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Tenant conference success

In September we welcomed over 70 residents to the tenants and leaseholders conference at the assembly rooms. This is the first we have held for several years, and it was fantastic to be able to bring people together again to shape our services.

The conference saw tenants themselves speaking about tenant engagement and why its important. We welcomed guest speaker Linda Moir, who in the past worked for Richard Branson, she joined us to talk about 'building a memorable customer experience'. And Yvonne Davis who spoke to residents about the new regulatory changes taking place and how this will affect landlords and their tenants.

Those who joined us were also able to visit 'stalls' set up by our different teams so they could talk directly to us about any concerns or issues. We hope to see even more residents at the next one!



Face to face customer services to open at Marmion House early 2025

On Monday 16 September, councillors made the decision to open a customer services reception at Marmion House. The new service will open early 2025.

This new service will provide face-to-face customer services which meet the needs of the whole community, Monday, Wednesday, Friday between 10.00am and 2.00pm and Tuesday and Thursday 2.00pm - 6.00pm.

There is no change to the face-to-face service at the Assembly Rooms, services available over the phone, online or through apps such as MyHousing and MyTamworth.

To explain this decision, Councillor Lewis Smith, portfolio holder for people services, leisure and engagement, said: "Residents have consistently been telling councillors and the council for a number of years that they want a face-to-face customer service desk in Marmion House, additional to the service at the Assembly Rooms. As a new political administration, we simply could not continue to ignore the voice of residents on this matter."

In the same meeting, cabinet also approved to move committee meetings from the Town Hall to Marmion House. This move increases accessibility for councillors and enhances operational efficiency as staffing is only necessary at one venue.

Refurbishment work and updating technology is necessary before the new reception can open. It is expected to cost around £150,000 in the first year to carry out the refurbishment and staff service, with ongoing costs of less than £60,000 every year after. It is anticipated the new service will open early 2025.

Council meetings are broadcast on YouTube, but the existing broadcasting technology no longer meets its intended purpose and offers an unsatisfactory experience for remote viewers. Therefore, it is also necessary to upgrade the out-dated audio visual equipment used for council meetings. It is anticipated meetings will take place at Marmion House from the new year.

Councillor Lewis Smith went on to say: "Work now starts to implement these plans over the next few months, with the hope of opening the new service to residents early 2025. Alongside supporting the residents of Tamworth, the front desk opening will allow a number of council services to use this space and continue their work with community groups and the voluntary sector."



Are you state pension age, or do you know anyone who is?

If you are state pension age, you may be able to claim pension credit.

To check if you are eligible for this benefit or to apply:

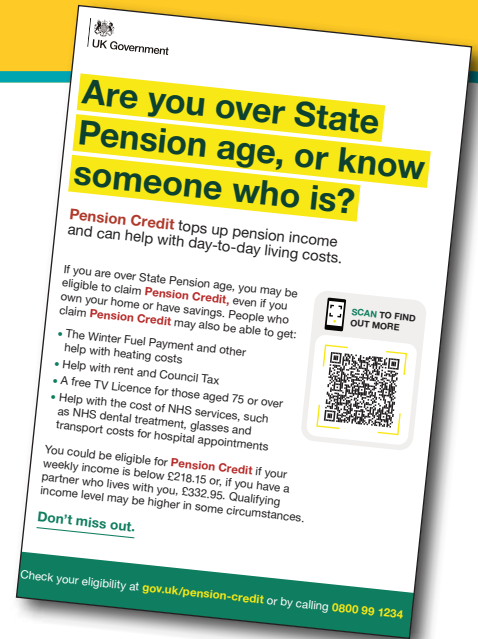
- Visit www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim
- Call calling 0800 99 1234 (Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm)

For more information visit the Pension Credit website at www.gov.uk

Anyone who is entitled to pension credit for at least one day of the winter fuel payment qualifying week will have automatic entitlement to winter fuel payment. There are some exceptions which are detailed on gov.uk: winter fuel payment: at www.gov.uk.

The qualifying week for the winter fuel payment for 2024 was the 16 to the 22 September. However, when you apply for pension credit you can ask for the claim to be back dated up to three months as long as you are entitled to it during that time. If you are eligible for a back date, you may be able to receive a winter fuel payment. **This means that the latest date to apply for pension credits and still qualify for a Winter Fuel Payment is 21 December 2024.**

The winter fuel payment is worth £300 for households with someone aged 80 or over. Households with someone aged 66-79 will receive £200.



Plant a pot events

In September our tenant participation team, with the support of our housing maintenance operatives successfully hosted plant a pot events at two of our sheltered housing schemes, Bright Crescent and Edward Court.

Residents were provided with autumn plants, tools, compost and pots to fill with flowers and place around their homes. Everyone had a fantastic time, one Bright Crescent resident said "This was a wonderful morning, lots of laughter and a lovely get together with our neighbours. We all really enjoyed ourselves."

A resident of Edward Court commented "I really enjoyed it; the helpers were kind and helpful."

Both events were well attended and extremely successful. We run these regularly to encourage our sheltered residents to get involved with their community and brighten up their outdoor spaces.

We would like to thank Seaton's Hire who donated the planting tools and gazebos which kept us dry from the September showers. These kind donations will help us to hold more of these events in the future.



Antisocial behaviour

Tackling antisocial behaviour is a priority for us, and we'd like to keep you updated about the service.

Antisocial behaviour scrutiny group

This is a group of councillors, residents and staff who meet four times a year to help improve how we tackle antisocial behaviour.

The group met recently and agreed a series of factsheets for residents and new ways of working for how the antisocial behaviour team manage cases and reports.

All new factsheets about what to do, how to report and much more are now available on our council website at www.tamworth.gov.uk/factsheet-library. They also explain all kinds of antisocial behaviour such as Cannabis use, Cuckooing and noise.

We're always looking for residents to join the group, if you are interested, contact us at neighbourhoodimpactteam@tamworth.gov.uk or call us on 01827 709709.

Our antisocial behaviour team

Every member of our Neighbourhood Impact team – the people who tackle antisocial behaviour are professionals dedicated to reducing the crime of antisocial behaviour across the borough. Every team member either has or will be gaining a qualification specifically for the job. This is a

BTEC Level 3 Advanced Award in Community Safety, Crime and Nuisance Management for Practitioners.

We also train our staff throughout the year around subjects such as safeguarding, protect UK terrorism, antisocial behaviour tools and powers and injunction applications.

How to report

You can report anti-social behaviour on our website at - <https://mytamworth.tamworth.gov.uk/do-it-online/report-it/anti-social-behaviour-incident/>

Reports of abandoned vehicles can be reported here - <https://mytamworth.tamworth.gov.uk/do-it-online/report-it/abandoned-vehicle-report/>

If you are unsure of what to do and need advice, please email us at neighbourhoodimpactteam@tamworth.gov.uk or call us on 01827 709709



Antisocial behaviour success - 12-month jail term for Tamworth resident

A Tamworth resident has been sentenced to an immediate custodial sentence for 12 months for breaching an injunction and exclusion order on multiple occasions.

Tamworth Borough Council officers obtained an emergency injunction on 17 May 2024 against Dean Chambers of Sorrel, Amington, with conditions not to use threatening or abusive behaviour and not to threaten or use violence against anyone in the borough of Tamworth. This injunction was later extended to include an exclusion order forbidding Chambers from entering his home and part of the street.

However, Chambers continued to flout the law and ignore the injunctions, so Judge Singh at Warwick County Court, determined that a prison sentence was necessary.

Judge Singh found that the remaining five breaches were proven to the criminal standard and warranted an immediate custodial sentence. Time served will be 12 months less time on remand which was 22 days. Costs were also awarded to the claimant of £2,700.

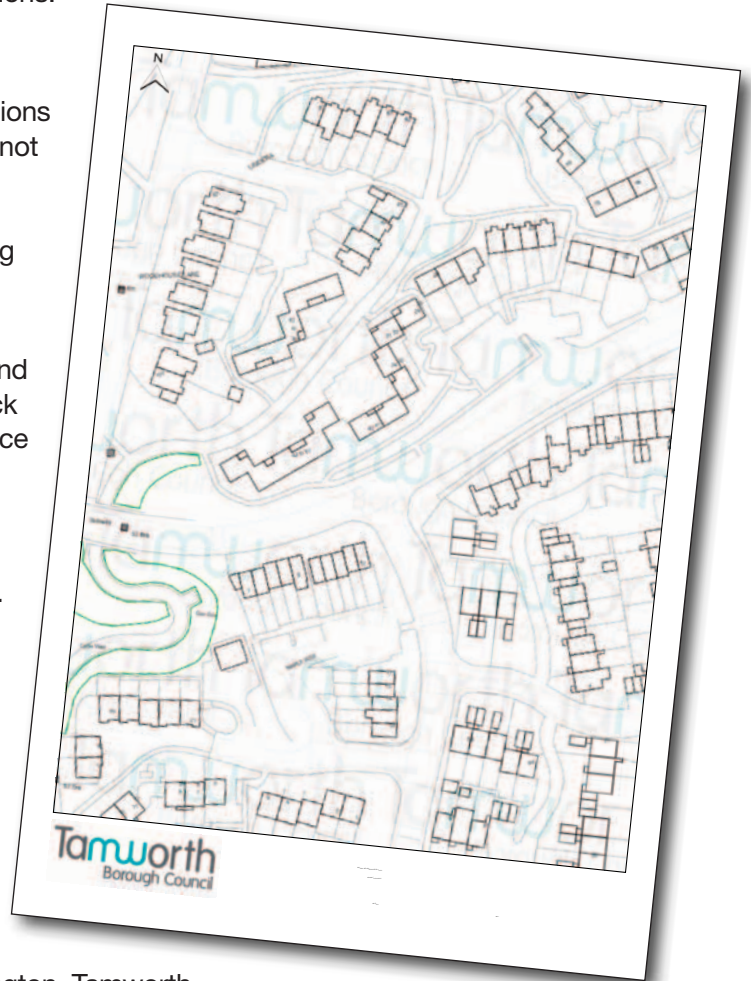
The injunction, exclusion order and power of arrest remains in place until 17 May 2025 at 11.59 pm.

Dean Chambers is forbidden (whether by himself or by instructing, encouraging or permitting any other person) from:

- Visiting or staying at a property in Sorrel, Amington, Tamworth
- Entering the nearby area, outlined on a map of Sorrel
- Using abusive and threatening language toward a person who resides in, or any other person (whether residing, visiting or otherwise engaged in a lawful activity) in the locality of Sorrel, Amington Tamworth, and throughout the borough of Tamworth
- Using violence towards or threatening to use violence towards any other person in Staffordshire
- Engaging or threatening to engage in conduct which causes or is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance anyone who resides in, or visiting in or otherwise engaged in a lawful activity in the locality of Sorrel, Amington and throughout the borough of Tamworth.

Councillor Sarah Daniels, portfolio holder for co-operative council, community partnerships and antisocial behaviour, said: "Antisocial behaviour, including abuse and violence towards individuals, is a crime, terrifying anyone on the receiving end. It is a crime we take seriously, and we work with community safety partners, including Tamworth Neighbourhood Policing Team to take swift and strong action."

"In this case, Chambers breached the terms of both his injunction and exclusion order on several occasions. Breaking this order was a serious crime, one that we could not ignore, and the decision was taken by the judge to issue a prison sentence."



Meet Hailee, our new tenancy sustainment officer

Hailee McIntosh recently joined us as our fourth tenancy sustainment officer. Hailee is responsible for the estate and tenancy management functions across Stoneydelph, Kettlebrook and Dosthill.

Hailee joins us with a wealth of experience in a variety of sectors and prides herself on delivering a customer focused service.



Facts about Hailee

“I love to travel; I have been fortunate to visit over 25 countries”

“My travel bucket list is South Africa, India and Brazil.”

“I enjoy trying foods from different cultures, especially Thai, Chinese and Indian.”

Q: If you could only ever eat one meal again, what would it be?

A: Oxtail, rice and peas with macaroni cheese, coleslaw and plantain.

Q: What do you enjoy most about your role?

A: The variety, no day is the same

Fireworks spectacular

**SATURDAY 2 NOVEMBER 2024 -
TAMWORTH CASTLE GROUNDS**

This event is free, and no tickets are required - Anyone trying to sell you a ticket is a scammer so please ignore them.

Date: Saturday 2 November 2024 - 5.30pm

Venue: Tamworth Castle Grounds



Tamworth wind band - free concert

Experience the enchanting sounds of the season with the Tamworth Wind Band.

Soak in the seasonal atmosphere as festive favourites fill Ankerside. The talented musicians of the Tamworth Wind Band will be playing Christmas classics old and new, creating a magical atmosphere perfect for the whole family.

The group will be performing at different intervals throughout the day in Castle Square. So join the holiday spirit as you shop for gifts for your loved ones this Christmas.

Date: Saturday 7 December 2024 - 10.00am

Venue: Ankerside Shopping Centre, George St, Tamworth B79 7LG



Annual tenant satisfaction survey

The tenant satisfaction survey results provide information around tenants' perceptions of our housing services and help tenants scrutinise how well we manage their homes and neighbourhoods.

The survey happens every year and the results are reported to the Regulator of Social Housing.

Summary of tenants satisfaction survey findings

In January and February this year, we M·E·L Research (an independent research company) contacted all tenants to ask what is going well what not so well. This year was the first survey we've carried out and the findings are helping us to improve the quality of services we deliver to our tenants.

Out of the 4242 council properties let at the time of the survey, 745 tenants completed a survey either by phone or post.

So what did you say?

- 58% satisfied with the overall service provided by the council
- 62% satisfied with the overall repairs service
- 62% satisfied with the time taken to complete most recent repair
- 63% satisfied that the council provides a home that is well maintained
- 69% satisfied that the council provides a home that is safe
- 51% satisfied that the council listens to their views and acts upon them
- 56% satisfied that the council keeps them informed about things that matter to them
- 69% agree that the council treats them fairly and with respect
- 23% satisfied with the council's approach to complaints handling
- 68% satisfied that the council keeps communal areas clean and well maintained
- 52% satisfied that the council makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhoods
- 54% satisfied with the council's approach to handling antisocial behaviour

You can watch a short video or read a leaflet about these results on our website at www.tamworth.gov.uk/tenant-satisfaction-measures-and-performance-information

Thank you to all our tenants who were involved with sharing their feedback

Thank you for sharing how you feel about your housing services. We're currently working hard, together with our tenants' groups to make things better for everyone based on what you have told us. The improvements to our service will be published in our tenant annual report available towards the end of the year.

More information on the regulatory standards and the tenant satisfaction measures can be found here: www.gov.uk/government/collections/transparency-influence-and-accountability-including-tenant-satisfaction-measures

Managing your budget through winter

As we enter into the winter months many people experience money worries when faced with winter bills and the cost of Christmas festivities.

Here are some of ways we can help you manage your household budget over the coming winter months:

- We can refer you to the Tamworth Advice Centre or you can call them direct on 0808 2787972 for help with increasing your income, by checking you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to and offering debt, budgeting and energy advice.
- www.moneyhelper.org.uk offers lots of free information about benefits, debt, debt agencies and charities that may be able to help with financial support. They also have an online budget planner to help you to plan your weekly budget, and a benefit calculator so you can check you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.
- Beat the cold 0800 043 2815 offer free independent home energy advice, including advice on debt with gas and electric bills. It is also wise to call your own energy supplier promptly if you are struggling to afford your gas and electric.
- You may also be eligible for help from one of the hardship funds, the discretionary housing payment or the landlord hardship fund. To be considered for the discretionary housing payment you must already receive housing benefit or Universal Credit. To find out more you can us on 01827 709514 or email incometeam@tamworth.gov.uk.
- We can refer you to the food bank for food or a referral to the household support fund for a supermarket voucher and utility payment. To find out more you can us on 01827 709514 or email incometeam@tamworth.gov.uk (Note: Each household can only access the supermarket vouchers and utility payment once during this funding period of 1st October 2024 to 31st March 2025).
- Check your rent balance, which you can do yourself online at any time, by:
 - o Registering on the tenant's website at www.myhousing.tamworth.gov.uk
 - o Visit www.tamworth.gov.uk and click 'check your rent balance'
 - o Ask about your rent payments and balance on the webchat on the council website
 - o Phone us on 01827 709514 during office hours
- Rent Free weeks: The weeks starting Monday 16 December 2024, 17 March 2025, and 24 March 2025 are rent free weeks. Unless you are behind with your rent and on a repayment plan.

Remember, please call us 01827 709514 or email: incometeam@tamworth.gov.uk if you are struggling to pay your rent or manage your household bills. We're here to help and advise you.

Your rent should always be a priority and be paid first to make sure you do not risk losing your home.

www.tamworth.gov.uk/sites/default/files/housing_docs/Paying_your_rent_booklet_3109.pdf

Tunstall

Tunstall appointed to deliver 24-hour community lifeline service

After a robust process to appoint a new supplier, Tunstall now delivers our **24-hour community lifeline service**.

Tunstall has been at the forefront of technology innovation for the housing, health, and social care markets for 65 years.

The seamless changeover from our previous supplier to Tunstall took place in June 2024, and the Tunstall response centre now provide the 24-hour lifeline monitoring services across all the our 11 sheltered housing schemes, monitoring the lifelines, door entry systems, and fire alarms.

Tunstall Response also provides monitoring across all of our high-rise blocks and provide the lone working monitoring systems for our staff.

It is good to report that there have been no difficulties during the changeover period, and we currently benefit from regular update meetings.



Thank you for the flowers

Our sheltered housing residents were really delighted to receive a kind donation of bedding plants from the our grounds maintenance team.

Thanks to all those involved in making this happen - the gardens look wonderful and will be enjoyed by all the residents!



Regulator of social housing

The Regulator of Social Housing regulates any organisation who provide social housing.

They work to make sure there is a viable, efficient, and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs.

The regulator sets the consumer standards that all landlords must deliver using powers under the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008..

There are four consumer standards:

- Neighbourhood & Community Standard
- Safety & Quality Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard

For more information on these or how the regulator assesses these including inspecting landlords visit the government website at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing

Reporting to the Regulator for Social Housing

We're very committed to making sure the services we deliver to you meet the new standards introduced by the Regulator for Social Housing.

To do this, we looked at all our services and compared how we were doing to the new standards. We found that in some areas we do not meet the standard we expect of ourselves nor the standards of the regulator.

We're taking swift and robust action to make sure our housing services improve, and we're sorry that some of our services are not as they should be.

There is information on our website about the improvements we're now prioritising visit www.tamworth.gov.uk/house-house-regulations

If you have any questions, please contact our tenant regulatory team on 01827 709709.

Bulky waste – information about how to arrange collection of large items you need to throw away

Large items you need to throw away are called 'Bulky waste'. These are items that are too big to be collected by the normal bin lorry. Bulky items can include old furniture, appliances, toys, large boxes, etc.

If you live in a flat, please do not leave any items outside your property or in the communal areas, as this causes a fire risk.

It is also illegal to dump unwanted items in the streets or on anyone else's land.

If you need to dispose of any household items, please book a collection at www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/xfp/form/257.

- It costs £18 for the first item and £7.50 for each other item to be collected at the same time.
- You can book up to four items on any one bulky collection and up to two items on any one scrap collection.

If you are unable to book in a bulky waste collection you should use one of the **household recycling centres**. These sites also have recycling facilities. You can find a full list of household recycling centres at www.lichfielddc.gov.uk.



Comments, compliments and complaints

Customer feedback – We're listening

As a council and landlord, we aim to deliver services that meet your expectations from the start. Sometimes however, things do not go as planned.

We value your feedback and invite you to share your experiences with us, whether good or bad and make suggestions on how we can improve.

In 2023/2024...

Our commitment to you is that we'll listen when we haven't got things right, and we'll do all we can to stop the same mistake happening again.

We will continue to use complaint feedback alongside the other feedback we get from customer satisfaction surveys to drive improvements this year.

In 2023-2024 we have:

A revised complaint policy: We've implemented an updated complaint policy, meeting the needs of the housing ombudsman.

Introduced a centralised complaint processing team: By centralising the complaint processing team, we've streamlined how we work.

Improved customer communication: All communication received through the central team is now acknowledged within five working days. In 2023/2024, we 95% of complaints received met this target.

Empty properties being prepared for a new tenant: We now assess any damp and mould in our empty property inspection.

In 2024-2025 we are learning from complaints and we will:

Continue to improve our services:

- o Introducing a clear set of customer care standards
- o Working to resolve issues first time and improve the time we take to respond to complaints
- o Introduce a programme of training for staff including customer service training and how to handle complaints
- o Introduce a compensation policy

Continue to learn from complaints and make sure we clearly report how were handling complaints and the improvements made.

Introduce customer satisfaction questionnaires for all reported cases of damp and mould.

How to provide feedback

We encourage anyone who has a concern to first contact a member of staff in the relevant service, they will work to address the issue. Should you remain unhappy and want to make a complaint or provide feedback, there are multiple ways you can do this.

To provide **feedback or to make a complaint, comment or provide a compliment**, you can:

- Complete a form on our website at <https://mytamworth.tamworth.gov.uk/do-it-online/contact-us/comments-compliments-and-complaints/>
- Phone us on 01827 709709
- Email us at enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk
- Write to us at Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B79 7BZ or
- Ask any member of staff for help.

Focus on our high-rise blocks

Communal cleaning

All residents must keep the shared landings outside your flat clean. While our cleaners do clean some communal spaces in the high rise blocks they do not clean the landings around residents' front doors.

Any mess made by contractors will be cleared by the workers themselves. If this does not happen please report it to us on 01827 709709.

Keeping communal spaces clear

All residents must keep the communal spaces and landings clear at all times. Anything left out could stop someone evacuating the building safely in an emergency or accelerate the burn or start of a fire.

In an emergency such as a fire, anything in a communal area could create a real hazard for you and other residents by blocking your exit or rescue from the property putting more lives at risk.

You must not leave items such as mobility scooters, bikes, prams, bulky waste or rubbish in communal areas.

Town centre regeneration work continues

The next stage of the huge Tamworth town centre regeneration project starts soon, with work to improve St Editha's Square.

The work includes:

- Removing the steps, to make the whole area flat and assessable for all
- Removing existing tree, replacing with six native trees around the square
- New benches and bike racks
- Replacing security bollards
- New lights throughout the area
- Repaving part of College Lane

While the work is happening, St Editha's Square will be closed off with hoarding, but you'll still be able to walk around the edge and use the local shops, Middle Entry and church.

The market and other traders like Spudman will temporarily move while the work is taking place, so the shops and traders you know and love will still be open and will very much welcome your continued support throughout the disruption.

All this work is part of ambitious regeneration plans to transform the town centre into a vibrant, thriving place that meets the needs of residents, visitors and local businesses.

The £21million regeneration project will see:

- A new Enterprise Centre in the original 19th Century former Co-operative building on Colehill, an addition to the existing enterprise centre at Corporation Street.
- Restored and refurbished historic vacant properties on Market Street (opposite Peel Café) with a wider footbridge into the castle grounds.
- Redeveloped building replicating the original Georgian style of the former Peel Café, bringing a building back into active use. This is now in the hands of Nationwide Building Society who are finalising the internal fittings before opening.
- Middle Entry renovations which will see some vacant units demolished to be replaced by a new flexible, multi-use building for independent small businesses.
- Public spaces and walkways will also be improved to link the whole project together.
- Project funded from the government's Future High Street Fund.



The aftermath of events on 4 August

4 August was a dark day for Tamworth as we saw hate and violence directed at those seeking asylum staying at the Holiday Inn in town.

The shocking actions of a very small group of thugs and criminals do not represent the Tamworth we know and love. It was so good to see local communities come to help clear up and support in the aftermath of the dreadful violence.

Staffordshire Police have arrested 116 people with 48 charged with offences as part of their ongoing investigation into the disorder in Stoke-on-Trent on 3 August and Tamworth on 4 August.

Much of the motivation behind the actions of those involved in the violence was hate, intolerance and people believing fake information about those seeking asylum.

An asylum seeker is someone who has left their country, often suddenly, because they are faced with persecution, war or violence and cannot get protection there.

The UK government has a statutory duty to accommodate people who are seeking asylum. As the number of people in this situation continues to rise, the Home Office has a range of approaches to provide temporary accommodation for those who have fled their countries, while their asylum requests are processed. This included the use of a hotel in Tamworth.

While waiting for an asylum application to be considered, those seeking asylum are not allowed to work and receive £8.86 a week from the government for essentials. Those who came to stay in Tamworth often had nothing, so clothes and personal care items were provided by charities and from the donations of local people. In Tamworth, a number of asylum seekers while not able to work were actively volunteering to support local communities.

Over the coming months we will continue to work with partner agencies, community and faith groups to understand the needs of the wider Tamworth. We look forward to sharing with you some positive projects that celebrate our community and the differences within.

For more information about asylum seekers accommodation visit:

www.tamworth.gov.uk/community/asylum-seekers-accommodation

If you require this document in an alternative format or language, please contact us on 01827 709709 email: enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk



Tamworth Borough Council,
Marmion House, Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire B79 7BZ
www.tamworth.gov.uk

Register for MyHousing

Our MyHousing portal allows you to:

- See your current rent account balance.
- Report repairs.
- Report antisocial behaviour.
- Pay your rent.
- Make a housing application for another property all online.



Sign up at <https://myhousing.tamworth.gov.uk> or visit our Tamworth Borough Council website and search MyHousing portal.

When you sign up, you'll be asked to create a password so you can safely and securely access your personal details.

Contents insurance

We have negotiated a home contents insurance scheme for tenants and leaseholders.

The prices are competitive, and it's important to protect your own personal contents in your property against loss or damage caused by fire, flood, and burglary.

The council's insurance policy only covers the building not your personal contents.

Full details are available at: www.tamworth.gov.uk/contents-insurance

Identity badges

All Tamworth Borough Council staff and repairs contractors should be wearing an identity badge when they visit your home.

If it is not displayed, then please ask to see this before allowing entry to your property.

