and wellbeing support
- ASB issues and complaints resolved
- Repair and damp & mould cases actioned

Jessica Barker, who attended one of the events, commented: "I'm grateful that issues are identified and pro-actively dealt with as part of these days, and they help to provide something for everyone."

In 2022/23, 75% of you said you were satisfied with your neighbourhood as a place to live.

Visit ongo.co.uk, follow us on social media and keep a lookout in future **Key News** for more planned action days.



Cooking up a treat

A spookily cost-effective and healthy Halloween themed pumpkin soup, perfect for the whole family.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp cooking oil
- 2 onions, finely chopped
- 1kg pumpkin peeled, deseeded and chopped into chunks
- 700ml vegetable or chicken stock
- 150ml double cream
- A pinch of salt and pepper

Freezable

Vegetarian

Serves 6

METHOD

- Heat your cooking oil in a large saucepan, then gently cook your onions until soft.
- Add in your pumpkin chunks and cook for around 10 mins, stirring occasionally until it starts to soften and turn golden.
- Pour in your stock and season with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 10 mins.
- Pour in your double cream, stir gently, bring back to the boil, then purée with a hand blender.

Top tip: For an extra-velvety consistency you can pour the soup through a fine sieve, and croutons make a great accompaniment. The soup can now be frozen for up to two months.

Pumpkin Soup



Games corner

Mr and Mrs Ongo Bear are excited for Halloween on 31 October!

Check out The Arc and Viking Centre Facebook pages for Halloween events

Wordsearch

PUMPKIN
TRICK OR TREAT
LANTERN
SKELETON
COSTUME
SWEETS
BROOMSTICK
SPOOKY



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Spot the difference

Mr and Mrs Ongo Bear had a great summer holiday. They got a nice photo, but it has been altered and there are now five differences. Can you help find them all?



We want your feedback on Key News. Scan the QR code to complete the survey and be in with a chance of winning a £40 Love to Shop voucher.



Join us for this year's

ongo

Dine and Dance



The festive Dine and Dance is for our tenants living in retirement living schemes, Myos House and over the age of 55 who would normally spend Christmas alone.

Places are limited and it is first come first served, so don't miss out, the closing date is
3rd November 2023



If you'd like to find out more about the event and to book a place, email or call:

customer.engagement@ongo.co.uk

01724 279900



DECEMBER 2023

WEDNESDAY

6th

1PM-4PM

HESLAM PARK RUGBY CLUB,
SCUNTHORPE