

# streets ahead

Summer 2017

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



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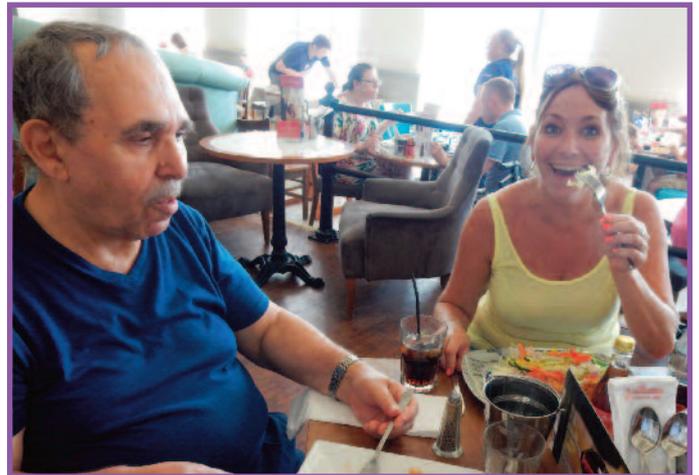
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# A DAY DOWN BY THE SEA

Back on a beautiful sunny Friday in July our Community Housing Officers took over 40 of our sheltered housing customers on a trip to the seaside town of Bournemouth. After an early start, resident quiz master Bill entertained everybody with a quiz, with the top prize being a bottle of fizz! When we finally pulled up in Bournemouth everyone had the afternoon to explore the town, paddle in the surf or stroll along the promenade. Before the coach began its journey home everyone enjoyed a delicious fish and chip lunch at Harry Ramsden's and another round of ice creams. A wonderful day was had by all; we can't wait to feel the sand between our toes again next year.



## BILL'S QUIZ AFTERNOONS

As Bill's quiz proved so popular with customers he has agreed to host a Quiz Afternoon at Southgate House every month. Residents from all of our 9 sheltered schemes are invited to come to join in the fun! For a donation of £1 you can enjoy an afternoon of quizzing, snacks, drinks and prizes. Your Community Housing Officer will let you know when the next quiz afternoon will be. You don't need to know all the answers, come along and have some fun.



# HAPPY GRADUATION, STRIVERS!

Throughout July we were delighted to celebrate with our Strive graduates from the Slough, Windsor and Wokingham courses. As part of their final task the Strivers were asked to present their business model to a panel of judges. Jill Caress and Andrew Robertson from Housing Solutions were invited to individually sit on the panel at each of the three graduations to support our Strivers. Wokingham MP, John Redwood, was present at the local Strive Graduation on 21st July and commented on the unique business ideas presented. "So many interesting business ideas from drone cameras, to talking walking sticks, to personalised scents!"

Congratulations to all of our graduates, we wish you all great success with your exciting future businesses. If you have a great idea for a business get in touch with Jennifer Platt on [jennifer.platt@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:jennifer.platt@housingsolutions.co.uk) and take the first steps to owning your own business today!



## WE'RE ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Join us over on Facebook and Twitter for regular updates and see what we get up to!



@HSL\_Homes



@Housing.Solutions.UK

# POTENTIAL MERGER UPDATE

On 26th July the Housing Solutions Board met to discuss the potential merger with Bracknell Forest Homes. Following those discussions, the boards of Housing Solutions and Bracknell Forest Homes have decided to not proceed with the merger.

While there were sound grounds for evaluating the option to merge, having concluded the due diligence process and having sought to develop a joint business plan, it became apparent that there were differences of opinion about the way forward for the merged association and that these could not be easily resolved. The process has been useful for both associations and much of the work undertaken can be carried forward into our respective strategies. Thank you for all your support and contributions during the customer consultation in May this year. Your feedback during the merger consultation has been extremely useful.

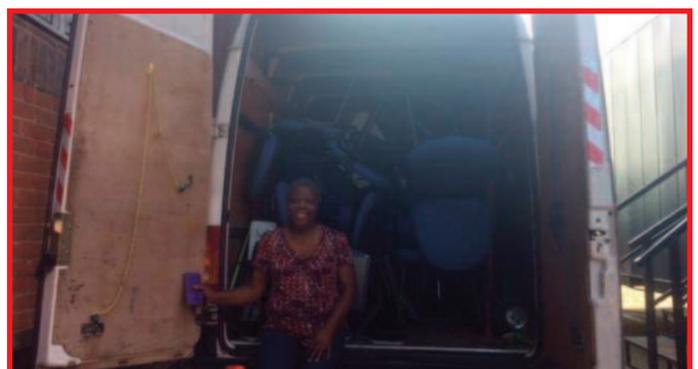
Housing Solutions will continue to be a well-managed, financially stable organisation and our focus going forward will be on local affordable homes and services. In the last few months alone we have secured over 200 units for development across the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Wokingham, High Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale. Our development team endeavour to secure more developments in the future with a range of rented and shared ownership properties.

## OFFICE REFURBISHMENT

It's a very exciting time at Housing Solutions as we are having our offices refurbished! Over the next 8 weeks Morgan Lovell will be transforming our dated offices into an attractive, modern working environment. During this time our visitor parking will be restricted and access to our reception will be slightly different. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause and we ask for your patients during the renovations. We can't wait to show you our new offices in December.



In preparation for our office move we donated lots of our office furniture which we hope will be loved and used in their new homes. Rosie from Kori Women's Development Project and Clean Conscience took two vans' worth of office furniture and will be shipping it to some very worthy causes in Sierra Leone. We can't wait to see some pictures when it arrives at its new home!!



# CONGRATULATIONS, NICOLA!



Housing Solutions own Anti-Social Behaviour Team Leader, Nicola Dymock, has had the prestigious honour of being awarded a Local Policing Area Commendation. On Wednesday 11th October 2017, Nicola will be presented with her award commemorating her contribution to reducing anti-social behaviour within The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and for her exceptional example of supporting police values; leadership, objectivity and accountability.

## DOUGHNUT DAY

In support of our chosen corporate charity, Thames Hospice, we took part in international Doughnut Day back in June. Staff were asked to donate £1 for every Krispy Kreme doughnut they ate, we had so many leftover that we made a trip to Thames Hospice to treat all the hard working nurses and staff to a Friday afternoon doughnut. Housing Solutions have been supporting Thames Hospice for the last year and a half and so far have raised over £1,500 which can provide a patient with 48 hours of care on their inpatient unit; this will make a genuine difference to someones end of life quality care. Thames Hospice is a truly deserving cause and we look forward to showing you how we will be continuing to support them in 2018.



## UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Local Authority	Due to go live
Reading	December 2017
Wokingham	December 2017
Basingstoke & Dean	February 2018
RBWM	February 2018
Slough	February 2018
South Bucks	February 2018
Wycombe	May 2018
Aylesbury Vale	June 2018

Universal Credit rolled out locally in September 2015. Currently we have just over 40 customers claiming. It is being introduced in stages, at present it is for single adults of working age. Here is a timetable of when certain areas will go live with the full digital service.

The full digital service will be open to all new claims from claimants of working age. All new claims will need to be made via the digital service. Claimants on the current live service will be transferred across to the full service. Under the full service you will have an online Universal Credit account to manage your claim.

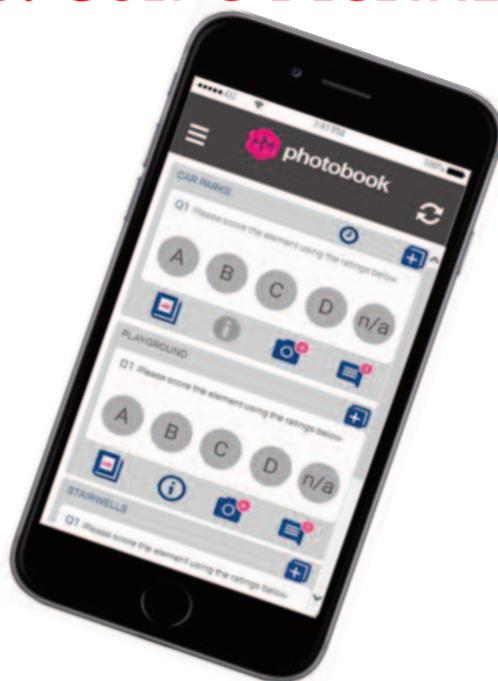
You can use your account to report changes, send messages to your work coach and find support. Eventually all Universal Credit claims will be on the full digital service and you will have a Universal Credit account online.

# GROUNDS & CARETAKING CONSULTATIONS

Over the winter months we will be making some changes to our grounds keeping services so that our customers receive the maximum benefit out of the service. Housing Solutions will be hosting meetings in Maidenhead, Slough and Wokingham and inviting customers to come along to meet the Grounds and Caretaking Team, to discuss future options. Over the next few weeks all customers who pay for a grounds or caretaking service will receive a letter detailing more information about the changes and details for attending the consultation meetings. We look forward to seeing you there

## ESTATE INSPECTIONS: GOING DIGITAL

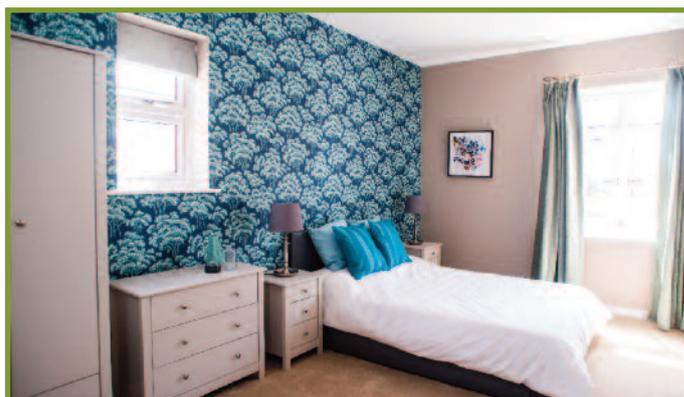
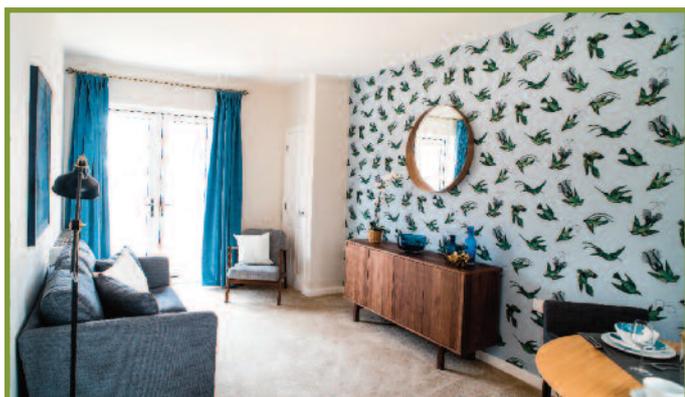
Our Tenancy Neighbourhood Officers (TNOs) will be carrying out all estate inspections on a new digital format; the Housemark app. The app works on a pre-existing A to D grading system and allows TNOs to take additional photographs to document the condition of any estate. The app will allow TNOs to carry out more detailed, consistent inspections and raise repairs on the go. After an inspection is complete a report will be created and saved so that all Housing Solutions staff can access the information to monitor their respective areas and provide an improved and consistent service to all customers.



## THE BIRCHES SHOW FLAT

We are pleased to announce that our stunning show flat over at the The Birches is now open. We have 30 one and two bedroom apartments for sale under shared ownership and 30 for rent. These properties benefit from 24 hour onsite care and support, and The Landing Spot Cafe serving freshly cooked meals everyday. The Birches is the ideal place for older people looking for both comfort and independence.

Call us today on 01628 543181 or email [TheBirches@HousingSolutions.co.uk](mailto:TheBirches@HousingSolutions.co.uk) for more information and to book your appointment to see our show flat.



# FLY TIPPING

It has come to our attention over recent months that fly tipping is increasingly becoming an issue on many of our estates. Fly tipping is the illegal act of dumping waste rather than disposing of it using an authorised method, such as kerbside collection or authorised rubbish dump.

It costs Housing Solutions £50 plus labour charges to remove 1 fly tipped fridge

In an average week we make 5 trips to the tip to dispose of fly tipped rubbish costing over £500

The costs of the disposal of fly tipped items will be recharged to the accommodation where the items have been discovered. If there is evidence of an individual offender we will recharge the costs to that individual.

Housing Solutions will take away your unwanted items for a fee of £5 per item; we can also dispose of mattresses for £15 and TVs for £25. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Council run a service to collect and dispose of fridges for a nominal fee. For more information on RBWM's rubbish and recycling services please visit: [https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200175/recycling\\_and\\_rubbish](https://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/info/200175/recycling_and_rubbish)



## CONTACT DETAILS

Streets Ahead is the newsletter for customers of Housing Solutions.

Don't forget that this is your newsletter, so if you have any suggestions for improvements or ideas for stories or local news, please let us know by dropping an email to: [pr@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:pr@housingsolutions.co.uk) or by calling Holly Burgess on 01628 543126.

## OPENING TIMES

Our offices are open Monday to Thursday from 8.45 am to 5.15 pm and on a Friday from 8.45 am to 4.45 pm.

## CASH OFFICE OPENING TIMES

For the payment of rent, our cash office is open: Monday to Thursday 8.45 am to 4.45 pm; Friday 8.45 am to 4.15 pm.

Or call 080087 6060 to use our automated telephone rent payment line.

## CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRE OPENING TIMES

Monday	8.45 am to 5.15 pm
Tuesday	8.45 am to 5.15 pm
Wednesday	10 am to 5.15 pm
Thursday	8.45 am to 5.15 pm
Friday	8.45 am to 4.45 pm

## EMERGENCY REPAIRS

For emergency repairs outside our normal office hours, at weekends or on bank holidays please call:

**0800 876 6060**

## CONTACT NUMBERS

Freephone - 0800 876 6060

Email - [contact@housingsolutions.co.uk](mailto:contact@housingsolutions.co.uk)

Website - [www.housingsolutions.co.uk](http://www.housingsolutions.co.uk)

Facebook - [facebook.com/Housing.Solutions.UK](https://facebook.com/Housing.Solutions.UK)

Twitter - @HSL\_Homes