



GET YOUR GARDENING GRANT

MMHS residents can apply for a £250 gardening grant per connexional year.
Email ministerial.grants@methodistchurch.org.uk

roof 'n' roots

The MMHS Newsletter • Spring 2025

Feel the benefit

MMHS RESIDENTS DISCOVER UNTAPPED SOURCES OF GOVERNMENT HELP – VERITY TWOMBLEY REPORTS

Millions of people are missing out on an estimated £23 billion in unclaimed benefits, according to Martin Lewis's Money Saving Expert website.

That means it's worth checking to see if you qualify for help – such as if you have caring responsibilities or a long-term health condition.

Multiple health problems and advancing years caused MMHS residents Revd John Millard and wife Maureen to make a number of adaptations to their home. MMHS encouraged John and Maureen to apply for Attendance Allowance due to their medical conditions.

'I wasn't sure whether I would qualify and was faced with a long, complicated 30-page application form,' said John. 'However, I went ahead and applied. After a few weeks – and without any problem – I was informed that I qualify. It is now being paid weekly.'

Around the same time, he applied to the local council for a Blue Badge for his car. 'That was sent within a couple of weeks,' said John.

He was on a roll. So John checked around to see if any other benefits were available. 'Going online, I discovered something called Council Tax Reduction,' he said.



PARTNERS ADAPT: Revd John Millard and wife Maureen did their homework and found out they could apply for various allowances

FACT FILE

✦ To check if you are entitled to benefits, use any of the following online tools:

- [moneysavingexpert.entitledto.co.uk](https://moneysavingexpert.com/entitledto.co.uk) – Benefits Calculator
- benefits-calculator.turn2us.org.uk – Turn2us Benefits Calculator
- betteroffcalculator.co.uk/login – Better Off Calculator – Policy in Practice
- benefitscheck.ageuk.org.uk/Home/Start – Benefit calculator
- ✦ You can also find local services providing benefits advice:
advice.local.uk/find-an-adviser – Find an adviser | [Advice local](https://advice.local.uk)

'I applied, and within a very short time I was awarded ten per cent reduction. It was granted because I have a specially adapted bathroom and bedroom for health reasons.'

'We thank God and all involved for all the help we are now receiving. If you find yourself in a similar

situation, it's well worth having a go!'

Most local authority websites have links to benefits-checking tools and other advice via their benefits and money pages.

However, if you still find yourself 'stuck', contact MMHS Housing and Wellbeing Officer Verity Twombley.

Email vtwombley@mmhs.org.uk 🏠



New experiences are the theme of the spring *Roof 'n' Roots*. And we have a new editorial team who came up with the ideas!

Residents are finding sources of help in the welfare system. One couple shared their story with Housing and Wellbeing Officer Verity Twombly – see the front cover.

Condensation is a constant. There are handy resources in and around the home to combat condensation. Read about that on this page.

'Mindful moments' can be created right where we live – see article on page three.

How about a hobby? Plenty of residents enjoy those – from model train layouts to making a telescope from scratch! Editorial team member Dan is proud of his grandfather, who found fresh freedom in music. Read page four.

Our CEO Mairi Johnstone offers thanks for your help with our property survey, a new experience for everyone. See these centre pages.

Enjoy a new experience this spring!

Clive

Clive Price
Communications Manager

A new survey experience for us all!

CEO MAIRI JOHNSTONE
PRESENTS AN UPDATE

Our uniqueness as an organisation presents some interesting challenges. One is our geographical spread – with properties across England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. I don't know of any other housing provider with such a footprint!

We take such challenges head-on. Looming large on our horizon was the need for a fully comprehensive survey of our properties, your homes.

Like all private landlords, we face a mountain of legislation and regulation.

We identified what we needed to know about our properties, to meet present and future requirements. We didn't want to stop at that, though.

We wished to go further. We were interested in how we could improve our

properties and the experience of living in them.

We wanted to play our part in enabling you, our ministerial residents, to continue living independently in your own home, for as long as possible. That's a hugely important matter to us, linked as it is, to personal wellbeing and quality of life. And so, we added a 'people' section to the survey, addressing mobility and access issues.

We were pleased to hire surveyors and energy advisors *Rand Associates* to undertake this multi-faceted survey. They were undaunted by our geographical spread!

Surveys should be nearing completion by the time you receive this edition of *Roof 'n' Roots*. Results will be loaded into an excellent piece of software designed by a partner organisation of *Rand Associates*.

You may have observed the surveyor



TABLET TIME: You may have observed a surveyor visiting your home using a tablet to collect data.

who visited your home using a tablet to collect data. Capturing data in real-time is an efficient way of working. We look forward to analysing all the findings.

I'd like to thank you for assisting us in our task, by opening up your homes and answering our questions. Maybe you even provided a cuppa or two! ☕



MINDFUL MOMENTS

Now the days are growing longer, the air is warmer and nature is thriving, why not dust off your walking shoes and step outside?

Walking brings multiple benefits, without the risks associated with rigorous exercise. Even with gentle paces, you can burn calories, strengthen muscles, lower blood sugar, ease painful joints, boost immunity, improve mood and inspire creativity.

For those who find a walk physically challenging, simply getting outdoors can be a tonic.

Consider the Nordic concept of *Friluftsliv* (pronounced *free-loofts-liv*) – or 'open-air living'. In Sweden they say, 'There's no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes'.

Whether it's your favourite spot to see, place to sit, or go for a saunter, take time to notice and harvest the sights and sensations.

Why not seize the moment and create a memory, through writing a poem, creating some art or offering a prayer of thankfulness? Let us know how you get on. Share those with us. You never know – we might even publish some of those moments.

Put 'spring in your step' and art in your heart!

Verity Twombly

It's a breath of fresh air

PROTECT YOUR HOME FROM
CONDENSATION. HERE'S HOW...

Condensation can rot your home. But you can tackle it – and the treatment is a breath of fresh air.

Councils, housing associations and ventilation companies promote the same steps to crack down on condensation. It starts with something as simple as opening a window.

What are we fighting against?
Condensation is caused by excessive

moisture that cannot escape. Every day, each person adds 2.5 litres of water vapour into their home.

Excessive moisture rests on a cooler surface and forms droplets. If untreated, it can lead to black mould.

If mould appears, it brings health risks. Treat it quickly with a vinegar solution. When dry, cover with anti-mould paint.

The good news is, we are not powerless to do anything. We have the resources to repel condensation from our homes:

- open trickle vents or windows to allow fresh air in;
- open internal doors to encourage fresh air to flow;
- when cooking, put lids on pans and use a fan to take any steam away;
- spin clothes well before putting them on an airer to dry;
- on bright, breezy days, dry laundry in fresh air outside;
- use a dehumidifier to keep 40-65 per cent humidity indoors;

- when showering or bathing, use bathroom fan to extract moisture;
- wipe condensation off windows, sills and shower cubicles;
- maintain low ambient heat, rather than short hot blasts;
- more furniture away from radiators so warm air can circulate.

Both physical and mental wellbeing can be affected by mould in the home. But the way to avoid it could be as simple as opening windows for a short period of time each day. 🪟



AIR WAYS: On these bright, breezy spring days, dry your laundry outside to cut down the condensation

HOW MUCH EXTRA MOISTURE YOU CAN BE ADDING TO THE AIR IN YOUR HOME EVERY DAY

Drying clothes indoors = 9 pints



Cooking and using a kettle = 6 pints



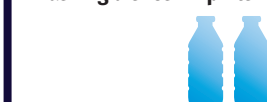
Two people at home breathing = 3 pints



Taking a bath or shower = 2 pints



Washing dishes = 2 pints



Total = 22 pints of extra moisture in the air

FACT FILE

Here are some useful websites for further information:

cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/Services-DCCS/damp-and-mould-leaflet-2025.pdf

ncha.org.uk/media/nrpi3f3r/damp-and-mould-booklet.pdf

envirovent.com/blog/how-much-condensation-does-one-person-produce/?form=MG0AV3

How a hobby can help your health

FOLLOWING AN INTEREST CAN BOOST YOUR WELLBEING, SAYS DAN BROOKES. HE SHARES A FAMILY STORY ABOUT FINDING A PATH TO FRIENDSHIP AND FULFILMENT

Retirement can open up a world of possibilities waiting to be explored – even on a budget.

Take my grandad, Jeff, for example. At age 75, he decided to learn the saxophone—a decision that not only brought him joy but also opened the door to new friendships and creative fulfilment.

What's even more inspiring is that Jeff didn't need to invest in expensive lessons or gear to pursue his passion. He found free online music groups where he could learn and improve his skills.

Through these virtual communities, he connected with like-minded individuals from all over the country, sharing the joy of music while growing his talents. Eventually, many of these online friends turned into in-person companions, as they began meeting up to practise together.

Starting a new hobby, especially something as accessible as learning an instrument, can bring unexpected rewards. It's not just about the

skills you develop – it's about the people you meet and the sense of accomplishment you gain from challenging yourself.

Whether it's music, painting, writing, or any other creative pursuit, if you are minded to discover them and search online, there are countless free resources online that can help you dive in and find a new community. And you don't have to break the bank.

So, if you're feeling a bit disconnected or in need of something new, consider picking up an instrument or another low-cost hobby. Like Jeff, you'll find joy, personal growth, and maybe even a whole new circle of friends.

Don't just take my word for it. *Happiful* magazine reported on a recent study that said engaging in hobbies boosts wellbeing and lowers depression in people aged 65 and over.

Published in the *Nature Medicine* journal in 2023, the research across 16 countries showed that participating in hobbies was linked to lower levels of depression, higher life satisfaction, happiness and health. Hobbies get the green light! 🟢

Dan Brookes is Commercial Officer at MMHS, and a member of the editorial team.

FACT FILE

USEFUL WEBSITES

- ✚ Hobby ideas for older people
lifeconnect24.co.uk/blog/top-15-hobby-ideas-for-older-people
- ✚ How to find a hobby
bbcmaestro.com/blog/how-to-find-a-hobby
- ✚ Hobbies for retirement
afhwm.co.uk/news/10-hobbies-to-take-up-in-retirement



Photo: Shutterstock

