

**WIN!**

£100 shopping  
voucher  
inside

# Mike's mushrooms are on the menu!

(More details  
and recipe  
inside)



## ALSO INSIDE...

Help with the  
cost of living

Independent  
Living update

What's on  
my estate?

Budget-friendly  
things to do in  
the district

**NEWS FOR  
STROUD DISTRICT  
COUNCIL TENANTS**

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[www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)

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Front cover photo credit:  
Ollie Hobbs, Wholly Gelato.

# Welcome to the 2023 edition of *Keynotes*

We are delighted to bring *Keynotes* magazine back this year. This issue is packed with useful advice on everything from condensation and damp in your home to help with the cost of living, plus news from our tenant services and Independent Living teams, competitions, children's activities and a guide for enjoying the district. Below, our new Strategic Head of Housing introduces himself and talks about his priority for our housing services in 2023 and beyond.



## INTRODUCING SDC STRATEGIC HEAD OF HOUSING ANDY KEFFORD



I have been appointed to Stroud District Council in the role of Strategic Head of Housing. My job will be to ensure we deliver the best housing services, build strong communities and ensure residents have a voice that is heard.

One of the council's priorities is Environment and Climate Change, leading the district to carbon neutrality by 2030. Housing Services is committed to this and has in place a strong retrofit programme of upgrading existing buildings to improve energy efficiency.

Our retrofit programme recently achieved a Highly Commended in "The best Local Authority or Social Housing Retrofit Programme" award, which is a fantastic achievement. In the short space of time that I have worked for SDC, I am reassured to see that we have a committed and passionate team of people that are dedicated to providing exceptional services to you.

There are, and will be, many challenges ahead of us, but with the team I am committed to ensuring that we deliver services that comply with regulation to keep tenants safe, provide excellent customer service and that our approach represents best practice and value for money.

I am looking forward to working with colleagues, partners, members and tenants to ensure that our service meets your needs both now and in the future.

*Andy Kefford*



# Tenant evicted after making neighbours' lives a misery

**A tenant was evicted recently who made his neighbours' lives a misery. Mark Peto used a council home garden as a scrap yard and stored offensive weapons in the home in Woodview Road, Cam.**

He was evicted on 22 March 2023 following a Gloucester County Court hearing on 9 February 2023, where Stroud District Council was granted a Possession Order for the property.

For several years he used the property and garden as a scrap yard, storing flammable materials outside. In February 2022 the court granted a civil injunction order requiring Mr Peto to remove items from the property and garden. A power of arrest was later added to the order and offensive weapons, including axes, were found at the property and removed by police.



He refused to clear the outside of the home, so SDC removed more than four tonnes of scrap metal from the rear garden. Council officers worked with both the police and fire officers to try and resolve this matter. After careful consideration the council made an application for possession.

Neighbours have had to live with the risk of flammable materials being stored against their property as well as being unable to sell their homes due to the eyesore. When approached by council officers Mr Peto was aggressive and was sent to prison in June 2022 after breaching his injunction order by assaulting a council officer.

Cllr Mattie Ross, Chair of Stroud District Council Housing Committee, said: "Over a prolonged period he inflicted misery on his neighbours with no thought or concern of his actions on others. Whilst we always use eviction as a last resort, the council had no option in this case but to apply to the courts for a warrant."

**If you need help managing your tenancy please get in touch with your housing officer – see page 13.**

## Jobs and Education

### Interview

#### tips



The National Careers Service provides careers information, advice and guidance, including how to write a CV and tips to help you prepare for an interview. See: [www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareers.service.gov.uk)

**If you have a disability you have the right to ask for changes to job interviews and tests. For example if a test is on a computer you can ask for a larger screen, software or a person to read it for you.**

**Visit Scope, the disability employment charity at [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk) for more information.**

### Learn with SGS

SGS College, with a campus in Stroud, is one of the largest further education providers in the country.



It delivers a huge range of courses, from part time free-of-charge qualifications to help adults improve their job prospects, to apprenticeships and full time degrees. It may be able to help with childcare costs too.

**FREE Adult Functional Skills in English and Maths.**  
See [www.sgscol.ac.uk](http://www.sgscol.ac.uk) for more information

# TENANT SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT

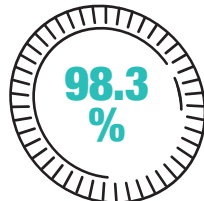
2021/  
2022



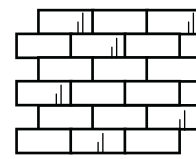
Total  
income

£21,917,268.69

Rent  
collection rate



Number of  
evictions



21

Number of new  
properties built

770

Number of  
independent  
living units



409

Number of  
new tenancies

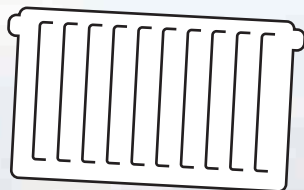


Kitchens &  
Bathrooms

£78,070

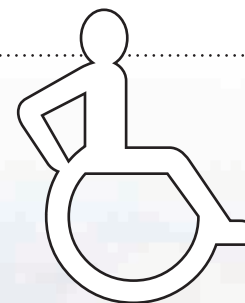
Central  
Heating Systems

£116,000



Doors

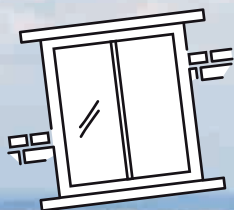
£393,122



Disabled  
Adaptations

£116,751

Windows  
£389,515



Roofing and  
external works

£3,467,251

We attended  
10,504 repairs of  
which 1,090 were  
emergencies



Properties with  
a valid gas  
certificate

99.97%

Stock  
Condition  
surveys  
undertaken

299

Number of  
households  
on the  
waiting list

3,961

Number of homes  
sold right to buy

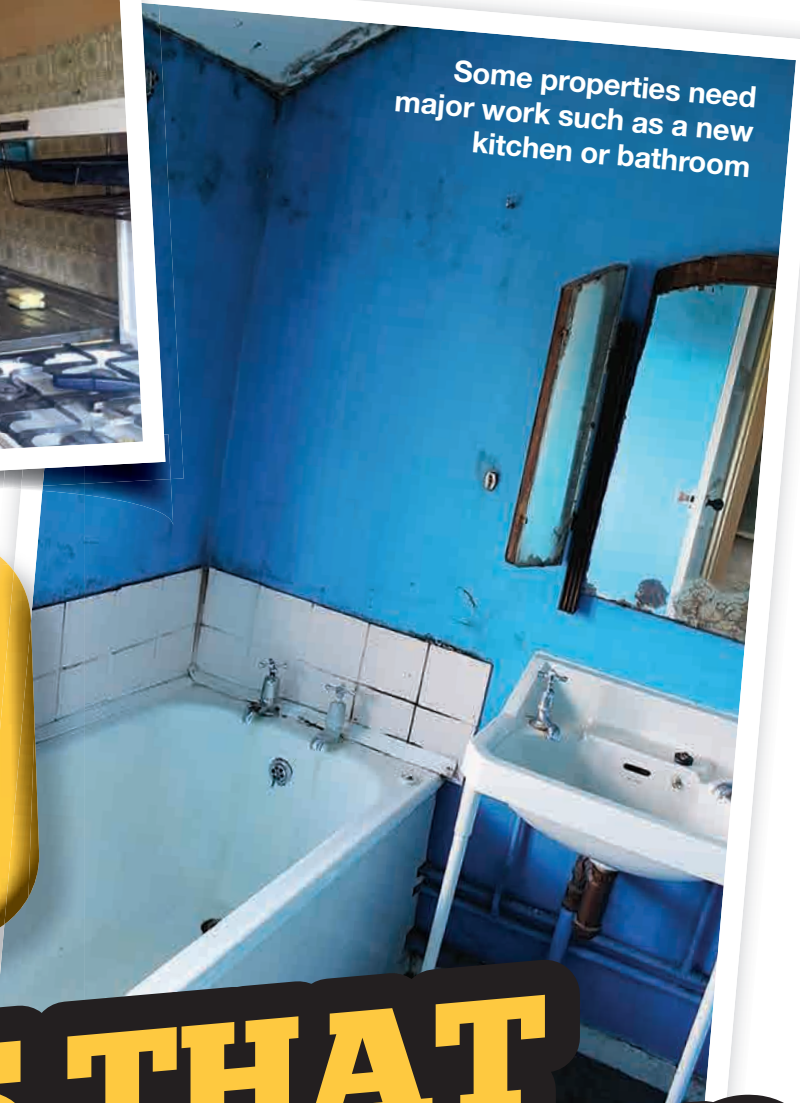
10



Some properties need major work such as a new kitchen or bathroom

If you think that a council home is no longer lived in, please tell your Housing Officer (see page 13 for details).

We won't be able to share personal information about another tenant with you, but we will always do our best to get empty homes relet as quickly as possible.



# WHY IS THAT HOUSE EMPTY?

There are currently almost 4,000 households on the waiting list for a council property, so when a tenant out moves we work as quickly as possible to relet it.

Sometimes it looks as if a council house is standing empty with nothing happening. We understand how frustrating this appears, but there are usually good reasons for this.

**Here are some of the most common:**

- the house may be in private ownership, having been bought under the 'right to buy' scheme.
- the tenant might be in hospital or in a care home, expecting to return.
- if a tenant dies without making a will and appointing an executor it can take many months to for the legal process to be completed via the Court of Protection.
- the property may need major work such as installing a new heating system, kitchen or bathroom before it can be relet. Those that don't need a lot of work can be relet in a couple of weeks, but any that need a lot of work require more planning and to fit in with other major works programmes.
- the tenant might have left without telling us. We then have to follow a legal process to end the tenancy which takes some time.

# Competition

Circle the words which are taken from this edition of *Keynotes*. Find the word that isn't in the wordsearch to be in with a chance of winning a £100 supermarket voucher.



## WORDSEARCH COMPETITION

CARELINE  
COMMUNITY  
CONDENSATION  
ESTATE  
FIREALARM  
GARAGE  
HAP  
HELLO  
HOUSE  
HUBS

INDEPENDENT  
INTERVIEW  
MUSHROOM  
REPAIRS  
SCAM  
SUPPORT  
WALK  
WARM  
WINTER

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

Enter by emailing the missing word to [keynotes@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:keynotes@stroud.gov.uk) by Sunday 4 June.

Don't forget to include your full name, address and phone number.

If you'd prefer to post it, please send it to: *Keynotes*, Stroud District Council, Ebley Mill, Stroud, GL5 4UB with your name, address and phone number.

Name .....

Address .....

Email ..... Telephone number .....

## Housing sudoku



You'll find the answer on page 19

Terms and conditions are also on page 19



Turn to the **inside back page** for our children's activity page

# Updating your home... getting the right permission

Whilst we know that our tenants like to update their properties and keep them looking nice, you do need permission for alterations that include any addition or alteration to the exterior and interior of the property in accordance with your tenancy agreement.

## Property alterations – dos and don'ts

- **You must not** undertake any alterations or additions to your property without having our written permission to do so, including external decoration.
- Any requests for permission will need to be made in writing to: **Tenant Services, Stroud District Council, Ebley Mill, Ebley Wharf, Stroud, GL5 4UB** or emailed to: [housing.management@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:housing.management@stroud.gov.uk)



## Some examples of alterations that require permission

- External lights
- Outside sockets
- Replacement of radiators
- Gas cookers
- Laminate flooring
- Bathroom fittings
- External tap
- Moving gas meters
- Replace bath with shower
- External door and window replacements
- satellite dishes and aerials



If you want to know more, email [housing.management@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:housing.management@stroud.gov.uk) or check 'Information and Property Update' on our website.



## TENANTS SCRUTINISE VOIDS MANAGEMENT

Tenant involvement has been reinvigorated by the work of a tenant focus group examining SDC's management of empty properties. In November the group presented its report findings and recommendations to senior managers.

Managers in turn were able to give a progress update and are keen to work with tenants on an action plan for outstanding actions. The group's report has now been published to our website and

there are plans to recruit a few more tenants who would be willing to monitor the resulting voids management action plan. The Tenants' Focus group will shortly reform to investigate another area of our housing service.

If you are an SDC tenant and would be interested in taking part, please call: **Christine Welsh** on **07774 453357** or email: [christine.welsh@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:christine.welsh@stroud.gov.uk)

# £ HELP with the COST OF LIVING £

We are doing all we can to support people and communities with the rising cost of living. Below is a list of some of the help you can access. Importantly, if you're struggling and getting into debt, don't leave it too late. If you reach out and seek help there's plenty which can be done to improve the situation.



## Household costs.

The Household Support Fund is available through

Gloucestershire County Council to support households in the most need with food, energy, water bills and other essential items. When you apply you will be asked to provide some kind of evidence to show your loss of income or increased living costs.

You can apply via the website [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk) or call **01452 425000**.

**Housing.** If Housing Benefit or Universal Credit doesn't cover all your rent, check to see if you can make a claim for a discretionary housing payment.

This is administered by SDC, you can find more information on our website at [www.stroud.gov.uk/dhp](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/dhp)

## Food parcels and fuel vouchers.

Stroud Foodbank can support you with food parcels or fuel vouchers. Please ask us to refer you if you are in food or fuel emergency.

Call us on **01453 766321** and dial 0 for Customer Services or email [customer.services@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@stroud.gov.uk)

**Council tax.** You may be eligible for council tax support through Stroud District Council if you receive certain benefits or are on low income. You can find out more on our website.



## Energy.

Contact your energy supplier if you are struggling

to pay for energy or think you may get into difficulty. If you already have energy debts, some larger suppliers offer grants to help pay this off. You can also visit Warm and Well for advice and support on managing your home energy.

Visit [www.warmandwell.co.uk](http://www.warmandwell.co.uk)

**Warm spaces.** Warm spaces are places where people can gather free-of-charge in a warm, safe, welcoming place if they are struggling to heat their home. Some warm spaces will close during the warmer months and reopen when the temperature drops later in the year. Many of them also offer free wi-fi, activities and pay-as-you-fee cafes.

Find warm spaces close to you by visiting [www.cscic.org/warm-spaces](http://www.cscic.org/warm-spaces)

**Pension credits.** If you're of State Pension age, check if you're eligible for Pension Credit, which provides extra money for living costs and access to other help. Around a third of eligible pensioners don't claim Pension Credit – often because they don't know they can or that they need to.

Find out how to apply at [www.gov.uk/pension-credit](http://www.gov.uk/pension-credit)

**Money worries.** If you're in debt, seek advice early rather than let things spiral out of control.

Contact Citizens Advice who can help on **0808 800 0510**.



**Free school meals.** If you or your child receive certain benefits, you can apply for free school meals from Year 3 and above.

Apply for free school meals at [www.gloucestershire.gov.uk](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk) or call Gloucestershire County Council on **01452 425000**.

**Childcare.** More than one million families are missing out on up to £2,000 a year towards childcare costs. Search online for the Government Childcare Calculator to find out how much you could get towards approved childcare if you need cover while you work.

Find more advice, help and links to agencies visit [www.stroud.gov.uk/costofliving](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/costofliving)



## Contact your Income Management Officer

Income Management Officers work with you to manage your rent and service charge payments. If you're having financial difficulties and are unable to pay your rent, please get in touch sooner rather than later. Your Income Management Officer will do everything they can to help you keep up with your rent payments.

**The quickest and easiest way to contact us about your rent is via email at [housing.rents@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:housing.rents@stroud.gov.uk) or by telephoning 01453 766321 and choosing option 3, then option 3 again.**

## HAVE YOU VISITED YOUR LOCAL COMMUNITY HUB?

Community Hubs are places that act as a central point of contact and support for local people (these are different to our Independent Living hubs). They offer a range of services depending on the hub and are situated at locations across the district. Many of the hubs offer low-cost drop-in cafes to get hot food and drink. Some also run a variety of clubs and training sessions and others have communal laptops and phones for you to use as well as people on hand to offer support and advice.

**Find your nearest community hub:**  
[www.stroud.gov.uk/communityhubs](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/communityhubs)

# Holiday Activity & Food Programme

**W**e work in partnership with local voluntary and community organisations to deliver Gloucestershire County Council's Holiday Activity & Food Programme (HAF). The programme is funded by the Department of Education for those in reception to year 11 who receive benefits-related free school meals.

During the summer holidays children can look forward to activities such as forest school, paddleboarding, canoe and bike hire, craft sessions, activity days and much much more.

**For more information and to register or update your CABS account ready for summer 2023 visit [www.strouddistrictHAF.co.uk](http://www.strouddistrictHAF.co.uk)**



**Check out the children's activities on page 23**



2023

# A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

...a Senior Housing Officer  
**Manjit Kaur**

Have you ever wondered what makes up a typical day for your housing officer? We asked Manjit Kaur, Senior Housing Officer for Stonehouse, Whitminster, Eastington & Frampton-on-Severn to give an inside look into her day:

**About the role:** I've worked in housing since 1996 and during that time have dealt with all aspects of social housing. However my current role at Stroud District Council has been quite different, and at times, challenging.

The volume of work which comes through to the tenancy team varies on a daily basis, including reports of anti-social behaviour, repairs, income queries, safeguarding concerns, attending meetings, carrying out tenancy visits, dealing with mutual exchanges, boundary disputes, overgrown trees, hedges, parking - the list goes on!

As a Senior Housing Officer, it is difficult to describe a typical day as it is so unpredictable, and I never know what is in store. Here's a snapshot...

**9am** My day starts by checking my calendar, so I can plan for the day. I then check my emails and prioritise what is urgent.

**10am** Every Monday I attend the community Hub at APT in Stonehouse (All Pulling Together) for one hour. I am often approached by various members of the community, people from all walks of life, wanting assistance and advice on repairs, anti-social behaviour, welfare concerns, and sometimes just wanting to chat whilst they visit the food bank.

**11am** My diary is always full but when an emergency occurs I will reschedule what I had planned to do and head out. Today I head out to help with an emergency situation with a tenant.

**1pm** This afternoon I am dealing with a case of hoarding. This can be extremely difficult to deal with, especially when tenants are reluctant to ask for help and cases can go on for years. First, I have to build up a relationship with the tenant, visiting every week, sometimes for months. During that time, I build trust, advising them of the risks to their home, their environment, their health and of those that live around them, while trying to encourage them by explaining what a new start would look like. If all goes to plan the work finally pays off, the property is cleared and I work with the tenant to ensure it stays that way.

**4pm** This afternoon I am working with some severe anti-social behaviour issues and some safeguarding cases involving domestic abuse. This is very sensitive and has to be managed the correct way, building trust and relationships.

**5pm** I look at what's going on tomorrow. I know where my diary says I have to be, but anything could change. And that's why I love what I do!

If you're inspired by Manjit's story and would like to join us as a housing officer, keep an eye on our jobs pages: [stroud.gov.uk/jobs](https://www.stroud.gov.uk/jobs)

# Mike puts mushrooms on the menu

SDC's Independent Living Team, led by Site Officer Team Leader Mike Wardell, has been working with local business Slad Valley Mushrooms, collecting grow bags that are no longer commercially viable, but still fruiting, for residents to grow their own mushrooms to help with the cost of living. So far, a number of residents have picked and used them for their own meals, and some have used them in a communal cooking experience - enjoying freshly cooked meals together with the locally grown mushrooms.

Grow bags have also been donated to organisations including Trinity Rooms Community Hub and Paganhill Community Group and are being distributed by Network of Stroud Hubs (NOSH).

Once the bags have stopped fruiting, they can then be used as compost and are being used on Independent Living gardens and allotments.



## Recipe *The Long Table's Mushroom Pasta Stroganoff*



This simple and comforting recipe has been shared by Masie McBagley, head chef of The Long Table.

### Ingredients

- 1 small yellow onion, finely diced
- 5 tablespoons of butter
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 400g mushrooms, sliced
- 2 tbsp flour
- 300ml vegetable broth (*can be from a stock cube*)
- 120ml sour cream or milk
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley, plus more to serve
- Salt + pepper, to taste
- Your choice of pasta

### Method

1. Using a large pot, add the butter and cook the onions until tender. Add the mushrooms and cook until they have sweated down, releasing some juices for about 5 minutes.
2. Sprinkle in the flour, stir to mix until all the flour has dissolved in the mushroom juices. Cook for 1 minute.
3. Pour in the vegetable stock, stirring while you do this, and cook for a further 10 minutes.
4. Bring pasta water to the boil and cook the pasta until done and drain.
5. Add cream or milk to the mushroom mix and stir in your cooked pasta.
6. Season with salt and pepper taste and add parsley at the end



The Long Table is a Community Interest Company with the aim of making locally sourced and lovingly prepared food available to everyone, regardless of their social or financial background. It owns a canteen in Brimscombe that serves home-cooked food at a reasonable price in a friendly atmosphere. The mill building is also home to Stroud Food Bank and Stroud District Kids Stuff. The Long Table operates the 'Freezers of Love' which provide fully paid for, home-cooked meals for people who can't afford them. All you have to do is visit your closest freezer and take what you need (some even deliver!)



To find your nearest freezer in the district or for other information visit [www.thelongtableonline.com](http://www.thelongtableonline.com)

# What's on my estate?

**Community hubs**  
Some estates have community hubs (see page 9) or Independent Living hubs (see pages 16 & 17)

There are a whole range of services, agencies and community facilities available on your estate. Some services differ from area to area but you should find many of them near you. Do you know what's on your estate?

## Neighbourhood wardens

They help create safer, greener and cleaner spaces. You can approach them with concerns about rubbish, graffiti, anti-social behaviour and other issues.

## Income management officer

Find out about these on page 9.

## Animal Welfare Officers

You may see them in your local area, or if you have found or lost a dog you can contact them on 01453 754478.

## Play areas and green spaces

Make the most of parks and green spaces in the warmer weather to get fresh air and exercise.

**Housing Officers**  
You can find your local Housing Officer on the next page.



# Your Housing Officers

Housing Officers cover six geographical areas across the district. They can deal with any of your tenancy-related questions and they contribute to making our estates safe, community focused and a pleasant place to live. You can contact your Housing Officer using the details below:

## Rachel Pratt

[rachel.pratt@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.pratt@stroud.gov.uk)

**Area:** Alkington, Dursley, Ham & Stone, Hillesley and Tresham, Kingswood, Stinchcombe, Uley, Wotton-under-Edge, Kings Stanley, Leonard Stanley



**Find me at:** The Keepers, Wotton-Under-Edge  
*Every Wednesday, 10.30am*

**Find me at:** The Chantery Centre, Dursley  
*Third Thursday of the month, 10.00am*

## Rebecca Woodward

[rebecca.woodward@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:rebecca.woodward@stroud.gov.uk)

**Area:** Berkeley, Cam, Coaley, Frocester, Hamfallow, Hinton, Slimbridge



**Find me at:** GL11, Cam  
*First Wednesday of the month, 11.00am*

## Colin Levine

[colin.levine@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:colin.levine@stroud.gov.uk)

**Area:** Cainscross, Cashes Green, Ebley, Paganhill, Randwick, Ruscombe, Whiteshill



**Find me at:** The Octagon, Paganhill  
*First Wednesday of the month*

## Manjit Kaur

[manjit.kaur@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:manjit.kaur@stroud.gov.uk)

**Area:** Arlingham, Eastington, Frampton-on-Severn, Frethern-with-Saul, Stonehouse, Whitminster



**Find me at:** APT, Stonehouse  
*Every Monday, 10.00am*

## Joe Philips

[joseph.phillips@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:joseph.phillips@stroud.gov.uk)

**Area:** Rodborough, Stroud/ Uplands, Woodchester



**Find me at:** Top of Town  
*Location, dates and times to be announced*

## Neil Boulton

[neil.boulton@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:neil.boulton@stroud.gov.uk)

**Area:** Bisleigh-with-Lypiatt, Brookthorpe-with-Whaddon, Chalford, Cranham, Elmore, Hardwicke, Haresfield, Horsley, Minchinhampton, Miserden, Nymphsfield, Painswick, Thrupp, Upton-St-Leonards, Nailsworth



**Find me at:** The Arkell Centre  
*Dates and times to be announced*

# Keep your home free from condensation all year round

Condensation and damp can seriously affect your health. The Council's Warm and Well service has some information and tips for reducing condensation and keeping your home healthy...

## What is condensation?

Condensation is caused by moisture in the air. There is always some moisture in the air, even if you can't see it. When air gets colder it can't hold all the moisture and tiny drops of water appear – this is condensation. If a house is not ventilated and condensation cannot escape, you will find water on windows and windowsills for example. If it isn't dealt with this can result in mould building up on walls and around windows.

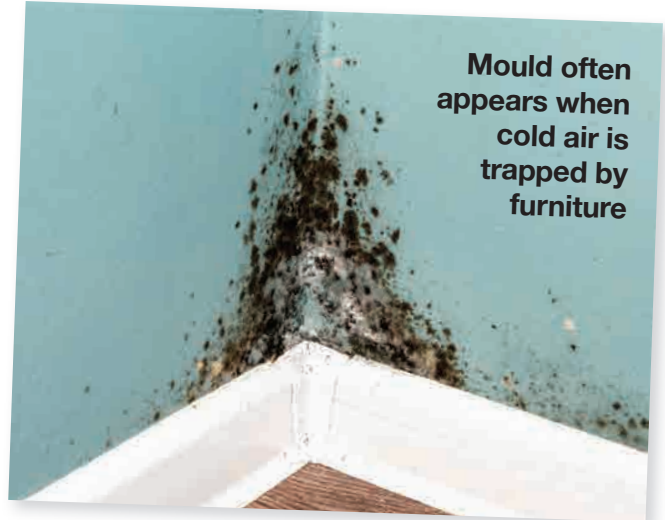
## What causes condensation?

You are producing moisture all the time, simply by breathing. However, a range of activities in your home can cause more condensation, for example: cooking, having a bath or shower and drying clothes inside.

## Tips for reducing condensation

### • Reduce the amount of moisture you produce

Dry clothes outside if you can, and cover pans to stop as much steam escaping while you cook. Close internal doors when cooking or showering to keep moisture in the room. If you have an extractor



Mould often appears when cold air is trapped by furniture

fan, turn it on or open a window to let moisture escape.

### • Improve ventilation to allow moist air to escape

Open windows for a few minutes several times a day and whenever they steam up. Leave a gap between walls and furniture to allow air to circulate.

### • Heat your home a little at a time

Very cold rooms are more likely to suffer from damp and cold. If you have central heating, set your radiators to 1 in rooms you use less so that the radiator will give out a small amount of heat when the heating is on. Air these rooms from time to time.

### • Be proactive

If you notice condensation building up on your windows and windowsills, give them a wipe over in the morning. This will prevent the excess moisture sitting in the room and causing damp or mould.

## Report a damp or mould problem

The majority of damp and mould is a result of too much condensation in your home. However, it could be the result of other issues, for example a leaking pipe or roof. If this is the case, or you suspect it, then please contact us via the repairs contact details on the next page. We may require you to send us photos of the damp and mould to help identify the problem.



Call Warm and Well for free home energy advice on 0800 500 3076, Monday-Friday, 9-5pm

# HOME REPAIRS

We look after the repairs for approximately 5,000 homes in the district. We know repairs and maintenance is one of the top priorities for you, so here is a guide to our repairs process.

## How we deal with repairs

If a repair is deemed an 'emergency' we will respond within 24 hours. An emergency is classed as causing serious damage to the health and safety of the occupants or risk of extensive damage to the property. For example: total loss of electricity or bare wires, burst pipes or blockage of the only toilet in the property.

If you report an emergency repair out of hours, we will either complete the work in 4 hours or make the fault 'safe' so that there is no danger to you or the property and return the next working day to finish the job. You may be charged for the visit if the out of hours team do not consider the call-out to be an emergency.

## Routine Repairs

These are repairs that are not urgent and will be carried out by appointment. Examples include: repairs to plasterwork, clearing guttering and repairs to kitchen units.

## Who is responsible for the repair?

### Repairs the council is responsible for:

As part of your Tenancy Agreement, there are certain repairs that we will carry out to your home. A full list is available on our website or in your tenant handbook, they include things like:

- the structure and exterior of the property
- the roof, chimney stack and chimney pots
- walls, ceilings, floors and foundations
- gutters, soffits and fascias, pipes and drains
- doors and window frames



## Repairs SDC is *not* responsible for:

As a tenant, you are responsible for minor repairs, maintenance and replacements. Check your handbook or online for more details, they would include for example:

- damage caused by you, your family or visitors to your home
- lock changes
- decorating the inside of your home and keeping it in a good state of decoration

## Security

All SDC employees and contractors carry an official identity card with their photograph. Before allowing anyone claiming to be from the council into your home, please ask to see their identity card. If you are in any doubt about the identity of a caller, do not let them in. Call the council on 01453 754852. Genuine callers will not mind waiting whilst you check their identity.

## REPORT A REPAIR

You can report a repair in the following ways:

- **Online:**  
[www.stroud.gov.uk/apps/report-a-repair](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/apps/report-a-repair)
- **Telephone:** 01453 766321
- **Email:** [property.care@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:property.care@stroud.gov.uk)
- **Text:** 07984 442968 and start your text with the work REPAIRS



# INDEPENDENT

## Grow your own to beat the price rises

Our Independent Living team has been exploring how to help residents with the cost of living, especially rising costs of fruit and vegetables. Following consultation, we have begun to mark and dig out allotments at a number of sites. This will allow residents to grow whatever they would like. Some have aspirations of growing fruit for making jam, hosting strawberry teas and more. We are engaging with local businesses who can help with donations of starter pack materials such as trowels, watering cans and other gardening equipment.

## Clean and tidy estates

Grass cutting is now underway - this is carried out by our Site Officers. We do not collect the grass as over time it mulches back into the ground however, the grass is quite long and this process usually takes two to three months by which time the areas are beautifully green and tidy. Meanwhile, the Independent Living team is working in partnership with the Housing Officers on the Cleaner Estates project, assisting with fly tipping removal, ensuring the estates are kept safe.

## Need support?

Within the Independent Living team we have three Enabling Officers. You can refer yourself for housing related support; this can cover anything from assistance with benefits, attendance allowance and blue badges to helping overcome loneliness. We are also hoping to work with Active Gloucestershire delivering nonprescriptive falls prevention activities such as better balance and indoor ball games.

## Have you visited our Independent Living hubs?

Our Independent Living hubs have been a huge success and residents and the local community are making the most of the opportunities available. Sharing the spaces with the community has worked well and brought new faces to the hubs as well as more interaction with local people. Below are some updates from each hub and what's going on there.

### Sherborne House Hub, Stonehouse

- Regular community meals, events, coffee mornings and quizzes
- There are weekly art classes, digital training sessions, meditation and bingo
- Group meetings for The Visually Impaired Club, Craft and Stitch and Managing Memory



- The weekly Day Centre on Wednesdays is hugely successful, thanks to the volunteers that work so hard to make it a fun, vibrant place to be.
- The social committee has applied for funding for a larger cooker, to enable them to offer meals to larger groups

### Grange View Hub, Uplands, Stroud

- Weekly tea, coffee and bingo
- One of the residents runs a yoga class which is great for the body and mind
- Stroud College is running a watercolour class for beginners.





# LIVING NEWS

## Independent Living hubs?



### George Pearce House Hub, Minchinhampton

- A defibrillator has been installed, which has sparked interest in a first aid course to learn basic first aid skills, and how to use a defibrillator
- Regular social events, including weekly bingo, coffee mornings and art classes
- A digital champion is on hand to help with any digital support
- Stroud College students will be visiting to offer manicures, foot and hand massages. This will also be offered at other hubs



### Concord Hub, Nailsworth

- A variety of courses available from arts, crafts, yoga, mindfulness, nail art and DIY.
- The social committee organises coffee mornings, monthly bingo, quizzes, move-to-the music, and several social events
- Working in partnership with Stroud Valleys Project, Concord/ Long Ground successfully received a £10,000 grant from the National Lottery. This grant has enabled Stroud Valleys Project to work alongside the residents to create a wild garden area and to open part of the ground along the riverbank for a footpath, fruit tree planting and shaded spaces with benches



### Springfields Hub, Cam

- A tea and coffee facility with a donation box has been set up to keep it running sustainably
- Weekly café club, craft group, darts and games
- Weekly art group, DIY course and occasional digital awareness sessions
- The Invisible Illnesses group meet weekly at the hub offering support and mindfulness sessions

## Nine schemes completed in £8 million modernisation programme

The Independent Living Modernisation Programme is now in its sixth year. Nine schemes have been renovated so far as part of an £8 million project to modernise our accommodation for older people.

Five of the larger schemes are now Independent Living hubs (details about hubs can be found on this page).

**If you'd like more information about events at any Independent Living hub, or would like to hold a group or volunteer at one please contact Katherine Allen, Community Hub Facilitator by email at [katherine.allen@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:katherine.allen@stroud.gov.uk) or by phone on 07792 420069.**

# Tenant NOTICEBOARD

## GET THE FLARE APP

'Flare' is a Safer Gloucestershire app, created for people to share their experiences of how and where they've felt unsafe. The app helps local agencies understand how and where you feel unsafe and take action. It's anonymous, quick, free to use and can connect you to support and advice in Gloucestershire. You can report any experiences such as staring, cat calling/wolf-whistling, inappropriate gestures, online harassment and more. Download it on the Apple or Android app store. In emergencies dial 999.



## FLY-TIPPING

Fly-tipping is the illegal dumping of waste. It costs the council a lot of money each year to tackle it, money that could be better spent on improvements to the district. Please dispose of your waste either with your weekly waste and recycling collections, at a Household Recycling Centre, or book a bulky waste collection with us. **Please report fly-tipping if you see it by visiting [www.stroud.gov.uk/report/](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/report/)**

## TEST YOUR FIRE ALARM

Testing your fire alarm is simple, but it can save a life in the event of a fire. Test it each week by holding down the test button for a few seconds to ensure it beeps. If it is faulty, or starts beeping in between tests, contact our repairs team.



## GARAGE SALES

We are gradually selling council-owned garage sites, with the proceeds going to our house building programme which will benefit people in the district. The programme is rolling over the next few years and when sites are ready for sale they will be advertised on the council website and with local estate agents. If you currently rent a garage and want to find out more visit:

[www.stroud.gov.uk/garage sales](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/garage%20sales)

Careline is an effective way of getting help through your landline telephone line quickly and efficiently 24 hours a day, 365 days a year – perfect for elderly people or those living on their own who need the security of knowing someone will be there if they have an accident. A small pendant is worn around the neck or on a wrist-strap. This is linked to a special unit – the Careline – which plugs into the telephone point with an adjacent 13amp electrical socket.

The Careline logo, featuring the word "Careline" in a blue, sans-serif font with a small red square above the letter 'i'.

**If you would like more details, please email [careline@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:careline@stroud.gov.uk)**

## EXPERIENCING DOMESTIC ABUSE?



Stroud Women's Refuge

Stroud Women's Refuge provides safety and independence for women and children whose lives have been impacted by domestic abuse. The charity also runs a local community outreach programme for women in the Stroud district who are affected by domestic abuse or are at risk of domestic abuse.

**To contact them call 01453 764385.**

## TAKE FIVE – BE SCAM AWARE

Criminals are experts at impersonating people, organisations and the police. They spend hours researching you for their scams, hoping you'll let your guard down for just a moment. National organisation Take Five, has developed a three step plan to help you avoid scams and protect your money.

**STOP.** Take a moment to stop and think before handing over money or personal information.

**CHALLENGE.** Could it be fake? It's OK to ignore, reject or refuse requests. Only criminals will rush you into a decision or action.

**PROTECT.** Contact your bank immediately if you think you have fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

## VOTER ID

From now on, voters in England will need to show photo ID to vote at polling stations in some elections and from October 2023 it will also apply to UK General Elections.

The most common forms of photo ID are permitted eg, photo driving license, passport, bus pass, student PASS cards and some concessionary travel cards. If you don't have accepted photo ID, you can apply for a free of charge voter ID document, which is known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

For more information, please see:

[www.stroud.gov.uk/voterID](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/voterID)

The next scheduled elections for Stroud District Council will be held on 2 May 2024.

## ADOPT - DON'T BUY

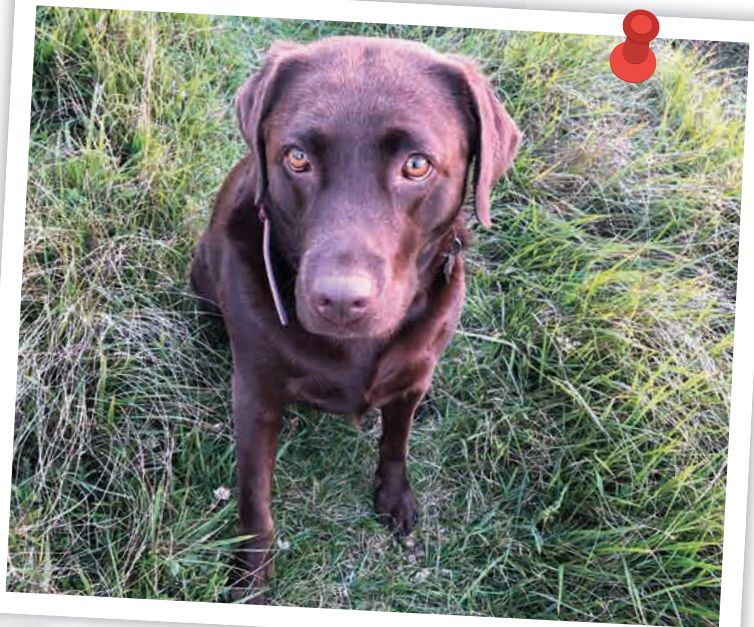
Bringing a pet into your home is a decision that shouldn't be taken lightly – considerations should include your lifestyle, the likely costs of caring for a pet including veterinary care, equipment, food and training, and in some cases, making sure your garden is secure.

You'll also need permission from your Housing Officer who will ask you to sign our Pet Policy.

Adopting a pet from a trusted local organisation like The Cotswold Dogs and Cats Home is a rewarding way of giving an animal a second chance, and the charity help match you with a suitable pet.

CDCH is SDC's charity of the year.

[www.cotswolddogsandcatshome.org.uk](http://www.cotswolddogsandcatshome.org.uk)



## SAY HELLO TO HOUSING ONLINE

Say goodbye to Tenants Online and hello to Housing Online. We will be introducing a brand new digital service where you will be able to:

- View your rent (and other) account information, including the ability to pay
- View and log repairs
- Complete application forms
- Make general customer service requests, such as reporting anti-social behaviour, requesting forms etc

You will also be able to log on to your Housing Online account using a Facebook profile. This does mean that Tenants Online will be unavailable from later on this year, but we are sure you will love the new and improved Housing Online when it's launched in 2024. In the meantime, you will still be able to contact us to check your rent account balance or repairs history by ringing 01453 766321.

## Competition terms and conditions *(from page 6)*

The competition is open to Stroud District Council tenants. One entry per household. The winning entry will be selected at random from all the correct entries received by midnight on Sunday 4 June. Stroud District Council employees are not eligible to enter. The winner will be contacted by phone or email. An alternative prize will not be offered.

## Sudoku ▶ Answers

*(From page 6)*



# Ten budget-friendly

Check out this guide full of budget-friendly things to do and places to go around the district – perfect for anyone who wants to get out and about.

## 1 Fly a kite or have a picnic

We are spoilt for choice when it comes to commons and views in the Stroud district. Selsley, Rodborough and Minchinhampton commons are all great places to fly a kite or enjoy a picnic on a nice day, as well as Coaley Peak and Cam Peak.



## 2 Take a dip in the lido

Stratford Park Lido is a 50 metre spring-fed pool – perfect for cooling off on hot summer days. The lido will be open from the first week in June, every day from 12pm to 7pm and early mornings on Tuesdays and Thursdays 7am - 9am. Bookings can be made at [www.everyoneactive.com](http://www.everyoneactive.com), via the Everyone Active app or in person at Stratford Park Leisure Centre.



## 3 Dursley sculpture trail

The Dursley Sculpture and Play Trail is a great way to enjoy the woodland and see locally made sculptures along the way. The trail is accessed off the A4135, in Twinberrow woods. It is free of charge and open access to visit any time.

## 4 Visit the library

The library is a great place to visit, either alone or with children. The children's areas in local libraries are not only filled with books but also craft activities to keep little ones busy. Libraries run a range of events such as Baby Bounce and Rhyme, Story Time and Code Club.

Find your local library and its activity programme at:

[www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/libraries)



## 5 Museum in the Park

In Stratford Park, Stroud, you'll find the Museum in the Park and its beautiful walled garden. Both are free of charge to visit, and are a great place for adults and children. There are more than 4,000 items on display, most of which are connected to the Stroud district, and the garden is a beautiful place to walk, sit and enjoy a peaceful moment. The museum is open Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 4pm and Saturday and Sunday from 11am to 4.30pm.

# summer activities in the Stroud district

## 6 Visit your local park

There are many parks to visit around the district and they are a great way for children to let off steam. There should be one within walking distance of your home, or you could venture to a different park for a change. We are investing £300,000 from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) to improve five SDC-owned play areas in Paganhill, Dursley, Stroud and Stonehouse. Residents voted for their favourite designs, which will be installed later this year.



## 7 Enjoy the Cotswold canals

The miles of canal paths to cycle or walk along, feed the ducks and watch the local wildlife. The Cotswold Canals Trust operates boat trips in the summer season on traditional narrow boats. Boat trips run from Ebley Wharf and Wallbridge on alternate Saturdays from 11am – 4.30pm and cost £5 for adults or £3 for children (under threes go free).

**To find out more or book a place visit**  
[www.cotswoldcanals.org/events-calendar/](http://www.cotswoldcanals.org/events-calendar/)

## 8 Take a walk using our new trails app

We have a new free-of-charge walking app that will help you make the most of the Stroud district. It's a great way to discover areas of the district you may never have seen before, or learn more about your local area. Discover Stroud Trails is available to download from the Apple and Google Play store now or discover what's on your doorstep on a Go Outside walk.

See [www.stroud.gov.uk/gooutside](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/gooutside)



## 9 Join the Play Rangers

The Gloucestershire Play Rangers offer free of charge outdoor after-school play activities at various sites in the Stroud district from 4 – 6pm. They also offer additional play sessions during school holidays. They run in all weathers and are open access – this means there's no registration and children can come and go as they please. Under sevens are welcome but must be accompanied by an adult.

**To find your nearest session visit**  
[www.playgloucestershire.org.uk/play-timetables/](http://www.playgloucestershire.org.uk/play-timetables/)

## 10 Woodchester Park

Set in a beautiful valley near Stroud, Woodchester Park is the perfect place to walk with friends and family. It's free of charge to visit but you'll have to pay to park at the National Trust car park. One of the sign-posted walks will take you through a play trail with wobble beams, stepping logs, balance bridges, rope swings and more.

# Stroud tenant voice picked for national role

Former Housing Committee tenant representative Ian Allan (pictured right) from Dursley has been selected to participate in the national **Social Housing Quality Resident Panel**. Ian has been a council tenant since 2011 and has already made a significant contribution to our housing work. He'll now be sharing his skills and experience on social housing matters at this national panel, which will discuss the Government's social housing quality programme with ministers.

## Tenants' Voice

Mike Richter and Becky Adams are currently your Tenants' Voice, representing tenants at Housing Committee meetings. They attend tenant events and gather comments so they can advise councillors when decisions are being made about housing.

To contact them call **07970 952214**, or email **volu524@gmail.com**

## Get involved

We're looking for tenants who would like to join a team of Tenant Void Inspectors – checking the quality of work carried out in our empty properties. You will report on how well we are doing and make suggestions on how we can improve.

If you're interested in finding out more, please contact **Christine Welsh**, Tenant Engagement Officer on **07774 453357** or email: **christine.welsh@stroud.gov.uk**



## Armed Forces Community Covenant

**T**he Armed Forces Covenant is a nationwide agreement between the armed forces community, the nation and the government. It recognises “the value serving personnel, both regular and reservist, veterans and military families contribute to our business and our country.” If you are a former member of the armed forces then you could get help and financial support.

### What we do:

- We provide advice and support on housing, welfare, benefits and healthy living
- Our Housing Advice service and Housing Service (for council tenants) guarantee a face to face interview for veterans
- Other services such as education and social

services are the responsibility of Gloucestershire County Council

### We have an Armed Forces Champion Group

Stroud District Council has an Armed Forces Champion Group which is led by two Armed Forces Councillor Champions and includes council officers with useful skills, knowledge and experience. Two members of the group are veterans, and one is a serving reservist. It meets regularly to make sure the aims of the covenant are being followed.

### Funding and grants

The Royal British Legion provides grants to help with urgent assistance to get through a temporary crisis or if you need help at home.

To find out more or to get support visit [www.stroud.gov.uk/veterans](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/veterans) or email [armedforceschampions@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:armedforceschampions@stroud.gov.uk)

# Woodland Activities

Here are some activities to keep young ones busy, all themed around woodlands and their animals.



## Did you know?...

Hedgehogs are good runners and climbers, and they can even swim!

## Colouring

Have fun colouring Sleepy owl and Hetty the hedgehog



## Wordsearch

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N | W | J | T | T | R | E | E |
| C | I | P | T | E | Z | W | L |
| B | C | E | G | S | U | N | X |
| L | I | D | W | O | O | D | S |
| S | A | R | P | D | F | O | Z |
| B | L | G | D | Q | F | N | Y |
| N | C | I | S | S | F | O | B |
| F | L | O | W | E | R | U | X |

Find the following words in the wordsearch above...

- Badger
- Birds
- Flower
- Fox
- Sun
- Tree
- Woods

## Forest Maze

Can you help Rabbit get to the end of the maze?



# THANK YOU!

Last year, households in the **Stroud district** were in the top 14 best recyclers\* in England! However, six years ago we were the 6th best, so we know we can improve!

**Here are a few tips to help us reach the top spot...**

**1** Always **check before you chuck** – not all plastics are recyclable. You can find out which plastics can be recycled at: [www.stroud.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/recycling)

**2** Use the online Waste Wizard at the web address above to find out more about which household items can be recycled or if they can be given a new life through repair and reuse, and how to do that

**3** Put recycling loose into your bin/bag – carrier bags can't be recycled and sometimes get caught up in the machinery

**4** Remove film from plastic containers such as microwave food trays (we can't recycle it)

**5** Fold, cut or tear large pieces of cardboard to the approximate size of your recycling box then place next to or under the box for collection

**6** Batteries and used vapes/e cigarettes can cause fires in recycling trucks so please don't put them in any of your house bins, bags, or communal bins – the Waste Wizard will tell you where to take them for recycling. [www.stroud.gov.uk/wastewizard](http://www.stroud.gov.uk/wastewizard)

**7** Soft plastic like carrier bags, wrapping and cling film should not be placed in your recycling, we can't sort them from other materials – the Waste Wizard will tell you where to take them for recycling

**\*letsrecycle.com**



To check your collection day and to download your recycling calendar visit: [stroud.gov.uk/myhouse](http://stroud.gov.uk/myhouse)



**STROUD  
DISTRICT  
COUNCIL**

[www.stroud.gov.uk](http://www.stroud.gov.uk)  
[recycling@stroud.gov.uk](mailto:recycling@stroud.gov.uk)  
01453 766321