

THE NEWSLETTER OF ARBOUR HOUSING

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ARBOUR HOUSING

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Welcome

Welcome to the Spring / Summer 2022 edition of **Arbour Voice**, which is produced with you, the tenant in mind.



Kieran Matthews,
Chief Executive
Arbour Housing

We hope you'll find it enjoyable and informative, and if you have any comments about content or suggestions for future editions, please do get in touch. We would love to hear from you!

CONTACT US

Please see below different methods to get in contact with us:

 028 3833 9795

 07375 341 414

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TENANT VOICE

We strive to be more than just a Landlord. For us, that means making sure your voice is heard as we focus on delivering great homes and services, supporting communities and improving lives.

To help us achieve our goals, we want to have tenants at the heart of everything we do. We need people just like you to come forward as Tenant Representatives for the area where you live and to sit on the Tenants' Forum to become the voice of others and to help us improve delivery of services to everyone. If you'd like to find out more about this, just contact the housing team on:

028 3833 9795

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our current Tenant Forum members for all their hard work, commitment and contribution that they make.

DIGITAL ZONE

If you have problems accessing a computer or the internet, visit our office Digital Zone. It's here for tenants like you – for example if you need to apply for or to manage a Universal Credit claim on-line, or if you have any other internet/computer needs.

Staff are on hand if you need extra help. And if you can't make it to our office, the Digital Zone can come to you. Get in touch and find out more.



028 3833 9795

COMMUNITY FUNDING

Arbour Housing provides funding for our communities to assist with Community Initiatives. Funding has been awarded for things like assistance with fun days, improving the environment, and encouraging healthy lifestyles to scheme enhancement projects.

Do you have an initiative you feel would benefit and include all members of the community? Let us know – we'll consider all suggestions.

Contact your local Housing Officer – either as an individual or as part of a group – and see what you could achieve with funding from Arbour Housing! You may be inspired by some of the pieces in this and previous Newsletters.

House Sales Scheme

- The House Sales Scheme for Tenants of Registered Housing Associations is due to end from **midnight on 27 August 2022**
- From 28 August 2022, the scheme will be closed to applications and Arbour Housing tenants will no longer be able to buy their home
- The legislation allowed for a transitional period of two years from 28 August 2020. This gives time for eligible tenants to be aware of the closure and exercise their right within that timeframe. This means that the scheme will end at midnight on 27 August 2022
- Any eligible Arbour Housing tenants who wishes to buy their home must make an application through the existing House Sales Scheme before the deadline of **midnight of the 27 August 2022**
- Applications should be made by contacting the Arbour Housing either by phone on **028 3833 9795** or by email at **hello@arbourhousing.org**

Arbour Housing will accept applications from tenants to buy their homes under the Statutory House Sales Scheme up until midnight on 27 August 2022. The rules of the scheme will continue to apply up until that date and the rules can either be obtained from Arbour Housing or can be accessed on the Department's website at: <https://www.communities-ni.gov.uk/disposal-housing-association-property>.



ANNUAL TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Our Annual Tenant Satisfaction survey will take place in March 2022 and we would encourage as many tenants as possible to take part. Taking part in the survey gives you the opportunity to let us know what it is like to rent from us. It will help us to improve our services to all tenants of the Association and we welcome your views and experiences of this.

To take part in our Annual Tenant Satisfaction survey please let your Housing Officer know you wish to participate.



Emergency fuel payment scheme

This initiative is delivered in collaboration with the Department for Communities, the Consumer Council, Bryson Charitable Group, and a range of local energy companies.

It will provide one-off support of up to £100 worth of electricity, gas, or oil to 20,000 households across Northern Ireland that are experiencing an emergency fuel crisis during Winter 2021/22. To find out if you are eligible visit Bryson House website:

<https://www.brysongroup.org/news/emergency-fuel-payment-scheme>.



Tenants Corner

We've caught up with one of our residents, Mrs G of Mark Street, to chat to her about her passion for baking!



Q How long have you lived in an Arbour housing property?

A Approximately 30 years, previously at two properties in Brownlow Terrace then I moved into Mark Street. I have very much enjoyed living in each of the properties over the years and when I needed to move on I found the staff very helpful.

Q How long have you been baking?

A Approximately 50 years.

Q What's your favourite thing to bake?

A Christmas fruit cake with icing! My husband and I also love apple and cinnamon tart.

Q What was your inspiration to begin baking?

A My mother and sisters are also great bakers and would have baked a lot at home, so I have followed in their footsteps.

Q Do you like to bake for friends and family?

A Yes very much so, when a new neighbour moves into Mark Street I bake a lemon meringue to welcome them into the community. We like to introduce ourselves and in return a family provided us with a sample of their local cuisine of rice and chicken. I also have a special Christmas list for people wanting Christmas cakes and I love to bake for my friends and family members.

Q Any other hobbies?

A I enjoy walking and sewing as I used to be a stitcher at a local company. I feel that hobbies such as baking, walking, sewing etc are extremely good for looking after your mental health and wellbeing and this is something that is extremely important to me.

Supporting Tenants

The impact of Covid is still very much being felt by our tenants especially in the winter months. To support our tenants through this difficult time we presented hampers to a number of our vulnerable tenants in December.

We recognise that it can be a challenge to get to the shops, struggle to carry grocery bags or have health conditions that impair tenants so preparing Christmas lunch can be a tricky scenario. To help with this we supplied Christmas lunch to our over 65 year olds that was enjoyed on Christmas day.





Working in partnership

As energy prices rise we teamed up with CTS Projects Ltd to provide heating vouchers to some of our tenants. This partnership enabled us to double the number of heating vouchers available for allocation. This venture provided tenants with some much needed assistance with heating their home during the winter months.



TUTORING PROGRAMME // FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Following the difficult past two years we recognised that children have missed so much school and we wanted to provide some additional support to our Tenant's children. We launched our province wide Tutoring Programme in January this year with Kip McGrath Tutoring providing this service on behalf of the Association.

We are able to provide tutoring in essential skills (Maths and English) to a wide range of children aged between 5-15 years old. All involved will benefit from 10 x 60 minute sessions between January and March 2022. We will review the success of this scheme and may run it again later in the year - we will keep you posted.



CHRISTMAS CRAIC

A couple of our Tenants' Forum members enjoying the Christmas party held for the tenants of Granemore Park, Keady.

Santa was able to stop by and check his list as well as delivering Christmas treat bags to all the children.



PHOTO BY: Mel Hughes



FRIENDSHIP BENCH // GIBSON STREET

During the summer we hosted Coffee Morning at Gibson Street, Belfast and afternoon picnic at Euston Street, Belfast. This provided a lovely opportunity for our residents to meet and get to know each other. It was such an enjoyable experience for the residents that they requested a friendship bench/table for the communal areas to allow them to continue and develop the friendships formed. We were delighted that we were able to present them with this friendship bench so that the friendships that they have formed can be sustained.





Local Councils

Our local Councils offer a range of services towards community well-being. We work closely with all local Councils and we want to highlight some of their services that can be of benefit to our tenants.



HOME SAFETY SCHEME

This scheme is available to those over 65, families with children under five and vulnerable adults/children to avoid serious accidents in the home. This scheme includes free home safety visits, home safety equipment and helping aids (where criteria is met) and home safety talks to groups.

Household Waste

Some helpful advice when it comes to your household waste...

Armagh City Banbridge & Craigavon Borough Council
 0300 0300 900 | www.armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk

- One bin per household
- Please put your bin out before 7am on bin collection day
- Please bring your bin back to your property after it has been emptied
- No overflowing bins
- Do not use your neighbour's bins
- NO DUMPING - Maximum Fine £2500
- Households with 5 or more occupants can request a larger 360 litre green bin
- Households with 7 or more occupants can request a larger 360 litre green bin + larger 360 litre black bin

0300 0300 900 | armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk
 info@armaghbanbridgecraigavon.gov.uk



Gardening Tips for Spring

It is apparent that container planters and hanging baskets are a part of the floral displays around the various housing schemes, bringing a real splash of colour, however it does result in some essential winter maintenance. If not done already then all hanging baskets and containers now should be emptied and the spent compost removed for recycling.

It is imperative to thoroughly clean these baskets and containers to remove any overwintering eggs and larvae, especially slug eggs in and on the containers. The wet autumn and mild weather so far means they are extremely prevalent. Also, remember to thoroughly clean gardening tools such as trowels and hand forks etc. This cleaning process applies even if you are replanting with a winter display.

A great plant to use for winter displays are pansies, a stalwart of winter displays which thrive well even in semi shade. Other plants to consider are wallflowers, violas and primulas. Small flower cyclamen and shrubs that can be used are Erica carnea (winter flowering heathers, ivy (hedera) variegated or plain, and Carex (ornamental sedge) and don't forget that you can underplant with bulbs such as crocus in preparation for the spring. There are of course many other plants that are suitable for winter planting but the above mentioned are the mainstay which don't mind our inclement weather and are available in local nurseries.

Hopefully, you will have seen Operatives of Greentown Environmental Ltd in action on site and have noticed the improvements which have taken place around your Scheme. To continue this high standard of service, we have introduced additional skilled and experienced Operatives to support and enhance our existing teams to deliver grounds maintenance services across the Arbour Housing schemes. In addition, we have significantly invested in upgrading our equipment.

We are always keen to hear from you, our clients, and to receive feedback concerning the work which is taking place, so we are able to address any issues as early as possible. Feedback can be provided through Arbour staff.



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**That's it for this issue.
As ever, we love to hear
from you, so feel free to get
in touch within concerns,
questions or comments.**



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