



KEY NEWS



Establishing a community

Ashtree Close in Belton continues to be transformed.

Corporate Plan

The new plan has launched, find out what it will mean for you and your home.

A range of support

There is help available for you to improve your situation and create a brighter future.

Contact made easier

We've launched new features, benefits and ways for you to get in touch.

Improving repairs

The work taking place, acting on feedback and making changes to the service.

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Contact us:

-  ongo.co.uk
-  [OngoHomes](https://www.facebook.com/OngoHomes)
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-  01724 279900

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A message from Chief Exec Steve

Scan for the latest update.



Corporate Plan

We held tenant and colleague focus groups to gather feedback about what the new plan should look like, what our priorities should be and what timeframe it should cover. This helped to identify the key areas of focus for the next five years, and our three main objectives.

To be a great landlord

- Our homes will be safe, secure and well-maintained
- Repairs will be carried out to a high standard and in a timely manner
- Neighbourhoods will be thriving, with community spirit and opportunities
- Communication will be clear, listened to and acted upon

Being customer focused

- Our workforce will be professional, competent and suitably qualified
- We will be totally committed to our values and the work we do
- Financial, training, employment and wellbeing support will empower customers to thrive
- We will grow and be sustainable

Invest in our existing homes

- Millions of pounds will be invested into our existing homes each year
- Building and acquiring homes will grow
- Homes will be fit for purpose and cost effective
- We will work towards our Net Zero aims, improving local environments and reducing our carbon footprint
- Financial stability and the governance of the organisation will remain priority

The new Corporate Plan has launched and will run from April 2024 to March 2029.

Visit our website to read it in full.



A range of support

Helping those in need



Martin was found to be struggling financially meaning he was unable to heat his home and only ate occasionally. He was also living with unreported damp & mould and repair issues.

Work was carried out and help provided. This included managing bills, maintaining his home and improving his health and wellbeing.

Martin has since moved back into his home and is 'tremendously grateful' for what has been done.

He said: "I was at rock-bottom and in a very difficult place mentally because of the stressful situation. I struggled to see how things were going to improve, but Ongo acted quickly and it felt like a guardian angel came along with this support.

"It feels like a new home, when I first walked back in I just thought 'wow'. This has really opened my eyes to how much support is available to us as tenants. I can't thank all those who have helped me enough, and now I can see a bright future ahead."

Scan the QR code to read more of Martin's story.



HOUSING PERKS

Sign up to access exclusive discounts of up to 18% from over 100 retailers. Visit ongotalk.co.uk/housing-perks to discover more.



Affordable mental health services

Time to talk

Our Ongo Talk team of highly skilled counsellors can help to support you with a range of issues, whether it's for yourself or your family.

Sessions are affordable (or free, depending on eligibility) and with no long waiting lists. You'll be speaking to one of our friendly team soon after you contact us.

You choose the setting, whether it's in-person or over the phone, our team are here for you.

Contact us ongotalk@ongotalk.co.uk or call 01724 844848.



We've supported

673

people over the last three years.

53 rent weeks

If you receive Universal Credit (housing element), there is a week's rent which will not be covered in the next financial year (April 2024 – March 2025), leaving you responsible for the payment.

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) always assume a 52-week rent year (364 days). Because each year has 365 days (or 366 for a leap year), this means a Universal Credit payer is required to pay one day's rent themselves every year. If this isn't paid, this catches up to the equivalent of one week's rent every five to six years.

This will be applied to your rent account on 24 March 2025. You can prevent arrears by splitting this over the year, which will mean you are paying little rather than a lump sum payment.



Please contact us if you are struggling. We can provide personalised guidance, help access additional benefits and maximise your income.

Learn more about financial help available.



Celebrating neurodiversity

A group has been set up to raise awareness of neurodiversity and provide support to each other.

They meet every first Thursday of the month at The Arc (Scunthorpe) to discuss key topics and issues, plus share experiences and available support. Everyone is welcome, with digital options available if needed.

Phili Smith attends the group: "Being autistic or caring for someone with it can be very lonely. That's why safe spaces like this where you can just be yourself are so important."

For more information, head to: arcwestcliff.co.uk/neurodiversity



NEW CONTACT CENTRE SYSTEM, BRINGING BENEFITS TO YOU

These include:

- **Call back** – to save you waiting when we are busy, you can leave a callback request and keep your place in the queue
- **Automated balance/rent** – this will allow you to check this either over the phone or via the website
- **Chat bot** – this will be smarter, more intuitive, and have additional features available such as the rent checker
- **Artificial intelligence (AI) tools** – this will provide relevant information and guidance about your call to help us improve the service at first point of contact
- **Reporting** – there will be improved reporting to enable us to understand customer demand and potential gaps in service
- **Digital channels** – website live chat, Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp have been integrated



We can also view issues using video technology which means a quicker diagnosis and resolution.

A day in the life of.....

Keeley,

ONE OF OUR CUSTOMER ADVISORS



Q: What does your role involve?

A: It involves supporting people in their current homes and when applying for a home. This can be sustaining tenancies, making sure we get people into a home that suits their needs, and any changes or events that may happen. We work with all areas of the organisation, so knowledge is key in getting the right support.

Q: The favourite thing about your job.....

A: My brilliant colleagues, they are all so knowledgeable and listening to them speak with tenants and knowing that we are helping people every day is the best feeling. Tenants may contact us scared or angry and may be going through a difficult time, but we all work together to ease their worries and get them answers and support they are looking for.

Q: How do you support tenants?

A: I support them on the phone and in person at Ongo House by helping with their housing applications. I offer advice on mutual exchanges, tenancy changes and in the unfortunate instance that a tenant passes away. I support their families through this process. I arrange key fobs, handle garage enquiries, and advise tenants who are looking to buy their home. The list is endless as there are so many areas in our large team.

“I love the different challenges that every day brings, and being able to help and support tenants in the best way that I can is what motivates me the most.”

Keeley

Did you know?

“I’m also the the voice you will hear on our automated system when you ring us!”



Keeping you connected

Accessing and improving services, benefitting from opportunities and receiving support in the best way for you.

Promoting inclusion

Access digital support from the comfort of your own home.

Based at a level and commitment that suits you, it includes:

- ✓ One-to-one financial, wellbeing, tenancy and employment support
- ✓ Training and courses to increase your skills
- ✓ Mentoring and coaching to help get to where you want
- ✓ Personalised guidance
- ✓ Assisting you to get online

The support is available to all tenants no matter where you live, your age or your current circumstances.

Scan the QR code for further details.



“ I WORK FULL-TIME, SO IT’S REASSURING THAT THERE ARE A RANGE OF DIGITAL OPPORTUNITIES AND HELP AVAILABLE WHICH I CAN ACCESS WHENEVER SUITS ME BEST.”

Harry, tenant

Manage your tenancy anytime, anywhere

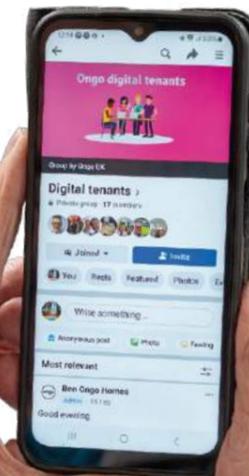
Did you know that you can pay rent, book repairs, report any issues and so much more at the touch of a button?

My Home is quick and easy to use. New features are regularly added alongside Digital Tenants feedback which has recently led to:

- ✓ Improved appointment slots
- ✓ More text reminders
- ✓ Report anti-social behaviour (ASB) section moved to the home screen
- ✓ Updated guidance sheets for home alteration requests



Sign up at myhome.ongo.co.uk or search ‘Ongo My Home’ in your app store.



We want your views

Please take a minute to complete our My Home survey. Your responses are really important to us to make sure we’re delivering a service you expect.

The survey closes on 12 April. Scan the QR code to take part.



Drop-in sessions

Monthly Tech and Talk sessions have been held to offer digital assistance for you.

David, Broughton resident, said: “It was incredibly useful. My queries were sorted straight away, the colleagues were supportive and I learn a lot for the future.”

Visit ongo.co.uk and follow us on social media to find out about future sessions.

New homes

“This has made a huge difference, not just to me but the whole community. It’s improved so many lives and revitalised the local area.”

Louise, tenant



Neighbourhood regeneration

The next phase of the Ashtree Close (Belton) transformation has been completed.

The first three bungalows were handed over in September 2023, with 13 more homes finished in March.

Work on a further 11 bungalows and houses has started, with completion due in May 2025.

A big welcome

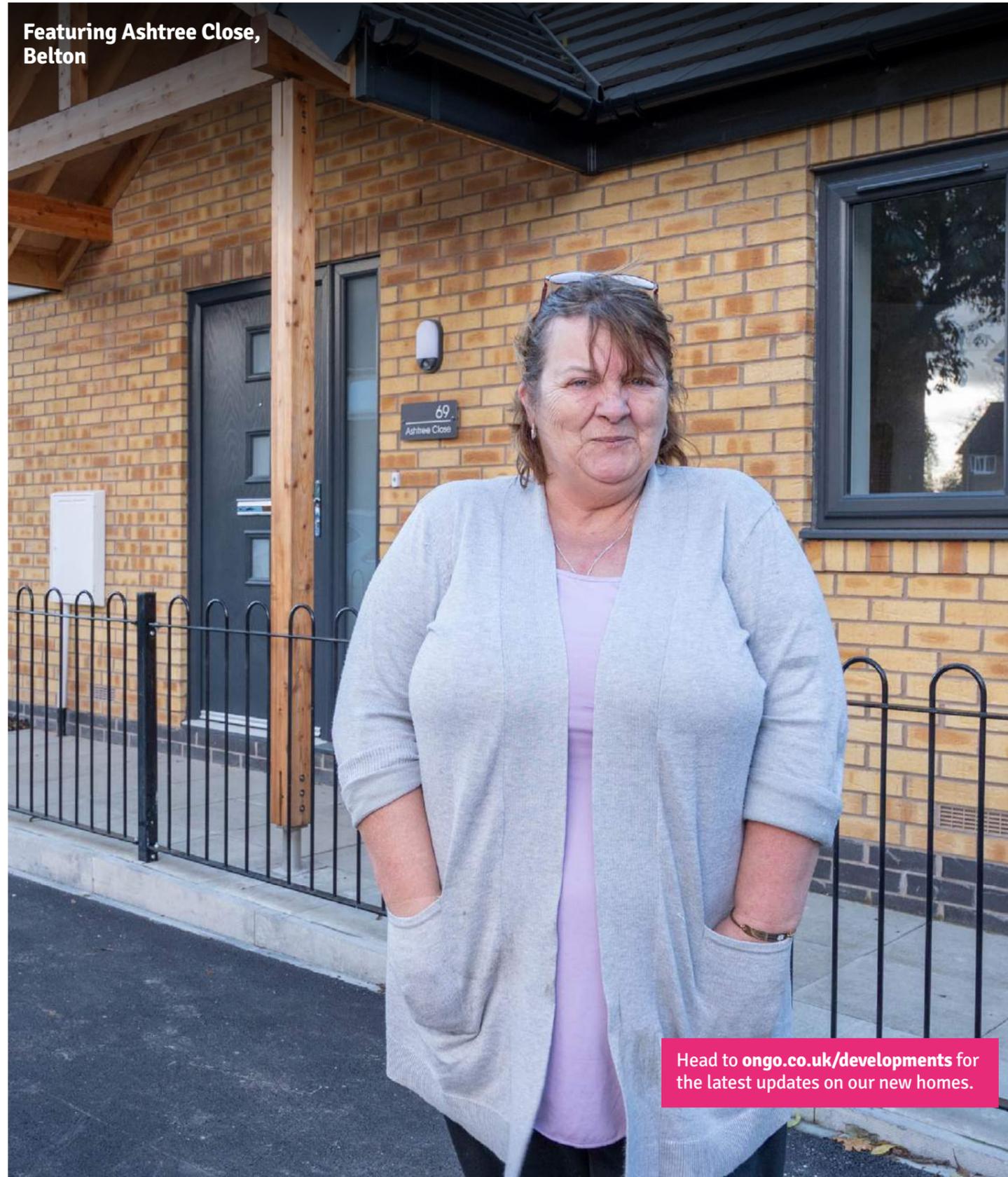
On 11 March we welcomed 841 new tenants. We made the decision when the opportunity came up to purchase these homes from another housing association – The Guinness Partnership.

The homes, which are a mixture of houses, flats and bungalows, are located right on our doorstep.

Increasing our stock size improves our financial viability. This means we can continue to drive improvements and become the great landlord you deserve.



Check out further details.



Head to [ongo.co.uk/developments](https://www.ongo.co.uk/developments) for the latest updates on our new homes.



Gainsborough growth

We completed 11 homes in December 2023 as part of the wider Thonock Vale (Gainsborough) development.

They are a mixture of houses and flats close to shops, schools, green-spaces and a leisure centre along with regular transport links.

We are also building 19 more homes at the site which are due to complete in June.



Between April 2023 and March 2024, we built

145

new homes and started work on another 274.



The 27 new homes on Ashtree Close are part of a huge

£5million

regeneration project.

JUDY'S STORY

“ THIS WORKS BRILLIANTLY FOR ME AS IT COSTS MUCH LESS THAN PRIVATE RENTING. EVEN BETTER, I NOW LIVE IN A BEAUTIFUL NEW HOME! ”

Judy

Shared Ownership is a scheme to help people to buy their own home. The initial share is usually between 25% and 75% of the full property price and is tailored around you and your circumstances. Your deposit is usually much less as you only need a mortgage on the share you buy. Rent is then paid on the remaining percentage of the house.

Judy shares her experience of getting a Shared Ownership home with us:

“I was looking on Rightmove after my husband and I had separated. Due to my age (69), I probably wouldn't have got a mortgage so I looked into whether I would qualify for a Shared Ownership house.

“It was really easy with help from the estate agents and my solicitors. They did everything for me, I just had to sign the paperwork, and I would recommend it to anyone.

“I love my new home. It is a three-bed on the outskirts of Armthorpe with brilliant motorway links and access to town. The garden is a manageable size and it is very modern, warm and in a great location.”

Check out more about Shared Ownership, what homes are available and register your interest today!



A focus on noise complaints

We have reviewed a Housing Ombudsman spotlight report, entitled 'Time to be Heard'.

A Noise Working Group has been established to review cases, share learning opportunities and work through an action plan to improve the service. Just some of the outcomes include:

- Targeted focus group with tenants who have experienced noise nuisance to learn what worked well and what could be improved
- Exploring if carpets can remain in homes for tenants moving in
- Developing a framework, reviewing policies and providing training to colleagues
- Piloting the introduction of washing machine anti-vibration mats and potentially rolling this out further
- Close partnership working with relevant agencies, including local authorities



Keep up to date on further progress by visiting ongo.co.uk or on our social media.

Discover more about the work taking place.



Did you know?



You can be a part of improving the complaints process from start to finish with our tenant Complaints Panel.

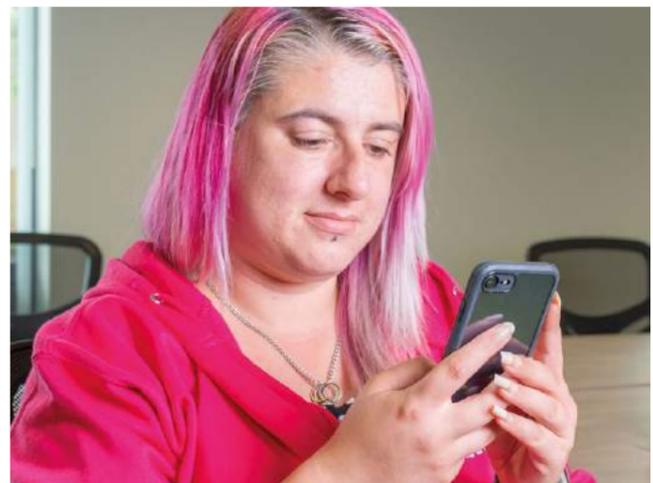
To sign up, check out ongo.co.uk/getinvolved



Involved
with



CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AND UPDATED CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT HANDBOOK FOR THE RANGE OF WAYS TO GET INVOLVED!



Making decisions from your own home

Our main tenant group, Community Voice, who decide on all customer-facing matters, are extending their digital offer.

This allows those who can't attend meetings but still want to be at the heart of improving services the ideal opportunity. They receive the information about a particular service, then have a section on My Home to answer questions and give feedback in their own time.

Plenty of opportunities

Three groups are looking for more people to contribute – the Property Services Panel, Tenant Inspectors and Residents Building Safety Group.

If you want to help improve the repairs service, ensure that neighbourhoods are proud places to be and have a specific input on where you live, then these groups would be perfect for you.



Spreading happiness

Come have a look around Myos House, our amazing dementia care scheme with specialist facilities to support independent living. From Fish and Chip Fridays, to interactive music sessions, to day trips out, Christmas light switch-ons and much more, there's always something going on!



Scan the QR code to find out more, and hear from residents about what they think is so special about living there.



You said, we're doing

Following feedback raised by residents at retirement schemes, sessions have been held to discuss the cost of energy where they live.

The latest information was provided, a range of questions answered and options discussed as to what could be done. Further consultation then took place and, as agreed by residents, this led to changes in the way that communal areas will be heated and the temperature setting.

Our Tenancy Services team are also holding sessions at schemes for residents to learn more about the support available.

Discover some handy hints to save energy.



Good food habits



In each edition, we will focus on a different theme to help you save money and live greener. Here's a few simple ways to avoid food waste:

- Think before you shop – planning meals and writing a list can help you avoid impulse buying
- Set a budget before you get to the shop – use the quick scan handheld facility to add up your food bill as you go along
- Is your fridge at the right temperature? Having it below 5 °C keeps food fresher for longer
- Plan a day to use up leftover food or food close to the end of its life for a flexible, freestyle and creative tasty meal
- Get date label savvy – learn what date labels mean. 'Use by' is about food safety, 'Best before' is about food quality. It could save you money by not binning food in error
- Think frozen foods – a great nutritious flexible option for food at home. It's quite often cheaper than buying fresh food, easy to use and stays fresh for much longer

Headline facts:

- 60% of food waste comes from UK homes
- 18 million tonnes of CO2 are generated by UK homes from wasted consumable food and drink
- Eight meals could be saved each week if we stopped binning our food at home
- By throwing away food that could have been eaten, we are not only just wasting food but valuable resources that went into making it including water, land and greenhouse gases

Growing and Learning project

We have a Growing & Learning project at our allotment on Somerby Road, Scunthorpe. Volunteers help to grow a range of fruit and veg which is then donated to our local community hub, The Arc.

Search 'Growing and Learning' on our website to learn more about the benefits and how you can get involved.

Learn about more top tips.



HELPING A NEIGHBOURHOOD



Community action days have been arranged for the following areas:

- **South Killingholme** (Tuesday 9 April)
- **Riddings (Scunthorpe)** (Tuesday 28 May)
- **Epworth** (Tuesday 23 July)
- **New Westcliff (Scunthorpe)** (Tuesday 20 August)

They will focus on targeted improvement work, various games and activities for children plus an opportunity to speak to our colleagues and local partnership agencies.

Visit ongo.co.uk, follow us on social media and keep a lookout in future Key News for more planned work across our communities.

A local play park has been improved by our Neighbourhood Services team.



Situated on Pryme Road (Scunthorpe), work included re-painting the play equipment and tidying the area.

The team has also worked in partnership with Messingham Parish Council to put in a new fence (Manley Court).

Hear from new operative Alicia about her work to spruce up communities.



Ten year old inspires change

A new bench has been installed in Winterton to reduce social isolation.

Ten-year-old Niall initially wrote to Winterton Town Council asking for something to help brighten his neighbourhood. A bench was donated and, following consultation, was placed in a prominent position within the community.

Niall said: "This allows me and my friends somewhere to meet and talk about things. I love living here and would give it a ten out of ten every time."

His mother, Teresa, added: "I have lived in Winterton for 25 years, and it's always felt great to be part of a nice and friendly community."

"This bench will bring people together even more and make a positive difference."

Get in touch if you have ideas to improve where you live.



A SPOTLIGHT ON... Hatfield



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 Hatfield near Doncaster and Kayna's Deli.

To find out more about Hatfield, go to: hatfield-tc.gov.uk/the-town



All about Hatfield

It's a village surrounded by great local amenities and beautiful countryside. Last year we completed work on 41 new homes in the area.

Tell us about Kayna's?

Opening in 2021, throughout the day we offer food, sweet treats,



specialist dog food for your pooch and different specials every week. On an evening, we host gin nights, quizzes, medium nights and so much more. We have an alcohol licence so we can host different events, such as hen parties and parties too.

Tell us about you and your team?

We are a close-knit family-owned business that has been open for two and a half years.

We have a team of seven who all live locally, with four being mum, dad and sisters.

What inspired you to open the shop?

In 2021, we were given the opportunity to take over the running of the deli from another family member. We own businesses within the community and wanted to give it a go!

We named the deli Kayna's, after our mum/grandma.



Why did you choose Hatfield?

We have always lived in Hatfield and love the area. We have a great relationship with the community, and they've been amazing with supporting us.

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

The amount of amazing people we've met and customers who have now become great friends. We love watching the local area grow.

We have been made to feel so welcome and we cannot thank our customers enough for what they've helped us to achieve!



Check out their Facebook page for more!



Improving your repairs service

An action group was set up at the start of 2024. So far they have:

- Reviewed the whole process – from an issue first being reported to the work being completed
- Looked into timescales and reasons why they're not being met
- Implemented tenant and colleague feedback, especially around communication
- Checked record-keeping and inputting data so that the system is accurate and up to date

We recognise that, though the general demand for repairs has increased and resources were stretched (despite taking on additional colleagues and contractors), the length of time that you have had to wait for many repairs is below the standard we want to provide.

The group are meeting every two weeks, with work taking place in between to ensure improvements are made as quickly as possible.

Thanks to your feedback, the timescale for no hot water repairs has changed to 24 hours all year round rather than just the winter months.

Our Maintenance Policy has been updated, including repair priorities after consultation with our Property Services Panel. Read it here.



Check out future Key News, our website and social media channels for further updates.

ARCAFE

“THE TEAM I WORK WITH ARE AMAZING WHICH I'M VERY GRATEFUL FOR. I KNOW THAT I'M NOW SET UP FOR A GREAT FUTURE AHEAD.”

Grace

In the community

MEET GRACE, THE NEWEST ARCAFE TEAM MEMBER

She said: “It’s really enjoyable and I’ve developed so much already. It’s helped me to grow my social skills, learn something new every day and I feel very positive knowing that I’m helping local people.

“It’s also made me realise that no matter what your circumstances are, what stage of your life you’re at and where you want to get to, there are opportunities and support for you.”

Check out what it means to others who are gaining experience at the community hub:

“I feel appreciated, and I like that I can help others and make them happy.”

Tia

“It’s a cosy environment to be in, and the best part is the people that I work with.”

Aaron

“I love it, it’s very fun and a cool place to be.”

Mike

Visit arcwestcliff.co.uk to find out more!



Discover what else has taken place throughout communities over recent months.



COOKING UP A TREAT

Easy Easter Nest Crispy Cakes



Costs less than 25p per cake!

Ingredients (makes 12)

- 150g chocolate
- 50g butter
- 2 tbsp honey
- 100g rice crispy cereal
- Mini eggs (optional)

Method

1. Line a 12-hole muffin tin with muffin cases.
2. Break or cut the chocolate into small pieces and place in a large microwaveable bowl.
3. Add the butter and honey to a bowl, then pop it into the microwave (or you can heat the bowl over simmering water) and heat in short bursts of around 30 seconds. Stir in between until all the chocolate has melted. (Note: be patient and don't be tempted to heat for longer at a time as chocolate is very easy to burn!)
4. Mix well to combine the ingredients, then add the rice crispy cereal to the bowl.
5. Carefully mix it all together until the cereal is coated in the chocolate mixture.
6. Spoon the crispy mixture into the muffin cases, dividing equally.
7. Working quickly, press down gently in the centre of each crispy cake with the back of a spoon to make a rough nest shape.
8. Decorate each crispy cake by popping mini eggs on top.
9. Once finished, pop the nest crispy cakes in the fridge to chill for an hour or so until set.

Don't forget that you could get these ingredients cheaper by signing up to the Housing Perks discount app! Visit ongoco.uk/housing-perks

Enjoy!



Games corner

Mr and Mrs Ongo Bear had a great Easter!

Wordsearch

Find the following Easter words:...

- | | |
|-----------|------------|
| CHOCOLATE | HOLIDAYS |
| EGGS | SPRINGTIME |
| TRADITION | BUNNY |
| BASKET | EVENTS |

S	O	P	H	X	T	W	L	B	E
P	N	Y	O	I	C	N	U	A	T
R	G	O	L	E	G	G	S	S	A
I	T	D	I	W	Z	B	V	K	L
N	B	U	D	T	Q	P	A	E	O
G	U	H	A	R	I	C	O	T	C
T	N	A	Y	G	D	D	P	J	O
I	N	F	S	B	N	S	A	F	H
M	Y	Z	G	I	H	L	I	R	C
E	V	E	N	T	S	F	S	J	T

Maze

Mr and Mrs Ongo Bear are heading to a half-term activity (check out more events on the back page), but they've got lost. Can you help them to find the way?

We want your feedback on Key News to help improve future editions. Complete the survey to be in with a chance of winning a £40 Love to Shop voucher.



Upcoming events

We've compiled a list of events taking place near you over the coming weeks. From markets and fayres to fun activities, there's a variety of events for all ages to get involved in.

So, take a look below and prepare for a fun-filled month ahead!

Friday 5
to
Sunday 7
April

Easter event at
Yorkshire Wildlife Park
9:30am - 5:30pm

Saturday
6
April

Lincoln Makers Market
at Castle Hill
10am - 4pm

Saturday
6
April

Arts & Crafts Fayre
at Lakeside Village
Shopping Outlet,
Doncaster
9.30am - 6pm

Tuesday
9
April

The Museum of
Marvellous Things at
Cast, Doncaster
1pm

Sunday
14
April

Countryside Lincs
at Lincolnshire
Showground
10am - 4pm

Sunday
14
April

Paws in the Park
at Normanby Hall,
Scunthorpe
9am - 3pm

Scan the QR
code for more!



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