



Arbour
HOUSING

ISSUE 20 | SPRING/SUMMER 2024



THE NEWSLETTER OF ARBOUR HOUSING

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ARBOUR HOUSING

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Hello

Welcome to the Spring/Summer 2024 edition of **Arbour Voice** – the newsletter produced with you, the tenant, in mind.





Kieran Matthews,
Chief Executive
Arbour Housing

In this issue we discuss our Annual Tenant Conference, the House Sales Scheme, expanding our Property Services team and the developments made through our Housing for All Schemes. We hope you find it informative. As ever, if you have any comments – or suggestions for future editions – please do get in touch.

CONTACT US

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

 028 3833 9795

 07375 341 414

 hello@arbourhousing.org

 arbourhousing.org

  @ArbourHousing



DIGITAL ZONE

If you have problems accessing a computer or the internet, the Association's Office is equipped with a Digital Zone for tenants' use – for example, to apply for or manage a claim for Universal Credit on-line, or any other internet/computer needs you may have. There will be staff at hand for any tenant requiring additional support, or where access to the Office is an issue. On request a member of staff can also attend a tenant's home to provide assistance. Just ask for more information.



COMMUNITY FUNDING

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

We will consider any initiative you feel that would benefit and include all members of the community. Why not see what you could achieve with Arbour funding support? Start by contacting your local Housing Officer – either as an individual or as part of a group.



HAVE YOUR DETAILS CHANGED?

It's vital that the information we hold about our tenants is accurate and up to date. So, for example, if you've changed your telephone number, please contact us so that we can update our records accordingly. Also, if there have been any changes to your household that we're not aware of, do let us know as soon as possible.

028 3833 9795



2023 Tenant Conference

In October 2023 we hosted our Annual Tenants' Conference at Craigavon Civic Centre, 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 content for the conference.



There was a range of speakers in attendance to deal with important issues impacting our tenants. Presentations were given by Advice NI on the managed migration onto Universal Credit, and National Energy Action provided valuable advice on dealing with rising energy costs, with tips to save both energy in the home and money. To support our tenants in these challenging times we also arranged for Relate NI to provide an overview of their counselling service and programmes that they offer throughout Northern Ireland.



Our grounds maintenance and landscape contractor idverde provided an overview of their service, which recognises the importance of the environment now and for future generations through sustainable practices.



Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon Borough Council were on hand to provide advice and information on common complaints such as litter, noise, and odour, and ABC Dog Warden described his role with regards to animal control and welfare. Finally, the PSNI Community Policing Team discussed safety in home and reporting anti-social behaviour.





MyTenancy portal launched

Mytenancy is a secure online portal that's available 24/7 and provides tenants with control over their personal information.

By accessing it, tenants can view a wide range of information relating to their tenancy, such as:

- rent account detail
- repair history
- important documents for download
- update personal information

MyTenancy also includes features designed to promote digital independence, including:

- **"Pay your rent"** – a link to Arbour's payment provider
- **"Request a repair"** – a facility to report any maintenance issues and upload supporting photos

Additionally, the portal provides tenants with access to important relevant documents including statements, agreements, fire safety and gas certificates; as well as previous copies of Arbour Voice, event news and policy updates, etc.

arbourhousing.mytenancy.co.uk

Arbour adds to its Property Services Team

At the end of 2023, Arbour recruited a new staff member to our in-house maintenance team, with Paddy Henry joining us in the role of Caretaker.

Paddy will be working alongside and supporting our existing handyman Alistair, who has been with Arbour for over seven years.

Paddy brings a wealth of skills and experience across the various building trades to the position and his role includes visiting many of our schemes on a regular basis to carry out additional cleaning, minor repairs and maintenance duties.

This addition to the team will enable us to further enhance our maintenance services and provide an additional point of contact for residents to report repair issues.



The Cost-of-Living crisis affects us all

We encourage you to join the Oil Savings Network to help reduce your oil bills and make your money go further. You could save an average £15-20 when ordering 200 litres.

For more information and to find out how you can join, email oil savings@nihe.gov.uk or call NI Energy Advice on **0800 111 4455**.



Housing for All Schemes

Housing for All schemes are supported by the Department for Communities and the Northern Ireland Housing Executive's 'Housing for All' Shared Housing Programme.

The Programme has its origins in the NI Executive's Together: Building a United Community Strategy, which reflects the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society.

Housing for All schemes are social housing developments that are open to everyone, regardless of race, religion or community background. Homes within shared schemes are allocated in the same way as any other social housing scheme using the Housing Executive's waiting list, with the aim of ensuring one community does not exceed the target 70%/30% mix. We are pleased to announce that Commercial Road, Banbridge and Mountjoy Road, Omagh as Housing for All schemes.

COMMERCIAL ROAD, BANBRIDGE - Housing for All

TOTAL 59 units

28x 3-Person | 2-Bedroom
Semi-Detached Houses

5x 5-Person | 3-Bedroom
Semi-Detached Houses

2x 5-Person | 3-Bedroom
Wheelchair Houses

1x 2-Person | 1-Bedroom
General Needs Apartment

10x 3-Person | 2-Bedroom
General Needs Apartments

1x 2-Person | 1-Bedroom
Cat1 Apartment

2x 2-Person | 1-Bedroom
Generic Wheelchair Apartment

10x 3-Person | 2-Bedroom
Cat1 Apartments

Started on Site: 6 October 2023

**Proposed Completion:
6 April 2026**

MOUNTJOY ROAD, OMAGH - Housing for All

TOTAL 31 units

1x 6-Person | 4-Bedroom
General Needs House

5x 5-Person | 3-Bedroom
General Needs Houses

6x 3-Person | 2-Bedroom
General Needs Houses

1x 4-Person | 3-Bedroom
Generic Wheelchair Bungalow

8x 2-Person | 1-Bedroom
General Needs Apartments

10x 3-Person | 2-Bedroom
General Needs Apartments

Start on Site: 26 January 2024

**Proposed Completion:
26 November 2026**



House Sales Scheme

Following the closure of the statutory scheme, Arbour Housing has created a replacement House Sale scheme and has set out the criteria to be met for purchase of eligible properties.

Tenants wishing to purchase must have at least five years as a secure tenant in the property they want to purchase. For the purpose of the scheme, time spent as an introductory tenant will be taken into account as part of the five years if applicable. If you are interested in purchasing your home, please contact us and we will provide you with details of the House Sales Scheme.

Tenants who are in arrears will not be excluded from applying to purchase their property. However, the sale will not complete until all arrears are cleared. Arrears are defined as outstanding money for rent, rates, service charges and/or recoverable charges at completion date.

Anyone wishing to purchase their home should first apply to us in writing. In considering the application, Arbour will make the necessary checks to ensure eligibility to purchase.



Joint FUNDCastle Project in Newcastle

Last September Arbour Housing co-delivered a project in conjunction with Clanmil, Ark and Radius Housing within the Newcastle area as part of our shared housing ethos. We hosted a Participatory Budget program that allowed schools, community groups, local businesses, etc. within a 5-mile radius of our shared housing schemes to apply for a total funding amount of up to £1000 per group.

On the 22nd of November 2023, we held the voting night in the Burrendale Hotel and 15 groups were successful on the night. Each group presented to the room their reasons for applying and the good relations outcomes that would benefit their group as a result of being successful for the funding.

Overall it was a very successful night with lots of positive feedback and we look forward to bringing the groups back in June for a celebration night and to hear how the funding benefited the community.

FEEDBACK

from Friends of St. Malachy's Primary School, Newcastle:

"The event was perfectly organised and really enjoyable. Our kids and parents, as well as everyone I spoke to really enjoyed it."

"I just wanted to say a big thank you on behalf of Friends of St. Malachy's group who were in attendance at the Newcastle event last night."





Christmas with Arbour

Throughout the Christmas season, Arbour's celebrations included a heart-warming bonding event in Newry, a Christmas movie screening at the Craigavon Civic Centre and the distribution of 65 Christmas hampers to some of our tenants.



CHRISTMAS BONDING EVENT, NEWRY

This event was a great opportunity for shared housing tenants to get together over Christmas lunch at the Mourne Country hotel, which is located on the Belfast Road, Newry, as is the scheme apartment block.

Tenants got involved in discussions surrounding the creation of a residents' group, the focus being to establish support networks for the tenants. It was a great event and thoroughly enjoyed by the residents and Arbour staff.



CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

With the cost of Living crisis still affecting everyone's pockets, especially in the winter months, we provided tenants aged 75 & over with a Christmas hamper to help them get through the seasonal period.



CHRISTMAS MOVIE EVENT

As part of our tenancy participation Christmas 2023, we held a Movie Event for the tenants of the ABC Council area. The tenants enjoyed watching Elf, received a small gift and shared some happy Christmas cheer.



Gardening Competition

Our Best Kept Garden competition is an opportunity for green-fingered gardeners to showcase their sanctuaries – whether it’s a garden, outside space, window box or an alternative idea.

You can send in your photos or nominations to housing@arbourhousing.org, alternatively staff visiting schemes in Spring/early Summer can nominate.



HERE ARE A FEW TIPS TO GET YOU STARTED.

FEBRUARY



Clean pots and greenhouses ready for Spring.



Prepare vegetable beds and sow some vegetables undercover.



Prune hardy evergreen hedges.

MARCH



Prune bushes and climbing roses.



Plant shallots, onions, and early potatoes.



Plant summer flowering bulbs.



Protect new shoots from slugs.

APRIL



Sow hardy annuals, herbs, and wildflower seeds outdoors.



Keep weeds under control.



Increase water given to house plants.



Sow new lawn or repair patches.



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