

LIMELIGHT

Salix Homes Magazine

December 2024



INSIDE:

Save Salford City Radio

Getting back to our roots

Springboard Community Fund

Supporting Salford's
new Youth Zone
Plus much more

salix h:mes

SPECIAL
BUMPER
FESTIVE
EDITION

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Welcome to this special bumper edition of Limelight, rounding off another significant year for Salix Homes.

After a few years away, we're excited to bring our customer magazine back into print, reflecting our renewed commitment to putting you – our customers – at the heart of everything we do.

This edition highlights how we've been getting back to our roots and reconnecting with customers, so we can provide better homes and services, and make a real difference to your lives.

Inside, you'll find updates on our community initiatives, including inspiring projects funded through our Springboard Grant and Salix Seed Fund, which help improve lives, increase opportunities, and build stronger communities.

We understand that the cost of living crisis is continuing to impact many of you. That's why we're committed to offering practical support to help you through these challenging times, which you can also read more about in this edition.

We're incredibly proud of our Greenhaus development, which opened in March, and you can read real-life stories showcasing the impact of social housing, along with more on our investment plans to make all our homes modern, safe, and sustainable.

Building safety remains a top priority, and you'll find more about our commitment to keeping our customers and your homes safe on page 42. We're also proud to have received a C1 grade from the Regulator of Social Housing, one of the first housing associations to achieve this top rating, with more details on page 12.

This edition of Limelight is particularly significant for me, as it marks my final one as your Chief Executive before my retirement in 2025. After 16 years at Salix Homes, I've been reflecting with mixed emotions on what makes this organisation, and Salford, so special. I want to say a huge thank you for your ongoing support, feedback, and trust over the years. I'm immensely proud of all we've achieved at Salix Homes, and I'm confident that new leadership will bring fresh ideas to continue improving homes, communities, and lives in Salford.

Sue Sutton



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SALFORD FAMILY SAYS GOODBYE TO THE 'HOUSE WITH THE RED ROSES'

The year was 1948. Clement Attlee was the Prime Minister, the National Health Service had just been launched, and Salford teenager Mary Jones was moving into a new house on the Duchy estate, which was to become the place she would call home for the next 76 years.

Following the Second World War, the country was experiencing an intense housing shortage and the Government had announced a major home building programme, which prioritised social housing.

In Salford, the old terraced 'slum housing' was being cleared to make way for new, modern housing, which included the Duchy estate, which was built during the 1940s.

A then 18-year-old Mary Jones was amongst the first to move into the new homes on Duchy, along with her mum Ellen and older brother and sister Eric and Agnes.

The youngest of seven children born on 3 February 1929, Mary's father died when she was just two years old. The family had lived in Ordsall, but had been staying with relatives in Kersal before they were given the keys to their new, three-bed, semi-detached council home on Central Avenue in Duchy.

Today the homes on the Duchy estate are owned by Salix Homes, and Mary, now aged 95 and a great-grandmother of four, recalls: "I didn't actually want to

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WE USED TO SAY AT THE TIME THAT WE WERE MOVING TO 'A POSH PART OF SALFORD' BECAUSE THE HOUSES HAD GARDENS.

”

move in at first because I had all my friends in Kersal and I didn't want to leave them behind.

"We used to say at the time that we were moving to 'a posh part of Salford' because the houses had gardens. We were used to the old terraced houses, and not many council houses had gardens in those days.

"The best thing about living here has been the friends and neighbours I've made over the years – there was always a real strong sense of community."

Over almost eight decades, the house provided a safe and happy home for three generations of the Jones family.

When she turned 21, Mary became a 'WREN' joining the Women's Royal Navy Service and was stationed in Plymouth and Portsmouth. She returned home to Duchy and had her son Michael in 1955. With her older sister Agnes also having a son, John, the house was now home to three generations.

Mary's son Michael, now aged 69, said: "We have some very happy memories of living here – it's been a very precious family home for so many of us.



"Growing up, the boys would sleep in one bedroom and the girls in another. We all had our chores to do – my Uncle Eric was in charge of the garden. He took such pride in the garden and it was always known by people round here as 'the house with the red roses'.

Mary worked as a machinist, while her brother Eric was an engineer and sister Agnes worked as a cotton spinner. With her skills on the sewing machine, and being a keen knitter and crocheter, Mary would always make clothes for the family, and would often make crafts for the local churches to help with fundraising efforts.

Michael moved out of the house when he got married, aged 22, to his wife Christine, but it always remained a place for the Jones family to call home.

Mary's mum Ellen lived there until she died in 1970, as did Agnes who passed away in 1993, and Eric who died in 2020, leaving Mary living alone for the past four years.

After almost eight decades of calling the 'house with the red roses' on Central Avenue her home, Mary has now moved into an extra-care retirement village in Salford, where she can still live independently, but also has support on hand if she needs it.

Sue Sutton, Chief Executive at Salix Homes, added: "Mary's story is a powerful example of the profound difference that social housing can make in people's lives, providing stability, security, and a foundation for generations. We'd like to thank Mary and her family for taking such pride in their home over the years and we wish Mary much happiness in her new home."

Scan the QR code to see photos of Mary and her family through the years or visit our website

www.salixhomes.co.uk/news



SAVE SALFORD CITY RADIO



Salix Homes has launched a brand-new show on Salford City Radio all about housing. Let's Talk Housing aims to strengthen our connection with customers and directly address the issues that matter most. But now, Salford City Radio is in a desperate fight for survival as it struggles to secure enough funding and support to continue.

For 17 years, Salford City Radio has been a cornerstone of the community, offering a unique blend of local news, music, and a platform for marginalised voices. It not only showcases local talent, but also helps address the issues, challenges, and stories that matter most to people in Salford.

The much-loved community radio station broadcasts from a studio, generously provided by Salford City Council, located at the rear of the Civic Centre in Swinton. It's run by a network of more than 65 volunteers, alongside Station Manager Jill Bowyer, and relies on grants, advertising, sponsorship and fundraising in order to keep its vital programming alive and accessible to the community.

For many of the station's volunteers, who range in age from 21 to 80, the station is not just a hobby but a lifeline, providing them with a sense of purpose, community and support.

Station Manager Jill said: "We are more than just a radio station; we are a community. We've got volunteers from all walks of life. Some are disabled, others are battling cancer, some are young people starting out in their careers, and we're here to offer

them a platform to develop their skills and connect with the community. Our station is an inclusive space where everyone can contribute and learn, making a real impact in Salford.

"For many, coming to the station is the reason they get out of bed in the morning. Our dedicated volunteers pour their time and passion into creating programmes that inform, entertain, and uplift our listeners.

"We desperately need the backing of local businesses and

organisations in the form of sponsorship or advertising. The closure of Salford City Radio would be a tremendous loss for our community, silencing important voices and dismantling a vital support network for so many."

Salix Homes is a station sponsor, and we also recently awarded £1,950 through our community grant programme Springboard, which provides funding to local groups and projects across Salford.



Salix Homes Chief Executive Sue Sutton with the team at Salford City Radio.



WE'RE URGING ALL LOCAL ORGANISATIONS TO COME TOGETHER AND HELP SAVE SALFORD CITY RADIO

Scan the QR code to find out how to support the station with sponsorship or advertising, or visit their website www.salfordcityradio.org/



To find out more contact: jill.bowyer@salfordcityradio.org

We also use our radio show 'Let's Talk Housing' as a platform to connect with our communities, answering customer questions on air and sharing important news and information about housing services.

Our Chief Executive Sue Sutton said: "We are proud to support Salford City Radio and call on other organisations to get behind them in their hour of need. Its diverse programming reflects the rich tapestry of life in Salford. The closure of the station would not only silence some important voices, but also remove a vital resource that many rely on for connection and support."

Tune in to Salford City Radio at 94.4FM or visit www.salfordcityradio.org

GET YOUR HOUSING QUESTIONS ANSWERED OVER THE AIRWAVES

Salix Homes is committed to being open and honest with our customers and explaining the reasons behind the decisions that we make, so our radio show is proving a great way to talk directly to our customers and address the issues that matter most to them.

Some of the issues our Chief Executive Sue Sutton has addressed so far include the rent increase, anti-social behaviour, our repairs service, fly-tipping and e-bike safety.

If you've got a housing issue or a question about housing matters, then we'd love to hear from you. The show airs every Wednesday at 10am or tune in at 94.4FM.

To listen to previous episodes, or send in a question, scan the QR code or visit:

www.salixhomes.co.uk/lets-talk-housing-with-salford-radio/



MORE ON SALFORD CITY RADIO ON PAGE 8 >>>

MEET THE FACES OF SALFORD CITY RADIO



Salford City Radio is run by a team of dedicated volunteers. We caught up with some of them to find out more about the faces behind the radio, and why the loss of the station would be a huge blow to the community.

STEVE PENDLEBURY



Steve is just one of the many remarkable volunteers at the station. He is an engineer, who the others affectionately call 'the fixer'. He manages the technical side of the station, as well as presenting his own show – 'Tune Raiders' – featuring music and musical history from the 1950s and earlier.

Having suffered a stroke at the age of just 36, Steve was told he'd never walk again. He defied medics, but was left disabled and with limited mobility. He also underwent a kidney transplant the year after his stroke.

Now aged 58, Steve, who is also a widower, says volunteering at the station is his lifeline.

"This station keeps me going, it keeps me alive," he said.

"Being disabled, I have experienced discrimination before, but here I feel valued

and accepted. I've been passionate about electronics since I was just three years old, so when something breaks, I know how to fix it. Volunteering here allows me to do what I love and be part of a team that appreciates my skills. Losing the station would be a real loss for all of us who rely on it."

“**BEING DISABLED, I HAVE EXPERIENCED DISCRIMINATION BEFORE, BUT HERE I FEEL VALUED AND ACCEPTED.**”

DAVID GRAY



As a funeral celebrant by day, David is a larger-than-life character with a diverse background, having also worked as a priest, social worker, stand-up comedian, and interfaith minister. He presents The Witches Hour, featuring Pagan music from around the world, as well as other programming that highlights the diverse voices and traditions within the Pagan community.

He explained: "Community radio provides a voice for the marginalised community, working to demystify and challenge stereotypes. Our aim is to uplift and empower by addressing issues that often go unspoken, bringing them out of the shadows and into the light."

COLIN WESTON



Colin was a continuity announcer at Granada for more than 30 years. He began volunteering at the station 12 years ago and presents an evening show featuring music of the 50s and 60s.

He's passionate about the radio station, and everything it represents. He said: "It's not just about doing the show – it's a community here and I look forward to coming in every week and seeing everybody."

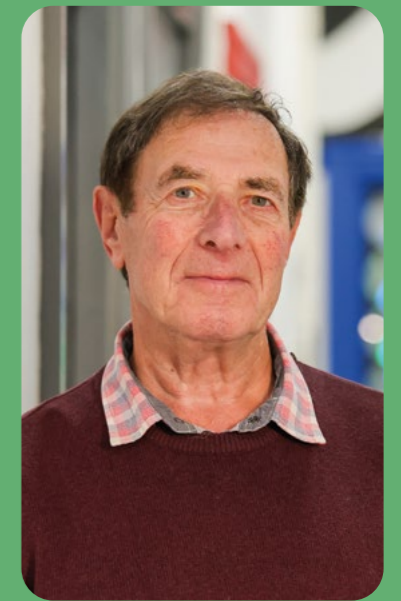
MATTHEW AINSCOUGH

At just 21, Matthew is the station's youngest volunteer. After studying journalism, he is gaining skills and experience as a Trainee Studio Manager and also presents his own show – Alternative Punk and Goth.

He explains: "This station means everything to me. Being a voice in the community and having a place like this to come to is incredible. It's honestly one of the best places on earth."



ALLAN SHALKS



Allan has been volunteering at the station for 12 years after honing his craft in hospital radio. He presents a range of shows, with his consumer advice programme being a listener favourite. On his show, Allan uncovers scams, shares money-saving tips, and offers practical advice to help people navigate financial challenges.

He said: "I'm passionate about this place, we all are – and it would be a huge loss to the community if it had to close."

JANE WOOD AND MIKE SCANTLEBURY

Jane and Mike were amongst the first volunteers at the station when it launched back in 2007.

The husband-and-wife duo, who are also folk singers, present their own show, Green Giraffes and Worms, which aims to inform listeners about local environmental issues, climate change, and practical initiatives like how to grow your own food cheaply and easily.

"Community radio is our passion," said Jane. "We need an outlet, and this is our platform to talk about the environment, share ideas, and inspire positive change in our local area. It's a space where we can raise awareness and engage people in important conversations."



TRANSFORMING LIVES: CHARLIE'S JOURNEY WITH SALIX HOMES

Mum-of-four Charlie works in our Customer Call Centre. It's a job she loves and takes great pride in, but just a few years ago her life was very different, and she credits social housing for transforming her life.

In 2016, Charlie and her family's lives were thrown into turmoil when their private landlord announced they were selling their home. To make matters worse, her husband was made redundant from his job around the same time.

With four young daughters, including a new baby, the couple didn't know where to turn until a friend suggested they apply for social housing. They were offered a Salix Homes property – a home they love and a move that has changed the course of their lives for the better.

On top of everything else Charlie was dealing with at the time, she was also diagnosed with psoriatic arthritis – a rare form of arthritis that can lie dormant and be triggered by stress. The condition left her in

chronic pain, and it got so severe, she was forced to give up her job at a supermarket.

"I was in such horrendous pain, particularly in my hands and knees," she said.

"It was devastating for me to give up work as I've never not worked. I felt so low at the time, and I lost all my confidence."

Charlie was eventually able to manage the condition with medication, but after being out of work for several years, the thought of getting back into employment was a daunting prospect.

That was until a chance text message from Salix Homes set the wheels in motion for a new direction for Charlie.

She explains: "I received a text about an opportunity to join the Customer Committee and I

thought it would be a good way to dip my toe back in the water and get myself back out there.

"I'm quite community-minded and I liked the idea of helping to improve things and make life better for other tenants."

The Salix Homes Customer Committee is made up of our tenants, giving them a powerful voice and the opportunity to help influence and improve our services.

Charlie added: "Joining the Customer Committee marked a huge turning point in my life, and I've never looked back. It helped me learn new skills and grow in confidence, and really opened my eyes to the housing sector."

Last year Charlie applied for a job in our call centre and is thriving in the role, though



“

JOINING THE CUSTOMER COMMITTEE MARKED A HUGE TURNING POINT IN MY LIFE, AND I'VE NEVER LOOKED BACK.

”

the move has meant she's had to give up her place on the Customer Committee.

She added: "I was sad to leave the Customer Committee, but it's been such a positive move for me. I love working in housing and I feel for the first time that I've got a career now and I'm looking forward to seeing where it takes me."

Our Contact Centre is often the first point of call for our customers, and the team deal with a wide range of customer calls and queries, from raising repairs to taking rent payments.

Charlie added: "We say in the call centre that it's a job where you have got to know a little bit about a lot of things."

"I think being a tenant as well as an employee also really helps, as I can relate to customers and what they're feeling, and I'll often say to them 'I'm a tenant too'. The best thing about the job is knowing that you're making a difference for our customers and that you've made their day that little bit easier, even if it's just by listening to them."

Sue Sutton, Salix Homes Chief Executive, said: "Charlie is an

absolute asset to our team and her journey is testament to the transformative power of social housing. It's not just about providing a roof over someone's head – social housing has the potential to change lives, giving people like Charlie the stability and support they need to rebuild their confidence, learn new skills and thrive."

Scan the QR code to read more stories from Salix Homes or visit



www.salixhomes.co.uk/news

SALIX HOMES AWARDED TOP RATING FROM REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING



We recently became one of the very first housing associations in the country to be awarded the highest possible grading from the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) in recognition of the homes and services we provide for our customers.

This is a really positive outcome for both our organisation, and more importantly for you, our customers. Read on to find out what it all means...

What is the Regulator of Social Housing?

The Regulator of Social Housing, or RSH, is a Government body that 'regulates' the social housing sector. This means it oversees housing associations and other social landlords to ensure they meet certain standards in managing their homes and providing services to customers.

How often does the RSH inspect housing associations?

Generally, housing associations can expect to be inspected around every four years, but

there are also additional checks in between, including annual stability checks and quarterly surveys. These regular checks help the RSH keep an eye on any potential problems, and they will work with landlords to address these issues as much as possible.

More frequent inspections might also take place if there are concerns about governance, financial viability or compliance with the Consumer Standards, which is a measure introduced to help drive improvements in the quality of social housing and services.

Governance relates to how well an organisation is managed, while financial viability refers to our ability to manage our money effectively and remain financially secure.

What are the Consumer Standards?

Housing associations have always been assessed on our Governance (G grading) and financial Viability (V grading), but now there's a new Consumer or C grading where the Regulator looks at how we comply with the Consumer Standards.

The Consumer Standards were revised in 2023 and the revised standards came into force in April 2024 in response to the tragic

death of Awaab Ishak, a young boy in Rochdale who died as a direct result of the damp and mould in his family's social housing home.

Along with other new laws and regulations, the Consumer Standards focus on ensuring that housing associations provide safe, quality homes, listen to customers' concerns, and address issues effectively.

There's four Consumer Standards, which all housing associations must show that they can meet. These are:

Safety and Quality Standard: This standard ensures that homes are safe and maintained to a high quality.

Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard: This standard requires housing associations to provide clear information to customers and to consider their views in decision-making.

Neighbourhood and Community Standard: This standard focuses on how housing associations work with other local groups and organisations to create safe and welcoming communities.

Tenancy Standard: This standard outlines how housing associations manage tenancies, including how they allocate homes and support tenants.



What does the inspection involve?

It's a very in-depth process carried out over several months, starting from the moment the inspection team begin their evaluation until you find out your grading.

The inspection starts with us submitting a lot of documentation to give the Regulator a clear picture of our practices and performance.

The inspectors also met with, interviewed, and observed our Executive Management Team, our Board members, the Chairs of our Committees and crucially, our Customer Committee.

Our Customer Committee is an integral part of our formal governance structure – it's made up of customers who use their lived insight as tenants to influence decisions and help shape services. They played a key role in the inspection process, as the RSH sought to understand how customer feedback impacts our decision-making.

What grading did Salix Homes get, and what does it mean?

We are amongst the first housing associations to be inspected as part of the new standards and inspection programme, and one of the very first in the country to be awarded the highest possible Consumer grading, **C1**, in recognition of the homes and services we provide for our customers.

We also retained our **G1** grading for Governance and **V2** grading for financial Viability.

The grades we received reflect our commitment to ensuring that our homes are safe and well-maintained, our customers are listened to and respected, and that our services are responsive and effective.

Retaining our G1 and V2 gradings also highlights our dedication to strong governance and financial stability, providing assurance that we are managing our resources wisely and are well-positioned to continue providing high-quality homes and services.

What did the RSH say about Salix Homes?

The inspection team acknowledged our ongoing commitment to putting customers at the heart of our organisation.

Some of the strengths they highlighted include:

- We have appropriate systems in place to ensure the health and safety of our customers in their homes, including an effective Building Safety programme.
- We work effectively with our partners to tackle anti-social behaviour and ensure safe communities.
- We treat customers with fairness and respect, providing a wide range of opportunities for customers to influence and scrutinise our services, and that customer feedback directly and positively impacts service delivery.
- We use the information, or data, we have about our customers and properties to effectively manage our resources and provide high-quality homes and services.
- We are implementing positive changes to our Repairs and Maintenance Service to help improve the service and reduce waiting times.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 >>>

YOU SAID, WE LISTENED, WE IMPROVED

Feedback from our customers gives us the chance to improve our performance.

Scan the QR code to find out about some of the actions we've taken as a direct result of listening to our customers, or visit our website at: <https://tinyurl.com/467tejwc>



SALIX HOMES AWARDED TOP RATING FROM REGULATOR OF SOCIAL HOUSING

What can Salix Homes improve?

Although we are proud of the grading we achieved, we know that there are areas where we can do better, and we are actively working to improve these. One key area we're focused on is our Repairs and Maintenance Service, which we discussed in-depth with the inspection team.

Over the past two years, we've seen a significant increase in demand for our repair services, coupled with an increase in complaints about the service. This has prompted us to carry out an in-depth review to identify the root causes of these issues, and to explore options to improve the service.

We began the review in 2023, delving deep into analysing complaints, consulting with dissatisfied customers, and gathering insights from colleagues and contractors involved in service delivery, as well as input from our Board and Customer Committee.

As a result, we are now implementing substantial changes. We're currently in the process of restructuring how we deliver the service, with additional resources and increased hours of operation, all based on the feedback we received during the review. These improvements aim to reduce waiting times for repairs

and improve overall service delivery for our customers.

How will Salix Homes maintain your grading?

While we are proud of this recognition from the Regulator of Social Housing, we are not complacent. We're committed to continuous improvement, and we will keep learning from customer feedback to adapt and evolve in order to meet our customers' needs and continue providing a housing service in Salford that we can all be proud of.

We always encourage feedback from our customers, and value the chance that these views give us to improve our performance.



Scan the QR code or visit our website to read the full judgement about Salix Homes www.salixhomes.co.uk/salix-homes-amongst-first-to-be-awarded-top-c1-grading-from-regulator-of-social-housing

IMPROVING OUR REPAIRS SERVICE

A rise in demand for repairs and an increase in complaints prompted us to conduct an in-depth review to understand the root causes and find ways to improve our service for you, our valued customers. We launched this review in 2023, prioritising customer feedback throughout.

The process involved analysing complaints, consulting with dissatisfied customers, and gathering insights from staff and contractors. We also held

focus groups to better understand your experiences and pinpoint areas needing improvement. This review aimed not only to identify issues but also to discover practical solutions that enhance your overall experience with our repairs service.

Based on your feedback, we have relaunched the MySalix portal, making it easier to book repairs online. We've removed the chatbot for a more

straightforward experience. Additionally, we are investing significantly in our repairs service for 2025 and beyond. This includes increasing the number of operatives to reduce wait times and offering more flexible appointments, including evenings and weekends.

Moving forward, we will implement a new service model with expanded hours and resources based on your feedback.



For more details about changes to our repairs service, and other improvements we've made as a result of customer feedback, scan the QR code or visit www.salixhomes.co.uk/about-us/performance/you-said-we-listened-we-improved/

GETTING BACK TO OUR ROOTS



We have reintroduced Working in Neighbourhood (WIN) Days in the last year, in a bid to get to know you, our customers and communities better.

Our WIN Day initiative has been given a re-boot as part of our new operating model and ways of working at Salix Homes. The company-wide activity is held every three months as a way to be out and about in communities and meet our customers. Each WIN Day has a different focus, with some prioritising community clean-ups and litter-picks, while others have focused on knocking on doors and speaking to customers.

Whatever role they do at Salix Homes, everyone gets involved in

the WIN Days. They are proving a valuable opportunity for all our workforce to meet with our customers face-to-face, listen to your feedback – both good and bad – and better understand the communities we serve.

Sue Sutton, Salix Homes Chief Executive, said: "We're on a mission to get back to our roots and refocus on our core values to provide good quality homes and services to our customers.

"We're committed to ensuring our customers' voices are heard and

listened to and providing more opportunities for them to help shape and improve our services, so the WIN Days are a key part of that commitment.

"By having more regular, dedicated WIN Days for our teams to go out knocking on doors and engaging in face-to-face conversations, we can identify any potential issues and better understand the needs of our customers, as we work together towards building stronger, more connected communities."

CHRISTMAS IN THE COMMUNITY

On 4 December, our teams were full of festive spirit as we hosted Christmas themed drop-in sessions across our neighbourhoods, as part of our winter WIN Day activities.

Our teams were on hand to answer questions and share information about support with the cost of living, repairs, or other housing questions, while customers enjoyed a mince pie and hot drink.

In addition to the festive fun, our partner organisations and other

support services came along too, which included The House of Memories who are an award-winning dementia awareness programme, and Manbassadors who support men through difficulties in their mental and physical ill health.

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without giving back, and that's exactly what some of our teams did across Salford, volunteering at community groups and organisations including St James' Church in Higher Broughton and Loaves and



Fishes on Paddington Close in Salford.

We look forward to continuing to strengthen our community ties in the new year. Happy Christmas to all!

We're taking part in the Wood Street Mission Christmas appeal again!



WE WERE ALSO
KNOCKING ON DOORS
AND SPEAKING TO
CUSTOMERS AS PART
OF OUR GETTING TO
KNOW YOU CAMPAIGN



CLEANING UP THE COMMUNITY AND GETTING TO KNOW YOU

During our summer WIN Day, our teams hit the streets to help clean up our communities. Armed with litter pickers and bin bags, we rolled up our sleeves and cleared 48 bin bags of rubbish from our neighbourhoods.

We were also knocking on doors and speaking to customers as part of our Getting to Know You campaign, with the aim of contacting all our customers to learn a little more about you and your household to ensure our data is up-to-date.

That data is being used to help us improve customer access to our services and support and help us better understand the diverse range and needs of the people living in our communities.



We cleared



bin bags
of rubbish

GETTING BACK TO OUR ROOTS...



ALLOTMENT SITE IN BLOOM

During August, in partnership with the Royal Horticulture Society (RHS), we held a celebratory open day at the Heath Avenue allotments in Lower Broughton.

The community gathered together for a day of green fingered fun and learning, when locals came along to explore the allotment site, share gardening tips, and even sign up for their own planters.

The day was packed with activities, including cake, gel plate painting, and a climbing wall that kept everyone entertained, and it proved a great opportunity for Salix Homes to connect with the community.

Back in 2022, a team of dedicated Salix Homes officers restored the overgrown green space making it a hub for gardening enthusiasts and a

place for people to grow their own produce.

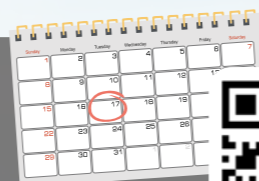
Situated on a parcel of land owned by Salford Council, the allotment site is home to 85 large mobile planters, many of which are ready to be used to grow fruits, veggies and flowers.

Victoria, a Salix Homes customer and user of the allotment, said: "The allotment is a great place to take my grandkids to learn about growing their own food and connecting with nature, especially as we don't have our own garden."

The allotment hosts regular learning workshops and drop-ins open to all. These workshops cover essential gardening skills, from composting and garden maintenance to recognising weeds and making plants thrive.

Salix Homes and the RHS are continuing to work on the allotment site to create a safe and welcoming place.

Keep an eye on the Events Calendar on our website for dates of upcoming activities and events at the allotment site or speak to your housing officer to find out how you can get involved as this is just the start of the journey.



EVENTS IN YOUR AREA

Scan the QR code to keep up to date with events in your area or visit www.salixhomes.co.uk/events. If there's an event coming up in your area and you think we should share it with our customers, please send the event details to marketing@salixhomes.co.uk.

HIGH-RISE MONTH OF ACTION



During February 2024, we held a High-Rise Month of Action across all our tower blocks.

We carried out home visits and hosted communal drop-in events, where we completed essential safety checks and audits, and were also able to have meaningful discussions with you, our customers about your priorities and concerns, so we can tailor our services accordingly.

We also used the opportunity to advance our Getting to Know You campaign, whereby we are contacting you to learn a little more about you and your household to ensure our data is up-to-date.

Throughout the month-long initiative, we completed 186 home visits and spoke to more than 350 of you.

The comments, insight and feedback has fed directly into our new Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy, which you can read more about on page 42-45, and has also helped shape our neighbourhood action planning process.



SALIX SEED FUND

The Salix Seed Fund, a brand new initiative that empowers Salix Homes employees to make a positive impact in the Salford community, was launched in 2024.

The Salix Seed Fund is a funding pot of £40,000, provided through the contractors we work with, that has been set aside for projects that will impact the community.

With this initiative, Salix Homes aims to build better relationships with our customers, enhance health and wellbeing, improve

lives, and increase opportunities for the people of Salford, by funding projects that directly benefit our customers and communities.

To ensure that the Salix Seed Fund is spent on projects that truly reflect the needs of our communities, we invited all Salix

Homes employees to nominate projects for consideration, as we believe our dedicated teams, with their understanding of our communities' needs, are the best people to identify projects that will have the most impact.

The projects we've allocated funding to include:

SALFORD LOAVES AND FISHES



WE WORK WITH SOME OF THE MOST VULNERABLE AND ISOLATED PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES



Jan Drew, Salford Loaves and Fishes

A charity which supports homeless, isolated and vulnerable people across Salford.

The Salix Seed Fund grant has been used to deliver a Flexible Learning Hub at the charity's Skills For Life Centre, to help people develop digital skills and complete online training courses. This includes maths, English and IT, as well as a range of accredited courses in skills such as health and safety and food hygiene to help improve people's employment chances.

Salix Homes Social Inclusion Manager, Jackie Crook, works closely with Salford Loaves and Fishes and nominated the Flexible Learning Hub for a share of the funding pot. She explained:

"In a world that is digitalising rapidly, many of our customers are being left behind because they either lack the necessary skills or don't have access to suitable devices or a reliable internet connection."

The Salix Seed Fund awarded £8,000 to the project. The funding has been used to equip

the Hub with essential IT gear, including computers, course software and headphones.

The Flexible Learning Hub is based at the charity's Skills for Life Centre on Paddington Close in Pendleton. The Hub offers computer and internet access, or learners can complete the courses in their own time with their own devices.

Weekly drop-in sessions are at Salford Loaves and Fishes, 1-3 Paddington Close, Salford, M6 5PL on Thursdays from 1pm.



THE PEOPLE WE SEE AT THE SHED COME HERE TO CONNECT WITH ONE ANOTHER, BUILD THEIR CONFIDENCE, LEARN NEW SKILLS AND ACCESS GENERAL SUPPORT.



Salford Foundation's Business Development Manager
Helen Garry

THE SHED CREATIVE HEALTH

A project first set up during the Covid pandemic that supports vulnerable men with complex needs including physical and mental health issues, by providing support and access to arts, culture and heritage activities to help improve their health and wellbeing.

Established in 2020 by the Salford-based charity Salford Foundation, 'The Shed' began as a digital support network for men facing isolation and mental health challenges.

Since emerging from the pandemic, The Shed has evolved into a vibrant welfare hub, based at Acton Square, where it now supports up to 100 men each year. Here, they can access information, advice, and mentoring support from professionals, alongside guidance from volunteers and peers within the community.

Through activities designed to build confidence and tackle isolation, The Shed offers men a safe, confidential and

welcoming space to develop skills, connect with others, and strengthen their mental wellbeing.

Now Salix Homes has awarded The Shed a £10,000 grant through our Salix Seed Fund initiative.

Michael is a regular visitor at The Shed, attending cooking sessions held every Tuesday. He said: **"I've been coming to these sessions and I've found they've helped me to gain new skills and socialise with people rather than just sitting at home. I've even recreated one of the dishes I made during the sessions at home on my own using what I've learnt here."**

The cooking sessions at The Shed help build confidence by encouraging participants to try new recipes, manage food budgets, and make healthy choices. Participants also learn to repurpose ingredients and practice food safety and hygiene – all while connecting with others in a supportive environment.

For more than 30 years, Salford Foundation has been providing opportunities for young people and adults to create better futures for themselves and their community through creative health, adult services, women's survivor services, and youth services.

Find out what's on weekly at The Shed, visit <https://tinyurl.com/mt68c8bj>

DoSportUK

A project which provides sporting opportunities to people of all ages with disabilities.

The Salford Knights inclusive basketball team is part of the DoSportUK initiative, providing a fun and inclusive environment for people with learning difficulties to play basketball, make friends and feel part of a team. The project is a lifeline for many of its members, helping to tackle the health and social inequalities that exist for people with disabilities.

We've awarded £4,200 to DoSport UK to help support their work in providing disability sports and accessible physical activities for people of all ages with disabilities or learning difficulties.

The funding has allowed DoSportUK to continue delivering their Salford Knights sessions with new equipment for a full 12 months, providing members with opportunities to access physical fitness, team building skills and opportunities in gaining their own coaching badge.

Mohammed, whose sister, brother and niece all attend the session at Eccles College said: "My family have been coming to these sessions pretty much every week and I've seen how it has helped them progress socially. It's great for their health and wellbeing, but it's also been great for them to make friends and build on their skills."



“

IT'S GREAT FOR THEIR HEALTH AND WELLBEING, BUT IT'S ALSO BEEN GREAT FOR THEM TO MAKE FRIENDS AND BUILD ON THEIR SKILLS.


”

SPRINGBOARD COMMUNITY FUND

Every year, we award grants to groups and projects across Salford that are making a difference in our communities, as part of our Springboard Community Fund.

From cheerleaders to a forest school, this year Springboard has provided much-needed cash injections to projects that boost community spirit, promote health and wellbeing, reduce isolation and improve the environment.

THESE ARE JUST SOME OF THE PROJECTS WE'VE SUPPORTED...



Asthma Relief

Asthma Relief was set up in 1997 to support people with breathing difficulties by providing much-needed medical equipment called nebulisers.

A nebuliser is a device which is used to administer a solution of medication in the form of a fine mist for the patient to breathe in. Every year, the charity provides more than 1,500 nebulisers to patients of all ages throughout the UK with asthma and other breathing-related illnesses.

Thanks to a cash boost of £950 from our Springboard fund, the charity has provided an additional five nebulisers to Salford Children's Community Nurses, in response to a growing demand for the medical equipment.

Patricia Davis, Asthma Relief Charity Manager said **"The Springboard funding has been a huge help. We are committed to distributing our services to those most in need and we couldn't do it without the support of organisations like Salix Homes. I would like to say a big thank you on behalf of Asthma Relief and the people of Salford that you are helping through the nurses based there."**

In 2023/24 we invested **£20,059.25** through our community fund Springboard, supporting **24** community groups and projects.



Red Hot Flames

Founded in 1996, Salford's own community cheerleading and dance club, Red Hot Flames, received a much-needed boost of over £1,000.

The funding helped ensure 60 of the club's athletes could step out in style with new training kits as they headed to an international competition in Orlando, Florida – a trip that marked a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for its young members.

A beloved part of the Salford community, the club offers a variety of classes including



Pom Dance, Cheerleading, Gymnastics, Jazz, and Kick, for athletes as young as three years old.

Red Hot Flames had the opportunity to compete in one of

the world's most prestigious dance competitions where they were up against some of the best cheerleading troupes from around the globe, finishing in an impressive 6th and 8th place.

Albert's of Salford

Albert's of Salford is a popular community sports facility in Lower Broughton that has undergone a remarkable transformation, breathing new life into its once run-down football pitch.

The sports facility, located in Albert Park, opened 20 years ago, but sadly found itself in need of renovation and was facing closure. Now, Albert's of Salford has become a vibrant hub for sports and recreation.

After securing a significant amount of funding from the Football Association (FA) and a £2,000 boost from our Springboard fund, Albert's of Salford have been able to fully refurbish their new 3G, shock pad installed pitch, as well as add new perimeter fencing, goal posts and lights.



Manchester Bees Forest School



A once neglected parcel of land has been transformed into a thriving learning haven after receiving a cash boost from our Springboard fund.

Manchester Bees Forest School secured £1,800 to help launch the 'Salford Hive' in Broughton, providing educational opportunities for children, and specialising in sessions for those with additional needs and neurodivergence.

Creating a real buzz in Broughton, the Forest School delivered jam-packed, fun-filled sessions at the Salford Hive, with the Springboard grant used to deck the space out with hammocks, dens, tool stations, balance lines, sand pits, a kitchen and a digging area.

The Salford Hive area is now being used and cared for by the local community and Manchester Bees Forest School is hoping to deliver more sessions there in the future.



Love Your Neighbourhood

SALFORD COMMUNITY LEISURE

With the support of donations from Salix Homes and ForHousing, Salford Community Leisure (SCL) received vital funding to install and upgrade nine new life-saving de□ brillators within their leisure centres across Salford.

We donated £1,500 towards the vital medical equipment, which significantly increase the chances of survival for someone experiencing a cardiac arrest as they can help get the heart beating again.

The defibrillator at Irlam and Cadishead Leisure Centre was recently used in a life-saving emergency



when a member of the public suffered a cardiac arrest near the building, and the defibrillator was used to save their life.

Every second counts in an emergency situation, and we'd urge people to familiarise themselves with the locations of these defibrillators.

The new defibrillators can be found at:

- Broughton Leisure Centre, Great Cheetham Street West, Salford, M7 2DN
- Cleavley Athletics Track, Winton, Blantyre St, Eccles, M30 8HY
- Eccles Leisure Centre, Barton Ln, Eccles, M30 0DD
- Irlam and Cadishead Leisure Centre, 243 Liverpool Rd, Irlam, M44 6BR
- Ordsall Leisure Centre, Craven Dr, Ordsall, Salford M5 3DJ
- Salford Sports Village, Salford Sports Village, 325 Littleton Rd, Salford M7 3NQ
- Salford Watersports Centre, 15 The Quays, Salford M50 3SQ
- Swinton & Pendlebury Leisure Centre, Cromwell Rd, Swinton, M27 9SZ
- Worsley Leisure Centre, Bridgewater Rd, Walkden, Worsley, M28 3AB



EASILY ACCESSIBLE DEFIBRILLATORS ARE VITAL WITHIN THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE THEY SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE THE CHANCES OF SURVIVAL FOR SOMEONE EXPERIENCING A MEDICAL EMERGENCY. PLACING DEFIBRILLATORS IN PUBLIC SPACES ENSURES THAT PEOPLE CAN ACT SWIFTLY, POTENTIALLY SAVING LIVES WHEN SECONDS MATTER.



SCL Sport and Leisure Manager, Paul Bland

Apply for Springboard funding

Anyone can apply for the Springboard fund. It doesn't matter if you're an established community group, a charity, school, or just one person with a great idea for a community project, you can still apply for a share of the funding pot.

Scan the QR code to apply online, visit www.salixhomes.co.uk/springboard or email enquiries@salixhomes.co.uk



Springboard HEROES

From the left... Thomas Arenas, Irene Travis, Jimmy Renshaw, Brian Johnson, Steve Farr



CHANDOS BOWLING CLUB – WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

In 2023, Chandos Bowling Club were crowned our Springboard Heroes winners in our annual awards, which aim to recognise community groups and initiatives making a difference in our neighbourhoods across Salford.

The bowling club, based in Weaste, has been at the heart of the community for more than 50 years, providing much-needed sporting and social activities open to all.

Its members described it as an "oasis in the middle of Salford" and for many, it has been a lifeline for helping to overcome isolation or mental health issues.

So, where are Chandos Bowling Club a year on? We caught up with Club Treasurer Irene Travis, who's been part of the club since 1982, to find out what's been happening since winning the Springboard Heroes Award, and the £1,000 prize money.

Irene said: "We've been carrying on as normal. Our bowlers are still bowling multiple times a week, and we have other things going on like

Buddy Club on a Wednesday where people with conditions like dementia can come down with a carer, friend or loved one and enjoy a game of bowls."

When asked how the team has been getting on, Irene revealed that the team had won the Swinton League 10-a-side knockout this year, had come second in the bowling league, and star player John Grace has been on his own winning streak. John, who's been bowling since he was just nine years won Floodlit and Bowler of the Year, as well as an award for being 'top of the averages.'

The bowlers held an awards ceremony in November, using some of the Springboard funding to purchase trophies for the event. And the Club has more plans for the funding, as Irene explained: "We've got no shelter at the top of the bowling green, so we want to have one fitted and have something on it to say Salix Homes funded it. The work Salix Homes does in the community is just great."

When reflecting on being voted Springboard Heroes 2023 winners, Irene added: "It was fantastic, we couldn't believe it. I must have told everyone in Salford! It's just so nice to be recognised and appreciated for the work we do."

Irene is also keen to bring new bowlers on board. "New bowlers are always welcome. We start the season next April and we provide free tuition in the daytime, evenings and weekends."

If you're interested in a game of bowls you can call Sue on 07426102401 or Irene on 07799042236.

Scan the QR code or visit our YouTube channel to see the moment the bowlers found out they'd won.



<https://youtu.be/2W6rug9hwFk>



SUPPORTING SALFORD'S NEW YOUTH ZONE

Salix Homes is a proud Founder Patron of the new Salford Youth Zone (SYZ).

We're donating £100,000 over the next four years to support the early growth of the Youth Zone, as well as provide additional initiatives and opportunities for young members to access.

This partnership between Salix Homes and SYZ marks our shared commitment to transforming lives, boosting community spirit and further developing the city of Salford. SYZ holds immense promise for both our customers and the wider community, through its opportunities for young members, job and volunteer positions and mentoring schemes.

Sian Grant, Executive Director of Customers and Communities at Salix Homes, said: "We are incredibly proud to be a Founder Patron of Salford Youth Zone. We believe that building vibrant communities goes beyond

providing homes; it's about supporting people and creating opportunities for the future.

"By supporting the Youth Zone, we're investing in the young people of Salford, giving them access to a safe space where they can grow, learn and thrive. This partnership reflects our commitment to empowering our customers and ensuring that young people in our communities have the chance to achieve their full potential."

Founder Patrons' contributions combine to create 70% of the annual running costs of a Youth Zone, and the support will provide a foundation to develop and maintain excellent services for young people.

With planning approval granted in 2023, the construction of SYZ, located on Belvedere Road in Pendleton, began at the end of



January 2024 and is set to open in summer 2025.

SYZ promises to usher in a new era for the city's youth, offering educational, recreational, and developmental opportunities in a safe and inclusive environment. The purpose-built Youth Zone will open seven days a week, with more than 20 activities on offer every session for young people aged 8-19, or up to 25 for those with additional needs or a disability.

Scan the QR code to find out more about Salford Youth Zone or visit <https://salfordyouthzone.org/>



£20 MILLION INVESTMENT FOR SOCIAL HOUSING IN SALFORD

Salix Homes is investing more than £20 million improving social housing across Salford over the next year.

Our latest investment programme will see 1,366 homes undergo improvement work.

A £10 million eco-transformation at neighbouring tower blocks Grey Friar Court and White Friar Court in Greengate forms a key part of the investment programme, aiming to make the buildings greener and more energy efficient.

We are also installing sprinkler systems in five more of our tower blocks, which includes Floral Court and Cheshill Court in Broughton and Black Friar Court, Newbank Tower and Riverbank Tower in Greengate.

This means 14 of our 20 tower blocks will have sprinklers, with the remaining blocks to follow.

Other improvement work includes new kitchens, bathrooms, windows, doors, roofs, rewiring and heating systems to hundreds of homes.

Liam Turner, our Executive Director of Assets, Growth and



Friar Court before development

1,366 homes to undergo improvement work in 2024-2025

Sustainability, said: "As we continue to build new homes, we also remain dedicated to investing in our existing housing stock to ensure our customers have the high-quality, safe and sustainable homes they deserve.

"This investment programme is one of our most ambitious yet, aimed at significantly enhancing our customers' quality of life by creating safer, cleaner and greener homes and communities."

The project at Grey and White Friar Court includes external wall and roof insulation, new windows and ventilation; while the façade and balconies will be completely rendered and transformed. An eco-friendly ground source heating system is also being installed, which, combined with the external insulation will improve the thermal efficiency of the building and help reduce energy bills.

A message for high-rise residents

While some of the initial work is underway, the refurbishment project at Grey and White Friar Court, and the sprinkler installation programme, has not progressed as quickly as we had hoped. This delay is due to an extended application process with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR).

The BSR is a Government body, set up following the Grenfell Tower tragedy to improve safety standards in high-rise buildings. As part of the new building safety laws and regulation, all refurbishment work must first be approved by the BSR.

Normally, we would expect approval from the BSR within eight weeks, however it's currently taking significantly longer, and our applications are still being reviewed. This delay is part of a wider issue, with many high-rise projects across the country also facing longer waits for approval.

We understand that this delay is frustrating, and we share our customers' frustrations. However, the safety of our customers and your homes is our top priority. While it's taking longer than expected, getting the right safety approvals is essential, and we won't compromise on safety, no matter how long it takes. We'll keep all customers informed as the situation progresses.

CLEANER, GREENER HOMES AT GREENHAUS

Greenhaus is our latest flagship new-build development, which opened in March 2024.

It's a highly sustainable apartment block comprising 96 homes on the historic Chapel Street, opposite Salford Cathedral – an area which is currently undergoing significant investment as part of a wider regeneration project.

The one and two-bedroom homes are available in a mix of tenures including social rent, affordable rent and rent-to-buy, and there's also four accessible apartments on the ground floor for people with disabilities.

The nine-storey apartment

block has been built to Passivhaus Classic certified standard, which is the leading low-energy design standard, and it's the first and largest development of its kind in the region.

Salford City Mayor Paul Dennett was at the official launch of Greenhaus where he hailed the development as "the benchmark" for new-build, affordable, and sustainable homes.

Sue Sutton, Chief Executive at Salix Homes, said: "We are

incredibly proud to see our vision for high quality, affordable and sustainable housing brought to life at Greenhaus.

"At a time of a housing crisis, and with climate change such a critical issue, we're committed to working alongside our partners to deliver desperately needed affordable homes in Salford, which are better for the environment, support our carbon neutral ambitions, and help reduce fuel poverty for customers."



What is Passivhaus?

Passivhaus is the gold standard for energy efficient buildings and construction.

Buildings constructed to Passivhaus standards are meticulously designed and built to be extremely airtight, well-insulated, and utilise solar power and internal heat sources to maintain a consistent, comfortable temperature without relying heavily on mechanical heating or cooling systems.

Customers can benefit from a healthier living environment, reduced energy consumption and homes that are cheaper to heat and run.

The sustainable features at Greenhaus include triple glazed windows, the latest insulation technology, improved ventilation and airtightness, air source heat pumps and publicly accessible electric vehicle charging points.

What does this mean for customers?

Salford is the 18th most deprived area in the UK and the increased cost of living is having a huge impact on many of our customers.

The homes at Greenhaus will help reduce fuel poverty for customers, with the monthly cost of heating and hot water estimated at around £40, compared to £95 for a similar sized new-build home with a gas boiler.

Passivhaus properties also offer a range of health benefits for customers, and can reduce the impact on the NHS and the costs

associated with illness related to poor quality housing, as well as minimise the risk of damp, mould and condensation.

Why are we doing this?

Sustainability is a key focus for Salix Homes, and we're committed to improving the energy efficiency of all our homes and buildings to benefit both our customers and the environment, aiming to become a carbon neutral organisation by 2038.

While the initial cost of building Passivhaus standard homes might be higher, we have considered the long-term savings to be made on repairs and maintenance or complex and expensive retrofit solutions, as well as the financial and health benefits for customers.

Partnership working

Greenhaus has been delivered in partnership with the English Cities Fund (ECF) – a joint venture between developer Muse, Legal & General and Homes England, to bring together the public and private sector to transform urban areas. It's supported by Salford City Council which provided the land for the development, and the homes were built by lead contractor Eric Wright Construction.

Salix Homes is the housing association partner, and we've financed the project after securing funding with our banking partner NatWest, along with grants from Homes England and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA).

MEET THE GREENHAUS RESIDENTS

Mature student Harriette Matthews was one of the first residents to move in at Greenhaus.

Harriette, who is studying animal behaviour and conservation, had been staying on her dad's sofa in his one-bedroom flat following a relationship breakdown. She has autism and also suffers with scoliosis, which is a curvature of the spine, and her difficult living conditions had been affecting both her physical and mental health.



Moving into Greenhaus has transformed her life. "I just can't put into words how much of a difference having my own home has made to my life," she said.

"I've had a difficult few years, but I've been trying my best to get my life back together – I'm studying, I've had therapy, my mental health is the best it's been – everything else was going right for me, but I just couldn't catch a break with my housing situation, and I was starting to lose hope.

"When I got the call from my housing officer to say I had a place at Greenhaus, I just couldn't believe it – I feel so lucky. It feels like the final piece of the puzzle has finally slotted into place and I can start living my life now."

Scan the QR code to find out more about Harriette and some of the other Greenhaus residents www.salixhomes.co.uk/meet-the-new-greenhaus-residents/



GREENHAUS PAVES THE WAY FOR MORE PASSIVHAUS HOMES

Following on from the success of Greenhaus, we've established a solid partnership with ECF to build more affordable homes in Salford that are high quality, cleaner and greener.

In April 2024, construction began on a second Passivhaus-certified development – Willohaus – on Peru Street, which will deliver another 100 highly sustainable and affordable homes.

The name Willohaus is inspired by Salix Homes' own name, with Salix being a variety of willow tree synonymous with Salford. A Salix willow tree can be found in the

nearby memorial garden at the University of Salford.

Greenhaus and Willohaus represent a new era of high quality, sustainable and affordable homes, and we're incredibly proud to be delivering new homes which are better for the environment, support carbon reduction targets, and help reduce fuel poverty for customers.

The Willohaus development is expected to be completed by summer 2026. We've also recently secured planning permission for a third Passivhaus development, which will be exclusively for older people. The 'independent living scheme' for the over 55s will be built on disused land on Arrow Street in Broughton.



GETTING TO KNOW MARTIN

Martin Warhurst was appointed as our new Chair of the Board in September, taking over the post from our outgoing Chair Jim Battle. We sat down with Martin to find out a bit more about him...

Martin, tell us a bit about yourself.

I'm skinny, 6ft 6in, introverted, full of imposter syndrome. I also like cake. And having a good chuckle.

You've been working in social housing for more than 20 years, how did that come about?

I'm actually just about to hit my 25th anniversary! I know, I don't look old enough (I wish!)

Can I, or should I, admit that from the age of seven, I knew I wanted to be a Chartered Accountant? So I studied to become one and here I am!

After I qualified in 1999, I decided that I wanted to put my new found qualification to some form of social purpose. So in 2000, I went to work for KPMG in their social housing team and realised I had found my calling in life. I became an Executive Director of Finance for a housing association in the North East in 2010 and a Board Member at Leeds Federated Housing and Broadacres Housing. I joined the Board at Salix Homes in September 2023, before taking on the role of Chair a year later. I'm currently Chief Executive of Habinteg Housing Association, primarily providing accessible, integrated housing for people living with disabilities.

I'm well and truly part of the social housing sector!

What's the best thing about working in social housing?

Every day, as housing associations, we do things that improve people's lives and their life experiences. I can look at myself in the mirror at the end of each day and know that I have been a very small part of something very special.

“
I WANT TO BE
REMEMBERED AS
A CHAIR WHO GOT
IT RIGHT.
”

What do you think is the biggest challenge for the social housing sector at the moment?

Where do I start!? Probably the first 15 years of my existence in social housing was relatively straightforward. Things were pretty stable (I know there was a crash in the 2000s). Social housing finance was relatively straightforward. For the past 10 years, things have become very challenging. We have to balance responding to feedback from our tenants, investing in our existing homes, building new homes, place shaping, filling gaps left by the legacy

of public sector austerity, building safety, compliance, regulatory requirements, global pandemics, global conflicts, mini-budgets, EPC C, zero carbon, changes in government and therefore housing policy, understanding our properties, etc, etc. The list goes on.

The challenge, as set out in the Regulator's latest Sector Risk Profile, is whether the sector can afford to deliver against all of these challenges and respond to future unexpected bumps in the road, whilst maintaining and improving the standard of services and homes delivered to our customers. Financially, the sector is at a significant low at the present time. We need to respond to this challenge by making sure we maximise value for money and continue to deliver what our customers need from us.

What do you hope to achieve as Chair of the Board at Salix Homes?

I am under no illusion, this is a position of significant responsibility and pressure. I have joined Salix Homes at a high point in the organisation's history. If it is even possible to do so, I have to build on the amazing achievements Sue as Chief Executive and Jim Battle as Chair of the Board have delivered. I need to safeguard Salix Homes' for future generations of social housing tenants.

Martin Warhurst
Chair of the Board

Put simply, I want to be remembered as a Chair who got it right.

What are your hobbies?

In three words – guitars, cars and cake.

When I was in my teens, I spent many a long hour learning to play guitar and playing in several thrash metal bands (it was the late 80s, early 90s!). Yes, I even had long hair! I play guitar and I also collect a certain brand of electric guitar (Jacksons for those who know their Gibsons from their Fenders).

I also love cars. I'm a petrol head. I like looking at cars. I like driving cars (but slowly – I know my limitations as a driver). I love Formula 1 and have been a massive supporter of Sir Lewis Hamilton ever since he burst on to the scene.

Cake. Get in my belly!

Big shout out to my two (now adult) sons who are, and always will be, everything to me.

I probably shouldn't mention Manchester City!

What are you passionate about?

Food – have I mentioned cake?

My immediate family. We are dwindling in numbers these days, but I love them all!

What is the last TV show you binge watched?

I love Ghosts UK. I've also just binge watched the first three series of Ghosts US (both are available on BBC iPlayer). The episodes are short and just so easy to digest after a long day at work. It's just daft and funny.

What's your favourite food?

Food is a very high priority for me. I have a sweet tooth and love anything laden with sugar. Battenberg cake in particular (YUM!!!).

Savoury wise, I have a go to dish that I find very comforting and is just so easy to make. I call it Chicken Satay – but it probably doesn't meet the definition of a satay dish (I think the chicken should be on skewers or

something?) Basically, fry a few bunches of chopped spring onions, add chopped chicken and lightly brown, add chicken stock and a couple of tablespoons of peanut butter and some chilli powder and let it cook for around 20 minutes, stirring regularly. Serve with rice. Simple and delicious in my opinion. I sometimes add mushrooms too.

What's your favourite music/band?

Easy one – but no one will have ever heard of them! My all time favourite guitarist is Criss Oliva. He played guitar for 80s/90s power metal band, Savatage. He is, in my opinion, the greatest guitar player I have ever heard. I had the pleasure of standing front row at one of their gigs in a small venue in London in 1993, just a few weeks before he was tragically killed in a road accident, at just 30 years of age. I could almost touch him and watching the way he played guitar that night was an amazing, mesmerising experience.

ACHIEVING NET ZERO AT SALIX HOMES

David Malsom is our Sustainability Manager, who is tasked with supporting Salix Homes to cut our carbon footprint and oversee our journey to net zero. We sat down with David to find out what this means

What is net zero?

Essentially net zero means that the amount of greenhouse gases human activity adds to the atmosphere is no longer more than what they take out. This is essential to combating climate change and global warming.

The UK Government has set a target for the UK to be Net Zero by 2050.

So what about carbon neutral?

Similar to net zero, but carbon neutral only refers to off-setting carbon dioxide rather than all the greenhouse gases, which also include methane and nitrous oxide.

In Greater Manchester, there is a target to become carbon neutral by 2038.

What does this mean for Salix Homes?

In line with the Greater Manchester target, we have committed to becoming a carbon neutral organisation by 2038.

This means we need to emit virtually no carbon in our homes, our office buildings and within our supply chain.

What's a carbon footprint?

A carbon footprint is the amount of carbon that we generate.

As a business, our carbon footprint is around 7,000 tonnes per year. But we have over 8,000

homes in Salford, and collectively they generate around 21,000 tonnes of carbon every year, which we will have to reduce to virtually zero.

Can Salix Homes achieve the targets?

The most challenging aspect will be achieving carbon neutrality in all our homes, many of which are older properties, and will require 'green' home upgrades and improvement work, such as insulation.

The electricity used to power our homes is only as clean as the energy which generates it, so until the electricity providers switch to greener alternatives, which is expected in the mid to late 2030s, then our homes will not be carbon neutral, and we have no control over this.

What we can do is ensure our homes are as energy efficient as possible and are ready for the transition to a cleaner energy source when the time comes.

What is Salix Homes doing?

It's a big challenge and won't be achieved overnight. As an organisation we will need to fundamentally change the way we operate.

With our homes, the first step is to bring all our properties up to EPC 'C' by 2030. Then we will be investigating how alternative heating systems and sources

of renewable energy could be used in our future home improvement programmes.

We are already using ground source heat pumps at some of our tower blocks and our new Greenhaus development has created highly energy efficient and sustainable homes, built to Passivhaus standards.

You can read more about this on page 30.

Looking to our business operations, our Diamond House and Orchard Street offices are using renewable energy sources, and we'll be adopting alternative ways to travel, improving our waste management and recycling, and ensuring that we work with contractors who also have good carbon credentials.

Scan the QR code to watch our video and hear more from Sustainability Manager David Malsom. Or visit:

<https://tinyurl.com/bdyec49c>



Salix Homes customer Julie Pemberton with Glenn Martin, Director of Investment, Development and Sustainability at Salix Homes, Lee Hurst, Site Manager at our contractor Emanuel Whittaker, and David Malsom, Sustainability Manager at Salix Homes.

SOLAR PANEL PROJECT SHINES BRIGHT

We've been installing solar panels on homes across Salford – saving hundreds of pounds for customers.

We've recently completed solar panel installations to 49 properties after securing funding through the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF).

Customers say they're already seeing the benefits on their energy bills.

Julie Pemberton lives in Weaste and is thrilled with the eco-improvements to her home. She said: "I have had the solar panels installed and I'm saving roughly £4 to £5 per week on my electricity. I know this as fact, as being on a pre-payment metre allows me to see my usage and expenditure.

"Having the solar panels installed will save me over £200 per year and helps with climate change – it's a win-win situation."

David Malsom, Sustainability Manager at Salix Homes, said: "Our latest solar panel project is another step forward in our ongoing commitment to sustainability and improving the lives and homes of our customers.

"Harnessing the power of the sun through the solar panels, we are not only helping to protect the environment, but also offering tangible benefits to customers which go beyond financial savings. By using clean, renewable energy, we are actively reducing the carbon footprint of our communities and supporting the transition to a greener, more sustainable future for all."

Julie added: "The whole process from start to finish lasted just five hours. The teams of workmen were excellent – extremely professional, knowledgeable, courteous and respectful. The whole team ensured there was minimal disruption or mess to my home – you could not have guessed that any work had been carried out internally or externally."

All customers who require energy efficiency improvements to their homes will be contacted directly by our Investment Team to schedule the work required.



HAVING THE SOLAR PANELS INSTALLED WILL SAVE ME OVER £200 PER YEAR AND HELPS WITH CLIMATE CHANGE – IT'S A WIN-WIN SITUATION.



CALL THE GREEN DOCTOR

Salix Homes has teamed up with the Green Doctor service to help our customers stay warm, stay well and save money on household bills.

All our customers can request a free home visit from a Green Doctor, who are trained energy efficiency experts, or we can refer you directly.

The Green Doctors offer free, impartial advice to help you take control of your bills, save energy where possible in the home, and access other services and initiatives available.

They can provide different kinds of support, whether it's advice on paying off debt with energy or water companies, identifying energy efficiency improvements in the home or spotting other concerns for a

referral to other services.

Some of the reasons people contact the Green Doctors are:

- Struggling to pay energy bills
- Finding it hard to manage fuel debt
- Worrying about keeping warm or choosing between eating and heating
- Respiratory problems such as asthma or a persistent cough

Here are just a few of the free services you can get when you sign up for a Green Doctor consultation:

- Fixing causes of heat loss in your home
- Useful tips for saving energy and water whilst ensuring your home stays safe and comfortable
- Installing small energy and water efficiency measures, such as draft excluders
- Help with accessing other support, such as emergency heating, government subsidies or grants, and advice on energy or water debt.

Contact Salix Homes on enquiries@salixhomes.co.uk or call 0800 218 2000 to request your referral to the Green Doctor service.



FURNITURE RECYCLING SCHEME HELPS PEOPLE AND THE PLANET

Thousands of items of furniture destined for landfill sites have been donated to families in need in Salford.

We operate a successful Furniture Recycling Scheme that has kept 360 tonnes of furniture out of landfill sites over the past five years, and saved £70,000 in tipping costs.

The scheme aims to reuse furniture that customers donate or leave behind in our properties by providing it for free to customers who need it.

Since it launched in 2019, more than 3,000 items of furniture have been delivered to customers in need.

Jeanette Green, Salix Homes Director of Property, said: "We're thrilled to see the positive impact the scheme has had on the environment and the lives of our customers.

"We're always looking for ways to support our community and reduce our environmental impact, and this scheme does both.

"By repurposing thousands of items of furniture destined for

landfill sites, we're not only providing essential support to families in need, but also significantly reducing our carbon footprint."

The scheme is open to customers who receive benefits such as Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), those claiming their pension or any of our customers who may be facing financial difficulties and require support.

Customers can apply themselves, and if they qualify, they'll be given an appointment to visit our furniture warehouse in Salford and select what they need. Our officers can also refer customers to the scheme and will contact you directly to discuss your needs.

We've kept 360 tonnes of furniture out of landfill sites over the past five years

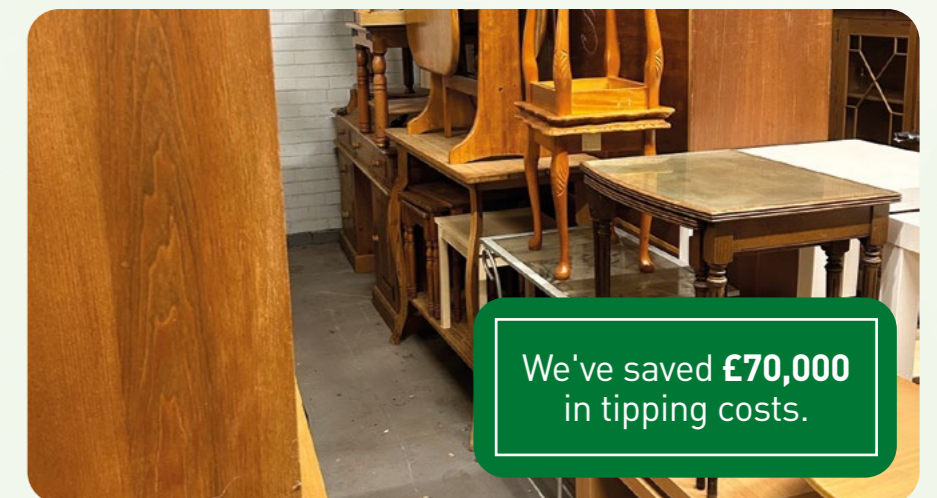
We will also deliver the furniture for a small delivery fee of £10.

The warehouse is well stocked with good quality, clean, pre-loved furniture and homeware, including sofas, beds, tables, drawers, white goods such as fridges, freezers, and washing machines, as well as smaller items like mirrors, lamps, and ornaments to help make your home feel comfortable.

To donate furniture email environmental.maintenance@salixhomes.co.uk

To use the service email enquiries@salixhomes.co.uk or call 0800 218 2000

“ WE’RE THRILLED TO SEE THE POSITIVE IMPACT THE SCHEME HAS HAD ON THE ENVIRONMENT AND THE LIVES OF OUR CUSTOMERS. ”



We've saved £70,000 in tipping costs.

ARTIST PAINTS INCREDIBLE SCENES FROM HIS HIGH-RISE FLAT

In a quiet corner of Salford, from a second storey flat in Blackfriar Court, a hand darts to and fro across a canvas, delicately placing lines to painstakingly create stunning images.

Phillip Horrock's work depicts everything from majestic African animals, lifelike renaissance portraits and stunning scenes of Manchester and Salford.

The 64-year-old artist has lived and worked in Salford all his life and in that time has created some incredible paintings with his small home studio bursting with art materials, canvasses and his masterpieces.

With Manchester city centre just a stone's throw from his home, the city has often been Philip's muse; his work intricately picking slices of life from the bustling streets.

Inspiration also comes from further afield, as his canon of work shows his ability to capture beautiful images of African animals such as the head of a majestic lion, each hair of his mighty golden mane painstakingly committed to canvas.

Philip has been a Salix Homes customer living at Blackfriar Court for 30 years and the artist in residence loves his artisan abode.

He said: "Oh, I love it here, Salix Homes have been great, they look after the place and I feel safe here. I love Salford, it's a friendly, witty and warm place to live, it's great being so close to such a good arts scene."

“
OH, I LOVE IT HERE, SALIX HOMES HAVE BEEN GREAT, THEY LOOK AFTER THE PLACE AND I FEEL SAFE HERE. I LOVE SALFORD, IT'S A FRIENDLY, WITTY AND WARM PLACE TO LIVE.
”

Philip has painted since he was three years of age; drawing bunnies in nursery are some of his early memories. He went on to complete a degree in fine art and since then has spent his life painting, drawing and etching a wondrous array of images.

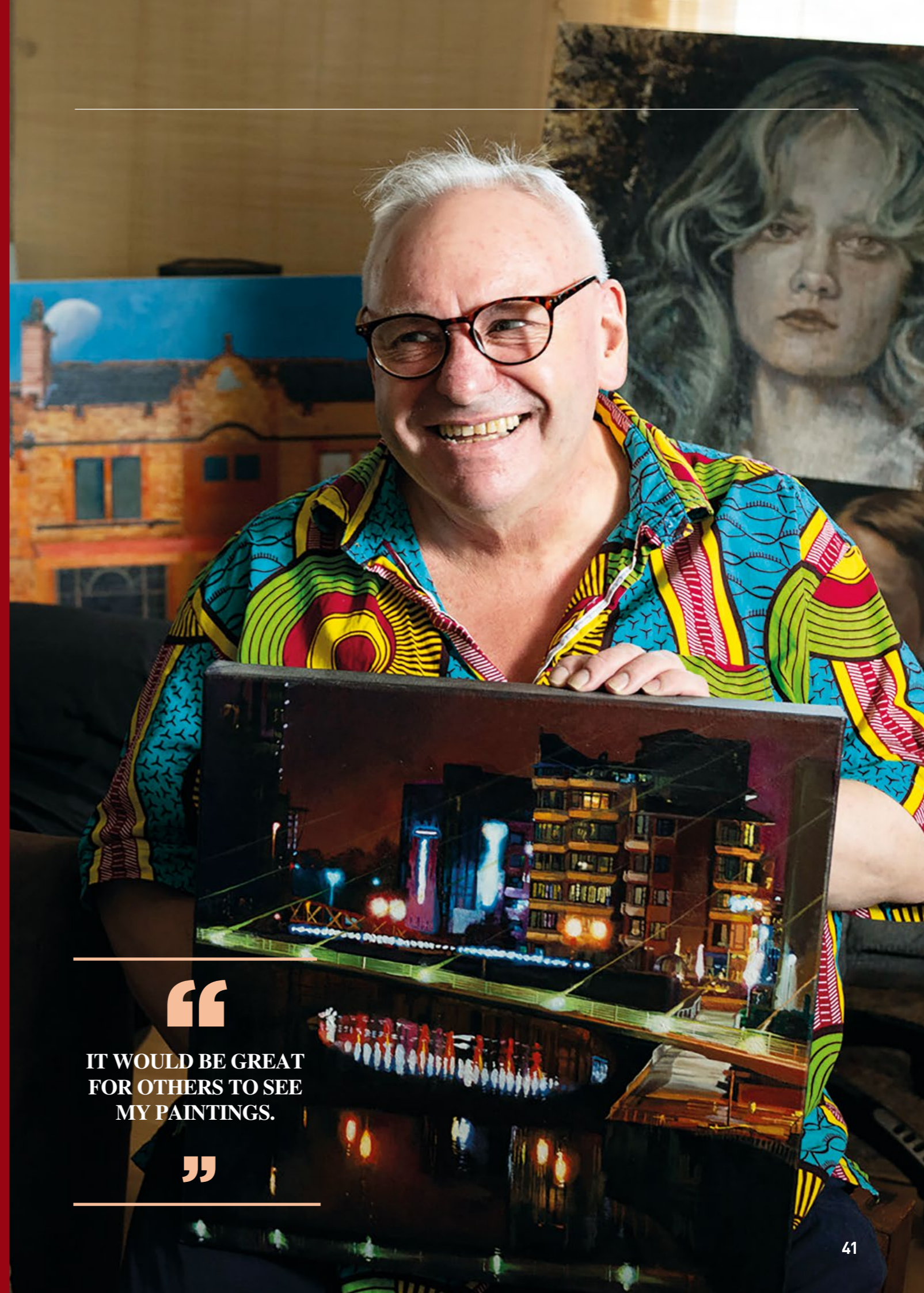
We stumbled across Philip's work during a routine home visit and were amazed by his work. It's hard to believe that a small apartment in a Salford tower block is home to some of the most extraordinary artistic masterpieces. Philip has an

incredible talent, and his work deserves to be seen by the wider public.

He has several pieces he is working on, but ultimately, he would love to have an exhibition so the public can enjoy his skill capturing images in lifelike detail.

"It would be great for others to see my paintings," he added.

"I think a lot of people enjoy art in whatever form, I would just like to push my work as far as I can and let the good folk of Salford and Manchester see them."



“
IT WOULD BE GREAT FOR OTHERS TO SEE MY PAINTINGS.
”

OUR COMMITMENT TO BUILDING SAFETY

At Salix Homes, we take building safety seriously.

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy back in 2017, we have taken a leading role in building safety – raising safety standards in our properties, advising government bodies on new regulation, and meeting and exceeding the requirements of new laws and standards.

We were also one of the very first housing associations to achieve Building a Safer Future Charter Champion Status – a national benchmark, awarded in recognition of our commitment to building safety and culture change.

Seven years on from the tragedy, the final report into the Grenfell Tower Inquiry has been published – marking a critical moment in the ongoing efforts to understand and learn from the tragic events of 14 June, 2017, which saw 72 people lose their lives in the most horrendous circumstances.

The report examines the decisions and circumstances that led up to the fire, providing detailed findings and recommendations aimed at preventing such a tragedy from ever occurring again. It also reveals systematic failures from multiple organisations responsible for building safety, including the Government, the construction industry, manufacturers, policy makers and the landlord involved.

Salix Homes owns 20 high-rise buildings across Salford, and following the publication of the report, we'd like to provide some reassurance that we



are committed to ensuring the safety of all our customers and your homes.

Salix Homes Chief Executive Sue Sutton said: "The safety and wellbeing of our customers and your homes will always be our top priority.

"The findings of this report are a stark reminder of the critical importance of fire and building safety, emphasising the need for accountability, transparency, and for customers' voices to be heard, and listened to.

"We have carefully reviewed the

findings and recommendations of the report, and we're satisfied that our ongoing efforts and existing safety measures fully align with, and exceed, the actions recommended to keep people safe.

"However, we also recognise that building safety is a continuous journey of improvement, and we remain committed to working with the fire service, our partners, the Government, fire safety experts, and of course you, our customers, to ensure you are safe and that you feel safe in your homes."



Scan the QR code to find out more about our commitment to building safety, some of the safety measures we have implemented, and the journey we have been on or visit www.salixhomes.co.uk/building-safety



FIND OUT KEY SAFETY AND BUILDING INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR BLOCK

It's now a legal requirement that all housing associations share key safety and building information about our high-rise buildings with our customers.

We also share this information with the Building Safety Regulator (BSR), which is a Government body that oversees and ensures that buildings are safe for people to live in.

This includes things like:

- What material your building is made of
- Any potential safety hazards
- Improvement work that's been carried out at your building
- When essential safety checks were last carried out and are next due

We've summarised all this key safety information on our website to make it as easy as possible to access and understand, but if you'd like to know about any of this in more detail you can contact us by emailing buildingsafety@salixhomes.co.uk or call 0800 218 2000.



Scan the QR code to access this information about your block or visit www.salixhomes.co.uk/building-safety-case-information/



KEEPING YOU INFORMED ABOUT BUILDING SAFETY

Salix Homes is working hard to meet the requirements of the new building safety laws and regulations and ensure that all our properties are safe places to live.

For our customers, we want you to feel safe in your home, as well as feel informed about building safety and empowered to challenge decisions and get involved in discussions.

We've recently launched our new Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy, which all our customers living in high-rise

buildings should have received through the post.

It aims to put customers firmly at the centre of our approach to building safety, and we hope it provides some reassurance that, as your landlord, we're doing everything we can to maintain the highest standards of safety in your home.

We've also developed tailored Methods of Engagement for all our high-rise blocks, which are bespoke to each building and our customers who live there, taking into account things like languages spoken.



Scan the QR code to find out more and read our new Building Safety Customer Engagement Strategy or visit www.salixhomes.co.uk/building-safety.

REPORTING BUILDING SAFETY CONCERNS

If you live in a high-rise building and you notice a building safety concern, whether it is something that isn't working how it should, or an individual acting irresponsibly, please help us by reporting it. This is known as a Mandatory Occurrence Report.

A building safety concern could be:

- Poor installation or poor workmanship
- Customers undertaking their own DIY or causing damage to the block
- A safety feature is damaged or not working as it should

You will find Building Safety letter boxes in the foyer of your building where you can post your safety concern.

You can also report it via: Tel: **0800 218 2000**

Email: buildingsafety@salixhomes.co.uk

Website: www.salixhomes.co.uk/building-safety

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT: KEEPING YOU INFORMED AND INVOLVED

At Salix Homes, we're committed to keeping our customers fully informed about building safety and providing meaningful opportunities for you to share your views.

To support this, we have a dedicated Apartment Living Forum – a group of high-rise customers who meet with us every six months to discuss building safety, raise any

concerns, and help shape important decisions.

Building on this commitment, and in addition to the regular block inspections by our Property Safety Officers and Housing Officers, we're also introducing drop-in sessions twice a year at all of our high-rise blocks, starting in January 2025.

These sessions will give you the chance to meet with officers from our Building Safety, Neighbourhoods, and

Customer Engagement teams. Together, we'll carry out block walkabouts where you can ask questions, raise building safety concerns, or discuss any other housing matters with us.

The drop-in dates will be shared on the notice boards in your building, through individual invites, and you can also keep up-to-date with all our events and activities on the Events Calendar on our website at

www.salixhomes.co.uk/events



If you're interested in joining the Apartment Living Forum, or would like more information about the new Customer Building Safety drop-ins, please contact our Customer Engagement Team at customer.engagement@salixhomes.co.uk or for more ways to get involved visit www.salixhomes.co.uk/get-involved

“SALIX HOMES HAS ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME WHEN I NEEDED SUPPORT”

Scott has been a Salix Homes customer for the past nine years. However, this year brought unexpected challenges when he was made redundant from his job at John Lewis in January.

Facing financial difficulties, Scott fell behind on his rent payments, but he didn't have to navigate this tough time alone – he turned to David Taylor in our Income Management Team for help.

Scott explained: “Not only was I struggling with rent, but I was also facing deductions from my Universal Credit payments.”

Understanding the reality of his circumstances, David quickly set up a reasonable payment plan to help Scott get back on track.

Living in a two-bedroom flat, Scott was surprised to learn he could apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to assist with the cost of the ‘bedroom tax’.

He said: “The application was so long and complicated that I felt overwhelmed. That’s why I scheduled an appointment at Diamond House to see David. He was a tremendous help and filled out the form for me.

“I was constantly thinking about where I was going to find the money to pay everything I needed to. When you get the support you need like I did, it stops the panic.”

Scott wasn't a stranger to the support offered by Salix Homes, as during the Covid-19 pandemic, we supported him in getting food parcels, electronic cards to help pay energy bills, as well as assistance from the Salix Homes Customer Support Fund, which helped spruce up his garden, allowing him to enjoy his outdoor space.

“People think that the Income Management Team is only there to collect rent payments,” Scott pointed out. “But they are so much more than that. David even informed me about a social tariff that saved me £120 a year on my broadband.”

Scott understands first-hand the complexities of the benefits system, noting that many people may not know about the support available to them.

He said: “A friend of mine is currently having trouble, and I told her about the help I received from Salix Homes. Now, she plans to talk to her landlord about getting some assistance too.”

In addition to his financial struggles, Scott faces health challenges, dealing with chronic COPD, bronchitis, and asthma. He previously attended clinics that significantly improved his lung capacity by 20%. However, when these appointments were relocated to Ardwick, travelling became a challenge.

Inspired to maintain his progress, Scott is eager to transform his spare bedroom into a gymnasium for home exercise. To support Scott with his health and wellbeing, our teams are currently exploring our Furniture Recycling Scheme to provide him with gym equipment for his new space.

Scott added: “Salix Homes has always been there for me when I needed support. I’ve never felt afraid to speak to them, and I encourage any customers to reach out for help if they need it.”

Scott’s journey shows the importance of community support and the difference it can make in navigating life’s challenges. With the assistance of Salix Homes, he has been able to get his life back on track.



COST OF LIVING SUPPORT PRACTICAL HELP DURING DIFFICULT TIMES

We’re working closely with our partners and support organisations across Salford to do all we can to help ease the cost of living crisis for our customers.

With escalating energy prices, rising food costs and soaring household bills, we know times are tough at the moment.

If you are worried about your finances and are struggling to cope, please don't suffer in silence as we have dedicated teams and services in place to support you.

Do you have financial difficulties? Contact our Income Management Team.

If ever you struggle with paying your rent, our dedicated Income Management Team can give you guidance and support.

Here are some ways we can help:

- Help with energy costs

- Discretionary Housing Payment
- Customer Support Fund
- Food assistance
- Income and expenditure assessments
- Challenging benefit decisions

Call 0800 218 2000 or send us an email at salix.incomemanagement@salixhomes.co.uk

We'll be here to support our customers where they need it most.

We're also working closely with Salford City Council and other partner agencies to provide additional help and support where it's needed.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details about the latest support available.



You can also visit the dedicated support section on our website where you can find out more

about the support on offer, including information on what our partners and other local community services in Salford are doing to help, such as:

- Food banks and low-cost food pantries
- Family support including free baby essentials like nappies and formula
- Health and wellbeing – from help to quit smoking to accessing mental health support
- Salford Citizen’s Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Salford Credit Union

Visit www.salixhomes.co.uk/how-we-can-help-you/

Support from the Government

The Government has a number of measures to support people with the cost of energy and household bills, which you can find out more about using the links below.



<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk/>



<https://www.salford.gov.uk/advice-and-support/support-with-the-cost-of-living/>

Access our cost of living support factsheet

<https://tinyurl.com/yc4ys5h5>





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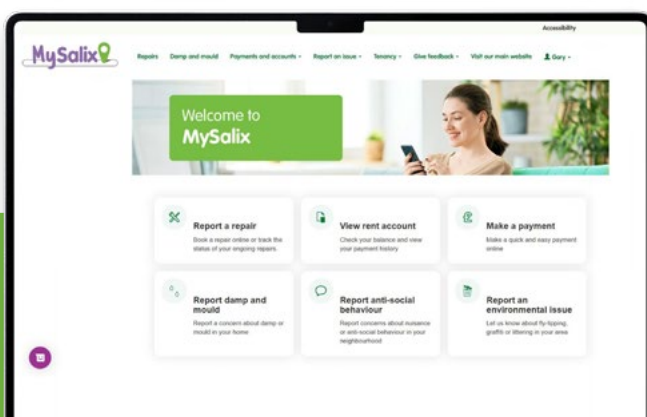
www.mysalix.co.uk 

Booking your repairs online has never been easier – we've completely overhauled the process to give you a better, more reliable experience. With this new tool, you can:

- Upload photos directly. No need to choose words – just snap a picture of the repair needed and upload it directly, so we can see exactly what you need.
- Got more than one issue? You can now schedule all your repairs in a single booking.
- Book repairs and change or cancel your appointments anytime, day or night – no waiting for office hours.
- We listened to our customers and there is no more chatbot – making the experience more straightforward and hassle-free.

In addition to our repairs booking improvements, you can also:

- Check your rent balance, set up a new direct debit and download our improved new-look statements.
- Make payments and track your cases in real time.
- Report an issue.
- Make a compliment or complaint.



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