

Southway Stories

The magazine for
Southway Housing
customers

Summer 2022

BOOK REPAIRS ONLINE AGAIN!

Manage your tenancy
online, whenever and
wherever you want.

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HOW WE'RE DOING: PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Each year we set performance and satisfaction targets for all of our services, to make sure customers are getting the best experience and value from our resources.

This was another challenging year for Southway as the pandemic continued to impact our frontline service delivery. We are focused on supporting our customers and working to help communities in a post-pandemic, but economically challenging environment. Where we were not meeting targets we were happy with, and improvements have been put in place, we are already starting to see some benefits;

RENT 4.7*



The team has achieved excellent performance, with the year-end rent collection of 99.73% only just below our target of 99.98%.

We will continue to support tenants as the cost of living, including fuel and food, increases. Our financial support funds, Energy Buddies, Welfare Rights, Budgeting, Debt Advice and Employment Team continue to provide guidance and support assisting wherever possible.

CALL HANDLING 4.5*



The number of calls answered at 83%, and long call waiting times at an average of 397 seconds, are disappointing.

However, our satisfaction feedback tells us that the quality of service our Advisors provide is high. The return to the office has helped to improve call handling generally, as our Call Centre works more effectively when many of the team are working alongside colleagues and are able to engage face to face. We have appointed five additional advisors to help us answer the phone more quickly whilst we carry out improvements to the service.

REPAIRS 4.7*



As lockdown lifted, we were able to return to delivering more than just an emergency repair service.

However we had built up a significant backlog of outstanding repairs – 613 at the start of May. Issues with materials shortages, sickness within the Repairs Service, and problems with recruiting to vacant positions, meant we have not been able to reduce this backlog as quickly as we wanted to. We know we need to return to our high levels of performance in this area and have set up a full new Repairs Planning Team who will work to clear the repairs backlog by the end of September 2022.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR 2.6*



We had fewer cases of ASB during 21-22 than we did in 20-21, down by 31%.

Our tenants are not always happy with the service they received so we'll be looking to further improve our work and satisfaction around ASB as lockdown restrictions ease. We recognise there is still work to do, and we will have more details on this in our next edition of Southway Stories.

COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

We have started to hold more face-to-face events and our in person, community-based services like activities, direct support and advice, are back.

Over the last year we held 12 events, **Westcroft Community Centre** opened its doors and delivered 63 activities during the year, and our Groups met 18 times, though some of these continued to be online. Our Age-Friendly team met up with tenants and residents 14 times, and our Environment team met up with tenants and residents 33 times! It was really good to see people again and get back out in our communities.

The **Beautiful South Fund** had its best year yet and allocated all **£25,000** to Community Projects focusing on neighbourliness. Please see The Beautiful South Fund article on **page 13** for how to apply for the fund.

If you are interested in feeding back on Southway's performance and have ideas on how we could do things differently, have you thought about joining our **Board, Scrutiny Panel, or People and Places Committee?** There are current vacancies on each of these groups - see **page 11** for more details.



BOOK REPAIRS ONLINE AGAIN!

We know from feedback that so many of our customers have missed the freedom and simplicity of **managing their tenancy online, whenever and wherever they want**. After two years, where we had to close the booking system due to the pandemic and repairs backlog, our online repairs portal is back online.

This means that booking a repair online is quick, simple and available 24 hrs a day!

HOW DO YOU ACCESS ONLINE REPAIRS?

Online repairs can be accessed through your MySouthway online account. The portal is a one-stop shop for all of your tenancy needs. The service allows you to book appointments for routine repairs using your MySouthway online customer portal, which is part of our ongoing commitment to make it easier for tenants to access services.

HOW DO YOU BOOK A REPAIR ONLINE?

The tenant portal allows you to log non-emergency, standard day-to-day repairs around your home in five easy steps.

STEP 1: Log into your MySouthway account and Click on the 'Report a Repair' button.

STEP 2: Simply search for the type of repair you require or click on the relevant repair area. Each further selection you make will narrow your options, helping you pick the right repair.

The portal is a **one-stop shop** for all of your **tenancy needs**.

STEP 3: You will then be given a summary of the repair you are about to order. Here you can add some more information about the repair or choose to add a photo.

STEP 4: Choose the time and date that suits you and click 'Reserve Slot'.

STEP 5: To confirm the time and date selected, click on the 'Confirm this time slot' button.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

MySouthway allows you to book the right tradesperson for the repair job at a time that suits you. As well as booking repair appointments, My Southway can be used 24/7 for a range of services including; making rent payments, updating tenancy details, checking your rent balance, contacting us, and accessing tenancy documents.

To find out more and to view our step-by-step guide, visit southwayhousing.co.uk/mysouthway-guide

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Just before Christmas the Regulator of Social Housing published draft **Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)**.

This followed a commitment in the Social Housing White Paper to introduce ways that tenants could measure the performance of their landlord against other Housing Associations.

WHAT ARE THE TSMS?

They are a set of performance indicators that measure some of the most frequent activities carried out by Housing Associations. They were put together by the Regulator following consultation with tenants from across the country.

They cover the following:-

- residents' perception of overall satisfaction
- keeping properties in good repair
- maintaining building safety
- effective handling of complaints
- respectful and helpful engagement with residents
- responsible neighbourhood management

WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE?

The Regulator has assessed the feedback from Housing Associations and tenants and from April 2023 all Housing Associations will be expected to report against the measures. To give us a head start we will be running a pilot over the coming months, where we approach tenants and ask them to give us feedback on our performance using the TSMs.

We would really like people to get involved to make sure that we get our approach right, and start acting on the feedback we receive. All you will need to do is respond to a short online or telephone survey.

To get involved, or find out more, please e-mail **governance@southwayhousing.co.uk**

COMMUNITY LUNCH IN LADYBARN

The first **Ladybarn Community Hub** event since pre-covid is taking place on **Saturday 20 August 12-3pm**.

There will be free food, live music and fun activities for all ages. The free lunch and fun day are to help celebrate the community, residents and fantastic partnerships that have been built over the last two challenging years.

Our Community Development Officer, **Kathryn Marsh** is attending the lunch, along with Community Champion **Don Evans**.

Staff from our Advice Teams will be manning stalls on the day so feel free to head over to ask them any questions you may have.

If you have any questions about the **Fun Day**, please contact **Kathryn Marsh** either via the website, social media or by calling **0161 448 4200**.

Ladybarn Community Hub
Royle Street, Manchester M14 6RN



COPING WITH THE COST OF LIVING INCREASES

The cost of living increase is leaving many of us that have just about managed in the past at risk of developing worrying debt problems.

There are things you can do, such as looking at ways to increase your income or reduce your living costs, and **Southway's Advice Services Team** can support you with this.

If looking for work, our **Employment Team** runs events throughout the year linking you to local job opportunities and providing help with applications and interviews.

Our staff can perform benefit checks to see if you are getting all you are entitled to. And we are part of a campaign to increase take up of **Pension Credit** and **Attendance Allowance**.

IMPROVE YOUR MONEY SKILLS

You can now complete a free online **Money Course**, developed by **Crosslight Advice**, which can be accessed via Southway's website.

You can choose to do it either in your own time or by joining a live group session on set dates. The course provides ideas and resources to help you manage your money, including ways to increase your income and reduce household bills and spending. It also offers useful information on dealing with debt.

MONEY SAVING EVENTS

Look out for the 'Reducing Living Costs' events we are organising over the next few months offering advice on a range of money saving issues with activities such as 'Cooking on a Budget' demonstrations to help get you through the crisis.

Our **Energy Buddies** will also be there to offer advice on reducing energy costs and tenants can make appointments with them to visit their home.



WIN A SLOW COOKER!

Slow cookers are a very **energy efficient** cooking method and so are an effective way of **reducing fuel bills**.

Send us your top tip for saving money, and you will be entered into a prize draw to win a family sized slow cooker. We have **3 to give away** and we look forward to reading your suggestions.

Send your money saving tips to Southway by email: **communications@southwayhousing.co.uk**

Send them to us in a message on social media (we are **Southway Housing**).

Post them to the Advice Services Team,
**729 Princess Rd, Didsbury,
Manchester M20 2LT**

Or drop off them at **Southway's office reception**. Mark all submissions as **'Slow Cooker Prize'**.

LOOKING TO BOOST YOUR INCOME?

To help ease the financial pressures we are all under at the moment, Southway can provide one-to-one employment support.

This is to help find paid work, training or volunteering roles for anyone who is currently out of work or looking to move jobs to maximise their income.

We also run a number of events which we regularly post on our social media @SouthwayHousing, including our 5-week employability course '**The Time is Now**'.

If you would like support from the employment team or to sign up for a course or event, contact us at **EmploymentSupportReferrals@southwayhousing.co.uk** or call Southway.

AN EXAMPLE OF HOW OUR SERVICE CAN SUPPORT YOU

We recently supported single mum **Rebecca***, who had been unemployed for a number of years when we first started working with her. Her referral originated from outbound calls that the Employment Support Officer made, to tenants aged 16-24.

Rebecca wanted to work as a Teaching Assistant having worked in schools previously as a volunteer and lunch time assistant, but she had low confidence from being out of work for such a long time.

We helped her with the usual employment support package of CV development and interview

techniques, which in turn, helped her confidence. After working together for just a small number of weeks, she was offered a Teaching Assistant role at a local school and we also used our partnership working with local organisations by referring her to SMART works who were able to provide clothes for her interview and for when she started her role.

Congratulations Rebecca, and good luck in your fantastic new role!

If you have a career aspiration like Rebecca, contact Southway's employment team today, to get the training and support you need to make it happen.

**Name changed*



HELP FROM THE RECOVERY ACADEMY

Are you currently recovering from substance misuse, struggling with your mental health, or supporting someone who is?

Greater Manchester Mental Health provides a range of free educational courses and resources for people with mental health and substance misuse problems, their families and carers, as well as health care professionals.

The resources provide support for people with their recovery and promote future good health and wellbeing. All resources are produced by health care professionals, alongside people with lived-experience of substance misuse.

To view the resources available take a look at **www.gmmh.nhs.uk/free-courses**

To receive news about all the support from the Recovery Academy, sign up to the Recovery Academy's newsletter here: **www.gmmh.nhs.uk/recovery-news**



IN DEBT? HERE'S WHAT TO DO

Gas and electricity bills have **increased by 54%** with another rise due in October.

This is on top of the annual increases for other household bills, petrol and food. Even Martin Lewis (the Money Saving Expert) has said he has run out of tools to help people - so what can we do?

CREATE A BUDGET

Write down your income and expenses. If your expenses are more than your income, you need to consider ways to cut back. This is not easy when most people have already cut spending. **Check your direct debits** – can you cancel any subscriptions (if out of contract)? Or, can you speak to the provider about reducing the package?

DO YOU HAVE DEBTS?

Some accounts are more important to keep on top of than others. Rent, council tax and household bills (including food, travel and clothes), should be paid before debts to credit / store cards, catalogues and other forms of credit.

Consider what the sanctions are for non-payment. Important bills like rent and council tax potentially have high sanctions (eviction and bailiffs), credit debts can only seek a County Court Judgement.

There's a lot to think about – **talking to a Debt Advisor will help and Southway will do everything it can to support you!**



HOW CAN A DEBT ADVISOR HELP ME?

A Debt Advisor can:

- Help you work through your budget and discuss all the options available to deal with your debts.
- Discuss if there are ways you can maximise your income
- Contact creditors and negotiate new payment arrangements, to make paying your priority accounts more affordable to you.
- Refer you to other forms of advice like employment and benefit advice.

Southway provides tenants with free and confidential advice in all these areas: **debt, budgeting, employment, and benefits.**

If you are struggling, please contact the **Advice Team** on **0161 448 4200** or via Southway's website **southwayhousing.co.uk/help-with-money**.

MINEHEAD, OUR AFFORDABLE COMMUNITY CAFÉ

With the cost of living increasing, it can begin to feel like you need to compromise your social life.

Our Community Café at Minehead Court, run by Open Kitchen, has plenty of affordable options such as a **coffee and cake deal for £2.50**, providing a great chance to catch up with friends and family on a budget!

There are also **hot breakfasts, sandwich deals, and roast dinners** on a Sunday.

As Minehead Community Café is run by Open Kitchen, all food is

purchased from organisations which share their environmental and ethical values. This means we are helping to support local, sustainably produced, seasonal and fair trade companies.

They have also recently opened a mini mart, where you can get plenty of items cheaper than you would in a shop. As there are limited shops nearby it's a perfect chance to pick up some affordable essentials.



You can find the café at **Minehead Court, Brian Harrison Close, Old Moat, M20 1NG** – we hope to see you down there.

COST OF LIVING SUPPORT PAYMENTS: HOW MUCH WILL I GET?

On 26th May, the Chancellor announced a package of support worth over £15bn to help households with the rise in the cost of living. This means that **almost all households will receive a minimum of £400**, with the most vulnerable households **given up to £1,200** to help with the cost of living.

These payments will be made directly to eligible people across the UK, so claimants don't need to take any action.

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE SUPPORT PACKAGE?

For all households:

All households will get a £400 grant to support with their energy bills from the Energy Bills Support Scheme.

For those on means tested benefits:

A **£650** additional one-off Cost of Living Payment is available for those on means tested benefits.

This includes households receiving the following benefits:

- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance

- Income Support
- Working Tax Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Pension Credit

Payments will be made in two instalments; the first in July, the second in Autumn. Payments for those on tax credits only will be paid close together to avoid duplicate payments.

Claimants will need to be in receipt of one of these benefits, or have begun a claim which is later successful, as of **25 May 2022** to be eligible for the first of the two instalments. This payment will be tax-free, will not count towards the benefit cap, and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards.

For households claiming disability benefits:

Households claiming disability benefits will receive an additional **£150** Disability Cost of Living Payment.

This includes households receiving the following benefits:

- Disability Living Allowance (including Child Disability Living Allowance)
- Personal Independence Payment
- Attendance Allowance
- Armed Forces Independence Payment
- Constant Attendance Allowance
- War Pension Mobility Supplement

If you receive means tested benefits and also receive any disability benefits, this £150 will come on top of the £650 payment.

These payments will be exempt from tax, will not count towards the benefit cap, and will not have any impact on existing benefit awards.

Contact Southway and ask for a referral to the **Advice Team** today to get a benefits check, to make sure you are getting everything you're entitled to.

HAVE YOU MET A FRIENDLY-FACED COMMUNITY CHAMPION YET?

Southway Community Champions are people in the community, encouraging our tenants to access any support that they might need, or encouraging them to get involved with us.

Champions provide an additional link between Southway staff and the people who can benefit from our services.

People may prefer to share with Champions initially, before engaging with Southway or other services.

Being a Community Champion doesn't mean extra commitment, it's about helping, whilst going about your normal routine. It's sharing knowledge, and sometimes experience, to help another person.

We've had a range of Southway Community Champions providing support in our communities for over six months, but there's always room for more! If you'd like to become a Community Champion, get in touch with someone from the **Customer Involvement and Community Investment Team** either via our website, social media, or on **0161 448 4200**.

Introducing some of our Community Champions, who are giving something back to their local community...

ANNE GUY (BURNAGE EAST)

Anne, a long time Burnage resident is very active in her local community. Anne is involved with the Bin it in Burnage litter picking group and gives her time to St Bernard's lunch club and Burnage Community Centre. Anne says she enjoys being part of community projects, particularly those for the well-being of the older members of the Burnage Community.



ESTELITA AVILEZ (BURNAGE WEST)

Estelita has recently stepped into the role of Sessional Development Worker at Westcroft Community Centre where she has previously given her time to support the community. This means that the Burnage community can continue to enjoy the thoughtfully designed skill building sessions, which Estelita plans and delivers.



LISA PENNINGTON AND LEANNE THOMPSON (BURNAGE EAST)

Lisa and Leanne are busy ladies being Southway Community Champions and active Burnage East Quids In volunteers.

DON EVANS (BURNAGE EAST)

A Southway Community Champion and Burnage East Quids In volunteer, Don is also a Southway Energy Buddy. Find him at The N-Gage Catalyst Centre, Burnage.



HANNAH WORTHINGTON (BURNAGE EAST)

Southway Community Champion Hannah is the Centre Manager for the N-Gage Catalyst Youth Centre in Burnage. You can find Hannah running the community café from the N-Gage centre most days of the week.



HELEN FYNCH (BURNAGE WEST)

A Southway Community Champion who also volunteers for Quids In at Westcroft Community Centre.



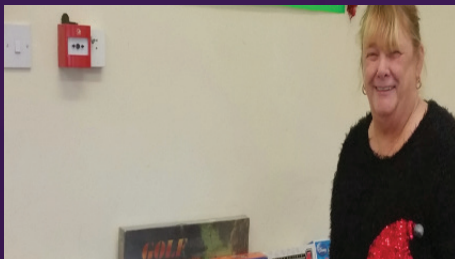
We'd like to say a **HUGE thank you** to all of our engaged tenants who give up their time to make the Southway experience as good as possible.

THREE CHEERS FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

We celebrated the work of our volunteers at our Southway Volunteers Celebration Event, where we recognised and thanked our volunteers and shared news about community projects funded through our Beautiful South Fund.

Chef Exose of Masterchef fame, who volunteered at Southway and Barlow Moor Community Centre when he was younger, was a special guest, providing cakes and sharing his experiences volunteering.

Attendees enjoyed dinner and we heard from our staff and volunteers about their work. Special recognition awards were given to the following volunteers:

**BERNIE RYAN**

Our Quids In Superstar and host of Community Crafts Events.

**JONNY BUTCHER**

A real all rounder across Burnage projects, especially at Westcroft.

**MAGGIE WALKER**

Passionate about her Tenants' Association, other groups, and supporting residents into roles.

A big thankyou to the work of all our volunteers and all who came along to the event.

Award winners received a **£20 gift voucher** for a shop of their choice and all attendees received a giftbag to thank them for their hard work.

**LEANNE THOMASON**

A huge asset to Quids In, and Old Moat Sure Start Centre.

**JAKE WHITEHOUSE**

A saviour for Quids In and Southway during the lockdown.

**INTERESTED IN
BECOMING A VOLUNTEER?**

There are many opportunities to get involved with volunteering and on our various groups. We welcome volunteer applications and are particularly looking for volunteers on our Tenant Scrutiny Panel, Board, People and Places Committee, and our Beautiful South Fund Decision Making Panel.



To find out more about our volunteering opportunities, visit www.southwayhousing.co.uk/news-events/events/celebrating-our-volunteers or call us on **0161 448 4200**.

GETTING THE KETTLE BACK ON AT THE Quids In FOOD CLUBS



With living costs rising, our **Quids In Food Clubs** are needed more than ever; as one member told us, *“without Quids In I can’t make ends meet”*.

Over the last 12 months the five Quids In food clubs have given out **10,512 weekly food shops**, which has also **saved over 70,500 tonnes of food** going to waste.

We also know that the clubs are about more than food for many members, so the changes made to the clubs to keep them running during the pandemic left some members feeling disconnected and missing their friends.

When Covid restrictions lifted, we surveyed our members to find out how they felt about coming into the clubs again. People told us they were glad we’d put measures in place during the pandemic and had always felt safe at the clubs, but many were keen to bring back the social side of the clubs. One member told us that *“It would be lovely to be able to go inside and have chats with other members”* and another made a more direct request to *“Bring back coffee”*.

So, we are delighted that coffee is now back at most of the clubs! Members can still choose to collect their food at the door of the club if they prefer, but it’s lovely to see people having a brew with friends, getting to know new members and finding out what’s going on locally when they come in to pick up their food.

Keeping the Quids In Food Clubs going wouldn’t be possible without the support of our fantastic volunteers, funders (listed on www.southwayhousing.co.uk/quidsin), food partners and donors. The last 12 months have been particularly challenging as food supplies to the clubs have reduced so the grants, new food partners and kind donations of food and money by individuals have all made a huge difference. **THANK YOU** for helping hundreds of families in south Manchester put food on the table every week.

To keep up to date with the work of the Quids In Food Clubs, follow us on Facebook www.facebook.com/QuidsInFoodClubs/

SUPPORT Quids In AS YOU SHOP

Burnage East and Merseybank Quids In Food Clubs are part of the Co-op Local Community Fund until October 2022.

This means that you can help to raise money for the clubs as you shop at the Co-op.

If you are a Co-op member, you can choose one of the clubs as your local cause. Find them at:

Burnage East Quids In
membership.coop.co.uk/causes/60131

Merseybank Quids In
membership.coop.co.uk/causes/60138

You can become a Co-op member online at www.coop.co.uk/membership or ask in your local store.

ARE YOU STRUGGLING WITH FOOD COSTS?

‘Quids In’ food clubs offer members a variety of fresh and chilled food worth around **£15** for just **£3 a week**.

To join a Quids In food club, please email quidsin@southwayhousing.co.uk or call **0161 448 4200** to speak with Maureen Ward. You will need to prove that you receive Housing Benefit, Universal Credit or Pension Credit. Please be aware that the clubs may have waiting lists.



energy buddies

GAS AND ELECTRIC BILLS: OUR ENERGY BUDDIES ARE HERE TO HELP

Prices for gas and electric continue to increase, with more increases expected around October.

Ofgem predict the price cap will **rise to around £2,800**. Every household across the UK will be hit by the increase in costs. If you are concerned about paying for your gas and electric, we have a free and impartial Energy Advice Service available to any Southway tenant who needs support: The Energy Buddies!

WHAT CAN THE ENERGY BUDDIES HELP ME WITH?

Our Energy Buddies are here to provide advice for you and your home. They can check what financial support you may qualify for (such as Warm Homes Discount or Winter Fuel Payment). They can also check if you are eligible to be on the Priority Services Register. This will make sure you don't lose access to power in the event of a power cut.

CAN ENERGY BUDDIES HELP ME FIND A CHEAPER TARIFF?

Although switching to a cheaper tariff isn't an available option for many at the moment, there are still steps you can take to reduce energy consumption. We can visit your home and offer suggestions on how to reduce your energy usage, as well as fitting free measures such as foil radiator panels.

CAN ENERGY BUDDIES HELP ME UNDERSTAND MY BILLS?

The Energy Buddies had great success speaking to energy suppliers recently, on *Iman**'s behalf. He had been mis-sold a fixed rate direct debit. The Energy Buddies were able to spend time speaking to his supplier, and managed to agree that they would reverse the fixed tariff contract and move him on to the standard variable rate, which was much cheaper.

** Name changed*



If you think the **Energy Buddies** could help you, please visit www.southwayhousing.co.uk/energy-buddies or email energybuddies@southwayhousing.co.uk. You can also call us on **0161 448 4200** and ask to speak to an Energy Buddy.

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH FUND



GET THOUSANDS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

Do you have an idea to brighten up your local neighbourhood, help people to connect, or to boost community spirit?

A Beautiful South Fund grant could help you to put your plans into action.

Grants of up to £2,500 are awarded to individuals, groups and organisations to run activities and events in south Manchester that promote 'neighbourliness' or to support communities to ease the impacts of a rising cost of living. Projects just need to benefit Southway tenants.

Previous grants have been awarded to street parties, Halloween/Christmas events, gardening projects, dance classes and arts and crafts groups.



You can apply for a grant any time; applications are considered by our tenant-led Beautiful South Fund decision-making panel.

You can find out more about the Beautiful South Fund and download an application form at www.southwayhousing.co.uk/beautiful-south

If you'd like to talk to us about your project or idea or need help to make an application, contact Roz Hampson or Maureen Ward.

PENSION AGE? YOU MAY BE MISSING OUT ON MONEY!

Over **£17.6 million of pension credit is currently unclaimed** in Manchester. Now is the time to see if you can top up your pension.

Pension Credit gives you extra money to help with your living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. State pension age is 66 for both women and men, and if you were born after 5 April 1960, there will be a phased increase in State Pension age to 67, and eventually 68.

Pension credit will increase your weekly income to £182.60 if you're single, or your joint weekly income to £278.70 if you have a partner.

Pension Credit can also help with housing costs such as:

- Free TV license. For over 75s worth £157.50 year
- Council Tax reduction. Worth over £1000 per year
- Warm Homes discount worth £140 per year
- Housing Benefit. You could have your rent paid in full
- Cold weather payment. Worth £25 p/w in winter
- Free dental treatment
- Voucher for glasses.

"With so much pressure on household finances, it's vital that older people are getting all the money they are entitled to. A third of those eligible for pension credit in Greater Manchester aren't claiming, with many missing out on income from attendance allowance and housing benefit too."

"If you own your own home or have a private pension you could still be eligible, so please take a moment now and check – for yourself or your loved ones. It's going to be another tough winter and getting this top-up could make all the difference."

Andy Burnham

"For many people, that bit of extra income can make a crucial difference between struggling to pay the bills and living more comfortably. With more households struggling to meet the cost of living, we urge people to find out if they are eligible for pension credit and other support."

"We also discovered that some people are worried that claiming might impact other benefits they receive. However, qualifying for pension credit often prompts more financial support and people also find out there are other benefits they are entitled to but not claiming."

Karen Mitchell, Southway Chief Executive

"Pension Credit has helped me with lots of the costs including food, clothing and bedding. My son helped me fill the forms out – I wouldn't be able to do it without his help."

Jean*, aged 86, from Gorton

Speak to us as soon as possible to see if you, or a loved one, friend or neighbour, is eligible for Pension Credit.



THE PENSION TOP
up

CREATING NEW HABITATS FOR NATURE

The best way to create homes for nature is by introducing suitable plants and habitats for different types of wildlife to use. That's why we have teamed up with Groundwork to launch a new project within a gated area at Bullfinch Walk on the Arrowfield Estate.

WHAT WORK IS CURRENTLY BEING DONE ON THE PROJECT?

We have started to introduce different types of wildlife features to provide areas for invertebrates to live in and we are soon moving onto creating hedgehog homes and features to benefit birds.

Local residents have already helped by providing information about the birds which they see around the site.

We have decided to make a small, experimental "Rain Garden" feature. We have planted moisture-loving plants at the bottom of this to drain water and prevent pooling.

We have surrounded the Rain Garden with one of our new "Beetle Banks". Beetle Banks are mounds where the grass will be allowed to grow long to provide shelter for different types of Beetles. Grasshoppers and other invertebrates will also benefit from these features.

WHAT ARE PLANS FOR THIS SITE IN FUTURE?

We aim for this site to be used as an educational area for school groups and nature-based events hosted by our Environmental Team.

Some residents have direct access onto this site from their gardens and the Groundwork Team listened to their ideas before starting work on the site. We are aiming to create a community space for people to enjoy.

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

We would like to invite volunteers to get involved with creating this new community wildlife space. If you would like to know more about how you can get involved or the plants which we are introducing and any of the wildlife habitat features please contact our Urban Ranger, **Debbie Wallace** at d.wallace@southwayhousing.co.uk or call us.



SOUTHWAY IS FIFTEEN!

In November we'll be celebrating our 15th year in existence! We think we've come a long way in 15 years, with Chief Executive, Karen Mitchell being at the helm.

For our 15th birthday, we're going to give every staff member the opportunity to work in a small group to enhance a number of community sites, which should be of great benefit to our tenants. Staff will be carrying out litter picking, weeding and pruning, repairs to

site furniture such as tree pits, noticeboards and benches, to name a few of the birthday activities. We'd also really like to say a big happy birthday to any of our tenants' children who were born in November 2007 when Southway first started out.

HAVE YOU GOT A SON OR DAUGHTER BORN IN NOVEMBER 2007?

Let us know if they are, on social media by sharing a photo of their birth certificate, and a photo of the November 07 birthday child. Verified birthdays will receive a small birthday present in November.

Happy 15th
Birthday Southway
Housing!



SUMMER FUN DAYS

JOIN US THROUGHOUT AUGUST FOR 3 FUN DAYS, THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN YOUR NEIGHBOURS IN YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY.

**TUES 2ND AUGUST
11AM-2PM**

Plover Terrace Green
Space, off Wintermans
Road, off Arrowfield Road,
Chorlton, M21 7U

**THURS 11TH AUGUST
11AM-2PM**

Old Moat Lane Green
Space (opposite Old Moat
School), Old Moat Lane,
Withington, M20 3FN

**FRIDAY 12TH AUGUST
11AM-2PM**

Westcroft Road
Green Space, Westcroft
Road, Burnage, M20 6EF

FREE FACE PAINTING, BOUNCY CASTLE AND MORE FOR CHILDREN

CHAT TO SOUTHWAY STAFF ON INFORMATION
STALLS ABOUT OUR SERVICES

LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE

All children need to be accompanied by an adult.

For more information please contact Tina Murphy or Maureen Ward on 0161 448 4200.



BLACK HISTORY MONTH COMPETITION HERE ARE THE WINNERS!



Last October, we held a competition to celebrate the diverse heritages and cultures that we have in our own communities. You submitted entries (photos, videos, audio) that show something about your culture and heritage that make you proud to be you.

We are happy
to announce the
following winners:

MICHELLE BRATHWAITE

Michelle submitted an impressive, well researched video about the Black Lives Matter movement on social media becoming a trend, and how racial issues persist today despite the decrease in posts on social media. Her video ended with a powerful statement: **'Our lives are NOT a trend'**

You can view it here
southwayhousing.co.uk/bhm-winners



JEAN JONES

Jean submitted a heartwarming story about her husband, Joseph Williams, who has served in the Jamaican army for 30 years and worked at Boots during lockdown to make sure the public could get the supplies they need.



Thank you so much for your submissions and we can't wait to see what you submit for our upcoming competition this year! Together, we can challenge prejudice in the fight against racism by celebrating our wonderful diverse communities.

