

We are Connexus Magazine

Winter's Coming...

Helping you get through the colder months and the latest Connexus news...

Your new look
magazine from



south shropshire
housing association

Issue 3 - Autumn/Winter 2019

Hello Everyone

We hope you've all seen our repairs colleagues out and about in our new eco-friendly Connexus vans over the last few months.



In this issue we'll be talking about how to prepare your home for winter, reminding you of some important dates and times and letting you know all about the consultation process for the proposed South Shropshire Housing Association and Meres & Mosses Housing Association merger and Herefordshire Housing conversion.

Have Your Say

Please cut me out and send back to: Have your say, Connexus, The Gateway, The Auction Yard, Craven Arms, SY7 9BW. Or visit our website: connexus-group.co.uk/haveyoursay
Your feedback is much appreciated.

Let us know what you'd like to hear about in the next issue of We are Connexus!

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Projects | <input type="checkbox"/> Competitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Connexus company updates | <input type="checkbox"/> How we're performing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developments | <input type="checkbox"/> News about your tenancy | <input type="checkbox"/> Hints and tips | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal Updates | | | |

Tell us more about you...

Age:

Location:

Tenant Consultation

South Shropshire Housing Association (SSHA) and Meres and Mosses Housing Association Limited (MMHA) are proposing to merge by way of amalgamation.

SSHA and MMHA are part of the Connexus Group and we work together as one landlord. However, from a legal perspective they still exist as separate legal entities and separate landlords.

Administering separate entities costs us money and time, which could be better invested in the improvement of the services we provide to you.

Our Board are proposing that SSHA and MMHA formally merge into one legal entity and one landlord. As part of this we have a duty to consult with you and our Board will be taking

your views into account before making a final decision.

All South Shropshire Housing Association and Meres and Mosses Housing Association tenants will be receiving a consultation letter within the next few weeks to explain in further detail the proposed changes, and how you can share your views.



FAQs

Q. I am a leaseholder - will this affect me?

A. No. The terms of your lease and your statutory rights will remain the same, but your landlord will change to the new merged entity.

Q. Will the security of my tenancy change in any way?

A. No. The terms of your current tenancy agreements will remain the same, but your landlord will change to the new merged entity.

Q. Will it affect repairs and maintenance to my property?

A. No. Your repairs will continue to be carried out in the same way as they are now.

Q. What is the main advantage of the proposals?

A. It will mean we can work more effectively and efficiently together, with a clear focus on improving services to our tenants and creating value for money.

Q. Will my rent and service charges be affected?

A. No. Rent and service charges will continue to be reviewed each year.



Warmer Homes



We're committed to warmer homes for our tenants and have been successful in obtaining a grant from the European Regional Development Fund to improve the heating and insulation of over 150 tenants' homes.

The Connexus Warmer Homes project will improve the heating and insulation of over 150 of our homes by 2021. Part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), this work is just part of our 30-year plan for upgrading your homes in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible. This work may include installing wall cavity insulation and improving heating systems.

We'll be working with the Marches Energy Agency to monitor the success of the Warmer Homes project, inviting tenants to take part in 3 review meetings and measuring the temperature of your home before and after the project work. Your feedback and data will then be collected and used to inform the next 30 years of improvement works for all our tenants.

Winter Energy Saving Tips...

We've put together a few tips to help you this Winter

- We know it sounds obvious, but use the timing on your heating system sensibly - you don't need it on all day if you're not in
- Close the doors on unused, unheated rooms to prevent cold air from circulating
- Are you on the best fuel tariff? Using a comparison site to weigh up different energy suppliers can reduce your fuel bills
- Try to keep the front of your radiator clear of furniture
- Draughts around your feet can make things seem really cold. Putting up thick curtains and closing them at night helps to keep the cold out and the heat in. But remember that your house needs to breathe, so don't cover up air bricks or window vents
- Turn back your heating thermostat and put on extra clothes - time to dig out that itchy Christmas jumper?

Emergency Repairs

The number of heating repairs increase during the winter months and so we've had a look at how we prioritise these to help support you.

Our winter period runs from 1st November 2019 until 31st March 2020.

Repairs categorised as an emergency will be made safe within 4 hours and repaired within 24 hours. Emergency repairs are all repairs that have an immediate threat to your health and safety, life or are a security risk.

During this time heating repairs categorised as urgent will be resolved in 1 - 5 working days. Non-urgent repairs are all other heating repairs that don't immediately threaten your health and safety.



Contractor?



We're looking to increase the number of approved subcontractors that we work with.

From time to time we may need extra help maintaining our 10,000+ homes, to do this we rely on an excellent team of subcontractors. If you're a subcontractor, you can sign up on our website.

Know a subcontractor? Let them know where to sign up!

Signing up is simple:

[Connexus-group.co.uk/subsignup](https://connexus-group.co.uk/subsignup)



Customer Involvement Panel

Summer Activities

Our Customer & Community Involvement Team and the Customer Involvement Panel (CIP) ran family activities over the Summer in Herefordshire. The activities included; cookery sessions, football coaching, 'WildPlay' days and trips to the seaside, all of which were greatly enjoyed by families in Hereford and Ross-on-Wye.

Peer to Peer Review

During the summer, CIP members worked with our Independent Living Managers to plan their review of the Connexus Independent Living Service.

600 Independent Living Service customers completed a postal survey asking for their views on the service. We're also currently having informal face-to-face chats with 60 customers who volunteered to be interviewed.

Look out for the full report on their findings in 2020.

Interested? hello@connexus-group.co.uk

Community Panels

We're setting up a Community Panel in Herefordshire!

Community Panels work with our colleagues, Board and committees on behalf of tenants to ensure that their needs and aspirations for housing and other neighbourhood issues are identified, understood and, where possible, addressed.

The panels will meet three times a year, and will have £20,000 to allocate to groups, who want to run activities or projects that would make a positive difference for our communities.

Together with Tenants

A plan, coordinated by the National Housing Federation, is now drafted. Once it has been agreed, the Tenant Advisory Panel will work with housing associations like us that have volunteered to be early adopters of the plan.

We'll work with a nationwide network of tenants and housing associations testing out the Together with Tenants proposals and sharing their experiences, findings and feedback.

Shared Ownership



A fantastic opportunity to get your foot onto the property ladder if you can't afford to buy a home outright.

Shared ownership allows you to buy a share in a brand new home on a part buy/part rent basis paying a subsidised rent on the part that you do not own. It's not just new properties that are available to buy, from time to time properties that were originally sold under Shared Ownership become available for resale. Properties are available from 25% of the home's value and you pay a subsidised monthly rent for the remaining share. In some cases, you can buy up to 100%.

Withington

1 x 3 bedroom end terrace house
2 x 2 bedroom terraced houses
2 x 2 bedroom houses

Available for sale now.

Ford

13 x 3 bedroom house
3 x 2 bedroom house

Released for sale in Spring 2020, ready for the site's completion in June 2020.

Baschurch

3 x 3 bedroom house

Released for sale in January 2020, ready for the site's completion in April 2020.

Bishops Castle

8 x 3 bedroom house
4 x 2 bedroom house

Released for sale in February 2020, ready for the site's completion in June 2020.

Condoover

6 x 3 bedroom house
4 x 2 bedroom house

Released for sale in December 2019, ready for the site's completion in March 2020.



Visit our website for Shared Ownership properties

To register your interest in these Shared Ownership properties please email hello@connexus-group.co.uk



Residents needed for Ludlow Grain Loft

Our stunning Grain Loft extension to the Marstons Hub building in Ludlow is nearing completion and we need new residents!

The Grain Loft offers something new and different for the people of Shropshire: low-level supported accommodation that is the ideal stepping stone towards fully independent living.

The Grain Loft is part of the redeveloped Marstons Hub (due for completion in November 2019), located close to the centre of Ludlow and key amenities. The 11 x 2 bedroom shared flats are available to those aged between 18 and 55 years old with a low level support need. This is the perfect opportunity for somebody to take up a licence, with support available when needed. This support can cover anything from advice on how to manage money, to understanding letters and looking for work or education - preparing Grain Loft residents for their next move.

It is important that prospective new residents understand that this is a shared environment. With this shared living comes the opportunity to develop social skills and to support each other. Indeed, it avoids any social isolation of those with low-level support needs.

The Grain Loft is supported by our Ludlow Foyer service and every Grain Loft resident will have regular sessions with their keyworker, where support plans will be agreed and reviewed.

For more information on how to apply, please contact Customer Services on 03332 31 32 33

Connexus Catch Up



Have you spotted us?

Our amazing team of repairs colleagues have been kitted-out with the new Connexus uniforms and we're sure you have spotted them out and about in your local community driving the new eco-friendly vans. All our colleagues have Connexus ID badges, so please ask us to show this to you before letting anyone into your home.

Annual Report

The good stuff and the things we need to improve on.

Every year we look back on what we've been doing, pulling together performance and your feedback into one annual review, so we can see at a glance what's working well, and sometimes not so well. Through your feedback we can easily identify areas we need to improve on areas that are working well, so we can continually improve what we do, for our customers and our communities too.

To view the Annual Report please visit: connexus-group.co.uk

300
Comments

66
Complaints

57
Compliments



17,401 Phone Calls
93.4% Call Satisfaction



85.81% People would
recommend Connexus to
a friend



£504,650
Adapting Homes
£6,423,922
Improving Homes

Thank you to everyone for your support and time when giving us feedback, it really is important to us

We're Hiring!



We're passionate about providing the very best services for our customers, but we can't do this without an awesome team.

Roles with Connexus are located across Shropshire, Herefordshire and Gloucestershire.

Happy applying!

[Connexus-group.co.uk/careers](https://connexus-group.co.uk/careers)

Sign up!

If we haven't got the perfect job for you right now, how about signing up for our job alerts? It's quick and simple and takes the hassle out of searching. We'll simply alert you by email when your ideal job becomes available!

Wildflower Garden

Look at 11-year-old Sam's wildflower garden that he created in North Shropshire.



Sam has a keen interest in the environment and wanted to create a wildflower garden to help encourage and save local bees and insects. He's planted a wide variety of bee and insect friendly seeds ready for spring and has even purchased a bee hotel.

Sam is so proud of his creation and tends to it before and after school.

Rent Reminder

Christmas is approaching and we know this puts a tighter squeeze on the purse strings. However, it's important that you make paying your rent a top priority. After all, paying your rent keeps a roof over your head and pays for repairs and services.

Hopefully you've managed to put aside some money for this festive period, but if not remember it's the thought that counts. Being with your loved ones is worth much more than any expensive gifts.

Missing one weekly rent payment can make it difficult for you to catch up, leaving you left in

arrears for a long time. Getting behind on your rent may mean that we start proceedings to evict you.

If you're worried about making your rent payments or need advice call us on 03332 31 32 33



Voluntas Calling

You may have noticed calls from a company called Voluntas. We'd like to reassure you that these are legitimate calls that we've asked them to make on our behalf.

Voluntas are an independent market research organisation. We've worked with them for some time and they're now working with us more widely across Connexus. They'll be calling you about satisfaction surveys, so we can find out how we are doing.

Why are we doing these surveys?

We want to know how we can make our services better, so we're contacting you to find out your opinions. We want to know what you think about us, our services, your home and your neighbourhood. We also want to know if there are other ways in which we can help you, we have lots of services on offer!

Thank you

for talking to the Voluntas team.
Your time and opinions matter to us!

Developments Across Connexus

We're dedicated to creating not just homes, but communities too. Here are some of the homes we're building.

Ludlow - Marstons Hub

This scheme will provide an iconic extension to the Ludlow Foyer, providing 11 more apartments, in addition to upgrading and modernising the Foyer. This extension will be completed and handed over at the end of October 2019.

Hereford - Pyefinch Meadow

We're taking ownership of some high quality properties from a local builder. At this site we already own 5 properties with another 3 rented properties to be handed over in July 2020.

Withington - Whitestone Chapel

This scheme will consist of 33 units, including a mix of Shared Ownership, rented properties and Rent to Buy properties. Work is well underway, and the scheme is expected to be completed by Summer 2020.

Baschurch, The Wheatlands

Works started in August 2019 on 3 Shared Ownership units. These are due to be completed in July 2020.

Hereford - Bath Street

Starting life as a Working Boys' home in 1877 and going on to become the local registry office, Bath Street is being transformed into 74 x 1 & 2 bedroom apartments (including affordable). Phase 1 will involve the refurbishment of the existing redbrick building while phase 2 will include new build sections. Each phase is expected to take 1 year with final completion being in 2021.

Bishops Castle

24 properties started on site in March 2019 (12 rented and 12 shared ownership) and are due to complete by Summer 2020.

Bomere Heath

This scheme consists of 13 units (12 x 2 & 3 bedroom homes and 1 x detached 2 bedroom bungalow), 7 Affordable Rent and 6 Shared Ownership properties. These are due to be completed in January 2020.

Ford

This scheme consists of 32 units (16 Affordable Rent and 16 Shared Ownership). Work is anticipated to be completed in May 2020.

Condoover

Work commenced in March 2019 on 20 x 2 & 3 bedroom homes. Completion is scheduled for March 2020.

Information on our developments can be found on our websites.

Alternative formats: Available in audio, large print, braille and other languages. Please contact us for more information.

> Registered Office: Connexus Housing Ltd, The Gateway, The Auction Yard, Craven Arms, SY7 9BW
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> Regulator of Social Housing Number: L4494 > Financial Conduct Authority Number: 30269R



Connexus
People > Places > Partnerships