

An NÚacht “The News”

“Go n-éiri an bóthar leat... (May the road rise up to meet you)”

Welcome

Welcome to the Winter edition of our newsletter for residents of Innisfree.

It’s hard to believe that 2016 is nearly over. During the year we’ve seen some significant changes going on around us, with a new London Mayor, the vote for Britain to leave the EU and a new Prime Minister.

We’ve also seen changes in our Board, in our staff and said goodbye to some long standing tenants. But we are clear that Innisfree remains

strong throughout these changes and we are looking forward to 2017 with an ambition to do more of what we were set up to do – providing good quality homes and welcoming people to live in our neighbourhoods.

We would like to wish everyone a very peaceful and Happy Christmas and New Year.

Nollaig Shona Duit



© Gavin Freeborn

Christmas – a time for sharing

Many people – young and old – may be on their own at Christmas time. We can all perhaps do something to help by either inviting them for dinner on Christmas day or even take a dinner over to them?

<http://communitychristmas.org.uk/map/> is a link to places that provide free Christmas meals along with some company for those who may be alone.



The Passage – to ending homelessness

Home for Good is a London-wide scheme designed to support those who might be struggling in a new and unfamiliar area, without a support network.

They are looking for people who may be able to help. Volunteers receive full training and support and are asked to commit for 6 to 12 months.

If you would like to make a lasting difference to someone’s life, please contact The Passage on **020 7592 1873** or email



homeforgood@passage.org.uk



Inside this issue...



Page 2
Tell us what you think!



Page 3
Money matters



Page 7
Repairs

Keep up with your rent this Christmas

It's tempting to overspend on Christmas fun, but using your rent money can cause problems in the new year. If you miss a rent payment or don't keep to your agreement with us, Innisfree will take action. It's hard to get out of debt and it's best to avoid it altogether. If your rent arrears increase after Christmas, you risk losing your home.



Above all, talk to us about your rent payments. If you are struggling to keep to an agreement or pay your rent, we want to hear from you so we can help. **Sean Cogan** is our new **Income Management**

Officer and you can contact him on **020 7692 1249**. You can also come into the office to see Sean. He will be pleased to talk to you about your rent or benefits.

The benefit cap

From 7th November 2016 the amount of total benefits you can receive has reduced from £500 per week for a couple or a single parent to £442.31 per week and from £350.00 per week for single claimants to £296.35 per week.

What is the Cap?



The Cap takes into account any monies paid to you in benefits such as Job Seekers Allowance, Child Benefit, Income Support, Employment Support Allowance and Housing Benefit. If you receive more than the capped amount, your Housing Benefit payments will be reduced so that your overall benefits do not exceed the capped amount.

The fact that Child Benefit is included in the equation signifies that claimants with large families will be particularly affected.

There are a number of benefits which are not included in the cap, such as statutory sick pay, statutory maternity pay, attendance allowance and a number of others (see <https://>

www.gov.uk/benefit-cap/benefits-included-in-the-cap for a full list of benefits that are included and excluded).

If you are affected by the cap, you should ask your local Housing Benefit office for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to help you cover the rental shortfall. However, the money available to Councils for such payments is limited so they may not make these payments to you. You should also seek advice to ensure that you are receiving all of the benefits to which you are entitled. If you are able to work, try to find a job that qualifies you for Working Tax Credits as this will exempt you from the Cap.

Advice

Staying Safe

Your safety is extremely important to us, which is why we carry out annual gas safety checks and periodic electrical tests and stress the importance of allowing our contractors access to your homes for gas and electrical tests to be undertaken. You can also help protect your family by following this advice.



Fire safety

- Make sure all exits are clear
- Make sure that everyone knows where your door and window lock keys are
- Keep your mobile phone with you in case of emergency
- Check your smoke alarm is working
- Do not overload electrical sockets
- Please take extra care with candles and make sure they are out when going out or at night
- Only use chargers that have come with the appliance and do not leave them plugged in overnight
- Do not leave cooking unattended
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children
- Do not store any items in your gas or electricity meter cupboards
- If you live in a block of flats, do not block the communal hallways.



Electrical safety

- Never use electrical appliances in the bathroom
- Always disconnect plugs when not in use
- Make sure appliances have the correct fuses
- Always replace frayed flex on appliances
- If you have any problems, turn off the electricity at the main switch by your meter



Gas safety

If you can smell gas, turn off the gas using the lever by your gas meter. DO NOT use any electrical equipment, naked flames, switch on or off lights or smoke. Open all windows and doors, leave your home immediately and alert your neighbours. Call the National Grid on 0800 111 999.



Water leak safety

If you experience a water leak, make sure you turn off the water at the main stopcock and turn off your heating and hot water systems. Open all taps and the water will stop running within around two minutes if you have turned the stopcock off. Try to soak up and remove as much water as possible to stop it from damaging any furniture and fittings.



REMEMBER

– take the time to know where your electrical fuse board, gas meter and water stopcock are as you will need to use these in an emergency.

Team Changes

Life is constantly changing and here at Innisfree things are no different as we say goodbye to colleagues and welcome some new faces to the team.

Tricia Goan, (Operations Director), Ellen Ryan (Customer Services Officer) and Peter Murphy (Housing Team Leader) have all

moved on to pastures new. We wish them well with their new ventures.

We welcome Ed Butler back as Interim Operations Director, as well as say hello to Sean Cogan (Income Management Officer), Emma Howe (Customer Services Assistant) and Stefan Kistnah-Jefferies (Finance Assistant).



From left to right: Stefan, Sean, Ed and Emma

Holiday Season Opening Hours and Emergency Repair Service

24th December	Christmas Eve	Closed
25th December	Christmas Day	Closed
26th December	Boxing Day	Closed
27th December	Bank Holiday	Closed
28th December		9.00am – 5.00pm
29th December		9.00 am – 5.00pm
30th December		Closed
31st December		Closed
1st January	New Year's Day	Closed
2nd January	Bank Holiday	Closed

Whilst the office is closed emergencies will be dealt with by our out-of-hours repairs service. For repairs regarding gas fired heating and hot water please call our dedicated heating contractor **Liberty on 0330 333 8390**. For all other emergency repairs call our dedicated out of hours call handling provider **Pinnacle on 0800 678 3313**. We will deal with non- urgent repairs when the office re-opens. *Please see the article on repairs on page 6* for more details on which repairs qualify as an emergency.

What would you like?

What sort of events would you like to see in 2017? Perhaps we could help.

For example, are you keen to take part in a St Patrick's Day celebration or is there a public occasion you would like us to commemorate?

Let us know by e-mailing us at info@innisfree.org.uk or let us know when you visit the office

Please remember to dispose of your Christmas waste – wrapping paper, cardboard and Christmas tree – responsibly.



Urgent Repairs

These are repairs that are not classified as an emergency but which result in the loss of a basic facility or where further damage will occur if the problem is not dealt with. We aim to attend and complete urgent repairs within seven calendar days of the repair being reported.

Examples of urgent repairs include the following:

- Toilet not flushing (where no other working toilet in the house)
- Blocked sink, bath or basin (only if you are unable to clear this yourself), taps which cannot be turned on, running overflows, stopcock problems
- Door entry phone not working
- Electrical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working
- Insecure window (above ground floor)

Routine Repairs

These are repairs that can wait without causing major inconvenience to you. We aim to attend and complete routine repairs within 28 calendar days of the repair being reported.

Examples of routine repairs include the following:

- Repairs to/easing of windows, internal doors (including cupboard doors) which do not close properly but are not a security risk
- Repairs to sanitary goods, minor leaks (which can be contained), dripping taps
- Repairs to letterboxes
- Re Glazing (where there is no risk to security)
- Repairs to kitchen units, worktops or drawers.

- Defective guttering, external repairs to fencing, gates, paths, manhole covers, brickwork or roofing (where there are no structural or health and safety issues)
- Non-urgent electrical work (loss of a single light or socket)
- Appearance of cracks
- Graffiti removal (unless obscene or racist)

For out-of-hours repairs regarding gas fired heating, and hot water please call our dedicated heating contractor **Liberty on 0330 333 8390**. For all other emergency repairs call our dedicated out of hours call handling provider **Pinnacle on 0800 678 3313**.

Thames Water 0800 316 9800 – UK Power Networks 0800 316 3105.

If you have a suspected gas leak or your carbon monoxide detector is activated you should contact National grid on **0800 111 999** immediately.



