

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

South Devon Rural Housing Association Limited
Registered England and Wales
South Devon House, Babbage Road, Totnes TQ9 5JA

T. 01803 863550 F. 01803 863685 E-mail: Info@southdevonrural.com

Website: www.southdevonrural.com

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

Autumn Newsletter

Inside this issue:

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Autumn 2022



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SOUTH DEVON RURAL
HOUSING ASSOCIATION LIMITED

Heart-warming thoughts as cooler days beckon...



By Christine Candlish, CEO

As summer passes into autumn, with the days getting shorter and the nights cooler, humans and creatures alike turn their attention to staying warm and cosy in the coming winter.

For many of us, the challenge of paying to heat our homes and provide all the rest of life's essentials has never been greater. As our nation faces a cost of living crisis and spiralling energy bills, this latest edition of your newsletter contains helpful advice and guidance on heating and cooking on a budget.

As a responsible social housing provider, the welfare of our residents is paramount, so I commend to you the tips and ideas on Pages 3 & 4. There's also reassurance (Page 13) for those struggling to pay their bills.

Meanwhile, SDR has been playing a key role in helping to tackle the region's housing shortage – which reached crisis level a year ago, prompting South Hams Council to declare a *Housing Crisis*. You can read the background and trace SDR's approach in a special article on Pages 5 & 6 of your newsletter.

Ground-breaking

It's by no means all doom and gloom of course – and we're delighted to cover the opening ceremony for Elmhirst Court, our purpose-built apartments at Brimhay for people with learning difficulties. See this page for photos

of a happy afternoon spent with residents, partners and key stakeholders as we ticked one of the final boxes in this ground-breaking project. There's still more good news for Elmhirst Court resident Able Sharp, who quickly raised the £20,000 cost of a life-changing mobility device (Pages 7 & 8).

Continuing with that lighter mood, there's heaps of suggestions for making your garden or outside space more wildlife friendly in our collaborative feature with the Wildlife Trusts.

Plus, for your interest and entertainment a warming autumn recipe suggestion and a brain-teasing wildlife-themed Coffee Break Wordsearch in our leisure section.

Paying respects

Residents at our Forder Lane House Care Home joined the rest of the nation in paying their respects to Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, on the day of her State Funeral on 19th September. This was a patriotic and sombre affair, in keeping with the occasion.

SDR recently held a highly successful Annual General Meeting, where the Board were pleased to report on a year of strong progress and lots more exciting ideas in the pipeline.

As ever, I want to pay tribute to our hard-working teams of managers and staff, who all do an amazing job every single day to keep things moving in the right direction. And to our wonderful residents for their contribution to making this association such a great place to work.



Sun shines for Elmhirst Court ribbon cutting ceremony

An official opening ceremony has finally been held for 11 new independent living apartments for people with various levels of learning difficulties on a site at Brimhay, Dartington.

The Elmhirst Court apartments on land owned and managed by South Devon Rural Housing Association (SDR) were completed in the summer of 2021 and the first tenants are now well established in their new homes, which for many are offering the first taste of independent living.

The opening ceremony, which was attended by key stakeholders in the project, had to be postponed from the original date due to Covid-19 restrictions. Dartington Councillor Jaqi Hodgson cut the ribbon.

Councillor Jaqi Hodgson, South Hams District and Devon County Councillor for Dartington, who performed the opening ceremony, said: "The 'Stepping Stone' apartments at Elmhirst Court are a real boost for meeting a wider range of housing needs for our community. These 11 new homes mean we can now offer more local people the chance to live independently and confidently in bright and comfortable accommodation".

SDR Chief Executive **Christine Candlish** added: "The range of properties that make up our soon-to-be-completed Brimhay Project symbolises the broad spectrum of ages and needs that South Devon Rural aims to cater for going forward.

Above: A large group of residents, partners and stakeholders gathered for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Below: Close-up shows Councillor Jaqi Hodgson cutting the ribbon watched by (left to right): Versha Koria from Homes England, Christine Candlish SDR Chief Executive, Roger Hands SDR Chairman.

"I'm delighted these 11 apartments are now helping tenants to experience independent living, many for the first time. It's the human element that makes any building come alive and Elmhirst Court is now fulfilling the potential we knew it would offer".



AS DOMESTIC ENERGY PRICES GO THROUGH THE ROOF...

Bright ideas to help keep your electricity and gas bills down

All through the summer, warnings have been coming thick and fast that we all face much higher energy bills this winter – and into the immediate future. Whether or not you qualify for help with paying your bills, there are some smart things you can do to stay cosy and stay solvent, whilst also doing your bit for the environment.

Being environmentally aware and living sustainably is about changing some of our habits to the point where doing the right things becomes second nature. So, how can you form better habits that reduce your energy use, cut your bills and reduce your carbon footprint?

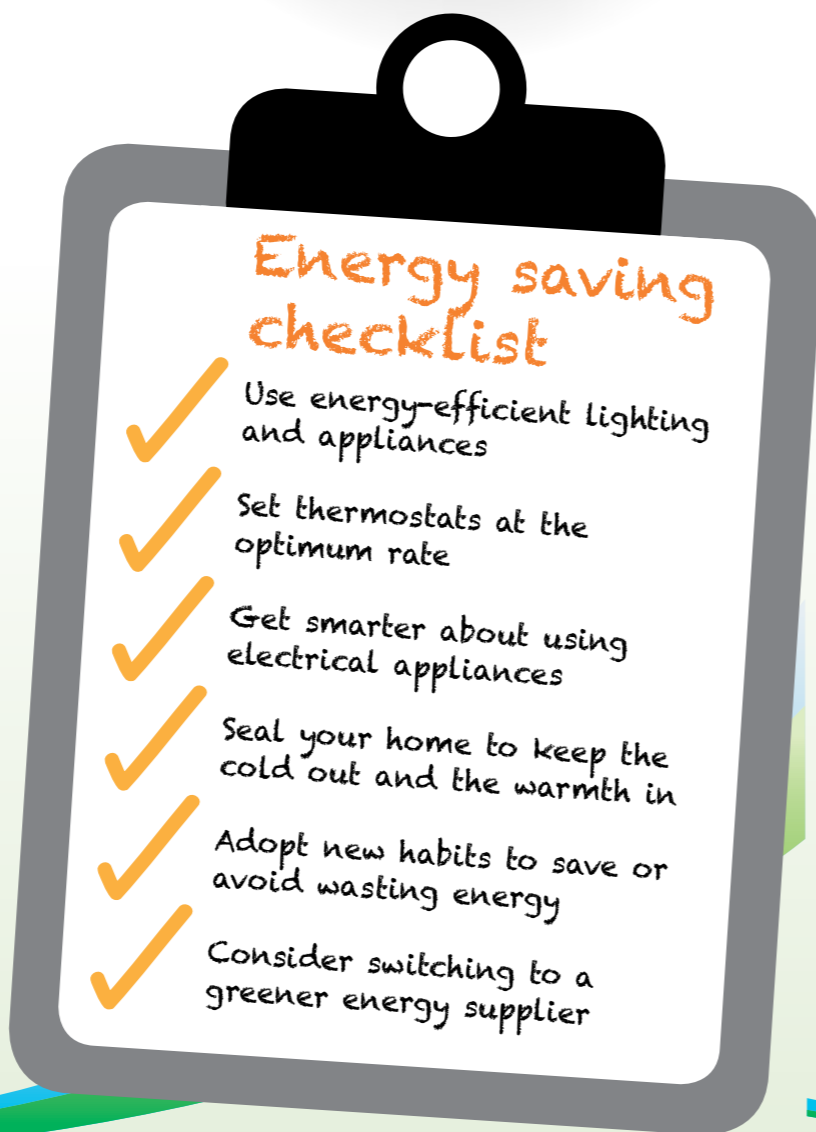
Read on for some reminders of the obvious things you can do, plus some other easy changes that can make a big difference – like turning off appliances at the wall or even just putting a lid on a saucepan.

Energy Efficiency vs Energy Conservation

First, it might help to understand the difference between Energy Efficiency and Energy Conservation. Both can save energy, wasting fewer resources and reducing our carbon footprint. But there is an important distinction.

Energy Efficiency relates to advances in technology. So, a modern, energy-efficient fridge/freezer uses a lot less energy than an old-style refrigerator. And an LED unit uses less energy to produce the same amount of light as the traditional bulb with a glowing element inside. The latest equipment simply wastes less energy.

Energy Conservation is about the way we use our devices and appliances. Small changes in habits – like turning off the lights when you leave a room, or unplugging at the wall, rather than leaving appliances on standby. This guide shows how changing those habits can conserve energy, save you money and reduce your impact on the environment.



Energy saving checklist

- ✓ Use energy-efficient lighting and appliances
- ✓ Set thermostats at the optimum rate
- ✓ Get smarter about using electrical appliances
- ✓ Seal your home to keep the cold out and the warmth in
- ✓ Adopt new habits to save or avoid wasting energy
- ✓ Consider switching to a greener energy supplier

Recipe for energy saving starts in the kitchen...

When boiling water, use a kettle or put a lid on the saucepan, so it will come to the boil sooner and use less energy.

When boiling an egg, turn the heat off early and the egg will finish cooking in the residual heat.

Cooking food from frozen? Plan ahead and take it out of the freezer in time to thaw properly. This avoids wasting energy defrosting in the oven or microwave.

After baking, leave the oven door open for a while, so the heat can warm your kitchen (unless there are small children or curious pets around!)

Don't place your fridge or freezer near your cooker, or in direct sunlight.

Set your fridge thermostat at 3°C or get a cheap fridge thermometer and adjust the dial until the thermometer sticks at 3°C, as cold as it needs to be. Equally, keep your freezer compartment set at -18°C.

Defrost your fridge and freezer regularly. If they ice up, they have to work harder and use more energy.

An outdoor washing line is the most energy-saving way to dry clothes. If it's raining, an indoor ailer is better than a tumble dryer.



Little lifestyle changes can help make BIG savings!

A quick, simple way to conserve energy is to turn down your heating thermostat. Just 1 degree lower can save you more than £80 a year.

If you've set the timer to switch your heating off at 10am, but you're leaving the house at 8.30am, change it to switch off as you leave the house. This daily saving soon mounts up. Consider getting a Smart Meter, which helps you track energy consumption in real time so you can make on-the-spot tweaks to conserve fuel.

You can also buy a smart thermostat that allows you to control your heating and hot water anytime, anywhere, controlled by a handy phone app.

To stay cosy indoors, wear something warmer. Layers, like a vest and a light jumper will trap heat better than a single thick garment.

Take showers rather than baths. A family of 4 swapping one bath a week for a 5-minute shower would save up to £20 a year on gas bills.

If you've got ventilation fans in your kitchen or bathroom, turn them off once they've cleared any condensation. Open curtains and blinds during the day, to let in the warmth of the sun. Close them at night to keep the heat in and the cold out.

Use a draught excluder to stop warm air escaping, or cold air getting in, through gaps under your doors or in sash windows.

Install dimmer switches so you can light a room just as much as you need, but no more. They work well with new LED bulbs.

If you're not going to be using your computer for a while, switch it off, rather than leaving it in screensaver mode. You can save around £55 a year just by remembering to turn your appliances off standby mode. Take phone, tablet and camera chargers out of the wall socket. Leaving them switched on means they still use power, even when the device isn't charging.



Proud to play part in easing pain of South Devon's homes crisis

SDR Chief Executive Christine Candlish says she's proud of the contribution her organisation is making in the battle against the region's housing crisis and the threat of rising homelessness following a "perfect storm" of conditions putting pressure on people needing a home.

SDR has been working in this sector for just over 60 years, providing quality, affordable housing for people of various ages with a range of personal circumstances, much to the satisfaction of the CEO and Board.

Soaring food prices and sky-high fuel costs have sparked headlines about a cost of living crisis not seen for decades – which only goes to aggravate the struggle that individuals and families already face in paying for a roof over their heads. But the causes of the problem are complex.

There's also a long-term nationwide shortage of housing – with this mismatch between supply and demand helping to drive up house prices in leaps and bounds. This national picture is reflected in life on the ground in the South West.

Magnifying the problem still further is a chronic shortage of affordable rented properties, with latest annual figures showing demand in South Hams and West Devon was outstripping supply by a factor of nearly 600%.

Waiting list

According to the Devon HomeChoice quarterly monitoring report for July 2022, there are 823 in housing need on the register for South Hams. Of those, 472 are looking for one-bed accommodation and 205 for two-bed, a total of 677; that's 80% of the full number.

In West Devon, the total in housing need and seeking a home is 516, with 270 looking for one bedroom and 104 wanting two beds, a total of 374 – or 72% of the whole.

Across Devon in 2021-22 there were over 19,300 people on the waiting list and only 3,298 properties actually let, meaning that need is running at nearly 6 times availability.

Many families are suffering more general deprivation, with the latest report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation* showing that the proportion of children in poverty after housing costs are taken into account was 27% in South Hams and 28% in West Devon. That's better than the 40% or even 50% in parts of London and the North West, but still needs urgent attention.



Bad news

House price growth in our region is now stronger than any other part of the UK – bad news for young home-buyers and people who are homeless in the region.

The average house price in the South Hams is £440,139 (average salary £30,160), whilst the average house price in West Devon is £306,203 (average salary £22,048)** so the gap between purchase price and affordability continues to widen.

Also pushing up house prices at unprecedented rates are increases in the number of second homes, more properties being converted to holiday lets, and extra people moving into the area from outside. These price rises increasingly squeeze local buyers – especially young couples and families – out of the market because their earnings don't match the repayments they would have to find for the necessary mortgage.

There's also a lack of rentable homes available for tenancies of longer than six months – inflicting more pain on those seeking longer-term rented accommodation.

The South West region and South Devon in particular have long been suffering from a shortage of homes, which is why in September 2021 South Hams District Council officially declared a Housing Crisis.

Lobbying

Most experts agree that the key to solving this crisis is partnership working: District councils taking their own individual measures; working with Devon County Council on joint strategies; and lobbying central government to create the right conditions for housing stocks to increase.

SDR, like other so-called Registered Providers (RPs), has been helping to promote a number of innovative local authority schemes aimed at easing the housing shortage.



These council schemes complement national changes aiming to make shared ownership affordable for more people, like a new Homes England shared ownership funding scheme that allows buyers to start purchasing shares from 10% (currently 25-30%).

SDR is well practised at finding ways to provide homes for a wide range of people of all ages and housing needs, from care home rooms for the elderly to small homes for retired workers and, more recently, building apartments for the Over 50s and for people with a variety of learning difficulties.

Spreading its wings geographically beyond the boundaries of its original Totnes base, SDR's 365 property assets now extend to Cornwall in the West, Plymouth to the South, Tavistock to the North and Exeter to the East.

We have also widened our range of partners to include Homes England – which grant-funded two of SDR's schemes at Dartington – Devon County Council, Cornwall Council, Cornwall Land Community Trust and, more recently, national rent-to-buy champions Rentplus.

Working hand-in-glove with people on the ground is crucial to success and the teams at SDR and daughter organisation Rural Homes Ltd collaborate closely with the Housing Service at South Hams District Council to tackle the local housing crisis.

Perfect storm

Rises in rents and property prices have priced many low-income families out of both the home-ownership and private rental market – as the numbers of landlords also drop. The furlough scheme and changes to benefits have impacted on people's ability to manage their finances and this highlights the challenges faced by many in our area, risking an increase in homelessness.



Christine Candlish said *shortages of affordable accommodation affected a wide range of folk – from singles to couples, to families and the elderly, as well as people with learning difficulties or disabilities. This makes the problem much more complex than a simple shortage of bricks and mortar, requiring a more holistic approach to finding solutions.*

Partnering

Part of SDR's multi-faceted approach is partnering with providers of rent-to-buy options like Rentplus – now focusing on the South West.

Christine Candlish continued:

"I'm really proud of the measures and partnerships we've put in place and I'm confident they will have a significant impact on the region's housing shortage. Local government and private sector strategies also give me hope that we are on the right track to slow the rate of decline and in time turn it around for the benefit of people on low incomes who want to live, work and bring up their families in our wonderful area".

* UK Poverty Report 2022 – EndChildPoverty.org

** Office for National Statistics figures.

Check out South Hams Council's Step On scheme at: www.southhams.gov.uk/step-on





Ready, Able and mobile!

A young man out for a stroll in the country with his fiancée and the family dog. Such an everyday sight – except that this young man is quite exceptional and has only this summer been able to get around on his own feet as it were. Read on for the heart-warming story of how Able Sharp, severely disabled by a life-threatening disease as a toddler, has fought back to regain his mobility in the standing position.

HIGHTECH MOBILITY DEVICE IS UP AND RUNNING AFTER BIG COMMUNITY FUNDING BOOST

A young tenant at SDR's Dartington apartment block for people with learning difficulties can now extend his independence even further than he dreamed possible when he first moved into his ground-floor 'independent living' rooms.

And it's all thanks to his fantastic local community, who rallied round with moral support and financial backing.

Able Sharp enthusiastically embraced his new independent life when he moved into his purpose-built apartment at Elmhirst Court, Brimhay. Then, early this year, he launched a fund-raising campaign to buy a high tech mobility aid like a 'segway' personal transporter. This would help him get around in the upright position, with many advantages over a conventional wheelchair or mobility scooter.

SDR helped to launch the appeal fund with a £1,000 donation quickly followed by a series of pledges, large and small, to Able's online GoFundMe page. In a few short months, thanks to the generosity of a huge number of donors, Able's £20,000 target was reached. Soon he would take delivery of the American-made TekRMD machine from Anatomical Concepts Ltd. in Scotland.

A few weeks later Able, 25, was zooming around the locality and going shopping with the help of his new stand-up device.

His mother, Alex, has expressed her heartfelt thanks to the local community for their response to Able's appeal. She's made a video showing him out and about on his TekRMD, among some of the local people and places he enjoys as part of his daily life.

The film captures the improved posture and mobility that the machine offers, but also the sheer zest for life Able has always shown since surviving a critical illness as a toddler.



Captions, clockwise from top left: Enjoying the countryside – Able and fiancée Leanne with family dog Merry. Able and Leanne can enjoy an eye-level hug. Able can do his own shopping in the local supermarket. Able cooking in his specially adapted kitchen.



Delighted

Alex was surprised and delighted when the fund reached its target after just a few weeks. She said: "Just a few months ago we shared Able's story. Now here he is, absolutely thrilled to be out and about every day powering around Dartington and Totnes with this new life-changing mobility kit!"

"I can't believe how soon and with such good heart we reached our target. The response from our local and wider community has been phenomenal – everyone coming together with deep care for Able. A truly shining example of love in action!"

"Thanks to our wonderful local community, Able is experiencing all the long-term essential health benefits of bearing his own weight and standing upright on his own two feet. We'll carry the spirit of this human kindness in our hearts for the rest of our lives".

Benefit

SDR Chief Executive Christine Candlish said: "Able is a great example of the kind of person we had in mind when we first conceived the idea of Elmhirst Court. He's shown how much someone with learning difficulties and other issues can benefit from getting a taste of independent living, whilst remaining in the community where they have love and support.

"We're delighted to play our part in helping Able attain his next step towards greater mobility and independence through this cutting-edge piece of kit. He's a great ambassador for the disabled community and an example to us all in overcoming adversity and living life to the full".





In this issue, we team up with The Wildlife Trusts to share some exciting ideas for helping wildlife where you live.



Creature Comforts

TOWN OR COUNTRY – WE ENRICH OUR LIVES WHEN HELPING WILDLIFE TO THRIVE

The green spaces of our towns and gardens bring nature into our daily lives, brightening our mornings with birdsong and the busy buzzing of bees. Together, the UK's gardens are larger than all of our National Nature Reserves combined, making them as important for wildlife as they are for our own wellbeing.

From parkland to window boxes, wildlife thrives in gardens. Below are some tips on how YOU can help.

These green spaces are a lifeline for wildlife, little havens scattered through the desert of urban sprawl and intensively managed farmland. Trees and shrubs shelter miniature mammals and nesting birds, whilst feeders offer a reliable food source no matter how wild the weather is. Even a single window-ledge plant pot can make a difference, providing pollen and nectar for insects straying into the concrete jungle.

Larger parks and gardens can become a wild paradise, home to creatures you would never expect to find so close to home: grass snakes slithering through the undergrowth, foxes frolicking on lawns, and even owls peering out from the gnarled trunks of old trees.

Parks and gardens are as good for us as they are for wildlife. They provide a place where we can relax, breathe in the fresh air and remind ourselves of the beauty of the wild world around us. For people living in the heart of urban areas, they offer an escape into nature that would otherwise be out of reach.

Spending time connecting with nature is proven to reduce stress and improve both our mental and physical health, and the green oases of our parks and gardens offer the perfect opportunity to do this.

Birds

Numbers of house sparrows, song thrushes, dunnocks and starlings have all declined in the countryside, and are now considered endangered. But you can help them, by providing food and places for them to breed in your garden.

Mammals

Many mammals that would have once lived in the countryside, have learnt to adapt to our towns and gardens; keep a look out for hedgehogs, foxes and house mice. There are lots of ways you can help mammals in your back garden by creating habitat and food sources.



Go wild in your garden...

Go wild in your garden! Large or small, ledge or yard, your garden can be a mosaic in a wider network of natural havens linking urban green spaces with nature reserves and the countryside.

Hedgehogs, bats, sparrows, song thrushes and stag beetles are all declining species in the UK, but if we manage our gardens to benefit wildlife, these creatures and many more will find refuge. It's not hard to be of help. Consider a whole host of wild ideas and features – or just pick one and then sit back, enjoy the view and see who visits!

Riches

Why have a plain, ugly fence when a green, living boundary can bring the riches of flowers, scent, berries, rich autumn

colours and wildlife? Ever thought about which heavenly-scented plants provide night-time nectar for moths? Or digging a pond?

If you introduce a water feature, not for fish but for newts, **dragonflies**, pond skaters, you'll also be providing water for birds. Plant up the edges with the golden blooms of marsh marigolds and the lush spikes of purple loosestrife and you'll have nectar stations for **bees**, insects and beauty to dwell on.

Working together, people can change the natural world for the better. You can start this Autumn by following our gardening tips at the foot of the page.

Earn a Wildlife Garden Award

Get your garden buzzing with wildlife and you could qualify for a free Wildlife Trust plaque to display in your garden!

Gardening for wildlife doesn't need to be complicated; neither does it mean abandoning your secateurs and surrendering to a bramble invasion! There are simple ways of inviting wildlife in, some of which can be found on The Wildlife Trust's wildlife gardening page at: <https://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/take-action/garden-wildlife>

To attract wildlife to your garden you need to provide opportunities for wildlife to get food, water and shelter. You may also need to manage your garden a little differently. To enter the scheme you must have at least 10 of the features in the full list of examples below, with at least one from each area (Food, Water, Shelter, Management and Connectivity).

Food – for example: Bird feeders, food left for hedgehogs, berry or fruit producing trees and shrubs, plus nectar rich flowers.

Shelter – for example dead wood, log pile or tree stumps, nesting box for birds and bats, solitary bee home, insect or bug hotel.

Water – for example: Bird bath, shallow water dish or ground level water sources for insects and hedgehogs to drink; wildlife pond (no fish).

Management – for example: Water butt, peat-free compost, recycling materials e.g. old boots as plant containers, leaf pile in a quiet corner.

Connectivity – for example: Mixed native hedge along boundaries, rows of trees or shrubs, gaps in fences for hedgehogs and other wildlife.



TASTY AND HEALTHY

Try our fab recipe for Apple, Ginger and Rhubarb Crumble ...

Each year in October, people gather for a celebration of the most delicious harvest of the season when they come together to share the joy and fun of apples.

Apple Day events can be large or small, from apple games in a garden to large village fairs with cookery demonstrations, games, apple identification, juice and cider, gardening advice, and the sale of many hundreds of apple varieties.

Of course apples can be eaten and enjoyed every day - after all, as the old saying goes: "An apple a day keeps the doctor away".

So try this simple but delicious NHS approved recipe for Apple, Ginger and Rhubarb Crumble:



Ingredients

- 1 kg apples before coring, cubed
- 400 g tin of chopped rhubarb, drained (fresh, diced rhubarb can be also used)
- 2 tsp vanilla sugar
- ½ – 1 tsp ginger powder or fresh grated

For the topping:

- 1 cup plain flour
- ½ cup oats
- ¼ cup soft brown sugar (can use dark brown)
- 100 g unsalted butter or vegan alternative

Equipment

- 6 ramekin dishes
- small saucepan

Method*

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (356°F).
2. Core and cube apples; place them in a small pan and simmer for 3 – 5 minutes until apples are softened.
3. Remove from stove, stir in vanilla sugar, ginger powder and rhubarb. Share mixture into the 6 ramekin dishes.
4. To prepare topping, mix all ingredients together with your fingers until it looks and feel like crumbs.
5. Sprinkle over the fruits; place in the oven and bake for about 20 minutes until topping is crunchy and fruit mixture is bubbling.
6. Serve warm or cooled down; add ice cream or crème fraiche etc. to taste. Serves 6.



IT'S COFFEE BREAK TIME!

Try solving our wonderful wildlife - themed wordsearch



Can you spot the 15 common creatures 'hibernating' in our Autumn Wordsearch puzzle..?

Your task is to pick out the 15 creatures - hidden in the grid below?

Names are horizontal and vertical, both across and down.
Best of luck!



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

BADGER
BATS
BEAVER
HEDGEHOG
BOAR
DEER
FIELDMOUSE
FOX
HARE
MOLE
OTTER
OWL
RABBIT
SQUIRREL
VOLE



Struggling with finances? Don't suffer in silence



We are all currently living in unprecedented times, with many people facing steep rises in energy bills which can have a worrying impact on family finances, affecting the ability to afford other regular outgoings like rent.

SDR are aware of these issues and we want to work sensitively with you if you fear falling into financial difficulty. Paying your rent is a condition of your tenancy, and we would advise prioritising paying your rent where you can. But if you're struggling, don't suffer in silence. Please get in touch with us promptly.

We are here to help

We can offer a friendly listening ear, whilst offering information, and signposting you to services that may improve your situation. We will do our best to help you avoid falling into rent arrears.

Another option, if you are suffering financial hardship, is to contact your Local Authority and apply for Discretionary Housing Benefit (DHP). This is a payment determined

by your Local Authority to help support you through financial hardship. We can support you in making these applications if you aren't confident to do it yourself.

If you are claiming Universal Credit for the first time or need to amend an existing claim, we appreciate there could be significant delays in this for you. Please contact us as we may be able to help with this.

If you are struggling food-wise let us know so we can put you in touch with local charities and foodbanks.

If you are struggling with paying for gas/electric, you can contact your supplier and advise them that you are experiencing financial difficulties. They may be able to offer you a more affordable payment plan.

Keep in touch with our Housing Team. We're here to help and support you through this difficult time.

Take Care, stay safe and best wishes:
Francis Bourke – Deputy Chief Executive

Care Home residents pay sombre tribute to a long life of service

Residents of our Forder Lane House Care Home in Dartington paid their own sombre tribute to the late Queen as they watched the state funeral on television screens in their Day Room.

The room was decorated with patriotic flags and bunting but the mood was much more solemn than earlier this year when the same group had gathered to celebrate Her Majesty's Platinum Jubilee.



Official Platinum Jubilee photo of Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Credit: Ranald Mackechnie.



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 2021/22	QTR 1 (Apr - Jun)	QTR 2 (July - Sep)	QTR 3 (Oct - Dec)	QTR 4 (Jan - Mar)	Target 2022-23
ASSET MANAGEMENT						
Annual Gas Safety Checks Completed	100%	100%	100%			100%
Emergency Repairs	100%	100%	100%			100%
Urgent Repairs	100%	100%	98%			95%
Repairs/Contractor Satisfaction	100%					90%
RENT ARREARS						
GN Tenant Rent arrears as % of annual debit	0.52%	0.64%	0.50%			1.00%
ALLOCATION AND VOID MANAGEMENT						
Void loss on homes as a % of gross rent	0.07%	0.22%	0.19%			1.00%
Average relet time (excluding major works)	36	13	29			14

Out of target, due to issues with contractor delays, complicated end of tenancy due to death and no NOK (Next of Kin)