

Ffordd o Fyw

The Securahome Newsletter



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improving homes since 1994

Meet Matthew's House – Securahome's charity of the year

It's our 25th year and to celebrate we wanted to find a local charity to support that meant a lot to our customers and community.

At the start of the year we set about asking you what we should support and we had a lot of great nominations. We put the front runners to the public vote on our Facebook page and are delighted to say that Matthew's House in Swansea was selected.

This homeless charity carries out truly inspiring work in Swansea city centre, providing support and a fantastic 'pay what you can' café that is open to all (do visit, the food is fantastic and you will be supporting a very good cause).

To kick-start our year-long support, from now until January 31, 2020, Securahome will donate £25 to Matthew's House for every order over £1,000.

In spring, we are planning a sponsored bike ride and staff also hope to take part in a fundraising "sleep out" in Swansea to support for the charity in February.

Manager Thom Lynch of Matthew's House is a complete dynamo and

full of ideas about how the charity can reach more people who need help. He explained the Matthew's House ethos of being 'a place of unconditional hospitality and hope for those who are most vulnerable'.

Thom said: "We could not do any of our work without the support of so many people. This is a special place, with a simple ethos, big vision and an incredible group of volunteers who want to make a difference.

"But we won't thrive and support those people who need it the most in our society without financial backing.

"We cannot thank Securahome and its customers enough for choosing us as their designated charity and want to assure them that their endeavours will benefit a lot of people who desperately need their help and support."

For those of you who haven't come across Matthew's House, it is based in a former Grade II listed church near the station on High Street.

It is run by volunteers and its facilities include showers, laundry room, lounge, meeting rooms,



auditorium and a full-fitted kitchen plus a laundry room to come.

Its café – Matt's Café – takes food donated by local supermarkets and businesses, and turns them in to delicious 'home-cooked' style meals on a pay-as-you-feel basis.

Within a year of its 2017 launch Matthew's House had a team of more than 70 volunteers and had served 8,000 meals. Since then Matthew's House has served more than 45,000 meals, more than 800 dignity packs and the shower has

been used more than 50 times. Now the charity continues to build on its current success with plans to expand its facilities so that it can help even more vulnerable people, but it needs fundraising events and donations to carry out this vital work.

All of us at Securahome look forward to working with Matthew's House and hope that over this silver anniversary year we can make a lasting difference to those people who use it and need our support.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Winter is on its way and if your conservatory is becoming out of bounds in the colder weather, than a solid roof may be the answer.

See the back page for some tips on how to transform your conservatory into a year-round room with a solid roof.

Another way to keep your home warmer in the cooler months is to look at your windows and doors, on

page three we've got an essential checklist to help you choose the styles that will suit your home.

If you fancy a day out, the Botanic Gardens of Wales offer something for everyone and our recipe this edition is an easy to make,

deliciously moist Bara Brith, perfect with a warming cup of tea!

Finally, if you're wondering whether to move or improve, take a look at our guide to extensions on the back page.

Recipe: Bonfire toffee apples

Toffee apples are a real taste of childhood and perfect for traditional bonfire night or Halloween treats.

The preparation of these autumnal favourites is best left to adults as the toffee needs to get to 150C to ensure it will set, so please keep them away from little fingers until they've well and truly cooled.

Ingredients:

- 8 Granny Smith apples
- 400g golden caster sugar
- 1 tsp vinegar
- 4 tbsp golden syrup
- Skewers or lollypop sticks
- Red food colouring (optional)

Method:

1. Place the apples in a large bowl, then cover with boiling water (you may have to do this in 2 batches). This will remove the waxy coating and help the caramel to stick.

2. Dry thoroughly and twist off any stalks. Push a wooden skewer or lollypop stick into the stalk end of each apple.
3. Lay out a sheet of greaseproof paper and place the apples on this, close to your hob.
4. Tip the sugar into a pan along with 100ml water and set over a medium heat. Cook for 5 mins until the sugar dissolves, then stir in the vinegar, food colouring (if using) and syrup.
5. Set a sugar thermometer in the pan and boil to 150C or 'hard crack' stage. If you don't have a thermometer you can test the toffee by pouring a little into a bowl of cold water. It should harden instantly and, when removed, be brittle and easy to break. If you can still squish the toffee, continue to boil it.
6. Working quickly and carefully, dip and twist each apple in the hot toffee until covered, let any excess drip away, then place on the greaseproof paper to harden. You may have to heat the toffee a little if the temperature drops and it starts to feel thick and viscous.
7. Leave the toffee to cool before eating.



Day Out: National Botanic Garden of Wales

Celebrating almost 20 years since it opened to the public the award-winning National Botanic Garden of Wales is a great day out whatever your age and interests.

Opened in May 2000 near Llanarth, Carmarthenshire, the most visited garden in Wales has welcomed more than 2.5million people and is recognised as the most influential landscape scheme in Wales over the last 75 years.

Set on land that was once a magnificent Regency water park, the garden has the perfect blend of both modern and historic attractions including lakes, ponds, woods and a licensed restaurant.

You will find an inspiring range of themed gardens, including the

Tropical Butterfly House and Aqualab which are ideal for children along with a zip wire in the adventure play park and the fairy wood, complete with pint-sized residents!

You can also learn about the geology of Wales with a history lesson going back 300 million years.

The garden is also a centre for botanical research and conservation, and features the world's largest single-span glasshouse.

Designed by Foster and Partners, the structure is 95 m (312 ft) long and 55 m (180 ft) wide, with a roof containing 785 panes of glass and houses plants from Childe, Western Australia, South Africa, California, Canary Islands and the Mediterranean.

A double walled garden houses a wide variety of plants, including a modern interpretation of a kitchen garden.

Meanwhile, the hot and steamy Tropical House is now home to a kaleidoscope of hundreds of exotic and colourful butterflies from around the world.

The Garden is host to the British Bird of Prey Centre, offering

amazing encounters where you can see eagles fly every day.

Already at home there are 20 native birds of prey including hawks, falcons kites and buzzards, as well as eagles. Owl and red kite taster sessions take place daily, allowing you the opportunity to have these birds fly to your glove.

For further details visit: www.botanicgarden.wales



Your essential checklist for choosing the perfect windows and doors

Windows and doors make a huge difference to the look and feel of your home. With such a plethora of styles and finishes available, it's important to think about exactly what you want to make the right choice. Before you make a change to your windows and doors, consider our six tips to make sure they are the perfect fit!

1. Energy efficiency: With older styles, up to 30 per cent of your home's heat loss could be through your windows, so it's important that your windows – and doors – offer good insulation properties as well as looking good. We've moved design and technology on a long way, and energy efficiency is now better than ever, so you can expect A+ rated windows fitted as standard from Securahome.

2. Colour: Anyone who has noticed the current trend for anthracite grey windows or even simply painted a front door will know colour alone can transform the appearance of your home. From Cotswold biscuit, classic creams through to a striking red and modern greys, colour makes a huge difference to your home's kerb appeal.

3. Inside and out: It's also really important to consider the interior of your windows and doors, after all that's the part you will look at most!

4. Material: At Securahome, we supply aluminium, UPVC and timber windows and doors as they all give a different look, feel and quality to your home. Think sleek aluminium with their slim frames, timber with its distinctive grain, sash windows with their period appeal or UPVC with its low maintenance and variety of styles, and you can see how the material itself impacts the character of your home.

5. Style: When you are changing your windows and doors, consider if you want maximum light in the room, a traditional look or a very modern feel, all of which will make a difference to the type of window or door that will work best for you.

6. Warranty: It really is important that windows are fitted by a reputable firm that offers a warranty. A window or door can only perform to its potential energy rating if it's fitted properly. Gaps and cracks let in cold air and damaging rainwater, so it's essential to safeguard your investment and for your own peace of mind.

Fall in love with your conservatory again with a Securahome solid roof

A solid roof can truly transform your conservatory from a 'sometimes space' to an all-year-round room.

It's one of our most requested home improvements, and from the pictures here it's easy to see why.

With the same thermal efficiency of a standard, traditionally-constructed house roof, these roofs help keep your conservatory warmer in winter and cooler in summer.

And while most people consider a replacement solid conservatory roof for their thermal properties, the finished result is more akin to a brand-new room – if it's done correctly – with a real designer feel.

However, like any construction work, alterations to your conservatory must be done correctly to avoid problems. Older conservatories weren't originally designed for solid roofs and that's why it is very important that any replacement roof is fit for purpose.

There are people who will 'clad over' your roof promising it will give you a warmer room and less glare. Either they will clad the inside using wooden batons and cladding or externally with batons and tiles. Both options will add significant weight to the roof.

Original conservatory roofs themselves were designed for polycarbonate or glass and clad over or clad under systems can affect the structural integrity. They are simply not designed for the extra weight or rigidity of cladding or tiles.

A quality, specially designed solid conservatory roof will mean completely removing the structure of your existing glass or polycarbonate roof.

Designed to be both strong, highly insulated and light enough for a conservatory, Securahome's solid conservatory roofs are built to last.

Once fitted, your conservatory will be transformed internally and externally. We can add glazing



panels to the roofs, which help to bring light into the room wherever you want it. We can also add downlighters to brighten your room at night.

Like many well-engineered products, a solid conservatory roof is an investment and will cost more than a clad over, but it is significantly less costly than having to pick up the pieces when a clad over goes wrong or facing a complete rebuild.

At Securahome we offer a number of ways to help spread the cost of your home improvements. For example, we are able to offer three years at 0% interest on our solid roofs or, to spread the cost over a longer repayment period, we can offer 4.9% over 120 months. Please go to our website www.securahome.co.uk for full details.

The perfect extension is all in the design

When you need a little more space at home, the options for extensions are greater than ever.

For many people, a light and airy kitchen/ family room is top of the home improvement list, while others may want a quiet, bright space to relax and enjoy the garden views.

When you consider the costs, time and upheaval of moving, extending your home can be an attractive alternative, with the added advantage that you get to personalise your space, and create it to suit your taste and lifestyle.

At Securahome, our extension projects include conservatories,

orangeries, solid roof extensions and sunrooms, giving you a range of options to choose from when you're looking to create more space.

If you've had building work before, you'll know that there's a lot to consider: From planning to building control through to heating and electrics, plus all of the different trades that carry out those tasks.

As the foundations will involve excavation, you may have to consider retaining walls and check that sewer works remain unaffected. A knock-through will mean a structural engineers report and building control inspections at important stages of the process.



At Securahome, we treat extensions as we treat any of our projects and offer a complete end-to-end service.

From creating the design and submitting plans, dealing with building control and any water board consents to those final, but very important, finishing touches such as flooring, lighting and even door handles, we oversee every aspect of the build.

We carry out extensions every week, so are very familiar with the different consents and permissions needed and our design team have a treasure trove of ideas and suggestions to help you plan your perfect new space.

In the year that we celebrate our 25th anniversary, we are also a one-stop shop for you to call, with guarantees that really are worth more than the paper they're written on.