

# Bridge Brief



The magazine for Newport City Homes' residents | Autumn 2016



## #Newportselfie

Help us celebrate the people and places that make Newport great. See page 6

News > Welfare Reform > Interviews > NCH Updates

# 2020 VISION

Newport is changing and so is Newport City Homes.

We have never been just a housing association. Our residents are Newport and we're proud of that. Working with our partners, it's time to realise the full potential of the city.

2020 Vision sets out our ambitions for the next five years and there is a lot to be excited about.

We are the largest social landlord in Newport, with 71% of the city's social housing. We are ambitious and ready to be the partner of choice in building Newport's future.

We're focusing on:



**Putting residents  
at the heart of  
what we do**

**Making a  
difference in our  
communities**



**Continuing to invest  
in our homes and  
neighbourhoods**



**Providing  
new homes**

Throughout the magazine, you will find the 2020 Vision 'stamp' against some of the stories. This is so you can see exactly what progress we're making against each of the four areas.



## Reader's Top Tip!



**"Make sure you test the operation  
of fire alarms fitted in your home."**

Ian Webster, Testing and  
Inspection Electrician



Send your top tip to  
[communications@  
newportcityhomes.com](mailto:communications@newportcityhomes.com)  
or tweet us [@NewportCityH](https://twitter.com/NewportCityH)  
with [#TopTip](https://twitter.com/NewportCityH)

We would love to hear your thoughts. You can contact us by:



[enquiries@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:enquiries@newportcityhomes.com)



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[www.newportcityhomes.com](http://www.newportcityhomes.com)

# OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES CELEBRATED AT ROAD TO RIO CEREMONY



Carol Phelps, who brought her foster children along to the event, said: "The kids loved the event. It was absolutely fabulous, really well organised, and promoted health and well-being."

Newport LIVE sports coaches, national sports associations, and local sports clubs were available to help out during activities.

Our community initiatives co-ordinator Samantha Reed commented: "Our aim was to encourage people to live more

active, healthier lives. We hope the event has inspired people to continue to get involved in sports."



We've had an amazing Road to Rio journey this summer.

We teamed up with Newport LIVE to provide free Olympic sports for families to try, across communities in Newport.

Around 2,000 people helped us celebrate the Olympics and Paralympics in August at Newport International Sports Village. The event featured a variety of free sports taster sessions and family activities, and Brazilian food, dancer and singers.



*It was absolutely fabulous, really well organised, and promoted health and well-being*

A number of prominent Welsh teams and organisations attended including Newport Gwent Dragons, Newport County, Welsh Gymnastics and Welsh Rowing.

Sport and physical activity development officer at Newport LIVE, Leigh Williams commented: "We had a fantastic turn out. It was really good to get so many people over to the sports village participating."

Road to Rio is a sports-based project that we delivered in partnership with Newport LIVE, Charter Housing, Monmouthshire Housing, Tesco and Linc Cymru.



Have you turned off your hair straighteners?

# FIRE & GAS SAFETY AWARENESS

We carry out annual gas safety inspections to check that your gas appliances are safe and running efficiently.

For your safety, it's essential that you let us into your home for electrical installation and gas safety inspections. It's important that you know if you do not allow access, after two inspection attempts, we will consider legal involvement. Safety must come first.



Popping out?  
Unplug your e-cigarette charger

Place your candles in a heatproof holder

## Smoke alarms save lives

A smoke alarm detects smoke in the early stages of a fire, warning you of the danger and allowing you vital time to escape.

Do not remove your smoke alarm from the ceiling or paint over it.

If your smoke detector/alarm is faulty, you must report it immediately by calling (01633) 381111 or at [www.newportcityhomes.com](http://www.newportcityhomes.com)



Don't overload your electrical sockets

## Gas Cookers

During the annual gas safety inspection, we only carry out a visual inspection of a gas cooker owned by the resident. It is your responsibility to ensure the appliance is working and maintained safely by a gas safe registered engineer.

To find a gas safe registered engineer visit [www.gassaferegister.co.uk](http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk)

# BE SAFE AND RESPECT OTHERS THIS BONFIRE NIGHT



## Advice from Gwent Police

Bonfire Night is a particularly busy time of the year for the police with an increase in the number of emergency calls.

We want people living in our communities to have a good time and feel safe this Bonfire Night.

### Top tips for staying safe this Bonfire Night:

- Make sure your bonfire is a safe distance from any property, hedges or fences.
- Make sure you have a water supply nearby in case something goes wrong.



- Let neighbours know your plans, to reduce the risk of false emergency calls.
- Don't buy fireworks from anywhere you're not sure about, like a van or a temporary, unlicensed market stall.
- Only buy fireworks marked BS 7114 - this is the British Standard that all fireworks should meet.
- Follow the instructions carefully for each firework.

## Did you know...?

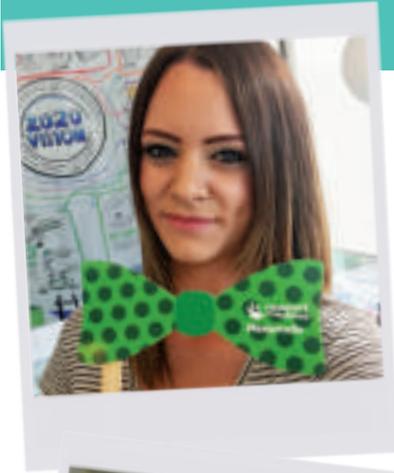
- Fireworks can travel at speeds of up to 150mph.
- It is illegal to sell fireworks to anyone under the age of 18.
- Fireworks can be used up until midnight on 5th November, anyone caught using them after midnight could be fined £80.
- Throwing a firework is a criminal offence, which carries a fine of up to £5000.
- Wildlife can be killed by bonfires so make sure there are no wild animals nesting or hiding inside.

**If you experience any crime or witness any incidents please call 101.**

**In an emergency, with someone at risk of being hurt, call 999.**



# #NEWPORT



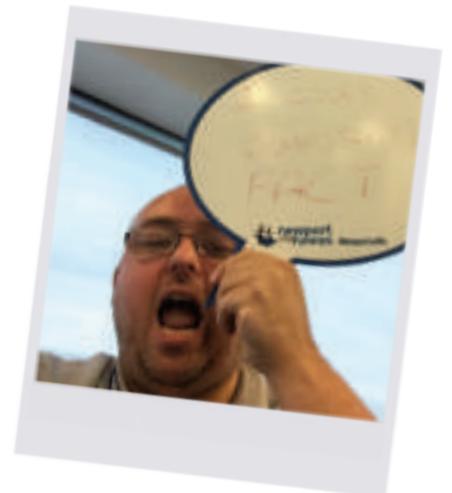
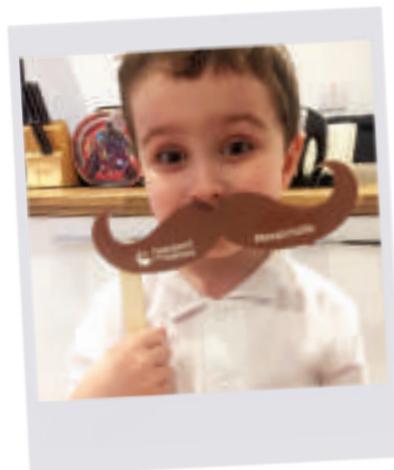
Help us celebrate the people and places that make Newport great.

We are about people and not just homes and, following on from the success of #HatsOffNewport, the #Newportselfie campaign demonstrates just this. It's all about you!

Show off your best poses with the #Newportselfie challenge today. Tweet us @NewportCityH or post on the /NewportCityH Facebook page. Don't forget to use #Newportselfie.



Communications manager Jessica Roberts said: "We want to celebrate the people that make up our vibrant and diverse communities and #Newportselfie lets us do that. It's about being proud of where you live and having fun. We know Newport is a great city full of great people and we want Newportonians to help us shout about that. All they have to do is take a selfie."





# First, let me take a selfie

Selfie is short for self-photograph. A photo, taken by you, of yourself!



### Step 1

Click on the camera icon of your smartphone/tablet.



### Step 2

Make sure you have a well-lit area, and nothing stuck in-between your teeth!



### Step 3

If your smartphone/tablet allows you to, set your camera to front camera.



### Step 4

Do your cheesiest grin, strike your best pose, and take your photo!



### Step 5 (optional)

Add a filter to your selfie on Instagram or Snapchat and save the image.



### Step 6

Log into Twitter, and tweet us @NewportCityH with the hashtag #Newportselfie



# Digital heroes at Pillgwenlly Primary

We worked with Digital Communities Wales to help pupils at Pillgwenlly Primary School boost their digital skills.

The school hosted two computer-based projects, Digital Heroes and Cloud 9. Cloud 9 helped raise awareness of e-safety and ICT skills in the home, while offering families the chance to purchase affordable computers and laptops. Digital Heroes saw pupils learn ICT skills, completing a bronze, silver and gold booklet.

Head teacher Kath Bevan said: "Our Digital Heroes are setting a wonderful example and are actively helping others to use the internet in a safe manner."

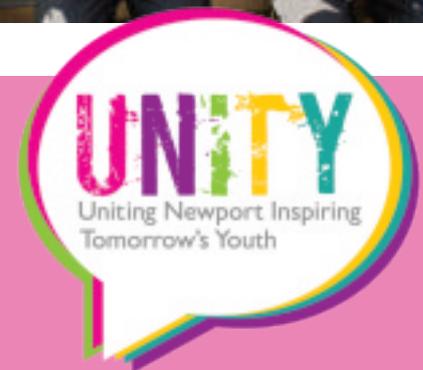
To find out more contact Julie Gower on [julie.gower@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:julie.gower@newportcityhomes.com) or (01633) 227889.



## GIVING A VOICE TO YOUNG PEOPLE

Uniting Newport Inspiring Tomorrow's Youth (UNITY) is a youth forum led by young people, providing them with a voice in housing, services and communities.

We set up UNITY in partnership with Charter Housing, and launched the forum in July this year. UNITY aims to develop skills and confidence, and promote



and campaign for young people's rights, while having fun and socialising with other young adults.

UNITY is open to anyone from Newport aged from 14 to 25. The forum meets every fortnight in local venues.

To find out more contact Kate Aspinwall on **01633 227710** or [kate.aspinwall@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:kate.aspinwall@newportcityhomes.com) or Chelsea Crook on **01633 227844** or [chelsea.crook@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:chelsea.crook@newportcityhomes.com)



# LEASEHOLDER BRINGS LIFE TO LOCAL COMMUNITY

Norma Frost, a leaseholder from St Julians, has lived in her flat for 63 years.

After Mrs Frost retired, she joined the Women's Royal Voluntary Service (WRVS), volunteering for Meals on Wheels: "I used to drive the vans, and organised the drivers' schedules."

The meals service, based in Ringland, had drivers visiting homes all over Newport. "We went out nearly every day, even in the snow!" Mrs Frost commented.

In recognition of her community work, Mrs Frost was nominated for WRVS' best volunteer in Wales, reaching the top five.

"I've had a good happy life," Mrs Frost said.

Like this story? Tweet us @NewportCityH



## Your Heroes Resident engagement team




Our resident engagement team has been chosen as your heroes for this edition.

Duffryn resident Margaret Roberts nominated the team, saying: "They are very nice to work with, if you have a question, they'll try and help as much as they can."

Resident engagement manager Sian Nicholas said: "We were really surprised and delighted to be nominated, and then to win. There was a bit of a celebration in the office."

Do you know an NCH resident who has gone the extra mile?  
Email [communications@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:communications@newportcityhomes.com)



# WE HAVE MULTI-MILLION POUND PLANS FOR RINGLAND

We are planning to invest multi-million pounds to regenerate Ringland.

We want to transform the area around Ringland shopping centre into a vibrant community hub.

We created a steering group of residents and retailers to gather their views. Here's what some of them had to say.



## A new heart

Julie Fowler has been a Ringland resident for 21 years. She joined the steering group to make a difference.

"As Ringland Community Association's chair, I needed to put my foot forward so that we could have a say," said Julie.

"I feel that we are being listened to. It's nice to know that if it goes ahead, my say could mean a difference. At the moment we don't feel like Ringland has a heart. It would be nice to have that feeling."

## Embracing change

Paul Blandford, a third generation resident of Ringland, said: "Rest assured, after sitting with the architects and Newport City Homes, they've given me some peace of mind. They've listened, and that for me is a massive factor."

Paul believes the project could really benefit the community: "It goes beyond homes. To know what the new shopping centre could provide for Ringland. It's 100% positive, as long as people embrace it."



## A strong community

Graham Rickett has worked in Ringland for 18 years: "I wanted to know what was going on for Costcutter. Once I met everyone I realised it will be a community project. I have a better understanding of why we're doing it and what the end result is going to be."

"Ringland is a community. People look after each other and they support each other. They deserve a better shopping centre than what they've got now."



Keep updated with the project on our Twitter **@NewportCityH** and search **#FutureRingland**

## The Foundations

Before the houses and facilities were built, Ringland was just agricultural land. The area close to the shopping centre was known as Seven Meadows.

In the early 1950s, before the building work began, a stream ran through Ringland, near Ringland Circle, and the junction with Ringwood Avenue. This was eventually piped in for safety reasons.

During the late 1950s, convoys of lorries caused disruption throughout the town, taking shale to the new Llanwern Steelworks, which was being built by Richard Thomas & Baldwins. It was known locally as the Spencer Works, the name of the company director, who also initiated the popular Spencer Boys Club.

*Keith Wood*



# WE'RE STARTING £10 MILLION REGENERATION WORKS IN PILL



Our major regeneration works in Pill, estimated at £10 million, will soon start.

Work will include a new community hub where the Knight Street garages currently reside; and a new three-story block in Williams Close and Charlotte Drive containing six one-bedroom flats and two three-bedroom houses.

The ambitious plans for the area are a result of a dedicated group of residents, retailers

and the wider community working with us to understand the unique and diverse needs of their community.

Marian Barnett has been a resident in Pill for 49 years: "I think it'll be much better. It'll open it all out and help stop gangs. I really hope it makes a big difference."

*Now is the exciting bit when we really start to see the area transform; all driven by the people who live and work there*

The project is being completed as part of our commitment to investing in our homes and neighbourhoods; transforming areas across Newport into vibrant communities.

CEO Ceri Doyle commented: "This is a major opportunity for the city and people of Pill. We know the community is full of passionate and engaged people, many of whom worked with us to shape the master plan right at the beginning of the project. Now is the exciting bit when we really start to see the area transform; all driven by the people who live and work there."

Keep updated on the project on our Facebook page [/NewportCityH](#) and Twitter account [@NewportCityH](#)





# PRIDE IN NEWPORT

Newport City Council has relaunched its Pride in Newport campaign due to the growing problem of fly-tippers dumping illegal rubbish across the city.

We have pledged to work in partnership with the council, residents and partner agencies to tackle fly-tipping in Pillgwenlly.

Councillor Ray Truman said: "The fact Newport City Homes has signed up to the project will be an example to other landlords to encourage their tenants to take responsibility for ensuring recycling is carried out so as little rubbish as possible ends up in landfill."

The project is also being backed by South Wales Argus, Gwent Police, South Wales Fire and Rescue Service and Fly-tipping Action Wales.

Board member and Pill resident Jayne Rose commented: "I think it's an inspirational campaign which gives the people of Pill great pride in their area. Hopefully now the rest of the residents will get together and support the scheme."

# PRIDE IN PILL



Pride in Pill is a community group set up in 2014 to help Pillgwenlly become a cleaner place.

Volunteers run clean-ups every three months.

We have supported the group by attending clean-ups, providing vans to clear rubbish and fly-tipping, and doing needle sweeps to keep volunteers safe. We have also funded equipment and storage.



**Tonnes of rubbish is roughly collected at each clean-up**



**10-25 Volunteers attend each clean-up**



**35 Clean-ups completed around Pill since February 2014**

Partners include ASDA, Tesco, Newport City Council, Keep Wales Tidy and Fly-Tipping Action Wales.

Like 'Pride in Pill.' on Facebook.



# Making a Difference

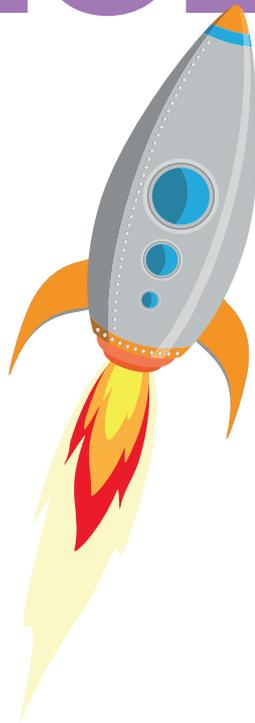
## Making an Impact

Do you have a great idea which will benefit people in Newport?

The Making an Impact Fund helps you to develop a project that will support people in the community.

To be approved, at least half of your project must be aimed at our residents.

Your project has to support one of these three themes:



### Employment and Enterprise:

Helping the community find work or create a business.



### Health and Wellbeing:

Helping the community improve their physical or mental health.



### Financial or Digital Inclusion:

Helping the community get online or save money.

The maximum amount you can apply for is £5,000.

## Making a Star

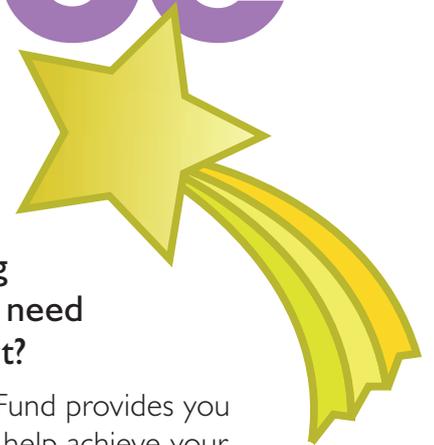
Do you have big aspirations, but need financial support?

The Making a Star Fund provides you with the funding to help achieve your ambitions and fulfil your dreams.

The fund is available for our residents who cannot finance their goals themselves.

To be approved, your goal has to have a positive impact on you, your family or your community.

The maximum amount you can apply for is £1,000.



To find out more contact:

Julie Gower 01633 227889 / [julie.gower@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:julie.gower@newportcityhomes.com)

Lisa Ash 01633 227764 / [lisa.ash@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:lisa.ash@newportcityhomes.com)



*DAS encourages members to do what they want to do. We're like a family, who can break down barriers*

# BETTWS RESIDENTS PURSUE TALENTS

Bettws residents Mark Harris and Deborah Loosmore are members of our Disability and Support (DAS) Network, which gives a voice to residents with disabilities.

Both Mark and Deborah have sight impairment. Mark says that DAS prevents them from “getting lost in the mix”: “In society, our views, hopes and fears are largely forgotten. DAS has opened so many doors.”

Through DAS, the couple joined an eight-week radio course, which taught

participants producing and presenting skills.

Through the training, the couple met members of Newport City Radio, and by the last week of training, they had hosted their first show on the station.

“We discuss DAS but also cover outdoor events in Newport on our show,” said Deborah.

Mark recently won second prize in a talent competition at Maindee Festival performing a song he wrote himself titled ‘I Remember’, inspired by a young girl who suffered from an illness, and sadly passed away.

Mark said: “DAS encourages members to do what they want to do. We’re like a family, who can break down barriers.”

DAS meet four times a year to discuss issues that affect them and influence the services they need.

Contact us on **(01633) 381111** to find out more.

# WELFARE CHANGES: WILL I BE AFFECTED?

The news has been full of stories about welfare changes. Here are some of the big things you need to know.



## Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

Have you entered a new tenancy from April 2016 onwards? Any housing costs you pay through Housing Benefit or Universal Credit will be limited to LHA rates from April 2018. The LHA rates for Newport are available at [www.newport.gov.uk](http://www.newport.gov.uk)

Single tenants aged 35 or under without children will be heavily affected, as they will only be able to claim a shared accommodation LHA rate, even when living alone.

## Benefit Cap

The maximum amount of benefit your household can receive will reduce to £20,000 per household, and £13,400 for a single person with no children. This will take effect from autumn 2016 in areas outside London.

Households that receive Carer's or Guardian's Allowance will not be affected.



## Universal Credit

Universal Credit is rolling out across the UK, covering everyone who receives work benefits. Currently, it only affects single claimants.

The aim is that all applications for Universal Credit will be made online by 2021, starting late 2017 for new applicants in Wales. The main change is that



you will need to pay your rent direct to your landlord out of your monthly benefit payment.

When you move onto Universal Credit it is important that you notify us of this straight away. The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will require you to provide proof of your tenancy and the current rent you are charged. We will supply you with this information.

There can be a waiting time of up to six weeks to get your first payment from DWP, which could put you into debt straight away.

We are working with DWP as they learn the new processes. We want to support you with your claims to make sure that you are in the best position to pay your rent.

Please get in touch if you feel that you could be affected.

**Tel: (01633) 381111**

**Email: [income.services@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:income.services@newportcityhomes.com)  
or [tenancy.support@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:tenancy.support@newportcityhomes.com)**

## Changes to Housing Benefit and Pension Credit

Housing Benefit and Pension Credit has been restricted. If you are temporarily absent from your home for more than four weeks you will need to pay your rent yourself.

Being absent means you are not in Great Britain (this includes Northern Ireland).

The new regulations also apply to people living in the property with you. The number of people living in the property will affect how much housing benefit you get.

Exemptions apply, please contact us for advice on **(01633) 381111**.



# ENERGY AND COMPLIANCE TEAM SCOOP NATIONAL AWARD

Our 'Extraordinary Energy Team' has won Staff Team of the Year at TPAS Cymru's 2016 Participation Awards.



The awards celebrate the amazing work that is being carried out throughout the Welsh housing sector.

Our energy and compliance team were nominated for their work on the sustainable Duffryn district heating system, which supplies more than 900 homes and Duffryn Primary School.

The new energy centre was completed during the spring, in partnership with British Gas. Since applying the new energy saving measures, carbon emissions have reduced by 2327 carbon tones.

Energy and compliance manager Andrew Lloyd said: "We're proud to support the residents with the new heating system; and pleased to be recognised by the residents and TPAS Cymru."

The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS Cymru) supports social housing tenants and landlords across Wales to develop effective participation in housing. For more information, visit <http://www.tpascymru.org.uk/>

## "HelpU" reduce your water costs

Is your household income below £15,000 per year?

Welsh Water's HelpU scheme helps families on a low household income with their water bills.



**Band 1**  
Household income up to £5600 = **£177.86 annual charge** (£3.42 per week)

**Band 2**  
Household income £5601 - £6700 = **£248.56 annual charge** (£4.78 per week)

**Band 3**  
Household income £6701 - £8600 = **£314.21 annual charge** (£6.45 per week)

**Band 4**  
Household income £8601 - £15000 = **£374.81 annual charge** (£7.21 per week)

Housing Benefit, Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Payments will not be counted as income.

You will need to have evidence of all the income coming into your home for us to check your eligibility.

For more information, call **(01633) 381111** and ask for tenancy support, or email [tenancy.support@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:tenancy.support@newportcityhomes.com)



We're really looking to build more links with the communities

# Community project flourishes after funding

In the last edition, we told you about a local community group who received funding after £1,000 was stolen from their community centre.

Roots in Bettws, which provides gardening training to disabled people in Newport, was granted £2,062 through our Environmental Improvement Fund\*.

Since we last spoke to Roots in Bettws, raised wooden planters have been installed to grow new

produce, an orchard area has been created, and renovation has started on a fruit cage.

Lionel Barnes, who manages the project, said: "We're really looking to build more links with the communities. We're moving in the right direction, but there's always

room for improvement and more help."

If you're interested in volunteering, contact Roots on **07841 565924**.

\*Now called 'Making a Difference', see page 14.

## Try DIY

We need volunteers for our One Stop, Rescue and Restore Shop.

With guidance from Growing Space, volunteers upcycle old and unwanted wooden furniture and donate them to vulnerable residents in Newport.

If you're available on Thursdays and Fridays, please contact Julie Gower on **(01633) 227889** or email [julie.gower@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:julie.gower@newportcityhomes.com)



# TEA AND TECH

## Do you want to go digital?

You can learn to shop online, look up your family tree and discover new hobbies.

Come along to one of our sessions:

**3 October:**  
Whittle Court/Brookside,  
11am-12pm

**12 October:**  
Milton Court, 10am-12pm

**31 October:**  
Stelvio Court, 2pm-4pm

The sessions are suitable for all levels. You can bring your own device or use one of the laptops provided.

All sessions run for six weeks. Other sessions will be arranged. For more information contact Julie Gower on (01633) 227889 or [julie.gower@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:julie.gower@newportcityhomes.com)



## Talking Bridge Brief

### What would you like to see in Bridge Brief?

We're looking for creative advisors to offer ideas and suggestions.

Join our online group to see your ideas come to life in print.

Email [communications@newportcityhomes.com](mailto:communications@newportcityhomes.com) to get involved.

Twitter: @NewportCityH

Facebook: /NewportCityH

## Prize draw winner

Congratulations to Milton Court resident Janet North, the lucky winner of our quarterly prize draw for returned satisfaction forms.

The satisfaction forms looked at communal

upgrade work completed by United Living, and everyone who returned their form entered the prize draw.

Janet received a £25 gift voucher donated by United Living.

