

## Welcome to our Spring/Summer 2020 Newsletter

We hope to keep you up to date with information about all aspects of Public Sector housing in Braddan.

### FIVE YEAR FIXED TERM TENANCIES

The Commissioners at their meeting on 9 January 2020 "...agreed that plans should be made to implement the new 5 year tenancy agreements to all existing tenants, to ensure that income levels are reviewed, and that the appropriate rent levels, as set by Central Government, are being applied".

As a result of this decision, review forms will be sent to all tenants over the coming months who do not yet hold a Five Year Fixed Term Tenancy. The review will ensure all tenants are paying correct levels of rent and allow for further reviews every five years as tenancies expire. It is also much fairer if everyone holds the same type of tenancy.

At present, 35% of our tenants hold five year tenancies. In the last 12 months, we have carried out reviews of some households. Of those reviewed, 50% remained on the same rent and 50% are now paying a higher rent.

For more information about this process please contact the Housing Officer on 852808. The full Fixed Term Tenancy Policy can be found on our website or you can request a copy from our office.

### PROPERTY INSPECTIONS

We will shortly be writing out to tenants to make an appointment to carry out a property inspection. The reason for the visit is to identify any outstanding maintenance issues regarding the property or concerns that tenants may wish to raise.

We will start with tenants in Cronk Grianagh this spring and then roll out the inspections to other areas later this year.

Going forward, we hope to visit about 30% of our properties annually and the feedback received should allow us to plan for future schemes and improvements to properties.

### MULLEN DOWAY APARTMENTS

You may have seen in the local press that the building works as at the beginning of February 2020 are currently running approximately 20 weeks behind schedule. This reason for the delay is because of issues with the final location of the drainage. Obviously this is an essential part of the building works and we are working closely with the contractor to resolve this. We hope that the contractor will be able to claw back some of the time in due course.

As a result of the delays, we have decided not to open the waiting list for the new apartments for the moment. We will advise all tenants once we have received a revised completion date from the contractor.

Over the next few weeks, work will start on the fourth and final block on the Peel Road side of the site. The current access from the main road will be closed off and all construction traffic will come in via Snugborough Avenue.

We hope any disruption for residents will be kept to a minimum during this next phase, but please contact the Commissioners' Office if you have any issues or complaints and we will do our best to resolve them.

**Contact us:** Tel: 852808 Email: [braddan@braddan.im](mailto:braddan@braddan.im) Web: [braddan.im](http://braddan.im) [facebook.com/braddancommissioners](https://www.facebook.com/braddancommissioners)

Once again, the Commissioners would like to thank tenants for their patience during the building works. If you would like some more information about the new apartments, please contact the Housing Officer or call in to the Commissioners' Office to see the latest plans which are available to view.

## RENT AND RATE INCREASES 2020/2021

### Braddan Commissioners' Rents

Stock type	Average Rent	Average Rates	Total Average Rent	Average weekly increase from 2019-20
2 bed house	91.80	12.86	104.66	2.11
3 bed house	104.18	14.55	118.73	2.42
4 bed house	122.58	17.38	139.96	2.79
1 bed flat	52.62	8.69	61.31	1.23
2 bed flat	77.82	12.97	90.79	1.83
2 bed bungalow	79.89	12.38	92.27	1.86

Included with this newsletter is your annual rent notification letter. Public Sector rents are set by Tynwald in consultation with the Island's 15 Housing Authorities. This year the increase was agreed at 1.9%.

Please see the table above for the average weekly rent increases in Braddan. The increase will apply from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

### PAYING BY DIRECT DEBIT



If you still pay your rent by weekly Direct Debit, we do offer the option to pay monthly. We offer different two dates for collection during the month – 1st and 25th.

If you do not wish to pay per calendar month, we can also calculate 12 equal payments over the course of the year. If you'd like to discuss this further, please contact the Commissioners' Office.

### RENT ARREARS

If you have any issues paying your rent, please contact the Housing Officer as soon as possible. By letting us know, we can help to minimise rent arrears and work out a repayment plan.

If you find yourself struggling to pay your bills, you should contact the **Social Security Division** within the Treasury, where staff can provide advice regarding any assistance for which you may be eligible. Tel: 685656

**The Office of Fair Trading** has a Debt Counselling Service with fully trained staff who can help with practical advice. They have a dedicated confidential phone line: 01624 686510 or Email: [debt@gov.im](mailto:debt@gov.im)

**The Isle of Man Foodbank** is also there to help – for more information about what they can do for you, call 01624 646999 or 07624 311550 or email: [isleofmanfoodbank@gmail.com](mailto:isleofmanfoodbank@gmail.com)

**The Braddan Parish Endowment Committee** is a registered charity that can help people in the short term with funds. Application forms are available in the Commissioners' Office or email [braddanparishendowments@gmail.com](mailto:braddanparishendowments@gmail.com). All applications are dealt with in confidence.

## BRADDAN HOUSING BYELAWS 2020

An updated version of the Braddan Housing Byelaws was recently submitted to Tynwald for approval, as the previous set had expired.

The new Byelaws will come into effect from a month after they have been approved and they will apply to **all** Commissioners' properties. They will be available to view on our website when available.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC ID

All Commissioners staff have now been issued with photographic ID. Please can we ask that if a member of staff is calling to your property you request to see their identification.

## PET POLICY

The Commissioners recently approved an updated Pet Policy. We have formalised what was already in place in a more official document as part of the application form to request permission for a pet.



The main changes are set out below, but they should not affect any existing tenants:-

*Written permission must be sought **BEFORE** obtaining such pets and such permission will be restricted to **two dogs OR two cats OR one dog and one cat per household.***

*If you are living in a scheme with more than four flats in the block, tenants can only keep small caged pets. This also applies where a property does not have its own front door opening to the outside and has common areas.*

As part of the same document, there are now guidance notes for pet owners, which set out your responsibilities as a tenant and pet owner. Again, these should not affect responsible pet owners, and the majority are things we already ask tenants to do.

A copy of the Pet Application Form, Pet Policy & Guidance notes is included. If you have any queries, please contact the Housing Officer.

## ALLOCATION POLICY

The Commissioners, also recently, approved an Allocation Policy for their properties.

Some of document is formalising what was already in place, but there are changes which will affect people already on the internal transfer list. As a result, we will review all transfer applicants and will be writing out to them shortly. Our aim is to make the best and most appropriate use of our housing stock.

For full details, please see our website. Copies are also available from the Commissioners' Office.

## TT HOMESTAY SCHEME – PERMISSION REQUIRED

Please remember that if you wish to register your property for the TT Homestay Scheme, you need written permission from the Commissioners.

## GARDENS

Spring is nearly here and we would like to remind all tenants to take pride in their property and the surrounding areas.



Please make sure your grass is cut regularly and that any rubbish is removed from your garden.

Gardens will be looked at as part of the property inspections, so please ensure they are tidy and that hedges do not obstruct the pavements.

Hedges should be no more than 1m in height at the front and a maximum of 2m for rear gardens.

If you are having difficulty looking after your garden, please contact us for advice.

## HOUSING STATISTICS

Did you know, as at February 2020....

- The Eastern Shared Housing waiting list has 52 applicants waiting for a home.
  - 36 for a 1 bedroom property
  - 13 for a 2 bedroom property
  - 3 for a 3 or more bedroom property
- Between 1st April 2019 & 31 December 2019 we have responded to:-
  - 192 responsive repairs
  - 17 out of hours emergency call outs
  - 7 property transfers within Braddan Commissioners' housing stock - including internal transfers & Mutual Exchanges
  - 6 voids re-let

## LOCAL ELECTIONS

You may be aware that **Local Elections** are happening on the **23 April 2020**.

5 seats are available for Braddan Commissioners. If you are passionate about local issues and would like to represent your community, nomination packs will be available from our office during March.

For more information about standing as a Commissioner and what the role entails, please contact our office.

## UPCOMING SCHEMES.....

### Decking at Close y Lhergy

The Commissioners are in the process of putting together a scheme to remove the decking at Close y Lhergy and replace it with slabs. Tenants will be consulted prior to any works going ahead as they may wish to retain their decking. We will write out to those involved shortly with more information.

We are currently looking at the following schemes for the future: -

- Replacement of gas boilers with air source heat pumps
- Purchase of a parcel of land for possible future housing
- Replacement roofs – The Strang
- Replacement windows & doors – 1 – 8 Jubilee Terrace & 1-10 Coronation Terrace
- External painting – Millennium Close