



Spring 2016

## Find out all you need to know inside about:

New friendship group launched

The Summit leisure village news

Keep up to date with the latest Council news

A day in the life of... at our Customer Contact Centre

Competition – win a meal at Frankie and Bennys!

# Volunteers drive improvements to housing service



Your Tenant and Leaseholders Scrutiny Panel have been working hard to help the Council deliver significant improvements to the service.

Over the last few months, the Panel have been busy focusing on the voids process – this is the turnaround time to get council properties ready for new tenants.

The Scrutiny Panel have looked at some of the systems in place to re-let homes and looked at the wider issues surrounding the re-letting of these properties.

This has included helping officers review and revise the Moving Out standard to help tenants have a clearer understanding of their responsibilities. They have also been involved in the work on the Lettable Standard (for more information about this, take a look at the article on page 6). They have also supported the work to revamp the pre-termination form which is a disclaimer for the incoming Tenant to agree to

take responsibility for the items of good condition if they want them to be left in the property. This helps the incoming tenants and reduces the waste of good quality items that could be reused, which is what happened in the past.

Other work has included looking at ways to raise awareness of recycling because of the high cost of sending waste to landfill by highlighting the work of organisations such as the Community Furniture Store, which takes donations of good quality furniture and makes them available at low cost to people who need furniture.

Chair of the Panel, Susan Pattinson, said, “The work we have done has been received positively within the Council. It’s very satisfying and rewarding to see our recommendations implemented and acted upon.

“The work we have done will make positive changes to the services that tenants and leaseholders receive across the district.

I hope our results encourage more people to get in touch and get involved in our group.”

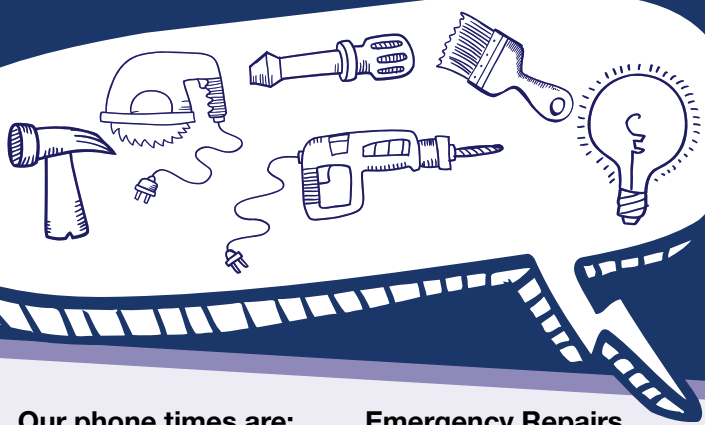
An important role of the Scrutiny Panel is to review key service areas by scrutinising performance and customer intelligence data, identifying areas of concern and making recommendations on how to improve the service.

If you feel you would like to get involved, please contact Dominic Richardson on 01757 705101. Training is available, so bring your energy, enthusiasm and scrutinising skills to benefit others in your community. Get involved and help us make a difference to housing services that will benefit us all.

Next for the Tenant and Leaseholders Scrutiny Panel will be to look at the Council’s repairs and maintenance work.

They have been speaking to users of the service to find out about the service – including issues around appointment times and communications between a householder and the trades team.

**If you haven’t spoken to them and would like to contribute your views towards this work please email [123susanpattinson@gmail.com](mailto:123susanpattinson@gmail.com).**



# Reporting repairs

You can report repairs by calling us on **01757 705101**

## Our phone times are:

Monday 8.30am – 5pm

Tuesday 8.30am – 5pm

Wednesday 10am – 5pm

Thursday 8.30am-5pm

Friday 8.30am-4.30pm

## Emergency Repairs

(out of hours)

**01653 600941.**

Please use this number for genuine emergencies only.

**You can also report repairs:** On [www.selby.gov.uk](http://www.selby.gov.uk) (search for Council House Repair Request form).

- In person at our Access Selby office, Market Cross, Selby.
- Through the Lifeline service

## Offering a new property maintenance service

We're now offering a new joinery and electrical property maintenance service to everyone in the district.

### Why a property maintenance service?

We know there is a demand for the service.

We also know people want trusted, qualified tradesmen - especially the elderly or people new to the district.

People can have confidence in the quality of the workmanship carried out by our trades team and know the job will be done right first time.

### Starting small

We recognise this is a significant shift from delivering a service as a social landlord, so we want to make sure we get it right, promoting the service to our existing customers such as those who use our Lifeline products.

Initially we will be offering joinery and electrical services to private customers and our tenants.

### What are we charging?

Most small jobs will be completed within an hour at a fixed price of £38.40 plus materials, subsequent hours charged at £31.20 (both prices include VAT), which we believe compares favourably with the market for the type of service we deliver. For larger or more complicated jobs we will carry out an inspection and provide a written quotation.

### Chargeable repairs for our tenants

Alongside the roll-out of the service, we're also making improvements to the way we deal with chargeable repairs at our own properties. Although many repairs for our tenants are completed free of charge, there are some repairs tenants are responsible for and would need to pay us if we carry out the repair; for example if a tenant has caused the damage themselves. These are explained in the tenancy agreement and tenants' handbook.

Previously we invoiced tenants for chargeable repairs but were unable to

tell them how much it would cost in advance. Now tenants will be able to:

- get a price upfront for the majority of repairs
- make an informed choice whether to go ahead
- pay for the repair at the time of booking

### Preparing for change

Whilst it is a change for tenants to pay upfront for repairs they are responsible for, we are now able to offer a price in advance, removing the uncertainty and anxiety on the cost.

We're making this change to enable us to offer the best quality service to tenants across the district and customers of our new repairs service

Please get in touch with any questions:  
email: [commercialservices@selby.gov.uk](mailto:commercialservices@selby.gov.uk)

**01757 705 101**

To report suspected cases of Benefit fraud please use the following new number

**National Benefit Fraud Hotline number**  
**0800 854 440**



# A day in the life of Selby District Council's Customer Contact Centre



Sophie's first call is a payment for a customer's council tax and rent account, whilst Sophie takes the payments, she advises on the present balances on both accounts. Her customer asks about single person discount as her circumstances have changed, Sophie takes all the details so she can benefit from the 25% discount.

Sophie's next call is a customer that is moving within the Selby district, she ensures she collates all the relevant details so her present council tax account can be closed and a new account be created for her new address. She advises her customer that she will receive a closing bill and a new bill and advises it would be best to keep her direct debit in place to pay her account at her new address, reassuring that the accounts will be adjusted accordingly and any credit will be transferred to her new account.

Her next call is from a customer checking when her benefit payment is due, Sophie ensures she takes the relevant data protection details so she can give this information.

Her next call relates to benefits again, the customer has received a letter asking for evidence to support her claim. The customer lives central to Selby, Sophie advises of our opening hours so the customer can drop off the relevant paper work to ensure her claim isn't delayed.

Her next call is regarding Planning, her customer wants to discuss

a possible planning application, Sophie gives general advise and then they agree that the customer needs more specialist advise, Sophie explains the duty planning officer service and the relevant fee and books her in for a time that suits.

Sophie takes a call regarding our homeless service, the customer has nowhere to stay and is very upset regarding his present circumstances, Sophie gives general advise on what we can do to help and checks their priority need and due to the urgency asks the customer to come in see a Housing Options advisor to receive urgent assistance.

Her next call is regarding Lifeline, her customer is a daughter who is concerned over her Mum and would like to know the levels of care and the cost, Sophie goes through all these with her and then completes a form to register the daughter's interest in the service.





### Do you want to meet new people?

A charity in Selby has set up a friendship group to support people in our area who feel isolated. Friendship offer one-to-one friendship, based on trust and support for a range of people in Selby district.

Danny Fitz-George, Friendship Co-ordinator, explained, "Everybody needs a friend and we want to work to alleviate loneliness, promote social interaction, independence, health and confidence.

"At friendship we help people to overcome obstacles, by helping to match a good friend on their shared interests and what they want their friend to be.

"At friendship we show sympathy, honesty, confidentiality, we offer advice, support and listen to the other person without judging."

You can also get involved by volunteering with the group. Friendship volunteers are of all ages and with a wide variety of life experiences and backgrounds.

"Involvement in friendship can be a very rewarding experience for all volunteers, also it gives you a chance to meet new people but most important gain a friendship," Danny added.

To find out more please contact:

Danny Fitz-George  
Friendship Co-ordinator  
Community House  
Portholme Road  
Selby  
North Yorkshire  
YO8 4QQ  
Tel: 07736 117300  
Email: [danny@carerscount.org.uk](mailto:danny@carerscount.org.uk)



# Celebrating 100 years in Style!

A Tadcaster resident has celebrated her 100th birthday with a special party.

Miss Ethel Swinden, from Woodlands Avenue, Tadcaster, turned 100 in January – and celebrated with a shindig for family and friends at Tadcaster Methodist Church.

*Congratulations Ethel!*



"The Lifeline service has allowed me to live safely and independently and has taken the stress away from my family that worry about me"

Centenarian Miss Ethel Swinden is just one of more than 900 users of our Lifeline support service that make it easier to live independently in your own home and offers peace of mind that help is on hand when needed.

Lifeline is an alarm system connected to the telephone line, which you can activate with a wearable pendant. When you need help, you press the button on the pendant.

The alarm sends a message to our 24 hour monitoring centre, which then contacts someone on your behalf. This could be one of our community support team, a family member, friend, a doctor or the emergency services. We will work with you to determine who the best person to contact is.

"I was going through a difficult period of my life where I was scared and concerned for my wellbeing.

This service made me feel at ease knowing that there was somebody available to help in an emergency."

All our staff, in the call centre and who visit you are:

- friendly, compassionate and able to sensitively deal with your individual needs
- fully trained and equipped to deal with the requirements of the service
- trusted, familiar faces in the community, supporting residents on behalf of Selby District Council
- DBS checked under criminal and safeguarding records

Various packages are available to suit differing need levels, starting from just £2.58 a week. To register for more information about the Lifeline service you can complete an online form on our website, email [lifeline@selby.gov.uk](mailto:lifeline@selby.gov.uk) or call 01757 705101. You can also visit us at Access Selby, Market Cross, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 4JS and we'll be happy to help.

# Working hard to provide a Gold Standard service for you

Housing Options continue to make strong progress towards achieving a “Gold Standard” service. Following their 3 day Peer Inspection earlier last year, the team submitted evidence to support their application for the first of ten challenges. The first challenge focused on the use of bed and breakfast as temporary accommodation for homeless applicants.

The application was considered by the National Practitioner

Support Service and a panel of members from agencies who specialise in homelessness.

We are delighted to announce that the Housing Options team have passed this challenge and as a result have been awarded “Bronze Standard”.

The team will now move on to further challenges over the course of the next 12 months.

The Challenge is a local authority, sector led peer

review scheme designed to help local authorities deliver more efficient and cost effective homelessness prevention services. The challenge follows a 10 step continuous improvement approach that starts with a pledge for local authorities aspiring to ‘strive for continuous improvement in front line housing services’ and culminates in an application for the Gold Standard Challenge.

## Community Officers to visit tenants who apply to move



As part of its verification procedures, Community Officers will now be carrying out Transfer Visits to all tenants of Selby District Council who apply to move through North Yorkshire Home Choice.

Transfer visits allow for an inspection of a Selby District Council property at the point a tenant applies for housing.

If there have been any breaches in the tenancy, including damages to the property, advice is given to the tenant as to what would be required in order to remedy this prior to moving out. They would then be bypassed for offers of accommodation on North Yorkshire HomeChoice until their property was deemed to be in a satisfactory condition.

These visits form part of a series of changes to improve how we manage our homes and ensures properties are left in an acceptable condition for new tenants.

The visits will working in conjunction with our new Moving Out Standard.

**Further information in relation to the Moving Out Standard can be found on our website [www.selby.gov.uk](http://www.selby.gov.uk).**



# Your local Community Officer Surgery

These surgeries are drop in sessions where you can come along and talk to a Community Officer about any issues or concerns you have and ask questions.

Community Officers have in-depth knowledge of your area and can help with a variety of issues from fly tipping to dog fouling, offer advice about rent, benefits and council services, and work closely with partners including the police to find solutions to local issues.

**Central Surgery** is 9.30 until 12.30 every Tuesday at the downstairs office 12 Normandy Close, Selby.

**Western Surgery** is 9.30 until 12.30 every Tuesday at Sherburn Library

**Tadcaster Surgery** is 9.30 until 12.30 every Thursday at Calcaria House

**NEW - Southern Surgery** is 10 until 12 noon, every Thursday at Westfield Court Centre, Eggborough.

# Lettable standard – what you can expect from your new home

We have refreshed our Lettable Standard to make it clearer and more accessible to our tenants. Every Selby District Council property should be clean and in a good state of repair when you move in. The Lettable Standard sets the benchmark as to what to expect when you rent a Selby District Council property and was agreed in consultation with our Tenant and Leaseholders Scrutiny Panel.

Before you move in, we will check your new home to make sure it is safe, secure, clean and in a good state of repair. Then we will ask you to keep your home in this condition.

For example in terms of bathroom fittings, these will all be securely fixed and free from cracks and stains. Sinks, wash basins and baths will have plugs and chains attached, the bathroom window will have obscure glass fitted, there will be at least one row of splash back tiles around the bath and sink with no cracks and the sealant will be in good condition.

**To see the standard in full, please visit our website [www.selby.gov.uk](http://www.selby.gov.uk).**

## The easy way to pay – direct debit



Paying by Direct Debit is easy and convenient: you know exactly how much you'll be paying each month. You can pay your Council Tax bill, your rent and garage rent, your business rates or for your business waste collection by Direct Debit by completing the form on our website. For the Council, Direct Debit is the most cost-effective way of managing payments, helping to keep down costs for everyone.

### Why pay by direct debit?

- You have a choice of payment dates
- It is easy and convenient
- Advance notification of changes is given

- Ensures payments are made on time
- Direct Debit continues year after year and does not have to be renewed like a standing order
- No queuing to pay or having to remember to pay

**To start paying Council Tax by Direct Debit, call us: 01757 705101 or download the Direct Debit form: [www.selby.gov.uk](http://www.selby.gov.uk).**

If you already pay by Direct Debit, remember there is no need to cancel the payment and set it up again when the new bill arrives – it rolls-over, but we will of course inform you of any changes to payments.

## Dates for your diary:



**The annual Selby Classic Motorcycle and Car Rally in Selby Park** welcomes hundreds of visitors each June. The rally will be held on Saturday 18 June.

**The Tour de Yorkshire** will pass through our district on two consecutive days: - On Friday 29 April the race enters the Selby district at North Duffield, and passes through Riccall, Kelfield, Cawood, Ulleskelf, Towton and Tadcaster before heading out towards Boston Spa. On Saturday 30 April the race comes into the district from Aberford, then to Sherburn in Elmet, South Milford, Monk Fryston, Hillam, Birkin and Beal, before heading out towards Knottingley.

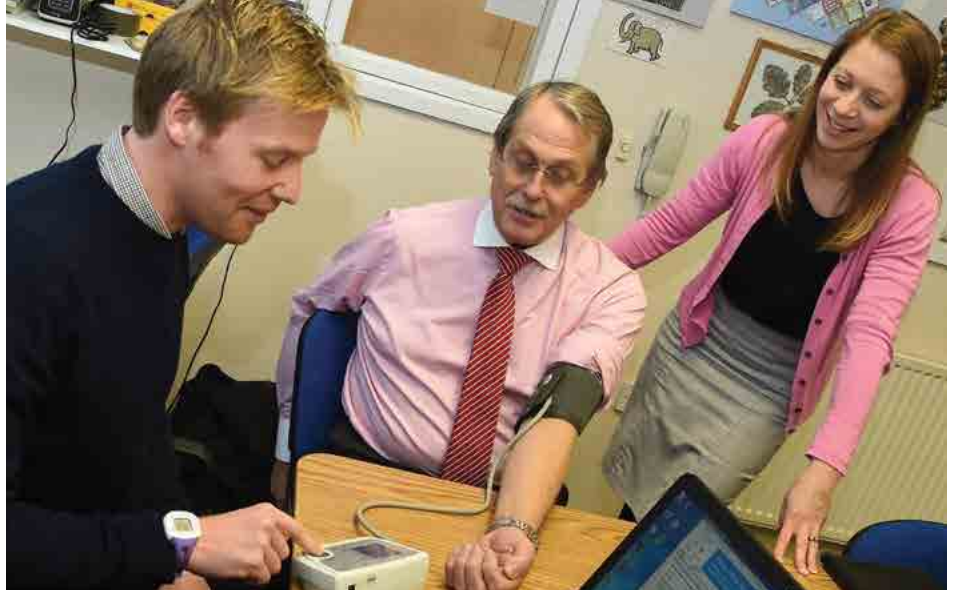
**The Selby Three Swans Sportive** will take place on Sunday 4 September, offering routes of 30, 66 and 106 miles, appealing to all abilities from novices through to elite riders. All routes start at Selby Abbey and tour the beautiful Vale of York visiting scenic villages on fully signed and marshalled flat roads. Find out more by visiting [www.selbythreeswanssportive.org/](http://www.selbythreeswanssportive.org/).

# Put your health first

Put your health first and get it checked for free –that’s the advice coming from North Yorkshire County Council and health professionals across the county

The County Council is asking people aged 40 to 74 years to take up the offer of a free NHS Health Check. NHS Health Check invites adults aged 40 to 74 years - without previously diagnosed heart disease, diabetes or chronic kidney disease (CKD) - for a free health assessment to see if someone is at risk of serious, but potentially avoidable, conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, kidney disease and certain types of dementia.

“It’s a good idea to take a few minutes to get your health checked out for free” said County Councillor



David Chance, portfolio holder for public health and stronger communities. Cllr Chance is pictured here receiving his Health Check.

“The NHS Health Check is one way people can help to keep well: it detects issues that could increase the risk of heart disease and checks that some of your body’s most important systems are all running smoothly. Crucially, your NHS Health Check can detect potential problems early and allow you to put them right before they do real damage. Among other things, your blood pressure, cholesterol and BMI will all be properly checked.

“Having an NHS Health Check is both quick and straightforward. Your GP will invite you to have one so please look out for the invite letter. It’s free of charge, including any follow-up tests or appointments”.

The NHS Health Check interactive website provides information about what happens at the check, when and how to get one, and how to lower your risk. For further information please visit [www.nhs.uk/healthcheck](http://www.nhs.uk/healthcheck) You can also visit the Council’s website at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/healthcheck](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/healthcheck) or ask for more information at your GP surgery.

## Leisure village moves closer

**Opening later this year Selby’s new leisure village is nearing completion as work continues on the internal fit out of the building.**

Opening later this year Selby’s new leisure village is nearing completion as work continues on the internal fit out of the building.

Inspiring healthy lifestyles will manage the newly-named Summit Indoor Adventure on behalf of Selby District Council.

The £5m centre, set to open in Scott Road in May, will offer a six-lane 10 pin bowling facility, adventure climbing with themed climbing panels up to eight metres high, an adventure play zone with a dedicated area for babies and toddlers, aerial trekking ropes set above the indoor skate and BMX park and two indoor ski simulators.

There will be an outdoor skate park which has been designed following consultation with local skate park users. Visitors will also be able to grab a bite to eat from a café and restaurant on site.

The facility will link to the existing Selby Leisure Centre via a new glass walkway. Leisure development partner Alliance Leisure is delivering the project on behalf of Selby District Council, with construction partner ISG undertaking the role of principal contractor.

Cllr Dave Peart, Selby District Council’s executive member for responsibility for housing, leisure, health and culture, said: “The fantastic new



leisure village will give a real boost to the local economy. It’s not only providing jobs but is set to attract visitors into town from across the surrounding district. It also gives residents more opportunities to get active and healthy on their doorstep.”

[www.summitindooradventure.co.uk](http://www.summitindooradventure.co.uk)

# Abbots Staith – information site and Selby's first Fairtrade shop



*Joanna Pollard holds a painting by local artist, Geoff Walker, which he donated to the Trust to show what the Staith would have looked like during the medieval period.*

## Selby is set to join over 700 Fairtrade Towns worldwide after launching a campaign at the Abbot's Staith Counting House in Selby.

The Abbots Staith Heritage Trust with 'All's Fair' is Selby's first, dedicated, fair trade shop run by Joanna Pollard; the shop is a treasure trove of gifts, Fairtrade chocolate, coffee, treats and groceries.

The Abbot's Staith was used by the monks to store goods brought in along the river from Hull and points East. In the middle ages when the Staith would have stored wool for Selby Abbey, it is thought that it traded with partners all across Europe, importing goods including spices from India and silks from the Far East. The group feel it is right to celebrate Selby's trading history by connecting the town with fair trade now.

In a rural area like Selby it's important to support farmers and workers

across the globe. The goods come from such diverse countries as Colombia, Kenya and Sri Lanka but are all united by high quality and great value. Many of the products are designed in Yorkshire and the direct connection means you will always know where and how your goods were made. Money raised in the shop goes towards the on-going restoration project for this fascinating medieval building.

The Fair Trade shop is now open at The Counting House, 79 Micklegate, Selby YO8 4ED and open from Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm.

**For more details email [abbotsstaith@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:abbotsstaith@yahoo.co.uk) or call the counting house on 01757 712366.**

Frankie & Benny's  
NEW YORK ITALIAN RESTAURANT & BAR

## Competition

To win a £30  
Frankie & Benny's  
voucher

How many Fair Trade towns  
are there in the World?

More than 700

More than 800

More than 1,000?

Your answer: \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Julie Walden,  
Communications, Selby District  
Council, Doncaster Road, York,  
YO8 9FT by 30 April 2016.

Thanks to all those who entered our competition in the winter issue to win a meal voucher for Frankie & Benny's.

**Well done to Mr John Hudson, from Sherburn in Elmet, who wins the prize!**

## Contact us:

### Online

You can find out about all Selby District Council's housing services online: **[www.selby.gov.uk](http://www.selby.gov.uk)**.

### Phone

01757 705101

### Phone line opening times

Monday – 8.30am to 5pm  
Tuesday – 8.30am to 5pm

Wednesday – 10am to 5pm

Thursday – 8.30am to 5pm

Friday – 8.30am to 4.30pm

**The out of hours emergency number for repairs and homelessness issues**

01653 600941

### Visit

Customer contact centre, Market

Cross Shopping Centre, Selby, YO8 4JS. Please note: the postal address of the Council is Civic Centre, Doncaster Road, Selby, North Yorkshire YO8 9FT.

### Customer contact centre opening times:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday – 9.30am to 4pm  
Wednesday – 10am to 4pm