

LOCAL ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHT

JOAN WAKE CLOSE SOCIAL CLUB

Joan Wake Close is an Independent Living scheme in Market Deeping, Peterborough, set within a private and secure location, designed specifically for people aged 55 and over.

The Joan Wake Close Social Club is a group of residents who come together to form a collective voice. The chair has extensive knowledge in sourcing funding and is not a bad cook either! The treasurer has previously been a landlady of a local pub, is an experienced cook, and always makes sure people feel looked after and cared for.

The Joan Wake Close Social Club has a very clear aim - to supply affordable meals, wellbeing events and social activities all in a safe place, and to enjoy each other's company.

The group works together to cook meals which are available and affordable for other residents to take full advantage of, paying a donation which suits their budget.

The club has since been certified by both Fareshare, a charity network aimed at relieving food poverty and reducing food waste, and Neighbourly, an award-winning

giving platform that helps businesses donate volunteer time, money and surplus products. This gives them access to food and other goods which can no longer be sold in supermarkets.

In the first six months of operation, they have provided more than 750 hot meals. So far, they have saved 5681kg of food which was destined for the tip.

Each month, the club hosts a brunch which has been very well supported by residents and their families. Each Friday, they hold a coffee morning for all to join in with. Tesco's local Community Champion attends to help serve.

We are so proud of the Joan Wake Close Social Club and all that they have achieved. Their efforts have helped to make Joan Wake Close a happier, healthier, cleaner and greener environment for everyone.

CUSTOMER CONTACT STRATEGY RESULTS

Thanks to everyone who took part in our survey and discussion on contact preferences.

We are pleased to report that over 500 customers took part in the survey, from many different backgrounds, and the results were very revealing. The full results are available [here](#).

The consultation revealed that:

- Some of you prefer to call Accent, rather than use online channels, because you feel more assured that your query or request will be actioned appropriately.
- Some of you report that transactions carried out online often have to be followed up with a phone call (inbound or outbound), negating the benefits of using online channels.
- You are generally satisfied with the service you receive by telephone, so there is little incentive for you to switch to online channels of communication.
- There appears to be strong appetite for an app, in part, to mitigate the problems some of you continue to experience in registering for MyAccount and logging in. It was also suggested that an app would improve the experience for people with visual impairments.
- You had mixed feelings about engaging with Accent using social media. Many of you are using it already and would find it more convenient. On the other hand, some of you have concerns about privacy.

Here are some quotes which support these findings:

“Rather speak to someone. I have used my online account and ended up having to phone anyway.” – **Ms S, Barrow-in-Furness**

“To be able to speak to someone is comforting and important, especially to elderly residents. It makes you feel safe and listened to.” – **Mrs K, Camberley**

“Other companies have better online and web chat features that actually work.” – **Ms S, Addlestone**

“Going online is more demanding and time-consuming.” – **Mr Q, Camberley**

“I don’t have an issue completing anything online. It’s just speaking to someone, I then know the message has been received.” – **Miss D, Camberley**

We know there is more we could do to improve your confidence to use Accent’s online services. We’ll keep you informed about progress and how your feedback has shaped our Customer Contact Strategy.



TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Thanks to everyone who took part in our discussion about the Regulator of Social Housing's proposed new landlord performance measures.

Under these proposals, all registered providers of social housing (local authorities and housing associations, like Accent) will have to publish certain performance information on a regular basis.

The aim is to make it easier for tenants and residents to assess and compare the performance of their landlord.

In case you have not already seen them, the proposed performance measures are available [here](#).

The discussion revealed that:

- Those with outstanding repairs and complaints are unlikely to pay attention to Accent's performance on other service areas.
- While the tenant satisfaction measures will help to put performance data into context, they are only useful if we explain how we are using these measures to improve services.



- You are keen that we remain focussed on your priorities rather than trying to outperform our competitors.
- Some of you did not see the use in comparing the performance of different landlords – you are not able to move home in the same way that you would be able to switch utility providers, for example.
- Performance on complaints remains a priority. You also suggested that it would be useful to understand customer 'satisfaction with the quality/condition of home'.

We will pass on your feedback to the Regulator of Social Housing. This may influence the type of performance information Accent is required to publish.

BIN CHUTES

Some of Accent's blocks of flats (particularly in the South) have bin chutes, where refuse can be passed down from an opening of each floor of the building to the central refuse room on the ground floor.

While convenient, some residents have expressed concerns about the misuse and safety of bin chutes and refuse rooms. Some were also concerned about the contamination of recycling.

We are consulting with residents on selected schemes about proposals to replace the bin chutes with smart new bin stores.

External bin stores are thought to be safer because combustible rubbish is stored away from the building, mitigating the risk of fire spreading. This would also prevent the problems previously seen in some areas with people rough-sleeping or using drugs in the refuse rooms. It is also hoped that an external bin store would improve recycling rates, promoting a cleaner, greener environment for everyone.



GREEN INSPECTORS

In a previous edition of News & Views, we told you about our plans to recruit resident 'Green Inspectors' on our five largest schemes in the North West to help us monitor the performance of our grounds maintenance contractors.

Green Inspectors will serve as 'the eyes and ears' for their estates helping to make sure that they are kept tidy.

Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, the Green Inspector programme could not be carried out in the way that we had hoped.

Now that the growing season has begun, the time is right to relaunch the Green Inspector programme – taking into consideration the feedback we received from those who expressed an interest.

As such:

- Online capability will no longer be a requirement of the role
- It will be flexible to fit around existing work or household commitments

We are confident that the role will improve understanding of what is covered by the service and improve communication on how we are dealing with any problems.

If this proves to be the case, we would like to roll this out in other areas. Depending on how it goes, we may offer Green Inspectors additional roles and responsibilities too.



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