



In Partnership with  
Melton Borough Council



## Welcome and a Happy Easter to you all from the Chair.

From time to time we like to keep you informed of what TFEC representatives do on your behalf so to that end I will bring you up to date.



All of the representatives are involved in the tasks groups and working parties, most of which work along side officers and Councillors. We discuss issues like housing allocations, voids (empty properties) and the loss of rent money from them which in turn means less money to spend on your properties.

We also take part in the annual setting of rents although very little can be done about it because the government give councils a recommended increase and if the council go above it or below then the council are penalised.

As you may be aware the repairs and maintenance, and decent homes, new bathrooms, new kitchens are and will continue to be ongoing in addition to these new windows and external doors will also continue. I personally think the council have always kept the housing stock up to a very good standard and are continuing to do so. We feel that this has been achieved partly do to the efforts of TFEC members who have taken on yet more tasks recently, we now do inspections on the condition of voids before and after repairs, new kitchens, bath rooms, new doors and windows, electrical rewires. We also do regular walkabouts on the estates looking for deterioration of the exterior of properties we also monitor the condition of the up keep of grounds maintenance on housing land and open spaces.

However, TFEC is a small but dedicated team who care about things like your homes, environment and your standard of living.



Hopefully after reading this I have interested you in becoming involved. If you would like to find out more on becoming a TFEC member, what's involved, how much time you want to spend on it and if you are a council tenant or leaseholder please contact Natalie James on MM 502481 or myself on MM 569446.

All TFEC members are volunteers and any out of pocket expenses, such as travel, is reimbursed. We also pay for babysitters should you need one. Training will be given to you either in-house or on special external courses.

Thank you for taking the time to read this message and I hope you have found it of interest.

*Best Wishes*

**John Skerritt**

**Chair of Tenants Forum Executive Committee**

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# Housing Register

**In order to be considered to transfer to another council property or registered social housing landlord, you need to apply to go onto the housing register.**

The Council maintains a housing register and the allocation of properties are made according to priority categories ranging from statutory re-housing (through priority medical needs) - to points allocation. This means that applicants can be allocated a special category or points based on their current housing circumstances.

Please note that applicants who owe a debt to Melton Borough Council or another registered social landlord (Housing Association) will be given a low priority on the housing register,

When a vacancy for a property arises the property is allocated to whichever person or household is top of the housing register at that time. However, the property must be suitable for the person or household it is allocated to. For example, a single person would not be allocated a property with 4 bedrooms as it is unsuitable for their needs. The table below shows properties that are likely to be offered to households.

APPLICANTS HOUSEHOLD TYPE & SIZE	PROPERTY TYPE THAT APPLICANTS WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR
Single person	Bedsit <b>or</b> 1 bedroom flat
Couple	1 bedroom flat <b>or</b> 2 bedroom flat
2 people (not a couple)	2 bedroom flat
1 or 2 adults + 1 child under the age of 2	2 bedroom house
1 or 2 adults + 1 child over the age of 2	2 bedroom house <b>or</b> 2 bedroom flat <b>or</b> 2 bedroom maisonette
1 or 2 adults + 2 or more children <b>or</b> 1 or 2 adults + 1 child & where applicant is expecting another child	3 bedroom house
1 or 2 adults + 2 or more children over the age of 2	3 bedroom house <b>or</b> 3 bedroom flat <b>or</b> 3 bedroom maisonette
1 or 2 adults + 3 or more children	3 bedroom house <b>or</b> 4 bedroom house (but the size of the family & need of the family will take priority)
Single person (age 60 or over)	1 bedroom flat <b>or</b> bungalow (designated) or 2 bedroom flat <b>or</b> bungalow (designated) - but only if medical needs dictate this
Couple (where at least one applicant is age 60 or over)	1 bedroom flat or bungalow (designated) <b>or</b> 2 bedroom flat or bungalow (designated)
Single person with access to 1 child	1 bedroom flat
Single person with access to 2 or more children	May be considered for a 2 bedroom flat
Couple with access to child/children	2 bedroom flat



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It is not possible to predict how long it will take an applicant to be offered a transfer to another property as this depends on the type of property that meets their needs and the areas of choice.

In order to give you a better idea of how often our properties become vacant and available for letting, we collate lists of

how many different types of properties we have for rent and in which areas of the Borough. These lists show how many of these properties have come available and been let in the past year. These lists are currently being updated but previous data can be obtained from Customer services or at [www.melton.gov.uk](http://www.melton.gov.uk)

## How your Council is performing?

### Void turnaround times

The table below shows the average number of days it takes for a property to become fit for new tenants to move into. The target is 25 days. It should be noted that Melton Borough Council have received a high number of voids this year and many of them are "development voids" whereby extensive work is required to bring them up to the decent homes standard.

	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08
<b>Excluding Development Voids</b>	70.40	93.50	20.00
<b>Including Development Voids</b>	157.90	92.69	69.00
Target (days)	25	25	25

### Quality Assurance Checks

The table below shows the percentage of tenants who completed a survey who are either "satisfied or very satisfied" with the general repairs service.

	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08
<b>Satisfied/Very Satisfied</b>	95%	100%	100%
Target	95%	95%	95%

### Rent Figures

The table below shows the percentage of rent collected and compares these figures with the previous year.

Date	2008/9 %	2007/8%	Difference %
26/10/2008	93.40	94.65	-1.25
30/11/2008	94.34	94.93	-0.59
28/12/2008	94.78	95.52	-0.74

### Anti-Social Behaviour Cases

The table below shows the percentage of Anti-Social Behaviour cases and the time they are dealt in. Category A means the matter is urgent and needs to be dealt with in 1 working day. Category B means that the matter should be dealt with in 5 working days.

	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08
<b>Category A in within 1 day</b>	100%	100%	100%
<b>Category B in within 5 days</b>	87%	89%	86%
Target	100%	100%	100%



# What is Housing and Council Tax Benefit?

**Housing and Council Tax Benefit are means tested benefits that may be awarded to you or your partner to help pay your rent and Council Tax for the home you live in if you have a low income - for example if you or your partner work full time, part time or are self-employed and get a low wage or if you or your partner receive any other State Benefits.**

The amount of Benefit awarded is worked out by taking into account you and your partners' total income and savings, the make up of your household and the amount of rent and Council Tax you have to pay.

You or your partner must also have savings of less than £16,000. However if you are over 60 and receive Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) there is no restriction on the amount of savings you can have.

The Benefit Regulations are set by Central Government and the Council must administer the scheme within the legislation.

The regulations can be complicated and are dependant on your individual family make up and circumstances. The following tables have been designed to give you a rough guide as to how much Benefit you may be entitled to.

## **How can I claim Housing and Council Tax Benefit?**

To claim the above Benefits you must complete an application form. The form is quite long and asks for a lot of information. Please take the time to read all the notes on the form to make sure you complete it correctly. You will also need to provide documentary proof of you and your partners (if applicable) Identity and National Insurance number and documentary proof of entries made on the application.

If you don't complete it correctly it can delay the processing of your claim. Benefit claims will normally start from the Monday after we receive them. Therefore do not delay in handing in your application just because you cannot provide all the supporting evidence.

If you get or have applied for Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Pension Credits the Department of Work and Pensions should have taken an application for Housing and Council Tax Benefit from you already. If you want to claim both Housing and Council Tax Benefit you only need to complete one application form.

You can request/obtain an application form by

- Visiting our centres at Sysonby Street and Dalby Road, Melton Mowbray
- Telephoning our Customer Service Centre on **01664 502502**
- Emailing our Customer Service Centre - **customerservices@melton.gov.uk**

If you are unable to complete the application form yourself and cannot come to our offices we can arrange for someone to help you in your home.

## **Help us to help you**

We are always looking to improve our service - HOW CAN WE DO THIS FOR YOU? We would like to know what you think, this could include things like our forms, information available, time taken to deal with your claim or how you contact us. As part of this we would like to start a customer focus group, if you are interested please let us know.

You can do any of the above by ringing our Senior Benefit Officer Jackie MacSporran on 01664 502474 or writing to her at *Phoenix House, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, LE13 0UL.*

Here are some further examples to help you - please remember they are only intended to be a guide, for further information please do not hesitate to contact our Customer Services team on **01664 502502**.

### Example 1

A couple aged 25 and 26 have 2 children aged 4 and 6. The total joint income they have coming into the household is £327.00 per week. This is made up of earnings, child benefit, child tax credit and working tax credit. They also have a total of £2000.00 in various bank and building society accounts. They live in a council owned property with a Council Tax band of B. The eligible rent is £70.00 per week (NB some charges are not eligible for Benefit ie water rates and the Council Tax is £21.70 per week.

Based on the basic details above they may be entitled to **£24.58 per week** Housing Benefit and **£7.72 per week** in Council Tax Benefit.

### Example 2

A couple aged 66 and 68 have a total joint income of £360.00 per week coming into their household. This is made up of 1 occupational pension, 2 state pensions and one of the couple also receives Attendance Allowance. They also have £5000 in premium bonds. They live next door to the couple above therefore the eligible rent is also £70.00 per week (NB some charges are not eligible for Benefit ie water rates and the Council Tax is £21.70 per week.

Based on the basic details above they may be entitled to **£16.93 per week** Housing Benefit and **£5.37 per week** in Council Tax Benefit.

### Example 3

A single man aged 35 works in a local bakery and earns a total of £120.00 per week after tax and national insurance deductions have been made. He has no other income but has £500 in his current account. He lives in a Council owned flat with a Council Tax band of A with a single person discount that has been applied. His eligible rent is £65.00 per week and his Council Tax is £13.95 per week

Based on the basic details above he may be entitled to **£32.05 per week** Housing Benefit and **£3.81 per week** in Council Tax Benefit.

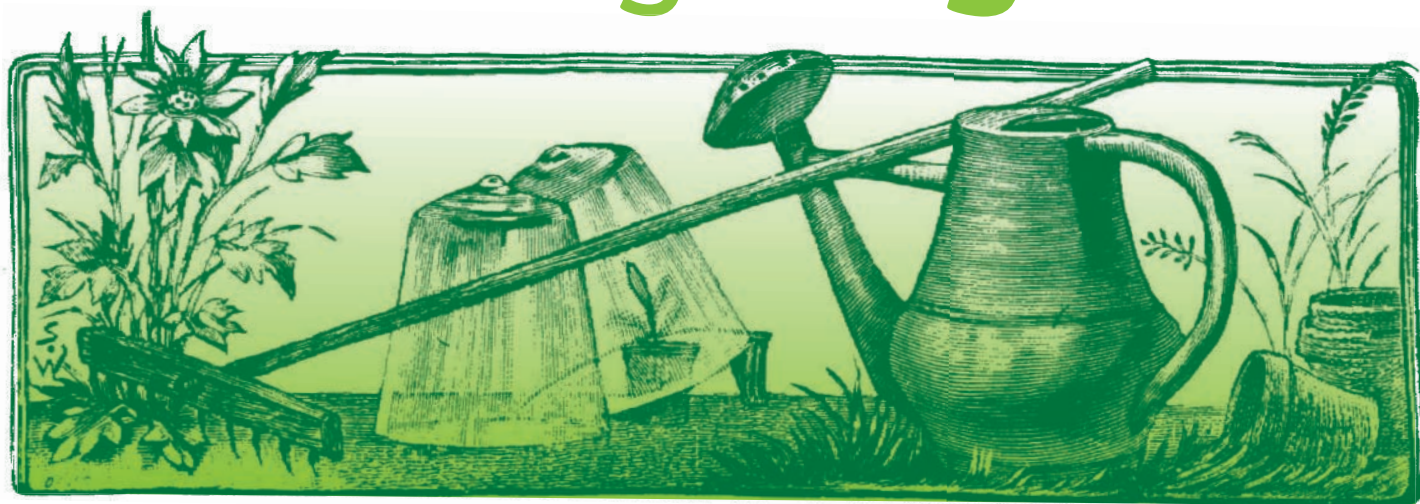
### Example 4

A widow aged 69 has a total of £200.00 per week. This is made up of a state pension and 2 occupational pensions she also has £1300 in her current account and £2000 in her building society account. She also lives in a Council owned flat with a Council Tax band of A with a single person discount that has been applied. Her eligible rent is £60.00 per week and her Council Tax is £13.95 per week

Based on the basic details above she may be entitled to **£27.76 per week** Housing Benefit and **£4.03 per week** in Council Tax Benefit.



# Gardening Angels



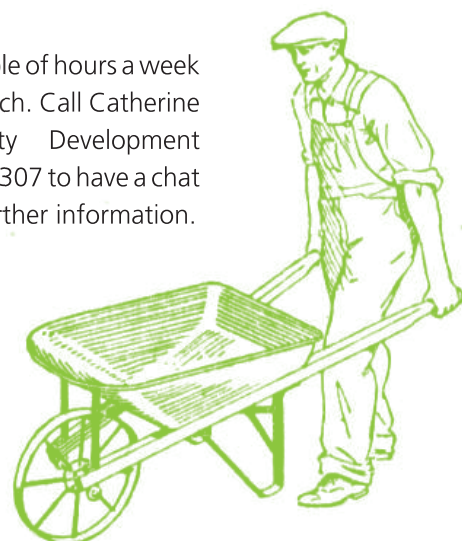
**Volunteer Gardening Angels have started digging weeding and tidying up some local gardens recently. They are taking part in a project which aims to help older people or people with disabilities have their garden maintained and kept tidy.**

The project has been set up because maintaining a garden can become difficult in later life and it can be the beginning of a road that leads from independent living into a care home. Houses with overgrown gardens can signal vulnerability and therefore be more likely to be burgled. The new Gardening project co-ordinated by Voluntary Action Melton provides an innovative solution to the problem by pairing up green fingered people with older people or people with a disability who cannot cope with their garden.

Garden referrals are coming through different organizations such as Latham House, Age Concern and Melton Borough Council or from the individuals themselves. The scheme does focus on those most in need and those who cannot afford to pay for a gardener. If you are older and/or have a disability and need help with garden maintenance then please get in touch with a on 01664 485307.

The scheme can only work if people keep donating their time to do the gardening work. It is a rewarding job helping someone else and you do not need to be a gardening expert as Voluntary Action Melton will provide training and all the tools. Jerry Hefford a volunteer gardener says 'A few hours a week in the fresh air helping transform a garden area which has become too difficult is being a good Samaritan and reduces their burden'

If you can spare a couple of hours a week then please get in touch. Call Catherine Hallinan, Community Development Worker on 01664 485307 to have a chat and find out some further information.



# Mutual Exchanges

Would you like a move? Is your home too big for your needs?  
Have you ever considered a mutual exchange?

If you are a secure tenant you have the right to "exchange" (swap) your home with another Council or a housing association tenant.

You must seek permission from your landlord before exchanging your home and your rent account must be clear at the time of the exchange.

If you are interested in this scheme and wish to register, please contact Customer Services on **01664 502502** or via **www.melton.gov.uk**

To view the current Mutual Exchange register go to **www.melton.gov.uk** or alternatively ask for a paper copy from Customer Services.



## Calling All Youth Sports Teams

As part of the on-going involvement with the community, TFEC are looking to sponsor a junior sports team. We would like to buy some training T Shirts for a youth team in turn for our logo being printed on them.

Do you have a team that needs new T Shirts? If so, please contact Natalie James, Resident Involvement Officer, Melton Borough Council on **01664 502481** or email [njames@melton.gov.uk](mailto:njames@melton.gov.uk) or contact John Skerritt, TFEC Chair on **01664 569446**.



## Having Your Say

The Melton Community Safety Partnership (which includes the police, fire service and Melton Borough Council) has recently purchased some new equipment to facilitate consultation with the community. The new touch-screen computer will allow residents in the Borough to provide feedback on the community safety issues affecting them and allow the partnership to inform the community of new community safety issues in the Borough.

The new system will be coming to a children's centre or supermarket near you soon - so have your say and tell us what to do!!



## Congratulations - A new residents group in Asfordby

A new group has been established at Bradgate Flats supported housing in Asfordby aimed at giving residents a much greater involvement in fund raising and the organisation of social events.

The Bradgate Flats Residents Social Committee first met in October last year. Meetings are held monthly in the community room where new ideas are discussed and future events decided upon and planned.

Mr Addicott said, "I am very pleased with the success of this new venture, it has given residents the opportunity to become involved in the management of events here at Bradgate Flats. I hope it will ensure the continuation of an active social scene well into the future".

One new idea that has proved popular with residents and visitors alike is the weekly coffee morning with sausage and bacon rolls on sale. Food is served from 9.30 every Thursday morning. Other activities include Bingo on Tuesdays at 7.30pm and Thursdays at 2pm, ALL WELCOME!

*Pictured below is support officer Chris Addicott with committee members Mary Such, Margaret Clark, Bob Powell, Ron Green, Ivy Jordan, Peter Smith and Muriel Ellard.*



## Congratulations

Congratulations to **Mrs Huckerby of Melton** who successfully spotted ten differences in the last competition. She won **£20 worth of store vouchers** of her choice.

If you would like a copy of this newsletter in another language, Braille or audio cassette please contact Melton Borough Council on **01664 502502**.

## Wordsearch

Find all the words listed above in the grid of letters and you could be the winner of high street vouchers of your choice. **1st Prize £25 - 2nd Prize £15 - 3rd Prize £10.**

Send correct entries to: Natalie James, Resident Involvement Officer, Melton Borough Council, Council Offices, Nottingham Road, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE13 0UL

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- Administration
- Allocation
- Bank
- Bathroom
- Benefits
- Boiler
- Bus
- Choice Based Lettings
- Community
- Council
- Electricity
- Environment
- Gas
- Home
- Local Authority
- Money
- Offices
- Pay Day
- Planning
- Policy
- Rebate
- Rent
- Repairs
- River
- Services
- Telephone
- Town
- Value
- Village
- Waiting List
- Walk