

InTouch

Issue 49 Winter 2022



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WELCOME

Happy new year to all of our readers and residents. We hope you've had a wonderful Christmas and holiday break.

The new year offers us all a chance to reflect upon our lives. It's a great opportunity to make a change or set yourself a new goal.

In this edition, you can read all about a pioneering new service designed to help everyone get into work or education.

The Skills Launchpad Plymouth was started to help people make the best decisions for long-term employment aims. This is far from the usual job search, but rather, a service that aims to be a career companion, to make the most out of your employment prospects.

We have our *Plymspirational* interview with Pen Farthing, a former Royal Marine who founded a dogs and cats charity in Afghanistan. Read all about how he was one of the last people to safely leave the country.

We have a new feature called *Your Patch, Your Page* - where we hand the magazine over to you – the reader – to tell us what you want from In Touch.

As autumn has turned to winter, what better time to brighten up your day and show you some of the wonderful flowers that have been planted at the Devonport Towers. There's more colour as we catch up with two Plymouth artists who have transformed Colin Campbell Court with stunning artworks commissioned by PCH.

As ever, we have one eye on the environment with some news on our big plans for big plants; PCH is planting lots of trees in green spaces and doing our bit to tackle climate change and give wildlife a home.

And you can read about one brave and inspirational resident who won a national award for standing up to antisocial behaviour in her community.



Nick

Nick Lewis, Chair of the Board

COLOUR CAMPBELL COURT

A splash of colour can go a long way to put smiles on faces. Which is why PCH commissioned two local artists to brighten up Colin Campbell Court last month, with some spectacular results.

A tired looking alleyway which links the area to Western Approach now has been transformed along with a drab looking corner at the entrance of the car park.

A bright and cheery mural of faces now welcomes shoppers to the area. Artist Rosie Cunningham, who created the mural, was very happy with her work. She said: "I wanted something to represent the diversity of local people in the Colin Campbell Court area."

"Passers-by have been saying they love it and that it's colourful and cheerful. . . I think I met the brief!"

The artist received help from paint business, Ian Williams, as part of a social value project.

Rich Turner, Business Manager at Ian Williams was happy to see some additional colour in town. He said: "We were more than happy to help Rosie with her artwork. It's a bright and cheery picture, which will bring some smiles to the faces of children as they walk by."

A second piece in the area was painted by artist, John Lily, who themed his work around nature and the importance of trees.

He explained: "The idea was to brighten up a very dark alleyway, I wanted something that had flow to it. It represents a tree, It's not an obvious tree but I chose the bright colours to give the area some vibrancy."

"My piece is meant to capture a tree in the breeze, the colours flow along the wall and I only finished it properly last night."

He added: "I got some great feedback from nearby residents who thought it uplifted the area."



SAVE MONEY ON YOUR HEATING BILLS

This winter, you may have seen headlines about energy bills going up. In many countries, there has been lots of disruption, which has even seen some energy suppliers go out of business in the UK.

But there is some good news: It's important to know that you could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2021 to 2022 under the Warm Home Discount (WHD) Scheme.

The WHD is offered by the government through larger energy suppliers and could make a difference to your outgoing costs.

The Warm Home Discount is £140 and comes off your electricity bill total between October and March. If you're on a prepay meter, you'll usually be sent a top-up voucher.

Getting the discount won't affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment either. The scheme is set to run until 2022.

AM I ELIGIBLE FOR THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT?

If you get pension credit, the payment may come automatically.

If you get the guarantee credit element of pension credit you should get the warm home discount automatically, provided your energy supplier is part of the scheme (all firms with more than 150,000 customers will offer it) and your name (or your partner's) was on your energy bill as of 4 July 2021.

You will get the discount from whichever supplier you were with on this date, whether you've switched away from it since or not (if you've since switched away from that firm, Ofgem advises you to check with your old supplier how it'll be paid).

You should receive a letter between October and December confirming when the £140 will be deducted from your energy bill. The letter may also ask you to contact the Warm Home Discount helpline to confirm your details.

If the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) doesn't send you a letter between October and December 2021, or if you're not sure if you qualify as part of the core group, you can call the DWP's Warm Home Discount helpline: 0800 731 0214 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm). The helpline will open on 18 October 2021 and close on 25 March 2022.

ON CERTAIN BENEFITS? YOU MAY QUALIFY, BUT YOU MUST APPLY.

If you're on a low income and on certain means-tested benefits you may be eligible to apply for the Warm Home Discount (all firms with more than 250,000 customers will offer it), but in this scenario, it won't be paid automatically, and you'll need to apply to your energy provider. The full eligibility criteria are as follows.

If you have an annual household income of £16,190 or less and you get child tax credit, or you receive income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance, or you receive income-related employment and support allowance, you're eligible if you have any of the following:

- A disability premium
- A pensioner premium
- A disabled child premium
- Child tax credit that includes a 'disability' or 'severe disability' element
- Parental responsibility of a child aged under five living with you

If you get universal credit and have earned £1,349 or less in at least one month since October 2020, you're eligible if you have any of the following:

- The 'limited capability for work' element (with or without a 'work-related activity' element)
- The 'disabled child' element
- Parental responsibility of a child aged under five living with you

To get the discount you'll need to stay with your supplier until it's paid.

Each energy supplier has their own eligibility for the scheme – including low income, welfare benefits, age and disability.

HOW TO CLAIM THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT

If you believe you might qualify for the discount, you can fill in an application form online at your electricity supplier's website or call them. If you need help, Plymouth Energy Community can do this for you.

If you're part of the 'broader group' of households that need to apply for the Warm Home Discount it's worth getting in your application as soon as possible as it's generally delivered on a first-come, first-served basis, with each supplier having a limited pot of cash to distribute.

Unless you qualify automatically, you will need to apply for the scheme every year.

HOW IS THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT RECEIVED?

The money isn't paid to you directly. A one-off discount of £140 (inclusive of VAT) is taken off your electricity bill total if you qualify for the scheme automatically or have successfully applied. In the future, if you have dual fuel, you will be able to decide if you'd like this taken off your gas account instead. If you are on a pre-payment meter, you can still qualify for the discount and your supplier will tell you how they apply it.

WHICH SUPPLIERS WILL LET YOU APPLY FOR THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT SCHEME 2021/2022

SUPPLIER	CAN I APPLY?
Boost	Yes
British Gas	Yes
Bulb	Yes
E	Yes
E.on	Yes
E.on Next	Yes
EDF	Yes
Octopus Energy	Yes
Ovo Energy	Yes
Scottish Power	Yes
Shell Energy	Yes
So Energy	Opens Autumn
SSE	Yes
Utilitia	18/08/21
Utility Warehouse	Yes

Bristol Energy, Ecotricity and Green Energy UK also provide the WHD Scheme but only to households eligible under the 'core group'

You may still be able to apply for WHD if your supplier has gone bust. Regardless of whether or not your now defunct supplier offered the scheme, you may still be able to apply to the Warm Home Discount. What matters here is:

- Whether you're eligible. This doesn't change if a supplier goes bust, so if you could apply with your old supplier, it's almost certain you'll be eligible with your new one.
- The size of the firm, as the smallest don't offer it. As we mentioned above, most small firms don't offer the Warm Home Discount, it's only those with more than 250,000 customers that let you apply under the broader group category. So if you were with a smaller firm that has gone bust, there is a silver lining here – you're more likely to get the Warm Home Discount, as you'll be moved to a bigger supplier.

If you are eligible under the broader group category, you will need to apply via your newly appointed energy supplier as soon as your account is set up. You'll also need to reapply to your new supplier if you had already successfully applied to your old provider that's no longer trading.

For those who are part of the core group; you don't need to do anything as Ofgem has confirmed that your new supplier will have to pay core group customers where the exiting supplier hadn't already done so.



Our services at a glance

Service as normal

Services with some changes

Services paused



All repairs, safety checks and maintenance works



Flytipping removal and clearances



Outdoor environmental services



Stairwell cleaning



Laundries remain open



Outdoor playgrounds remain open



The Beacon is open to the public



Community rooms are open



Any routine in person home visits can take place



Community activities with face coverings and reduced social contact



Housing, Leasehold and Income Officer visits



Beacon café is fully open



Allocations, lettings, mutual exchanges and sales continue



Resident-led events can go ahead with measures in place



Communal lounges in sheltered housing schemes are open with some restrictions in place



Our City Centre shop is now closed



Plumer House is closed

For the most up to date information, please go to our website: www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk or see our Facebook and Twitter pages.



Farewell Diane

A HOUSING HERO IS RETIRING

For exactly half her life, Diane Escott has been a very active Pembroke Street resident.

Having served both as a founding member of the original Residents Association way back in 1986 and a founding director of Pembroke Estate Management Board (PEMB), Di has seen it all.

The company that was established in 1994 to take on the management of the Pembroke Street estate and has close ties with PCH.

Current and former PEMB board members and staff were able to say thank you to Di for her contribution at a special lunch, following her decision to retire from the board of directors after many years of continuous service. Diane is pictured with fellow founding board member and former PEMB Manager, Christine Watts MBE who presented her with a gift.

Di moved to Pembroke Street in the 1980's, when the area suffered from a declining reputation with an increase in crime and other problems which became progressively worse.

A committed group of local residents decided to try to "stop the rot" and campaigned for improvements, leading

to a complete refurbishment of the Pembroke Street estate, which the residents themselves designed down to the last detail.

It was a process which was very time consuming for the residents who were all volunteers but proved very worthwhile.

Di said: "When local residents first came together to campaign for change in the 1980's, I never imagined that I would still be involved all these years later. The transformation of Pembroke Street and the wider area has been amazing and to think it all started with a small group of residents who believed things could be better. I love living in Devonport as have generations of my family before me."

Pembroke Estate Management Board is the only tenant management organisation in the South West. It is a resident led not for profit company which manages the Pembroke Street estate and also offers other activities across the wider community, some of which take place at the Mount Wise Neighbourhood Centre. To find out more, please visit www.pembrokestreet.co.uk or search for Pembroke EMB on Facebook.

A green-fingered community group which formed to form a wildlife garden, has received a generous donation to help to get them going.

Wyoming Close Community Wildlife Garden Group were kindly donated a selection of hand tools, such as spades and trowels to get them started on an overgrown area.

The tools were donated through a partnership between Plymouth Community Homes and builders supply merchant, Travis Perkins. The volunteer group are now able to keep the green space looking beautiful.

“We were more than happy to help”, said Steve Chapman, a Branch Manager from Travis Perkins. “The area was just a small scrubland before but now they’ve got it looking nice and we even have a bench being delivered soon, so residents can enjoy the space even more.”

He added: “It’s been a real eye opener; it shows that people really want to work as part of a community.”

As a well-stocked merchant, Travis Perkins will soon deliver a healthy supply of topsoil and bark chips to the site.

However, the Wyoming close group aren’t the only ones who’ve been going green in Efford. A group of community volunteers called Clean Our Patch have also been hard at work in the area.

The volunteers have 38 groups in Plymouth and 2 groups in Efford alone. One of their groups being in Wyoming Close and the other dedicated to improving a nearby beauty spot with the Friends of Efford Marsh group.

Clean Our Patch works with Plymouth City Council to highlight messy spots and arrange collection of waste, which is gathered in piles before being taken away by the council.

The group was founded by eco-conscious couple, El and Ashton who said it was a pleasure to work in the area, and with Friends of Efford Marsh.

PCH Communities Worker, Ryan Huws, said that its wonderful to see so many ‘green initiatives’ in Efford. It’s such a beautiful area to live in and its great to be part of improvements.

Meet our newest board member



We at PCH are pleased to welcome our newest board member, Cllr Ian Tuffin, who also sits on the Customer Focus Committee.

Here, Ian tells us a bit about himself and his life in local politics up to now:

I was born and bred in Plymouth, I am married with two grown-up children and have worked for Blue Circle Cement for 31 years. After leaving Blue Circle, I worked in adult social care for various companies including Havencare, Mencap and Plymouth City Council.

I am a Ward Councillor for St Peter and the Waterfront with two other Labour Cabinet Member colleagues. I was elected to the Council in 1991 to 97 serving on various committees including acting as chair of Contract Services and, since being re-elected after my retirement in 2011.

I have been a member of the Caring Plymouth Panel, the Transformation Advisory Panel and chair of Your Plymouth. I have enjoyed the challenge of scrutiny. I am also a Director of Millfields Trust.

I have been a Trade Union Shop Steward for many years, campaigning with colleagues to adopt partnership working, and I continue to be a full member of GMB.

In 2014, I had the privilege of being selected to serve in the Cabinet as Member for Adult Social Care, which brought new challenges.

I look forward to working with colleagues and staff to take forward the transformation of the service.

This year I have returned to the back benches with a view to focus on working with community members and scrutinising health and customer care.

When asked what Ian hopes to bring to the role, he replied:

I’m hoping to bring my broad experience, particularly my life in politics. I was part of the trade union movement as many people were back in the day.

I was instrumental in bringing together The Way Ahead scheme with a former company, we looked at where we could work with bosses and workers. I attended a workshop and we were asked what we want out of this company. We discovered that we all wanted a successful business, we had that in common.

Back then, as ordinary workers we never thought we could have such a role in forming the future of the company, but we could! That was the beginning of my political life.

I never went to university. Ordinary folk have lots of power and imagination. I want to form a great partnership between residents, employees and the organisation.

PLYMOUTH'S PLAN FOR TREES



We'd like to increase the beauty of our estates, improve people's health and wellbeing, and create beneficial homes for wildlife.



**WE PLAN TO
PLANT TREES
THROUGHOUT
NEIGHBOURHOODS**



**HELPING TO MAKE
OUR CITY MORE
RESILIENT AGAINST
CLIMATE CHANGE**

**PART OF THE WIDER
PROJECT KNOWN AS
'PLYMOUTH'S PLAN
FOR TREES'**



**WE HAVE
CAREFULLY
CHOSEN TREE
PLANTING
LOCATIONS**



**WE WANT
YOUR
FEEDBACK**

HELPING HAND AT THE YMCA

Staff at a charity that supports the education and wellbeing of young people were left thrilled after a team of PCH apprentices transformed their classrooms with a gleaming new paint job.

The YMCA charity saw some of its Honicknowle facilities given a much-needed refresh, as a community minded gesture from PCH last month.

A team of apprentices were on hand for three days to redecorate a classroom. The apprentices volunteered to do the work, sacrificing part of their half term break in the process.

The apprentices involved are training to be Plumbers, Gas Engineers or Carpenters. As such, most of them had no prior painting or decorating experience. Except for David Phillips, who is currently 13 months into a painting and decorating apprenticeship and was on hand to guide the volunteers.

On day 1 the team started off painting one classroom as planned, but following a tutorial from Mark Davey, the group worked so hard in the morning that they offered to do more while the room was drying.

The team of PCH apprentices painted all the walls, glossed door frames and the skirting of the classrooms. Much of the space is normally used for vocational training for 16-19-year-olds, who will be wowed by their classrooms when they return.

Thanks to great workmanship and hard graft from the group, they were able to paint an additional classroom and an office often used for 1-2-1 meetings and counselling. The end result was a wonderful brightening up of the rooms.

David Phillips, who was putting the finishing touches on a classroom wall, said: "We came to do one room but have ended up doing 3. We had quite a few workers here and we were done early. So, we thought: why not squeeze another couple of rooms in?"

The end result was flawless, as though painted by a team of highly experienced painters and decorators.

Pupils in the class will now benefit from a bright and airy environment in which to learn.

As well as work with children's mental health and education, last year the YMCA provided more than 850 young people with youth activities and over 200 young people with training and education.

Staff at PCH were thrilled to be able to offer a helping hand to this much-valued charity.

"WE CAME TO DO ONE ROOM BUT HAVE ENDED UP DOING 3"

Sarah Newberry, Fundraising Lead at YMCA, said: "Thanks to the kindness and generosity of the staff and apprenticeship team from Plymouth Community Homes, we now have two welcoming classrooms.

"The team gave up their time to come in and transform the rooms which were tired and dated and in need of some attention.

"Originally they pledged to do 1 classroom but due to their efficiency and kindness they extended it to 2 rooms and a small office. In addition, they provided all of the materials free of charge.

Sarah continued: "The apprentices were from various backgrounds including plumbing and electrical and in some cases were new to decorating. Despite this, they soon rolled up their sleeves and got stuck into the task with a positive attitude and a willingness to learn.

"As a result, we are now able to welcome people into the centre where they come for education as well as family support and cardiac rehabilitation. We are grateful to have them as one of our valued partners."



Mount Wise Towers looking blooming lovely!

With the Towers project coming to a finish, several residents have been working hard to make sure the green spaces around their homes are flourishing and looking fabulous!

We meet John and Leanne Fox at Tavy House, where they have taken a previously untouched area of green land and created a haven for residents and wildlife alike.

They spent a week getting rid of the weeds, before adding in blocks that were donated to them which they painted the same shade of blue as Tavy House – they then planted lots of bulbs and flowers, added in some bird feeders and are just waiting on a bird table.

The bird table will be made by residents who attend the Men's Shed – the popular club which see's men get together to practice woodwork.

John said: "We've added in some solar lights, so when it lights up at night it's very impressive – it just gives a nice look and a lift to the area. We can see the garden from our home near the top. It's cheered residents up and we've had quite a few compliments.

"When the Summer arrives, we're hoping people will be able to come down and sit out, enjoying the flowers in full bloom with a cup of tea."

At Tamar house we see Malcolm Campin who has been working tirelessly since the first lockdown on the garden that adjoins the main road.

Malcolm said: "I saw the garden needed a bit of work and I wanted something to keep me busy during the lockdown – I've always had a passion for gardening and I help out at a local park. I also have an allotment so I'm not short of gardening skills."

Joe Loughran, Towers Liaison Officer explains: "Malcolm has really transformed the area to give it a warm, communal feeling. The area consists of an assortment of plants including an apple tree and some Hydrangea plants."

But Joe is not the only person full of praise for John, with resident Fran Walker adding: "Malcolm has never wanted any praise for his work on the garden, but I feel like he

should get some recognition as he is always out there in all weather conditions creating a special space for us and he should be really proud. The area has really made the Tower feel more homely, especially considering the last few years we have had."

And as we reach Lynher House, Leroy Pope and Alistair Hooper are there to greet us at their garden.

Leroy talks us through the concept: "We managed to get an old rowing boat which we've called the SS Towers and created a flower bed in there to give it a theme."

"We take pride in our surroundings and have added in some climbing roses in the memorial part of the garden to represent the people we all know who have passed away due to Covid."

Two of the roses in the memorial section of the garden are dedicated to popular local ice cream lady, Ruby Smith who sadly passed away in 2020 after thirty years of selling ice cream to the locals.

But the gardening project has made the already-close community here even stronger: "Our friend June hasn't been able to get out and about too much in the last year or two, but we encouraged her to come down and get some fresh air and help out with the garden, and it's really helped her."

Even Leroy's granddaughter designed a 'no fouling' sign, which PCH had printed and installed in the garden, as we look to add a similar sign to the other two gardens.

The Mount Wise community has really pulled together and done what they can to improve the area. The next item on the agenda is improving the lobby areas in each Tower to bring a more welcoming reception area, which should be finished by March next year – just as we head into spring and residents are able to enjoy the garden areas that so much hard work has gone into.



BAMBOO BONANZA AT DARTMOOR ZOO

PCH Rangers provide some comfort for creatures

One species' trash is another's treasure, it seems, after PCH rangers found a far more suitable home for freshly cut bamboo than the garden waste bin.

After being tasked with cutting back some overgrown bamboo, PCH Ranger, Sheraton Davidson thought there must have been some use for the versatile plant.

An overgrown garden at a PCH property was destined to benefit all manner of furry friends at the zoo after Sheraton got on the phone and asked zookeepers if they had any use for freshly cut bamboo: "Yes" - was the instant answer.

After the zoo gratefully accepted the offer, the greenery was soon introduced to the animals and was met with a very pawisitive response.

Zookeepers even made a bamboo tipi for their resident Agoutis, a rodent from Central and South American rainforests. Visitors were thrilled to see that the critters could have their first taste of glamping.

Claire Lee from Dartmoor Zoo said: "The bamboo had lots of uses and was enrichment for the animals. It went to quite a few of the animals. Some of the bamboo went to the Otters and some to the Tapirs who absolutely loved it."

Lynne Hodgson, Fundraising Lead for the zoo said: "We are extremely grateful to Plymouth Community Homes for their donation of a large quantity of bamboo which will be used as food and enrichment for the animals at the zoo.

"It costs the charity over £23,000 each week to feed and care for over 400 different animals at the zoo, many of which are vulnerable to extinction, so we truly appreciate this donation which will benefit a lot of animals in our care."



Pen Farthing is a former Royal Marine who founded a cats and dogs rescue charity in the most unlikely of places.

Having served with Plymouth's 42 Commando Marine regiment in Afghanistan after the invasion in 2001, Pen met a stray dog that would change the course of his life forever.

As you may have seen in the news, the withdrawal of US – led troops from Afghanistan was considered by most to be a massive failure, as the brutal Taliban quickly took over the country. Many are still fleeing or are living in fear under Taliban rule and many more have been killed.

Pen's charity, Nowzad, was formed after the Plymouth based soldiers of Kilo Company, arrived in the war-torn town of "Now Zad" in Afghanistan in 2006.

It all started after Pen rescued a street dog that was being used for cruel dog fights. He said: "He stayed with me. I couldn't bear to leave him behind, knowing he would be picked up again for dog fighting. So, I smuggled

him out of the country to Pakistan, then from there, I had him flown to London."

A Royal Marine being reunited with a street dog from thousands of miles away made the newspapers in the UK. It didn't take long for other soldiers to contact him, saying they also wanted to bring dogs home that they had bonded with while on duty, "that's how it all started."

"We soon needed a physical location. We ended up with five vets working full time to do something positive for animals in Afghanistan. We also created a donkey treatment centre to help and treat working donkeys over there. It just grew and grew."

To date, Pen and his team had helped over 1,700 soldiers be reunited with a dog or a cat they had met in Afghanistan. The charity has won praise from a number of high-profile fans. And even counts comedian Ricky Gervais and his partner, Jane Fallon, as Nowzad patrons.



Sadly, since the Taliban takeover in the summer, women's rights in the country are feared to be almost non-existent, just as they were before international troops invaded in 2001. "We had female and male staff all working together, it's so sad that now it's just all gone. . . in the years since I first arrived in the country there was amazing progress, with girls going to school, carrying their books as they walked down the street. Afghanistan was heading in the right direction, with female lawyers and teachers and now it's gone."

After living in the country's capital city, Kabul, since before the pandemic with his wife, Pen knew that the return of the Taliban was bad news. His days in the country were soon numbered as people fled to the city's airport. His wife – who worked with young women and girls in the country, ensuring they received an education - went to the airport before him, and even narrowly missed a stampede in which people lost their life. Eventually, she made it out safely.

Pen's own journey out of the country was fraught with danger. He was the last British person out of Afghanistan, even leaving after the British armed forces. He managed to get all of his staff to safety and 94 dogs and 68 cats out of the country too. Some of whom are now settling in Devon. The mission to evacuate all the staff and animals was named Operation Ark, a reference to the story of Noah's Ark.

Pen was devastated by how things went in the end, he explained: "All I could feel as the plane took off was a sense of regret. So much hard work had been undone so quickly."

"It was the most stressful time of my life. When I was serving with the Marines, I knew I had a team of people who had my back. This time round, we knew the Taliban were coming and I was on my own now. . . It didn't have to be like that, that's the bit I can't get my head around."

Although Pen had to leave so much behind, he isn't letting it stop him or his team. He still has big plans for the future of Nowzad.

"We've come too far", he explained. "We have too much experience and energy to just stop. There are too many animals out there that need our help. We're going to take a break and get back out there, perhaps to a country in East Asia."

"We want to say thank you to everyone who's supported us and helped us get out of the country."

As with many charities, the impact of the pandemic has hit fundraising. The Nowzad team are hoping that in 2022, they will start hosting events again.

If you're interested in Nowzad and the work they do, please keep an eye on social media, or head to: Nowzad.com.

Pen has also written books about his work and travels, which can be found for sale in Waterstones or on Amazon.

EMMA TAKES ON ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

A Whiteleigh resident has been recognised for her bravery after standing up to a group of intimidating youths who were causing trouble in her community.

Emma Boyle's efforts have been recognised after she scooped a national award from Resolve, an organisation dedicated to preventing anti-social behaviour.

In 2017 a trouble-causing group of youths hanging around Whiteleigh Green were causing neighbours stress and anxiety with their bad behaviour.

Emma was one of the few people who said she was willing to go to court to explain how the community was being affected. A step that often leaves residents feeling too nervous to go through with.

Emma's bravery impressed judges at the Resolve organisation, adding that those brave enough to speak out, were very rare indeed.

Upon receiving her award, Emma said: "At the time it was really stressful. Everyone moaned about the behaviour but never did anything about it."

Emma explained that the community had since become stronger since she raised the issue with the police. "People have been coming to me for all sorts ever since" she said.

Emma's advice for anyone suffering in silence over bad behaviour in their community was loud and clear: "Don't be afraid to speak out. If something is wrong, you have to speak up."

She spoke of how important it was to maintain close ties with your neighbours to keep anti-social behaviour in check. Now, she's even on a first name basis with her local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) who "pops in for a cuppa" while keeping an eye on things.

Presenting Emma with her award was former policeman Steve de Burgh, a man who knows a thing or two about the intimidating behaviour.

He said: "It was tough competition, so this is a real accolade. It takes a great deal of courage to stand up to anti-social behaviour."

"The competition from the other nominations was really tight, so this a real feather in your cap."

He explained that Emma's actions had helped to build a case for enforcement action, making Whiteleigh a safer place to live as a result.

For more information on how you can report anti-social behaviour, just take a look at the next page.

For more information on the work that Resolve have done in the community, please visit: resolveuk.org.uk



Reporting antisocial behaviour

There are few things more important than feeling safe and comfortable at home. Which is why you should never tolerate anti-social behaviour that leaves you feeling intimidated or causes distress.

On the PCH website you can find some easy steps on how you can resolve any persistent problems with your neighbours. You can also talk to us if you don't feel comfortable or have failed to stop the issue from reoccurring.

Many issues can be resolved if reported. At PCH, we define anti-social behaviour as: 'acting in a way that causes or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more people not of the same household.' If this definition matches behaviour that you have encountered, it's important to let us know so the issue can be resolved.

Housing Manager, Andrew Brettle stressed the importance of reaching out if you're experiencing issues with someone in your community. He said: "At PCH we aspire to build communities where everyone feels safe in their own homes and neighbourhoods. If you ever feel threatened by Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) then we are here to help."

"We have recently introduced an on-line reporting mechanism that can be accessed 24/7 for you to report ASB to us."

He added: "Your contact details along with full details of the incident can be reported via the website. Once triaged your report will be given to one of our Housing Management team who will contact you to assess what support we can give you."

Go to: www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk/your-home/information-for-residents/anti-social-behaviour/

SKILLS LAUNCHED-PAD IS ALL SYSTEMS GO TO HELP LOCAL PEOPLE

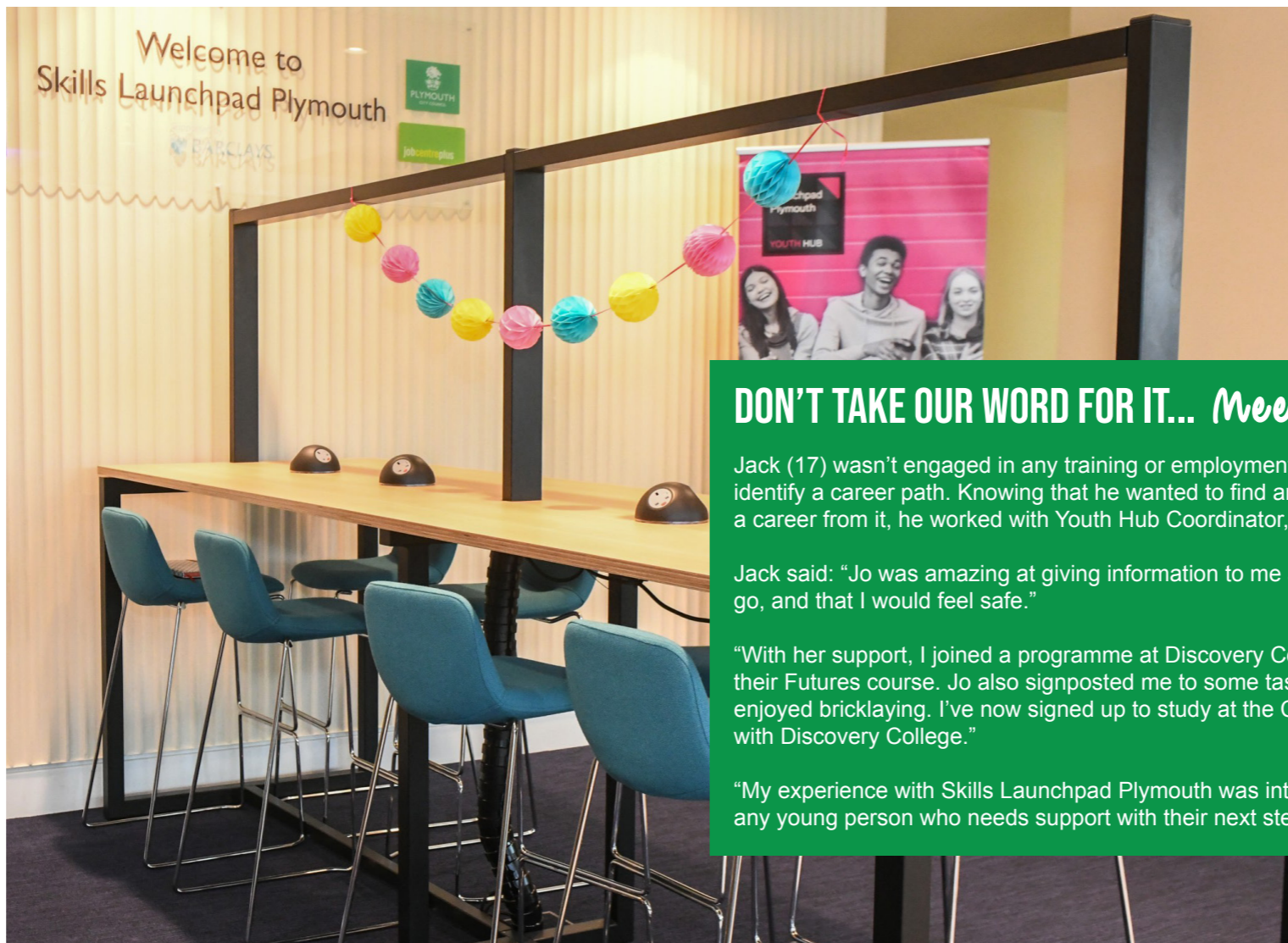
September 2021 marked the opening of Skills Launchpad Plymouth, the city's new one-stop-shop connecting local people with opportunities for skills, training, education, careers and jobs.

Led by Plymouth City Council, in alignment with Department for Work and Pensions, Skills Launchpad Plymouth supports those who are facing redundancy or changing careers through the Adult Hub aged 25 years+, and offering targeted support for young people aged 16-24 years including those with additional needs through the Youth Hub. The intention of the 'Skills Journey' through the Launchpad is to put the individual at the heart – recognising that not one size fits all and that anyone in Plymouth can access this free help. The service offer an ethical and inclusive front door, designed to help residents make independent and informed skills and training choices, leading to better access to real employment opportunities.

Supported by Barclays Plymouth (located 140-146 Armada Way), Skills Launchpad Plymouth is home to both the Youth Hub and Adult Hub, providing bookable appointments for face to face coordinated services for young people and adults, and a range of activities are delivered at Barclays Bank each week including drop in Job Shops for help to join the construction industry, and health and care sector.

Skills Launchpad Plymouth offers you FREE:

- access to impartial careers information, advice and guidance
- 1:1 face to face skills assessment to identify your skills to help you more confidently apply for jobs
- help to job search, update your CV and prepare for interview
- the opportunity to gain skills to build confidence
- support for mental health and well-being to get you in a better head space
- advice to overcome barriers to starting work including access to financial support for work clothing, initial travel to work costs as well as guidance on benefits calculations
- access to ongoing training and skills development once you get started to continue up-skilling and developing your career



NEW YEAR, NEW START

Launch your skills journey and sign up as a FREE member today!



Aged 16-24

Looking for advice on training and education?
Need help applying for an Apprenticeship or job?



Over 25 years old

Ready to get back to work?
Wanting to update your skills?
Thinking about a career change or to progress in work?

Skills Launchpad Plymouth can help you get better informed and equipped to take your next steps.

Visit www.skillslaunchpadplym.co.uk for great resources and to sign up for FREE 1:1 support.

Keep up to date with all the latest news and events by following on:

Facebook and LinkedIn: @SkillsLaunchpadPlymouth
Twitter: @LaunchpadPlym

Cllr Dave Downie, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills, and Children & Young People said: "We recognise that the ongoing economic impact of the global pandemic has created much uncertainty surrounding exam grades, job security, and employment prospects, as well as impacting on our mental health and well-being. We also identify a significant volume of jobs available in and around the city, with many local employers and sectors struggling to recruit the right skills they need. That's why the Skills agenda is so crucial – and through Skills Launchpad Plymouth we are helping people, both claimants and non-claimants, to gain the skills they will need through training, up-skilling, access to impartial careers advice and to become work ready, in order to help them transition into meaningful employment, ensuring no one gets left behind."

DON'T TAKE OUR WORD FOR IT... Meet Jack

Jack (17) wasn't engaged in any training or employment and so signed up for Skills Launchpad Plymouth to help identify a career path. Knowing that he wanted to find an industry where he could enjoy what he was doing and make a career from it, he worked with Youth Hub Coordinator, Jo to explore his options.

Jack said: "Jo was amazing at giving information to me and my foster carer. It enabled us to choose where I wanted to go, and that I would feel safe."

"With her support, I joined a programme at Discovery College, where I found them very friendly, and really settled into their Futures course. Jo also signposted me to some taster sessions with City College Plymouth, where I particularly enjoyed bricklaying. I've now signed up to study at the College full-time because I feel I can cope with it after my time with Discovery College."

"My experience with Skills Launchpad Plymouth was interesting, helpful and efficient. I'd recommend the Youth Hub to any young person who needs support with their next steps."

A NEWS DISCOVERY AT A PCH PROPERTY

STAFF RENOVATING A PROPERTY RECENTLY WERE SHOCKED TO BE GIVEN AN UNEXPECTED GLIMPSE INTO PLYMOUTH'S PAST.

The team were amazed to discover a hoard of newspapers dating back to the 1950's.

The old papers were in near perfect condition having been sheltered under the floorboards for all those years.

Headlines down the decades offer a glimpse into a world that has seen a lot of change.

One headline read: "Increased drunkenness in Plymouth reported". The article was centred around a report from the Chief Constable Mr J. F. Skittery. The policeman presented a damning report to the Plymouth Licensing Committee, which was responsible for overseeing who had a right to sell alcohol in the city at the time.

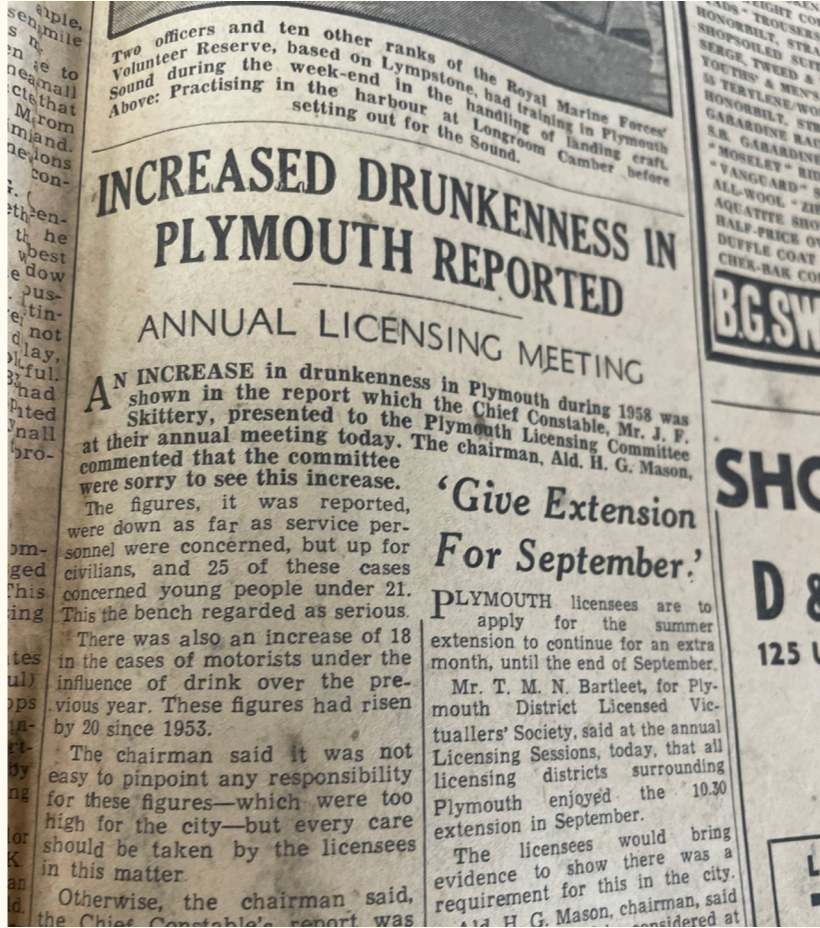
Over a 12-month period, 25 cases of drunkenness were reported in under 21-year-olds. Overall, there had been 338 arrests for drunkenness during 1953. The chairman of the licensing committee at the time, said he was sorry to hear of the increase during the meeting.

A later find was also made of newspapers dated 1945 which were brought into the Reuse Centre. Among a trove of paperwork, were certificates from the First World War, even older than the initial newspapers found in the property. The paperwork included certificates for "Wounds and Hurts" dated, 1912, 1926 and 1927.



Another news story was all about a Plymouth resident looking back at when mixed bathing in the sea between men and women was frowned upon in his youth. In the article, a Mr Cole, who served as the city's Entertainment and Publicity Manager, recalled the change in attitude from when he was young, which was a "far cry from the bikini period of today."

"In those days mixed bathing was unheard of" read the article, which also highlighted that since 1912, over a quarter of a million pounds had been spent by the city authorities on improving the Hoe waterfront and Mount Wise bathing pool areas.



One front page headline dated 27th January, 1959, was all about objections to plans by the Ministry of Justice to open a new prison near Newton Ferrers.

Complaints were raised by locals that the plans would jeopardise tourism to the area.

The newspapers discovered in the PCH property were a mixture of national paper, the Daily Express, and local papers including The Western Evening Herald, an earlier version of the Plymouth Herald.



At PCH we are committed to protecting your privacy and keeping your personal data safe and secure. This means we must protect your information from fraudsters who may try to use it for identity theft, fraud and other such activities.

So we embed information security into our everyday interactions with you, including when you call our Contact Centre. We control access to your information by asking you some questions to check your identity. By doing this, we can be sure we are talking to the right person.

However, we do understand that it can be frustrating having to answer questions every time you call us. So, if you would prefer to contact us another way, the best option is to use the MyPCH online self-service portal.

MyPCH lets you access your PCH rent account, make an online payment, report a repair, update your contact

details and make a comment or complaint online. You can access this portal 24 hours a day from your computer, tablet or phone.

Find out more about signing up to MyPCH from our website. The link is www.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk If you have any difficulties registering, please call us and a member of the contact centre will be happy to help you sign up.

If you want to know more about why we collect personal information, how we use it and who we may share it with, have a look at our Privacy Notice on our website; there is a 'easy read version' or, if you prefer, you can view the two-minute video.

Any queries can be sent to the company Data Protection Officer by email governance@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk or by writing to our Plumer House office.

BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY THIS WINTER

WITH YOUR FLU VACCINE + COVID-19 BOOSTER

Flu and COVID-19 can be life-threatening, so protect yourself, your family and patients.

Don't delay, get your free vaccines now.

NHS

Your patch, your page

After speaking to PCH residents since the last edition, it soon became clear that readers of In Touch wanted more involvement in the magazine.

This is why we have launched Your Patch, Your Page, a new feature that puts you – the reader – in control.

For our very first edition, the North Prospect community are in the driving seat. We spent the morning with them at The Beacon to hear what they would like on their very own page.

The feedback was loud and clear, readers wanted to know all about budget food recipes that were easy to cook. News and alerts on the latest scams to watch out for, community groups in the area, and for those in need, information on the nearest foodbanks.

If your community or group of friends would like to design your page for the next edition of In Touch, please contact your Housing Officer.



1	3	6	2		5	4	7	
		5	7		1	3		
7	2			4			8	
2	5		4	6	7	1	9	8
9		8	1	3			5	4
6				5				2
					3			
3			8	4	2			5
4				9	8			3

This is a sudoku puzzle. Fill in the 9x9 grid with digits so that each column, row, and 3x3 section contain the numbers between 1 to 9. Each row, column and 3x3 section must not contain more than one of the same number.

SCAMS TO WATCH OUT FOR



BOGUS BAILIFFS DEMANDING MONEY

Devon and Cornwall Police have warned about scammers pretending to be bailiffs.

This can start by the victim being cold called by someone pretending to be a bailiff working on behalf of a court and scamming people out of money.

The fraudsters reportedly request payment by bank transfer and threaten the removal of goods to repay the non-existent debt.

How to avoid falling victim? One step you can take is refusing to use any telephone number provided by the bailiffs and make vigorous checks if you ever get a cold call you're not expecting. You should always feel confident to make your own inquiries.

If you have been affected by this or any other type of fraud, report it online to Action Fraud or call 0300 123 2040.

A BUDGET RECIPE SURE TO IMPRESS

ONE POT CHICKEN TRAY BAKE

Ingredients:

- 1 packet of chicken thighs (bone-in and skin-on are much cheaper and have far more flavour than any other part of the chicken)
- 1 brown onion.
- 1 can of budget chopped tomatoes
- 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 can of chickpeas
- 1 small bag of fresh or frozen spinach
- 4 tablespoons of smoked paprika

How to make it:

1. Slice onion and pan fry with chopped garlic on a medium heat until the onion is soft
2. Transfer onions and garlic into a roasting tray
3. Add the whole can of chickpeas, spinach and chopped tomatoes to the tray
4. Add 2 tablespoons of smoked paprika and give it a stir
5. Add your chicken thighs and sit them on top, skin-side up
6. Add salt and more smoked paprika to the chicken and roast for around 55 mins at around 170 degrees until the skin on the chicken is golden in colour



GENERAL KNOWLEDGE QUIZ

1. WHAT UNIT IS USED TO MEASURE HORSES?
.....
2. WHAT INSTRUMENT CAN BE BASS, ELECTRIC OR SPANISH?
.....
3. WHAT DO THE NUMBERS ADD UP TO ON THE OPPOSITE SIDES OF A DICE?
.....
4. IN THE ZODIAC, WHICH ANIMAL IS LINKED WITH CAPRICORN?
.....
5. WHAT IS THE SINGER ADELE'S SURNAME?
.....
6. IN SPAIN WHAT IS THE WORD FOR AN AFTERNOON NAP?
.....
7. WHO WROTE "THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM"?
.....
8. WHICH IS THE LARGEST LAND CARNIVORE IN BRITAIN?
.....

B	D	E	T	S	O	R	F	S	C
A	S	C	N	E	W	Y	F	R	A
R	E	E	J	R	A	E	M	I	T
E	E	M	A	S	N	O	W	M	T
T	R	B	N	U	A	S	N	A	E
I	T	E	I	S	R	N	E	I	N
N	A	R	C	K	Y	O	L	C	S
G	K	S	E	I	F	W	C	I	H
F	E	B	R	I	L	A	S	L	G
Y	R	A	U	N	G	K	E	E	I

BARE TREES
DECEMBER
FEBRUARY
FROST
ICE SKATING
ICICLE
JANUARY
MITTENS
NEW YEAR
SCARF
SKIING
SLEIGH
SNOWFLAKE
SNOWMAN

This is a zigzag word search puzzle. Words go left, right, up and down, not diagonally, and can bend at a right angle. There are no unused letters in the grid, every letter is used only once

Community groups at The Beacon

Hobbies and coffees
Every Friday - 10am

Friendship group
Mondays at The Beacon - 14:45 pm

Tea and toast
Tuesdays - 11am- 1PM

Answers:

- | | |
|-----------|--------------------|
| 1. Hands | 5. Adkins |
| 2. Guitar | 6. Siesta |
| 3. 7 | 7. Edgar Allan Poe |
| 4. Goat | 8. Badger |
- General knowledge quiz:

1	3	6	2		5	4	7	
		5	7		1	3		
7	2			4			8	
2	5		4	6	7	1	9	8
9		8	1	3			5	4
6				5				2
					3			
3			8	4	2			5
4				9	8			3

B	D	E	T	S	O	R	F	S	C
A	S	C	N	E	W	Y	F	R	A
R	E	E	J	R	A	E	M	I	T
E	E	M	A	S	N	O	W	M	T
T	R	B	N	U	A	S	N	A	E
I	T	E	I	S	R	N	E	I	N
N	A	R	C	K	Y	O	L	C	S
G	K	S	E	I	F	W	C	I	H
F	E	B	R	I	L	A	S	L	G
Y	R	A	U	N	G	K	E	E	I

SIGN UP TO MYPCH



Use MyPCH to quickly and easily check and pay your rent, report a repair and update your contact details anywhere, anytime.

mypch.plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk

We're always keen to hear what you're up to, so if you'd like to tell us about something we can include in In Touch, we'd love to hear it.

Email news@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk.

-  0808 230 6500 / 01752 237990
-  info@plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk
-  plymouthcommunityhomes.co.uk
-  twitter.com/PlymCommHomes
-  facebook.com/PlymouthCommunityHomes
-  youtube.com/user/plymouthch



Did you know you can recycle me?