



Opendoor

The magazine for magna housing customers

A photograph of a family of four (a man, a woman, and two children) gathered around a large, wrapped gift box. They are all wearing Santa hats and looking at the gift with interest. The background is a brightly lit Christmas tree with warm white lights and red ornaments. The scene is set in front of a brick fireplace.

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!

**Win £20 in
our Christmas
competition**

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views to help us
improve**

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Welcome

Christmas is nearly here!

Yes, it's that time already - Christmas. The year has flown by!

If you fancy something festive to do for five minutes, check out our competition on the opposite page - spot the reindeer for a chance to win £20!

Continuing with the Christmas theme, on [page 12](#) we've got the 12 days of fire safety at Christmas. There are lots of extra hazards at this time of year - candles, fairy lights and overloaded sockets to name a few - so please take a read and make sure you're safe. We've also got tips on how to look after your home through the winter weather on [page 8](#).

Christmas can also put extra pressure on our finances. Our money matters team are here to help and are organising a live Q&A chat on our Customer Facebook Group this month and in January too. Join us if you can. Find out more on [page 16](#).

We'll be closing over Christmas and New Year to give our colleagues time with their families, so please see [page 11](#) for contact information during this time.

Finally, you'll notice throughout this edition the introduction of QR codes. Many of you will be familiar with them now as they've been used throughout the pandemic to check into locations. We explain in detail what they are and how to use them on [page 7](#).

I hope you all have a lovely Christmas and wish you all the best for the new year.



Tanya Churchill

Marketing Manager and
Editor of Opendoor

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Online

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Can we email you?

We'd like to contact you by email rather than letters in the post. It means we can get information to you quicker and it's better for the environment. Email us with your name and home address to update your contact details:

contactus@magna.org.uk



Can you find this reindeer?

Enter our Christmas competition for a chance to win £20 in vouchers to spend in the new year!

Christmas is here, so we thought we'd spread some festive cheer with our spot the reindeer competition.

Hiding somewhere within this magazine is the reindeer shown opposite. If you can find him, let us know!

Email engage@magna.org.uk or call 07977 175087 and tell us your name, contact details and the page he's hiding on. Entries close on Monday 20 December.

Correct entries will be put into a hat and three lucky winners will be drawn at random to win £20 each in shopping vouchers.

Winners will be announced on our [Magna Housing Customer Group on Facebook](#).





Seasons greetings from Selina and the Board

On behalf of everyone at Magna, I'd like to take this opportunity to wish you season's greetings in what has been another challenging year for many of us.

I hope that we will be able to enjoy Christmas without too many restrictions, but most importantly I hope that Christmas is a safe time for us all and that we have the opportunity to spend some of the festive period with those closest to us.

I wanted to take this time to thank you all for your support and your patience over the past year. We started 2021 in lockdown and continued to follow government guidelines to make sure that you and our colleagues were safe. I know this has meant continued disruption for many of you, with improvements and plans for homes being delayed. I can fully appreciate how frustrating this has been, and I

understand the impact that this can have on your lives. We have worked extremely hard to catch up on all our outstanding work that built up during lockdown and I am very proud of how hard the team has worked to get us back on track. Since bringing back all of our services in the summer and autumn, we have experienced an unprecedented demand for our repairs and maintenance services, and we continue to work at pace to meet this demand but it will take us some time yet before we are back to our pre-covid workload levels. We really do appreciate your patience and understanding in these challenging times.

This past year seems to have flown by, and despite it being necessary to put some of our plans on hold, we have achieved a number of important things. In April, we launched our new brilliant basics strategy, which is our three-year plan that focuses on improvements to services that ensure we can get the

basics right, every time. We also welcomed a number of new people to our Board, who bring a wealth of experience and knowledge to help us deliver this strategy. We strengthened our new contact centre, to make sure that more of your issues are resolved first time and have prioritised investment in building and fire safety measures that meet the latest legislation.

As we look to 2022 our ambitions for excellent customer service and being a great place to work continue. We want to support customers to interact with us when and how they want with the introduction of a new customer self-serve portal. We will also be opening up more ways in which you can get involved in what we are doing and make it easier for you to express your views and ensure we are listening; in turn, this will help us to shape our future plans and services to meet your needs.

We will continue to invest in our properties, both existing and new, to deliver safe, warm and affordable homes for local people. And with this work we will also be considering our impact on the local environment. We'll be focusing on sustainability both in the way we run our business and how we

invest in your homes. We'll be looking to reduce waste, carbon and our overall impact on the environment, whilst increasing the opportunities to change how we work, the materials and processes we use to be greener and more sustainable.

We hope that we'll be able to see more of you in 2022, and we are keen to get out and hear what you have to say about our services and how things can improve. We're also keen to understand what is important to you and how we can work together to improve your home and your community. Look out for these opportunities next year and I hope you will be able to get involved.

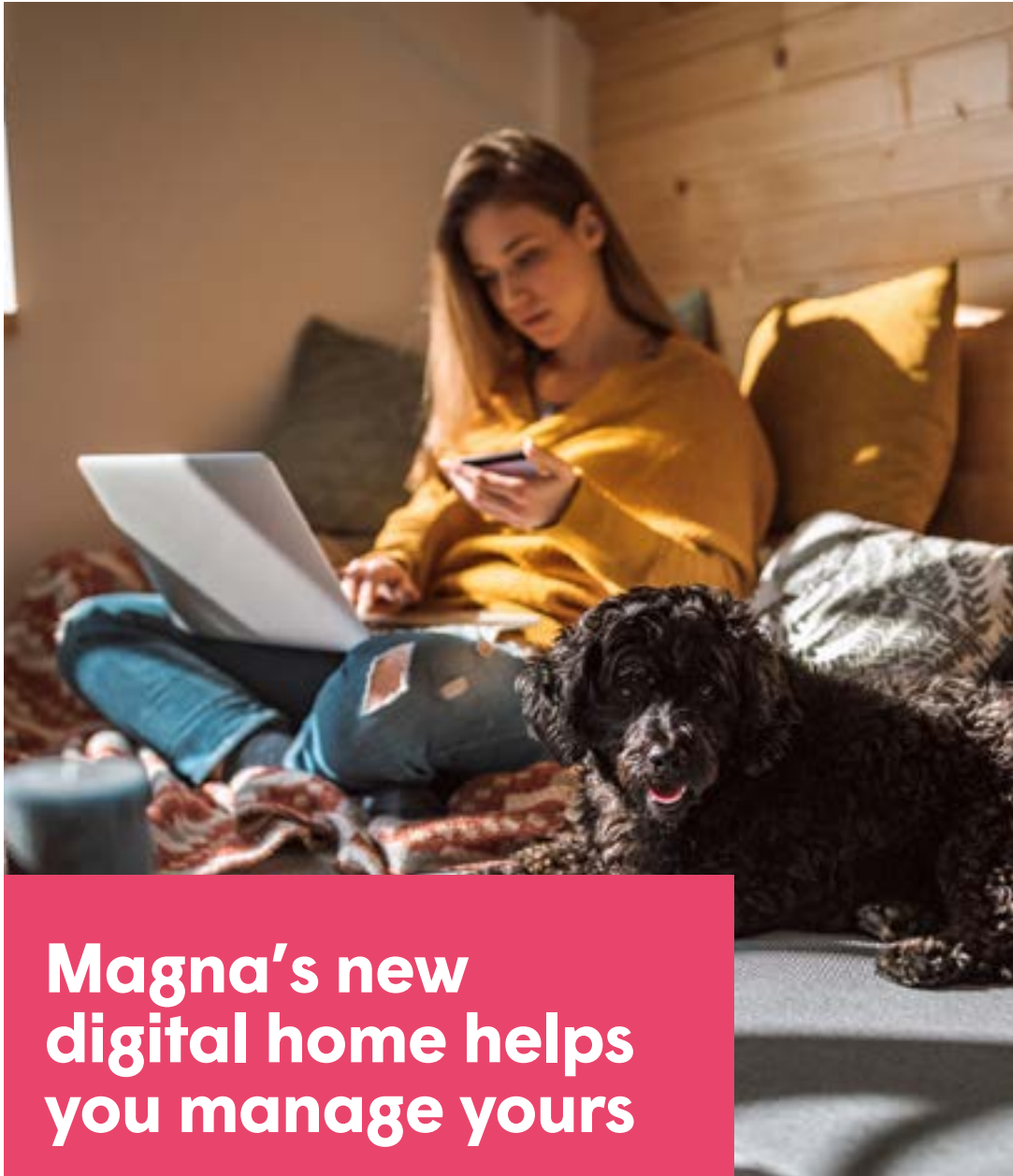
I wish you all a happy and healthy Christmas and that 2022 will be a good year for you.

On behalf of myself and the Magna Board, thank you for being part of Magna, and thank you for your continued support.

Best wishes,

Selina White

Chief Executive



Magna's new digital home helps you manage yours

At Magna, we know how precious your time is. So, we've been busy developing our website so you can access Magna customer services from anywhere at any time, making your life a little simpler.



Visit our website to find out more
magna.org.uk/digital-doorway



Going digital with QR codes

We've started to see QR codes used much more since the beginning of the Coronavirus pandemic, with Test and Trace check-ins at restaurants and other locations putting a QR code on the front door for you to check-in to help prevent the spread of the virus. They're a great way to access something online easily, and we're starting to use them too.



What are QR codes?

This is a QR code, or quick response code. These are different from a barcode in the way that they provide information quickly to anyone who scans one.

How do I scan a QR code?

On most mobile phones, it's as easy as opening the camera app on your phone and pointing the camera at the QR code – a link will pop up which you can tap on, as pictured on the right. You don't need to take a picture, just point your camera at the QR code and the link will show up.

If your camera doesn't do this, you can download a QR code scanner app from the app store on your phone.

Why are people using them?

Most people carry a smart device on them, whether it be a phone or a tablet. This means almost everyone carries something that can scan a QR code.

When you scan a QR code, you can be redirected to almost anything, such as a website, a location on a map, a video, a song, create a contact in your address book, or even call a specific number.

Bearing this in mind, a QR code can add value to a magazine article, a poster, or a product. We're starting to use them in Opendoor to link pages on our website - it's much easier than you having to type in the web address to find the page.



Looking after your home through winter

Cold, wet and windy weather can cause problems for your home. Here's some handy info to help look after your home through winter.



Roofing

You may get issues with your roof, like a tile which has blown off or dropped following strong winds. If you start to see water coming through your roof then please notify us ASAP. Before we attend, there are a few things you can do to help:

- Put a bucket or container under the leak to catch the water. This will reduce damage to your home.

- If you're able, move any furniture or contents away from where the leak is. This will help keep your belongings undamaged and allow us to easily access the affected areas.
- Have a look outside at the roof to see what has caused the issue. Is there anything that looks out of place? This info will help us when you report the repair to us.



Fencing

When we have strong winds and constant rain making the ground wet, these create perfect conditions for fences to be blown over.

If the fence has blown over onto a public right of way, then contact us straight away.

If your fence has blown over in your garden, report it to us and if possible, stay away from the affected area until we are able to attend.

When we attend, we will make the fence safe. This might mean that we will remove the damaged fence and you may be left with a gap where this once was. Where possible, we will mark the boundary with temporary orange mesh.

If you have pets that need access to the garden, we advise you put them on a lead to avoid them escaping.

Flooding

High rainfall, especially over a short period of time, can cause flooding. Here are a few simple checks which you can do to prevent flooding in your home, especially if you live in an area that is susceptible to flooding:

- Check your gutters. If you have a blocked gutter or downpipe, report it to us so we can arrange to come out and clear the issue.
- Check your drains and gullies to see if they are blocked or covered with leaves or dirt. If you live near trees or have lots of vegetation in your garden, keep on checking your drain covers and clear leaves and dirt that may get there.
- If you notice that the road drain is blocked or starting to get blocked, report this to the local council. This is their responsibility to clear and the earlier this is picked up the less likely it is that flooding will happen.

To report a repair go to: magna.org.uk/report-a-repair or contact us using the details on the back page of this magazine.

There's also lots more useful info on our FAQs page online here magna.org.uk/faqs or scan the QR code to go straight to the page.



Keeping warm, safely, this winter



During winter it's important to think about how to keep safe, as well as warm, as there may be extra fire hazards that weren't present in the summer.

In the UK, around 65 fires a year are caused by faulty electric blankets and two fires a day are caused by heaters. If you do use additional heat sources please take extra care.

Heaters

- Keep heaters away from curtains and furniture.
- Never use them for drying clothes.
- Make sure they are positioned so they won't fall over.

Electric blankets

- Try not to buy second hand electric blankets and check regularly for wear and tear.
- Replace your blanket when it is more than 10 years old.
- Never use a hot water bottle in the same bed as an electric blanket even if the blanket is switched off. Water and electric do not mix!
- Unplug blankets before you get into bed unless they have a thermostat control for safe all night use.
- Store electric blankets flat, rolled up or loosely folded to prevent damaging the internal wiring.
- Test blankets every 3 years. Age UK

or your local fire and rescue service may be able to do this for you.

- Always follow the manufacturer's instructions.

Alternative lighting

- Keep a battery-operated light or torch handy in the event of a power cut or failure. Keep a mobile phone handy too so you can still make an emergency call if you need to.
- If you have to use candles or matches always take special care. Put them out completely before leaving the room or going to bed.
- Make sure candles are secured in a proper holder and away from materials that may catch fire – like curtains.

Contacting us over Christmas & New Year

We will be closing at 1pm on 24 December and re-opening at 8:30am on 4 January.

If you need to report an emergency repair during that time, please call us on 0800 358 6025.

The careline service will operate as normal throughout the entire Christmas period. If you have an emergency, please contact Apello on 0300 777 1053 or press your pendant.

Any emails received during this time will be responded to as soon as we're back.

We wish you a very
merry Christmas and
a happy new year.

The Twelve Days of Christmas (safety)

On the 1st day of Christmas •

Check your Christmas tree lights conform to the British Standard and replace them if they become worn or damaged.

On the 2nd day of Christmas •

Never place candles near your Christmas tree or furnishings and don't leave them burning unattended.

On the 3rd day of Christmas •

Make sure your family and visitors staying for the festive period know what to do in an emergency.

On the 4th day of Christmas •

Decorations made of tissue paper, cardboard or flammable materials burn easily. Don't attach them to lights or heaters or put them immediately above or around the fireplace.

On the 5th day of Christmas •

Never overload electrical sockets. Always switch Christmas lights off and unplug them before you go to bed or leave home.

On the 6th day of Christmas •

The risk of accidents, especially in the kitchen, is greater after alcohol is consumed - take extra care if you're having a drink.

On the 7th day of Christmas •

Most fires start in the kitchen. Never leave your cooking unattended.

On the 8th day of Christmas •

If you are planning to celebrate with fireworks, store them in a metal box, read the instructions, never go back to a lit firework and keep a bucket of water nearby.

On the 9th day of Christmas •

Make sure cigarettes are completely extinguished before you go to bed.

On the 10th day of Christmas •

Check the battery in your smoke alarm every week and use Christmas as a reminder to clean it and remove dust.

On the 11th day of Christmas •

Please don't hang wreaths or any other festive decorations in communal hallways or on your front door in a communal area as these create a fire risk and can affect escape routes.

On the 12th day of Christmas •

Take the time to check on elderly relatives and neighbours this Christmas. Make sure they are fire safe.

Everyone at Magna wishes you a safe and happy Christmas!



Keeping our customers safe is our number one priority

That's why we're delighted to announce that following extensive training, assessment and auditing, we have achieved certification under the BM Trada Q Mark scheme for the installation and maintenance of fire doors.

Fire doors are an essential life safety device designed to hold back smoke and flame for a set period of time, usually 30 minutes.

To maintain the integrity of a door installation, maintenance must be carried out by competent persons and we are really pleased to be able to demonstrate this through the Q Mark Scheme.

Every fire door is assessed against a comprehensive checklist where we will look at the integrity of the

door, the hinges, door closers and any glazing.

If a door requires a repair or a replacement then our skilled and trained staff are able to replace this to the highest standards and certify each door as fully compliant.

We are committed to investing in safety and this is just part of our three-year strategy that will see changes across Magna as we develop new safety standards to improve on how we keep our customers safe.

You can learn more about what we do to keep you safe from fire on our website magna.org.uk/your-home/your-safety/fire-safety or scan this code:



Electric and gas checks

The safety of you and your home continues to be important for us. That's why we regularly check your electric and gas to reduce the risk of fires or gas leaks.

But we do need you to be home when we carry out these checks. We'll do our very best to make an appointment that is convenient for you, and we ask that if you need to cancel or change your appointment to let us know as soon as possible.

We know that sometimes your plans can change, and if they do, let us know so we can rearrange this with you, and our team can then be out supporting other customers.

If you want more information about the checks we carry out for your safety, visit our website: magna.org.uk/your-home/your-safety or scan the QR code below to go straight to the page.





Let's talk about money matters

Christmas can be an expensive time of year. Add to that the rising costs of living, and changes to Universal Credit, and it can put a strain on your finances and your wellbeing. We have a money matters team who are here to help.

Join us on our customer Facebook group on 15 December, at 11am, where our money matters team will be available to give you advice on all things money, including benefits, council tax, housing costs, budgeting and utilities.

If you can't make our live chat sessions, you can also contact the team through the customer contact centre, by emailing contactus@magna.org.uk or calling 0800 3586025.

Scan the QR code to visit our customer Facebook page.



Facebook live chat about all things money matters.

11am Wednesday 15 December

1:30pm Wednesday 26 January

We've joined the Institute of Customer Service

We're working hard to make sure that you receive the best possible service from us, and we know that in some areas we have more work to do to get it right for you.

To show our commitment, this year we have joined the Institute of Customer Service so we can measure how well we're doing and so you can also see how we compare to other organisations both in housing and outside it.

Thanks to everyone who took the time to complete the survey you received from the Institute of Customer Services back in August. The feedback you gave is extremely valuable and is already helping us to improve the service we give to you. The top three things you told us we need to improve on were:

- How we handle your complaints and the time taken to resolve complaints
- Getting it right first time.
- How we communicate and collaborate with you.

We've already started to make some improvements to the way that we work to make things easier.

We now have a dedicated complaints team that manage all incoming complaints both formal and informal.

So if you do need to complain to us, the best way to do this is completing a form on our website.



We're making further improvements to our new contact team, by investing in training so we can give you the right service, the right time, first time.

We're improving our website so that you can get the answer that you need quickly without having to contact us. There's lots of helpful information on our new FAQ page which we're regularly adding to.



We've started work on our new service standards which will set out exactly what you can expect from living in one of our homes.

Since 1 September we have received 21,657 contacts into our contact centre, and we answered 90% of your calls within 4 minutes.

We know that sometimes our lines are busy and you may have to wait longer than you would like to get through.

The easiest way you contact us is through our website

magna.org.uk/contact-us

or by emailing us on

contactus@magna.org.uk





Customer and community involvement updates

Residents' design conference

The South West conference took place in October and we had several customers take part.

The conference was really informative and highlighted a number of very important messages when we are designing or purchasing new homes.

We'll need to focus on improving energy efficiency and moving away from gas heating on our journey to achieving zero carbon homes.

Along the way we will be ensuring that new homes have gardens where greater biodiversity and wildlife will be encouraged. We know that safety and the appearance of estates remain high priorities and we will need to deliver this in a way that limits the effects on the environment and climate change.

Building safety customer group

The group's first meeting took place in October and we shared some of our key priorities, which include:

1. Ensuring we have high quality fire risk assessments for all of our blocks and schemes, these will be more intrusive to reflect our commitment to keeping our customers safe.
2. A programme to survey all fire doors.
3. Increasing the level of smoke detection we provide in our homes.
4. Training on building safety for all our colleagues.
5. Engaging and involving our customers in building safety.
6. Ensuring all of our new homes are designed and built to be as safe as possible.

We discussed ideas about how to communicate about building safety and we'd like to hear your ideas about what information you'd like and how we share it with you. If you'd like to join this group and help us shape building safety, contact Neil Bliss on 01984 635134 or email engage@magna.org.uk.

The art of engagement

We want to make sure that we're listening and acting on your feedback. This will help us to be a truly customer focused organisation, delivering what our customers want, in the way they want it.

But it can be quite tricky to do this – everyone has different views and priorities, and we know that we can't please all the people, all the time. What we do know is that the people who live in our homes, who receive our services and who we work with are best placed to help us make improvements and changes.

We do this in a number of ways. We take general feedback from customers through letters, complaints and conversations to see if we can make any improvements or change how we work. We also send out regular surveys.

We haven't been able to get out as much as we had hoped over the past 18 months due to Covid but we have previously worked with customers through a range of events and face to face workshops.

As we move forward with our new strategy, we want to do more to involve you in our work. We know that some people are just happy to give occasional feedback, and some may be keen to be involved more.

We're developing a plan to make sure that we get this right and give as many people as possible the opportunity to share their views about our services.

To start this process we're asking for your views about how we should be involving and engaging with you. This will help us shape the way we do things in the future and how we make sure that we involve people effectively and appropriately.

We'd be really grateful if you could spend some time to complete the survey by scanning the QR code shown. If you can't complete this online, then you can contact Neil Bliss on 01984 635134 to give your views. Plus, you can also be entered into our prize draw to win £100 of shopping vouchers!





We want your views on sustainability

Recently, the issue of sustainability seems to have been everywhere and very few people will have missed the goings-on at COP26 in Glasgow.

Here at Magna, it's also very prominent in our minds. We have a government-led commitment to be zero carbon by 2050.

In the September edition of Opendoor, we wrote about some of those issues and the challenges facing us. Over the past few months, we have engaged with almost every one of our colleagues to see what they think of sustainability in their work and to get feedback and ideas for how we can be more sustainable. The level of engagement has been fantastic and given us a great

springboard to help get our own house in order and these conversations will continue, to ensure that we do the right thing as an organisation.

Now, though, we want to hear from you. We've got our own ideas about what we need to do between now and 2050 and how living more sustainably is not only good for the planet, but is also good for the health, happiness and pockets of everyone who lives in a Magna home and neighbourhood. But what do you think?

We want to hear from people who have an interest in this area so we can shape our plans going forward. Contact Jason Hawkes, Energy Officer, by emailing jason.hawkes@magna.org.uk or call 07977 175224.



Guest bedrooms at sheltered schemes

Some of our sheltered schemes have guest rooms, available for residents' families to stay over when visiting, for a small charge.

They have been unavailable for some time, due to Covid restrictions, but we are now starting to reopen them.

To be able to open them we have had to make a few changes.

Each of the rooms has been deep cleaned and we have provided new duvets, pillows, and mattress protectors.

The guest visiting will need to bring their own duvet cover, pillowcases and towels.

Our preferred payment option will be online, and a step-by-step guide will be provided at the time of booking.

For more information and to book a guest bedroom, visit magna.org.uk/find-a-property/sheltered-housing/sheltered-housing-schemes or scan the QR code below.





New extra care homes in Gillingham

People in Gillingham will be able to benefit from a new housing development offering extra care thanks to investment from Magna Housing, Dorset Council and Homes England.

We are committed to reducing our impact on the environment and these homes will be part of our portfolio of sustainable homes. They will offer a mix of independent living with on-site care, activities and meals, which people can choose to join in with as they wish.

Located close to Gillingham High Street, residents will be able to easily

access local amenities to support their ongoing independent living.

Working with construction company Drew Smith, part of Vistry Partnerships Ltd, we will be offering 55 one and two-bedroom apartments for rent with extensive communal facilities, developed for people who need some additional support as they get older.

Paul Read, Director of Sustainability and New Supply at Magna, said: "We are working closely with Dorset Council and Gillingham Town Council to support the needs of older people in the local area. The result of this is our new development on the site of the old St Martin's House.

"This scheme will offer support for older people seeking independent living in a supportive and beautiful environment.

"Magna requested that a range of architectural materials were recovered when Dorset County Council took down the old St Martin's House and we are excited to be able to reuse these as part of the new building. We'll also continue to support wildlife on the site. We are using some modern construction materials built off-site, not only to reduce the impact on the local community but to ensure that the homes are more cost-effective to run."

Adrian Cator, Managing Director of Drew Smith, said: "We are looking forward to working with Magna Housing to bring forward this extra-care scheme in the heart of Gillingham, providing much needed affordable homes and integrated community facilities."

Cllr Graham Carr-Jones, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Community Safety, said: "Dorset Council is pleased that the St Martins Extra Care Scheme is starting on site. This development is the result of a good partnership working between the council, Magna Housing and Homes England which will result in much needed, high-quality affordable accommodation for

older people in need of support. We look forward to seeing the works progress".

We are really excited to be working in Gillingham and want to make sure that we are involving the local community as much as possible.

We have a dedicated Facebook page for the site, which we encourage people to join to find out what is going on and to share thoughts and questions. Search for '[St Martin's extra care scheme](#)' on Facebook to join the page or scan the QR code below.

We'll also post regular updates on our website magna.org.uk/st-martins

We'll also be out and about in the local area so we can make sure that local people know what is happening and when. We are committed to the local area so we are here to stay and are looking forward to building strong relationships with local businesses and residents.



Contact us

We have lots of useful information on our website:

magna.org.uk

Email:

contactus@magna.org.uk

Our phone line is open Monday to Thursday, 8:30am to 5pm and 8:30am to 4:30pm on Friday. We will be closing at 1pm on 24 December and re-opening at 8:30am on 4 January.

0800 3586025

Get #social!

You can also get in touch and keep up to date with the latest news through our social channels!

