

THE NEWSLETTER OF ARBOUR HOUSING

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ARBOUR HOUSING

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Welcome

I'd like to welcome you to the Autumn/Winter edition of Arbour Voice. The newsletter is produced with you, our tenant, in mind.

As ever, we hope you find it enjoyable and informative. If you have any comments regarding content of this edition or have suggestions for future editions, please contact us. We do welcome and value your feedback.



Kieran Matthews,
Chief Executive
Arbour Housing

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Saving energy and money

During the Spring/Summer period we held a number of energy awareness events in conjunction with the Consumer Council. The events combined a fun day for kids with helpful money- and energy-saving tips and advice from the Consumer Council's Ronan Convery.

Given current concerns about rising energy costs and the cost of living, the advice was very timely – especially in advance of the winter, when many people will be looking for ways to keep their homes warm while minimising the cost. Happily, Ronan had lots of simple tips that will enable tenants to make the most of the heating and energy they use, for example:



Turn appliances off standby mode. It could save you **£30** a year. And don't leave mobile phones on charge all night. Most only need a couple of hours.



Try putting on an extra layer on before turning the temperature up. 21°C should be comfortable for most people.



If you can, dry laundry on a clothes line instead of using a dryer. It could save an average of **£35** a year.



Close your curtains at dusk and keep internal doors closed to help keep the heat in.



Turning your thermostat down by just one degree could save you **£80** a year.

The events took place at James Mews and Clandeboye Road in Bangor, and Mill Street and Bridge Street in Hilden.

Two Exciting New Schemes

We are delighted to have launched two new-build developments in Belfast Road, Newry and Dundrum Road, Newcastle.

The developments are supported by the NIHE's "Housing for All" programme, which is part of the Executive's T:BUC (Together: Building a United Community) strategy.

A key focus of the strategy is building good community relations via shared housing. This is delivered through four key strands:

- celebration of cultural diversity
- challenging sectarianism and racism
- promoting the development of positive relationships between people from different backgrounds
- creating shared space and marking key events.

The developments in both Newry and Newcastle will benefit from funding that will be used to develop a good relations plan for the entire community within a five-mile radius.

LAUNCHING THE NEWRY SCHEME

To celebrate the launch of the Newry scheme, in June we held a promotional event during the Damolly Youth Football Tournament. We provided an Arbour goodie bag for everyone taking part, which included a branded water bottle, some fruit and literature about the development and gave a presentation on the housing scheme and its aims of a shared, welcoming and confident society that respects diversity.



LAUNCHING THE NEWCASTLE SCHEME

Newcastle's Big Summer Bash community event in July provided the ideal context for the launch of the Dundrum Road project. The Bash is part of the town's Bonding, Bridging and Engaging Community Programme and brings together residents and agencies including PSNI, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service, Homestart, SureStart, Mind Your Mate and Yourself, housing representatives, Police and Community Safety Partnerships, County Down Rural Community Network etc. The event was a great success, receiving very positive responses in particular from the Murlough Community Association, who thanked us for our support and celebrated our shared commitment to building community cohesion and capacity.

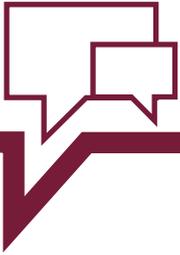
Housing for All schemes are social housing developments, and are open to everyone regardless of race, religion or community background. Homes are allocated in the same way as any other social housing scheme using the common waiting list, with the aim of ensuring no one community exceeds the target 70%/30% mix.



REMEMBER:

To keep us updated if you've changed your number to avoid missing any updates and text alerts.

If you plan on terminating your tenancy please contact the office with at least **four weeks' notice**.



Tenant Get-Togethers



CHOCOS AWAY AT EASTER!

We held a number of tenant Easter events during April. Predictably, chocolate and goodies were the common theme of all the get-togethers. There were Easter egg hunts and gift bag giveaways arranged for kids at Hull's Court in Lisburn. Gift bag presentations were also made at Mountain View in Warrenpoint.



TENANT FORUM TRAINING

At the end of June Tenant Forum members and Arbour staff attended a valuable refresher training session on good governance and codes of conduct. The session was delivered by Empowering Communities.

5-A-DAY GIVEAWAYS!

As part of our commitment to reach out to all our tenants and gain feedback on the services we provide, in May we engaged with our tenants in Tavanagh Gardens, Portadown. Staff completed a door to door survey with our tenants at Tavanagh, some of who are older residents or have limited mobility and may find it difficult to leave their homes easily. Tenants were presented with a luxury fruit hamper as a gesture of our appreciation for their valued contributions, with the added benefit that the hampers counted towards their all-important 5-a-day!



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week in May we held a coffee morning for residents at The Woodhouse in Bessbrook. The event was run in conjunction with PIPS, which is a community-led organisation focused on suicide prevention and self-harm.

The theme of Mental Health Awareness Week this year was loneliness, a real problem for many people in our society, and one that was made worse by the enforced isolation many had to endure during the Covid pandemic. The event was relaxed and informal, but also with plenty of advice on hand.

If you, a family member, a friend or a member of your community need help please get in touch with PIPS on **028 3026 6195**.



Tenants' Conference



In mid-June the Seagoe Hotel in Portadown was the location for our first Tenants' Conference, a major event we'd been looking forward to for a long time. Arbour organised it and we engaged with members of the Tenants' Forum in arranging the speakers and content for the event.

Joanne Coyle, Head of Housing Management with Arbour Housing introduced the event and welcomed all the attendees. 'Let me begin by explaining what the Tenants' Forum is. It's a group of tenants who meet on a regular basis along with Arbour staff members to address any issues they may have, as well as organising events and activities for all in the areas in which they live.'

She went on to set out the agenda for the event, with presentations and talks lined up from a number of outside organisations such as Community Advice, PSNI, the Consumer Council, Regenerate, and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council's Environmental Health Department.

'It's a group of tenants who meet on a regular basis along with Arbour staff members to address any issues they may have, as well as organising events and activities for all in the areas in which they live.'





Tenants' Conference: Key Moments



CRAIGAVON COUNCIL

Council Environmental Health Officer Shauna Livingstone gave an overview of the Council's wide-ranging remit in this area.

'We're here to help with everything from nuisance complaints about noise and waste to concerns about fly-tipping and pest control. We can also assist with ordering of new bins, arranging for collection of bulky waste such as sofas and fridges; as well as providing advice on recycling.'

Contact: 0300 030 0900



PSNI



The PSNI gave a talk on its Policing With The Community strategy. At the heart of this, Constable Conrad Heaney said, 'is gaining the trust and support of the community'. Neighbourhood policing, he continued, depends on listening to people's concerns, and addressing them swiftly and effectively.

Contact: 101 (for non-emergency)

'Engaging directly with people and communities, helps reduce crime, enhances safety and reduces anti-social behaviour – which provides a better quality of life for all.'





COMMUNITY ADVICE CRAIGAVON

Shannon McVeigh from Community Advice Craigavon (formerly Citizens' Advice) outlined the range of advice services the organisation is able to provide, including help on benefits, employment, housing, consumer, immigration, education, health, tax and family issues.

'We also have a Macmillan Welfare Rights Service for people/families dealing with cancer, as well as a dedicated Debt and Money Service.'

Shannon also spoke on Low Income Cost of Living Payments – something of particular concern to many at the present time.

Contact: 028 3835 3260



CONSUMER COUNCIL



From the Consumer Council, Ronan Convery gave some very useful and much-appreciated advice on saving money on energy bills.

'There are simple steps you can take that can really make a difference in costs – and you won't feel any inconvenience either. For example, pull your sofa away from the radiator if it's in front of it. Keep your curtains closed to keep the heat in. What's more, turn down your thermostat by 1°C could save you as much as £80 a year.'

Ronan also advised tenants to consider switching energy suppliers to get the best available tariff.

Contact: 028 9025 1600



Tenants' Conference: Key Moments



REGENERATE

Carla Stevenson from Regenerate spoke about the organisation's role.

'We work with local people and communities, empowering them to build a better and safer future by promoting community development, encouraging active citizenship, and improving social cohesion.'

Regenerate is also now a part of Northern Ireland Alternatives.

Contact: 028 3833 3368

'Regenerate is also now a part of Northern Ireland Alternatives. NIA is a restorative justice organisation that offers a non-violent, human response to hurt and harm that anti-social behaviour inflicts upon victims and communities,' said Carla. 'It seeks to heal wounds, repair broken relationships and work towards a better future for everyone.'



Austin Mullan concluded by welcoming the appointment of Patrice McCrory, Arbour Community Relations Officer, to the Forum, and emphasising the important role the Forum has for all tenants.

'I must emphasise that we are actively looking for new members from other schemes to join and would encourage anyone to let us know if you are interested in joining our group.'



Grants for Community Events

The Tenant Conference also discussed community grants to be made available by Arbour for local participation events and community development. These grants will be

offered on a case by case basis and where it has been identified a need or opportunity exists, for example seasonal activities, supporting vulnerable tenants and so on.

The Tenants' Forum therefore encourages anyone to get in touch with an idea or event that they would like to see happen.

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