

KEY NEWS



FESTIVE CELEBRATIONS

Spreading Christmas cheer in the community.

Save money by living greener

Top tips on how to reduce your energy usage and costs.

Here for you

Help and support available if you are struggling.

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Save energy

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If you would like Key News in another language, call 01724 279900

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如果您想本小册子在你的语言, 请致电 01724 279900

A message from Chief Exec Steve



Click on the image for the latest update.

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We record all calls for training and research purposes

My Home



Log in or register at:
myhome.ongo.co.uk
Or to download the app, search 'Ongo My Home' in your app store

Trending on our social media...



Celebrating the festive season



Halloween trick or treat



Myos House open day

A range of support

Did you know?

There are around £19 billion of unclaimed benefits each year. The most common are:

[Pension credits](#) [Council Tax support](#) [Universal Credit](#) [Broadband social tariffs](#) [Water social tariffs](#) [Healthy Start](#)

Click on each of the above to find out if you'd be entitled to the additional income.

Digital inclusion

If you're part of a family that needs access to a laptop but cannot afford one, Digital Poverty Alliance could help.

Find out further details and [apply here](#).

Supporting you this winter

We can provide a range of help and advice, tailored to your individual circumstances.

The support includes:

- If you're struggling to afford essential household items
- Pre-tenancy support such as setting up household bills
- Checking your eligibility for benefits and grants
- Budgeting tips to save money
- Signposting to partner agencies
- Helping you to find work or a new career
- Plus much more!

Check out our [website](#) for more information.



We supported **891** people between April and the start of November. **339** (38%) led to a positive financial outcome and **169** (19%) to improved health and wellbeing.



New opportunities

Three people being supported by our Ukrainian Resettlement team have secured work, with more closer to employment and with a better quality of life than before.

Community English sessions were held to develop their language skills in a friendly social setting, increase their independence and help to enhance their job prospects. Along with the personalised classes, the group have been on a confidence-building trip on a canal boat and took part in a pumpkin flower-arranging session for Halloween.

They continue to receive personalised support which includes helping further with community integration, building confidence, creating CVs, interview preparation and supporting with local volunteering opportunities based on their preferences.

“ At such a difficult time, you have become a real support for us. You helped us to understand that we're not on our own, and I can now say with confidence that everybody in our group are no longer afraid to speak. ”

- Olena



Whatever stage you're at in life, we can help you to develop your personal skills, achieve your aims and reach your potential:



Festive celebrations

Dine & Dance

Our annual Dine & Dance event took place in December which 82 tenants, over the age of 55, attended for some festive fun.

The afternoon included a two-course meal, photo booth, bingo, a raffle and music.

Sylvia, a tenant who attended, said: “Mixing with people like this helps your mental health, which is so important as you get older.

“When there’s so much bad in the world, something like this brings happiness to people and that’s what matters.”

Read [more](#) about the fun-filled day.

Funding for great causes

We’ve recently awarded 17 local groups a share of £15,000 through our community grants initiative.

The money helped to offer warm spaces for local people, provide essentials to those in need and host a range of events and activities during the festive season.

Hygiene Bank (Doncaster) were one of the successful groups. Serena said: “The grant means we’ll be able to support more households in Ongo areas experiencing hygiene poverty.”

Click [here](#) to find out more.



Dine & Dance



Lincoln Court



The Arc



Myos House

Christmas in the community

The Arc (Scunthorpe) and the Viking Centre (Barton) held several events over the festive period including breakfast with Santa, light switch-ons, arts & crafts and food.

Myos House got involved with the festivities by hosting a Christmas dinner featuring carol singing from a local nursery. An open day also took place for people to learn more about the dementia independent living scheme.

Lincoln Court (retirement scheme) held a Christmas party which saw over 30 people enjoy a meal, songs and games. They have also ran a free communal warm space from November to help residents.

Other schemes including Ancholme Gardens (Brigg), Martins Close (Barrow) and Chesleigh House (Gainsborough) also held get-togethers to celebrate the festive season.



Share your community stories with us so they can be featured in the next edition!



New homes

Part of a new community

We are currently building 18 houses on Bracken Lane, Retford, which will be ready over the coming year.

These are a mixture of two and three-bed homes in an ideal location on the outskirts of the town. Seven of the houses will be for [Shared Ownership](#) and are set to be completed in phases over the next year.

Included as part of the development is a public open space and children's play area, plus it's close to schools, a train station, supermarkets and the town centre.

Armthorpe progress

Work is also ongoing on 18 homes in Armthorpe.

Based on Mill Street, they will consist of two-bed flats and three-bed houses which are due to be completed in several phases between February and April 2024. There will be close motorway links and nearby access to supermarkets, a leisure centre, community halls and a school.

The homes will be for social rent, which is a low-cost rent set by a government formula and is significantly lower than the rent typically paid in the wider housing market. We are building some more homes for social rent on Jerusalem Road, Skellingthorpe.

Further growth in Gainsborough

Eight homes have been completed as part of a wider development and new neighbourhood on the outskirts of Gainsborough (Foxby Lane).

We are also building five more on the estate, with two completed and three due to be handed over in January. All 13 houses are for affordable rent, which is set at up to 80% rate of market rent (including any service charges).

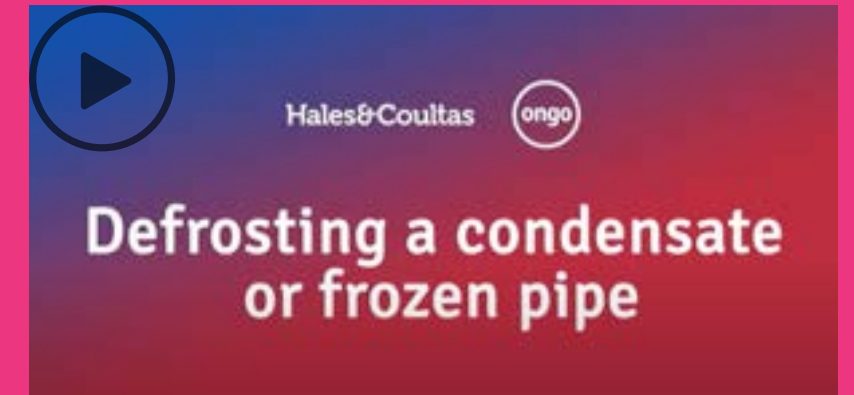
Featuring Retford,
Armthorpe and Gainsborough



Check out the latest news on all our new developments
throughout the region.

Improving your home

Handy hints from **Hales&Coultas**
HEATING AND PLUMBING



Here's another handy video on what to do if you smell gas:



Click on each of the images to view.

Damp & mould update

During the winter months, it is more common to experience condensation, damp & mould. If you have a new or re-occurring case, please get in touch. Our team are trained to assess the issues and ensure appropriate action is taken. If you have a smartphone, you can use our video call facilities to show the issues in real-time so we can diagnose more effectively.

It is also important to update your contact details with us if they change. We can then update our systems and contractors who have arranged appointments with you and keep you up to date.

Over winter, we will be publishing top tips and advice on managing condensation, damp & mould in your home.

There are things you can do to reduce the risk of condensation in your home. These include opening your windows for 10 - 15 minutes every day, using extractor fans if you have them and drying clothes in one room that is well ventilated. If you have extractor fans and are unsure that they are working correctly, contact us and we can investigate further.

Many of our homes have Positive Input Ventilation (PIV) systems installed which help to control indoor air quality. Let us know if you have any concerns about your PIV unit.

Your wellbeing is our priority and we are committed to investigating all cases of damp & mould thoroughly to determine the root cause.

Visit our [website](#) for the latest information and updates.

Did you know?

Our [Resident Scrutiny Panel](#) is currently reviewing our whole damp & mould process to ensure it is fit for purpose.

The group look into different service areas, interview relevant staff, research other organisations and then produce recommendations for improvement which are regularly fed back on to ensure that they have been implemented.






Would you like to be a part of change and help to improve services? Find out more [here](#).

Manage your home anytime, anywhere

There's so much that you can do on your tenant portal, My Home:

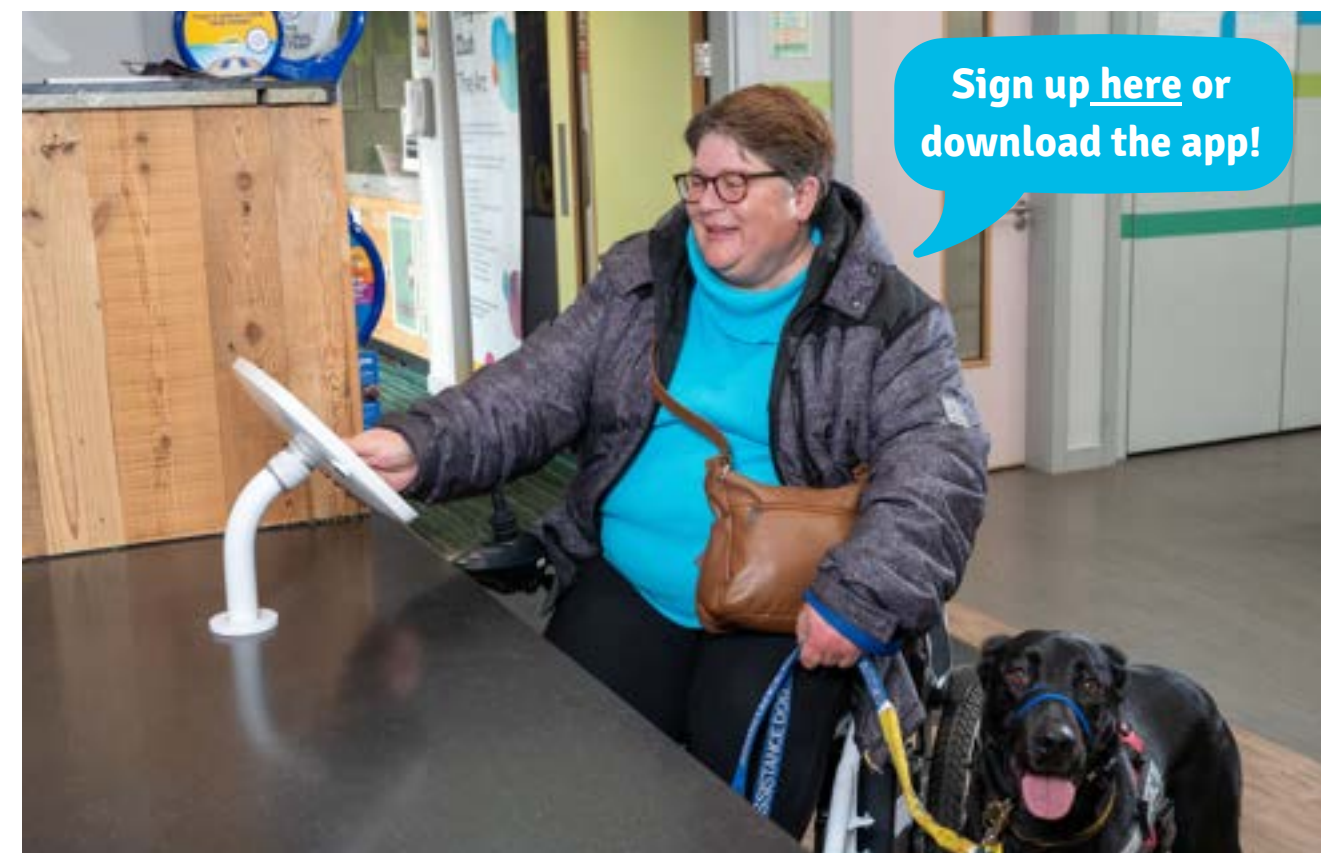
-  Book, track and manage repairs
-  Pay your rent and check your balance
-  Report anti-social behaviour
-  Get financial support
-  Set up a direct debit
-  Other sections including employment support, home alterations and opportunities to influence services

Some of the upcoming plans will feature:

-  Enhancing the fly-tipping and graffiti reporting functions to make raising issues easier
-  Integrating rent balances within the chat function for quicker and simpler access
-  Advertising community events so you can see what is happening in your area

We continue to make improvements and add to My Home alongside our Digital Tenants group. Updates this year have included:

-  More repair appointment slots
-  Reporting damp & mould
-  Increased password security





Digital drop-ins

We have started to hold some sessions for you to receive personalised digital and My Home support.

[Email us](#) if you would like to learn more.

Cleaner streets



Over recent months we've seen a large increase in cases of fly-tipping and general waste being dumped.

We're getting tougher on those who fly-tip in our communities. This is having a huge impact on our tenants, our neighbourhoods and on the workload of our Operatives who investigate and have to clean this up.

Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste. This could be bulky items (like a bed or sofa), black bags full of household waste, construction materials and more.

It is totally unacceptable and we are now taking more action than ever against perpetrators. If we find the owner, we will ask waste to be removed within a safe and reasonable timescale. If this does not happen, tenants will be recharged for the cost of removing this and will be in breach of their tenancy.

Along with causing a huge fire risk and health hazard, fly-tipping has in the past been associated with illegal activity and is unsightly for all who have to live with it. For us it also means having to re-prioritise work, meaning other jobs (like weedkilling and path edging) are delayed.

Bulky items

Each North Lincolnshire residential property can have one free collection (of up to three items) per rolling 12 month period. If you live in an area with a different council, please check their website.

Learn more about the service [here](#).

Reusable items

If items are suitable for reuse, there are several groups which can collect or accept items.

[Check out further information.](#)



[Click here](#) to learn how to report fly-tipping and how to dispose of waste correctly.

A spotlight on... Barton

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

This time we're focusing on Barton and Fleetgate Hardware.

Barton is a historic town with a range of local, independent businesses, attractions such as [Waters' Edge Country Park](#) and [The Ropewalk](#), plus lots of community spaces.

Along with over 550 Ongo homes in the area, we also have a community hub called the [Viking Centre](#). They provide regular events and family activities, a warm space and a weekly café along with much more.

There are also other public spaces in Barton such as [Baysgarth Community Hub](#) which meets a variety of health, social and educational needs. Furthermore, the town is near to the Humber Bridge and has excellent transport links to neighbouring towns and cities.

Click [here](#) to discover more about the town.



Fleetgate Hardware

The hardware store has been open for over 40 years and after being up for sale for a number of years, was at risk of potential closure. Luckily it was recently taken over by a new owner, who has retained the same team the community know and love.

They have a huge range of items from cleaning to building, ironmongery, guttering and plumbing. With plans to expand into fishing, camping and more, it's an exciting time for the small business.

We had a chat with the new owner and asked him some questions...

Tell us about you and your team?

We have a brilliant team of seven who all live locally. We're a tight knit group like a family and there's a big social element here. We love to chat and get to know locals as we know for some it's their only interaction all day.

What do you love about Barton?

I really like that most shops in the area are small, independent businesses run by good and hardworking people. We all look out for each other which is nice - for example, our local football club are supportive in advertising our company.

Why should people choose you rather than large retailers?

Our prices are more often than not cheaper, and you're helping small businesses along with the local economy.

We have so much choice, and we care about the environment with minimal waste and packaging. A keen focus is to help others use only the materials they need, or making the best of what they have by upcycling and regenerating.



10% OFF FOR ALL ONGO TENANTS WHEN YOU QUOTE 'HARDWARE 127'. ONE TIME ONLY.

Offer runs from Friday 22 December until Wednesday 31 January.



Involved with Ongo

Shaping the future

Your main tenant group, **Community Voice**, have influenced and approved our new Corporate Plan that will start from April 2024.

It sets out our main objectives over the next five years and what we will do to achieve them. Make sure to keep a lookout **online** and in your next Key News for the Plan in full.

This is just one example of tenants discussing, deciding on and helping to improve something that impacts on all residents. If you'd like to learn more about how you too can have a say, [register your interest today](#).



You said, we are doing

We carried out a recent survey with all leaseholders about how you would like to give feedback and receive updates.

Along with the re-introduction of the Leasehold Forum, which will be meeting in March and September, you said you wanted information in future editions of Key News and on our website.

[Click here](#) for the latest updates including frequently asked questions, your responsibilities and addressing some communal issues.

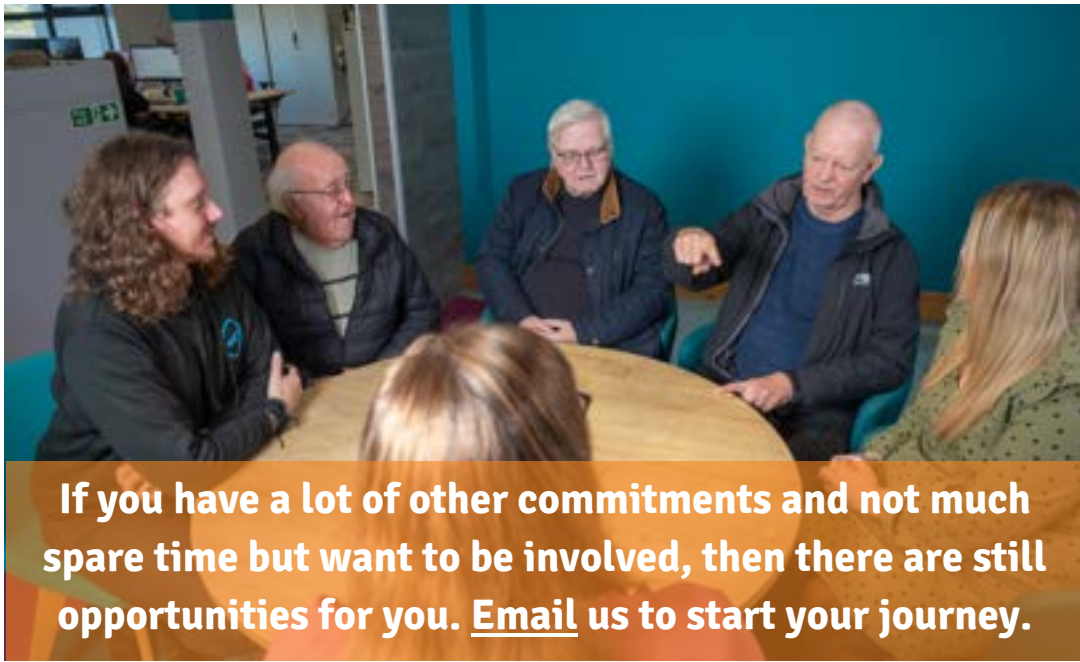


Plenty of opportunities

We are updating our **Customer Engagement handbook** which details the range of groups and ways to get involved for you.

Our **Publications Panel** have helped to influence its content and make sure it's clear to read and understandable.

Over 150 tenants have also been involved in choosing a new supplier and fresh design for future [Key News](#)!



If you have a lot of other commitments and not much spare time but want to be involved, then there are still opportunities for you. [Email us](#) to start your journey.

Winter warmer

Winter beef stew

What will I need?

- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 celery sticks, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp rapeseed oil
- 3 carrots, halved and cut into chunks
- 2 beef stock cubes or stock pots
- 900g beef for braising such as skirt. Buy a whole piece and cut it yourself for bigger chunks or buy ready-diced (remove the beef and add more vegetables to make it vegetarian)
- 2 potatoes for mash (optional)
- A pinch of pepper

Serves a family of four!

How can I make it?

1. Fry the onion and celery in 1 tbsp oil over a low heat for about 5 mins until they start to soften. Add the carrots and fry for 2 mins. Then add 600ml boiling water, stir and tip everything into a **slow cooker** (or into an oven dish if you wish to cook in the oven). Crumble over the stock cubes or add the stock pots and stir, then season with pepper (don't add salt as the stock may be salty).
2. Clean out the frying pan and fry the beef in the remaining oil in batches until it is well browned, then tip each batch into the slow cooker (or oven dish). Cook on low for 8-10 hrs, or on high for 4 hrs (slow cooker). If cooking in the oven, cover and cook for 2 hrs 30 mins, then uncover and cook for another 30 mins - 1 hr until the beef is tender .
3. If you want to thicken the gravy, mix cornflour with a splash of cold water to make a paste, then stir in 2 tbsp of the liquid from the slow cooker or oven. Tip back into the **slow cooker**, stir and cook for a further 30 mins on high. Season again to taste and serve with mash, if you like. Leave to cool before freezing.

Do you have a recipe to feature in the next edition? Then we'd love to hear from you! Message us on [Facebook](#) or send an [email](#) with your ideas.

Energy saving tips that don't cost a thing!

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 use less energy:

HEATING

- ✓ Turn your thermostat down by one degree; the ideal is between 18 - 20C. This could cut your heating bill by 10%.
- ✓ Move any furniture away from radiators. This will help the room to get warmer much quicker.

ENERGY

- ✓ Wash your clothes at a lower temperature. The lower the temperature, the more energy you'll save.
- ✓ Switch off standby. You could save around £55 a year by turning your appliances off standby.

KITCHEN

- ✓ Use a microwave, air fryer or slow cooker. These all use far less energy than an oven or hob.
- ✓ Defrost your fridge and freezer. Doing this regularly helps them to run efficiently.
- ✓ Turn the heat off a couple of minutes before your food is fully cooked. They take some time to cool down and so will continue to cook your food.

Click [here](#) for extra ways to make your home more energy-efficient and not spend a penny.