

WINTER 2024 | [ONGO.CO.UK](https://ongo.co.uk)

KEY NEWS

YOUR TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER
MAGAZINE



FESTIVE FUN

Christmas cheer and celebrations
in the community.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

Next round of funding,
plus an example of the
difference it makes.

TENANT IMPACT

How you have helped
to influence and
improve services.

SUPPORT AVAILABLE

A range of help to
create a brighter
future for you.

REPAIRS PROGRESS

An update on
recent work and
next steps.

Contents



3



4



6



14



19

In this issue...

Repairs update	3	New homes	10
Festive events	4	You said, we are doing	13
Support available	6	Involved with Ongo	14
A new project	8	A spotlight on Broughton	16
Community Grants	9	In your neighbourhood	20

Contact us:



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



[@ongoUK](https://twitter.com/ongoUK)



enquiries@ongo.co.uk



[OngoHomes](https://www.facebook.com/OngoHomes)



[My Home](https://www.myhome.co.uk)



01724 279900



A message from Chief Exec Steve

[Click here](#) for the latest update.

Repairs update

We are currently averaging between 3,500 - 5,000 new jobs per month across the repairs service, depending on the season.

Customer satisfaction rates sit at around **80%**, showing that overall customers are happy, but there is still work to be done on improving service delivery to get to where we'd like to be.

This is something we continue to work closely with tenants on our **Property Services Panel** and **Community Voice** (main tenant group) to shape, develop and influence.

In October, we completed more jobs using our in-house staff than at any point since April 2023. We are continuing to monitor contractor spend and have plans to increase our in-house workforce to ensure improved response times for you, plus higher satisfaction levels.

The triaging of repairs at the first point of contact has been reviewed, which has helped to improve our 'right first time' rates from 77% in July to 84% in November.

Finally, there has been a full skills review of the maintenance trades against the types and numbers of repairs, which has identified some gaps. These will be addressed in the coming months.

We are excited to welcome a new Head of Maintenance and a second Operations Manager in 2025, who will have responsibility for repairs and empty homes.

Damp & Mould

With the introduction of the new damp & mould procedure, the amount of new cases in autumn was around 45% less than the same period in 2023. The more severe cases (amber and red-rated cases) have also reduced by 71%. We now carry out virtual and/or physical inspections before rating each case. 15% of new reports of damp & mould are classed as very minor (white-rated cases), with the usual outcome of advice or a minor repair.

Report it!

As the colder months hit, we expect an increase in reports. If you are experiencing damp & mould, please complete our online form and let us know. We take cases very seriously and wish to do everything possible to resolve the issue.

Healthy home

We've pulled together a handy guide including the different types of damp, mould and condensation, how to spot, prevent and treat these, your responsibilities as a tenant and ours as your landlord.

Check out the handbook for more information.



Discover more and report any damp & mould [here](#).

Festive celebrations

Dine & Dance

The tenth Dine & Dance took place in November at Heslam Park (Scunthorpe), where over 85 tenants enjoyed an afternoon of festive fun.

Attendees enjoyed a two-course lunch, captured memories at the photo booth, and participated in games of bingo. There was also a heartwarming choir performance and singalong, a raffle with exciting prizes, plus a range of music.

[Check out more](#) about the fun-filled afternoon.

Christmas at the community hubs

The Arc (Scunthorpe) and the Viking Centre (Barton) held many festive events including a craft fair, lights switch-on, warm spaces, Christmas dinners, breakfast with Santa and a trip to the pantomime.

The events saw over 100 people take part in the fun. Lauren, tenant, attended the lights switch-on with her children and explained: “It was brilliant - the choir, alpacas, the elf workshop and Ongo Bear being there made it special, and my kids loved every moment of it.

“We use the Arc a lot, including the family games and ‘Stay and Play’ events for the kids, and it’s an incredibly important part of the community. I have made new friends with other Mums, the staff are always very helpful and the cafe is great with affordable prices.”

Visit their [website](#) and [Facebook page](#) to learn more.



Dine & Dance



Choir singing



Myos House



Lights switch-on



Photo booth



Games and activities



The Arc



Grimsby event



Donation to charity

Being together at Christmas

Our dementia independent living care scheme, Myos House, had a visit from Father Christmas and Little Goslings Day Nursery to switch on their festive lights. Choirs from Outwood Academy Brumby and North Lindsey College also sang carols, plus a big Christmas party took place that included games and music for residents.

Albion Grove (Epworth) and Greenfields (Goxhill) held festive afternoons, whilst Lincoln Court (Scunthorpe) put on a Christmas dinner and Ancholme Gardens (Brigg) hosted a festive buffet.

Creating memories and raising awareness

Over 50 tenants enjoyed a free festive event in Grimsby.

It included a meet and greet with Grimsby Town footballers, Christmas activities and competitions, presents, food and refreshments, plus an opportunity to learn more about the support and services on offer.

[Find out further details.](#)

Charity donation

The Arc’s knitting group have made 50 forget-me-knots for Myos House to help raise funds for the Dementia Friends charity.

The group, which currently has nine people, meet every week. Emma, a resident who attends, explained: “It’s a nice form of social interaction, plus doing things like this helps the charity to continue carrying out their inspiring work and helping people.”

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





Helping the environment

Be in with a chance of winning a £50 eco goodie bundle by answering one simple question!



Check out some top tips on how you can reduce waste during the festive season:

- ✓ **Recycling** - A lot of Christmas-related items (cards, wrapping paper, cardboard boxes, gift bags and tags, advent calendars, bubble wrap, glass bottles) can be recycled to help cut down on your household waste.
- ✓ **Bulky item collection** - Each home in the North Lincolnshire Council region can have **one free collection** (of up to three items) per rolling 12-month period.
- ✓ **Christmas trees** - **Lindsey Lodge Hospice** collect and recycle trees for a small donation from many DN postcode areas.
- ✓ **Recycle centres** - Local community waste recycling sites take a range of larger items that can't go in your household recycling. **Enter your postcode** to find out where and how to recycle specific items.
- ✓ **Electrical items** - In **North Lincolnshire** and with **Doncaster Council**, you can put small electrical items out with your green and blue boxes/bins respectively. If you have a different local council, check out their website for further information.
- ✓ **Leftover food** - Sign up for helpful hints from websites, such as **Love Food Hate Waste**, on getting more value from your food and what to do with leftovers.

Support available

A range of help

As part of our winter support campaign, we have updated our website to make the range of help available to you clearer and so you can learn more about support in specific areas.

Whether it's financial, employment, wellbeing or tenancy support, we are here for you.

If you are struggling, then you are not alone. Check out more here.

Additional income

Pension Credit could top up your weekly income to £218.15 if you're single, or your joint weekly income to £332.95 if you have a partner. You may get additional money if you have extra responsibilities and costs.

If you get Pension Credit, you could also receive other benefits including the Winter Fuel Payment, Council Tax discount and help with NHS costs.

People who do not get Pension Credit but receive Council Tax support will receive £200 to offset loss of the Winter Fuel Payment. A letter will be sent which can be redeemed at any Post Office with a proof of ID or address.

Take a few moments to check if you are eligible for Pension Credit or call 0800 99 1234.

Save money

“**I used my Housing Perks app for the first time and saved £1.20 on a £40 shop at Aldi. It was so easy, and I'll definitely be using it more often now that I've started.**”
- Jill, tenant

Sign up to Housing Perks for free to access discounts and savings on over 100 brands!



Protect your belongings

We wanted to remind you that it's your responsibility to insure the personal belongings in your home and cover you against things such as fire, theft and water damage.

Learn more, including the flexible contents insurance plans for tenants and leaseholders to benefit from.



BEING SAFE AT CHRISTMAS: E-BIKES / SCOOTERS

Are you thinking of gifting a loved one an e-bike or e-scooter for Christmas?

- Check the product contains a CE or UKCA mark to ensure they comply with UK product safety standards.
- Register the bike or scooter with the manufacturer to validate any warranties, which makes it easier for manufacturers to contact you in the event of a safety issue.
- Check if products have been recalled by visiting the government **Product Recalls and Alerts website**.



Learn about Andrew's story showing the aftermath of an e-bike fire.

NEW Stop Smoking Project

We are working with Public Health England and North Lincolnshire Council to help North Lincs residents over the age of 18 to quit smoking.

Those taking part will have access to **FREE** one-to-one support over a four-week period, plus **FREE** Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) products.

This includes nicotine patches, gum, inhalators, mouth sprays, vapes and vape liquids / salts.

If you don't feel fully ready yet, we have Swap to Stop kits which offer you the chance to use a vape instead as part of the journey to cutting out smoking altogether.

So far:

47 signed up for support

50 accessed Swap to Stop kits

14 successfully quit smoking

22 staff VBA (Very Brief Advice) trained

Complete our [website form](#) or [email us](#) to access the support.



“I had been a smoker for 25 years but, after four weeks of support through this project, I have stopped smoking. I feel a lot happier and also now have more money in my pocket. Thank you to Ongo!”

- Daniel, the first person to stop smoking as part of the project

Community Grants

Our next round of funding for local good causes is due to launch in February 2025. It's set to be the biggest and best yet, with a share of £25,000 available!

Find out below from one of the successful groups earlier this year, Lincoln Community Larder, and the difference it has made:

“At [Lincoln Community Larder](#), we aim to reduce poverty in the Lincoln area by providing food and amenities to those in need. We have been running for over 35 years solely by volunteers and with support from the community.

“We received a grant of £1,000 from Ongo, which went towards providing more space as part of a refurbishment. It's helped towards a much better, streamlined and organised service for our community, which also means we are more efficient and get to those in need quicker than before.

“As of mid-November, we have supported 4,642 adults and 2,063 children in 2024. We're really grateful for Ongo's funding, and it's had a positive influence on those local people who are struggling and in need of help.”

- Karen Mayor, Trustee and Treasurer of the group



Hear from [Jen's Special Place](#), [Little Victories](#) and [Lindsey Lodge](#) who also received funding.



Keep a lookout on our [website](#) and [Facebook](#) for updates when Community Grants applications open again.

New homes



Head to ongo.co.uk/developments for the latest updates on our new homes.

Regenerating a community

40 homes are close to completion on the old Ashby Market site (Scunthorpe), transforming a previously unused space into much-needed housing within a popular area.

There are a mixture of one-bed flats along with two, three and four-bed houses. 32 are for affordable rent, five for [Rent to Buy](#) and three [Shared Ownership](#) homes.

Each have their own designated parking space, plus features such as solar panels with battery storage, sound-proofing and electric vehicle charging points.



Work in progress

Adding to a village

New tenants have begun moving into 28 homes built on Jerusalem Road in Skellingthorpe (five miles from Lincoln).

The development includes a combination of bungalows and houses, with six of the homes for Rent to Buy and the remaining 22 for social rent. This is a low-cost rent, significantly lower than the rent typically paid in the wider housing market and is set by a government formula.

Read more from a new tenant in the next edition.

Featuring the Ashby Market development



Building bungalows

A site consisting solely of bungalows has completed on Poplar Tree Avenue and East Common Lane, Scunthorpe.

There are 28 homes in total, with two fully wheelchair accessible. They are near several amenities such as shops, green-spaces and a short drive from the town centre.

Features include increased thermal insulation, private rear gardens and environmental additions such as bat and nest boxes, plus hedgehog highways.

Also, there is now an environmental section within the home user guide that is given to all new tenants, explaining what biodiverse features there are in their new home.



New bungalows



[Read here](#) from one of the new tenants.

A day in the life of... Jane

Lettings and Homeless Service Manager

Q: What do your teams do?

A: The lettings team are responsible for marketing, allocating and letting all our vacant homes to those who need them, ensuring the best customer journey. We also manage Rent to Buy lets, decants and safeguarding triage.

The homeless team feature a mixture of shared and single occupancy units across Doncaster and North Lincolnshire. We provide a service to support and coach single adults who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to develop skills to be able to move on to independent living. The homeless team also manage the safe accommodation property, in partnership with North Lincolnshire Council, for families who are fleeing Domestic Abuse and at risk of being homeless.

Q: How do your teams make a difference?

A: We provide something so fundamentally essential to any one of us - a home. Not only that, but we support people to maintain it too, making sure they have a long and successful time as an Ongo tenant, with help and guidance if needed. My team are responsible for the start of the customer journey.



Jane will have been with the organisation for 36 years in January.

Q: Why have you stayed so long?

A: I love my job and always have done. I have had various roles which I feel has given me a breadth of knowledge and created some amazing relationships.

I love people, making a difference and providing the best service I can to our customers, but also to my team. I learn something new every day and when this stops, is when I think I will hang my hat up. I love working in an environment that evolves. We can be creative and this drives me to be the best I can be.

[Read more from Jane.](#)

You said, we are doing

Monitoring performance

Following the Regulator of Social Housing's introduction of new [Tenant Satisfaction Measures](#) in 2023, Community Voice asked for regular updates against each of the measures to be easily accessible for all tenants.

[Click here to see the monthly reports, plus our quarterly Complaints performance.](#)



Tenant consultation

Over 900 tenants responded to a survey on what tenancy services are most important to you.

Questions focused on communication, support, resolving issues and any suggestions for improvement.

[Hear more from Dawn, Head of Landlord Services, about the feedback and next steps.](#)



Providing your experiences

As part of the ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy review, 750 survey responses were received and two tenant focus groups took place to get feedback from those who had reported a case.

Key themes included communication during the process, raising awareness of responsibilities and being a greater presence in the community.

[Check out an update in your next Key News.](#)



Involved with

Appointing suppliers

Several tenants recently participated in the procurement process to appoint two suppliers.

Ground Control retained their contract for providing Grounds Maintenance services, including grass-cutting and tree maintenance, whilst **Howdens Joinery** were appointed as the new supplier of kitchens.

Jill, a tenant involved, said: “It’s crucial that we as tenants have the chance to influence such important decisions, and help choose the suppliers who will be providing these services over the coming years.

“It was informative, additional guidance was provided and I’m looking forward to helping with future procurement work.”

Visit [our website](#)
to see how you
too can help
improve services
and be a part of
change.



Influencing improvements

In May, Sue joined the **Tenant Inspectors** who check estates, green-spaces, empty homes and cleaning in communal areas to ensure they are up to standard.

She explained: “I’m loving it so far. I’ve learnt so much about Ongo and the services provided, plus it’s given me the chance to meet people and visit areas that I’ve not been to before.

“The great thing is it’s not impacted my routine or other commitments in any way. I can choose the days and times that suit me best, and there’s also the opportunity to do

digital inspections from the comfort of my own home.

“I’ve shadowed staff from different departments which has been very insightful, and it’s always reassuring that any issues you raise are dealt with and fed back on.

“It’s not only helping the community and fellow tenants, but it’s also given me increased confidence and an extra sense of purpose.”



Leaseholder update

A meeting for leaseholders was held in September to provide updates and answer any questions.

Information was provided on the **Leaseholders Handbook** which is being updated, a discussion took place about the Regulator of Social Housing’s new consumer standards and how these impact on leaseholders, and further opportunities to be involved were also shared.

The next meeting is due to take place in March to discuss service charges. Further details will be shared once confirmed.

A focus on complaints

In recent months, the **Complaints Panel** have reviewed several complaints to identify best practice and areas for improvement.

For example, the panel praised the acknowledgement letter written by one of our Customer Resolution Officers. This letter is now being used as a template for all complaint acknowledgments.

Going forward, the panel will continue to scrutinise improvements to service areas and ensure any learning is implemented.



In 2024, the Tenant Inspectors have:



Completed 144 inspections (over 20% virtual)



43 rated gold star (highest rating), 72 green (no issues), 27 amber (some issues) and two red (major issues)



Themes they have picked up include some external repairs, guttering, cleaning and investment work. All have been resolved thanks to the group’s input.



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

This time we're focusing on Broughton and their community.

All about Broughton

Broughton is a quaint and peaceful town with several community facilities hosting different activities, some shops, two pubs and restaurants, plus a primary school.

As part of the **183** Ongo homes in the area, we have a retirement scheme called Wells Court containing 26 flats and bungalows. Residents hold regular get-togethers and an annual focus group takes place to discuss any issues in relation to the scheme.



A spotlight on the village hall and the Phil Grundy Sports Centre

Both are located in the heart of Broughton and are available for hire for clubs, societies and private functions.

The village hall has recently been refurbished with the help of grants and support from the Town Council. In September, consultation also took place with residents about planned improvements to the sports centre.

There is a [community library](#) within the village hall (open four days a week) run by volunteers. It includes free Internet access for holders of a library card, plus free tea and coffee.

- Among the range of kids activities held at the sports centre, there is a [taekwondo club](#) for youngsters with special educational needs.



Find out more information [here.](#)

Winter warmer recipe

Slow cooker sausage casserole

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp vegetable or sunflower oil
- 1 medium onion (thinly sliced)
- 12 sausages, or Quorn sausages for the vegetarian option
- 3–4 medium carrots (around 300g), peeled and cut into slices
- 600g medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 3–4cm chunks
- 400g tin chopped tomatoes
- 200ml hot chicken or vegetable stock, made with 1 stock cube
- 3 tbsp tomato puree
- 1 tsp dried mixed herbs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

METHOD

- 1 Heat 1 tablespoon of the oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Fry the onion over a high heat for 3–4 minutes until lightly browned, stirring often. Tip into the slow cooker.
- 2 Add the remaining oil to the frying pan and fry the sausages over a medium-high heat for 4–5 minutes, or until browned on all sides.
- 3 While the sausages are frying, add the carrots, potatoes and chopped tomatoes to the slow cooker.
- 4 Mix the hot stock with the tomato puree and herbs. Pour into the slow cooker and season with salt and pepper; stir well. Place the sausages on the tomato and vegetable mixture without stirring in – this will help them retain their colour and texture.
- 5 Cover the slow cooker with its lid and cook on high for 5–6 hours, or low for 7–9 hours.

Enjoy!

SERVES 4



Send us your recipes to feature in the next edition!

A focus on Viking Centre

Did you know? A range of support for local residents from the community hub in Barton has led to 20 people accessing training and achieving qualifications, with five people also getting into work.

Susan Button has benefitted from the support: “I had been in my previous job for over two decades so, when I left, I felt overwhelmed and unsure what to do.

“That’s where Jane (Skills & Personal Development Coach) stepped in and was able to help. In a short space of time I’d updated my CV, completed several courses, achieved qualifications and will soon be doing a work placement.

“The support has helped me to realise and build on the skills that I have got ready for work, so it’s really boosted my confidence.”

“Before I wouldn't have considered trying to find work in a different sector, but now I feel in a much better place and it's greatly improved my future prospects. - Susan |”

Community cafe

Open from 10am – 1pm every Thursday, the cafe has a variety of tasty options at cheap prices!

Taryn started visiting the cafe in November alongside a group of local residents with support needs. She said: “We first saw it advertised on Facebook, and we loved it straight away. It’s affordable and a great way to bring people in the community together.

“We’ve also benefitted from the other activities they hold, including craft sessions where we were making snow globes. It was so fun!”

Take a look at their [Facebook page](#) for the [cafe menu](#) and other opportunities.



Susan receiving her Food Safety Level 2 qualification



Offer!

Visit the Viking Centre (Fairfield Drive, Barton, DN18 6ER) and quote ‘KEY NEWS VIKING’, before Friday 31 January 2025, to receive a free tea or coffee with every hot food purchase. One claim per person, terms & conditions apply.



In your community

Our Neighbourhood Services team have been busy with their winter work:

- Topping up salt bins in designated areas that we are responsible for
- Collecting leaves, removing moss, pruning bushes on communal spaces and resolving any other potential health & safety issues
- Providing shadowing to the Tenant Inspectors to learn for their green-space, estate and cleaning inspections



A lot of the team's time is often taken up with investigating fly-tipping. If you fly-tip, you could face a fine and are in breach of your tenancy.

There's lots you can do to dispose of waste including recycling, a free bulky item collection service and local reuse schemes. [Learn more here.](#)

Would you like a free hedgehog home?

We have been building these homes for areas where hedgehogs have been spotted. Made from recycled timber, the lid can be removed to add leaves and shredded paper for the hedgehogs to keep warm during their hibernation period.

Interested? Send an [email](#) or use our [webchat](#).



[Take a look](#) at our Christmas opening times.