

JUNE 2022

YOUR

WREKIN

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO PEOPLE'S LIVES

COST OF LIVING SPECIAL



Easy ways to boost your income

Budgeting advice and savvy tips

Protecting yourself from scams

The Wrekin
Housing Group



3-5

Money advice and support

6

2023 calendar art competition

Fundraising for local hospice

7

Competitions

8

**We're recruiting
Join #TeamWrekin**

My Wrekin app

Wayne's Wrekin word

As we head in to the warmer summer months, we are aware that for many there will be challenging times ahead as the cost of living soars.

You don't have to suffer in silence – we're here to help. This edition is packed full of essential tips and advice to help you, from how to boost your income, to protecting yourself financially. Every Wrekin tenant is entitled to dedicated, free support via our Money Matters Team – they have already helped hundreds of people with their finances this year.

Now that Covid restrictions have eased, you will see more staff out and about in your community. You may have already noticed members of our Customer Voice Team – usually armed with yummy cakes or biscuits – who are keen to get your views on our services and what you'd like to see more of in the future. The team will be coming to a community near you soon – your views really do make a difference to how we deliver our services going forward.

In this edition, we're also bringing you some wonderful stories from the heart of your communities. I'm sure many of you will have come across John Brayne, who lives at Withywood – our extra care scheme in Shrewsbury. John recently celebrated his 90th birthday by walking 90 laps of Withywood – raising over £1000 for Severn Hospice. Our motto here at Wrekin is 'Making a difference to people's lives' – something John embodies to a tee.

Wayne Gethings, Group Chief Executive



Laura Hilditch, Chair of the Tenants' Panel

It's been a busy few months for tenant involvement here at Wrekin.

As involved tenants, we've played a key role in helping shape Wrekin's response to the government's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). As part of these new measures, social landlords like Wrekin will need to share information about performance and quality of service. We believe the introduction of these measures will help improve services for all residents, give us a greater say and ensure accountability for landlords. We have also suggested some improvements that will help ensure tenants voices are truly heard. Visit wrekin.com to read more.

In this edition, you'll read more about Wrekin's exciting calendar competition. This year's theme is centred around the climate crisis; your artwork should reflect how we can live a more eco-conscious life. I always look forward to Wrekin's calendar competition. I've judged some fantastic entries over the years and I'm sure this year will be no exception!

We are always on the lookout for people to help us with our work. I've been an involved resident for over 17 years, and I've seen first-hand how our work has made a difference to people's lives.

If you would like more information or are interested in getting involved please get in touch.

getinvolved@wrekin.com

01952 217326

FEELING THE PINCH?

See how we can help

The cost of living crisis is squeezing households across the country as energy bills, groceries and fuel soar in price.

At Wrekin, we have specialist Debt Advice and Money Matters teams who always work hard to provide practical tips and offer support to any tenant worried about their finances.

We know that it can be hard to take the first steps to talk about money or get advice, and we're here to help. We want to make it easier for our tenants to ask for support, whether it's for budgeting advice or full on debt management – our friendly Money Matters team are here for you. They offer a confidential, non-judgemental service to support all tenants.

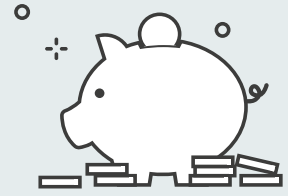
Spring clean your finances

While it's not advised to change your energy supplier at the moment, you can still save money on other household bills.

Changing insurance companies, internet and mobile phone packages regularly can really make a difference. It's also worth reviewing any TV packages or streaming services you use. You can also change banks! Keep an eye out for special joining offers, like money back or vouchers.

We've partnered with Aon to provide affordable contents insurance. You can also add on accidental damage cover for bikes, mobility scooters and more. Prices start from less than £1 a week.

Call **01952 217234** or visit **wrekin.com** and search 'insurance' for more information.



Budgeting advice

1

Make a list

Work out all of your regular outgoings, including your rent, fuel and insurance costs, so you know how much you need to pay.

2

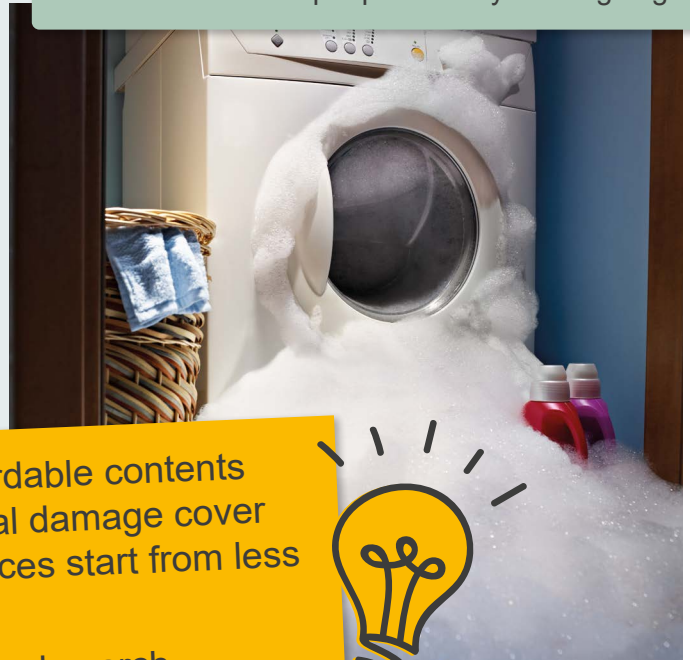
Set up separate accounts

If you're able to save anything, move that extra cash to a different account. That way you can start to save an emergency fund, and it will be less tempting to dip into that pot of money.

3

Track your spending

By noting down everything you buy, you'll be able to build up a picture of your outgoings.



Protecting yourself

Sadly, cases of scams and financial abuse are on the rise. Lockdowns and the pandemic became the perfect breeding ground for criminals to take advantage. Here are some of the latest scams to keep an eye out for:

Energy scams

People have reported receiving emails from their energy company, allegedly offering a refund. It is a convincing email, but it is fake. Always contact your energy supplier if you're unsure – and never click on any links if you think the email is suspect.

Council Tax rebate

Some residents have received phone calls and emails requesting their bank details so that the £150 rebate can be paid to them directly. Your council will never request your bank details this way. If in doubt, get in touch with your local authority to check.

What is financial abuse?

If you're not in control of your own finances, you may be a victim of financial abuse.

Anyone can be subject to this abuse, not just those in long-term relationships. Other family members, like children or siblings, may attempt to take advantage.

Financial abuse can look like:

- Not having access to your own bank account.
- Others closely watching what you spend your money on, demanding receipts afterwards.
- Applying for credit cards and loans using your details.
- Refusing to give you money for essentials, like food, clothing and medicine.

With services returning to some normality, there is a lot more support out there. If you think someone you know is a victim, see something – say something!

Fake Ukraine fundraisers

Scammers have been inventive on how they can deceive donors. Be cautious when donating to an online fundraising page; fake ones are often poorly written or contain spelling mistakes.

If you think you have given out your personal information to someone who isn't who they say they are, contact your bank immediately. You can report scams to Action Fraud on:

0300 123 2040.



Don't get bitten by a loan shark

A loan shark is an unlicensed moneylender who often targets people who are struggling. They will offer to lend money with little or no paperwork, and can become threatening or violent if you can't repay.

Stop Loan Sharks have specially trained staff to provide you with emotional and practical support that is tailored to your needs.

Visit stoploansharks.co.uk or call **0300 555 2222** for more advice.

Don't need it, sell it!

There's nothing like having a good de-clutter, and you would be surprised what people will buy.

Online, eBay and Vinted are amongst the best apps to sell your items, but do charge you a percentage of what you make. Using Facebook Marketplace lets you sell for free – children's toys and baby clothes are always popular.

If selling online isn't for you, why not see if you have a local car boot sale? It can be a great place to sell books, DVDs and more.

Buying from these sites and places are also great if you're after a bargain. **Don't forget that all Wrekin tenants also benefit from a 30% discount at our Wrekin Revive stores in Shrewsbury, Oswestry and Ludlow.** Wrekin Revive sell great quality, pre-loved furniture and appliances at very low prices. Visit revive.co.uk to see what they have on offer, or search for them on Facebook.

Wrekin Revive

Join your local credit union

These not-for-profit community banks provide a safe home for your savings. Credit unions can also help you access low-cost, affordable loans. If you're considering credit or a loan, please speak to them before making a decision.

t: **01743 252 325**

e: info@justcreditunion.org

justcreditunion.org



Did you know?



We can help with essential items if you're on a low income. We can also help if you're struggling to afford or replace white goods like fridges or washing machines.

Our Money Matters team can tap into grants and charities to help you get what you need – please speak to us before thinking about taking out a loan or any 'buy now, pay later' options.

Get something for nothing!

Giveaway sites are becoming more and more popular, as communities grow online. Check out your local Freecycle sites to see what others are getting rid of. Not only will your bank account thank you, so will the environment!

Local Facebook pages are also a great place to spot people keen to recycle goods rather than throw them away. Whether you're on the lookout for some new plants for your veg patch or a missing volume in your magazine collection – you might just strike lucky!

Money Matters



Here to help

If you'd like further advice about any of the above, please get in touch with our Money Matters team. The team are also able to offer an assessment on your benefits and let you know about any extra support you may be entitled to.

t: **01952 217234 / 217283**

e: money.matters@wrekin.com



Inspiring eco-art wanted for calendar competition

Taking care of the earth has never been more important. We want to celebrate the incredible work you're doing to help make a change in our 2023 calendar, and inspire others to do the same.

Show us how you're making an impact – get snapping, painting or creating! Think hedgehog hotels for the autumn months, busy bumble bees for spring and summer, and reclaimed 'rubbish' sculptures to add a splash of colour to the winter months.

"It's the fourth year of running our popular calendar competition", says Sam Hine, Social Value and Inclusion Manager for Wrekin. "This year we wanted to highlight the climate crisis and encourage everyone to live a more eco-conscious life. This could be as simple as reducing waste, reusing and recycling around the home, growing some wildflowers or a veg patch."

Entries can be in any and every medium, and you have until **31 August 2022** to submit a photo of your work. For more guidelines on how to enter, visit our calendar 2023 web page:

wrekin.com/calendar

ECO-ART

Captain Tom inspired walk raises over £1,000 for local hospice

John Brayne, who lives at our ShireLiving scheme in Shrewsbury, completed an astonishing 90 laps around his home just in time for his 90th birthday!

Swapping his usual fish supper for lighter salads to get into shape, John took the challenge in aid of Severn Hospice after they cared for his late wife Jean, who sadly passed away in 2019.

"It's been hard work but I've enjoyed it. I'm delighted we've been able to raise some money for Severn Hospice. I'm going to enjoy a well-earned rest now, but I'm already looking at the next fundraiser – maybe I can go five better when I hit 95!"

Sharon Lawrie, Service Manager at Withywood, said: "John has been an inspiration to both the residents and staff here at Withywood."



Wordsearch

All the words in the list below can be found in the grid, apart from one. Find the missing word and email it with your name and contact details to **YourWrekin@wrekin.com** for your chance to win a £50 shopping voucher.

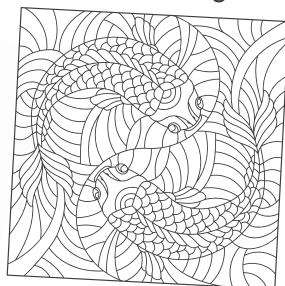
- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting | <input type="checkbox"/> Pounds |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Debits | <input type="checkbox"/> Savvy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Scam |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial | <input type="checkbox"/> Spending |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Income | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Money | |

**WIN £50
SHOPPING
VOUCHERS**

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

Colouring

Our popular colouring competition is featured at the back of the address label with this newsletter, so be sure to check it before you pop it in the recycling. The best colouring will win a £50 shopping voucher.



Please email your entries with your name and contact details to:

YourWrekin@wrekin.com by midnight on Friday 26 August

2022. If you are unable to email your entry, you can send it to:

Your Wrekin competition, M&C, The Wrekin Housing Group, FREEPOST RTSU-ATXA-ZATE, Colliers Way, Old Park, Telford, TF3 4AW

Terms and conditions: By entering our competitions, you agree to having your photo taken for promotional purposes. All competition entrants must be Wrekin tenants. If you are under 18 years old you must ask an adult to enter on your behalf, details must include the child's name, age and the adults contact details. Competition winners will be notified in the next issue of Your Wrekin.

COMPETITION WINNERS

Here's a round up of all the competition winners from our winter 2021 edition of Your Wrekin. Thank you to everyone who entered, we hope you had fun!

DIGITAL SIGN UP WINNER

Paul Hargreaves from Wolverhampton wins £50 in vouchers after being selected at random for our digital sign up.

WORDSEARCH WINNER

Julie Wakeley from Wrockwardine Wood wins £50 in vouchers after finding the missing word – RENEWABLE.

COLOURING WINNER

Our designer's favourite animal colouring entry was from nine-year-old Delvin, who is the winner of £50 in vouchers.

We're recruiting

Join #TeamWrekin

We're looking for people who are positive, friendly and passionate about providing an excellent service for our customers.

Enjoy working in a supportive team, undertake professional training and build a great career, whilst making a difference to people's lives.

If you would love to join #TeamWrekin visit our website for full details of all available vacancies wrekin.com/careers

The Wrekin Housing Group believes that having a diverse workforce supports the business to succeed. We are passionate about building an inclusive culture where all differences are embraced and reflect the communities in which we deliver excellent customer services.



Paying your rent with the MyWrekin App is...

✓ **EASY** ✓ **SECURE** ✓ **CONVENIENT**

The My Wrekin mobile app is now available to download for FREE. The app allows tenants to manage their Wrekin tenancy at the touch of a button.

The app offers a fast and simple way to pay your rent. Industry-leading security software protects your financial details and it's accessible day or night, at home or on the go.

You can download the app by searching 'My Wrekin' on either the Apple App Store or Google Play Store.

As well as paying your rent, The My Wrekin app also allows Wrekin tenants to log repairs at the touch of a button.

Visit wrekin.com/wrekinapp for further information.

