



Welcome to the Autumn newsletter

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What's new?

- > Contact the Customer Care Team via [myhomeonline](#) to:
 - Report a non-emergency repair
 - Check your rent balance
 - Set up a direct debit
 - Send us a message
- > Some staff are working remotely so may call you from a withheld number.
- > If you want to email us about repairs or tenancy matters always use:
enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk
- > Face to face contact/visits will be kept to a minimum, if other communication can be used.
- > If you call and leave a message, members of staff have 24 hours from when they return from their visits or meetings to contact you.
- > Please let us know if your circumstances have changed such as if you've had a baby, become unemployed or got married.



For your benefit

We know that this is a difficult time for so many people who are be affected by the impact of Coronavirus. There are lots of schemes and benefits available to help.

If you experience financial difficulties as a result of Coronavirus please get in touch.

Please email us via [myhomeonline](mailto:enquiries@myhomeonline) or at enquiries@midlandsrural.org.uk as soon as possible so we can provide advice and support with managing your rent payments.

We are here to help so we can all get through this together.

Goodbye Furlough, hello Job Support Scheme

The Furlough scheme comes to an end on 31st October. The new Job Support Scheme, which will replace furlough, starts on 1 November 2020 and lasts for six months. To qualify, you must work at least a third of your normal hours.

[Find out more about the scheme](#)



Universal credit and employment benefits

If you have lost your job or are working reduced hours you may be able to claim benefits including:

- Universal Credit
- New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (New Style JSA)
- New Style Employment and Support Allowance (New Style ESA)
- Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

[Find out more about these benefits](#)

Self-employment grants and tax extensions

The Self-Employment Income Support Scheme (SEISS) has been extended until April 2021, with an additional two grants, making four grants in total.

And, if you're self-employed and struggling to pay your taxes, you may be eligible to defer your tax payments.

[Find out more about self-employment support](#)



Working from home during coronavirus?

If your employer *requires* you to work at home, you could be eligible to claim tax relief on £6 per week – that's worth £1.20 to you a week.

[Find out more about claiming this relief](#)

Self-isolating and can't work from home?

The government has announced a £500 Test and Trace Support payment for people claiming qualifying benefits or working tax credit, who are required to self-isolate to avoid coronavirus transmission and unable to work from home.

[Find out if you're eligible](#)



Free school meals and food parcels

Children entitled to benefits-related free school meals, are also entitled to receive **food parcels** if they are unable to attend school due to coronavirus.

[Find out more about food parcels](#)

Expired driving licences automatically extended by 11 months

Photocard licences that expire between 1 February and 31 December 2020 have been extended for 11 months from the date of expiry. The temporary extension is automatic, and drivers do not need to do anything.

[Find out more about the extension](#)

Don't forget to book your MOT



Was your MOT due at the height of lockdown?

Vehicle owners with an MOT due date between March and 31 July were allowed to delay the test for six months due to the coronavirus pandemic. So don't forget to get booked in.

[Find out more about booking your MOT](#)

Heating news

Emergency heating repair times

Between 1st October and 31st March - if you experience a total loss of heating, this will be classed as an emergency repair and the contractor should attend within 24 hours.

You should make yourself available for the 24 hours to ensure the contractors can gain access.

Heating check

It's already getting colder, so don't forget to turn your heating on to check that it's working properly before you really need it. Just give us a call if there's a problem.

Please also bear in mind, that it is your responsibility to bleed your radiators. If you need any help, take a look at our [how to bleed a radiator guide](#).

Warm Home Discount scheme

You could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2020 to 2021 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The scheme for 2020 to 2021 opened on 12 October 2020.

The money is paid as a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March [Find out more about the Warm Home Discount Scheme](#)

How we're performing

We're continuously monitoring the service we provide for you and making improvements where we need to. This is how we've done during the past financial year:



- > Seven compliments were received
- > 92% of calls were answered within our target of 20 seconds
- > 318 residents have registered with myhomeonline
- > Our perception survey showed that 86% of residents say we keep them informed
- > 93% think we have friendly and helpful staff.
- > 87% think we provide an effective and efficient service
- > 87% are satisfied with our repairs and maintenance service
- > Our website had 4982 new visitors and we're making it even more interactive



- > Ten complaints were received

ACTION TAKEN:

- > We've enhanced the processes in place for documenting inspections
- > We're monitoring all touchpoints and communications for planned and cyclical maintenance programmes
- > We're actively monitoring work in progress jobs
- > We're confirming actions and resolutions to residents when issues have arisen
- > We're reviewing our website to ensure it provides the information you need



NEW HOMES

Nassington

Work is due to start on this new development later this Autumn.
There will be nine homes available for rent and shared ownership.

Norton

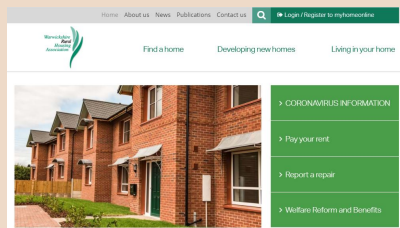
Work is due to start on this new development in Summer 2021.
There will be six homes available for rent and shared ownership.

[Register your interest in these homes](#) or call 0300 123 4009 for more information.

ANNUAL REPORT

Our Annual Report for 2019/2020, which shows how we're delivering the best service possible for you, will be published on our website in October. We'll send you an email, if we have your address, or a letter, with the website link.

TELL US... ABOUT OUR WEBSITE



We are reviewing our website. We're looking for ideas and suggestions for how we can improve our website so it fully meets residents' needs. Please email communications@midlandsrural.org.uk if you would like to input into improving this.

We'd really appreciate your involvement.

ALL STEPPED OUT FOR SEPTEMBER



The Northamptonshire Rural Housing Association team have just completed 'Step out for September', a month-long challenge to help them get active and boost their wellbeing. By the end of September they travelled over a 5 MILLION steps – which is 2510 miles!!

- Total number of steps: **501,9621**
- Record steps by one person in one day: **31,609!!**

Well done to everyone!

[Read more about the challenge](#)

Ask us...

Have you got a question about your home or the services we provide? If so, ask away! We'll answer one of your questions in every newsletter. Simply email them to communications@midlandsrural.org.uk

Can I make alterations to my home?

If you want to make any alterations to your home, whether it's rented or a shared ownership, you need to gain our permission first.

Please [get in touch](#), providing details of the work you want to do and who will be doing the work.

[Find out more about making alterations to your home](#)

Would you like to see your favourite recipes in our cookbook?



Our partners at emh are creating a community cookbook, full of all your favourite recipes that you made during lockdown.

The cookbook will be a collection of recipes submitted by residents, along with a short description about why these are your favourites and what they mean to you.

We aim to publish a free online version of the cookbook in December and sell hard copies to raise funds for activities for users of emh care and support services.

If you would like to contribute one or two of your favourite recipes, please send them to us. Please also include a short note about what memories they evoke, why they are long-standing family favourites, or what they meant to you during the lockdown, along with your contact details. They could be recipes you've made up or just old favourites. A picture of your creations would also make a great addition to the book.

Please send them in by **31st October** to communications@midlandsrural.org.uk or by post to Helen Prew, Communications Team, emh group, Memorial House, Whitwick Business Park, Stenson Road, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 4JP

Share your story

We're on the look out for residents to feature in future issues of our newsletter. If you'd like to tell us why you like living in your home and community, call 0300 123 4009 or email communications@midlandsrural.org.uk

What do you think of the new newsletter format?

We'd love to hear what you think of the new newsletter format.

Sending it to you by email, means we can easily direct you to detailed information online and ensure the content is as up-to-date as possible.

If you have any feedback, comments or suggestions, please send them to us at communications@midlandsrural.org.uk. Thank you!



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