



Sheltered Scheme Newsletter

Spring 2026

For environmental reasons, we don't print a copy of this newsletter for every tenant.

Once you're finished reading, pass me along to your neighbour to enjoy!

If you'd like any news or events included in the next newsletter, please email:

**Communications
@redkitehousing
.org.uk**

or speak to your
Sheltered Specialist.

More news can be found on our website at **redkitehousing.org.uk/news.**

Welcome to your latest Sheltered Newsletter.

This time, we're sharing updates on community projects, useful reminders for spring, and the different ways we're here to support you.

You'll find updates on what's been happening across our Sheltered Schemes, how we've been listening to your feedback, and the actions we're taking as a result.

New Group Chief Executive joins Red Kite

We're pleased to announce that **Peter Cogan** will be joining Red Kite as our new Group Chief Executive from 20th April.

He brings a great deal of experience and we're pleased to welcome him to the organisation.



We're launching a new way for you to share your views - the Tenant Voice Panel

The Panel makes it easy for you to get involved without any pressure or long-term commitment. You can take part as much or as little as you like, in whatever way works best for you.

This could be giving quick feedback in a short survey, sharing your thoughts by email, or helping us review letters or services.

There's no formal sign-up, and you don't need to attend meetings unless you want to. It's all about keeping things simple, flexible and comfortable for you.

By hearing from more tenants like you, we can shape our services around what really matters to you and your community.

Find out more at redkitehousing.org.uk/voice.



Turning conversations into action at our ELT coffee mornings

Over the past few months, members of our Executive Leadership Team (ELT) have visited all of our sheltered housing schemes to host ELT coffee mornings. These informal sessions were set up to give tenants the chance to talk to us face to face, share what's working well, and raise any concerns in a relaxed and friendly environment.

We're grateful to everyone who took the time to attend, speak openly and share their experiences. Your feedback has helped us take action and make improvements where they are needed.

Many of the day-to-day issues raised during the coffee mornings have already been sorted. These included small repairs, grounds maintenance issues, cleaning issues, safety concerns and practical improvements around our schemes.

Communication was raised as a concern by tenants at a number of schemes. Some tenants told us that issues had been reported, but that they did not always receive updates afterwards. In response, we've asked some tenants to become scheme champions. This role allows them to work more closely with us, report issues and help hold contractors to account where services have not been delivered to an acceptable standard.

We've already introduced scheme champions at Woollerton Court and would like to roll this out across our other schemes.

If you're interested in becoming a scheme champion, please speak to your **Sheltered Specialist**.

We also heard about some bigger issues that need more planning and longer-term solutions, like installing additional washing machines or installing CCTV so we will come back to you once we have investigated these further.

One of the most common topics raised was parking. We understand how important parking is for tenants and visitors, and we're carefully considering what can be done. In the meantime, we kindly ask everyone to be considerate when parking, to help make the best use of the space available for all tenants.

Gutters were another concern raised at several schemes. In response, we are putting a new programme in place to make sure gutters are checked, cleared and maintained more regularly across our sheltered housing. This will help prevent problems before they occur and keep our buildings in good condition.

Heating was also a key topic, with tenants telling us about issues they have experienced. We've listened carefully to this feedback and we've now introduced a new system that allows us to adjust temperatures more easily from the office when needed.

This means we can respond more quickly if temperatures are not right. Our contractor, Sureserve Compliance South, has also received extra training on the heating systems used in our sheltered schemes, so they are better equipped to deal with any issues.

The ELT coffee mornings have shown how important it is to listen, follow up and take action. They have helped us understand both the everyday concerns and the bigger issues that matter to tenants, and they have encouraged teams across Red Kite to work together to make improvements.

We will continue to listen to your feedback, keep you updated on progress and take action where we can. If you have any questions, concerns or issues you'd like to raise, please speak to us. You can call **01494 476100** or speak to your **Sheltered Specialist**, who will be happy to help.

If you'd like to read a digital version of this newsletter, head to **redkitehousing.org.uk/newsletters**.



Reminder: tell us about your needs

Thank you to everyone who has already completed and returned the Knowing Our Tenants survey — we really appreciate you taking the time to do this.

If you haven't had a chance to return your survey yet, there's still time. Please complete the survey and return it using the prepaid envelope provided.

Your feedback helps us better understand your needs, improve our services, and make sure they are fair and inclusive for everyone.

If you need help returning it, please speak to your **Sheltered Specialist**. If you're unable to post the survey back to us, you can leave it in your scheme office in the envelope provided.

If you didn't receive the survey, or have misplaced it, let us know and we can send another copy by post or email.

If you need the survey in a different format, we can provide it in large print, braille and other languages.

Please help keep our communities clean

Dog fouling is an issue in some sheltered schemes and other estates. We know this can be unpleasant and unsafe, especially around communal paths and entrances.

If you own a dog, please make sure you clean up after your dog every time. If you see a neighbour not cleaning up after their dog, please let us know or speak to your Sheltered Specialist, so we can look into it.

To help tackle the issue, dog waste bags have now been purchased using Environmental Improvement Group funding.

These will be added to dog waste bins in areas most affected, making it easier for dog owners to do the right thing.

If you think additional bins are needed in your area, let us know.

Thank you for helping us look after our shared spaces.



Adapting homes and services to meet your needs

At Red Kite, we want everyone to feel safe, comfortable and supported in their home, and confident when using our services. We know that everyone's needs are different, so we take the time to listen and work closely with tenants, families and professionals to make changes that really help in everyday life.

Sometimes this means adapting homes so they better suit the people living there. These changes are based on professional assessments and conversations about what will help someone feel safer or more independent at home. Recent work has included installing wet room showers, widening doorways, adding ramps and creating ground floor bedrooms for tenants with mobility needs. In another home, safety improvements were made for a family with young children by renewing fencing, boxing in exposed pipework and redesigning a bathroom to create a larger, more accessible space.

Every home is considered individually, with no one-size-fits-all approach. By focusing on what matters most to the people who live there, we can make changes that help tenants feel more at ease in their own homes.

Alongside adapting homes, we're also making changes to the way we deliver our services so they are easier to use. Many tenants have told us, through our Knowing Our Tenants survey, if they need adjustments to help them access our services more comfortably. When someone lets us know they need support, a member of our team gets in touch to talk through what would help.

These adjustments are often simple but can make a real difference. They can include allowing more time to answer the door, providing letters in larger print, arranging appointments later in the day, recording a preference to speak to a family member or advocate, or sending information by email instead of post.

If you think you, or someone you live with, may need changes to your home or support with how we communicate with you, please get in touch. Our team will be happy to talk things through and explain the next steps. You can contact us by calling **01494 476100** or emailing **contact@redkitehousing.org.uk**.

When we carry out your annual gas safety check, our contractor will also complete a Home MOT to help make sure your home is safe, warm and comfortable. This includes checks for things like damp or mould, fire detection, extractor fans and any repairs that may be needed. Both checks are done during the same visit and usually take around an hour.



Concerned about a neighbour? Get in touch with us

If you notice something unusual or suspect that something might be wrong with a neighbour, please don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Give us a call on **01494 476100** to report anything you're worried about.

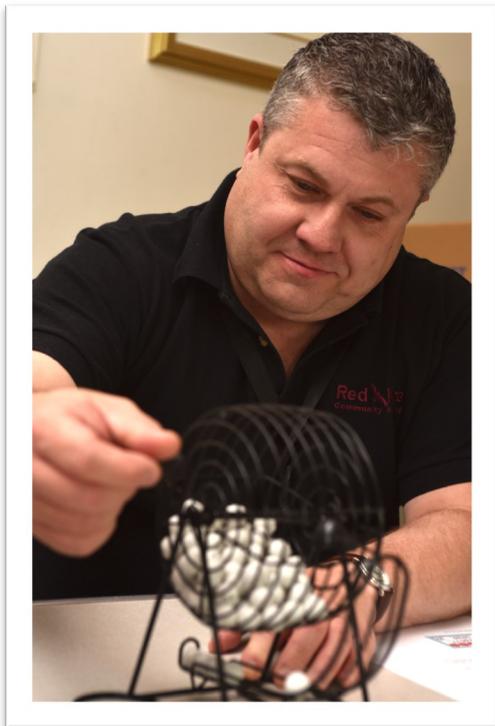
If you have serious welfare concerns, you should also **call the police via 101 or 999 in an emergency.**

Community Morning is back

Community Morning is our annual event where every member of Red Kite staff spends the morning volunteering for an organisation or charity in our local community. As part of the day, we also visit our Sheltered Schemes to spend time with tenants and run our popular quizzes.

This year Community Morning takes place on Wednesday 24th June, and we'll once again be popping in with some friendly competition and plenty of fun. Speak to your Sheltered Specialist if you'd like more information or want to take part.

Last year's winners were Parsonage Close, who celebrated with a well-earned brunch alongside our very own **Kevin Eckley**, Sheltered Services Manager, at Hills Café. We hope to see you on the day!



Thames Water's WaterHelp Scheme

If your water bill takes up a big chunk of your household income, Thames Water's WaterHelp scheme might be for you.

WaterHelp is a support scheme for customers on a low income or with high water usage. If your water bill is more than 5% of your net income, you may qualify.

You could get up to 50% off your water bill if you're eligible and the discount won't affect your credit score.

Complete an income and expenditure form online at thameswater.co.uk/waterhelp or call 0800 980 8800 for help.

You'll need:

- Details of your income and any debts
- Regular bills and outgoings
- Your Thames Water account number (on your bill).

Thames Water will then review your application and respond within 20 working days. Discounts apply from the date you apply.

Head over to thameswater.co.uk/waterhelp to explore the full range of extra support and contact options available.

Better support for tenants experiencing domestic abuse

We've spent the last few months reviewing how we support people experiencing domestic abuse. This has helped us strengthen our approach so that anyone who reaches out to us is listened to, taken seriously, and supported safely.

Domestic abuse isn't always physical. It can be emotional, financial, or controlling, and it can be difficult to talk about. Some people may not even realise they're experiencing abuse. That's why it's important that we respond in a consistent, sensitive, and safe way every time.

We now have clearer guidance for our teams, quicker ways to raise concerns, and stronger links with specialist organisations so we can make sure people get the right help at the right time.

If you or someone you know needs support, you're not alone. If you need to talk to us, please give us a call on **01494 476100** or get in touch in the way that feels safest for you.



Red Kite's Environmental Improvement Group tours blossoming community projects

On Thursday 12th March, tenants from our Environmental Improvement Group (EIG) joined Red Kite colleagues for a visit to several neighbourhoods where tenant-led projects have been funded through the group. The group toured a number of sites seeing first hand how planting, artwork and small environmental improvements are helping to brighten local areas.

They visited Hillary Park to see the daffodils now in bloom and the new bench added for the community to use, followed by Linchfield where the crocus rainbow and artwork are starting to take shape. At Owl Park on Underwood Road, they viewed the owl design made entirely from crocus plants.

At The Pastures, mass bulb planting took place with JUB Holland and is now beginning to brighten the area. We also planted more daffodils in the Disraeli area with the help of Wycombe Environment Centre. Mahoney Court is showing the impact of mass daffodil planting by Lubbe & Son, and the play park has been refreshed with new paint including hopscotch markings.

Other stops included Cross Road Park, where daffodils, a community noticeboard and new bollards have been added to help with parking issues, as well as Holmers Farm Way where further daffodil planting has taken place. At Brooke Furmston Place, gardening vouchers were provided and two tenants were supported with a trip to the garden centre to choose plants for shaded pots. The visit finished at Foxes Piece, which has benefited from mass planting by Lubbe & Son.

The day highlighted the impact of tenant ideas and EIG funding in making our neighbourhoods greener, brighter and more welcoming for everyone.

Do you have an idea that could brighten up your neighbourhood or make one of our shared spaces more welcoming? Applications for this year's EIG funding are now open, and we'd love to hear from you.

Find out more at redkitehousing.org.uk/EIG and apply for funding today!



Reporting repairs and repair priorities

If something in your home needs repairing, it's important to let us know as soon as possible so we can help. When you report a repair, we prioritise it based on how urgent it is and whether it could affect your health or safety. We also take any vulnerabilities into account.

Same-day emergencies are very serious issues that need immediate attention. These include things like a total loss of electrics, unsafe electrics, a major water leak, fire or flood damage, or an unsecured door or ground floor window.

24-hour emergencies are urgent problems that still need a quick response, such as no heating during winter, a blocked sewage drain or partial loss of electrics or water.

Urgent repairs are issues that seriously affect your comfort but are not an immediate danger. These are usually attended to within five working days.

Routine repairs are non-urgent issues that do not pose a risk to health or safety. These are completed within a longer timescale and will be booked in with you.

You can report a repair by calling **01494 476100** or online at redkitechousing.org.uk/repairs, and our team will make sure it is dealt with under the correct priority.

Caring for our trees: new contractors appointed

We've recently appointed two new contractors to help us look after the trees in our communal and open spaces. Heartwood Tree Surgeons Ltd started delivering our Tree Maintenance Services from 1st February 2026, and Dryad Tree Specialists began providing Tree Management Consultancy Services from 1st March 2026.

Both contractors will work together to carry out any work highlighted in our routine tree surveys, helping keep communal spaces safe and well-maintained. You won't see any changes to the service you receive, but if you have any questions, please get in touch. You can email us at contact@redkitechousing.org.uk or call **01494 476100**.

Read the full Q&A: redkitechousing.org.uk/newtreecontractors.



Looking after our green spaces this spring

As spring gets underway, there are a few seasonal updates we'd like to share about looking after our outdoor spaces and keeping communal areas safe and accessible for everyone.

Bird nesting season runs from spring through to late summer. During this time, birds may be nesting in hedges, trees and bushes around our schemes. To protect wildlife, hedges and trees should not be cut back between 1st March and 31st August, except in the case of a serious health and safety risk.



Grass cutting season is also starting. Our contractors will be visiting schemes regularly to cut grass and keep communal areas looking neat. You may notice that some areas are left uncut for short periods, particularly where wildlife is present or where spring flowers are growing.

You might also see daffodils left to die back after flowering. This is completely normal and important, as it allows the plant to store energy so it can flower again next year. Once the leaves have died back naturally, the grass around them will be cut.

Thank you for your understanding and for helping us look after our shared spaces. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak to your Sheltered Specialist or call us on **01494 476100**.

Reminder:

We'd also like to remind tenants about keeping communal areas clear. Mobility scooters, walking aids and other personal items should not be stored in communal areas unless permission has been given in writing. This is important to keep escape routes clear and ensure everyone can move safely around the building.

Supporting the Great British Spring Clean

This spring, Red Kite has been proud to support the Great British Spring Clean, a nationwide campaign led by Keep Britain Tidy that encourages communities across the UK to take action and care for the places where they live.

The Great British Spring Clean brings people together to tackle litter, improve shared spaces and help protect the environment. By taking small actions locally, communities can make a big difference, creating cleaner, safer and more welcoming neighbourhoods for everyone.



To support the campaign, Red Kite colleagues took part in litter-picking activities in Downley and near Desborough Street, helping to clear rubbish from local areas and give these spaces a fresh start for spring.

We also provided 22 free litter-picking sets to community groups and local residents, making it easier for people to get involved and care for their neighbourhoods.

Supporting the Great British Spring Clean reflects what matters to us at Red Kite. Clean, well-looked-after outdoor spaces help people feel proud of where they live, support wellbeing and encourage stronger communities. By working together and listening to what tenants care about, we can all play a part in looking after our shared environment.

Thank you to everyone who got involved or helped spread the word.



Listening and resolving issues together

We know how important it is for tenants to feel listened to and supported, especially when it comes to repairs and services in your scheme. Your feedback helps us understand what's working well and where things could be improved.

To help answer questions and resolve issues more quickly, our grounds maintenance contractor John O'Conner (JOC) has offered to attend sheltered scheme surgeries, if there is interest from tenants. This would give tenants the chance to speak directly with JOC, ask questions and raise any concerns face to face, with Red Kite also there to support the conversation.

The aim is to listen, explain what can be done and help resolve issues first hand, rather than problems being raised and passed on later. We hope this open approach will lead to clearer communication and quicker solutions.

If you would like John O'Conner to attend a surgery at your scheme, please let us know. You can speak to your **Sheltered Specialist** or call **01494 476100** to request this, and we'll look at arranging a visit if there is enough interest.

Five-yearly electrical safety checks

Most tenants are familiar with our yearly gas safety checks and are happy to let us into their home for these. We also need to carry out electrical safety checks every five years, but we know some tenants may not realise how important these are.

Electrical safety checks help make sure the wiring and electrics in your home are safe and working as they should. They can help prevent faults, reduce the risk of electric shocks, and lower the chance of electrical fires.

The check is carried out by a qualified electrician and usually takes a short amount of time. If any issues are found, we will explain what needs to be done and arrange any necessary follow-up work.

Please help us keep your home safe by allowing access when an appointment is arranged. If you have any questions or concerns, or need help with access, please speak to us by calling **01494 476100**.

Furniture and carpet support

If you need help furnishing your Red Kite home, support may be available. We can refer tenants to Central Aid, who provide low cost, good quality second hand furniture, appliances, furnishings and flooring for people on low incomes. In some cases, extra help may be available where tenants are experiencing financial hardship.

We can also signpost tenants to other organisations that offer support with furniture, white goods and household items, depending on individual circumstances. If you think this could help you, please get in touch to talk through the options available.

To find out more, head over to our website rekitehousing.org.uk/furniture.

Giving us your feedback

Your feedback is what helps us to be the best we can be. Feedback can come in the form of a complaint, compliment or general comment – but whatever it is that you want to tell us, we're here to listen and do something about it.



WHY 5-YEAR ELECTRICAL INSPECTIONS ARE CRITICAL

Regular 5-year electrical inspections are vital for ensuring the safety, reliability, and efficiency of an electrical system.

IDENTIFYING HAZARDS

Routine inspections help detect potential electrical hazards, such as faulty wiring or overloaded circuits, before they cause harm.

ENSURING COMPLIANCE

Periodic inspections ensure that your electrical installation meets current safety regulations and standards.

PREVENTING FAILURES

Inspections can identify wear-and-tear on components, helping to prevent unexpected breakdowns and costly downtime.

By giving us positive feedback, you let us know where we're performing well and giving you a good service. When you tell us about something that hasn't gone well, or didn't meet your expectations, we use that information to improve our services and do our best to make sure it doesn't happen a second time.

The Housing Ombudsman

The Housing Ombudsman is an independent organisation which deals with disputes between tenants and landlords. If you've been through our internal complaints process and still feel that we've let you down, you can escalate your concern externally with the Housing Ombudsman, or contact them at any time for advice.

Take a look at our feedback pages for more information - redkitehousing.org.uk/feedback.



How we've performed between October to December

Here at Red Kite, we do our best to deliver excellent services. To help us know how we're doing we capture a range of information from statistics through to tenant satisfaction. We share this information with our Resident Representative Team (RRT), our Board and our Committees. We also publish information on how we're performing on our website every month.

Here's how we've performed in key areas between October and December.

Providing high quality new homes



New homes at Lawrence Wy
and Stratton Close



183 homes under
construction



100.0% satisfied with the
quality of new homes

Our Development Team have been working hard to progress several development sites. Between October and December, new homes were handed over at Lawrence Way and Stratton Close.

183 homes are currently under development and we have permission for 72 additional homes. It's positive to see that 100% of tenants surveyed were satisfied with the quality of our new homes.

Keeping our homes safe



100% of fire alarm and Health and Safety tests completed in target



100% of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard



709 Hazard cases closed

Our team continue to work hard to ensure our homes remain safe, completing all mandatory health and safety tests and fire alarm tests.

A current focus for our teams is embedding the new process to address hazards identified under Awaab's Law. The legislation, which came into effect in October, outlines new regulatory timescales and requirements to address 29 hazards such as damp, mould and condensation. Since the launch of the new process, we've closed 709 cases, most of which are managed as standard repairs. The team continue to work hard to ensure we meet these new requirements to support our tenants and maintain their homes.

Effective Complaint Handling



89.2% of formal complaints responded to within target



80.7% of formal complaints resolved at Stage 1



71.7% satisfied with our complaint handling service

Between October and December, our Feedback team handled 212 formal complaints, the vast majority of which are related to our repairs service, the key touch point for most of our tenants.

The team have been able to respond to 189 complaints with our target timeframes, 10 working days for a Stage 1 complaint and 20 working days for a Stage 2. As part of the complaints process, the team will look to assess how we can learn and improve using the feedback that was provided. Between October and December, 164 potential learning opportunities were identified, ensuring we are consistently looking to improve our services.

Providing high quality services



96.7% satisfied with our community visits



286 second average wait time to answer calls to our Contact Centre



258 home checks successfully completed

Across October, November and December, our teams have continued to work hard to ensure we provide high-quality services for our tenants.

We've completed 108 six-week and six-month visits to new tenants, with 96.7% surveyed fairly or very satisfied with the service that they received.

Our Contact Centre has been busy, having answered over 12,000 calls and have been able to keep call wait time under 5 minutes, whilst ensuring over 97% of calls have met our Call Quality Framework.

Finally, the Community team have completed over 258 Home Checks, particularly focusing on the homes transferred from Riverside earlier this year. The team have been busy familiarising themselves with the local area through estate inspections and events held to introduce the team to tenants.

Food recycling

The council already provides a food recycling service to households across Buckinghamshire, and we're excited to announce that this service is now being rolled out to residents living in flats with communal bins. This has already started in the north of the county and is being rolled out during February and March for flats in the south.

This change is part of the Government's Simpler Recycling reforms under the Environment Act 2021, which require all households to have separate food waste collections by 31st March 2026.

What's included?

- Each flat will receive a kitchen caddy, caddy liners, and an information leaflet, delivered to your door where possible
- A 140-litre brown wheelie bin will be placed in communal bin areas for residents to empty their caddies into. These bins will be clearly marked 'Food waste only' and emptied weekly. They have special lids to help reduce smells.

Spring memories

Spring often brings back happy memories and simple pleasures.

It might be seeing daffodils in bloom, enjoying lighter evenings, celebrating Easter, or spending more time outdoors.

For some, it's a reminder of past springtime's, family traditions, or favourite places enjoyed at this time of year.

Why not take a moment to chat with a neighbour or your Sheltered Specialist about what spring means to you?



Our tenant volunteer, Daffodil, surrounded by blooming daffodils at Mahoney Court.

Our Easter opening times

We hope you enjoy the Easter break. We'll be back open on Tuesday 7th April, but please remember you can still call **01494 476100** if you have an emergency.

