

Door to Door

Your local tenant magazine

November 2023



From the Broadland Team!

Customer Services Phone Lines and Opening Hours

Date	Fri 22nd Dec	Mon 25th Dec	Tues 26th Dec	Wed 27th Dec	Thurs 28th Dec	Fri 29th Dec	Mon 01st Jan	Tues 02nd Jan
Opening Times	9am–5pm	Closed	Closed	8am–5pm	Closed	Closed	Closed	8am–5pm

If you need an emergency repair over the festive period, please call our out-of-hours service on 0303 303 0003



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Living 2023**
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We are listening, get in touch



broadlandgroup.org

Reaching the 60th Milestone!

We recently celebrated our 60th anniversary at Shipfield, our scheme in Norwich founded in 1963. Tenants joined us with a barbeque, cake and a celebratory speech from Chief Executive, Michael Newey. The event took place on Shipfield's green, bringing together the community, past and present board members, and our members in celebration.



"It's completely sensible and right to be here at Shipfield today because this was our very first scheme. I think it was a statement of intent and ambition building the scheme. It was very much about saying – We're here. We're going to provide decent homes at low rents to people in this community."

Michael Newey, Chief Executive



Community Inspectors

Our Community Inspectors have carried out scheme inspections looking at these 4 areas:

- Potential slips, trips & falls
- Gardening services
- Cleaning services
- Health & safety

Love where you live? This is a great opportunity to make a difference to your scheme.

Interested in getting involved? Find out more on our website at 'Get Involved'

TAP (Tenant Assurance Panel)

We're looking for new members!

Want to make a difference? We're searching for new members to join our Tenant Assurance Panel!

As a TAP member, you will shape our services and represent all tenants.

Mystery Shoppers

Mystery Shopping training has taken place in Norwich, Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn earlier this year. Our Mystery Shoppers look at:

- Empty homes before new tenants move in, ensuring we meet our standards.
- Customer Service and our Out of Hours service

Being a Mystery Shopper, you get to work with us and help plan the best way to improve our services. As a thank you, we will reward you with Love2Shop vouchers!



Cost of Living: Second Payment 2023

Help for Households

In 2023/2024, there are three payments to support households:

- 1st Payment: £301 (25th April - 17th May)
- 2nd Payment: £300 (31st October - 19th November)
- 3rd Payment: £299 (Spring 2024)

Millions to receive

£300

Cost of Living Payment
between **31 October**
and **19 November**

Help for Households

Eligibility:

- People on means-tested benefits like Universal Credit, Pension Credit, JSA, ESA, Income Support.
- Tax credit recipients: Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

To qualify, you must have been eligible for these benefits from **18th August - 17th September** or had a payment in that period.

No need to apply – Those that are eligible will be paid automatically. You do not need to contact DWP or HMCR.



Support over the Winter period:

Norfolk Libraries Winter Warm and Well

From **Monday 16th October**, all libraries will offer:

- **Free hot water bottles and blankets** available for anyone.
- **Free toiletries bag** containing deodorant, shampoo bodywash and toothpaste.
- **Free 'Tricky Period To Go' bag** including period cups, washable pads and period pants.
- **Free slow cooker courses** in partnership with Adult Learning (available at selected libraries)

Foodbanks

For locations of foodbanks in your area, head to our website 'Tenant Support.'



Service Charge Letter

If you pay a Service Charge, you should have received a letter at the end of September which provided the actual cost of providing services where you live for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

This letter was for information only and you do not need to do anything with the letter. We have received some queries from residents, and we are working through providing answers to these. Thank you for your patience whilst we do this.

We are working on improving the information we provide residents about Service Charges because we know it's important to you. Other improvements we are working on include:

- **Improving Website Information:** This for residents who have access to the internet. This has already started, please view and send any feedback on how we can improve this to tenantengagement@broadlandgroup.org
- **Publishing Service Standards:** For cleaning and grounds maintenance to residents who receive this service. We are including a way for you to give us feedback on the quality of the service. We are aiming to achieve this by end of **March 2024**.
- **Improving Information and Language:** Of the service charge information we send out with the rent notification letter. We are receiving some clear feedback about some of the service charge headings we use, an example is **Provision of Furniture & Equipment** which we will be changing next year following resident feedback.

If you have any queries about the letter you received or Service Charges in general, please contact us by email servicecharges@broadlandgroup.org or contact our **Customer Services Team**.

Legionnaires Disease

What is Legionnaires disease?

Legionnaires disease is a potentially fatal form of pneumonia that affects the lungs. The risk of infection increases with age, but some are at higher risk including:

- People over 45 years of age
- Smokers and heavy drinkers
- People suffering from chronic respiratory or kidney disease, diabetes, lung or heart disease.
- Anyone with an impaired immune system.

How can you get Legionnaires disease?

You can get Legionnaires disease if you breath in tiny droplets of water containing bacteria that cause the infection. It is usually caught in places like hotels, hospitals, or offices where the bacteria have got into the water supply.



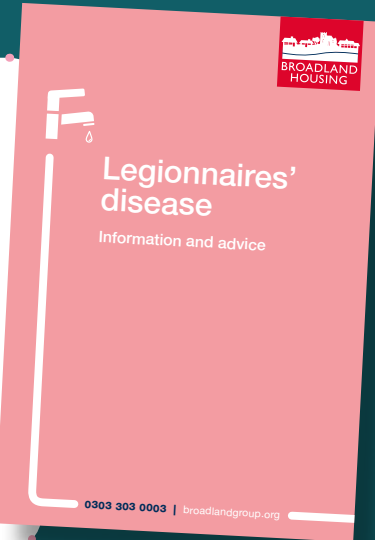
You can get the disease from things like:

- Air conditioning systems
- Humidifiers
- Spa pools and hot tubs
- Taps and showers that are not used often.

What you can do to prevent Legionnaires disease?

- Run all taps and shower heads for at least 2 minutes every week to flush standing water out of the pipes. If you have been away for some time, step outside the room while you do this.
- Clean scale and other deposits from shower heads and taps every 3-6 months.
- Keep the hot water in your boiler system at a minimum of 60°C.
- Disconnect and empty any hosepipes when not in use.
- Contact Broadland immediately if you notice anything unusual about your water supply eg. discolouration, sludge and odour.

For more information, visit [Contact us > Download](#) leaflets where you can download our **Legionnaires disease leaflet**.



Meet Jenny! Our New Chair

We are delighted to introduce Jenny Watson CBE as our new Chair. With an impressive track record including leadership roles at organisations like The Electoral Commission, The Equal Opportunities Commission, and The Financial Ombudsman Service, as well as her current roles at The House of St. Barnabas and the Norfolk Community Foundation, Jenny brings a wealth of experience.

Jenny Watson takes over from Chris Ewbank, who served as Chair for six years. Regarding her appointment, Jenny said:



"I am really pleased to be joining Broadland's board at such a critical time for the housing sector. I look forward to working with our tenants, partners, and the communities in Norfolk and North Suffolk to address homelessness and the demand for new, affordable housing."

Jenny Watson CBE

AGM 2023: Maintaining Our Purpose



At our recent Annual General Meeting (AGM), we reaffirmed our commitment to addressing housing needs and homelessness. Despite significant financial challenges, Michael Newey, Chief Executive, assured a continued focus during the cost-of-living crisis and rising interest rates.

The AGM highlighted Broadland's ongoing efforts to balance managing existing homes, delivering quality services, and building new homes to meet growing housing demand, all while ensuring sustainability.

To see the AGM Key Statistics, Latest news: broadlandgroup.org/broadlandgroup-annual-general-meeting-2023/

Get Involved!

HOP Overview 2023

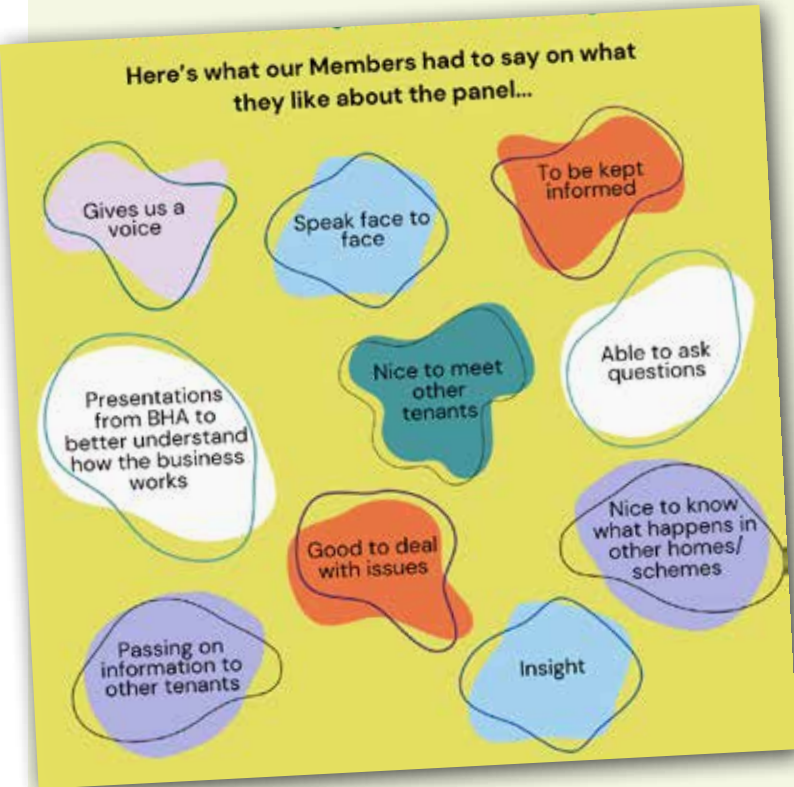
Tenants from our Sheltered Housing and over 55's schemes have regularly been a part of the HOP (Housing for Over 55's panel). Over 2023, Chris Poole, our HOP Chair, has led the meetings and been joined by 18 regular attendees!

The group have been looking at:

- **Friends Against Scams:** Aims to protect and prevent people from becoming victims of scams.
- **Anti-social Behaviour:** What we can and can't do.
- **Repairs:** Communication around repairs and Broadland's vision on taking the service forward.
- **Warm Spaces:** Information on warm spaces around the county, digital sessions, and local approved handyperson services.
- **Broadland Workforce:** Responsibilities of the Scheme Managers and Neighbourhood Officers.
- **Safeguarding:** What Broadland does to safeguard tenants and employees.
- **Age UK:** Information and advice service, activities and groups, volunteers, and befriending service.
- **Policies:** GDPR Regulations, Tenant Privacy Policy, and Next of Kin information.
- **Health and Safety:** Security on schemes.
- **Electrical Updates:** Upgrades and scheme lighting audits.



Why join the HOP Panel?



We welcome tenants living in our Sheltered Housing and Over 55's schemes to join!

Get in touch via tenantengagement@broadlandgroup.org or call 01603 750113

Dates for the HOP meetings in 2024:

Tuesday 30th January	11:00am – 2:00pm
Tuesday 26th March	11:00am – 2:00pm
Tuesday 21st May	11:00am – 2:00pm
Tuesday 30th July	11:00am – 2:00pm
Tuesday 24th September	11:00am – 2:00pm

Venues to be confirmed.

Provisional Dates could be subject to change.

Update!



Repairs Service

Over the last year or so, from our Community Conversations and Out and About door knocks and events, we received lots of feedback on our repairs service.

We have been listening and reviewing this feedback and put together an action plan to start to put things right and provide a better service to our tenants.

Some of the things we have been looking at so far are:

- Better control of contractor spending to drive down overall costs.
- Contacting tenants the day before an electrical test to ensure they are going to be in.
- More staff training to diagnose repairs when calling into customer services.
- Reviewing our out-of-hours service to ensure it is working as well as we want it to be.

- Reviewing our empty homes policy & procedure to ensure it is clear and consistently delivered.
- Reviewing our repair appointment text messages to tenants, so that tenants receive better information on the repair they have booked.
- We will shortly be asking all operatives to call tenants to let them know they are on the way.

What's still to come:

- We have had a lot of feedback on clearing gutters and drains. We are looking at putting a small team in place to be able to do this.
- More post-inspections of bigger repairs to ensure standards are met.
- Communication workshop with tenants on their repair journey and what tenants would like to see.

This is just a sample of some of the improvements we have planned. We will keep you posted on progress.

Repairs Timescales

In the rent statement you received in February 2023, Michael Newey gave an update on Broadland's current financial situation. We have had to make some hard decisions, one of which was to continue to put on hold our Category E repairs.

We wanted to take this opportunity to re-assure you that we are monitoring the budget situation very closely and will give you a further update in your next rent statement in February 2024.



If you would like a paper copy, please contact tenantengagement@broadlandgroup.org and we will send one in the post for you.

Category E Routine Repairs - within 365 days include but are not limited to:

Repairs & Replacements

- Internal doors
- Boxed in areas
- Gate or Fencing

Damages

- Bath panels
- Skirting or Architrave
- Bollard or Parking posts
- Fascias, Soffits and Bargeboard

Other

- Radiator is rusty
- Painting works
- Misted glass in door or windows



For more information on Category E repairs and what this could mean for you, please refer to our website [How we prioritise repairs](https://www.broadlandgroup.org) – [broadlandgroup.org](https://www.broadlandgroup.org)

Spooktacular at Canary Quay

Things got spooky at our Spooktacular at Canary Quay! Tenants joined us for a special Halloween themed Out and About, allowing tenants to speak with their Neighbourhood Officer and have some themed fun. We had Halloween arts and crafts, facepainting and delicious churros from the fantastic, Churros and Chorizo!



Around and about

Dementia Friends Session –
An Alzheimer’s Society Initiative



Do you know what Dementia is?
Or do you worry about memory loss
for you or your relatives?

We held an interactive ‘Become a Dementia Friend’ session for our tenants, lead by one of the Local Service Managers from **Alzheimer’s Society**. We learnt about dementia and how it affects a person. The initiative aims to transform the way the nation thinks, acts, and talks about the condition.

The session lasted an hour with people working in small groups putting themselves in the shoes of someone living with the condition. The group talked about what we can all do to help make our communities more dementia friendly.

Dementia Friends is open to anyone who wants to help people with dementia in their community. Find out more information or **become a Dementia Friend** at dementiafriends.org.uk



Woodcote Arts & Craft Showcase

At our Sheltered Housing Scheme in Hethersett, we held a Tenant Art and Craft Showcase! It was a fantastic opportunity for our tenants to share their skills and enjoy friendly chats with others at their scheme.



Meet Anne!
She has always worked in the shoe industry and has been binding shoes for around 15 years.



Meet Eileen!
She has always knitted as a hobby and is currently knitting Christmas gifts for her great granddaughters.



Meet Nigel!
He loves to cross-stitch as a hobby and make pieces for friends. Nigel has been cross-stitching for 10-11 years!



Meet Joe!
He started his model making journey a long time ago. The largest boat (as photo) took around 2-3 weeks to make.



Meet Mick!
He loves model making and has always been interested in planes. His largest model took 6 years on and off to make!



Meet Nick!
He creates pencil or pen and ink drawings of places in Norfolk and more! Nick went to art college and was awarded funding to start-up his business.

Want to get involved? We invite you to join us for future events and be a part of your scheme’s community!

Save More this Christmas

Christmas is a time of celebration. You eat, drink and be merry, but that can mean spending a little extra in the winter months. However, that isn't the only thing we spend more on...

Believe it or not, in the UK we use almost **£66 million** of electricity on Christmas day alone – that's **402Gwhs of electricity**. That's enough electricity to light the Eiffel Tower for 50 years!

Not only is it energy we're consuming more of at Christmas time, on average we create **30% more waste** than we do for the rest of the year.

So, there are plenty of things we can do, big or small, to save on your bills and have a more sustainable Christmas.

Recycling and Food Waste

How can you reduce waste this Christmas?

- Utilise your leftovers
- Recycle Christmas crackers
- Fix and reuse broken fairy lights
- Try eco-friendly wrapping paper alternatives
- Buy vouchers or gift cards as gifts
- Remove plastic bows and ribbons (to reuse) before recycling wrapping paper
- Compost peelings and leftover veggies

Energy Saving

LED Fairy Lights: When it comes to Christmas lights, research shows that incandescent bulbs can cost up to **83% more than LEDs**. Upgrading to LEDs could save you money and will give you an impressive **25,000 hours** of festive glow.

Turn Down the Thermostat: The ideal temperature is between **18 and 21 degrees**, and the general principle is that for every degree you turn your heating down, you could save around **£80 a year**.

Layer Up: Before heading to the thermostat, pop on another layer to warm up.

Keep Oven Door Shut: Try to keep your oven doors shut when cooking Christmas dinner, the heat will escape meaning your oven has to work harder to maintain the temperature.

Turn off Plugs: Chances are you might have several electrical items plugged in and on stand-by currently and they use more power than you think. You could save **£35 a year** just by turning things off at the wall.

Energy Efficient Appliances: Thinking of buying a new household appliance in the January sales? Make sure you choose an energy efficient model and look for the energy rating sticker - aim for **A+++ rating**.

Affordable Gift Guide

Giving gifts to family and friends this Christmas doesn't need to cost the earth. You hear it time and time again, but it's the thought that counts! It's all about quality over quantity.

Try these Tips:

- **Make your own wrapping paper:** Newspaper, cloth or handmade print on paper
- **Recycle Christmas Cards:** Make your own small tags with card
- **Plan gifts and budgets in advance:** Set yourself the challenge of staying in budget

Make Your Own Gift Sets

Making your own gift sets is a fantastic way of saving some pennies rather than buying pre-made. Bundle up a couple of items and make something your friends and family will love and remember!



Here's a few ideas:

S'mores Gift Set

What you need:

- 1 bag marshmallows
- 1 packet of digestive biscuits
- 1 bar of chocolate
- Ribbon or small basket (to gift in)



Pamper Night Gift Set

What you need:

- 1 sheet mask
- 1 bag of bath salts
- 1 box of chamomile tea
- 1 scented candle
- Ribbon or small basket (to gift in)



Hot Chocolate Gift Set

What you need:

- 1 pot of instant hot chocolate
- 1 carton long life milk
- 1 bag of mini marshmallows
- Festive mug (optional)
- Ribbon or small basket (to gift in)



Staying Safe this Christmas

Fire Safety in your Home DOs

- Blow out candles and tealights at night
- Keep tea towels away from the cooker hob
- Check cables and power sockets for damage
- Test your smoke alarms at **least** weekly
- Make sure cigarettes are put out properly
- Take care around open fireplaces

DON'Ts

- Overload sockets. Stick to one plug per socket
- Attach decorations to lights or heaters
- Leave cooking pans or candles unattended
- Leave tealights on a plastic surface
- Place candles near your Christmas tree
- Leave children or pets alone in the kitchen

Firework Safety

Fireworks can be great fun families, not just around Bonfire Night, but also Christmas and New Year's Eve. The advice is that the safest place to enjoy fireworks is at a large public display. Fewer people are injured here than at a smaller family or private party. We strongly encourage that you attend public displays to enjoy fireworks the safest way possible.

Test it Tuesday!

Do you regularly test your smoke or carbon monoxide alarm?

We recommend testing your alarms weekly. If you find fault, please report it to 0303 303 0003 and we will repair or replace it ASAP.

Important Checks in Your Home!



Gas Safety

A **faulty gas boiler** can cause deadly carbon monoxide poisoning. A **gas leak** can result in a devastating explosion and fire. We visit your home **every year** to carry out a gas safety check.

Please make sure you are at home for your gas or electrical safety check. If we are repeatedly not able to gain access to your home, we may have to start legal proceedings against you.

If you need to rearrange your appointment, please call 0303 303 0003 ASAP.



Electric Safety

Nearly 90% of electrical fires in the home are caused by kitchen appliances, lighting, portable heaters, and TVs. We check all our properties every 5 years to ensure all your wiring and home electrics are safe.



EICR Check

An EICR check stands for **Electrical Installation Condition Report**. This report requires regular visits to ensure safety requirements for tenants.



Stock Surveys

The Government and Regulator require Social Landlords to visit all their homes to ensure conditions are to an acceptable standard in line with Decent Homes. Our Stock Surveys allows us to view all the key components for assessment and assist with future planning of their replacement when due.

You **MUST** allow access. Failure to do so can lead to action against the tenancy, by way of injunction.

In each home, this includes but is not just restricted to:

- Kitchens
- External Doors
- Bathrooms
- Windows
- Levels of Insulation



Complaints Handling Update

Our Self-Assessment

We have checked how we handle complaints, which we are required to do so by the **Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code**. You can find the report on our website **Complaints > performance and self-assessment**

This assessment shows how we deal with complaints. In most areas, we're meeting the requirements, but we need to improve in these ways:

-  We need to spot when feedback shows there is a complaint.
-  We need to be meeting the timescales for responding to complaints.
-  We must show how we have made things better because of complaints.

We have seen a drop in number of complaints recently, we are experiencing some delays in responding to complaints and we would like to apologise if you have been affected by this.

We are in the process of recruiting a Complaints Manager with interviews being held in mid-November. The priority for this role will be improving the response times for complaints so we can meet the 10 working days as set out in the **Complaint Handling Code**.

Landlord's Report

We have received our annual landlords report for 2022/23 published by the Housing Ombudsman. You can find the report on the Housing Ombudsman website.

This report tells us about complaints the **Housing Ombudsman** made decisions on this year. The report identified that we have a high maladministration rate, and we are currently viewing the information to identify any learnings from it. This information will be presented to the **Tenant Assurance Panel** at a future meeting.

Please remember that you can contact the **Housing Ombudsman** anytime through:

Website:
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Telephone:
0300 111 3000

Address:
Housing Ombudsman Service,
PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ

Shutdown of Radio-Teleswitch Service

Many homes use **Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS) meters to control electricity for heating and hot water, with cheaper rates during off-peak times. RTS meters are set to shut down on March 31st, 2024. Energy suppliers are replacing them with smart meters that can handle dual-rate tariffs before the shutdown.**

Your energy supplier should reach out to schedule a smart meter installation, but if your meter hasn't been replaced yet, **contact them to confirm plans**. Not upgrading your meter means losing access to cheaper tariffs like Economy 7, which could increase your heating and hot water costs.

Please note that some energy providers may not install a smart meter if there are signal issues or if your electrical meter is housed in a metal box. Upgrading your meter to include an internal time

clock can provide an alternative to a smart meter, and this decision depends on your energy provider's policies. The main goal is to ensure your electrical meter is ready for the RTS shutdown to avoid unnecessary expenses.



Not upgrading your meter means losing access to cheaper tariffs like Economy 7, which could increase your heating and hot water costs.

Tackling Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse affects everyone, including those in same-sex relationships.

Since 2022, we have been working towards **DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance)** accreditation, sponsored by **Norfolk County Council**. DAHA is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse and is the only project in the UK offering domestic abuse accreditation for the housing sector.

For more information, visit our website '**Our Values**'.

Get Support

- **Refuge:** 24-hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247
- **Respect:** Men's Advice Helpline 0808 801 0327

- **Galop:** LGBTQ+ Helpline 0800 999 5428
- **Bright Sky App:** Free to download and available in 5 languages
- **broadlandgroup.org > Tenant Support**

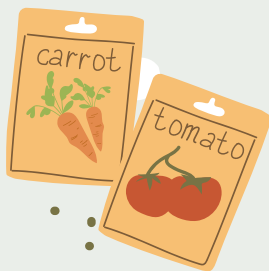


In the garden with Jane

Greetings to all tenants who love growing plants! Whether that be to eat, look or smell beautiful.

You may have a garden, allotment or indoor plants, or anything that holds a growing medium. I'm sure that whatever you've grown this year has given you pleasure.

You might have kept it to simple herbs in a window box or a tomato plant on a windowsill, so if you are a first-time grower, well done! Never mind if they didn't come up to expectations, only a couple of months before you can start all over again!



Choosing Your Seeds:

I think a nice thing to do on a cold wet miserable day is to settle down with a cuppa and flick through the latest collections of **seed catalogues**. They're full of wonderful ideas of what to grow in the next season.

When you place your order, the plant nursery will hold the order until the correct planting time. For example, potatoes, raspberry canes and plug plants. Plug plants can be sent through the post and are ready for planting when they arrive. This is a great way to get established plants if you don't have space for propagating seeds.



Preparing for Winter



Outdoors, get a head start on tidying up. Now is a good time to clear up perennial weeds and give your shed, tools, and garden a good once-over.

Indoors, Patios and Balconies

Sweep and clean flat surfaces, shift outdoor plants to sunny spots and check on your indoor greenery. Some dusting and leaf shine goes a long way.

Houseplants that Combat Condensation

Certain houseplants help reduce moisture and the risk of dampness and mold. They thrive in low maintenance, requiring minimal watering.

4 Great Options:

- Peace Lily (Mildly toxic)
- English Ivy (Toxic)
- Snake Plant (Low-maintenance)
- Palms (Effective moisture absorbers)

Christmas Plants:

Last year's poinsettia is still going strong? My secret: a bright windowsill. I'll kickstart my amaryllis in early November, aiming for holiday blooms.

I do hope you have picked up a few hints and tips from my column over the past year. If there is anything you would like me to address or research for you, please let me know.

Have a lovely Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Bye for now,
Jane



Peace Lily



English Ivy



Snake Plant



Palms

Spot the candy canes

Get ready for some festive fun as you dive into the pages of our Door to Door magazine!

Can you spot
all the hidden
candy canes?



**Congratulations
Mrs Bramble!**

**Well done to Mrs Bramble who won our
August Door to Door autumn crossword!**



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How to play:

1. Look through our magazine and keep an eye out for the candy canes. Count as you go!
2. When you think you have found them all, send us your entry with the total number via email to tenantengagement@broadlandgroup.org

Prizes:

Get your detective skills ready!

To celebrate our 60th Anniversary, we are giving away 20 tote bags to 20 lucky winners!

Closing date:

Submit your entries by
22nd December for
a chance to win.

