

listen • talk • share

Voices

Spring 2021

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newsletter
coming soon!

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Welcome to the spring issue of *Voices*!



It is an absolute pleasure to welcome you to our first resident magazine for 2021.

At Johnnie Johnson Housing our customers, are at the heart of everything we do. This year we are continuing to invest in your homes and we are working really hard to provide a range of opportunities to make it easier for you to interact with us and to voice your opinions.

In this issue of *Voices* we have lots of interesting and exciting content for you to read. Including feedback from our Customer Services team and information on Pension Credit and Astraline's new partnership with the North West Ambulance Service! But, what is most exciting to see is how you have remained positive over the last couple of months, and how many of you have got

involved in our resident forums and activities. We look forward to seeing pictures of your group activities once restrictions are lifted, until then we hope you enjoy and are inspired by this issue's features.

Thank you to everybody who got involved!

Best wishes,

Yvonne Castle
CEO Johnnie Johnson Housing

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Hello,

I would like to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you for your continued support. Your feedback and contribution to *Voices* is incredibly valued and is vital in helping us make your magazine better and better each time.

So much has changed over the last year and in true Johnnie Johnson Housing style, we have tackled the challenges COVID-19 has presented us, and continued to improve your experience, satisfaction and more importantly the services you receive in the place you call home. In this spring issue of *Voices* we have given you an overview of our new and improved services which we've developed in partnership with you. Thank you to everyone who has been involved in our resident

sessions and pilots, particularly the work undertaken with the website, portal, app and estate services.

Please keep those stories coming and your spirits high!

Emma Midgley
Head of Transformation
and Communications



Royal Mail Delays

You may be finding that our letters are arriving to you a little bit later than expected, because of Royal Mail delays. If you need to get in contact with us please email general.enquiries@jjhousing.co.uk or call **0345 305 5335**.

HELPING YOU STEP ONTO THE PROPERTY LADDER

Getting your foot on the property ladder can seem like an impossible task. Whether you are struggling to get a deposit together, have been renting for some time or feel like you have been priced out of the market, the good news is there are options available!

Johnnie Johnson Housing is committed to investing in affordable housing across the North of England, to help address the nation-wide housing crisis.

To support the current demand for affordable housing, we have made a commitment to build thousands of new affordable homes. As part of this project, we will be offering new homes for shared ownership.

Shared ownership allows buyers to purchase a share of a home – usually between 25% and 75%. Purchasers will pay a mortgage on the share that they own, and rent on the remainder.

For example, if you are buying a 25% share of a home with a full value of £100,000, the value of your share will be £25,000. If a 5% deposit were required, you would need to put down a deposit of £1,250. You will also

need to pay for your legal fees and local searches.

As a result, shared ownership can be a great opportunity for those looking to step onto the property ladder, as your mortgage and deposit is lower.

To keep up to date with our latest releases, please sign up to our mailing list, by visiting www.jjhousing.co.uk/find-a-home



Customer service is at the heart of what we do!

Kate McArdell-Broome, our Head of Customer Operations, explains how your feedback is improving our customer service.



"Customer service is at the heart of what we do here at Johnnie Johnson Housing, and what has been clear to me is that we want you to be heard, valued and clearly see how we have responded to your feedback.

We hold various groups, virtual workshops and meetings throughout the year to give you the opportunity to feedback to our team. We have created new posters, to help you identify our colleagues that work in your area and have started holding virtual meetings for our general let customers.

We have also been making an extra 2,000 calls a day, to residents in our Independent Living Homes to give you more opportunities to engage and interact with us.

It is important that you feel safe and secure in your own home, and we want you to know that we are listening to you.

Our teams have received refresher training in complaints and customer service, because this is what we are here to do, listen to you and provide outstanding customer service."

We have been making an extra 2,000 calls a day, to residents in our Independent Living Homes.



Contact our team!

Our Customer Service Team can be reached on 0345 305 5335.

When you call this number, you will speak to a dedicated Customer Service Adviser or, if the line is busy, you can request a call back. The team are available each weekday between 8.30-5:00pm with the exception of bank holidays. If you require an emergency repair, please listen to our recorded message, which will direct you to our out-of-hours team. If your message isn't urgent and you'd prefer to email us, you can do so at general.enquiries@jjhousing.co.uk

Community newsletter coming soon

We're creating community newsletters with stories, advice, and announcements just for you and your neighbours!

Your community newsletter is a great way to hear about local news from in and around your property, celebrations, events, and much more!

Residents with email addresses will receive their community newsletter in their inbox every

month, whilst other residents can expect a physical copy posted through their door.

Please speak to your local housing representative about how you'd like to receive your community newsletter.

In response to your positive feedback about our first-ever digital Community Activities Week, early this year, we will now be holding regular activities and events in your area. These will be advertised in your community newsletter. If you're interested in hearing more about our events and activities programme, let your housing representative know.

In the last issue of Voices, we shared some of the amazing parklands, woodlands, public gardens, and historical sites that are near so many of our properties. We hope it inspired many of you to get outdoors, get active and explore your local area. We also held an exciting photo competition with the chance to win a £20 shopping voucher! Kathleen Newell was our lucky winner, as she sent us this beautiful picture of Blyth beach!

Thank you to everybody who sent in their pictures!



Blyth beach from Kathleen Newell

STEP INTO SPRING. 10 WAYS TO BRIGHTEN UP YOUR HOME!

Winter is over, and springtime has brought warmer weather, fresh flowers and the hope for a brighter and more joyful year!

Spring is the best time to give your home a spring-clean and décor refresh. We're not talking about major home renovations or time-consuming DIY projects, but we believe these top 10 tips from Interior Designer, Rebecca Parker, will inspire you to fall in love with your Johnnie Johnson Housing home all over again!

1. Fresh scents

Freshen up your home with diffusers, scented candles, wax melts and Zoflora cleaning products for a 'spring clean' smell every day. Popular and classic scents like fig, vanilla and

fresh linen are great choices for spring. If you have pets, be careful and be sure to use only pet-safe products.

2. Fake flowers and house plants

High street stores like Dunelm and Home Bargains have fantastic ranges of beautiful fake flowers that look stunning all year round.

Pair two feature floral stems, with three greenery-based stems and a couple of accent stems for a well-balanced bunch. Stand in a clear or coloured vase for a lovely centrepiece on a dining table, side table or windowsill.

3. Accessorising a console or coffee table

Using large books, candle holders, diffusers and faux flowers, create a mixture of heights along a sideboard, console table or coffee table. Pair three items of different heights in a triangle to create depth.

4. Dining table

Accessorising your dining table with some light placemats, napkins and a vase of fresh flowers is an ideal way to keep your dining area looking fresh and clean for spring. Both Sainsbury's and Next offer fantastic and



@rebeccaparkerinteriors

affordable ranges of homeware that are especially good for the dining table.

5. Window boxes or garden plants

Accessorise your garden, balcony or windows with fresh plants and flowers to liven up for spring. Tulips, daffodils and hyacinths bring a beautiful range of colours to your outdoor space. No matter how big or small your space, you can adapt between a flowerbed to a plant pot, or window box.

6. Cushions and soft furnishings

Mix a range of textures and easily blended colours together for a fresh and consistent colour scheme. Pick three key pieces for your room; include a patterned fabric (in a cushion, lampshade or curtains), a soft background neutral (a throw, cushion, or rug) and an accent item that includes colours from both the neutral and patterned piece (a neutral cushion with coloured piping).

7. Voiles, nets and curtains

Choose soft and light-coloured voiles and net curtains to soften up any window, and pair with some lighter curtains that allow light to flow through your windows. Play around with



@rest_interiors

textures like crisp linens and flowing chiffons to accommodate for warmer and colder rooms.

8. Kitchen accessories

Get creative with kitchen accessories like display vases for seeds, different shapes and colours of dried pasta and display vases for fruit. For a low maintenance option, you can pick up artificial fruit on Amazon for display pieces!

9. Shelf accessorising

Shelves and shelving units are not just for books; feature some photo frames and ornaments to prop books up against to break up a shelf. Decorative book ends are also a great way to accessorise a shelf, and books can be stood up or laid down to create variety.



@rebeccaparkerinteriors

10. Pictures, mirrors and artwork

Create a collage wall from a set of matching frames (Ikea is great for frames) with black and white family photos, or hang a set of prints or artwork to create a feature wall, or to fill a blank space on your walls. Dunelm and Wayfair are great places to find printed art in lovely frames.

Hanging a mirror in a narrower or smaller room will also create depth and gives the impression that the room is bigger and lighter than it actually is!

Follow @rebeccaparkerinteriors on Instagram for home renovation tips and inspiration.



Rebecca Parker,
Interior Designer



@rebeccaparkerinteriors

Win a £200 shopping voucher!

To be in with a chance of winning a £200 voucher to spend on your home, all you need to do is share a picture of your spring décor to our Facebook page. In your post, please tag @jjhousingtrust and explain what you love most about your home! Please also use the hashtag #JJHVoices

The deadline for submissions is Friday 4 June and terms and conditions can be found at www.jjhousing.co.uk/terms-and-conditions. Good luck!

Astraline teams up with ambulance service

With approximately over 3.8 million individuals over the age of 65 now living alone, many people across the UK are concerned about the welfare of their family members and how to support them to live safely and longer in their own homes.

With over 20 years' of experience in the industry, Astraline have supported thousands of customers to live independently in their own home, and are now delighted to be teaming up with North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) to support more people out in the community.

Following a very successful regional pilot project, Astraline can now respond to certain calls in Cheshire on behalf of the North West Ambulance Service – where first aid is required instead of emergency treatment. Astraline can also offer patients professional advice on how to prevent future accidents and falls in the home.



Joe McLoughlin, Director of Astraline and Innovation, commented: "We are incredibly proud to be in partnership with NWAS and to support the world-renowned NHS emergency services. We hope to roll this unique partnership out more widely across the UK, to ensure the older generation is being supported to live safely within the comfort of their homes.

"In the current pandemic many older people have been separated from their loved ones and have had to rely on a stretched NHS for often minor incidents. I would encourage all families in this situation to



consider the benefits a service like Astraline can provide, when making decisions about the future independence and wellbeing of their loved ones. Our caring and reliable services give families peace of mind and can deliver the right response at the right time."

Carol Robertson, a Community Specialist Paramedic for the North West Ambulance Service, said:

"As a paramedic, I regularly see incidents where patients have had a fall at home and often these people are not in need of life-saving emergency care and hospital isn't the best place for them. They require basic first aid or an appropriate community service and a little help and information at home to prevent them falling again."

For more information about Astraline please visit:
www.astraline.co.uk

PENSION CREDIT. WHAT IS IT? AM I ELIGIBLE?

Pensioners on a low income in the UK are being encouraged to apply for Pension Credit to increase their weekly income.



We support over three thousand residents over the age of 65, and as a result we are committed to raising awareness about Pension Credit to ensure more eligible people receive the support they need.

Pension Credit can help reduce daily household costs, but also can include additional benefits such as; council tax reductions, free television licences, NHS dental treatment and contributions to glasses prescriptions.

In Greater Manchester alone, the latest figures released from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and Greater Manchester Housing Providers, suggest as many as 43,000 local residents could

benefit from £76 million of unclaimed Pension Credit.

Jamie Ellis, a Welfare Benefits Advisor at Johnnie Johnson Housing, said: "I know that older people are sometimes reluctant to claim, or simply don't know about it. On average, those who claim Pension Credit receive over £3,000 a year, and this amount of money can make a real difference to someone's quality of life."

It can often be difficult for people to know whether they are eligible for Pension Credit, however, it is

so important to find out. As your housing provider, we can help those who may be struggling with their finances and we encourage pensioners on low income to apply for Pension Credit.

To apply for Pension Credit you must live in England, Scotland or Wales and have reached State Pension age. When you apply for Pension Credit, on the official government website, your eligibility for Pension Credit will be calculated based on your income.

To claim Pension Credit visit www.gov.uk/pension-credit.
Call us on 0345 305 5335 and ask to speak to a welfare benefits advisor.

Connected communities

We provide a range of quality affordable housing to over 7,000 customers in the North of England. Some of our residents live in remote, rural areas and others in towns and cities. During lockdown, we've been finding new ways to build connected communities and have been delighted to see so many of you getting involved in our new online activities.



COVID-19 Vaccinations



Thank you to everybody who has shared their COVID-19 vaccination experiences with us by email and on our Facebook page. It is important to remember that we are all in this together and I hope that by sharing these stories we can help others to discuss the vaccination process with their family and friends. #StaySafe

Mary, Johnnie Johnson Housing resident:

"After twelve months in virtual isolation, my great day came along on the 16 January 2021, 'Vaccination Day' at St John's Medical Centre. With the help of excellent Doctors and volunteers, it was a quick and painless experience – with no side effects. Not only do I now feel much safer, but know I am protecting all those I meet. Thank you NHS."

Community Activities Week

In February, we held our very first digital Community Activities Week for our residents in our Independent Living Properties.

It was great to see so many of you taking part; we even held our very own version of the game show classic, Family Fortunes!

We also had a prize draw for everybody who attended three or more activities. The winners were Joyce Hartshorne, Sylvia Bradbury Eddie and Pat Lock, Elizabeth Barrow and Jenni Woolfe who all won a Samsung tablet* provided by Fortem!

*For full T&Cs visit www.jjhousing.co.uk/terms-and-conditions

Positively-brilliant!

To keep spirits high, we asked you and our colleagues to share your favourite quotes and sayings that have kept you going through lockdown. Here are a few of our favourites!

"Try to be a rainbow in someone else's cloud."

Becky Shuttleworth, Housing Manager

"Just when a caterpillar thought the world was ending, it turned into a butterfly."

Irene Ward, Housing Manager

"Everything is Beautiful when you dance in your own ballet."

Caroline Brock, Johnnie Johnson Housing resident

"I follow three rules: Do the right thing, Do the best you can, and always show people you care."

Susan Willerton, Housing Manager

"When it rains look for a rainbow, when it's dark look for stars."

Irene Ward, Housing Manager

"When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live your life so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice. Don't let yesterday use up too much of today."

Dave Cobbledick, Johnnie Johnson Housing resident

Record number at the latest Digital Resident Forum

We are delighted that around 50 of you logged on to our February digital forum. It was great to see so many new faces and welcome a number of new General Let and Leasehold residents. We hope you enjoyed hearing the latest updates about your homes and services including our digital transformation programme, our plans for estate services, and updates on the repairs and

maintenance service, among other things. We were also delighted to hear from you with your questions and queries.



While we will continue to hold digital forums, we also have plans to arrange other face-to-face and digital activities once we are allowed, including workshops, scheme meetings and conferences, so that we can engage with a greater number of you.

If you would like to attend our next online resident conference on 11 May, please register on the website at www.jjhousing.co.uk/resident-conference and we will send you details nearer the time.

New digital services for 2021

Following on from the work we did last year, we are making further improvements to our digital services, so you have easy access to the support and information you need!

New residents' online account services

To make sure you can access information about your property and tenancy, at a time and place to suit you, we will soon be launching a new and improved online account service for residents, previously known as the resident's portal.

Here you will be able to update your details, make payments, access your residents' handbook, as well as find information on how to feedback to our team. We will also be releasing the portal as an app, which you will be able to download on your smartphone or tablet.

New website coming soon!

We have some exciting news... we are giving our website a makeover! Many of you have

given valuable feedback in our focus groups and workshops, which has been valuable when redesigning the website. The new design will be clear and easy to navigate when reporting a repair or even finding a new home!

Making it easier to choose where to live

We are introducing a new lettings system which is easy-to-use and allows you to make choices about where you want to live and which home is most suitable for you. Most housing associations use this kind of system to advertise the homes they have available to rent. If you are looking to move home, you will be able to 'bid' on the homes

you would like to live in (subject to eligibility), and you can usually 'bid' for more than one home at a time. The system works on a priority basis depending on applicants' housing need at that time. Once the 'bidding' window closes on a property, we will inform the successful applicant.

Bridging the digital gap

Building on the digital training that we delivered last year, we are looking to provide further opportunities for you to access digital training this year. We will also be relaunching a digital champions programme which

we hope will give you the opportunity to learn new skills that you can share with other residents. If you are interested in finding out more about what being a Digital Champion involves, contact us at communications@jjhousing.co.uk

New digital noticeboards

After a pilot in one of our schemes last year, we will be rolling out digital noticeboards to more of our Independent Living Properties this year. These will display key messages that are relevant to you and should be of interest, as well as include a touchscreen to allow you to easily find more information.



Dealing with debt

If you are struggling with debt, you may find it difficult to make your bill payments and many people can feel overwhelmed or pressured to make payments that they can't afford.

At Johnnie Johnson Housing we're keen to support you. We work closely with the StepChange Debt Charity who give free expert impartial advice on debt. They can put solutions in place to make your finances manageable again and help you sleep at night.

How to get help?

Dealing with debt can be confusing and scary for many. There are hundreds of reasons why people put off getting debt advice – some fear they'll be judged, and many aren't aware that free, impartial debt advice is available.

1 Recognise the signs

StepChange Debt Charity estimates that the average person waits 12 months between realising they're in financial trouble and getting debt advice for the first time, during which their situation can get even worse. If you are in debt, had a sudden change in circumstances or using loans to pay off other debts we recommend seeking debt advice.

2 Prepare

Before speaking to an advisor for help, it is important to be prepared to answer questions about your debt, monthly budget

and outgoings and your personal circumstances. This will ensure you receive the correct support to start your journey to become debt free.

3 Speak to StepChange

StepChange is the UK's largest provider of free debt advice and we recommend speaking to them if you're worried about your debt. You can visit their website at www.stepchange.org or call them for free on **0800 138 1111**.

Universal Credit explained



Jamie Ellis, Johnnie Johnson Housing's Welfare Benefits Advisor, has been encouraging residents to apply for Universal Credit if they need support with living costs; such as rent, food and utility bills.



"It is important that people feel supported to apply for Universal Credit and speak to an expert if they're struggling to claim, or unsure if they should. You can apply whether you have a job or not, or if you're self-employed or own your own business. We should not allow individuals and families to lose sleep over paying essential bills. The best advice I can give people is to take action swiftly, since claims are not back dated."

To help us all understand how Universal Credit works, Jamie has answered some of the most frequently asked questions.

I already claim benefits can I apply for Universal Credit?

If you currently claim other benefits, these may end if you apply for Universal Credit. Many people in this position find that they are better off on Universal Credit, but some people aren't – and once you have made your claim there's no going back! If you are not sure whether claiming Universal Credit is the right

decision for you then Citizens Advice's 'Help to Claim' line can offer you independent guidance. Call 0800 144 8444.

Do I need access to the internet?

Universal Credit is designed to be managed online, so unlike other benefits you won't get letters about it through the post. The government knows that not everyone has access to the internet, so you can make a 'telephone claim' by calling the Universal Credit helpline on 0800 328 5644.

How much could I receive?

It does not matter if you have a job or not, the award will be based on how much you are earning. If you have no income then your maximum award will include a standard allowance, plus help towards any rent

payable and then additional amounts if you have children or a health condition that affects your ability to work.

What other support am I entitled to with Universal Credit?

If you receive Universal Credit you may be entitled to additional support with childcare and health costs, including prescriptions and dental treatment. Whether you can receive this extra support will depend on your personal circumstances and, in some cases, where you live.

I am retired can I claim?

Universal Credit is a benefit for working-age people, so if you've reached pension age then other benefits such as Pension Credit will be more relevant. Please see page 9 for further information.

For more information about Universal Credit please visit www.gov.uk/universal-credit/how-to-claim or call the official Universal Credit Helpline on 0800 328 5644.

Improving the services in and around your home



We encourage and value the voice of our residents by learning from feedback and working in partnership together to improve current, and develop future, services.

Over the past few months, we have been focusing on the services you receive in and around your home, including grounds maintenance and cleaning. We know this has been an area of frustration for a while and we have been working with our Scrutiny Panel to tackle this and deliver a solution that will improve satisfaction.

In December last year, we successfully delivered a pilot in partnership with Fortem, our repairs and maintenance contractor. The aim was to test whether or not combining services together would result in improved service quality, value for money and satisfaction for our residents and we are pleased to report that all three areas significantly improved when services were delivered by just one contractor.

Mrs Sloane, resident at Northolt Court, said "The operative that attended Northolt Court was an

74%

of residents involved in the pilot said the appearance of their scheme improved when services were delivered by one contractor

absolutely brilliant worker and I hope he comes back to carry out works in the future".

Residents from Kenley Lodge commented that the "service was very good and much better."

We value resident feedback and we wanted to understand whether or not you were supportive of our proposed approach. A huge thank you to everyone who responded to the telephone survey. The results have been extremely positive and reinforce the reasons why

93%

of residents recently surveyed said that they feel it would be more beneficial for estate services to be delivered by one single contractor

we plan to take this approach and hopefully replicate the success we've had with the pilot in all our regions.

Our colleagues are passionate about delivering our resident promise of **#LoveWhereYouLive**, ensuring it is brought to life in the homes and services we provide.

As we move forward, we will be in touch with further information of how this may impact where you live. We look forward to working with you and hearing your opinions as we progress.

PUZZLE TIME

WORDSEARCH

– can you find the 10 words?

S	P	R	I	N	G	T	I	M	E
Y	T	P	S	V	W	Q	Y	E	M
L	I	D	O	F	F	A	D	A	Z
F	H	B	O	E	X	U	N	D	M
R	G	L	I	A	B	Z	K	O	O
E	S	O	N	S	Y	M	C	W	S
T	N	O	Q	T	B	N	T	L	S
T	M	M	H	E	R	W	N	Y	O
U	S	S	A	R	G	Z	G	U	L
B	C	H	I	C	K	L	X	H	B

GRASS
CHICK
EASTER
SPRINGTIME

DAFFODIL
MEADOW
BLOSSOM
BUNNY

BUTTERFLY
BLOOM

SUDOKU

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

1. Only use the numbers 1 to 9.
2. Avoid trying to guess the solution to the puzzle.
3. Only use each number once in each row, column and grid.
4. Use the process of elimination as a tactic.
5. Use cross-hatching and penciling in techniques.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

– can you spot the 10 differences?



ANSWERS



B	H	X	1	K	C	H	C	B
1	0	2	2	0	V	S	S	U
O	A	N	M	R	E	H	M	I
S	1	N	B	1	O	N	I	
S	M	C	W	M	N	O	S	E
O	O	K	Z	Z	V	I	T	G
M	N	N	U	X	O	H	H	
Z	V	D	V	I	D	O	H	
M	E	A	Q	M	S	S	A	
S	E	N	G	T	I	M	E	

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



Mini Eggs Cookies



INGREDIENTS

300g plain flour
1/2 tsp bicarbonate of soda
1/2 tsp salt
1 tbsp cornflour
115g unsalted butter/margarine
100g light brown sugar
100g granulated sugar
1 medium egg
1 tsp vanilla extract
180g Mini Eggs (2x 90g bags)
200g micro chocolate eggs

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 180°C/160°C fan and line two/three large baking trays with parchment paper, leave to the side.
2. Whisk the plain flour, bicarbonate of soda, salt, and cornflour together in a bowl and leave to the side.
3. Melt your butter carefully, and then add to a bowl. Add in the sugars, and whisk the mixture together for two minutes. (I used my electric whisk, if whisking by hand, whisk for 3 minutes)
4. Add in the vanilla and egg and whisk again till combined.
5. Add in the flour mixture and beat till everything is evenly distributed and a cookie dough is formed.
6. Add in the Mini Eggs, and the micro eggs and mix together again.
7. Scoop the cookie dough using a cookie or ice cream scoop for even portions, then roll into balls. Bake in the oven for 10-13 mins.
8. Leave the cookies to cool on the trays for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely! Enjoy!

Win a £25 shopping voucher

To be in with the chance of winning a £25 shopping voucher, all you need to do is send us a picture of your Mini Eggs Cookies and your favourite recipe, to communications@jjhousing.co.uk

We will then select one lucky winner, who will have their recipe published in the next issue of *Voices* as well as a voucher to treat yourself with. **Deadline for entries is Friday 4 June ...so get baking!**



Terms and conditions apply. Visit www.jjhousing.co.uk/terms-and-conditions

Spring 2021 gardening guide from the experts at Dobbies Garden Centres



Resident gardening expert at Dobbies, Marcus Eyles, shares his top jobs for the spring gardening season:

- 1 **Garden spring clean** – After a wet and windy winter, it's time to tackle leaves and sheds and garden furniture in time for warmer weather. Declutter garden sheds, rake fallen leaves from lawns and give garden furniture a clean, making sure this is cleaned according to the manufacturer's guidelines.
- 2 **Pick up the paintbrush** – Take the opportunity to give the fence a fresh coat of stain for the new season, or even a fresh lick of paint to transform the overall look and feel of your garden.
- 3 **Prepare soil** – Prepare your soil for the growing season by working in a layer of around 5cm of manure to flower and vegetable beds.

- 4 **Plant up** – In terrace gardens, plant pots, hanging baskets and window boxes with a cheerful display of early season bedding plants including pansies, Violas and potted bulbs. One of the most economical ways to fill your tubs and baskets with colour this summer, is to grow your own bedding plants from young plants available now. Grow under cover until all frosts have passed.

- 5 **Get summer bulbs ready** – Spring is the perfect time to plant your beautiful summer flowering bulbs such as gladiolus and lilies. Dahlias and begonias should also be started now too, however these should be started off in pots under a greenhouse or potting shed, protected from any early spring frost.

- 6 **Grow your own** – Plant soft fruit now, such as raspberries, blackcurrants and blueberries. Mulch existing rows of raspberry canes and fruit bushes. Plant rhubarb remembering to allow enough room for them to develop to their full size. Add a thick layer of farmyard manure around your new plant to help retain moisture and keep weeds at bay.

- 7 **Welcome feathered friends** – Birds are an important part of a garden's ecosystem and are easy to attract with feeding and shelter. No bird friendly garden is complete without a bird feeder or table. Fill with nuts, seeds and homemade fat balls.

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