

Habinteg News

WINTER 2015

Residents' newsletter



Photo courtesy of Pacemaker and The BigLunch

Dear Residents

I am delighted to commend to you the 2015 edition of Habinteg News which is put together with you, the resident, in mind. We hope you find it enjoyable and informative.

If you have any comments regarding content or style, or suggestions for future publications, please contact Habinteg. We welcome and appreciate your feedback.

Best Regards

Handwritten signature of Teresa McDonough in blue ink.

TERESA McDONOUGH
Chair of the Residents' Forum



Habinteg
Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd





Our first business Objective is to provide quality services to all our customers and place a strong emphasis on community involvement. We believe that in order to do this effectively - to deliver services which are meaningful and nurture a positive community spirit- we have to fully involve you, our residents, in the process.

We remain fully committed to supporting tenant involvement and, in May 2015, the Association published a new Resident Involvement Strategy with a stated aim of **having residents involved at the heart of our services, making a valuable contribution to help us shape and drive improvement.** The Strategy embeds a commitment to resident participation at all levels - resident groups, Residents' Forum (which continues to provide a valuable customer perspective and consultation) and representation at Board and Committee level.

The Department for Social Development (DSD), in their Draft Tenant Participation Strategy, acknowledged and commended Habinteg for demonstrating good practice in relation to tenant participation, tenant engagement and involvement activities. With your help we would like to build on this endorsement and, through schemes like the one below, further improve our community work.

Our Community Small Grants Programme

Habinteg's **Our Community** Grant Programme provides small grants to community, voluntary or resident groups to support Community Involvement initiatives. Grants have been awarded to assist with fun days such as 'The Big Lunch' at a number of our housing schemes.

Why not get together with your Community Assistant or local Community / Voluntary group and see what you could achieve with a Community Grant from Habinteg?

Speak to your Community Assistant, where applicable, contact your Housing Officer or download the form from our website.

your online Services

www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk

Did you know?

You can access our services from the comfort of your own home - pay your rent, report a repair, contact us, get up to date announcements and the latest news or download the Tenant Handbook.



A phone call costs money and takes time, likewise a stamp and envelope. If you have a smartphone with a free minutes package or are already using wifi in your home for tablet or pc, you can save time and money, accessing our services online, from the comfort of your home and at a time which suits you. With mobile internet you can use the services any time. You can even 'listen' to our website by clicking the Browsealoud.

We are keen to further increase the use of the website among tenants and would encourage you to take a moment to view the site, use the online services and send us your comments. Visit our site at:
www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk

Tweet Tweet

Alongside our Website, our twitter feed continues to flourish and we are increasingly using it to promote events, activities, housing schemes, information and news - be the first to hear it all. Log on and follow us:
www.twitter.com/habintegNI




follow us

your Neighbourhood

YOUR SPACE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

We do all we can to ensure that our housing schemes are good places to live. Looking after the community as well as the houses is our priority.

Our Charter and our Good Neighbour Agreement both underline our commitment to communities built on mutual respect. We are helped in bringing this about by our residential members of staff, our Community Assistants (CAs). CAs work on many of our schemes, providing assistance to residents, promoting healthy community involvement and working with our Maintenance team in identifying and reporting repairs. Throughout 2014/15 CAs led a range of regular events across our schemes - dance and fitness classes, birthday parties, seasonal events, health and educational sessions.

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**

the big lunch
an eden project

CAs also took a leading role in our fundraising initiatives during the year, organising events at our schemes in support of our adopted charity Macmillan and promoting Big Lunch events. Our twitter feed and JustGiving site ensured successful promotion and reporting of all community involvement in the year.

As well as nurturing community, we also seek to protect it. Sadly, from time to time, there are incidents of Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) and we continue to do our very best in dealing with reported cases.

We take Anti Social Behaviour very seriously. If you are experiencing issues of this kind, please contact us. Tell us your concerns. We WILL listen. We WILL try to help. Call us now on **02890427211** or **02871360015**

Dog nuisance continues to be the most recorded 'neighbour problem' on our housing schemes. We must remind all dog owners that it is your responsibility to make sure your dog behaves well and is always on a lead when in public. Always clean up mess (£80 fines are issued for dog fouling).



ASB reports
received in
2014/2015



Complaints
(19 Maintenance,
6 service delivery)



Compliments
recorded by staff
in the period
2014 / 2015

Do you have a Story?

Mr and Mrs Cullen - Daniel and Christine - moved into their Habinteg apartment in 2015 and were relieved to escape the anti social behaviour which had blighted the area around their previous home. It had been a difficult period for the couple but thankfully their new home has brought great happiness.



“Since moving into Conar’s Court our lives have improved so much,” said Christine. Husband Daniel, who is also Christine’s carer, agreed. “You can’t get a property as good as this anywhere else. The services are excellent. We take great pride in our home and we are building a community with our neighbours.” Christine continues to call her Housing Officer ‘her angel’ because of how happy she feels at getting this property. During the viewing she was in tears and “...since then”, she added, “we have not looked back. Thank you Habinteg, keep up the good work.”

Tackling tenancy fraud

Every year in Northern Ireland, people on the waiting list are denied a home because of fraud.

Social housing is a scarce resource and we are committed to tackling tenancy fraud to ensure that our properties are let to people in genuine housing need.

Tenancy fraud can include **Illegal Subletting** when a tenant doesn’t live in the property and rents to someone else, **Abandonment** when a tenant moves out of their property and **Wrongly Claimed Succession** when someone who is not entitled, under the tenancy rules, tries to take over a tenancy when the named tenant dies.

Are you committing fraud?

We want to appeal to those who are committing fraud to do the right thing - you can end your tenancy without the threat of legal proceedings if you return the keys and a letter giving notice.

If you suspect someone is a tenancy cheat, please let us know immediately. Call our Hollywood offices on **02890427411** or North West on **02871360015** or email: tenancyfraud@habinteg-ulster.co.uk All information will be taken seriously and treated in confidence.



12 Properties
recovered & relet

your Accommodation

YOUR PROPERTY YOUR HOME

We plan, develop and manage housing across Northern Ireland and work with a number of partners to provide supported housing projects.

At 31 March 2015 our total Housing Stock stood at 2167. A busy year for our Development Team saw 121 new properties completed or acquired in 2014/2015 and there were 170 lettings including 74 new lets.

Investment in existing stock included £677,000 in Planned Maintenance at managed schemes and an additional £701,000 on supported housing. An additional £255,300 was invested in cyclical maintenance. Along with the acquisition of new housing, the total investment for 14/15 was £5.6million.

2167 Total stock at 31.3.15 including supported housing

£5.6m Invested in new homes and upgrades to stock

121 New properties completed or acquired and 74 handed over

37
Households received new Doors

37
Households received new Windows

91
Households received new Kitchens

We know that Maintenance is one of the most important issues for you and we are committed to delivering an efficient, effective repair service.

You can report a repair directly to us by telephone, by email, online via the Repair Request on our website, your Community Assistant (where applicable) or call into the office in person; Provide contact details and explain the nature of the repair. Sometimes an inspection may be required to determine the repair.

We aim to carry out all repairs within the designated response time. The DSD target for each is: Emergency 24 hours 85%, Urgent 4 working days 80% and Routine 28 working days 80%.

Requests 14/15	Issued	Met	%
Emergency	2131	1890	89
Urgent	3479	3090	89
Routine	2680	2404	90
Total	8290	7384	89

Tenant Responsibility Repairs

Some repairs are known as Tenant Responsibility (TR) - you will need to carry out these repairs yourself. Check the Repair Liability section of our website or your Tenant Handbook.

New homes 2014 · 2015

A busy year for our Development Team saw 121 new properties completed or acquired in 2014 / 15

Laurelvale, Crumlin

14 unit Off the Shelf purchase
8 x 4 person 3 bedroom houses
4 x 5 person 3 bedroom houses
2 x 6 person 4 bedroom houses

19-21 Castle Street, Comber

16 unit New Build development
4 X 5 person 3 bedroom houses
3 X 7 person 4 bedroom houses
9 X 3 person 2 bedroom apartments

Milltown Mews Phase 2, Dungannon

7 unit Off the Shelf purchase
2 x 3 person 2 bedroom apartments
5 x 4 person 3 bedroom houses

The Cloisters Phase 2, Dungannon

28 unit New Build development
28 X 3 person 2 bedroom apartments

Lammy Crescent, Omagh

1 unit New Build development
7 person 4 bedroom wheelchair bungalow

Glenavy Road, Crumlin

13 unit Off the Shelf purchase
13 x 5 person 3 bedroom houses

Lurgan Road, Crumlin

9 unit Off the Shelf purchase
2 x 3 person 2 bedroom houses
7 x 5 person 3 bedroom houses

Conars Court, Derry

8 unit Existing Satisfactory purchase
7 x 3 person 2 bedroom apartments
1 x 4 person 3 bedroom apartments

John Street, Derry

20 unit Refurbishment scheme
10 X 1 person 1 bedroom apartments
10 X 3 person 2 bedroom apartments

5 Individual buybacks

1 x 7 person 4 bedroom wheelchair bungalow
1 x 7 person 4 bedroom house
2 x 5 person 3 bedroom houses
1 x 3 person 2 bedroom house

at your Leisure...

Design our tenant Welcome Card

CALLING ALL BUDDING YOUNG ARTISTS

We would like you to display your artistic talents and design a Welcome Card. We will choose one to send to tenants being offered a new home.

The competition is open to all children who live on a Habinteg scheme, aged 12 and under. Draw, crayon or paint your design on paper/card, add your name, age and address and give to your Housing Officer or send to our offices.
Closing date: 29 February 2016.



Green Fingers?

GARDEN COMPETITION 2016 CALL FOR ENTRIES.

Are you ready to show off your green-fingered talent?

Enter our Garden Competition with an opportunity to win £25 of Garden Gift Vouchers.

If you would like to submit your garden for consideration, email info@habinteg-ulster.co.uk

Re: Garden Competition and include:

- Your full name and postal address
- Your category of choice:
 - A. Best front or back garden
 - B. Best Tubs, shrubs and / or window box
 - C. Best Communal / shared space garden

The closing date for entry is 30 June 2016. Judging will take place in July 2016. Winners will be announced in Habinteg News 2016.



word search



Can you find the names of 14 Habinteg housing schemes from across Northern Ireland?

GELVINGARDENS
DUKESTREET
MOUNTSTREET
LORDSTREET
OLDCITYCLOSE
GREEVESPARK
HENDRACOURT
ABBEYPLACE
COLECOURT
CASTLEGARDENS
IONAPARK
INCHVIEW
RIGBYCLOSE
CONWAYSTREET



Meal on a budget

TUNA and PASTA BAKE

SERVES FOUR



INGREDIENTS

300g pasta, dried
1 onion, chopped
1 garlic (clove), crushed
160g tuna
400g chopped tomatoes
1 tsp oregano, dried
100g cheddar cheese, grated
2 tbsp olive oil

METHOD

1. Cook pasta for 2 minutes less than the instructions on the packet and drain
2. Preheat oven to 180°C/Gas mark 4
3. Use olive oil or oil from your tuna if you have some - pour into a pan and fry the onion and garlic
4. Pour away the rest of the oil, add the tuna to the pan, and heat through and mix up for a minute
5. Add the chopped tomatoes, herbs (salt & pepper) - cook for 5-10 minutes
6. Add to the cooked pasta
7. Pile into an oven dish, top with grated cheese and bake for 20-30 minutes



In your Interest

www.habinteg-ulster.co.uk/tenant-information

Service Charges FAQ

We often receive enquiries about services charges. Here we provide answers to the frequent questions.

Your weekly charge is made up of rent, rates and - for properties with communal services - there is also a weekly service charge.

The charge is specific to individual schemes and is set to cover the actual costs incurred during the year. It also takes into account whether there was a surplus or deficit in the previous year. The charge will therefore vary year on year and covers items such as staff and common room costs, communal cleaning, heat and lighting, fire alarm testing and servicing. You will be provided with a breakdown of your charge each year. Some costs are fixed and some are variable (eg. the cost of electricity).

Some housing schemes will see an increase and others may stay the same or decrease. The charge is set for the whole year and then adjusted for the following year. Service charges are eligible to be covered by Housing Benefit.

Up-to-date contact

Have you got a new email address?
D your landline telephone?
Changed your mobile number?

If yes, please let us know

Having the correct details will help us contact you quickly if we have information for you or need to carry out repairs in your home, we may also need to speak to you in the event of an emergency. Email us on info@habinteg-ulster.co.uk using the header NEW DETAILS or call us so that we can update our records.

Is your TV licensed?

You need a TV Licence to watch or record television programmes as they are shown, whether you are watching on a TV, mobile phone, PC or other device.

There are many ways to pay for a licence - you can spread the cost with a Payment Card. Without a licence, you could be fined. If you are aged 75 or over, you are entitled to a free TV Licence. To find out more telephone on **0300 790 6115** or go to tvlicensing.co.uk/communityinfo

Are you Fully covered?

Many people experience damage to their homes. Habinteg will repair the damage to its properties but it is not responsible for damage to personal belongings / furnishings.

We encourage all tenants to take out household contents insurance. There are numerous policies available - check directories and comparison websites. Always choose a broker who is registered through the Financial Services Authority and read the policy carefully.

Growth of Foodbanks

The rise in the number and usage of food banks continued in 2014-2015. A significant number of food banks in Northern Ireland opened during the last 18 months.

The Trussel Trust is the largest charity providing Foodbanks. Their website is www.trusselltrust.org The site has a map where you can locate Foodbanks in your area.

Welfare Reform Update

At the time of going to press, politicians were reaching agreement on the new Welfare Reform package for Northern Ireland.

We will provide a full report of the outcome on our website and will notify tenants of benefit changes.

Home security

INSIDE: Make your home appear occupied when away. Keep keys out of sight, away from windows.

OUTSIDE: Lock cars, garages, lock away ladders, garden tools. Don't leave keys in 'hiding places'.

AROUND: Be vigilant and on the lookout for suspicious activity in your community. If in any doubt, call **Crimestoppers 0800 555 111**

Winter Freeze

LOCATE YOUR STOPCOCK

HEATING/FUEL: Make sure there is enough oil or credit for the gas to run the central heating at your property through cold spells.

FROZEN PIPES: Turn off stopcock. Don't leave taps running/dripping. Never attempt to thaw out by switching on the immersion heater and/or central heating boiler. Check for leaking joints or bursts. Gently heat with a hairdryer (at lowest setting) or a heated cloth. Do not warm them too quickly and NEVER apply a direct flame.

BURST PIPES: Turn off stopcock. Switch off immersion heater and/or central heating boiler. Open all COLD water taps to drain the system. Do not turn on hot taps - hot water cylinder may collapse if pipes leading to it are frozen.

Contact Information

We welcome your feedback on this publication and comments on our customer services in general. Please contact us with your comments or suggestions using the contact details below or complete the feedback form on our website.

Would you like to support any of our resident involvement initiatives - Mystery Shopper, Residents' Forum, Scrutiny Panel Armchair Panel etc. Please call us.

NB We are particularly keen to move towards paperless communications and we would encourage tenants to 'opt out' of major mailings in favour of email.



Alex Moira House
22 Hibernia St
Holywood
BT18 9JE

Habinteg House
2 Abercorn Rd
Londonderry
BT48 6SA



028 9042 7211

028 7136 0015



info@
habinteg-ulster.co.uk

derryoffice@
habinteg-ulster.co.uk



habinteg-ulster.co.uk



twitter.com/habintegNI

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

For emergency repairs (eg serious plumbing, electrical faults etc) outside our normal office hours please call FREEPHONE 0800 7313081.

Please note - ONLY EMERGENCY REPAIRS are dealt with under this service.

Additional EMERGENCY numbers

Northern Ireland Electricity
Emergency Service 03457 643 643

Northern Ireland Water
Emergency Service 03457 440 088

Gas (Phoenix & Firmus)
Emergency Service 0800 002 001

For emergencies relating to fire, crime or serious injury call 999

Habinteg's offices open:
Monday - Thursday
8:45am to 4:45pm
and on Fridays:
8:45am to 4:30pm

Offices will be closed on the following Public and Bank Holidays:

2015

Thursday 24 December
Friday 25 December
Monday 28 December

2016

Friday 1 January
Thursday 17 March
Monday 28 March
Tuesday 29 March
Monday 2 May
Monday 30 May
Tuesday 12 July
Wednesday 13 July
Monday 29 August
Monday 26 December
Tuesday 27 December
Wednesday 28 December

2017

Monday 2 January



Habinteg
Housing Association (Ulster) Ltd