

Welcome to our Spring 2021 Newsletter

A lot has happened since our last newsletter that we sent out a year ago! We hope that you found the service you receive from the Commissioners' staff largely unchanged, despite finding ourselves in the middle of a global pandemic.

MULLEN DOWAY APARTMENTS



Unfortunately, due to delays with certain materials and the current restrictions on travel to the island, the completion date for the apartments has been pushed back again to May 2021. Despite the issues, the apartments look fabulous and they are a great opportunity for anyone who is thinking about downsizing to move into a brand new, modern, well insulated property.

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.

All tenants who have already expressed an interest in transferring to these apartments will be contacted shortly and assessments will be carried out to ensure they meet the criteria.



Once this phase is completed, we will be looking to the Eastern Shared Housing Waiting List for suitable tenants.

Unfortunately the apartments are not suitable for pets or children and the buildings will be non smoking.

Once again, the Commissioners would like to thank tenants for their patience during the building works. Once the apartments are complete, the final section of Snugborough Avenue will be resurfaced.

Fixed Term Tenancies

42% of our tenants are already on Fixed Term Tenancy and the Commissioners are committed to ensuring all tenants will be signed up to a Fixed Term Tenancy within the next few years.

Occupancy Forms

Occupancy forms have been included with this newsletter, please complete and return to the Commissioners' Office in the prepaid envelope provided by **26th March 2021**.

Landlords' & Tenants gas safety responsibilities

As a Landlord, Braddan Parish Commissioners have a legal responsibility to carry out an annual service of the gas boilers within our housing stock. This will include an inspection of any associated flue and gas pipework.

When our boiler engineers (Ridgway Gas Ltd, Energy Management Services or SCS Ltd) visit your home to carry out the gas boiler service, they also have an obligation to inspect any flue or gas supply pipework to any other gas appliance within the property that may not belong to the landlord.



It is the responsibility of the tenant to ensure that their own appliance(s), be it gas cooker or fire, etc. undergo an annual safety check. You also have the right to use the contractor of your choice as long as they are Gas Safe registered

Solid fuel appliances – Chimney Sweeping

If you have a solid fuel appliance such as a coal fire, multi fuel stove or log burner in your property, it is your responsibility to ensure the chimney or flue is swept at least annually and kept free from blockages. If you burn wood, this should be increased to twice per year.

Please note that you should always seek your landlord's permission before installing a solid fuel appliance.



Carbon Monoxide Alarms

The Commissioners have just purchased 200 Carbon Monoxide alarms and these will be fitted at your next boiler service if the boiler is located within the property.

Smoke Alarms

Please remember to check your smoke alarm is functioning by regularly testing them by using the test button.

All of our properties have smoke alarms fitted and it is important that they are not removed or tampered with, as in the event of a fire they will enable you to escape quickly.

Statistics show that you are six times more likely to die in a fire if you live in a home without a working smoke alarm.



If your home does not have a working smoke alarm, you are struggling to change a battery or you believe the smoke alarm may be faulty, please contact the Commissioners' Office immediately on tel: 852808.

MAINTENANCE ADVICE:-

Please have a look at the following points to assist us:-

- Know where your stop tap is and how to turn off the mains water supply in case of sudden leaks. If you are unsure of the location, check the Welcome Pack that came with your property or contact the Commissioners' Office.
- Make sure the water pressure in your boiler is kept at the recommended level.
- Trip switches – know where the electrical consumer unit is in your property and how to put the switches back on should they trip. Before you call the office, it is always worth checking what has caused the circuit to trip. It may be something as simple as a blown bulb that you can resolve yourself.
- Condensation can be more of an issue in properties during winter when windows are kept shut and outside temperatures drop. For advice on how to resolve it, we have leaflets available in the Commissioners' Office and on our website.

If you notice an issue in your property, please advise us before it becomes a more serious problem over a weekend or Bank Holiday – we can resolve issues more quickly if you can let us know during working hours.



RENT ARREARS

We understand that this has been a very difficult year for many people and we have tried to help tenants who have been affected by the fallout from the pandemic. If you find yourself in financial difficulties and 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** 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

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

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 . All applications are dealt with in confidence.

The Manx Solidarity Fund is a registered charity set up support residents and local organisations facing difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. You can apply for help at www.manxsolidarityfund.com/apply

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.

UPCOMING SCHEMES.....

Unfortunately, the Pandemic meant that progressing schemes this year has been difficult and has resulted in delays. We are still progressing the scheme to remove the decking in the rear gardens at Close y Lhergy and have appointed Silva Consulting to lead the project. 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

Replacement roofs – The Strang

Replacement windows & doors – 1 – 8 Jubilee Terrace & 1-10 Coronation Terrace

Refurbishment scheme at Millennium Close to include external painting, replacement kitchens and air source heat pumps

5 Yearly Electrical testing of properties – as per NICEIC Guidelines

Housing Facts

37 Rent Accounts have been in Arrears at some time during the period 1st April 2020 – 31st January 2021

75% of our tenants pay their rent by Direct Debit, either weekly or monthly

264 Repair Requests were issued between 1st April 2020 and 31st January 2021

42% were immediate, 36% urgent and 22% standard

27 Housing related calls to the Out of Hours Phone between 1st April 2020 – 31st January 2021

14 void properties were relet

CORONAVIRUS/COVID 19 – Tenants and Self Isolation

Whilst the island is currently keeping the virus at bay, we must all be vigilant. Therefore, the Commissioners would remind all tenants that if someone in your household is self-isolating, **this must be reported to us as a requirement under your tenancy agreement.**

It is essential for our staff and any contractors to be made aware of any risks, should any issues arise at the property.

For further protection, an ongoing risk assessment is in force which will include screening questions being asked when you contact the Commissioners' Office.

If there are persons confirmed to be self-isolating at your address, we will only provide cover for urgent or essential work until the isolation period has expired.

Following which, we would then be able to attend as normal to carry out any cyclical or non-urgent work and once the self-isolation period is up, any coronavirus related records will be deleted.

Should we need to carry out an emergency repair, the process would be as follows:

- To ask pre-visit screening questions e.g. are you or any occupiers self-isolating due to travel or do you have symptoms of coronavirus or confirmation of infection?
- We would insist that the tenant and any occupiers distance themselves from the room where the work is being carried out.
- Should any staff/contractor need to enter, they will be wearing appropriate protective equipment such as face mask, gloves etc. and will clean down the work area with an appropriate cleaner before and after the task.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, this process will remain under review.