

Available Homes

We have lots of information about available homes on the Society's website and our Facebook page. If you have family or friends looking for a home to rent please let them know about us.



www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk

Win a Christmas Food Hamper



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

Find only the underlined words below in the above puzzle:

On the Twelfth day of Christmas my true love sent to me Twelve Drummers Drumming, Eleven Pipers Piping, Ten Lords a Leaping, Nine Ladies Dancing, Eight Maids a Milking, Seven Swans a Swimming, Six Geese a Laying, Five Golden Rings, Four Calling Birds, Three French Hens, Two Turtle Doves and a Partridge in a Pear Tree.

Mark them up clearly and return with the slip below to Stoke on Trent Housing Society, The Trevor Jones Office, Hammond House, Ridgway Road, Hanley, ST1 3AX before **19th December 2018**.

The winner will be the first correct entry drawn and must be a tenant or leaseholder of the Society.

Name:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone number:

Get involved



Becoming a member of the **Customer Panel** is something that all customers can do. Getting involved can help you to develop new skills, meet new people and influence the way that things are done at the Society.

The Customer Panel meets quarterly to discuss a range of subjects and its ideas and comments are fed back to the Society's Board. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Customer Panel please contact the Society on **01782 968566**.

Good Neighbour Guide to Car Parking

Getting along with your neighbours is an important part of living in a happy and safe community. Here are some suggestions to being a good neighbour when it comes to car parking:

- Don't park any vehicle on the garden of your home, on grass verges, pavements or designated walkways
- You must not park anywhere that would obstruct emergency vehicles
- You must not park an untaxed, SORN, or un-roadworthy vehicle on the land around your home, on the road, on any communal hard standing or parking bay. Cars found to be in breach of this will be reported to the Council's highways department
- You must not carry out major car repairs on any land around your home, on the road, nor on any garage site owned by the Society



My Home Tenants Home Contents Insurance

Did you know that as a resident of the Society you are responsible for arranging your own contents insurance?

We have teamed up with the National Housing Federation and Thistle Tenant Risks to offer tenants and leaseholders the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme. To find out more contact the Society for an application pack or:

- Call **0345 450 7288**
- Email myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk
- Visit www.thistlemyhome.co.uk



Your Voice - Your Views

Welcome to our **December 2018** newsletter, put together by staff and members of your Customer Panel. If there's anything that you would like to see included in any future newsletters then do please get in touch on 01782 968566.



Christmas Information

Our offices **close** on **Xmas eve at 1pm** and will **re-open** at **9am on Wednesday 2nd January 2019**.

****EMERGENCY REPAIRS****

If you need to report an emergency repair during this time call **01782 968566** and **press 1 on your telephone keypad** and you'll be connected to our emergency service. For any other repairs please wait until our office is open on the **2nd January 2019**.

PAYING YOUR RENT

You can still pay your rent over the Christmas period via our Allpay facilities:

- 24/7 automated phone line on 0844 557 8321
- At www.allpayments.net
- Using your Allpay payment card where you see a Paypoint sign.



www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk

Inside this Issue

- * Christmas Information
- * Keep warm and well this winter
- * Digital Assistance
- * Christmas money saving tips
- * Meet the Team
- * Available Homes
- Customer Involvement
- Win a Xmas Hamper word search
- Car Parking Guide

Struggling to put food on the table?

The Society team can issue foodbank vouchers if you are having financial difficulties such as benefit issues, delayed wages or ill health.



Contact us on **01782 968566** or go to www.stokeontrent.foodbank.org.uk

Direct Debit



We provide an any day/any frequency Direct Debit service to make it easier for you to pay your rent or other charges. Set up is simple and can be done over the phone in just a few minutes.

For more information call us on **01782 968566** or go to our website

www.stokeontrenthousingsociety.org.uk

Fire safety at Christmas

Christmas is a special time for celebration and should not end in tragedy because of the extra hazards that are present at this time of year.

Fairy Lights

- Check the fuses are the right type (see the box for the maximum size of fuse you should use)
- If bulbs blow, replace them
- Don't leave fairy lights on when you go out or when you go to sleep
- Don't let the bulbs touch anything that can burn easily, like paper
- Don't overload sockets or extensions

Decorations

- Decorations made of light tissue paper or cardboard burn easily
- Don't attach them to lights or heaters
- Don't put them immediately above or around the fireplace
- Keep them away from candles

Live Christmas Trees

- Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard
- Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.



Remember Fire Safety

Keep warm and well

Cold weather can be bad for our health, especially for people aged 65 and older. As we get older it takes longer to warm up, which raises the risk of increased blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes. There are easy things you can do to help yourself stay healthy over the winter.

Keep warm Heat your home to at least 18°C (65°F). You may prefer your main living room to be slightly warmer. Keep your bedroom window closed on a winter's night. Breathing in cold air can increase the risk of chest infections. Wear layers of clothes rather than one thick layer and invest in thermal clothing. When you're indoors, try not to sit still for more than an hour or so. Get up, stretch your legs and make yourself a warm drink.

Get financial support with heating bills There are benefits and sources of advice available to help with bills. Go to www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator for more information or contact the Citizens Advice Bureau on 03444 111 444

Look after yourself Eat at least one hot meal a day and sip hot drinks regularly through the day. Contact your GP to get your free flu jab if you are aged 65 or over, pregnant, have certain medical conditions or are the main carer for an older or disabled person. Don't delay in getting treatment for minor winter ailments like colds or sore throats. Visit your local pharmacist for advice on treatment before it gets worse so you can recover quicker.

Prepare your home Stock up on provisions in case it is too cold to go to the shops and use a draught excluder, as heat escapes under a door and draughts get through it.

Storage Heater Advice (To get the best use from your storage heaters)

1. Turn the **input** to its highest setting (this will give them the best charge)
2. The lower the **output** the longer the heat will last. Remember to turn your **output** right down at night
3. Don't place anything on the heater or over the vents
4. Remember to vent your rooms by opening windows for a short time. This will help to reduce condensation and stop black mould from growing



Digital Assistance

City Wide Advice Service

DIGITAL ASSISTANCE

Helping you to find the information you need to help yourself!

We can help you to search for information on your issue and will answer any questions you have if filling in forms on-line:

- Citizens Advice on-line
- Local & National Government websites
- Report fly tipping
- Apply for a Blue Badge
- On-line benefit checks
- On-line benefit claims

Bentilee Volunteers 1st Monday of the month
Blurton Hub 2nd Tuesday of the month
Stoke Library 3rd Monday of the month
Tunstall Library 4th Monday of the month

9.30am—1.00pm



Staffordshire North & Stoke-on-Trent

Funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council



Do you need help or know anyone that would benefit from some digital assistance ?

Perhaps you need help with your claim for Universal Credit or want to apply for a Blue Badge ?

Citizens Advice can help.

Drop into one of their regular city wide sessions at Bentilee, Blurton, Stoke or Tunstall. See poster for details.

****Remember - even if you are not claiming under Universal Credit yet, you should still prepare yourself.**

Most applications for Universal Credit and notifications of changes will need to be made online. Having access to broadband internet access and a suitable computer will help make this easier for you.

Get Help Now !

Christmas money saving tips

- Work out a budget and stick to it - avoid getting into debt - whilst it's great to see people enjoying their gifts, think about the stress being in the red will cause once the magic of Christmas is over.
- Make the most of your gift budget - find out where you can buy your presents for the best price using online comparison sites. MoneySavingExpert.com has a list of sites you can check out.
- Do Secret Santa and save - if you've got presents to buy for friends, suggest Secret Santa – that way you can set an affordable budget and only buy one present each.
- Donate a service - instead of buying friends and family physical gifts, offer to do something for them instead. It could be anything from babysitting to washing their car and it'll only cost you your time.
- Don't let Christmas food bills eat up all your budget - if you buy branded items try swapping to supermarket own brand or their basics range.
- Cooked too much? Don't let it go to waste - sites like "Love Food Hate Waste" have great tips on how to use up leftover food.

****Remember— Your rent and other bills still need to be paid over Christmas ****



Meet the Team

We're very pleased to welcome Erica , our new Housing Assistant, to the team.

Erica joined us in November, moving from a large Housing Association based in Cheshire and bringing with her a wide range of customer focussed social housing experience. She will be taking over from Rachel, who has moved into a new role as Assistant Housing Officer.

Erica's primary role will be to assist customers with queries they might have about their tenancy - such as repairs, rent and general tenancy support.

