

IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 Christmas at 51-98 Eringden
- 2 Tamworth Borough Council takes control of Ankerside shopping centre
- 3 Meet your new voice manager
- 4 Customer service at Marmion House
- 5 The post-christmas blues
- 5 Mental health support
- 6 Controlling condensation and mould in your home
- 8 Dehumidifier loan scheme
- 8 Coming Soon – annual tenants perception survey 2025
- 9 Mobility scooter safety fire advice
- 10 E-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooter fire safety guidance
- 12 Home hub
- 13 Antisocial behaviour awareness week
- 13 CCTV
- 14 Social housing consumer standards, short videos available on our website
- 14 Register for MyHousing
- 14 Identity badges
- 15 Getting to Know You Better – Tenants' Survey 2025
- 15 Contents insurance

Christmas at 51-98 Eringden

Every year our teams at Eringden organise a Christmas raffle and this Christmas was no different.

Colleagues from the council donated many chocolate bars with their own unique label, which we've been told were very yummy!

The Eringden residents have a strong sense of community, running errands for one another etc. Some even have their neighbours around for Christmas dinner. It is great to see residents helping each other out.



• Chocolates donated to supported housing.

Tamworth Borough Council takes control of Ankerside shopping centre

You may have seen local news that as Tamworth Borough Council, we've taken ownership of Ankerside Shopping Centre. We have not paid any money to the previous owners to do this.

Tamworth Borough Council has always owned the land (own the freehold), but the shopping centre itself has always been privately owned, and as leaseholders the owners pay the council rent. However, the previous owners handed the centre over into council ownership on Friday 29 November.

This was a mutual agreement, one that had been going through negotiations for around two years.

Councillor Nova Arkney, portfolio holder for infrastructure, heritage and local economy for Tamworth Borough Council, said:

"We're committed to seeing a town centre fit for the future, and this move seeks to provide stability and reassurance to Ankerside tenants and shoppers, to secure the long-term future of the shopping centre in the heart of our town centre.

"We have plans to invigorate the centre and are supported by NewRiver, a listed specialist owner and manager of retail destinations, in developing this. NewRiver is working on our behalf with all existing Ankerside tenants and contractors to deliver a smooth transition and continued operation of the centre."

"Ankerside Shopping Centre and the wider Tamworth town centre remain open for business, and we encourage everyone to continue to support the business in our wonderful town."



• Ankerside.

Meet your new voice manager

Name: Lee Hughes

Position: Tenant's Voice Manager

Where have you joined us from / experience:

I joined the council in April 2020 (yes in covid!) and have worked in different roles around neighbourhood services. Some of you may have seen me out on the estates as a community warden or as a neighbourhood impact officer, I have also spent time working in our estate management team.

Why you wanted the role:

I love working within the neighbourhood team and am also passionate about people, Tamworth and making sure we deliver the very best services we can for our tenants and leaseholders alike.

In this new role, I join a team of fantastic people who are dedicated and committed to delivering our services. With the new social housing regulations that have come into force across the UK this is a fantastic opportunity for us, as a wider team, to embrace the changes and make a difference to our communities borough wide.

What do you think your new role looks like:

Neighbourhood Services has always been successful in involving tenants in key aspects of service delivery. The tenant regulation and involvement team are continually exploring different ways to hear and respond to the views of all tenants in respect of the service it provides. The team would love to hear your views about the services you receive, your recommendations for any service improvement, how you would like to be contacted and how we could encourage more tenants to get involved. If you are interested in becoming involved or could suggest how best to progress tenant involvement and consultation, we would welcome your thoughts.



• *Lee Hughes.*

VISIT OUR NEW FACE-TO-FACE CUSTOMER SERVICE AT MARMION HOUSE!

The new service, available from the main council house in Tamworth town centre, offers:

- Face to face support with all council service enquiries.
- Support in how to access services yourself using self-service desks.
- A second face to face customer services reception in Tamworth town centre; our reception desk at Tamworth Assembly rooms remains open.

New service opening hours:

- Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 10am – 2pm
- Tuesday, Thursday: 2pm – 6pm

Other ways to access council services:

There are several ways you can get support from Tamworth Borough council:

- Phone 01827 709709.
Phone lines open 8.45am – 5.10pm Monday to Thursday and 8.45am – 5.05pm Fridays.
- Visit our website www.tamworth.gov.uk to self-serve or use the webchat.
- Reception desk at Tamworth Assembly Rooms
for face-to-face support 10am – 4pm Monday to Saturday
- For council tenants, the MyHousing portal is available
(Google Tamworth Borough Council MyHousing portal)
- Email enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk
and we can arrange for a call back.

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The post-christmas blues

- Have you borrowed more than you can afford to pay for the Christmas festivities?
- Do you feel like you will never be clear of the money you owe?
- Are you struggling to pay your everyday bills?
- Are you worried about losing your home, because you can't pay the rent?
- Are financial worries affecting your mental health?



If you've answered yes to any of these or are worried about paying your bills, contact... our income team at on 01827 709514 or email: incometeam@tamworth.gov.uk

We're here to help

We can offer a range of help and advice to help you manage your money, make sure you are getting the benefits you are eligible for and make a referral to specialist debt and money advice services for further support.

Mental health support

If you are struggling with your mental health there are people you can talk to, they won't judge you, they are here to listen and help you and are available any time day or night.

- The Crisis Team 0808 196 3002
- Samaritans 116123
- Text SHOUT 85258 (This is a text messaging service)
- If you have seriously harmed yourself or are suicidal call 999. Don't suffer in silence!

Mental health helplines (UK wide†, all free of charge*)	
 Available 24/7	Call 111 Option 2
 Available 24/7	Call 116 123
 85258	Text 'SHOUT' to 85258 Available 24/7
 Available 24/7, for under 19s	Call 0800 1111
 Available 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday*	Call 0300 102 1234*
 Available 9am-midnight daily, for under 35s	Call 0800 0684141
 Available 24/7, for under 25s	Text 'YM' to 85258
 Available 5pm-midnight, for men	Call 0800 585858



West Midlands Gambling Harms Clinic

We can help you with your gambling and gain control of your life again.

To access our self-referral service or self-help resources scan the QR code below or visit: www.midlandsgamblingclinic.org

The good news is that if you have a problem with gambling and you would like to stop, treatment and support are available. Recognising the warning signs can help you realise when it is time to seek help for yourself or others.

"It's never too late to make a change. Sometimes you think 'what's the point' because you feel that things are that bad and there's nothing to recover from. But it's never too late."

✉ westmidlandsgamblingharmsenquiries@mpft.nhs.uk
☎ 0300 123 0996
🌐 www.midlandsgamblingclinic.org

Scan the QR code to visit our website and find out more!



West Midlands Gambling Harms Clinic is provided by Inclusion
Part of Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
Find out more at www.inclusion.org

Controlling condensation and mould in your home

What causes condensation?








There are three main causes of condensation:

- Too much moisture production in your home
- Insufficient ventilation
- Cool temperatures

Everyday activities such as bathing and showering, cooking, boiling the kettle, drying clothes indoors, topping up fish tanks etc. add moisture to the existing moisture already present in the air. Moisture is added to the air by just breathing alone.

During the winter months (October – April) mixing with warm air can cause excess moisture to pool on windows and other surfaces allowing mould to grow you may see more condensation inside as although mould can be an all-year problem if air is not allowed to circulate within the property.

How much moisture can be produced in your home in a day?

Two people active for one day	3 pints	
Cooking and boiling a kettle	6 pints	
Having a bath or shower	2 pints	
Washing clothes	1 pint	
Drying clothes	9 pints	
Using a paraffin or bottled gas heater	3 pints	
Total amount of moisture produced in your home for one day	24 pints	

Reduce moisture levels

Ordinary daily activities can produce a lot of moisture quite quickly. Try the following to reduce the amount of moisture in your home:

- When cooking, cover boiling pans, close the kitchen door and open the window. Use the extractor fan if fitted.
- When bathing or showering, close the bathroom door and open the window until the air moisture level has reduced sufficiently. Use the extractor fan if fitted.
- If you are running a bath, put the cold water in first to reduce the amount of steam.
- Make sure your tumble dryer are properly vented to the outside.
- Dry clothes outside or where this is not possible, in the bathroom with the door closed and windows open or extractor fan on.
- Do you have a tropical fish tank that regularly requires topping up with water? The water that has evaporated from the tank has added to the moisture level of the air within your home. You could consider fitting a lid.

Increase ventilation

Simply opening a window, or window vents can help reduce the moisture in your home. By doing this, you will increase the amount of air circulating your home and reduce moisture.

Move furniture away from the walls slightly to allow air to circulate behind them. It's better to provide ventilation at the point where moisture is produced if possible.

Where do you find condensation?

It can be found on windows, in the corners and edges of rooms, behind and inside wardrobes and cupboards – especially if they are against an external wall. Condensation can also form on cold floor surfaces such as concrete floors underneath floor coverings.

How to control condensation

The following steps can be taken to reduce and control your condensation problem:

Raise the temperature

The best way to heat your home is through steady background heating left on throughout the day. This is because warmer air can hold more moisture, and as the temperature of your home goes up, the possibility of condensation forming is reduced. It is the repeated fluctuation of room temperatures that allows mould to appear, as each time the room cools down, the moisture in the air settles onto the cold surfaces, which in turn never get a chance to dry out fully.

Try to heat the whole house rather than just one room.

Remember, as the temperature of your home goes up, there is a smaller chance of any condensation being able to form.

Cleaning the mould

Once the steps listed have been taken, you should find that the condensation problems reduce, however, any existing mould will not disappear. It will need to be washed off and treated with a fungicidal wash, which is generally available in supermarkets and DIY stores, or you could use diluted bleach. It is important that you follow the manufacturer's instructions for important health and safety information so you use the products safely.

Are my damp symptoms caused by condensation?

Not all dampness is caused by condensation, sometimes dampness can be as a result of:

- Leaking internal or external pipes.
- Roof leaks caused by broken, missing or faulty tiles, guttering or chimney flashings.
- Rising damp because of a defective damp proof course or faulty rendering, mortar joints or blocked cavities.
- Dampness of this nature will often result in a 'tide mark' and can occur at any time of the year.

If you think that your home is suffering from one of the above defects please phone our housing repairs team on 0800 1830044. Email: repairs@tamworth.gov.uk

Other useful contacts: OFGEM: 0800 444202



Dehumidifier loan scheme – available to all Tamworth residents

We have a **FREE** dehumidifier loan scheme, open to all Tamworth residents who have damp and mould in their home.

A dehumidifier can be borrowed by anyone whether you own your own home, rent privately, are a council house tenant or living in social housing.

Every person deserves to live in a home that is safe, warm, and dry. UK homes in the winter can suffer from extra water in the air. This comes from drying our clothes indoors, cooking and not opening windows. This all leads to the most common cause of damp created from condensation.

The cost-of-living crisis also appears to have contributed to an increase in damp and mould in homes. Residents are not using heating due to costs and/or not opening windows, for fear of a cold home. This means that homes which many not have seen issues before, are now having signs of damp and mould.

When there is too much water in the air, dehumidifiers work to get rid of that water. This can help to prevent mould, mildew, musty smells, and condensation in your home. They reduce the presence of allergens and irritants, making breathing easier for people who have asthma. They can help dry out any existing areas of damp too and help when drying clothes indoors.

Contact us on 01827 709388 or email: private-sectorhousing@tamworth.gov.uk. to ask for a dehumidifier. We'll come and visit your home to do a damp and mould assessment to make sure a dehumidifier will help.

You will have the dehumidifier for three months. Our experience shows that just three months' use can greatly reduce damp and mould in the home.



Coming Soon – annual tenants perception survey 2025

Like last year, very soon we'll be asking tenants to take part in our annual tenants' perception survey to find out what tenants think about the housing services they receive from the council. This is part of our commitment to service improvement.

Independent research company M E-L Research will deliver the survey on our behalf and the feedback will be used to gather information on tenant satisfaction which we will then share with the Regulator of Social Housing. We use set questions all social landlords use, and these are set by the regulator.

All tenants will be asked to take part in their 2025 annual tenants perception survey between Monday 10 February and Friday 4 April 2025 either by telephone interview, e-mail or postal survey and take around 10 to 12 minutes to complete.

We'd like to hear from as many tenants as possible and welcome views on how satisfied people are with the landlord services we provide. The results of the survey are confidential and provide essential feedback to help us make decisions about future services for tenants, and how we need to improve services.

Mobility Scooter Safety

Fire Advice

Mobility scooter safety is usually mentioned when discussing road use or riding on pavements around pedestrians BUT there is an equal and potentially more dangerous risk associated with scooter safety and the risk of fires.

The main risk occurs around the storing and charging of mobility scooters.

Here is some advice on what can be done to increase mobility scooter safety and to reduce the risk of fire for people living in their own home:

- If you can, look at storing and charging your mobility scooter outside the house.
- If you do store your scooter in your house, don't store it on your escape route.
- Don't leave your scooter battery on charge overnight.
- When charging don't block your escape route and make sure the area is properly ventilated.
- Make sure you have a smoke alarm fitted. Check the batteries and test the alarm regularly.
- Make sure that you have your mobility scooter properly serviced regularly which should include portable appliance testing to ensure electrical safety.
- Make sure that your scooter is maintained in accordance with the manufacturers guidelines.
- If you think that something is not operating correctly on your scooter then have it checked by a qualified engineer.

Sheltered Accommodation

Mobility scooters are popular in communal blocks such as sheltered accommodation. The Fire Service feels that storing a mobility scooter in these areas may cause an unacceptable risk to all residents in what is usually a main escape route.

This equally applies to storing your mobility scooter in a hallway that could block your escape route when living in your own home. Because of this, Tamworth Borough Council does not allow mobility scooters to be stored in any communal escape route which includes communal corridors and staircases.

To help assist tenants the council has a limited number of dedicated shared scooter rooms at some of our sheltered accommodation schemes. No overnight charging is permitted in these areas.

So before you consider purchasing a mobility scooter, we always advise that you check with your scheme manager first about available and/or suitable safe storage in your own home.



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Revised Jan 2025

E-bikes, e-scooters and mobility scooter fire safety guidance

E-bikes and e-scooters are becoming increasingly popular. Most are powered by rechargeable battery.

You must recharge your mobility scooter, e-bikes safely to avoid a fire and putting your family's life and your home at risk.

Some fire services and fire investigators have seen a rise in e-bike and e-scooter battery fires.

Currently, there is limited information about the number of fires, but London's fire and rescue service reported eight fires caused by e-bikes and e-scooters in 2019, going up to 24 in 2020 and 59 by December 2021.

Sometimes the batteries in e-bikes or e-scooters can 'explode' cause a fast-growing fire.



Charging safely

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when charging, never leave it charging unattended or overnight and always unplug your charger when it's finished charging.
- Make sure you have working smoke alarms. Wherever you charge your e-bike or e-scooter make sure there is a smoke alarm, with inbuilt heat detector in the room.
- Don't leave batteries to charge while you are asleep or away from the home.
- Always use the manufacturer approved charger for the product, and if you spot any signs of wear and tear or damage, buy an official replacement charger for your product from a reputable seller.
- Do not cover chargers or battery packs when charging, as this could lead to overheating or even a fire.
- Do not charge batteries or store your e-bike or e-scooter near anything which could catch fire. Do not overcharge your battery – check the manufacturer's instructions for charge times.
- Do not overload socket outlets or use inappropriate extension leads (use uncoiled extensions and ensure the lead suitable for what you are plugging in to it).
- If there is a fire, get out, stay out, call 999. Do not try to put the fire out.

Storing safely

- Do not store or charge mobility scooters, e-bikes or e-scooters in communal areas. If there's a fire, it can stop someone getting out of the building safely.
- Store e-bikes and e-scooters and their batteries in a cool place. Avoid storing them in excessively hot or cold areas.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for how to store and maintain. Especially if not used for some time.

Buying safety

- Buy e-bikes, e-scooters, mobility scooters, chargers and batteries from reputable shops.
- Many fires involve fake electrical items. These usually do not meet safety standards and increase the risk of a fire. While genuine chargers (or battery packs) may cost more, it's not worth putting your life at risk and potentially destroying your home by buying a fake charger to save a few pounds.
- If buying an e-bike conversion kit, purchase from a reputable seller and check that it complies with British or European standards. Take particular care if buying online. If buying separate components, make sure they are compatible.
- Register your product with the manufacturer to validate any warranties, batteries are usually included in the warranty. Registering makes it easier for manufacturers to contact you with information or if the product needs to go back to the manufacturer.
- Check any products you have bought are not subject to a product recall. You can do this by checking Electrical Safety First's website or the government website

Damage and disposal

- Batteries can be damaged by dropping them or if you have a crash. Where the battery is damaged, it can overheat and catch fire without warning. Check your battery regularly for any signs of damage and if you suspect it is damaged, do not use it and replace it immediately.
- Do not throw a damaged or old battery into the bin. These batteries, when punctured or crushed, can cause fires in bin lorries or at recycling and waste centres. Your e-bike or e-scooter manufacturer may offer a recycling service. Alternatively, you can take it to one of Staffordshire's recycling centres. There is a recycling restriction of 2 batteries every 6 months.
- Enjoy and ride your e-bike, e-scooter or mobility scooter safely and make sure you are using these products within the law. Further information can be found here www.gov.uk/electric-bike-rules.

Fire escape routes

**You must keep clear: shared corridors, landings and stairways.
All are needed as a safe escape route in an emergency.**

Personal items **MUST** not be left out. This includes bikes, pushchairs, wheelchairs, mobility scooters, rubbish and any personal household items.



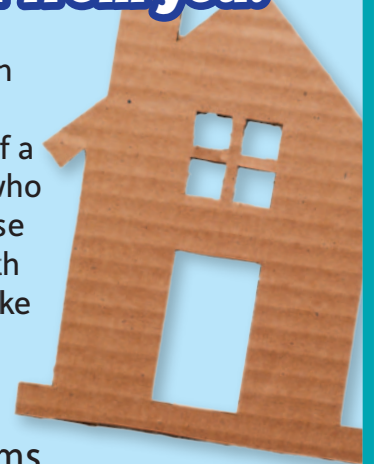


Holistic • Outreach • Multi Agency • Empowering

Are you struggling with... debt, meeting rent or mortgage payments, drug or alcohol misuse?

Whatever the issue we want to hear from you.

Citizens Advice Mid Mercia are pleased to announce in conjunction with its partners Betterway Recovery, Tamworth Home Start, Number 8 Charity and Community Together CIC the introduction of a new service for Tamworth. The service will be supporting anyone who may be in danger of losing their home even if you may not yet realise it. Whatever it might be help is at hand. Working in conjunction with your Tamworth Borough Council Housing Teams, the service will take a holistic approach providing wrap around support and early interventions to help you keep your home.



Holistic help to stabilise housing problems.

Outreaches within communities working towards positive outcomes.

Multi-Agency approach, one hub for all issues

Empowering and enabling people to build resilience and a better future.

For more information or if you're worried about losing your home then call the Tamworth **FREEPHONE** Telephone Support Line

0808 175 4041



Antisocial behaviour awareness week 2024

Antisocial behaviour awareness week took place nationwide towards the end of November.

Our teams joined up with local police and others to visit hotspot areas and talk to local people about their experiences of antisocial behaviour.

Over the week, we:

- Attended four community engagement events at Masefield Drive, the Town Hall, Greatmead and Exley Centre connecting with 27 local people.
- With local police and the youth intervention officer we spoke to 10 people in Tamworth town centre.
- With local PCSO's we were out and about, checking on hotspots and spoke to over 45 people over two days.
- If you have concerns around antisocial behaviour, report online at <https://mytamworth.tamworth.gov.uk/do-it-online/report-it/anti-social-behaviour-incident/>
- For advice, you can email: neighbourhoodimpactteam@tamworth.gov.uk
Or call: 01827 709709



• Left to right:- Lesley Gaunt Neighbourhood Impact Officer Tamworth Borough Council, PCSO Claire Jenkinson, Joanne Sathely Youth ASB Support Worker Staffordshire County Council, and Claire Turner Neighbourhood Impact Officer Tamworth Borough Council.

Antisocial behaviour prosecution success

On 29 August 2024, a Tamworth council tenant was sentenced to 12 months in prison for breaking an injunction forbidding him from making threats of violence.

A second court hearing on 3 December 2024 saw us ask for the court to extend the exclusion area and to ban the tenant from entering the whole of Amington. The court felt this was a just and proportionate request and put further protections in place for the witness while extending the order for a further six months.

What does this mean for the victims? The tenant can no longer return to the area he lived in so the community will be able to continue about their lives peacefully without fear of violence or threats of violence.

For one particular witness, the criminal cannot go within 50 metres of that person. The order will remain in place until 17 November 2025.

CCTV

We have a widespread network of CCTV cameras which are monitored 24 hours a day by our partners the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The cameras both help stop antisocial behaviour and crime and provide evidence for action against criminals. We also work in partnership with people who use Tamworth's Storennet and Nightnet radio surveillance systems to proactively reduce and manage crime in the town.

This year we have conducted an independent assessment of our service and a data privacy impact assessment. We have an annual programme of upgrades to make sure the system is fit for purpose to protect the residents of Tamworth.



CCTV in operation
Images are being monitored and recorded for the following purposes:

- Public Safety
- The Prevention and Detection of Crime
- Site Management and Administration

Images may be used to assist the prosecution of offenders

For further information contact:
Tamworth Borough Council, Marmion House,
Lichfield Street, Tamworth, Staffordshire, B79 7BZ
Tel: 01827 709709



Social housing consumer standards, short videos available on our website

The UK government introduced new consumer standards for social housing April last year.

These standards are enforced by the Regulator of Social Housing and apply to all anyone who provides social housing, including us as Tamworth Borough Council.

We welcome the new standards as they provide tenants greater rights and protections and help to improve the quality of our social housing, and the service tenants receive from us overall.

There are four standards:

1. Safety and quality standard
2. Transparency, influence and accountability standard
3. Neighbourhood and community standard
4. Tenancy standard

Watch some short videos to find out our plans around each of these standards:

www.tamworth.gov.uk/social-housing-consumer-standards.

Register for MyHousing

Our MyHousing portal allows you to:

- See your current rent account balance.
- Report repairs.
- Report antisocial behaviour.
- Pay your rent.
- Make a housing application for another property all online.



Sign up at <https://myhousing.tamworth.gov.uk> or visit our Tamworth Borough Council website and search MyHousing portal.

When you sign up, you'll be asked to create a password so you can safely and securely access your personal details.

Identity badges

All Tamworth Borough Council staff and repairs contractors should be wearing an identity badge when they visit your home.

If it is not displayed, then please ask to see this before allowing entry to your property.

Getting to Know You Better – Tenants' Survey 2025

- Survey to gather information about tenants' needs and preferences to help improve council housing services
- Information will be gathered by an appointed third party – M.E.L Research
- Tenants will receive a letter with survey details

We're currently working with appointed contractors MEL Research to collect relevant information about the people who live in council homes throughout the borough.

The information provided by council tenants will help us deliver better housing services to meet the need of housing tenants, and improve how we communicate with our tenants to make housing services fair and accessible.

This is part of the council's commitment to service improvement and includes key questions such as how they can best communicate and keep tenants informed about housing services they receive from the council.

Tenants can find out more information about M·E·L and their privacy policies at www.melresearch.co.uk.

All Tamworth Borough Council tenants will receive a letter inviting them to take part in the 'getting to know you better' survey from Monday 27 January 2025 to Sunday 23 February 2025. This is a different survey to the satisfaction survey which is happening from mid February.

The survey takes about 10-12 minutes to complete, and all the information tenants provide will only be used to update Tamworth Borough Council's housing management systems. This will help the council better tailor and shape housing services, to meet the needs of tenants. Every tenant over the age of 18 living in a council home will need to complete a survey to make sure the council have the information needed.

To reassure tenants, the survey will not ask for any personal financial information or details about your rent account.

The hope is that as many tenants as possible take part in this survey over coming weeks. This is a chance for all council tenants to update their contact information so we can look at how we can communicate council services effectively and efficiently, to deliver future improvements to services.

As a council and social housing landlord, we're committed to working closely with tenants to identify what really matters most and where we can enhance our services to provide the best possible experience.

All tenants will receive a letter to complete this questionnaire along with direct contact details for M·E·L Research for anyone who may need some assistance.

Contents insurance

We have negotiated a home contents insurance scheme for tenants and leaseholders.

The prices are competitive, and it's important to protect your own personal contents in your property against loss or damage caused by fire, flood, and burglary.

The council's insurance policy only covers the building not your personal contents.

Full details are available at: www.tamworth.gov.uk/contents-insurance

If you require this document in an alternative format or language, please contact us on 01827 709709 email: enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk

