

NOVEMBER 2020

YOUR

WREKIN

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES

Princess Anne visits Princess Avenue

ADAPTED HOMES

HELP FOR CUSTOMERS

The Wrekin Housing Group



COVID-19 NATIONAL RESTRICTIONS

We are continuing to deliver our services in a covid-secure way, keeping you and our staff safe. For more information please visit [wrekin.com/coronavirus](https://www.wrekin.com/coronavirus)



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Now, more than ever, it is essential for customers to have a say

getinvolved@wrekin.com

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WAYNE'S WREKIN WORD



Welcome to our new look customer magazine *Your Wrekin*. We're including many of the same popular features from Trust Talks but with a new refreshed design that is also available digitally. I'd like to thank everyone who submitted suggestions for the new name and congratulations to Aliya Hussain who came up with the winning entry.

I also want to share my thanks with the fantastic artists who submitted entries for our calendar art competition. I know the panel of customers and staff who judged the competition had some difficult decisions to make, but I am sure you will agree the final 2021 calendar looks great. Congratulations to Lesley Howse, who was selected as the overall winner and front cover artist.

This magazine is being delivered in the middle of the second national lockdown, during this period, as we have been throughout the pandemic, we will be continuing to deliver services in a covid-secure way and in line with government guidelines. I think we can all agree that we hope things settle down in the coming months but in the meantime I'd like to thank all our customers for your patience and resilience during the pandemic, please continue to check our website for further information about our services including a wide range of advice and support.

Wayne Gethings, Chief Executive

Clive Dann, Chair of the Customer Voice Panel

Hi everyone, I'm Clive Dann, the new Chair of the Customer Voice Panel at Wrekin. I have been an involved resident for the last six years. As Chair of the Customer Voice Panel, my fellow involved residents and I work directly with the Board and the Executive team at Wrekin to put customer's views across, holding the Board to account for delivering services and addressing issues that are important for our customers.

Since becoming Chair earlier in the year, we have faced an unprecedented situation and I'm pleased to say that we have worked well with the employees at Wrekin, but we are all learning as we go on.

There is an excellent involvement structure at Wrekin which informs the Customer Voice Panel of any issues, this includes:

- **The Tenants' Panel who are consulted on major policies and strategies as they are developed.**
- **The Tenant Auditors who check in-depth individual service areas.**
- **The Customer Assurance Panel who scrutinise Wrekin against the Tenants Charter and the National and Local Standards.**

Now, more than ever, it is essential for customers to have a say, so if you are interested in being involved please get in touch.



New homes are adapted to community needs

The keys to nine newly built bungalows, specifically designed and adapted for wheelchair users, have been handed to families in Malinslee, Telford and Lesley Owen Way, Shrewsbury.

Sophie and her son Mason moved into their new wheelchair adapted bungalow on Lesley Owen Way and said:

“ Having a home with room for a wheelchair and the ability to use a motorised hoist is fantastic for Mason, and we now have a garden to play in! ”

We have been working closely with local authorities including Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin councils, local Clinical Commissioning Groups and the NHS, to ensure we provide the properties that our communities need.

The bungalows form part of our wider investment plan which will see us build a further 2,391 new homes across Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire and Staffordshire over the next five years, with 350 of these homes being completed this year.



COVID-19 SUPPORT AND ADVICE

We are continuing to deliver our services in a covid-secure way, keeping you and our staff safe. Please check our website [wrekin.com/coronavirus](https://www.wrekin.com/coronavirus) for more information, support, advice and timely updates on how our services may change.





Princess visits Princess Avenue

Photo taken following COVID-19 social distancing guidelines

In September we were honoured to welcome Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal to visit a new housing development in Arleston.

The four innovative properties on Princess Avenue are highly sustainable timber-framed Passivhaus buildings, that will be ready for customers to move into soon. The Princess Avenue development also includes a further 41 traditionally built properties.

The Princess Royal met Group Chief Executive Wayne Gethings, Group Chair Desmond Hudson and the team of Wrekin trainees who have built the family homes. All of the trainees are new to the construction sector and have benefitted from training at The Marches Construction Ready Partnership. The build team includes several Wrekin customers, including Simone Hitchen who said: “Less than 18 months ago I had never even been on a building site, now I have shown a Princess

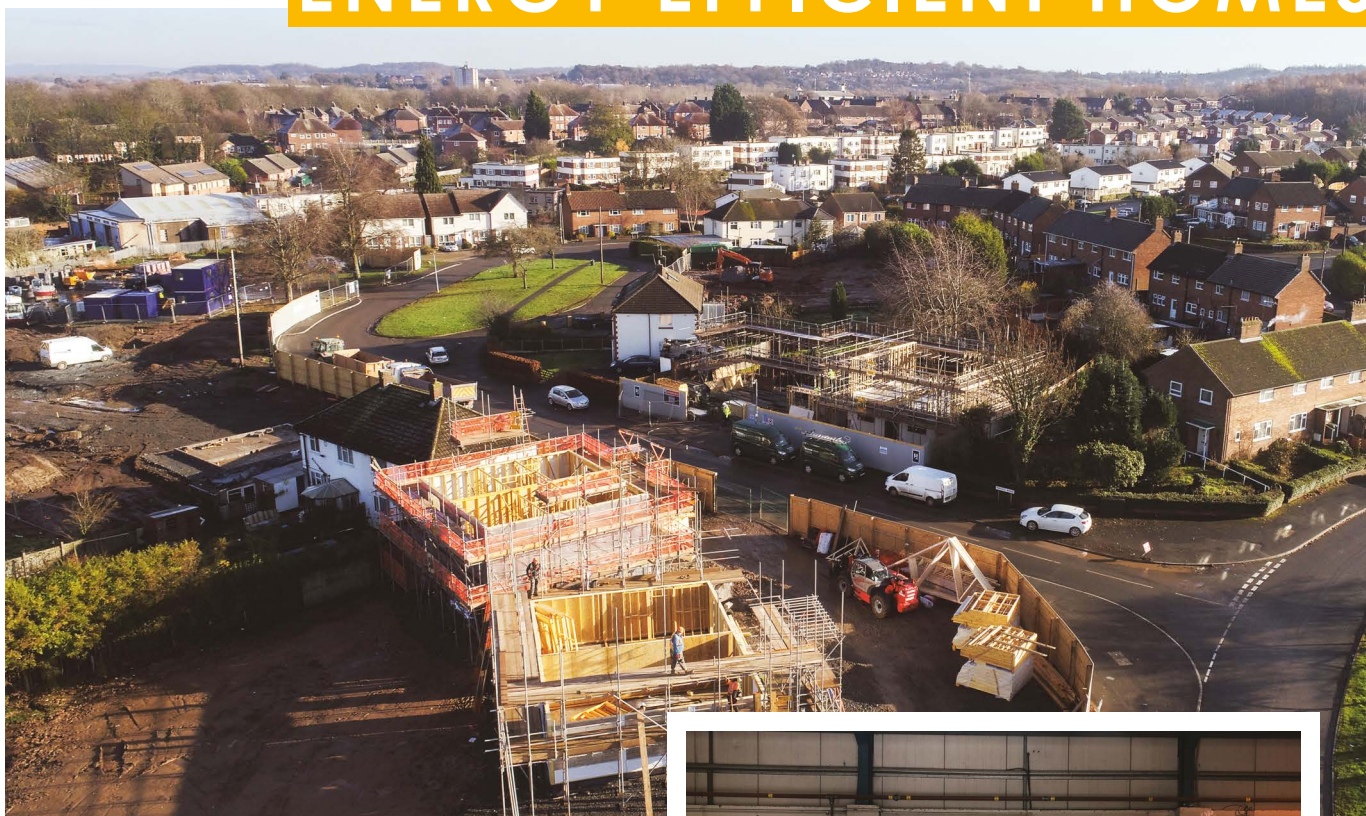
around a house that was hand built by me and the team.”

“Her Royal Highness was really interested in the roles we had all played during the build and also in the sustainability of the homes. We were only told she was coming on Friday and it’s really made our day that a member of the Royal Family has taken the time to come and see us here in Wellington and visit the houses that we have built.”

The Princess Royal’s visit was part of a tour of Shropshire that also included a visit to Harper Adams University and Telford Town Park.

Speaking after the visit Wrekin’s Group Chief Executive Wayne Gethings said: “It really was a privilege to have been able to welcome The

ENERGY EFFICIENT HOMES



“ As an organisation we are fully committed to addressing the future sustainability of our housing stock and these Passivhaus homes are just one element of that. ”



Photo taken pre COVID-19

Princess Royal to visit these great houses. The team have done a fantastic job with these innovative buildings that have been designed with the same finish as the traditionally built houses on the site.

"As an organisation we are fully committed to addressing the future sustainability of our housing stock and these Passivhaus homes are just one element of that."

We are set to continue our eco-friendly initiatives with a new project starting this year that will see us installing battery storage and solar photovoltaic technologies in to a selection of existing properties.



Pictured, top left: Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal talking to Wrekin trainees Owen Pennant and Simone Hitchin. **Top right:** Aerial view of Princess Avenue construction site. **Lower right:** Wrekin trainees and mentors with Chief Executive, Wayne Gethings and Chair of the Board, Desmond Hudson.

Help for customers

Money Matters advice

We have a specialist Money Matters team available to offer support and advice on money and benefits.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to very uncertain times. On our website you will find a page of frequently asked questions covering a range of subjects including rent, council tax, utility bills, debt and Universal Credit.

[Click here to read our frequently asked questions.](#)

Or you can contact the team directly.

t: 01952 217234

e: money.matters@wrekin.com



Improve your employment prospects

If you are worried about losing your job, are out of work or need help to improve your employment prospects, get in touch. Wrekin offers 1:1 employability and skills support to tenants and their families.

Contact the team to find out more.

t: 07816 510370

e: opportunities@wrekin.com

Government's Kickstart Scheme

Wrekin is hoping to apply and take part in the Government's Kickstart Scheme to create new job placements for 16 to 24 year olds. If successful, we would offer at least 30 placements, lasting six months each, over the next year or so, across all parts of The Wrekin Housing Group.

If you are a young person, interested in a paid six month work placement, please contact us so that we can keep you informed of the opportunities as they arise.

t: 07483 429280

e: opportunities@wrekin.com

Customers who take out a Wrekin Home Contents Insurance policy are entitled to **four weeks free cover!**

[Click here for more details.](#)

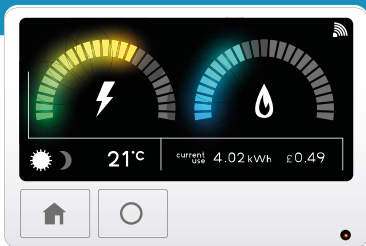


Get Energy Smart

The Marches Energy Agency 'Get Energy Smart' campaign is all about helping you save money and stay warmer this winter. You can get started today with these three Smart Steps:

GET A SMART METER

Smart meters send information straight to your supplier and show you exactly how much your energy is costing, so that means no more estimated bills or nasty surprises.



CHECK YOUR TARIFF

Energy costs can creep up over time so it's worth thinking about a switch. Switching is surprisingly easy and could save you hundreds of pounds.

CUT OUT THE WASTE

Simple changes such as installing LED light bulbs and switching off appliances at the plug can help you save energy and reduce your bills.

Keep Shropshire Warm offer free, impartial energy advice and can support you with any of these steps (and much more!).

You can call them on **0800 112 3743**

Or email: advice@mea.org.uk

Warm Home Discount

For those on a low income or who receive the Guarantee Pension Credit you may be entitled to a Warm Home Discount. This is a credit on your energy bill, normally given by the end of March. If you qualify automatically, you should receive a letter by December 2020 telling you how to get the discount.

To find out more call the Warm Home Discount helpline on **0800 731 021**

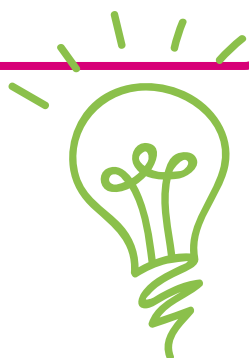
Or visit www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

Winter Fuel Payment

If you are of state pension age, are eligible and receive the state pension, you are able to get a Winter Fuel Payment. This can be between £100 and £300 towards paying your heating costs and is usually applied automatically.

To find out more call the Winter Fuel Payment helpline on **0800 731 0160**

Or visit www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment



2021 CALENDAR IS A SPLASH OF COLOUR

Your 2021 Wrekin calendar features the 12 winning artworks from our art competition. This year our theme was life on your doorstep and we wanted artists to think about using colour to help make this year's calendar our most vibrant yet, adding a splash of colour throughout your year.

Congratulations to our winner, Lesley Howse whose pastel drawing called, *No social distancing for the starlings*, has won pride of place on the front cover. It depicts a window view of a starling murmuration over nearby fields.



Competition winners!

Our calendar competition was just one of many competitions featured in the last edition of Trust Talks. Here's a round up of all the other winners. And don't forget to look out for our new competitions on the back of your address sheet.



NEWSLETTER NAME WINNER

Congratulations to Aliya Hussain who came up with the great new name for our newsletter, Your Wrekin! Aliya said: "To me the newsletter name Your Wrekin reflects what The Wrekin Housing Group is all about and how it values us as tenants. Receiving a newsletter called Your Wrekin would make me feel like a bigger part of The Wrekin Housing Group and I'll be really eager to read it!"

DIGITAL SIGN UP WINNER

Kim Mansell is the winner of an amazon echo after being selected at random for our digital sign up competition.

WORD WHEEL WINNER

Alex Perry, aged 10 found over 170 words in our word wheel competition. Well done, Alex.

COLOURING WINNER

It was great to see so many people showcasing their colouring entries in their windows to thank key workers. Our designer's favourite was from Mrs Braine for her use of colour surrounding the message in the picture.