



Sheltered Scheme Newsletter

Spring 2025

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.**

Spring is here, and we're excited to share the latest updates and projects in our community with you. This edition includes inspiring stories, helpful resources, and exciting initiatives to improve our tenant's lives. We hope you enjoy reading.

Warming homes with successful fuel voucher scheme

We have successfully completed our winter fuel support scheme, providing much-needed financial assistance to nearly 200 of our tenants who are struggling with rising energy costs, and resulting in thousands of pounds being awarded to them.

The initiative, which we launched in November last year in response to the government's surprise decision to stop winter fuel payments for around 10 million pensioners, has been praised both by tenants and by Buckinghamshire Council for its effectiveness and positive impact.

The scheme targeted vulnerable tenants of state retirement age who are not receiving other benefits and are living in homes with lower EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) ratings.

People who met these criteria were invited to apply for vouchers to offset their energy bills.

We partnered with Charis, a trusted administrator for essential funds and grants, whose website and support team proved invaluable in managing the distribution of the vouchers.

“We’re incredibly proud of the positive impact this scheme has had on our tenants,” said our Head of Community, Todd Ricketts. “We know that the rising cost of living is a real concern, and we wanted to do everything we could to alleviate some of that pressure during the winter months. The feedback we’ve received has been overwhelmingly positive, with many tenants expressing their gratitude for the extra support.”

Buckinghamshire Council has recognised the success of the approach we developed and agreed to provide funding for this scheme from the Department for Work & Pensions’ Household Support Fund. They have also worked with us to share the details of our approach with other housing associations and replicate this in other areas.

Councillor Arif Hussain, Cabinet Member for Communities at Buckinghamshire Council, commented:

“The work that Red Kite has led has been fantastic in providing assistance to elderly tenants during the winter period, and we are proud to have worked with them to support this and enable other housing associations to do the same. Buckinghamshire Council has targeted our use of the Household Support Fund to support pensioners during the colder months, and through working with Red Kite we will reach over 1,400 pensioners across the county.”

The positive feedback from our tenants speaks volumes about the scheme’s impact:

“Thank you for the help with the winter fuel payment which you so very kindly offered. It has been most helpful in boosting my credit for the coming cold months. Every penny helps. I am most grateful, thank you again.”

“Red Kite has gone above and beyond helping with these winter fuel vouchers. I am especially thankful for your help.”

We remain committed to supporting our tenants and will continue to explore initiatives that address the challenges of the rising cost of living.

Find out more at redkitehousing/costofliving.



Keeping you safe within your home

Your safety is our top priority and that's why we want to remind you of the importance of allowing access for gas and electrical safety tests. These checks aren't just a legal requirement; they're an essential step in ensuring your home remains safe.

Annual safety tests help prevent potential hazards, keeping your home protected from the risks of gas leaks or electrical faults.

We understand that your time is valuable, and we appreciate your cooperation in helping us maintain the highest safety standards.

Let us in so we can keep you safe within your home.



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.

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:

redkithousing.org.uk/feedback.



Be Healthy Bucks

Be Healthy Bucks want to help you to get more out of life. Whether you want to quit smoking, manage your weight, cut down on alcohol, or get an NHS Health Check, they've got your back. And the best part – it's all completely free!

Commissioned by Buckinghamshire Council and the NHS, Be Healthy Bucks is a **free** health and wellbeing service helping you make simple changes, so you can start feeling the benefits of a healthy life today.

If you live in Buckinghamshire or have a local GP, start your wellness journey today.

Eligibility:

- Aged 40-74
- Live or have a GP in Buckinghamshire.
- Not had a health check in the last five years.
- Not diagnosed with or medicating for: any heart disease/failure, kidney disease/failure, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or stroke.

Take your first step by calling them on [01296 322738](tel:01296322738) or sign up by scanning the QR code above.



Access PaySuite, our new payment provider

We're committed to ensuring that we provide the best value for money services to our tenants. In line with this commitment, we carried out a competitive procurement process, and Access PaySuite successfully bid to become our new payment service provider.

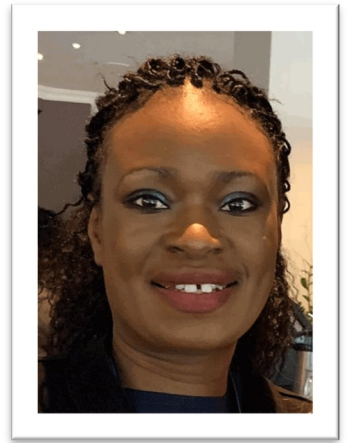
If you pay by Direct Debit we have emailed or written to you to notify you of the change. The date, frequency and value of your Direct Debit will not change as a result of this move.

If you pay your rent online you can now do this on our website redkitechousing.org.uk/rent - select Rent from the list of items shown. You'll need your tenancy reference number to make the payment. This is the 13-digit reference that you were given when you signed your tenancy agreement and can be found on the top right of most letters we send you. If you use a different reference, we won't be able to allocate your payment to your account.

If you have any questions about this change, or if you encounter an issue when making a payment, please [contact us](#) so we can investigate.

RRT Chair to judge Women in Housing Award

Candida Dutiro, tenant volunteer and chair of our Resident Representative Team (RRT), has been selected as one of the judges for this year's Women in Housing Awards and Housing Heroes Awards. Candida was a winner herself of a Women in Housing award last year, when she was named as Board/committee member of the year at the ceremony in June.



Candida will be taking part in the shortlisting and award process with an esteemed panel of industry experts, including tenants, chairs and chief executives from housing organisations and local authorities across the UK, along with Martin Hilditch, the editor of Inside Housing magazine who organise the awards, and Elly Hoult, the president of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

The Women in Housing Awards and Housing Heroes Awards seek to celebrate leaders, innovators and changemakers across the housing sector and shine a light on the incredible work carried out by teams, individuals, tenants and residents over the past year.

This year's awards will be presented on 23rd June in Manchester, at an event being held alongside the Housing 2025 conference.



Beware of scams

Be aware of scam text messages claiming to be from the Department for Work and Pensions.

Stay vigilant - never share personal or financial details and make sure to only engage with trusted official sources.

You can report suspicious messages to Action Fraud at [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk).



Spotlight on the Environmental Improvement Group

The Environmental Improvement Group (EIG) is a dedicated team of tenants, leaseholders and staff working together to enhance our neighbourhoods and are responsible for allocating the environmental improvement budget to projects that make a real difference in our communities.

The EIG have been involved in numerous projects aimed at making our communities great places to live. They recently collaborated with [Chiltern Rangers](#) to create a health and wellbeing garden at [Baines House](#). This project included planting fruit trees and a native hedgerow, which will provide valuable habitat and a noise pollution screen from the busy London Road. They also created wildflower strips and bespoke wall art.

In another project, the group funded family business [Lubbe & Sons](#) and their fascinating mass bulb-planting machine. The team came down to our site at [Foxes Piece](#) to plant a variety of bulbs whose flowering season will span from February to June.

Scan the QR code to see what else the EIG got up to in the 24/25 financial year:

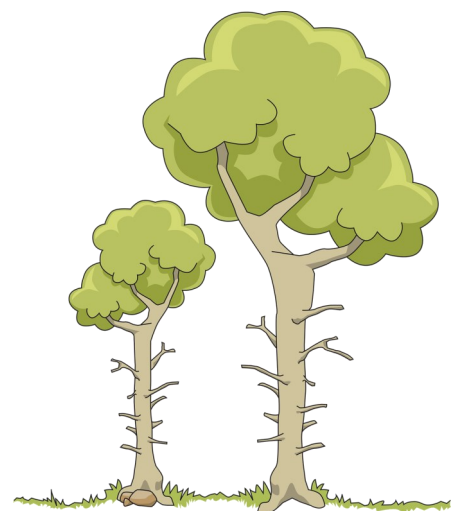


How to apply for an **improvement**

If you have an idea for a project, we'd love for you to apply for our funding.

You need to provide a detailed description of your project, including the expected benefits and any supporting information. It's always great to get support from your neighbours too.

For more information on how to apply, visit redkitehousing.org.uk/EIG. We look forward to seeing your innovative ideas and working together to create a greener, more vibrant community.



Springboard fund makes positive difference in our community

We've been keeping our tenant-led Springboard panel busy with some great funding applications from organisations and groups in the local community.

We're proud to be able to support our community by providing grant funding to help a wide range of projects in our local area.

We have some great blogs on our website showcasing the great work organisations have been able to do with our help, check them out:

- ⇒ **Active in the Community** ran a 10-week women-only swimming programme in High Wycombe: redkitehousing.org.uk/springboardswimming.
- ⇒ **DSCVR Creative** used their Springboard grant for an outstanding music project: redkitehousing.org.uk/springboardmusic.
- ⇒ **Booker Common and Woods Protection Society** used essential funding to clear a local footpath: redkitehousing.org.uk/springboardwoods.
- ⇒ **The Friday Club at St Peter's Church Loudwater** increased participation with new games equipment: redkitehousing.org.uk/springboardyouth.

Head over to our website to find out more about our Springboard fund: redkitehousing.org.uk/springboard.



A zero-tolerance approach to antisocial behaviour

We're committed to providing safe and secure homes for all our tenants. We have a zero-tolerance approach to antisocial behaviour and will take swift action to address any issues.

How we can help:

- Our experienced team is dedicated to supporting tenants who are experiencing antisocial behaviour
- We work closely with local authorities and police to tackle antisocial behaviour effectively
- In serious cases, we may take legal action to protect our tenants and the wider community.

What you can do:

- If you're experiencing antisocial behaviour, please report it to us immediately
- The more information you can provide, the better equipped we are to take action.
- By working together, we can create a safer and more peaceful community for everyone.

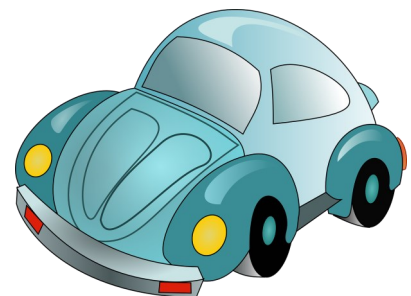
Find out more at redkitehousing.org.uk/asb.

Older drivers' assessments available

Age shouldn't stop someone from driving, but getting older can bring challenges. These include worsening eyesight, less flexibility, slower reaction times, and taking more medication.

Buckinghamshire Council is delivering assessments to support people to drive safer for longer. The assessment is for residents aged 65+, and it can help to:

- Refresh your driving skills
- Restore your confidence
- Maintain your independence
- Help you to drive safer for longer



This will be in your own car, from your own home, and on roads familiar to you, and lasts about 60-minutes with a specially trained Approved Driving Instructor. If you would like more information contact **June Howlett** at june.howlett@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.

Bird nesting season is here

Here's your official reminder: **bird nesting season has begun!**
From 1st March to 31st August, our feathered friends are busy building their nests and raising their young.

To ensure we comply with The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, **we do not cut hedges or shrubs during this time.**



Staying safe in your home: do not tamper with gas or electric infrastructure

Last June, a devastating gas explosion in Middlesbrough highlighted the severe risks of tampering with building infrastructure. The courts recently found the individual responsible guilty of causing the explosion by interfering with the gas system. This tragic incident highlights the importance of **never tampering with gas, electric, or other building systems.**

Tampering with these systems can lead to catastrophic consequences, putting lives at risk and causing significant damage to homes. Always ensure that only qualified professionals handle any repairs or modifications to building infrastructure. Stay vigilant and report any issues immediately to the appropriate authorities to keep our homes and communities safe.

Cleaning up our community: The Great British Spring Clean

We're excited to announce that once again, we'll be participating in the **Great British Spring Clean**, organised by **Keep Britain Tidy**.

This initiative is close to our hearts here at Red Kite, as we're committed to making our communities great places to live.

Throughout the campaign, our Estates team will be carrying out litter picks within the community. The litter pickers for these events have been generously funded by the Environmental Improvement Group, and the council will be notified of the dates and locations so they can ensure any waste bagged up is collected promptly.

We'll be sharing updates and pictures from the litter picks on our social media channels, so keep an eye out to see how the team gets on.



Shopmobility expresses gratitude for our support

High Wycombe Shopmobility has shared their heartfelt thanks for the Springboard grant we awarded them in summer last year, emphasising the significant difference it has made to their services and the community.

Our contribution has helped Shopmobility strengthen their membership and vehicle hire programme, an essential service that promotes independence and dignity for individuals with mobility needs.



Through our grant, alongside funding from The Shanly Foundation and Barchester's Charitable Foundation, Shopmobility successfully completed their Wheelchair Fund Project, adding eight new manual wheelchairs and three electric power scooters to their fleet. This expansion has allowed them to improve service quality and meet the growing demand from their members.

Looking ahead, Shopmobility continues to focus on financial sustainability and relies on the support of partners like us to maintain and grow their essential services.

Nahida our Community Investment Specialist commented,

"Shopmobility expressed their sincere gratitude, saying that without this kind of partnership, they couldn't have achieved these milestones or continued to serve those in need.

"We're proud to have played a part in this success and look forward to supporting more initiatives that make a positive impact on the community."

Rent increase letters and new tenant handbook

You should now have received your rent increase letters for the new financial year (2025/26).

Along with your rent letter, you should have also received our brand-new tenant handbook, which includes key contact details, an explanation of your tenancy, a guide to being a good neighbour, and much more. Every new tenant will receive one of these moving forward.

We also have a copy on our website at redkitechousing.org.uk/welcome. This will be continually updated with any changes.

Knowing our tenants

We're committed to providing the best possible service to all our tenants, and that starts with getting to know you better. We recently launched our '**Knowing Our Tenants**' project, and we'll be sending out tenant information collection forms for you to complete. These forms will help us gather important information and ensure:

- We always have accurate information about who is living in our homes
- We are meeting your needs when delivering our services.

When you do receive the tenant data collection form, please complete this and return it to us, so we can update our records accordingly.

We want to ensure that our services meet your needs. If you require any specific adjustments or accommodations, please let us know so we can make the necessary arrangements.

Your input will help us improve our services and ensure they are accessible and supportive for everyone.

Have you taken out home contents insurance?

As your landlord we cover the [buildings insurance](#) for your home but you're responsible, under the terms of your tenancy, for [insuring your contents](#). It's always a good idea to shop around for a policy that'll give you the cover you need.

Home contents insurance isn't compulsory, but it's a good idea to consider what a policy would cover you for. Home contents insurance can help protect your possessions from risks such as fire, theft, water damage, and many more household risks, giving you peace of mind.

The National Housing Federation has teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks and Great Lakes Insurance UK Limited to offer the **My Home Contents Insurance Scheme**, designed specifically for tenants living in social and affordable housing - so all our tenants are eligible to apply. Find out more at thistlemyhome.co.uk.

If you choose to go ahead with the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme, it is up to you to make sure the policy fits your needs. **Red Kite is not involved in the day-to-day administration of the scheme other than to let you know about this option available to you.**



FREE Easter Sunday afternoon tea



Hope Community Seventh-day Adventist Church

Presents

Giving Hope 2025 This Easter

A FREE AFTERNOON TEA
DELIVERED DIRECTLY TO YOUR DOOR

— **EASTER SUNDAY** —

20th April 2025
AT LUNCH TIME

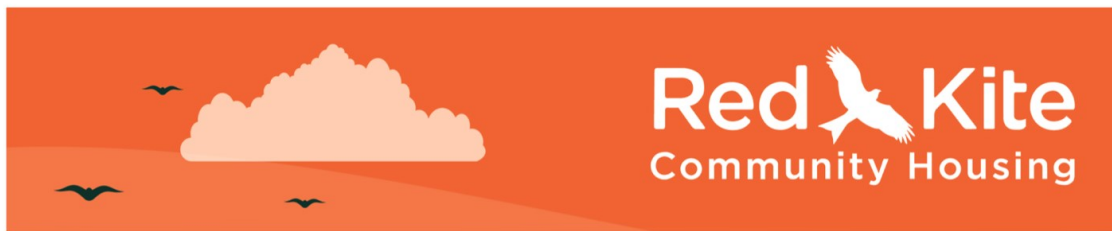
**For the Elderly, Vulnerable
and Families in need**

Sponsored By
THE HOPE COMMUNITY SDA CHURCH
& GENEROUS SUPPORTING ORGANISATIONS

Please contact on 07368637542 or
givinghope@hopesda.org.uk
to book a meal

Chapel Lane, High Wycombe, HP12 4BJ

Our Easter opening times



Our Easter opening times



Need to get in touch with us?

You can contact us 24 hours a day by:

Web chat: The quickest way to contact us during our opening hours is through web chat. You can access our web chat on any page of our website, no matter where you are - just tap/click the tab on the right-hand side to talk to one of our relationship advisors. We aim to respond to queries by web chat within five minutes.

Phone: Call us on 01494 476100 (please see our opening hours below). During busy times, there may be a wait to get through. If so, consider contacting us through web chat. If we cannot answer your call, we will return it **within two hours** when you select the callback option.

Email: contact@redkitehousing.org.uk. We aim to get back to you via email **within two working days**, but during busy times it might take us a little longer.

If you need to report an emergency repair, please call us 24 hours a day on 01494 476100.

Our hours

Monday - Thursday: 8.45am - 5.15pm



The graphic features the Red Kite Community Housing logo at the top right, which includes a red silhouette of a kite. Below the logo, a purple banner reads "Quickest way to contact us:". Underneath, "Webchat:" is followed by the website "www.redkitehousing.org.uk" in purple. Another purple banner says "Quietest time to call:", followed by the times "11am - 12.30pm" and "3pm - 5pm" in purple, with "Tuesday - Friday and Tuesday - Thursday" in bold purple. A third purple banner states "Our busiest day:" followed by "Monday" in bold black. To the right of the text is a circular icon containing a smartphone. The background has a light blue sky with a red horizon line and a purple city skyline at the bottom.

Red Kite
Community Housing

Quickest way to contact us:

Webchat:
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Quietest time to call:

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Our busiest day:

Monday