

YOUR NEWS

MARCH 2021

WE'RE KEEPING OUR PROMISE!

Last year, as part of our multi-million-pound re-investment plan to improve your homes, we said we'd fit 1,130 new kitchens and bathrooms before the end of this month – and we are pleased to say we will achieve this and then some!

At the time of writing, we have now fitted well over 1,000. Lee North-Smith, Your Housing Group's Interim Director of Property & Building Safety, said, "The pandemic delayed the start by several months, so there was some concern as to when we could really get going on this. However, it is so rewarding to see the level of commitment the teams have shown in order to upgrade our residents' homes as promised."

Mr and Mrs Wilson were thrilled with their brand-new kitchen, which was also the 1,000th property that we'd worked on since just last August! The couple have lived in Birchwood over 20 years.

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Get in touch



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INVESTING IN YOUR HOMES

We're spending **£219 million pounds** on upgrading thousands of homes over five years; which includes new kitchens, bathrooms, roofs, external doors and windows. The first £25 million has already been spent, with a **further £60 million committed for 2021-22.**



MR & MRS WILSON'S NEW KITCHEN!



HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS



Following the Grenfell fire in 2017, new regulations and laws have been introduced for all housing associations. This includes a new Fire Safety Bill and Building Safety Bill which are due to be introduced in 2021. All housing associations must adhere to these new and upcoming changes.

Whilst we *haven't* used the same cladding as was installed at Grenfell Tower on any of our buildings, we will always ensure we are fully in line with any new requirements.

As such, we've since appointed a new Head of Resident Safety. As the main purpose of these latest bills is to further improve the safety of everyone, specifically those who live in high-rise buildings over six storeys or 18 metres in height, this is a great addition to our organisation.

We'll tell you more about this new role and how you'll be able to get involved in resident safety in next month's Your News!



DEBT AWARENESS WEEK 2021

22-28 MARCH

YOU JUST HAVE TO TAKE #THEFIRSTSTEP

Authorised and regulated
by the Financial Conduct Authority

If you're struggling with rent or bills, help is always available, and we are always on hand if you need to talk.

This year's Debt Awareness Week is about taking #TheFirstStep to tackle the problem. During Debt Awareness Week, we'll be sharing some top tips about how to do this and how to work towards starting to resolve the debt problem.



Visit www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk/customers/money-advice/ for further information and to get in touch with our Money Advice Team.

Census 2021

 Office for National Statistics

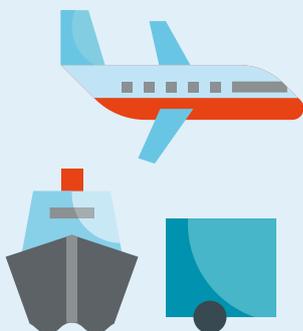


The census returns this month, but what is it?

The census is a survey carried out by The Office for National Statistics (ONS) every 10 years and you must complete it, by law. Census Day is Sunday 21 March, but you can fill yours in as soon as you get your access code in the post.

It's nothing to be concerned about as its aim is to improve people's lives by understanding exactly what's currently out there in all areas of England and Wales. This knowledge then guides who needs what and where and when!

Local councils, charities and many other organisations use census information to decide how to spend billions of pounds on services every year, including, but certainly not limited to:



TRANSPORT



EDUCATION



HEALTHCARE

This money is spent where it's most needed, so it's important that the census counts everyone

www.census.gov.uk

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE UPDATE



You may soon notice a new company cutting your grass. If you used to see a company called Sodexo, you will now start to see Tivoli!

Visit  www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk/customers/repairs-and-adaptations/grounds-maintenance-and-cleaning/ for all the latest on our services.



COVID-19 NEXT STEPS

COVID-19 UPDATE

We're continuing to support the steps to recovery and it's fair to say we're all looking forward to what this means if it all goes to plan!

By the time you're reading this, the schools will be open (March 8) and you'll be able to meet up with a friend for a coffee or picnic outside.

The next change comes later this month on March 29 when up to six people or two households will be allowed to meet up outside, including in private gardens. The 'stay at home' rule will also end but avoiding unnecessary travel will still be recommended.

We're currently reviewing what these changes mean for all our services, and we will always update you via our webpage as soon as we can, as well as share further updates in here next month. www.yourhousinggroup.co.uk/coronavirus/road-to-recovery

ENGLAND'S ROADMAP*

8 MARCH

- Schools open,
- outdoor after-school sports allowed,
- two people allowed to sit together outdoors,
- care home residents allowed one regular visit.

29 MARCH

- Two households or up to six meeting (including private gardens),
- outside sports,
- legal stay at home lifted.

12 APRIL

- Non-essential retail,
- hairdressers, nailbars and personal care,
- gyms,
- holiday lets for household groups,
- hospitality outdoors,
- libraries, zoos, museums, theme park visits as a household.

17 MAY

- Limit of 30 outdoors,
- socialising indoors,
- hospitality indoors,
- events with limits.

21 JUNE

- Limits on social contact lifted,
- nightclubs and large events,
- no limits on wedding and life events.



Happy Easter

This year, Easter Sunday falls on Sunday, 4 April and the reason it changes date each year is because for most Christians, Easter Sunday must always follow the first full moon after the official first day of Spring; the Spring equinox. This year that falls on Saturday, 20 March.

Now for many, Easter is all about egg hunts and bunnies but it's actually the celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus. So, in honour of tradition, we wanted to share a great recipe for the Simnel Cake; a light fruitcake commonly eaten during the pre-Easter period.

"Easter's early this year!"

Simnel Cake

INGREDIENTS

250g mixed dried fruit (a mixture of sultanas, currants, raisins and candied mixed peel)
1 orange, zested and juiced
500g pack marzipan
250g pack butter, softened
200g light brown soft sugar
4 eggs, plus 1 beaten to glaze
175g plain flour

100g ground almonds
1 tsp baking powder
1 lemon, zested
2 tsp mixed spice
1 tsp vanilla extract
100g glacé cherries, halved
3 tbsp apricot jam



METHOD

1. Put the mixed dried fruit in a bowl with the orange juice and zest and 2 tbsp water. Cover and microwave for 2 mins, then leave to cool completely. Alternatively, heat gently in a pan, stirring now and then until the liquid has been absorbed and leave to cool.
2. Heat oven to 150C / Fan 130C / Gas Mark 2. Roll out a third of the marzipan and use the base of a deep 20cm cake tin as a template to cut out a circle. Wrap any offcuts and the remaining two-thirds of marzipan and set aside for later. Butter and line the cake tin with a double layer of parchment. Beat the butter and sugar together until creamy. Add the eggs, flour, almonds, baking powder, lemon zest, mixed spice and vanilla (all in one go) and mix until well combined. Mix in the cooled soaked dried fruit and fold in the cherries.
3. Scrape half the cake mixture into the tin. Top with the disc of marzipan, then the remaining cake mixture, and level the top with a spatula. Bake for 2 hrs. Check it's cooked by inserting a skewer to the centre of the cake, if any wet mixture clings to the skewer, return to the oven for another 10 mins, then check again. Cool in the tin for 15 mins, then turn out onto a wire rack and leave to cool completely.
4. Brush the top of the cake with apricot jam. Roll out half of the remaining marzipan and use the base of the cake as a template to cut out another disc. Place it on top of the cake and crimp the edges, if you like. Roll the remaining marzipan into 11 equal-sized balls for the apostles. Brush the marzipan with beaten egg and arrange the apostles in a circle on top around the outside and brush them with a little egg too. Put under a hot grill for a minute or two until just starting to caramelize – be very careful as the marzipan will burn easily. Leave to cool and wrap a ribbon around the cake, if you like. Will keep for up to a week in a sealed tin.