

Issue
23

choice 
Together we enrich lives

news

Summer
2026



24
BIODIVERSITY
PHOTOGRAPHY
COMPETITION

30
GOOD
NEIGHBOUR
COMPETITION

31
BEST KEPT GARDEN
COMPETITION

Choice Blooms at the Home and Garden Show 2026

A message from Michael, our Group Chief Executive



Welcome to the Summer 2026 edition of Choice News.

I'm delighted to say that 2026/27 represents the 50th anniversary of Choice. A number of housing associations were formed in 1976/77 which ultimately came together with others to create Choice Housing. This is quite a milestone and speaks to the vision and commitment of those who laid the foundations for Choice many years ago. The housing association model – 'not for profit' charities with voluntary board and committee members – has been an extremely successful one across these islands, bringing many benefits to our tenants and communities. Fundamentally, the Choice mission 'to enrich the lives of our tenants and communities through the provision of great homes and services' is just as relevant now as it was 50 years ago.

This edition of Choice News shines a light on the core work and priorities of the Choice Group today. Our social housing new build programme remains strong and Woodland Manor is a fine example of our developments for the over 55s in South Belfast. In turn, Ulidia House highlights our continued commitment to investing in our existing homes to ensure that they remain fit-for-purpose. And we continue to focus on helping tenants through challenging times with our Tenant Support fund, the recently launched 'Grand Choice' community fund, our dedicated energy team and our commitment to removing financial barriers for our young people wishing to progress into further education.

We also highlight in this edition of Choice News our ongoing commitment to service improvement. Whilst we have recently been awarded a '5 star' rating for our quality management, we have so

much more to do to enhance our communication channels and simplify the 'customer journey'. A redesign of our website, additional contact options through 'Chatbots' and 'WhatsApp', and investment in social media are all focused on you the customer. I'm also pleased to announce that we will soon undertake a significant remodelling of our headquarters on May Street, Belfast designed to create new and enhanced facilities and resources for our tenants. This will be a great way to mark our 50th anniversary, one that reinforces our core values of being caring, committed and creative.

Thanks for being a tenant of Choice and I hope you have a great summer!

Michael McDonnell



Connect with Choice



Join us on Social Media!

Follow us on social media - from Facebook, to YouTube and LinkedIn - we've got something new for you every day!

Feel free to like, follow, share, and ask questions on any of our social media platforms.



@ChoiceHousing



enquiries@choice-housing.org



Choice Housing Ireland Limited



Choice Housing

We Have Moved to Citylink

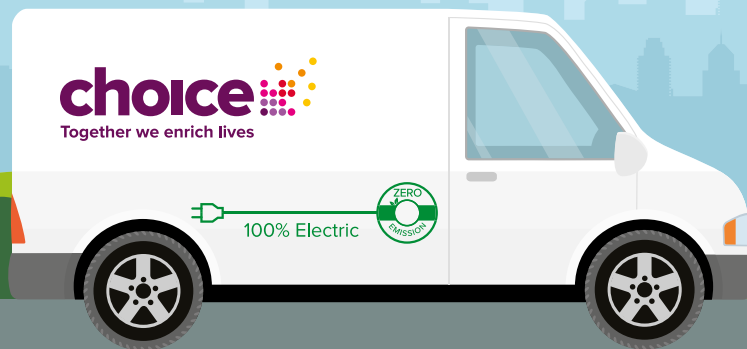


Our office at May Street, Belfast is currently closed.

We apologise for any inconvenience this temporary closure may cause and thank you for your understanding and patience while these improvements are carried out.

If you need to speak with your Housing or Property Services Officer, please contact our Services Centre on **0300 111 2211** or email enquiries@choice-housing.org. If you need to meet with a member of staff, we can arrange a home visit at a convenient time.

WE HAVE MOVED



NO COLD CALLING

Use your
'NO COLD CALLING'
window sticker to
advise salespersons
and traders to
stay away from
your home.

**Report online. Call 101.
In an emergency call 999.**

**we care
we listen
we act**

Police Service
of Northern Ireland

ARSON IS NOT A VICTIMLESS CRIME

**Think before you
act. Fire destroys
more than buildings,
it destroys lives.**

Every Fire puts People at Risk



FAMILIES
forced out
of their
homes, losing
everything.



**FIRE-
FIGHTERS**
risking their
lives to protect
others.



**NEIGHBOURS &
COMMUNITIES**
affected in
seconds.



**VEHICLES
& PROPERTY**
destroyed, insurance
costs up, communal
areas made unsafe.

The Consequences are Severe



RISK TO LIFE
Fires spread
fast often
without
warning.



**EMOTIONAL
TRAUMA**
Victims can
lose memories,
security and
stability.



**MASSIVE
COSTS**
Damages
to homes,
businesses and
public services.



**LOSS OF
HOUSING**
Especially
critical for
those in social
housing with
limited options.



AFTER THE FLAMES ARE OUT...

The impact continues
- families displaced,
communities shaken,
lives changed
permanently.

The Legal Reality



Arson is
a serious
criminal
offence.



It can lead
to prison
sentences.



A criminal
record that
impacts your
future forever.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

See something suspicious? Report it.
You could prevent a tragedy.

Struggling or feeling pressured? Seek help.
Don't make a choice that can't be undone.

In an emergency always call 999.
Non-emergency reporting: **call 101**

DUMPING IS NOT A VICTIMLESS ACT

**LESS DUMPING.
LESS FUEL.
SAFER
HOMES.
STRONGER
COMMUNITIES.**

Dumping items like furniture, beds, white goods and waste bags:



**PROVIDES FUEL FOR
ARSONISTS**
Waste and bulky items burn
easily and intensely.



PUTS LIVES AT RISK
Fires can spread quickly,
endangering residents,
neighbours and firefighters.



COSTS ALL OF US
Clearing dumped waste
costs money that could be
better spent on services and
homes.



**DAMAGES OUR HOMES
& AREAS**
It makes communal
spaces look unsafe,
causing distress and
reducing pride in where
we live.



IT'S ILLEGAL
You could face a fixed
penalty or prosecution
and a criminal record.

**Dumped items in
communal areas
provide fuel for
arsonists and put
your homes and
communities at risk.**

KEEP OUR COMMUNAL AREAS SAFE AND RESPECTED



Do not leave unwanted items
in communal areas.



Use the correct channels to
dispose of items responsibly.



Report fly-tipping or dumped
items to help keep our
communities safe.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

See something suspicious? Report it.
You could prevent a tragedy.

Struggling or feeling pressured? Seek help.
Don't make a choice that can't be undone.

In an emergency always call 999.
Non-emergency reporting: **call 101**

Leading the Way:

Choice - First Housing Association to Achieve EFQM Level 5 Recognition on the Island of Ireland.

Choice is proud to be the first housing association on the island of Ireland to achieve EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Level 5 recognition, marking an important achievement for the organisation and the social housing sector in Northern Ireland. At a time when public expectations, regulatory requirements, and tenant needs continue to evolve, this accreditation provides a clear example of how a structured commitment to leadership, quality, and continuous improvement can strengthen services and outcomes across the sector.

The EFQM Excellence Model is internationally recognised as a framework for assessing and improving organisational performance, evaluating an organisation's success and how services are delivered. The Level 5 designation represents one of the highest commendations available, signalling sustained excellence, maturity in systems and processes, and measurable positive impact.

Choice's achievement demonstrates that housing providers in Northern Ireland can compete, and lead on an international stage. This is especially relevant at a time when the sector faces increasing scrutiny around transparency, governance, tenant engagement, and long-term sustainability.

During the EFQM assessment, Choice was measured across core themes including Leadership, Strategy, People, Partnerships and Resources, Results, and the quality of our Processes, Products, and Services. In every category, the assessors found consistently high standards, demonstrating a strong operational foundation and forward-looking innovation.

This achievement builds on Choice's previous four-star EFQM rating in 2021, placing Choice among the highest performing housing associations across the UK and Ireland. This recognition reinforces Choice's ongoing commitment to excellence, accountability, and continuous improvement. EFQM accreditation provides independent, internationally benchmarked assurance that an organisation is performing to its potential, staying true to its purpose and delivering value to its communities.

The EFQM award therefore serves as a platform for further progress, strengthening Choice's determination to address the evolving challenges facing the sector, including rising living costs for tenants, a shortage of new homes, the need for decarbonisation and a constant focus on health & safety and maintaining homes to the highest standards.

Michael McDonnell, Choice Group Chief Executive: *"It is particularly pleasing to see the standards we set ourselves being independently recognised through the EFQM Excellence Model. Achieving Level Five reflects not only the robustness of our systems and processes, but the dedication of our colleagues in delivering strong, measurable results for tenants, partners, communities and stakeholders."*

This significant achievement reflects nearly five decades of Choice's commitment to delivering high-quality homes, services, and community support across Northern Ireland."



Michael McDonnell (Choice Group Chief Executive) with George Wilson (EFQM Assessor)



Tenant Support Fund

Through our Tenant Support Fund, Choice has provided more than £78,000 in targeted support to help tackle financial hardship, food insecurity and tenancy sustainment across Northern Ireland. The funding has supported a range of initiatives designed to improve wellbeing, strengthen communities and provide practical assistance to vulnerable individuals and families.

Supporting New Tenancies Through Home Starter Packs
Choice invested £48,000 in Home Starter Packs supplied by Homeless Connect, helping people transitioning from homelessness or difficult circumstances into settled accommodation. The packs contain essential household items including bedding, towels, kitchenware, cleaning products and toiletries, enabling tenants to establish their homes and reducing barriers to successful tenancy sustainment. The initiative reflects Choice's commitment to supporting tenants beyond the point of housing allocation by promoting stability, dignity, and long-term tenancy success.

Tackling Food Poverty in South Belfast

A £5,000 donation was awarded to the Lower Ormeau Residents' Action Group (LORAG) Social Supermarket in South Belfast. The funding supported a food voucher scheme providing access to affordable and nutritious food, toiletries and household essentials for individuals and families experiencing food insecurity. The project complemented LORAG's wider wraparound support services, which include family support, wellbeing programmes, health initiatives and community development activities.

Supporting Food Security in Coleraine

Choice also provided £5,000 to the Reset Social Supermarket in Coleraine, operated by Vineyard Compassion. The funding helps support a membership programme that enables people facing financial hardship to access affordable food and household essentials. Alongside food provision, the supermarket offers practical advice and support aimed at improving financial resilience and helping members achieve greater long-term stability.

Addressing Food Poverty Across Northern Ireland

A further £20,000 donation was made to the Trussell Trust, one of the leading organisations tackling food poverty. The contribution brings Choice's total support for Trussell Trust since 2021 to £87,500. The funding helps food banks across Northern Ireland respond to increasing levels of food insecurity, with recent research showing that one in five households now experiences food insecurity. In addition to emergency food provision, Trussell Trust works to address the root causes of poverty through advocacy, policy engagement and long-term solutions.



£2m refurbishment of Fitzroy Court

Choice has completed a £2.13 million refurbishment of our Fitzroy Court scheme in the centre of Belfast as part of our programme of planned improvement works this year.

The development, comprising of 25 self-contained homes near the vibrant Botanic area, with a mix of one- and two-bedroom units has been upgraded to enhance both the quality of accommodation and improve the overall living environment for Choice tenants.

As part of the 17-month refurbishment, 23 apartments were fully modernised, alongside the successful conversion of the former warden's house into two one-bedroom flats.

A wide range of significant improvements was delivered to each property at Fitzroy Court, including modern kitchens and bathrooms, upgraded electrics, replacement internal doors and fire doors and the installation and commissioning of more efficient gas boilers.

"Fitzroy Court is another great example of how targeted investment in our existing homes can make a meaningful difference to residents' day-to-day lives," he added. "Through a comprehensive programme of improvement works, we have been able to significantly enhance both individual apartments and shared communal spaces. We would also like to thank tenants for their understanding and patience during the works and our partners for delivering the scheme safely, efficiently and to a high standard."

The communal areas have been enhanced with new furniture, upgraded lighting, and improved security provisions, including the very latest CCTV. Further improvements were delivered to the two communal toilets and the shared kitchen facilities for tenants.

Delivered by McCusker Contracts Limited, work commenced on site in October 2024 and was completed last month. This latest investment once again reflects Choice's commitment to ensuring current and future tenants benefit from safe, modern, energy-efficient homes.

Wilton Farrelly, Group Director of Asset Services at Choice said: *"The completion of Fitzroy Court in Belfast represents another significant investment in our existing housing stock and demonstrates our continued focus on delivering high-quality homes. These improvements will enhance comfort, safety and overall quality for many years to come."*



**£2m
INVESTMENT**



allpay

Introducing Pay-by-Link: A Faster, Safer Way to Make Payments

We're always looking for ways to make managing your payments simpler, more convenient, and secure. That's why we're pleased to introduce our new Pay-by-Link service powered by Allpay — an easier way for you to make payments anytime, anywhere.

What is Pay-by-Link?

Pay-by-Link is a secure and personalised payment option that allows you to pay quickly using a unique web link. Instead of calling our office, you'll receive a link directly from your Income Recovery Officer via email or text message.

This link takes you to a secure payment page where you can complete your transaction using your debit or credit card — all in just a few simple steps.

Why Choose Pay-by-Link?

Our new service is designed with your convenience in mind:

- ✓ Simple and Convenient – No need to remember or enter your payment reference each time.
- ✓ Fast Payments – Complete your payment in just a few clicks.
- ✓ Secure Transactions – Each link is personalised with your unique payment reference for added security.
- ✓ No Apps Required – Pay easily through your mobile, tablet, or computer without downloading anything.
- ✓ Flexible Payments – Choose from a range of payment options to suit you.
- ✓ Avoid Waiting Times – No need to call our Customer Hub to make a payment.
- ✓ Helpful Reminders – Stay on track with timely payment prompts.

How It Works

Receive Your Link.

We'll send your personalised payment link via email or text message.

Open the Secure Payment Page.

Click the link to access your dedicated payment page.

Enter Your Details.

Fill in your information, including your name, address, phone number, and payment details.

Verify Your Payment.

You'll receive a validation code on your mobile phone to confirm the transaction.

Complete Your Payment.

Follow the on-screen steps to securely complete your payment.

Staying Safe Online

Your security is important to us. Please keep the following in mind:

All payment links sent by email will come from a Choice Housing email address.

If you receive a link and are unsure whether it's genuine, do not make a payment.

Contact our Income Recovery Team for advice before proceeding if anything doesn't look right.

Making Payments Easier for You

With Pay-by-Link, managing your payments has never been easier. Whether you're at home or on the go, you can make secure payments at a time that suits you — without the hassle.

If you have any questions about this new service, our team is always here to help.

Choice continues on our Sustainability Journey!

In 2025, Choice launched our latest Sustainability & Energy Strategy which runs to 2028 and provides a framework for positive actions we plan to take to support our tenants, local communities and the wider environment.

We're now into the second year of our strategy so it's a good time to highlight some of our recent achievements and some plans for the future.

Improving Energy Efficiency

We have continued to develop new energy efficient homes, to meet housing need, with all new homes achieving an energy efficiency rating (SAP) of Band A or B, and the proportion of Band A homes increasing. We have also continued to improve the energy efficiency of our existing homes, with our average Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating now at over 77 (a high Band C). In our strategy we set a new target of having 92% of our homes with an EPC rating of Band A-C by 2028, and are on track with over 88% at the end of 2025/26.

Reducing our Impact on the Environment

Choice have continued to invest in our existing homes, to include fabric and lighting upgrades and replacement heating systems. Alongside this, our Sustainability & Energy Team continues to monitor our landlord or communal energy, working with colleagues and tenants to reduce energy costs and our impact on the environment. In 2025/26 we reduced our landlord energy use by over 3% compared to 2024/25, and at the same time our emissions reduced by over 5%. These reductions mean that we have met our 2028 targets early, although we will continue to monitor this over the next two years and continue to take action to deliver further savings.



generating renewable electricity which is used within homes, communal areas or exported to the grid. By generating our own renewable electricity we are able to reduce our dependence on imported fossil fuels. Within our strategy we set a target of generating at least 700,000kWh of renewable electricity annually by 2028, and again this target has been met early in 2026. More of our new homes now have solar panels installed, and in 2025, our merger with Connswater Homes added more solar PV systems. Additionally, we have invested in a small number of communal solar PV systems at sheltered housing schemes in 2025 and 2026.

Delivering on Biodiversity Improvements

In 2025, Choice launched our first Biodiversity Action Plan, which was a target set within our Sustainability & Energy Strategy. We have progressed a number of actions in 2025/26, including already planting over 500 native trees, and completing biodiversity projects in two locations. Having recently appointed our first Biodiversity Coordinator, we have ambitious plans to carry out further improvements in relation to both our new and existing homes, whilst also engaging with staff, tenants and local communities.

Looking to the future

Going forward we will continue to develop new energy efficient homes, and have plans to develop around 190 new homes to SAP Band A in Derry/Londonderry within the next few years. We will also continue to invest in our existing homes and reduce our landlord energy costs and emissions. Actions within our Biodiversity Action Plan will be progressed alongside work on a range of other areas of sustainability, including waste & recycling, water use and transport.



Supporting Nature!

In 2025, Choice launched our first Biodiversity Action Plan, and this year, *Emily Taylor* joined our Sustainability & Energy Team as the Association's first Biodiversity Coordinator, underlining our commitment to tackling the biodiversity crisis.

Our Biodiversity Action Plan runs to 2028 and includes actions in relation to managing and improving our existing biodiversity, developing new homes and communities, and tenant and stakeholder engagement. Our plan has a target to plant a minimum of 500 native trees by 2028, but recognising how important this is, we have actually already achieved this in 2026, and have plans to continue planting in coming years. As an example of this, around 300 trees were planted at our housing scheme in Killaire Wood Lane earlier this year, with support from Ards and North Down Borough Council, alongside Idverde, our grounds maintenance contractor.

Once established, the trees will capture and store carbon, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; support wildlife by creating new habitats and increasing biodiversity; improve air quality; and contribute to a healthier environment.

Alongside the trees, more recently the surrounding area has been sown with wildflowers, to further enhance the landscape at Killaire, support our pollinators, and deliver long-term benefits for current and future generations. This initiative would not have been possible without the support of Ards and North Down Borough Council, with Dylan Freeburn – Development Officer for the Council – saying: “We were pleased to work together with Choice on this tree planting initiative at Killaire Wood, Bangor, where 300 native tree whips were planted using trees supplied by the Council.

“This collaboration forms part of the Council’s STAND4TREES initiative, which aims to plant one tree for every resident – around 160,000 by 2032 – and has already delivered more than 60,000 new trees across the Borough through strong community and partner involvement.



“Working closely with housing providers such as Choice is essential to increasing tree cover on both public and private land, helping us create greener, healthier and more climate resilient neighbourhoods for future generations,” added Dylan.

We were pleased to work together with Choice on this tree planting initiative at Killaire Wood, Bangor, where 300 native tree whips were planted using trees supplied by the Council.

NET-ZERO
2050
choice



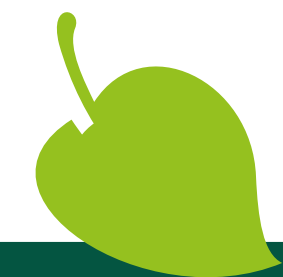
Solar Panels: Investing in Renewable Energy

Solar PV systems convert sunlight into free renewable electricity, which can be used to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, most of which are imported into Northern Ireland.

Choice have been installing solar PV systems for around 15 years, with many of these fitted on our newer homes, and some systems retrofitted to existing sheltered housing schemes. Electricity is used within homes, or in common areas of our schemes, and when there is excess this is exported to the electricity grid for others to use. Recent changes to building regulations mean that more of our new homes are now having solar PV systems installed, although this is not yet the case for all new homes. Following our merger with Connswater Homes, this also increased our number of systems further.

In 2025, Choice installed solar PV systems to three of our sheltered housings schemes, and as part of our investment in innovative technologies and processes we included battery storage. At each scheme an 11kWp system was installed, with a 10kW battery. This approach allows us to use as much of the renewable electricity on site as possible, which improves the cost savings on tenant service charges which we are able to deliver. We estimate that these systems may collectively save our tenants at these housing schemes around £5,000 per year and reduce our emissions by around six tonnes annually.

We have recently completed a further solar PV installation at St Bronaghs, in Rostrevor, replacing an older solar thermal system. This investment will deliver improved benefits for the scheme in terms of energy costs and environmental impact. All of these newer systems are intended to be monitored in coming years to further understand the benefits which have been delivered.



In our Sustainability & Energy Strategy we set a target of generating at least 700,000kWh of renewable electricity annually by 2028, and with the above growth in systems we have now met this target early in 2026.

Tughan Court 45th Anniversary

Choice marked a significant milestone at our Bangor sheltered living scheme celebrating 45 years of Tughan Court located on the Bloomfield Road. Choice staff joined tenants to mark the occasion, including Lilly Fleming who has been at Tughan Court for 33 years and looks forward to celebrating her 100th birthday early in the new year.

The scheme, which recently saw an investment of £300K from Choice as part of our upgrade commitments, was originally opened in November 1980.

Located on the Bloomfield Road, Tughan Court is closely connected to many local amenities, ensuring residents maintain their independence through accessing shops, healthcare services and other facilities that can also encourage interaction and social engagement outside of the scheme.

Catriona McCann, Area Manager for Choice said, "Reaching the 45th anniversary is a milestone to be proud of, and it was lovely to see so many tenants come together to mark the occasion. Tughan Court is very important to the community it serves, and the tenants it is home to."

"A key commitment from Choice is to ensure the long-term sustainability of our properties."

Investment in the scheme ensures the property not only keeps up with the latest energy efficient technology but that residents can enjoy the latest modern upgrades to their own homes and communal areas.

"I would like to make special mention to our Active Tenant, Nancy Green, who goes above and beyond for her fellow residents to ensure they are engaged and involved in a range of activities at Tughan Court."



"I would like to make special mention to our Active Tenant, Nancy Green, who goes above and beyond for her fellow residents to ensure they are engaged and involved in a range of activities at Tughan Court."

YEARS
ANNIVERSARY
45

Maple and May Affordable Rent



We believe Affordable Rent homes offer a practical response to real housing pressures in Northern Ireland. Whether you're starting out, saving up, or just looking for a great place to live, Maple and May offer quality homes at rents that are genuinely affordable. Maple and May is proud to bring this new housing initiative to Northern Ireland, offering quality homes at rents set at least 20% below local market rates.

These Affordable Rent homes will help those struggling with the cost of private rentals and others saving towards home ownership.

We are not simply introducing a new rental product. We are expanding opportunity, supporting aspiration and helping more people access a home they can afford — today and into the future.

As the first organisation to deliver this product in Northern Ireland, Maple and May Affordable Rent is setting a new benchmark for quality, stability and value in the private rental market.



Check your eligibility and view our Affordable Homes on our website Mapleandmay.co.uk



Maple and May Affordable Rent will provide **greater flexibility** for individuals and families looking to access the private property market.



300 Affordable Rent Homes across Northern Ireland.



Discounted rents – **20% below** local market rents.



Eligibility will be based around household income: up to £30,000 net for a single adult household, and £40,000 net for a two-adult household.



The first homes will be in Dungannon, with further developments to follow this financial year in Newry, Craigavon, Lisburn and Derry~Londonderry. Other locations, including Belfast, are planned in future years.



Check your eligibility and view our Affordable Homes on our website Mapleandmay.co.uk

WE WANT OUR
TENANTS TO
GET INVOLVED

Platinum Standard in Tenant Participation

Choice is proud to announce the achievement of Platinum Tenant Participation Accreditation, becoming the first social housing provider in the UK and Ireland to receive this highest level of recognition from Supporting Communities.

This significant milestone reflects Choice's sector-leading approach to tenant participation and our ongoing commitment to ensuring tenants have a meaningful voice in how services are shaped and delivered.

Building on our previous Silver accreditation, Choice has made remarkable progress in less than two years, strengthening our reputation for excellence across all areas of service. The Platinum award follows a comprehensive assessment process led by Supporting Communities, focusing on participation strategies, decision-making and the effectiveness of information sharing.

As part of the assessment, Choice undertook a detailed review of our practices, identifying areas for development while highlighting the strong partnership between tenants, staff and the organisation as a whole.

An independent panel subsequently confirmed that Choice had met the highest standards required for Platinum accreditation.

The organisation performed strongly across the 'Ten Standards', including the quality and accessibility of information provided to tenants, the effectiveness of tenant engagement structures, and the meaningful involvement of tenants in decision-making processes. A continued commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion was also recognised as a key strength.



Choice Celebrates Good Relations Success in County Antrim



Choice was delighted to mark the successful conclusion of a five-year Good Relations initiative in Lisburn with a vibrant community celebration held in Market Square. The special Country Fest event brought together people from across the Lisburn area for a day filled with music, entertainment and community spirit. With live performances from popular country artists including Hugo Duncan, Country Harmony, Boxcar Brian, Owen Mac and Conor McKay – The Singing Brickie, the atmosphere was lively, welcoming and full of energy.

The event celebrated the impact of the Good Relations Programme, delivered as part of the Department for Communities and the Housing Executive's Housing for All Shared Housing Programme. Rooted in the Northern Ireland Executive's Together: Building a United Community Strategy, the initiative reflects a long-term commitment to fostering connection, understanding and inclusion across communities.

Over the past five years, the Hull's Hill Shared Housing Development and its associated Good Relations Plan have benefited from significant investment, supporting a wide range of programmes designed to build positive relationships and shared experiences. From health and wellbeing activities to arts, cultural programmes, education opportunities and community development initiatives, the plan has created meaningful opportunities for residents and neighbouring communities to come together.

The Country Fest event provided a fitting finale, highlighting the strong sense of connection and shared identity that has developed throughout the programme. It was a wonderful opportunity for local people to celebrate these achievements in an inclusive and welcoming setting.

Choice continues to play a leading role in delivering shared housing and community development initiatives across Northern Ireland. With a growing portfolio of homes and a strong focus on inclusivity, Choice remains committed to building diverse, welcoming and sustainable communities where everyone can feel they belong.



Home & Garden Show Ireland 2026

Choice was delighted to attend and support this year's Home & Garden Show Ireland, held at Antrim Castle Gardens in June, where we were proud to be a lead sponsor.

The popular event welcomed thousands of visitors across the weekend, offering inspiration for home improvement, gardening and outdoor living. With a wide range of exhibitors, demonstrations and family-friendly activities, the show continues to grow as a highlight in the local events calendar.

A standout feature of this year's event was the Wheelbarrow Garden Challenge, which saw community groups transform ordinary wheelbarrows into imaginative miniature gardens. We were especially proud to see participation from our James Court scheme, whose entry showcased fantastic creativity, teamwork and community spirit.



The "Really Rubbish Scarecrow" competition also added colour and fun to the weekend, with local schools contributing a variety of inventive and eye-catching creations. The competition brought a strong family focus to the event, with plenty of smiles and engagement from visitors of all ages.

Overall, the Home & Garden Show provided an excellent opportunity for Choice to connect with local communities, celebrate creativity and support a well-loved and growing regional event.



plus
choice
Investing in our Communities

 **Antrim and Newtownabbey**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Choice brings Springwatch Programme to local primary schools



As part of our ongoing Springwatch programme, Choice was delighted to support an engaging and educational visit to Primary 5 pupils at Carryduff Primary School, marking the fifth event in a series of six, at Hollybank Primary School.

Led by local ornithologist Aidan Crean, the event offered pupils a fascinating insight into the natural world. Through an interactive and accessible approach, Aidan explored a range of topics including the legacy of David Attenborough, the importance of protecting nature and wildlife, and the role of insects and other "creepy crawlies" in our ecosystems.

One of the highlights of the session was learning about swifts - remarkable birds native to Northern Ireland that spend up to four years in continuous flight, migrating to Africa before returning home to breed. Pupils were captivated by these incredible migration journeys and the role birds play in our environment.

The session also included a hands-on activity, where pupils worked together to build bat boxes for their school grounds, encouraging biodiversity and supporting local wildlife habitats. The event concluded with a fun and lively quiz, giving pupils the chance to showcase everything they had learned throughout the day.

This event reflects Choice's continued commitment to environmental awareness, education, and community engagement, inspiring the next generation to value and protect the natural world.

Springwatch Event at Imagine! Festival, Botanic Gardens

A big thank you to everyone who supported Choice's contribution to the annual Imagine! Festival, held on Saturday 28th at Botanic Gardens. As part of our Springwatch exhibition and talk, the event focused on birds - their habits, habitats, song, and most importantly, their migration patterns and the benefits they bring to human wellbeing and community life.

As highlighted on the day, many of the birds that visit our shores are migrants, enriching our natural environment with their presence - not least through the joy of the dawn chorus. In a similar way, people who migrate into our communities bring cultural richness, fresh perspectives, and shared experiences that strengthen and enhance local traditions. Like birdsong at daybreak, they contribute to the vibrancy and diversity of our shared social fabric.

The event was well attended, highly informative, and delivered in great spirit. It stands as a strong example of the impact of Choice's Community Development outreach work, and we look forward to seeing it continue both as part of future Springwatch programmes and as a valued contribution to the Imagine! Festival.



Ulidia House, Belfast revitalised through £190,000 investment

Ulidia House on Belfast's Donegall Road has been revitalised following a six-figure investment by Choice, improving living conditions for residents and helping to future-proof the building for years to come.

Delivered in partnership with Bell Group, the project forms part of a wider £9.9 million investment programme across Belfast to maintain high-quality homes and enhance local communities.

Completed over a nine-week period, the works have transformed the South Belfast scheme through a combination of internal and external upgrades. The first phase was delivered in six weeks at a cost of circa £130,000 which included decoration work and improvements to high-traffic areas within the building.

A further three weeks were dedicated to specialist repairs to Ulidia House's distinctive glazed curtain wall system, with the £61,000 investment into the external structural.

The investment reflects Choice's ongoing commitment to ensuring our properties remain safe, modern and fit for purpose, whilst continuing to meet the evolving needs of tenants.

Wilton Farrelly, Choice Group Director of Asset Services, said: "This £190,000 investment represents a significant commitment to maintaining and improving Ulidia House for the benefit of our tenants, both now and in the years ahead."

"These works will help future-proof the building whilst ensuring it continues to provide a safe, high-quality living environment. We are delighted to have delivered the project in partnership with Bell Group, whose professionalism and efficiency ensured it was completed to an excellent standard within a very tight timeframe."

Ulidia House is one of several schemes to benefit from Choice's ongoing investment across the city. Totalling nearly £10 million, the wider programme spans North, South, East and West Belfast, including works at Colinwell Grove, Woodside Drive and My Lady's Road.



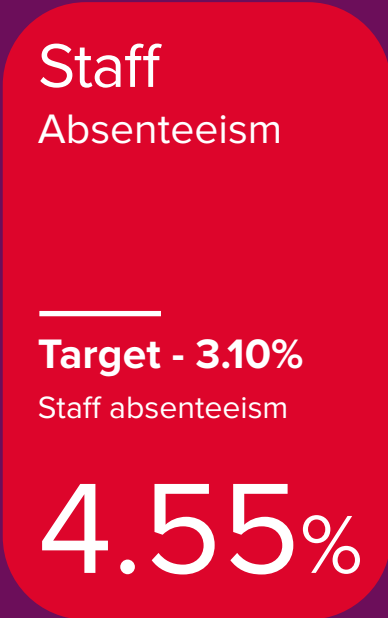
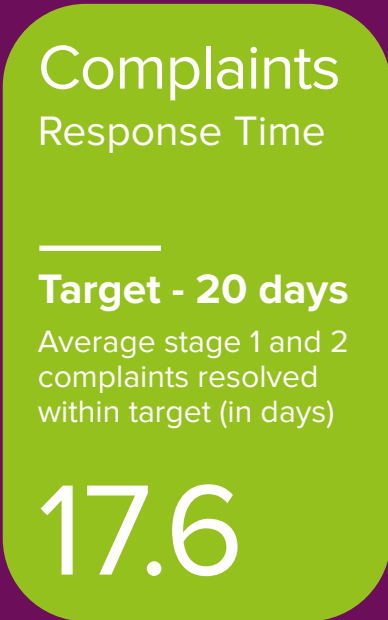
Colin Bunting, Operations Director at Bell/ CB Contracts said: "We are pleased to have partnered with Choice on the successful delivery of this project at Ulidia House. "Working within a live residential environment, our team prioritised safety, efficiency and minimising disruption to residents at all times. The curtain wall repairs required careful planning and specialist expertise and we are proud to have completed the programme on schedule whilst maintaining a high standard of workmanship. We look forward to continuing our strong working relationship on future projects and our continued commitment to deliver social value impact in conjunction with Choice."



How We're Performing

Choice is at the forefront in the provision of social housing and are committed to delivering quality housing and excellent customer service that enhance the lives of customers and communities.

It is important that your voice, in relation to our services, is heard as the feedback that we receive is vital for Choice to identify and correct any problems within our service delivery and to ensure that we meet the needs of all our customers.



We want to hear from you!
It is important that your voice, in relation to our services, is heard.

Performance figures are from 1st April-31st May 2026

Choice Biodiversity Photography Competition

Your details

Name:

Address:

.....

Email:



How to enter

1. Capture a digital photograph of flowers, trees, insects, birds, and wildlife in our neighbourhoods. Your entries do not need to be of rare species, we simply want to encourage everyone to engage with the wildlife all around us!
2. Submit via email to energy@choice-housing.org along with your name and address by the closing date - Friday 28th August 2026.
3. Our panel will judge the entries and winners will be announced on Facebook and featured in the next Choice News!



Please be advised that this competition is open to Choice tenants only. Ts & Cs apply.

Our Sustainability & Energy strategy sets out how we will build upon our past successes and address challenges such as the climate crisis and biodiversity loss.

We are committed to a sustainable future for all.

In order to promote positive biodiversity behaviours in our communities we are delighted to launch our first annual biodiversity photography competition.

Simply snap a photograph and send it to energy@choice-housing.org to be in with a chance of winning a £100 B&Q shopping voucher!

WIN
£100
B&Q
shopping
voucher



Out & About

Choice has more than 14,000 tenants, over 500 staff and works with numerous partners and stakeholders; so it's no surprise that there is always plenty of activity going on in all the communities we support.

Read our Out & About section to find out more and don't forget to let us know about your events!

Contact us at:

editor@choice-housing.org

POOL TOURNAMENT SUCCESS AT HILL COURT



Staff and residents came together at Hill Court in Lurgan for a fantastic pool tournament. The event was a great success, with strong participation and a bit of friendly competition!

A special congratulations goes to Property Services Officer, Darren Marshall, who claimed first place on the day.

Thanks to the generosity of everyone involved, the event raised an impressive £110 for Tiny Life, supporting families of premature and vulnerable babies.

BOARD FIELD TRIP



Our Board and Committee members recently took part in a successful field trip, visiting several of our sheltered living schemes and developments to see first-hand the work being delivered across our communities.

The day included visits to **The Belgravia, Ellis Court, and Woodland Manor** in Belfast providing a valuable opportunity to engage with tenants, view our properties and learn more about our ongoing planned maintenance investment and development programmes.

At The Belgravia, Board members enjoyed meeting with tenants and hearing about their experiences, whilst also learning more about the upcoming planned maintenance programme for the sheltered living scheme.

At Ellis Court, the Board shared a lovely lunch with tenants and viewed the recent upgrade works, seeing the positive impact these improvements have on the sheltered living scheme.

The final stop was Woodland Manor, where Board members viewed the impressive new-build apartments and saw the quality of homes and landscape gardens being delivered for residents in the South Belfast area.

The day concluded with a Group Board Meeting, bringing together the insights and discussions from the visits to support our continued focus on delivering high-quality homes and services.

A sincere thank you to our tenants, colleagues and everyone involved in making the day such a success.

COMMUNITY SPIRIT AT ST. ELIZABETH'S COURT



A huge thank you to Men's Shed Ballybeen and The National Lottery Community Fund for their generosity in repairing and replacing two benches at St. Elizabeth's Court, Dundonald.

Thanks to this fantastic partnership, our tenants now have a welcoming space to sit, enjoy the sunshine and spend time chatting with neighbours.

A SWEET SUCCESS AT PETERS HILL!



A huge well done to everyone who took part in the 6th Annual Peters Hill Bake Off & Bake Sale!

Residents and staff at Peters Hill Supported Housing Scheme, raised an amazing £360 to support future scheme activities.

It was a fantastic day filled with delicious homemade treats, great conversation and plenty of community spirit. A special thank you to Belfast Ukulele Jam for providing wonderful live music and helping make the event even more memorable!

A GARDEN FOR EVERY GENERATION



The Intergenerational Garden, created in partnership with Choice's sheltered living scheme Bearnagh Glen and St. Teresa's Nursery School, has provided a beautiful shared space designed to bring generations together, promote wellbeing and strengthen community connections.

The garden features seasonal planting and wildlife-friendly elements that encourage biodiversity whilst creating a calm and welcoming environment for everyone to enjoy.

This project is a wonderful example of the positive impact that can be achieved through creating more connected and inclusive communities. In recognition of its success, St Teresa's Nursery was recently honoured at the West Belfast Community Environment Awards, winning the Community Award!

Congratulations to all involved and we hope you continue to enjoy the garden especially during the Summer months!

EDITORIAL TEAM IN ACTION



Our wonderful editorial team met in February to share ideas and feedback for this edition of Choice News, review the Choice website and explore our Menu of Involvement. It was a productive day with thoughtful discussion, creativity, and collaboration.

VICTORIA COURT'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY GIFT



Our tenants at Victoria Court in Whitehead were delighted to receive a framed photograph celebrating the sheltered living scheme's 30th anniversary, which now takes pride of place in their communal room. A lovely way to mark three decades of serving the local community.

SALLY'S 100TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AT CLONARD HOUSE



Wishing a very special 100th birthday to Sally of Clonard House in Belfast! What an incredible milestone, enjoy all the celebrations!

BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR DOROTHY



We would like to wish our wonderful tenant Dorothy a very happy 86th birthday! Dorothy is a valued resident from McNeill Court in Larne who is extremely active around the scheme and enjoys her coffee mornings and bingo! We hope you had a fantastic day celebrating!

CIH PRESIDENTIAL VISIT



Julie Haydon, President of the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) visited Lanthorn Mews, a supported housing scheme in Belfast which is delivered in partnership by Cedar Foundation (Cedar) and Choice. During the visit, she witnessed first-hand the vital role that high-quality, person-centred supported housing plays in enabling people with disabilities to live independently and with dignity. She also had the opportunity to meet residents and staff from Cedar and Choice.

Contact us at:

editor@choice-housing.org

choice
Together we enrich lives

CELEBRATING LILY'S WONDERFUL 100 YEARS



Our wonderful tenant Lily from Tughan Court in Bangor recently celebrated an incredible milestone, her 100th birthday! We want to wish her a very happy birthday from everyone here at Choice!

A NIGHT TO REMEMBER - NORTHLANDS 50TH ANNIVERSARY GALA DINNER



Our tenants and staff from Donal Casey Court in Derry~Londonderry enjoyed a glamorous evening at the Northlands 50th Anniversary Gala Dinner, held at the Everglades Hotel.

The event celebrated 50 years of Northlands providing specialist addiction treatment and vital support to the local community. It was a wonderful evening recognising the impact of their work and the difference they continue to make in people's lives.

CITY CULTURE DAY WITH LISNAVAR COURT



Residents from Lisnavar Court enjoyed a wonderful cultural day out in their home city visiting the Guildhall, Tower Museum and the famous Derry Girls display!

It was an enjoyable and educational day out for everyone, with some tenants discovering places on their doorstep they had never even visited before. A day filled with history, laughter and great company!

C.O.S.Y. CLUB



Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Ruairi McHugh recently visited the C.O.S.Y Club (Citizens of Older Years Club), a vibrant group supporting older residents in the area, including tenants of Donal Casey Court in Derry~Londonderry.

Well done to everyone involved in the C.O.S.Y Club which is doing a fantastic job of promoting wellbeing and social connection.

PLAY PARK FUN AT ROSSES GATE



A fantastic day was had at the official opening of the new playground at Rosses Gate, Derry~Londonderry! The sun was shining and around 300 people came out to celebrate, making it a truly special afternoon. It was wonderful to see so many families and friends enjoying the new space together.

TAI CHI AT LISNAVAR COURT



Residents at Lisnavar Court in Derry~Londonderry enjoyed a fantastic session of Tai Chi. This activity was a fun way to keep moving during the rainy weeks, helping everyone to stretch, breathe and improve their balance.

HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAMME AT OLD MANOR HOUSE



We were delighted to welcome Tracey from the Resurgam Healthy Living Centre, who recently ran a programme for the tenants at Old Manor House in Lisburn. The sessions provided a great opportunity for tenants to get involved, learn new things and spend time together, an enjoyable experience for all!

HAPPY BIRTHDAY RICHARD!



Our wonderful tenant Richard from Lisnavar Court in Derry~Londonderry celebrated his 75th birthday. We want to wish him a very happy birthday from everyone here at Choice!

Contact us at:

editor@choice-housing.org

The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award 2026



To assist you in your nominations here are a few guidelines of what the judges will be looking for:

The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award will be judged by a panel made up of Board Members, Staff and the Community Network. You can nominate your neighbour by completing and returning the attached entry form. If you are unable to complete the form or require assistance, please contact the Services Centre on 0300 111 2211, who will be pleased to help.

- Have they helped you out at a time of crisis or are they a good neighbour all the time?
- Do they help you with your garden or do the shopping for you when you can't?
- Perhaps they have looked after your children so you can have a break or even go to work?
- Maybe they've just been there when you needed someone to talk to?
- The person nominated and the nominator must both be tenants of Choice.
- More than one person can be listed as nominator, however, anonymous nominations will not be accepted.
- Listing the special qualities that are the reasons for nomination of the person concerned will assist in the judging.

Ts & Cs apply.

Closing Date:
Friday 28th August 2026

WIN
£100
Shopping
Voucher

Best Kept Garden Competition 2026

Green-fingered tenants are being urged to 'grow for it' as part of the annual Choice gardening competition.

Calling all keen gardeners! To the green fingered among you or your friends and neighbours, it's time to remind you of the annual Choice Best Kept Garden Award. You can nominate your own or another tenant's garden, or a scheme garden providing it is tended by the tenant and not Choice contractors.

If you wish to submit an entry please complete and return the information slip plus photo(s) of the nominated garden by **Friday 28th August 2026** to the Editor, **Choice News Freepost CHOICE HOUSING**



WIN
£100
Shopping
Voucher

Please be advised that this competition is open to Choice tenants only.

Ts & Cs apply.

The Muriel Smyth Good Neighbour Award 2026

Your details

Name:

Address:

.....

Tel:

Nominee Detail

Name:

Address:

.....

Tel:

Reasons for nomination:

.....

.....

.....

.....

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All nominations should be forwarded to:
Marketing Officer,
Freepost
CHOICE HOUSING

Friday 28th August 2026



Best Kept Garden Competition 2026

Your details

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Tel:

Email:

Nominee Detail (if different)

Name:

Address:

.....

.....

Tel:

Email:



Protecting your home from condensation & mould

Where does the moisture come from?

All air contains some moisture. Modern appliances such as dishwashers, washing machines and tumble dryers all produce large amounts of moisture. As many as 20 pints of moisture is added to the air in the home by an average family per day.

How do the problems start?

Generally, the problems start in winter when there is too much moisture in the air which condenses on cold surfaces. In older properties which were poorly insulated and drafty, any excess moisture could easily escape.

Today our homes are much better sealed and insulated. Unfortunately excess moisture, once sealed into our homes now makes them prone to problems such as windows streaming with condensation. Excess moisture, if left unchecked, will lead to damp in the building fabric. Double glazing, insulation and draught proofing all help to retain heat, but can make condensation problems much worse by reducing natural ventilation. Since it is neither practical nor desirable to make our homes less-well sealed, the answer is to reduce the amount of moisture we produce and physically remove the excess moisture.

If excess moisture is allowed to build-up in the home, moist air will inevitably come into contact with a cold surface such as a window or external wall when the outside temperature falls. At these low temperatures beads of condensation form, initially on windows and then spread elsewhere. Soon the condensation turns into damp and may result in mould spots growing.

How does the moisture spread?

Moist air is never concentrated in one place for long, it will drift around the home. Moisture produced in one room, for example a kitchen or bathroom, will circulate around the house, until it finds a cold place where it will condense and create areas of mould. This may be a cool bedroom or inside a wardrobe for example. Condensation and mould can, therefore occur in any room of the home. Usually these are the rooms that are least well heated, not necessarily the ones where the moisture was produced.

How do you reduce condensation?

Condensation can be effectively managed by controlling moisture generation, adequate heating and ventilating your home.

In cold weather, opening windows for 5-10 minutes several times a day will remove moist air without allowing the fabric of the building to cool significantly. This method will conserve heat and reduce energy loss as most heat in a property is held within the building fabric (walls, floors etc.) and not the air itself.

IF YOU FIND MOULD, HIGH LEVELS OF CONDENSATION or you suspect rising damp, penetrating damp such as defective render or leaking pipework, please contact us to arrange an inspection.

CALL US ON:
0300 111 2211



It is important that tenants are aware of the need to control and manage indoor air quality which contributes to condensation and mould growth that may damage your health, home and belongings.

All homes produce some amounts of excess moisture and we are all familiar with condensation on windows and pools of water on window sills. In severe cases, if not managed, this can lead to damp patches on walls and mould growth. In homes, unsightly mould can form around window panes, corners of rooms and behind furniture.

Condensation is the first sign that your home is producing excessive moisture or that moisture cannot escape through ventilation. Moisture and mould build up is not only unsightly but can cause damage to clothing, furnishings, decorations and can aggravate certain health conditions.

TOP TIPS!

Do not dry your clothes indoors - each load of washing will contain 5-10 pints of water	Wipe condensation from windows in the morning and wring the cloth or sponge into the sink	Treat mould with a mild acid, such as undiluted white vinegar
Keep lids on pots when cooking, open a window and use the extractor fan if provided	Keep bathroom doors closed during and after bathing or showering. Open the window or use the fan if provided	Let fans run or leave windows open for at least 15 mins after showering, bathing or cooking
When filling a bath or sink run the cold water first before adding hot - this reduces steam and will prevent scalding	 Ensure all rooms are adequately heated even if rarely used	Don't use stand-alone gas heaters as these appliances produce water
Consider using mould resistant paints in rooms exposed to high humidity such as bathrooms and kitchens	Keep a space behind furniture to allow air movement and avoid placing furniture against external walls	Ventilate properly to remove stale, moist air. The most effective way is to open several windows to allow a through draft
 Don't block or close wall, ceiling or window vents	Don't isolate fans or ventilation systems if fitted - they are efficient and cost very little to run	 Don't cover radiators with curtains or furniture



Children's Colouring Competition

Open to children
16 years and under

Win
a family
pass to
Belfast Zoo!

BELFAST
ZOO



It's really easy to enter, just pull out this page and colour it in anyway you like! Then pop it in the post along with your name, age, address and telephone number in the reply slip below.

One lucky winner will receive this great prize! Entries must be received by **Friday 28th August 2026**.
(Please note that the parent or guardian must be a tenant of Choice Housing Ireland). Ts & Cs apply.

Name Age

Address

..... Tel.

POST TO: Freepost CHOICE HOUSING

Different ways to pay your rent and other charges

In order to make paying your rent, rates and service charges both safe and easy, we offer a wide range of options that will mean you can choose how you pay. Ways to pay your rent:



Direct Debit – You can set up a Direct Debit agreement. Please contact the Income Recovery Team on 0300 111 2211.



Going Online – You can pay your rent online at www.choice-housing.org by clicking on 'Pay Rent' on the homepage.



Pay Your Rent with allpay – Pay your rent quickly and securely using the allpay App or Pay-by-Link.

Pay-by-Link: Make a payment using your secure, personalised payment link.

allpay App: Download the free app from the Apple App Store or Google Play to manage your rent payments on the go.



Phone us using your debit or credit card – You will need to give us your rent reference number (on your rent payment card), your debit or credit card details, and the amount you want to pay.



At any Post Office, shop, garage displaying the Paypoint sign – You can pay cash and show your rent payment card. Make sure you get a receipt and keep it safe.



Post – Send a cheque or postal order to our head office. Never send cash. You need to allow three days for your payment to reach us on time.



Universal Credit direct payment – If you claim Universal Credit, the housing cost element is automatically paid directly to your rent account. However, if this does not cover the full amount of your rent you need to pay the difference.

Have you registered for My Choice?

We're making
life easier

- ✓ easy rent payment
- ✓ quick repair requests
- ✓ easy to update contact details
- ✓ access comments, compliments & complaints

To get started simply sign up
for My Choice today
choice-housing.org



Poetry Corner

View From My Window

by E. Larkin

*The tree outside my window,
tendrils curling round the spine,
green leaves moving in the breeze.*

*All kinds of birds, resting on its branches,
building nests and laying their eggs,
waiting until they hatch,
feeding them until they are able to fly.*

*A red and grey squirrel runs up and
down the spine,
so fast it's difficult to see it,
building a drey among the branches.*

*Then the season changes, summer arrives,
then it's autumn,
the leaves turn red and gold,
falling to the ground.*

*Every season brings different.
Colours change,
but nature can still be beautiful
if we take time to relax and enjoy.*

**Tenant
Approved**



We welcome your input

Here is your chance to become involved in future editions.

If you would like to submit a feature for consideration – such as a poem, a personal achievement, an interesting story, or indeed anything you feel would be of interest to other Choice tenants – then please send your article(s) to:

**The Editor,
Freepost
CHOICE HOUSING**



choice 
Together we enrich lives

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choice-housing.org