

# The Housing Bulletin

The Latest News & Bulletin Updates

**Coming up in this issue...**

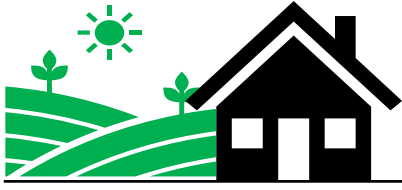
**Rent Increase & 53 Week financial Year**

**Engage with us! Community Meets!**

**Storage Spaces**

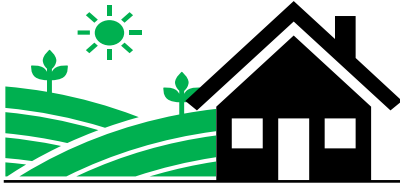
**Sheltered Housing Coffee Mornings**

**Axis call back system**



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## Rent Increase & 53 Week financial Year.

### Why is there a change this year?

There are 52 weeks in a normal year, meaning 52 weekly charges. However, every five to six years, there are 53 Mondays in a year instead. 2024/2025 is one of those years.

### How do I know what my weekly rent is?

We recently wrote to you detailing your new rent and service charges for the next financial year, starting from 1 April 2024. If you haven't received this, or you're unsure about anything, please contact us on 01277 312500.

### What if I pay weekly?

You will pay your new weekly rent from 1<sup>st</sup> April in advance every Monday, it will however be for 53 weeks instead of 52.

### What if I claim Universal Credit?

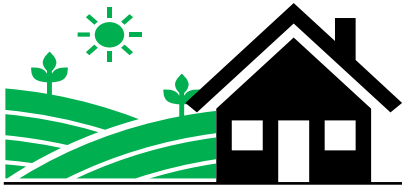
If you receive Universal Credit, you should be aware that this is currently calculated on a 52 week basis. However, this may change. We are monitoring the government's response to this issue and will let you know if there is a change. Unless the rules are changed before 1 April, the only way to avoid falling into arrears is by paying a little extra each week to ensure your rent is covered. **Please remember to update Universal Credit of your new rent charge as soon as possible, to avoid any delays in payment.**

If you would like any support with budgeting or other money advice, please email our Estate Officers at [Estates.Management@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:Estates.Management@brentwood.gov.uk) or call 01277 312500. If you are on low income or have a general debt problem, please be advised that agencies such as the Citizens Advice Bureau or Step Change offer free confidential help and guidance to resolve problems. For more information telephone: 0344 477 0808 or visit the websites [www.stepchange.org](http://www.stepchange.org) and [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk).

### What if I claim Housing Benefit?

If you are in receipt of housing benefit you don't need to do anything, as this will be covered.

**Remember, please reach out to your Housing Officer if you are struggling.**



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## Engage with us! Community Meets!

As part of the relaunch of our resident engagement we are now holding more community engagement events.



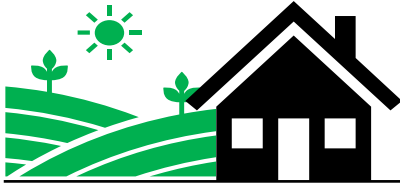
In December 2023, we held a 'meet the team' at our Resident Living Room at Gibraltar House. Residents were able to pop in for a hot drink and a mince pie, generally just chat with the Housing Team, get more information on our specialised hoarding contractor Harmonized living, report their repairs and much more.

Open every Wednesday 11am to 3pm in the bottom of Gibraltar House please do pop down for a tea and biscuit!

In January 2024 we also held an information evening in Pilgrims Hatch for those interested in finding out more on how to get involved with the Housing Team, have their say and help shape services for themselves and other residents. The event was so popular there was not a spare seat in the room!

As we go through 2024 we will be holding two community days, watch this space for more details on when and where these will be!

If you would like to get involved, please visit [Get involved | Brentwood Council](#).



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## Storage Spaces

### Loft spaces

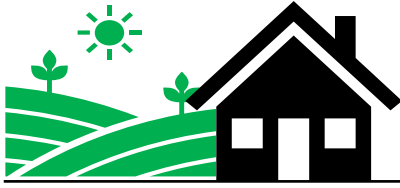
Loft spaces are not habitable areas unless converted by the council and are not to be used for any form of storage as they present undue stress to the roof timbers that are designed to take the weight of the roof covering. In most cases lofts have no access ladders, walkways or lighting and should only be assessed by a member of the repairs team. Loft spaces can have many hazards from wiring, extraction units, soil vents, water tanks and pipework and be very dusty with loose glass fibres or lagging. If you damage a pipe or wiring in your loft you will be counter charged for any repairs required to reinstate. Certain fittings and wiring cannot be covered due to heat loss and could be a health and safety fire hazard.

### Pram Sheds, Cellars, Outhouses and Garages

Please do not store perishable or valuables items in your garage, shed, cellar or outhouse as they are not always watertight, are exposed to all variant external temperatures, frost and humidity, are not heat regulated like habitable areas and do not always have the same security as a street door. Outhouses have no or limited insulation and are prone to leaks and condensation. We remove all external toilets when a property becomes void. Do not store flammable products or gas canisters in these areas due to fire safety.

Outhouses have been used for utility rooms and kitchen extensions without the councils knowledge or approval. Do not undertake any DIY in your property including wiring unless your housing officer is notified as it is a breach of your tenancy. For further information please refer to website.

<https://www.brentwood.gov.uk/-/repairs-and-maintenance#how-to-report-a-repair>



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## **Axis apprentice secures second place in H&V news awards**

The H&V News Awards held its annual event on November 23rd at the London Hilton Metropole. Known as the Oscars of HVAC, the awards recognised outstanding achievements across the HVAC supply chain, honouring manufacturers, contractors, consultants, installers, and their customers.

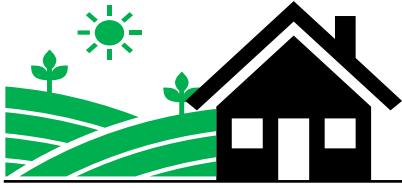
This year marked a significant milestone for Axis, as we entered the H&V Awards for the first time. Among the standout individuals shortlisted was Joel Wynter, our apprentice gas engineer, nominated for the title of Apprentice of the Year.

Joel's journey through the apprenticeship programme at Axis was highlighted by his dedication and commitment to personal growth. Despite stiff competition, Joel secured an impressive second place, a remarkable achievement for both him and Axis.

Alan Noble, M&E Director, expressing pride in Joel's accomplishment, referred to the H&V News Awards as the most prestigious event in the Heating Calendar annually. He said, *'Joel came 2nd which we are all very proud, but in my view and the rest of Axis who know Joel he is the Winner, such a great person, very approachable, helpful and great mentor for the future of Axis Apprentices. Well Done, Joel!'*

In response to his achievement, Joel expressed gratitude for the opportunities provided by Axis, stating, *"I'm very lucky to have been shortlisted for such an award, and to make it this far is still a pinch on the arm moment for me, one that will stay with me for a long time and be highly cherished. I would like to thank axis and my colleagues for helping me on my journey and for all the supporting kind messages it means a lot"*

Joel also highlighted the significance of being acknowledged as a valuable mentor for both apprentices and older colleagues, emphasizing the often-overlooked importance of apprentices in the workforce.



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## **Sheltered Housing Coffee Mornings**

*Are you over 60 and a Brentwood Council Tenant?*

*Are you lonely and seeking out some friendly conversation?*

Join us for a morning of warmth, conversation, and tea/coffee at our sheltered housing coffee mornings.

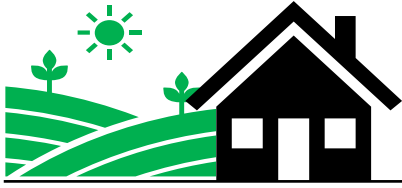
These events are to allow the opportunity for residents from within the borough, schemes and surrounding satellite properties to come together and connect with other residents in a cozy and welcoming atmosphere.

Catch up with your neighbours on the week's events or just put the world to rights all without the worry of hosting (or the washing up)

Feel free to bring along your own bakes or biscuits to enjoy with friends.

For times and dates in your area please see your local scheme memo board or ask your Housing officer for more information.

We look forward to seeing you there.



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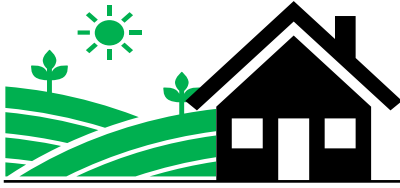
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## Axis call back

Axis now offers a call-back service Monday to Friday between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. The call-back service saves your space in the call queue so you'll still get to speak with the Axis team at the same time as your call would have been answered, but in the meantime, you can get on with your day-to-day life.

You are automatically offered this service if your call hasn't been answered within 4 minutes but if you don't want to wait, then simply dial 55, leave your contact number and we will call you back as soon as one of our team becomes available. 100% of call back requests are called back, due to the process being automated, and that in December 87.63% of call back attempts were successful.





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## Useful contact details:

- Resident Involvement, Brentwood Council Email: [Housing@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:Housing@brentwood.gov.uk)
- Brentwood Borough Council Tel: 01277 312500 or online [www.brentwood.gov.uk](http://www.brentwood.gov.uk)
- If you are unable to find an email address for a particular service department, or if you are unsure to whom your email should be addressed, then please send your email to our enquiries team at the following address: Email: [enquiries@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@brentwood.gov.uk)
- To log general enquiries, use the above contact details. Please ensure you note down your reference number for each enquiry, if they are ongoing cases ensure you quote your reference when contacting customer services.
- Tenancy & Estate Management Email: [estates.management@brentwood.gov.uk](mailto:estates.management@brentwood.gov.uk)
- Repairs Axis Europe Tel: 01277 312500 Option 2 > Option 2 > Option 1 Email: [brentwoodrepairs@axiseurope.com](mailto:brentwoodrepairs@axiseurope.com)
- Essex Country Council [www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)
- Essex Police <https://www.essex.police.uk/Non-Emergency> 101
- Mental health crisis team NHS Tel: 111, option 2.

Get Involved!  
Have your say!

**Report a repair**  
**01277 312500**  
**Option 2 > Option 2**  
**> Option 1**

[Report ASB in a  
Council property](#)