

Community News

Edition 12 | Autumn 2024

Welcome to the 12th edition of Community News.

We hope you enjoy all the latest news, activities, upcoming events and items of interest from around our Woven communities.

woven



Summer Colouring Competition Winner.

Congratulations to Sofia from the Cloisters in Dungannon - the winner of the Summer Colouring Competition.

Colouring in this edition has a Fire Safety theme for our Fire Safety Awareness Week.

Would you like to join our Editorial Panel?

Community News is produced by tenants, for tenants; co-ordinated and compiled by the Editorial Panel and members of Woven's Homes & Communities Team.

We are on the lookout for willing tenant volunteers. Gain experience of newsletter production and share news with tenants across NI. Email: newsletter@woven.org.uk

Meet the Woven Staff



Here at Woven, we believe it is important that our tenants know who we are and what we do! In our first edition of our 'Meet The Staff' feature, we spoke to our Communities Team!



Margaret McLaughlin
Senior Officer for Tenant Engagement
and Community Services

Margaret says: I joined the Woven team in January 2017 but I've worked in the community for over 20 years, firstly in my local area co-ordinating projects, promoting health & wellbeing, supporting the community and voluntary sector.

Since moving to Woven, I've enjoyed getting to know all things housing, engaging tenants and giving them a voice.

I love getting to meet different people from across Northern Ireland, hearing their stories and involving them, to improve the community they live in.

Outside of work I enjoy spending time with my family, farming and holidays.



Deirdre Nash
Community Involvement Officer
(Northwest)

Deirdre says: I have been involved in the community and voluntary sector for 17 years in the Derry City and Strabane District Council area.

I joined Woven in July 2022 and it has given me the opportunity to meet so many people from across the Northwest, building connections and working together with tenants and the wider community.

I love that every day can be different!

Away from work, I love spending time with my family and friends and my little Boston Terrier Flash Nash.



Tom Cummings
Community Involvement Officer
(Belfast)

Tom says: I joined the Woven team 2 years ago, the same time I moved to Northern Ireland.

My background is in urban planning which is what I studied at University and also the sector I subsequently worked in for 8 years. I was always more interested in the 'people' side of my job and so was naturally drawn to community work.

I love this role because no two days are the same. I couldn't be sat behind a desk 5 days a week anymore because I really enjoy getting out and about and meeting all our tenants.

Outside of work I enjoy running, reading and football. I'm a Warrington Town fan (someone has to be!)



Philip Whyte
Community Involvement Officer
(Belfast)

Philip says: I joined Woven very recently, in June 2024 but I have worked in the voluntary sector for the past 32 years. I started off in Youth Work then progressed into leading good relation and conflict transformation programmes. I have worked in the Housing sector for the past 9 years on the Housing for All Programme.

I really enjoy getting out and about meeting new groups and helping them develop programmes that really do have an impact in their neighbourhoods

In my spare time, I love travelling to new places and once even travelled the World on a Japanese Peace boat!

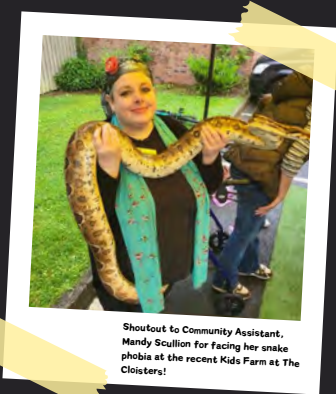
Next time, we will meet your Housing Team...



Out and About



As ever, the Communities Team have been out and about on our schemes. Take a look at some of our recent community events!



Shoutout to Community Assistant, Mandy Scullion for facing her snake phobia at the recent Kids Farm at The Cloisters!



Regional Panels

Woven's latest Regional Panels took place in September and were well attended by tenants and staff.

Regional Panels provide an opportunity for tenants to meet with staff to discuss 'everything Woven' to help steer our services and community events.

Representatives from these Regional Panels will be meeting in October at Woven's 'Residents Forum'. This is a more strategic meeting to discuss Woven and province-wide matters. If you're interested in taking part in the next Regional Panels in December, please contact your Community Involvement Officer.



Housing Manager, Joji Min delivering a presentation to members of the Belfast Regional Panel held at Hillmount Garden Centre



Around the District (goes back in time!)

After his deep dive in to the best that each Council area has to offer, Woven tenant Dave Maher now takes a look into the social history of these areas, from first arrivals to relatively current times. We start in the Derry City and Strabane area.

This area, rich with history, has been home to people for thousands of years. Long before the streets, homes, and communities we know today, this landscape was shaped by the lives and struggles of our ancestors who settled here in prehistoric times. The legacies of those early settlers still echo in the places we live today. Until recently it was thought the earliest known settlers arrived in the Mountsandel area during the Mesolithic period, approximately 8,000 BCE. In 2016 a find was made in the National Museum in Dublin which pushed back this timeline by 2,500 years into the Palaeolithic era. A bear bone, found in a cave in Co. Clare and which had been stored in a cardboard box in the museum for almost a century, was dated to 10,500 BCE. It showed clear signs of cut marks with a stone tool!

Mountsandel, on the river Bann, near Coleraine, is one of the oldest archaeological sites on the island of Ireland. These first arrivals were small groups of hunter-gatherers who made their homes along the banks of the Rivers Bann, Foyle and their tributaries. Rivers were crucial, providing food, water, and transportation. Below is a model of one of these homes.



These prehistoric people left behind traces of their existence in the form of stone tools and settlement sites. Over time, as agriculture emerged in the Neolithic period, settlements grew and became more permanent. Archaeological finds, such as those around Mount Sandel in Coleraine, suggest that similar communities may have lived in the fertile lands around Derry and Strabane, which were ideal for farming. Even today, many of our towns and villages are located on or near these ancient sites, showing a continuity of settlement that stretches back thousands of years.

By the Bronze Age (around 2500 BCE), people had begun to build more substantial structures and form early communities. The rolling hills and valleys of the region provided fertile ground for farming, and as social structures evolved, so too did the importance of the land. The distribution of early bronze tools, burial cairns, and standing stones found in the area suggests that these communities were growing, with social hierarchies emerging.

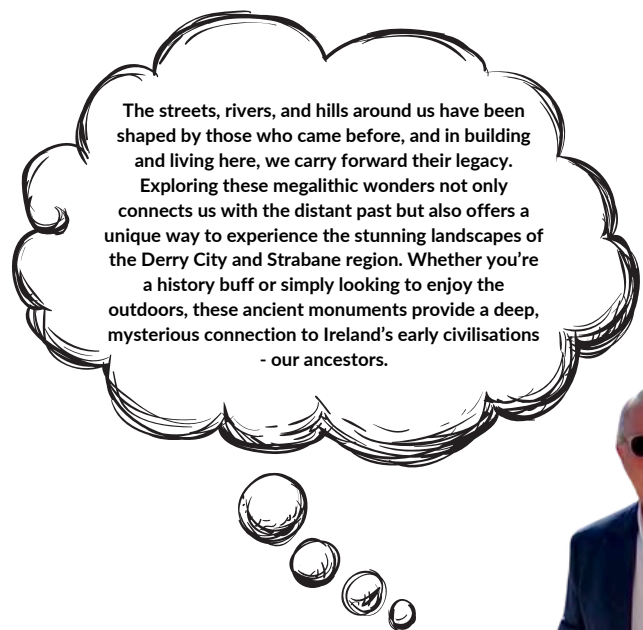
Some of the villages and hamlets that exist today trace their roots to these early Bronze Age settlements. As we move into the Iron Age and the arrival of the Celts (around 500 BCE), the Derry/Strabane area became part of a wider Celtic society. Early forts, or raths, dotted the landscape, built by powerful families to protect their people and livestock. Many of these raths, or ringforts, can still be traced in the countryside today.

Areas such as Burt and Grianán of Aileach, an ancient stone fort perched high on a hill overlooking Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle, became centers of power, and their influence likely spread throughout the surrounding lands. The Grianan of Aileach, which roughly translates as 'the stony place of the sun', although largely rebuilt in the 19th century, is a hugely impressive monument, and dates back to around 1700 BC, and may have been a royal seat or a ceremonial centre.

By the early medieval period, Christian monastic communities began to play a significant role in shaping the settlements. The founding of monasteries, such as those by Saint Columba in Derry, influenced not only religion, but also the social and economic development of the region. The original site of the Hill of Derry, where this first settlement and monastic community were established by Saint Columba in the 6th century is now occupied by St Columb's Cathedral (photo below). It is an Anglican cathedral and is one of the most iconic landmarks in the city. It was built between 1633 and 1637, making it the oldest surviving building in all of Londonderry and one of the oldest Protestant cathedrals on the island of Ireland.



These monasteries became centres of learning, trade, and craftsmanship, and the settlements that grew around them became more complex, with trade routes developing along the River Foyle. Derry, originally called Doire, meaning "oak grove," became an important monastic site, and the town grew around it. Over time, the settlement patterns became more urbanised, and many of the early medieval streets and pathways still form part of the layout of the modern-day city. Similarly, Strabane emerged as a key crossing point along the River Mourne, where early settlers would have relied on the river for transportation and trade.



The streets, rivers, and hills around us have been shaped by those who came before, and in building and living here, we carry forward their legacy. Exploring these megalithic wonders not only connects us with the distant past but also offers a unique way to experience the stunning landscapes of the Derry City and Strabane region. Whether you're a history buff or simply looking to enjoy the outdoors, these ancient monuments provide a deep, mysterious connection to Ireland's early civilisations - our ancestors.



Dave's Final Thought





What are scheme walkabouts?

Scheme walkabouts allow our tenants to walk around their scheme/local area with Woven staff to point out any issues and concerns. It provides an opportunity to discuss things 'on the ground' to ensure that all our developments and schemes are safe, clean and welcoming.

Where do they take place?

Scheme walkabouts take place all across our schemes. Generally, there is a focus on bigger schemes with lots of tenants where it is more likely issues might arise. However, if you feel your area would benefit from a scheme walkabout, we are more than happy to discuss this.

How can I find out when they are taking place?

Events are advertised in advance via flyers, text messages and social media but you can also contact your Community Involvement Officer for further information. We have recently launched a new Woven website and hope to list events on here in future too.

Who takes part in scheme walkabouts?

Along with tenants, we like to get staff from all our different teams down so we can discuss issues as one. This may include Housing Officers/Managers, Community Involvement Officers, Assets Officers/Manager and in some cases members of our Development team. Sometimes, Council officers, local community groups and Councillors may join us.

What happens after the scheme walkabout?

Staff will take notes during the walkabout so they have a record of what was discussed and any issues that are raised. These will then be reviewed and/or forwarded to the relevant staff member. From here, actions may be taken as a result of what was raised (i.e. maintenance work arranged, community event hosted etc.). Alternatively, a member of staff may contact individual tenants to gather further information and may arrange a follow-up appointment to discuss individual concerns. All tenants on the relevant schemes will be kept updated on any actions.



Dungannon

A scheme walkabout took place in Dungannon in June this year. All 5 schemes were visited on the day by Woven representatives from the Housing, Maintenance and Communities team, alongside local councillors and representatives from the community policing team. These were:

- Killymaddy Hill
- Woodlawn Park
- Milltown Mews
- The Cloisters
- Castle Gardens

Staff, tenants and representatives undertook litter picks to tidy up the schemes and were able to discuss issues affecting the different schemes.

All were invited back to Castle Gardens common room at the end for tea, biscuits and a debrief! (photos below)



Want a scheme walkabout in your area, or want to know when and where they are taking place?

- Give us a follow on Facebook - 'Woven Housing Association'
- Check our website - www.woven.org.uk
- Keep an eye on texts or flyers promoting the events
- Contact your Community Involvement Officer to discuss directly





Apple and Blackberry Crumble

For the crumble topping:

- 120g plain flour
- 60g caster sugar
- 60g unsalted butter, cut into pieces



For the fruit compote:

- 300g Braeburn apple
- 30g unsalted butter
- 30g demerara sugar
- 115g blackberries
- ¼ tsp ground cinnamon
- vanilla ice cream, to serve



Method

- Heat oven to 190C/170C fan/gas 5. Tip 120g plain flour and 60g caster sugar into a large bowl.
- Add 60g unsalted butter (room temp), then rub into the flour using your fingertips to make a light breadcrumb texture. Do not overwork it or the crumble will become heavy.
- Sprinkle the mixture evenly over a baking sheet and bake for 15 mins or until lightly coloured.
- Meanwhile, for the compote, peel, core and cut 300g Braeburn apples into 2cm dice.
- Put 30g unsalted butter and 30g demerara sugar in a medium saucepan and melt together over a medium heat. Cook for 3 mins until the mixture turns to a light caramel.
- Stir in the apples and cook for 3 mins. Add 115g blackberries and ¼ tsp ground cinnamon, and cook for 3 mins more.
- Cover, remove from the heat, then leave for 2-3 mins to continue cooking in the warmth of the pan.
- To serve, spoon the warm fruit into an ovenproof gratin dish, top with the crumble mix, then reheat in the oven for 5-10 mins. Serve with vanilla ice cream.



- Make sure your butter is at room temperature before you start. This makes it much easier to mix to get the perfect crumble top.
- August to October is the perfect time to forage for blackberries! Blackberry bushes are found all over the place - get out and see if you can find some. Just remember to wash them thoroughly before using!

PET SAFETY

With the most spooktacular time of year just around the corner here are some tips to keeping pets safe this Halloween courtesy of Castle Gardens Community Assistant, Mandy Scullion

While most of us enjoy Halloween, it can be a stressful time of year for pets with more knocks at the door, people dressed up, visitors calling to your home, loud fireworks and bonfires taking place. With all of this, our pets can become restless, unsettled and frightened.

Here we share some tips that have been given by the PDSA that can help keep pets safe, whilst helping them to feel calmer and more reassured.



1 Keep Halloween treats out of paws reach

It is important to know that most human sweets and treats can be dangerous (and even poisonous) to pets. Most people know not to give animals chocolate but even sweets and biscuits that contain birch sugar (xylitol) can make your pet sick. Stick to pet-approved treats for your furry friends!

2 Move lit pumpkins away from pets

An open flame and a curious pet is not a good combination... keep your lit pumpkins well out of reach, so they don't get their furry noses burnt! Also, be aware most wildlife charities now ask people not to discard pumpkins in forests, as they can spread disease and disrupt the natural diet of wildlife (fatally in some cases). You should dispose of your pumpkins in your green waste bin.

3 Keep decorations out of the way

Halloween decorations can help us get into the spooky spirit but you should keep these out of the reach of pets. An inquisitive cat or a playful dog will likely want to play with them but chewing on them risks your pet ingesting small parts or getting tangled up!

4 Be home before dark

Try to reduce your pets stress where possible. For dogs, take them for a walk before it gets dark and before Halloween activities start. For cats, try to take them in earlier and keep them indoors for the remainder of the activities. Close curtains and windows if there is lots of noise outside. You can also make a den indoors for your pet to hide to help them feel a little safer.

5 Have a cosy night in

If your pet seems worried, stressed or anxious then why not stay at home and snuggle up for a spooky movie night in with them instead. Your fur baby will appreciate the extra comfort and attention.



Got some cute snaps of your pets at Halloween?
Send them to newsletter@woven.org.uk and they could feature in the next edition!



DAMP & MOULD

This Autumn, Woven are conducting a survey on Damp and Mould. It is being shared on the Woven website and promoted via text and on social media.

All homes are at risk of condensation, particularly in winter. Condensation in small amounts is not usually a problem, and there are things you can do to help prevent it. For more information read the Woven leaflet on Condensation [HERE](#).

MOULD

Too much condensation in your home can lead to problems such as mould growth. Mould Growth can affect your health and the health of your home.

RISING DAMP

Rising damp is caused by water in the soil moving up through a wall and only affects ground floor rooms or basements. It isn't very common and is usually prevented by a barrier called a damp-proof course. Rising damp can occur if the damp-proof course in your home is either missing or damaged.

Signs of rising damp include damaged skirting boards and floorboards, crumbling or salt stained plaster, and peeling paint or wallpaper. It often has the appearance of a tide mark running along the bottom of a wall.



MOULD



RISING DAMP

If you spot any damp or mould in your home, contact Woven straight away on **028 9042 7211**. Woven will arrange an inspection to identify the cause of any issues you are experiencing and work together to ensure any risks, hazards or problems are resolved as a priority.

We encourage all tenants to respond to the survey. If you are not in receipt of text messages from Woven, you can check their website or ask to receive the survey by email.

TENANCY FRAUD

Social housing is a scarce resource. Those who commit tenancy fraud are in breach of their tenancy agreement, so it is against the law. It also means that people who need social housing the most miss out on a home.

Woven's Housing team are committed to tackling tenancy fraud. They carry out regular tenancy checks to make sure the right people are living in their properties, working closely with other social landlords and agencies. In the last financial year, Woven received 18 reports of suspected tenancy fraud. 8 properties were recovered as a result, and thus 11 people were provided with a home.



What is tenancy fraud?

There are different types of tenancy fraud, including:

- **Unlawful subletting** - when a tenant doesn't live in the property and rents their home to someone else.
- **Abandonment** - when a tenant moves out of their property, with no intention of returning, without ending their tenancy. Until we can confirm that it has been abandoned and take back possession of it, the property may be left empty for a long time.
- **Wrongly claimed succession** - when someone who is not entitled, under the tenancy rules, tries to take over a tenancy when the named tenant dies. For example, they might say they lived with the tenant before they died, when in fact they were living elsewhere.
- **Unlawful assignment:** no longer using your property as your main home and letting someone else live there without our permission.
- **Lying to obtain housing:** this can include providing false information to get a property to which you aren't entitled.

Are you committing tenancy fraud?

Anyone committing tenancy fraud can end their tenancy without threat of legal proceedings if they return their keys, along with a letter giving notice. **If this is you, do the right thing, act now.**

Tell Woven about it!

By reporting tenancy fraud, you can help us provide homes for people who need them most. If you think someone in your neighbourhood is a tenancy cheat, **let Woven know**, providing as much information as possible. It could make a big difference to people who are in genuine need of housing. You can make your report anonymously and all reports are taken seriously.

If you suspect someone is a tenancy cheat, Call Woven's offices:

Belfast 02890427411 North West 028713600 or email: info@woven.org.uk

All information received will be taken seriously and treated in confidence.

Tenant Zone

Poetry Corner

Peace - It's Time

Words and Music By

Woven Tenant, Brendan Vincent Owens

It's getting harder every day to hear good news - it's always bad
Even internet and TV's showing news that's always sad
I'm not an expert but I try to understand
Why the ones that rule will kill so many for a piece of land

To me it's very simple really - there is no win or lose
There's only pain and suffering when power is abused
No; it's not so complicated and debates only confuse
It's a case of every person saying;
"This time we will choose -
PEACE - PEACE give us PEACE - this time
PEACE - PEACE give us PEACE - it's time"

It's getting harder every day to smile but many make that choice
And to their credit many too are now united in one voice
Still for me some reason needs to be restored
Since we are all one family let's not use words that stab like swords?

To me it's very simple really - There is no win or lose
There's only pain and suffering when hate-filled words are used.
No; it's not so complicated. Hate can never be excused
It's a case of every person saying; "This time we will choose -
PEACE - PEACE give us PEACE - it's time!"

To me it's very simple really - There is no win or lose
With love and understanding any strife can be diffused
So it's not that complicated - it's just that - love is underused
It's down to me and you - Let's sing it; "This time we will choose -
PEACE - PEACE let's make PEACE - this time
PEACE - PEACE let's make PEACE - it's time!"
It's time!

Scan the QR Code to hear Brendan and his daughter perform this song!



Scan Me

Welcome to Tenant Zone! This section is full of useful information for Woven tenants.

This is also your opportunity to get involved and have your voice heard.



Visit our new website at www.woven.org.uk, to keep up to date with all the latest news from **woven**

There is currently an online 'Tenant Zone' on the website that we hope will be a useful resource for all tenants. We'd love to hear from you about what they'd like to see on it! Get in touch if you want to share your ideas.



Pets Corner
Meet Neteyam, who belongs to the Owens family in Greeves Park, Strabane!



WE WANT YOU!

Want to join our Editorial Panel and get involved in writing articles as well as designing and editing the Woven Community Newsletter?

Or do you just have a story you want to tell? Maybe you have an article you think other tenants would love to read?

If so, get in touch at newsletter@woven.org.uk



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Dates for your Diary



Your Communities Team

Woven Events

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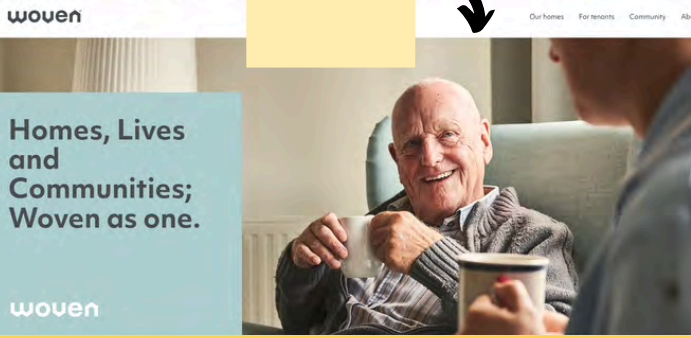


Tom Cummings

Community Involvement Officer
 tom.cummings@woven.org.uk
 07485396526



Find our latest events online at www.woven.org.uk



15th Oct

Charity Coffee Morning
 @ Clifton/Hendra Park

16th Oct

Autumn Wreath Making
 @Sion Mills/Strabane

22nd Oct

Quiz
 @ Ardnaclowney House, Belfast

23rd Oct

Residents Forum
 @ Castle Gardens, Dungannon

29th Oct

Halloween Arts and Crafts
 @The Cloisters, Dungannon

30th Oct

Halloween Arts and Crafts
 @ Sion Mills/Strabane

30th Oct

Halloween Party
 @ Johnston Way, Lisburn

6th Nov

Bingo
 @ Conway Walk, Belfast

Regional Panels

Belfast
 Monday 2nd December

Dungannon
 Monday 9th December

North West
 Tuesday 14th January

North Coast
 Wednesday 22nd January

Venues TBC. Please check online or contact your Community Involvement Officer

A full Christmas programme of events is currently being planned including wreath and bauble making, seasonal quizzes, coffee mornings, celebration lunches and much more...

Keep an eye out and if you have any events you'd like to see in your area, contact your Community Involvement Officer!



Other Events

Check out these events taking place across Northern Ireland in the coming months

Until 26th Oct
 Oktoberfest Belfast
 @ Custom House Square

16th Oct - 26th Nov
 Belfast International Arts Festival
 @ Various Locations

26th - 27th Oct
 Halloween Fun Fest
 @ Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge

26th Oct - 3rd Nov
 Halloween at Hillsborough Castle
 @ Hillsborough Castle and Gardens

26th Oct - 3rd Nov
 Halloween at Mount Stewart
 @ Mount Stewart, Newtownards

26th - 27th Oct
 Harvest Festival of Colour
 @ Florence Court

1st Nov
 Stargazing Evening
 @ Armagh Observatory

10th Nov
 Winter Foraging
 @ Ulster Folk Museum, Holywood

From 16th Nov
 Belfast Christmas Market
 @ Belfast City Hall



28th Oct - 31st Oct

The worlds of past and present collide to bring you a dazzling street celebration of all things spooky in the official home of Halloween!

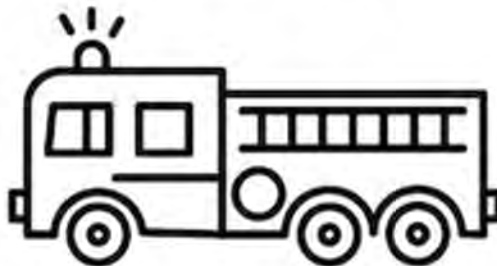




Northern Ireland
Fire & Rescue Service

woven

FIRE SAFETY WEEK
21-25 OCTOBER



Colour in our Fire Safety themed Colouring Competition page then Scan or take a photo of your completed page and email to newsletter@woven.org.uk or by WhatsApp 07485396526. Open to children aged 12 and under.

Name: _____ Age _____

Address: _____