

We have **vacancies** at our care home. *A safe caring, homely environment.*

When looking for a care home, you need to feel that the care and services provided meet or exceed your expectations. At Forder Lane House we focus on the individual, their needs, preferences and aspirations. Driven by an individual care plan, our team aims to balance care and support to maintain independence, along with encouragement to lead an active lifestyle wherever possible. Our friendly, homely atmosphere allows each resident to continue their daily life in a dignified way, with a high level of privacy, knowing that care and support is always available.



Please call us for more information 01803 863532



SOUTH DEVON RURAL
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

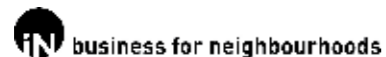
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We are open from 8.45 am to 4.45pm Monday – Friday

An Exempt Charity. South Devon Rural Housing Association Limited is a registered society under the Cooperative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 and The Homes and Communities Agency No. LH0920.



Totnes work hub – a South Devon Rural Housing enterprise

www.totnesworkhub.co.uk

Winter Newsletter

Inside this issue:

CEO's welcome message | Employee of Month | Elmhirst Court tenant case study | Management Team changes | Cooking & Gardening ideas | Cut food waste & save the planet | Keys for Cornish tenants | Christmas at our care home | Winter Wordsearch | Tenant shares bloom photos

Winter 2022



Large print copies available on request. Please call 01803 863550



SOUTH DEVON RURAL
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED



New Year, fresh team and a bright future beckons...

Welcome from SDR's Chief Executive, Christine Candlish

Welcome to this Winter issue of your newsletter, packed with news, features and useful information to help you make the most of this super season.

The New Year is well under way and the prospects are good for a bright future ahead for SDR. We're getting back on track with our corporate strategy, which will drive us forward in new directions over the coming 10 months and beyond.

Just like everyone else, we still have the unwanted distraction of Covid-19 to contend with, but we know that our excellent employees are more than capable of dealing with any challenges they may face.

WARM WELCOME

Our confidence about the future is based on a strong past performance, a growing property portfolio and the recruitment of some good people in key management positions.

A very warm welcome to Elaine Baker who joins SDR's Board of Directors, to James Gурpinar, taking over as Managing Director of our sister organisation Rural Homes Ltd. (RHL), to Robert Carnon, our new Housing Manager and to Kimberley Smith our new Housing Officer. These well-qualified, energetic and enthusiastic people will enable us to deliver on our exciting plans for the future.

A special "Thank You and Goodbye" to Alan Fox – who for the past six years has guided RHL through a particularly testing time. Alan has been the calm pair of hands at the helm as, among others, we embarked on our ambitious multi-faceted Brimhay Project, now nearing its conclusion with just a few market value homes to be completed and sold.

Enjoy your retirement Alan – and you can leave RHL in the capable hands of James Gурpinar, one of 3 new senior appointments that we cover in more detail on Page 12.

GOLD MEDAL

I'd also like to congratulate Julie Wareham, the latest winner of our highly successful Employee of the Month award at our Forder Lane House care home. Everyone who works in this sector of the care industry is a hero and the staff and management at FLH are right up there in the gold medal position! Just look at the smiling faces in our Christmas photo montage for evidence of their achievements.

Finally, do please make the most of our feature pages, where you will find puzzles to solve, gardening and cookery ideas and also some useful tips on saving money whilst helping to save the planet. See panel on Page 2, plus Pages 7 and 8. We're working with waste champions **wrap** on this. If the super bloom photos from one of our tenants inspire you, please send in your own snaps for publication in a future edition. Enjoy!

Kimberly Smith joins our Housing Team

A recent newcomer to our Housing Team is Kimberly Smith (pictured), who has previous experience within the private rented sector.

Kimberly, whose hobbies are reading, walking and swimming, says she's excited to be part of the South Devon Rural team and is keen to get stuck in!

She said: "Everyone has been very welcoming. I have previous experience within the private rented sector and I am looking forward to building my skills and knowledge within SDR and delivering an excellent service to all of our clients".



'Waste Not, Want Not'

On our feature pages in this issue we want to show you how easy it is to eat well, save money and help save the planet from the negative impact of wasted food and carelessly discarded food wrapping material.

We're working with wrap – the Waste & Resources Action Programme – to highlight the ways we can all make a difference to cutting waste, reducing landfill and tackling Climate Change. See Pages 7 and 8 for details of eating healthy and reducing waste. And see Page 6 for a great recipe that will tickle the taste buds of everyone in the family. Enjoy!

Above: The logo of the Waste & Resources Action Programme.



Tell Us What You Think

Enclosed with this newsletter are two annual surveys for our customers:

'What Do You Want?' Please highlight maintenance or upgrade priorities in your home. Feedback helps shape our annual maintenance programme, where we replace items like kitchens, bathrooms and heating systems.

Grounds Maintenance Survey: Please rate our grounds maintenance service on providing Value for Money. Please return both surveys in the freepost envelopes provided. We look forward to hearing from you.

Francis Bourke, Deputy Chief Executive.



Jolly Julie wins in January!



Julie Wareham is the January winner of the Employee of the Month award at our Forder Lane House Care Home. Julie is a care assistant working a daytime shift. She did a great job over Christmas when the agency let us down. She is reliable and always happy and smiley with the residents, who are very fond of her. She has worked in the home throughout the whole pandemic and supported the team. Her standards of care and her work ethic are first class.

Elmhirst Court opening ceremony postponed

December's official opening ceremony for our Elmhirst Court apartments at Dartington for people with learning difficulties had to be postponed due to Covid concerns for the safety of all attendees.

Built in collaboration with Devon County Council and South Hams District Council, the project was part-funded with £400,000 from Homes England.

The case study on Page 3 shows how one of the first residents is already finding the apartments offer life-changing opportunities.



Able Sharp takes a giant stride towards more independent living

Able Sharp is aptly named for a young man determined to overcome mobility issues and learning difficulties so he can get a taste of more independent living.

He recently became one of the first residents of SDR's new 'stepping stone' apartments at Elmhirst Court, Dartington.

Able, aged 24, contracted meningitis as a toddler and the infection severely restricted his mobility and ability to learn. He uses an electric wheelchair, plus other mobility aids, and since childhood has lived with his mother, Alex, in another SDR property at nearby Bramble Close.

INDEPENDENT

Alex takes up the story: "As a young child Able used to go past the Brimhay site on his way to nursery school. Little did we know that one day it would be the site of his new home and the key to a much more independent lifestyle. When we heard about the new apartments, Able was one of the first to apply."

"It's great that he's been able to find a home where he can have his own space, yet within the friendly community where he grew up and where he knows so many people. He loves his new flat, which has a spare room for a support worker to sleep in if they need to stay overnight. He's met other residents and has several new friends already".

Since September, when Able moved in, Alex has been working with Devon County Council to make changes to the ground floor flat that will improve accessibility and ease some of the everyday tasks like washing, cooking and personal hygiene.

She said Able is proud of his new apartment, where he's comfortable and can spend quality time with his fiancée Leanne, who is the "love of his life". The couple, who met at South Devon College, are cooking meals together and planning outings in Able's mobility car.

Alex added: "Able already feels completely at home in his new flat. Each day, with the help of his fantastic support workers, he's gaining the skills that will ensure he has a healthy, independent future. It's what every parent hopes for and I can begin to step back, confident that he's thriving. I couldn't wish for a safer, more friendly and supportive environment for Able to live in the heart of the village we both love".

Asked to sum up her view of the 11 new apartments at Elmhirst Court, Alex said: "It's a real gift to the community".

Pictured left
Able at Christmas with friends Abby and Niamh (left) and Buddy (far right).

Pictured below
Able with support worker Cassie and Merry, the family's Golden Retriever.



Above
the new homes at Ruan Minor. **RIGHT** – tenant Amie Gribble receives her keys from Deputy CEO Francis Bourke.

The Cornish connection...

SIX KERNOW FAMILIES CELEBRATE PUTTING DOWN LOCAL ROOTS

We have welcomed the first set of tenants to occupy a brand new housing scheme that we are now managing at Ruan Minor in West Cornwall.

The new homes, at a beautiful location on the edge of the village at Plain-an-Gwarry, Ebenezer Road, comprise two houses and four apartments.

They are the result of a community-led affordable housing project for local families in need of homes by Grade Ruan Community Land Trust and delivered in partnership with Cornwall Community Land Trust.

HIGH STANDARD

The new homes have been constructed to a high standard by Cathedral Builders of Cornwall, whilst Cornwall Community Land Trust has received capital grant support for the project from Cornwall Council and Cornwall Community Foundation.

Christine Candlish and Deputy CEO Francis Bourke spent a morning in Ruan Minor, handing over keys to the new tenants of this ground-breaking project, which SDR will manage and maintain on behalf of the community land trust by way of a management contract.

Afterwards, Christine Candlish said: "This fantastic new scheme is a snapshot of how we see SDR developing into the future. It sums up perfectly our desire to promote delivery of community-led housing projects, providing affordable homes that meet the needs of local people".

Jennifer Hawkins, Development Manager for Cornwall Community Land Trust, said: "It is the most wonderful news for the village of Ruan Minor that the project has finally been completed, after seven years of hard work. It is especially true for the six families who are absolutely delighted with their new homes.

"They're particularly relieved to have secured these homes at a time when our housing crisis has significantly worsened. Many thanks to SDR, without whom we could not have finally completed the project".



If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Percy Bysshe Shelley

Time to start planning for the warmer days ahead!

We're already through the darkest part of winter. Days are growing longer and it won't be long before we can look forward to spending quality time outdoors, enjoying sunshine, fresh air, the sounds of nature and the sight of fresh foliage and vibrant-coloured blooms.

The next few weeks are a great time to lay the foundations for a bloomin' great display in your garden, yard and patio – or even maybe a balcony.

February is the last month when you can plant bare-rooted roses; it's also the right time for planting clematis and for pruning late-flowering, large-flowered clematis and hydrangeas. In milder areas like the South West, it should be safe to hard prune varieties of Buddleia Davidii too, although you can leave all these pruning operations until March if there's still a cold snap forecast.

PLANNING

Now's the time to order summer-flowering bulbs such as gladioli and lilies, which can be planted as soon as you're confident the soil has warmed. If heavy rain and sleet or biting winds are keeping you indoors, there are plenty of things to do, ranging from sorting out the potting shed – if you're lucky enough to have one – or planning changes to your garden like re-shaping flower beds and deciding what bedding plants to introduce.

For those with the space and the desire to grow some fresh vegetables, the impending approach of spring is time to start making preparations. Begin by digging over

the chosen patch of garden, remove weeds and stones and rake level. Planting will take place in March to May, although broad beans may be put in earlier depending on weather and temperature conditions.

This is a good time to plant window boxes and containers for seasonal colour. These may already have survived the winter with a mixture of box balls and trailing ivy for interest. With warmer days in mind, window boxes, containers and hanging baskets can be planted with summer-flowering bulbs, especially hardy perennials such as Japanese anemones and hardy geraniums.

By now, early snowdrops and crocuses will be making their presence felt and primroses will also gladden the eye.

Looking ahead to March and April, if you were forward-thinking enough to plant plenty of daffodil and early tulip bulbs last autumn, you can expect to see the green shoots starting to appear, followed of course by that wonderful sight of shades of pale, medium and dark yellow daffs and clusters of tulips in many hues! This truly hails the arrival of spring.



In association with wrap's Food Waste Action Week 7 - 13 March 2022

Here are 2 flippin' fabulous recipes!



Pancakes are a great way to turn leftovers into an exciting meal. They're loved by children of all ages, so try these simple recipes for a quick brunch or teatime snack!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 egg, beaten
- 150ml (5floc) milk*
- 100g (3oz) flour* (plain, wholemeal or gluten-free)
- 50g (2oz) dried mixed fruit
- 100g (3oz) finely chopped fruit
- Pinch of salt
- Dash of oil
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice or cinnamon

*VEGAN ALTERNATIVE

- As above, but with plant-based milk and no egg
- 100g self-raising flour + 1/3 tsp baking powder

METHODS

Regular

Whisk the egg into the milk, then put the flour in a bowl and gradually stir in the milk mixture until smooth. Then mix in the dried and fresh fruit (pears can be used instead of apples - about 100g).

Heat a non-stick pan and add the oil, then add a tablespoonful of the mixture.

Cook for 2 minutes, then flip over with a spatula and cook for another minute or two on the other side. The pancakes should be about 8 cm (3 in) in diameter and only 3-4 mm (1/8 in) thick. You should be able to cook 2 or 3 in a large pan at the same time. If preferred, you can add more batter and make single pancakes of around 20cm diameter.

Mix the sugar and spice together and sprinkle over the hot pancakes before serving.

Vegan

Whisk the flour, baking powder, sugar, vanilla extract and a pinch of salt in a bowl using a balloon whisk until mixed. Slowly pour in the milk until you get a smooth, thick batter. Then, as Regular above.



SAVE YOURSELF MONEY AND HELP SAVE THE PLANET

The multiple benefits of reducing food waste

Your food is at its best when it's on your plate, ready to be enjoyed. It's perfect in your fridge, ready to be used, or stored in the freezer for another time. It's at its worst when it's in your bin.

Saving food means saving money, but look at the bigger picture, too. Reducing food waste is good for the planet, as it helps slow down global warming.

If global food waste were a country, it would be third largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the US.

By using up every edible bit of your food, you're doing your bit to look after the environment; imagine what we could achieve if we all make a change!



Here's your five step Food Waste Checklist

1. Check the dates on the food in your fridge regularly – like meat and fish. Move them into the freezer if you think you won't have time to cook them.
2. Keep a stock of essentials like pasta, rice and vegetables so you always have options for using up leftovers.
3. Check your cupboards and write a list before you go shopping.
4. Freeze bread. Slices from a frozen loaf can then be defrosted as needed or toasted straight from the freezer.
5. Check your portions to avoid extras going to waste – or maybe save you from eating more than you need!



WASTING FOOD FEEDS CLIMATE CHANGE.

FOOD WASTE ACTION WEEK
7-13 March 2022



You can eat well AND eat healthy!

Fresh and frozen foods are the healthiest way to put fuel inside your body – and there are plenty of recipes out there to help you cook meals that are delicious AND nutritious.

Read on for examples of the best foods for a healthy lifestyle, as well as what to look out for on the labels.

Try the Love Food, Hate Waste website for recipe ideas: <https://lovefoodhatewaste.com>

Fruit and vegetables – Eat at least five portions of a variety of fruit and vegetables a day. This can be from fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juice.

Starchy carbohydrates – Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates – and choose wholegrain where possible.

Dairy or dairy alternatives – Foods such as milk, cheese and yoghurt are good sources of protein, for the growth and repair and calcium, for strong bones.

Other sources of proteins – Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and meat alternative food products are also good sources of protein, vitamins and minerals. Foods such as beans, peas and lentils are good alternatives to meat, plus they're lower in fat and higher in fibre and protein. Choose lean cuts of meat and eat less red and processed meats. We only need a small amount of protein each day so check out the right amount for your family members before you plan your meals.

Oils – are essential in our diets as they help keep our cells healthy. Oils contain high amounts of energy (calories) so you should only eat them in very small amounts. Choose unsaturated oils and spreads.

Reduce salt and sugar intake – Check the information on food packs. They should all show the amount of salt and sugar in the food you want to buy and compare each brand. You may be surprised how much is contained in your everyday favourite foods.

Tackling the huge mountain of food packaging waste

Food packaging is a necessary evil. We need it to hold and protect our food. But when we've used it for a few short minutes or hours, what then?

Most packaging can't be recycled, ending up in landfill. Recycling doesn't compensate for having too much packaging in the first place, so it's better to refuse, reduce, reuse or rot (compost) before recycling.

Carry your own reusable single-use items when you're on the go. Cook at home more and limit takeaways and food deliveries to special occasions.

Shop at bulk stores or farmers' markets, or take your own containers/bags to the supermarket for loose produce. Buy products that have reusable or compostable packaging.

Avoid online shopping that comes wrapped in a mountain of packaging. Buy locally if you can and support your local high street too!

If we all stopped wasting bread at home in the UK for a year, it could do the same for greenhouse gas emissions as planting 5.3 million trees.

Festive Fun at Forder Lane House



Staff and Managers at our Forder Lane House Care Home in Dartington were determined that continuing concerns about the pandemic would not be allowed to spoil Christmas for the residents.

So the routine wearing of face masks that has become an everyday part of life in all care homes was a no-brainer for all those serving food and taking care of residents at their festive party.

Whilst face-coverings were the order of the day, that didn't mean that staff could not get fully into the spirit of things. As these photos show, there was plenty of Ho-Ho-Ho and all Santa's helpers were dressed appropriately for the occasion.

DELIGHT

The day room at the care home was decorated with tinsel, bunting and, of course, the all-important Christmas tree, much to the delight of the residents.

A roast lunch with the usual festive trimmings was the centre-piece of a day that also included carol singing and games.

Care Home Manager Sara Maynard said: "The residents had a fantastic day and got into the party spirit in no time. I'd like to thank my fantastic team for making it a fun time for all concerned and for giving the residents a day to remember!".



Ladies who lunch – getting in the party spirit!



'Merry Xmask' as care home staff put safety first





Tenant Steve Taylor shares his stunning bloom photos

SDR tenant Steve Taylor is not only a keen gardener at his home in Dartington. He's also a keen photographer, as this series of splendid shots demonstrates. If you'd like to share photos from YOUR garden, please get in touch at: info@southdevonrural.com

clockwise from top left:
Pussy Willow against a clear blue sky. Ladybird on French Lavender. Sensational spiky Teasel. Ravishing ruby red Rose.



How Does Your Garden Grow?



Send us your bloom photos!



Management changes

DEPARTURE



Alan Fox retires as Managing Director of Rural Homes Ltd.

Alan Fox retired on 31 January as Managing Director of Rural Homes Limited, a subsidiary of SDR, where he has worked since August 2015. Alan has worked in the profession for over 48 years, specialising in housing development, in particular delivery of affordable housing schemes for sale and rent (including social rent).

He was previously Executive Director and Secretary of Cornwall Community Land Trust Limited from 2006 to 2015 and Director of Housing and Development at Penwith Housing Association Limited (now part of LiveWest) from 1994 to 2006.

For the past 16 years his focus has been working with communities and community-led development, and has helped a number of rural communities deliver a wide range of affordable homes for local people.

MOVING ON: Alan Fox

ARRIVALS



James Gurpinar is Rural Homes new MD

Succeeding Alan Fox as MD at Rural Homes Ltd. is James Gurpinar, who moves from Randall Simmonds, a professional construction consultancy based in Newton Abbot, where he acted as a Building Surveyor and Employer's Agent from 2019.

He has previous experience running his own plumbing and construction business, before embarking on a degree course in Building Surveying and the Environment, gaining a BSc (Hons). He has also worked for Teign Housing and Haldons Construction Consultants as a Building Surveyor. He lives in Newton Abbot with his wife and four children.

MOVING IN: James Gurpinar



Robert Carnon is SDR's new Housing Manager

Robert Carnon joined us as Housing Manager in October 2021. Robert has a Level 5 Chartered Management Institute award as well as a Level 4 Chartered Institute of Housing award.

With over 10 years' experience in Social Housing, Robert previously worked with Sanctuary Housing, one of the UK's largest housing providers, as well as working for Ocean Housing in Cornwall. Robert prides himself on his positive outlook and strong customer services background.



Elaine Baker joins Board

Elaine Baker, who has joined the SDR Board, is a qualified Community Housing Enabler and Deputy Chair of Ashburton Community Land Trust. Raised in a poor district of Liverpool, Elaine has a degree in Philosophy from London University. She and her husband Rupert met whilst students living in neighbouring licensed squats in Lambeth, where occupants paid council tax. She retired from teaching 8 years ago.

Always passionate about the inequalities of the housing system, Elaine joined Ashburton Town Council 12 years ago with the aim of bringing affordable housing to the area.

HELLO WINTER - IT'S COFFEE BREAK TIME!

WORDSEARCH

Can you spot the 28 seasonal words hidden in our Winter Wordsearch?

Here's a fun way to while away your next coffee break – solving our wonderful winter Wordsearch. Can you spot the 28 Wintry words hidden in the grid? They're written horizontally, vertically and diagonally, forwards and backwards. Good luck!

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| CHILLY | HAT | SEASON | SNOW |
| COLD | HIBERNATE | SHOVEL | SNOWFLAKE |
| EARMUFFS | ICE | SKATING | SNOWMAN |
| FREEZING | ICICLE | SKI | WEATHER |
| FROST | MIGRATE | SLEDGE | WET |
| FROZEN | MITTENS | SLIDE | WIND |
| GLOVES | SCARF | SLIPPERY | WINTER |

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



SDR monitor performance in a number of ways, to ensure quality of customer service and value for money is achieved. One of the ways we monitor performance is by using Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Results from these regular checks on key areas are monitored, analysed and acted on by the management team, and also reported to SDR's Board.

These indicators cover a number of operational areas, such as repairs, allocations, rent arrears and anti-social behaviour.

Please see table below on how SDR are doing on some of the main KPI's. Green indicators show we are meeting or exceeding targets.

Performance Dashboard

	Performance 2020/21	QTR 1 (Apr - Jun)	QTR 2 (July - Sep)	QTR 3 (Oct - Dec)	QTR 4 (Jan - Mar)	Target 2021-22
ASSET MANAGEMENT						
Annual Gas Safety Checks Completed	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%
Emergency Repairs	100%	100%	100%	100%		100%
Urgent Repairs	100%	100%	100%	100%		95%
Repairs/Contractor Satisfaction	100%					90%
RENT ARREARS						
GN Tenant Rent arrears as % of annual debit	0.52%	0.45%	0.58%	0.93%		1.00%
ALLOCATION AND VOID MANAGEMENT						
Void loss on homes as a % of gross rent	0.07%	0.37%	0.36%	0.56%		1.00%
Average relet time (excluding major works)	36	N/A	44	74		14

Out of target, due to issues with contractor delays, Covid deep clean delays, and a need to readvertise 1 property.