



Image courtesy of Miss P, Gipton

Unity in Bloom

The winners are revealed!

Unity would like to thank everyone who entered this year's Unity in Bloom gardening competition. The standard was exceptional which made choosing a winner very difficult.

This task was left to our Tenant Panel, who took two days out of their busy schedules to visit 25 gardens around Leeds. The variety was spectacular and each of the participants deserves to be congratulated on their effort.

We saw some fantastic examples of neighbours working in harmony to make the best use of a shared space. Some residents had also gone to great lengths to attract wildlife to their neighbourhoods. Others had an environmentally-friendly element to their garden. As such, the Panel would like to introduce new categories next year.

The winners and the runners-up were each invited to an Awards Ceremony so that they had the opportunity to meet each other, the Judging Panel and the staff who had coordinated the event. The event served as a celebration of everyone's hard work (story continues overleaf).

3rd prize
Mrs M,
Meanwood



Mrs M, Meanwood

This shady garden has a mystical quality about it. It serves two purposes - on one hand it is a beautiful garden teeming with a vast array of plants and shrubs, on the other hand the Judging Panel identified a number of edibles including basil, rosemary, sage, rhubarb and gooseberries.

Mr & Mrs B, Crossgates

This couple has a front and back garden which are covered in a host of evergreen and deciduous plants. The back garden has a stunning water feature which is surrounded by a rockery, plants and ornaments. A bridge which spans the length of the pond leads to a playhouse which has been seamlessly incorporated into the design of the garden. The garden also features a decking area with seating.

2nd prize
Mr & Mrs B,
Crossgates



Unity in Bloom

The winners are revealed!

Ms B, Little London

This couple have made exceptional use of an unusual shaped garden by cutting a terrace into it which serves as a seat and a step up to the top half of their garden.

Unusual and interesting features including hanging baskets attached to tree trunks and suspended from washing lines and a chimney pot used as a pedestal.

Their garden takes on a different appearance at night time when it is illuminated by candlelight. They have created a calm oasis in the area of Little London.



1st prize
Ms B, Little
London





3rd prize
Mr D,
Little London

Mr D,
Little London

While this garden is still in its infancy, already the fruit trees (apple, cherry and peach) are bearing fruit. The Panel predicted that in years to come this will be a prosperous and bountiful garden!



Miss R, Chapeltown

This garden belongs to a lady who has successfully nurtured potatoes, onions, carrots plus a whole host of other fruits, vegetables and herbs. This lady believes in encouraging children to grow fruit and vegetables and her daughter has taken a keen interest!



2nd prize
Miss R.
Chapeltown

Mr & Mrs L, Harehills

This couple have utilised nearly every inch of space to grow something either beautiful, edible or both! Their front garden is teeming with colourful flowers.

Perhaps even more impressive is their back garden which they have used to grow a wide variety of herbs, fruits and vegetables including potatoes, onions, garlic, peas and beans. They share excess fruit and vegetables with friends and neighbours and also harvest the seeds so that they can be planted again the following year. In addition, they have constructed a smoke house to smoke their own meat – the fuel for which comes from their garden waste.



1st prize
Mr & Mrs L,
Harehills

Fruit & Vegetable Gardens

Win a SmartPhone!

Simply return your census form

The aim of the survey is to help us keep track of who is living in our properties, so that we can offer the best possible service tailored to your needs.

We may be able to help you and your family identify any **benefits you are entitled to**, help you **find a job** if this is what you want, and crucially help you to adjust to the changes that **Universal Credit** will bring in December 2015.

You have until the **end of September** to complete and return your survey. You will be entered into a **free prize draw** in which you could win a **SmartPhone**.

If you need us to send you another form, please call our office on **0113 200 7700** and ask for one to be sent out to you. We can also do the survey over the phone. It may take 5-10 minutes.

**1st prize
GONE!**

**3rd prize
SmartPhone**

**2nd prize
GONE!**

1st and 2nd prizes have been drawn.
The **SmartPhone** is still up for grabs!

Complete and return your Census form now to be in with a chance of winning!

FREE Arts & Crafts Activities to keep the kids busy

In last year's Tenant Satisfaction Survey, some estates requested more community activities which is why we invited the children in certain neighbourhoods to take part in Animal Arts & Crafts.

Some residents were also concerned about ball games being played on the estates - the idea of this activity is to offer children an alternative.

If you'd like us to bring a kid's activity to your area, please speak to Lewis on **0113 200 7751**. Provided there is enough interest from the residents, we can make it happen!



The Stonegates kids really enjoyed creating their own crafty critters!



Money worries?

We can help - but only if you tell us about it!

Paying your rent over the holidays

Unity understands that the school summer holidays and returning to school can be expensive and that it may be difficult to find the rent money for a month or two. However we have to remind tenants that rent is a priority. Your tenancy may be at risk if you fail to pay rent.

Our **Income Support Team** will work with you if you are struggling and can suggest alternative payment plans or ways to pay the rent as well as help with benefit claims or refer you to budgeting and debt advice. But if you don't talk to us we can't help and we will have to pursue the arrears as quickly as possible.

With changes to **Tax Credits** and **Universal Credit** coming very soon it is especially important to keep a good rent account. We know just how quickly things can go from bad to worse when rent arrears occur. Please talk to us if you are struggling, you might be surprised at just how much help we can offer.

Call now! We can help:

 **Clive:** 0113 200 7753

 **Matt:** 0113 200 7733

 **Sam:** 0113 200 7737



Pensioners

Have you heard of Pension Credit? Have you applied for it? If not you may be missing out on a top up benefit to your state pension or occupational pension or savings. If you do qualify for it, even just a little bit, you may also qualify for other entitlements and premiums such as health care and money off your utility bills.

For example:

- You'll get free NHS dental treatment. You can also claim help towards the cost of glasses and travel to hospital.
- You'll get a Cold Weather Payment of £25 when the temperature is 0°C or below for seven days in a row.
- If you rent your home, you may get your rent paid in full by Housing Benefit.
- If you're a carer, you may get an extra amount known as Carer Addition. This is worth up to £34.60 a week.

You have nothing to lose by applying, but potentially a lot to gain.

To find out more call the Pension Credit claim line on **0800 99 1234** (textphone: **0800 169 0133**). It'll be quicker to apply if you have the following details to hand:

- National Insurance number
- Bank account details
- Information about your income, savings and investments
- Information about your pension (if you have one)
- Details of any housing costs (such as mortgage, interest payments, service charges)
- Partner's details (if you have a partner)



Warm Homes Discount is not just for pensioners

This is **£140** credited to your electricity account if you qualify. In past years the scheme has been automatically available to everyone who gets the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit (even if they get Savings Credit as well). In winter 2015 the scheme has been extended to Pensioners on Guarantee Pension Credit and:

- 1** Those whose total household annual income is **less than or equal to £16,190** and are in receipt of Child Tax Credits or the Universal Credit equivalent, with either:
 - ✓ A child aged under five living with them.
 - ✓ A disabled child living with them with a Child Disability Premium or claiming Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element.

- 2** **Income Support** or income-based **Jobseeker's Allowance**, with any of following:

- ✓ A disability or pensioner premium
- ✓ A child who is disabled
- ✓ Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element
- ✓ A child aged under five living with them.

- 3** Income-related **Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)**, with any of the following:

- ✓ Support or work-related component of ESA.
- ✓ A severe or enhanced disability premium.
- ✓ A pensioner premium.
- ✓ A child who is disabled.
- ✓ Child Tax Credit that includes a disability or severe disability element.
- ✓ A child aged under five living with them.

To find out more call the Warm Home Discount team on **0345 603 9439** or your supplier. If your supplier does not offer the Warm Homes Discount it may be worth switching to a supplier that does.

If you have been with the same supplier for years it is probably worth switching anyway. Call My Home Energy Switch on **0800 001 4706** to get advice on switching.



You said, we did

Here's how we responded to your feedback

You mentioned:

Neighbours leaving their garden messy, bringing down the look of the neighbourhood.

It would be a good idea to inspect gardens and enforce tenants to keep them in better order

I have raised my concerns ... about the tenants' rubbish in their gardens

There are many overgrown gardens in the area which makes the area look rundown

This estate has so many children who group together and run riot. No supervision from their parents and out until late. They play football outside my house and the ball is continuously hitting the garden railings, house and my car.

If signs can be put up saying 'do not play football in the street', and some kind of law to be enforced.

Maybe have some fun days the kids in the summer.

Police presence is visible at times but we think there needs to be some improvement

The open dealing of drugs continues to be a problem.

Bad area, drugs, fighting, kids can't play outside due to cars

We did:

We arranged the 'Unity in Bloom' gardening competition to encourage residents to take pride in their gardens and raise the appearance of their estates. We provided opportunities for tenants to be on the Judging Panel.



We also hosted 'Gardening Workshops' on several estates throughout the spring to encourage novices to take an interest in growing flowers, fruit, vegetables and herbs.



We hosted several Arts & Crafts workshops aimed at children on several estates. It was hoped that children and their parents would interact with one another and create friendships. The idea was to keep children occupied with activities that do not involve 'ball games'.

We also produced a handy guide of things to do in the summer holidays which we distributed on some estates. By encouraging families to have affordable days out, it is hoped that it will take pressure off the estates during the school holidays.

We hosted some community action days in partnership with local police so as residents could raise any concerns they have about crime and anti-social behaviour.



Upcoming dates for Tenant Panel Meetings

Our Tenant Panel is a fun, friendly group of Unity residents that meets up monthly to discuss issues affecting the business, our homes and our tenants.

As well as attending meetings, the Tenant Panel get involved with practical on-site inspections, mystery shopping exercises and interviewing and assessing our contractors to help us monitor their performance.

Become a community reporter! Send your stories to Unity News

Unity would like to provide opportunities for tenants to write their own articles for Unity News.

We have heard about the wonderful things the Unity tenants are doing to benefit their neighbourhoods and communities, including 'community action days', attracting wildlife to their areas and organising children's events.

These neighbours living in Crossgates regularly pick up litter on their estate and surrounding areas. They take great pride in the appearance of their neighbourhood! They have also done a great deal to attract nature such as birds, frogs and wildlife to the area.

Why join?

The areas of **Beeston, Burmantofts, Crossgates, Little London, Moortown and Wortley** are not currently represented by our Tenant Panel. This means that we don't get to hear first-hand what people think about living these areas. If you'd like to represent your community on the Tenant Panel we'd be very keen to hear from you.

Upcoming dates

Wednesday 16th Sep 5pm

Tuesday 6th Oct 1pm

Wednesday 21st Oct 5pm

All expenses covered
covered plus
**£5 shopping
voucher** for every
activity you
attend/take part in

If you'd like to spread the word about the work you're doing in your community, we could help you reach hundreds of people!

Please send your stories and photos to lewis.holloway@unityha.co.uk or call Lewis on **0113 200 7751**.

If you're not confident at writing or using email, Lewis can visit your community group or event to take photos and help you put together the article.



Think you have a problem with damp?

You may have a problem with condensation

One of the most common complaints Unity receives from people living in our properties is about 'damp', when in fact the problem is caused by condensation.

This tends to be more of a problem in our new-build houses which are equipped with energy saving features which prevent heat loss, but at the same time can prevent moisture from escaping.

Condensation occurs when warm, moist air hits a cold surface. It is common in bathrooms where hot water makes the atmosphere steamy, but it can affect other rooms as well.

Follow these guidelines and you should be able to prevent any problems:

- ✓ After a bath or shower, open a window and close the bathroom door
- ✓ Dry clothes outdoors or in dryer. If drying clothes indoors, open a window in that room and shut the door
- ✓ Never block, stuff or cover air bricks. You will almost certainly have problems with condensation if you do
- ✓ Never place wet clothes directly on radiators as moisture seeps straight into the walls behind it.
- ✓ Black mould feeds on residues from shampoos and soaps. Make sure that you clean the tiling, grouting and sealant in your bathroom at least once a fortnight
- ✓ Don't push furniture against walls. Leave a gap for at least 5cm for warm air to get to the walls
- ✓ If you're doing something steamy (such as cooking, or ironing) shut the door, use an extractor fan or open a window
- ✓ It's better to keep your heating on lower for longer, rather than higher for a short-time.
- ✓ Treat mould as soon as you see it to prevent it from spreading

Genuine photos
from Unity
properties



Raised or peeling wallpaper?



Black mould on bathroom ceiling or on grouting?



Steamy windows, black mould around window frames or on the backs of curtains?



You probably have a problem with condensation!

If you see brown stains on your ceiling, green algae near drainpipes or on walls, or powdery salts on walls, you may have problems with leaks or damp.

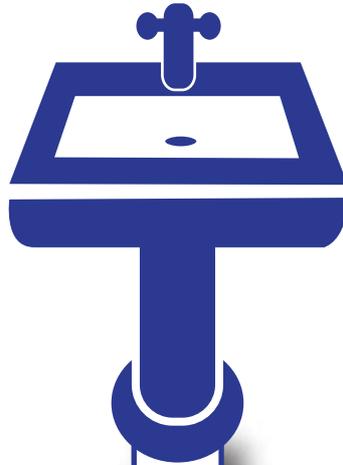
Call **0113 200 7700** to report the problem and describe it in as much detail as possible.

Avoid blockages in your pipes and avoid a hefty fee too...



Don't flush wipes down the toilet

Toilets are only designed to remove human waste and toilet roll. Other items like sanitary products, condoms, cotton buds, nappies and hair can block your pipes and could result in a flooded bathroom.



Don't wash away fat, oil, and greasy sauces down your sink

It can solidify in your pipes like a block of lard, creating a blockage that stops waste water draining away, meaning it could come back up through your plug hole.



Bin and wipe before you rinse

Let leftover fat, oil and grease cool, then pour into a suitable container and put it in the bin. Wipe pots and pans out with kitchen roll before washing up or placing in a dishwasher.

Did you know?

Around 45% of all blockages in sewers in Yorkshire are caused by people putting the wrong things down their toilets and sinks.



Oops I blocked the drain! What happens now?

If Unity has to fix a problem with your drains and we find that it has been caused by you, **you** will have to pay. Removing a blockage like this one can cost up to £200!

Leep 1 Opens New Cafe! at Unity Business Centre

Leep 1 is a self-advocacy group for adults with learning disabilities.

Their mission is to help adults with learning disabilities speak up for themselves in the community, to share experiences and information to help each other do new things in our lives.

Leep 1 have now opened a café at Unity Business Centre, serving a wide range of hot and cold dishes, speciality coffees and homemade cakes and pastries, all at a very reasonable price. The café is open Monday – Friday and is very popular with those who work in and visit Unity Business Centre.

Leep 1 would like to attract more local people to the café, so if you live in the Chapeltown, Sheepscar or Harehills why not pop down? Take the opportunity to meet some of the delightful staff and volunteers and enjoy a homemade cake. If the weather is good, you can even sit outside!

web: www.leep1.co.uk

 [facebook.com/Leep1-Leeds-People-First](https://www.facebook.com/Leep1-Leeds-People-First)

 [@Leep1Leeds](https://twitter.com/Leep1Leeds)

Leep 1 Cafe
26 Roundhay Road,
(opposite Thomas
Danby college)
LS7 1AB



Introducing Squaregrowth



Established in 2010, Squaregrowth has many years' experience in the media industry, with the focus on providing full service communication and design solutions to clients throughout Yorkshire. The company is based at Unity Business Centre.

Squaregrowth's mission is to help growing businesses make more of their sales and communication channels by providing the best in-house graphic design expertise and web-developers; the best service at the best prices.

The full suite of services include digital marketing, software development and graphic design. Squaregrowth is a young firm aiming to help your business grow.

If you're keen to continue your success armed with the knowledge of the latest trends, then please get in touch.

To book your **FREE** consultation or to find out more:

 0113 238 0601

 hello@squaregrowth.com

Now in
Unity Business
Centre

Right to Acquire

Current legislation still stands

Much has been made of the Government's decision to allow social housing tenants to buy their rented homes through the 'Right to Acquire' scheme. As a result we anticipate a number of enquiries about this. For the time being, the current legislation still applies.

Most Unity tenants **will not** qualify to buy their rented properties, but some do. You and your home will have to meet these criteria in order to be considered:

Q Who can acquire their home?

You can apply to acquire your housing association home if you:

- ✓ have spent a total of **two years** as a public sector tenant or in accommodation provided by the armed services, if you have been a public sector tenant before January 18th 2005
- ✓ have spent a total of **five years** as a public sector tenant, if your first public sector tenancy was created on or after January 18th 2005

Q Is my property eligible?

Your property must either have been:

- ✓ built or bought by Unity after 1st April 1997 (and funded through a social housing grant provided by the Housing Corporation or a local authority)
- ✓ transferred from a local council to Unity after 1st April 1997

You will not qualify if:

- ✗ Unity has a possession order on your property
- ✗ If you are an undischarged bankrupt
- ✗ If your home has been designed or adapted for people with disabilities

Case Studies



Name: Mrs Jones and daughter

Address: 113 Stainbeck Road, built in 1993

Tenancy Started: 7/5/2001

Right To Acquire:

Mrs Jones would qualify, as she has been a tenant for long enough. However, as her home was built before 1997, it doesn't.



Name: Mr & Mrs Szewc

Address: 23 Wesley Gardens, built in 1999

Tenancy Started: 22/10/2014 - no previous public sector tenancies

Right To Acquire:

Although 23 Wesley Gardens may qualify, as it was built later than April 1997, Mr & Mrs Szewc's will have to wait until they've been tenants for 5 years to qualify.



Name: Miss Stewart & Mr Ndlovu

Address: 43 Unity Drive, refurbished in 2000 with social housing grant

Tenancy Started: 6/6/2005 - previously council tenants for 3 years

Right To Acquire:

Miss Stewart & Mr Ndlovu qualify personally as they have been public sector tenants for more than 5 years and their home also qualifies.



Enrol on an access to Higher Education course and receive a free Chromebook



FREE

For the duration
of the course

Did you know?

Unity's Employment Service Team not only help tenants to find work opportunities, they can also help you access training courses and support applications to colleges and universities. Since they joined Unity in 2012, they have helped hundreds of people!

They'd like to help even more people to access work and training, so if you, or your relative/friend could benefit from some free one-to-one support please call:

 **Kelly:** 0113 200 7738

 **Noma:** 0113 200 7746

Lifelong Learning at University of Leeds

Prepare for a university study with a flexible part-time evening course. Preparation for Higher Education is a one-year foundation course designed for adults returning to education. It will give you the skills, knowledge and confidence in order for you to progress to a degree at the University of Leeds. Financial support is available.

Would you like to go to university, but lack the qualifications that you need?

These specialist courses are for students over 19 years of age (by 31st August in the year the course starts). They provide an alternative route for those who would like to go on to study in Higher Education but who left school without formal qualifications, such as A Levels.

Valuable skills you may have acquired during time employed, undertaking childcare or from other activities are taken into account. You should be motivated, enthusiastic and demonstrate the potential to succeed in your studies.

Terms and conditions apply. Visit leedscitycollege.ac.uk for more details or call **0113 386 1997**.



Noma



Kelly

'Taking the step into higher education has totally transformed mine and my daughter's life and had had a positive effect on my family and friends'

For more information:

 0113 343 3212 www.llc.leeds.ac.uk



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

Shared-Owners Useful Contacts

All your repair and home improvement needs!

These are personal recommendations only. Unity cannot take any responsibility for the actions of any of these contractors.

As a shared-owner, you are responsible for all repairs to the inside of your home, as well as any home improvements. However, Unity understands how important it is for you to access reliable and affordable services which is why we have asked our staff and residents to recommend any contractors who have offered exceptional service.

Top tips to avoid being ripped off:

- ✓ If you are unsure about the type of work that is needed, do not be afraid to get a second opinion
- ✓ Always ask for a quote, preferably a fixed price quote rather than an estimate, before any work is carried out
- ✓ If possible, get three quotes. Make sure you know whether VAT is included or not
- ✓ Try to avoid contractors that charge per hour or per day – as it will be in their interest to drag out a job. This will not only inconvenience you but also leave you out of pocket!



Gas & Heating

Philip Whittaker
Efficient Heating Solutions
203 Stainbeck Lane, Leeds, LS7 2PS

☎ 0113 226 9006

☎ 07868 703384

✉ efficientheating@gmail.com

Service ★★★★★
Cost ★★★★★
Speed ★★★★★



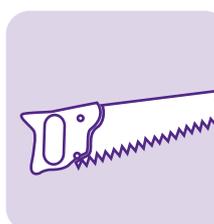
Electricians

JP Electrical
1 Green Row Fold, Methley,
Leeds, LS26 9BG

☎ 07713 427639

✉ john@jpelectricalleeds.co.uk

Service ★★★★★
Cost ★★★★★
Speed ★★★★★



Joiner

Warren Dodds
WD Joinery
97 Kirkdale Crescent,
Leeds, LS12 6AY

☎ 0113 322 3964

☎ 07894 470072

Service ★★★★★
Cost ★★★★★
Speed ★★★★★



Burglar Alarms

Meridian Security Systems
67 New Road Side, Leeds, LS18 4JX

☎ 0113 259 1538

☎ 07534 217275

✉ info@meridian-security.co.uk

Service ★★★★★
Cost ★★★★★
Speed ★★★★★



Pest Control

Axial Pest Control
2 Admirals Yard, Low Road,
LS10 1AE

☎ 0800 907 8693

☎ 07957 911030

✉ info@axialpestcontrol.co.uk

Service ★★★★★
Cost ★★★★★
Speed ★★★★★



Garages

Nelson & Lewis Auto Clinic
Unit 3, Longclose Works, Dolly Lane,
LS9 7TU

☎ 0113 245 3650

☎ Mark: 07496 179131

☎ Gregory: 07468 957853



Fireplaces

Rob Jackson Fireplaces,
23 Oaklands Avenue, Rodley,
Leeds, LS13 1LF

☎ 0113 255 5798

☎ 07974 706104

Service ★★★★★
Cost ★★★★★
Speed ★★★★★



Plumbing & Heating

John Dobson & Son

☎ 07889 917878

Contacting Unity

T: 0113 200 7700

E: uha@unityha.co.uk

W: www.unityha.co.uk

Office Hours:

Monday: 9am - 5pm

Tuesday: 9am - 5pm

Wednesday: 10am - 5pm

Thursday: 9am - 5pm

Friday: 9am - 5pm

If you have an emergency repair when the office is shut, please ring our emergency repairs number (see below). If we have to change our emergency repairs number for any reason you can get the new one by phoning 0113 200 7700 and listening to the message.

Emergency Repairs  0845 634 2766

e.g. serious floods and leaks, total loss of water and electricity, the only toilet is blocked.

Emergency Gas Repairs  01757 244510

e.g. total heating or hot water failure when Unity's office is closed the next day.

Transco (gas leaks)  0800 111 999

Repairs by email: repairs@unityha.co.uk

For information at your fingertips, visit our website at www.unityha.co.uk for leaflets, latest news and community information.

For comments and suggestions about this newsletter please contact Lewis Holloway on **0113 200 7751** or email lewis.holloway@unityha.co.uk

Leeds City Council Services

Adult Social Care

 0113 222 4401

Anti-Social Behaviour

 0113 222 4402

 onestop@leeds.gov.uk

Children Social Care

 0113 222 4403

Council tax and housing benefit

 0113 222 4404

 lcc.benefits@leeds.gov.uk

Complaints and compliments

 0113 222 4405

Environmental services

Contact the Council's environmental services to get bulky items taken away for free.

 0113 222 4406

 refusecollection@leeds.gov.uk

Highways

 0113 222 4407

 highways@leeds.gov.uk

Registrars

 0113 222 4408

Planning

 0113 222 4409

Minicom

 0113 222 4410

Problems understanding?

If you need any of our information translating or if you need an interpreter, please contact us. We can also provide this information in large print or on CD if you need us to.



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INVESTORS
IN PEOPLE

Silver



business for neighbourhoods

