

# An Núacht

Summer 2023

## The News

Innisfree

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



## More Change?



***I was listening recently to a film clip of an old farmer who was born in 1842 and so who was 87 years old in 1929 when he was filmed speaking about how life had changed since he was a boy.***

And it wasn't what I expected to hear:

*"The trees are just the same as they were when I was a boy, only larger. The sun still rises in the East and sets in the West."*

Sometimes we have a natural human reaction to resist change, so maybe that's what I expected to hear from him, but he spoke about the continuity that he experienced instead.

In this newsletter, we have got some stories that mark changes at Innisfree too: new homes being built, investment in our current homes to make them more sustainable – as well as welcoming our new Chair of the Board.

At the same time, we'll be continuing to keep your homes as safe, comfortable and affordable as we can – with our Board being clear that this remains our first priority.

As we come towards the end of the summer, I couldn't resist including some words from the Irish poet Derek Mahon – which refer to the weather(!) but also mark change and look positively to the future, despite the rain.

Best wishes

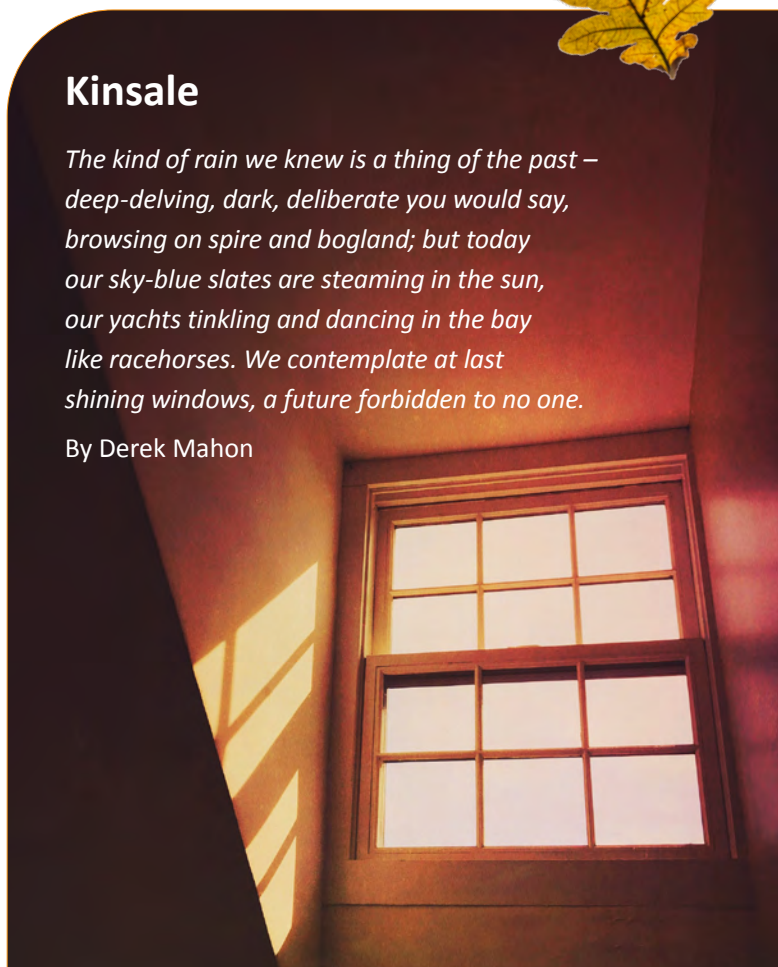
**John Delahunty, Chief Executive**



### Kinsale

*The kind of rain we knew is a thing of the past – deep-delving, dark, deliberate you would say, browsing on spire and bogland; but today our sky-blue slates are steaming in the sun, our yachts tinkling and dancing in the bay like racehorses. We contemplate at last shining windows, a future forbidden to no one.*

By Derek Mahon



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## Our news

# New Homes

**It's an exciting time for Innisfree, with new homes being built on several sites. We are taking on 13 newly built flats in Mill Hill on the site of the old National Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) buildings.**

These homes are part of a large housing development being built over a number of years. Each of the blocks is named after a scientist that worked on the site – our block



is named after John H. Humphrey, an immunologist who worked to establish international standards for antibiotics and enzymes.

We will be offering these 13 flats to families on LB Barnet's housing register, helping to meet their housing needs and having a strong base from which to get on with their lives!

We have a few more sites that we are developing across Camden and Brent – 9 flats on Aylesbury Street, near Blackbird Hill, and four flats that are part of the scheme being developed near Maygrove Road in West Hampstead. These will be ready later this year, so we will share more information about them in our coming newsletters.



## Making our homes more sustainable

Innisfree has successfully secured funding for 19 of our homes to benefit from the new Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund over the next two years. This is a Government scheme which supports energy-saving measures which could mean potential savings of between £200 and £400 a year on tenants' energy bills. We will be writing to any tenant whose home is included.



The type of improvements that could be carried out to your home include:

- External wall insulation
- Internal wall insulation
- Mechanical ventilation systems
- Electrical heating systems or air-source heat pumps etc.
- A-Rated energy saving window systems.

John Delahunty said: *"The surveyors will need to be able to get into tenants' homes to find out what specific works need doing. It is really important that the tenants involved keep the appointments made and let the surveyors in to do their surveys. We hope this project proves a great success and more homes benefit in the future."*





## Staffing / Board

# New chair



Sean McLaughlin

**Like most housing associations, Innisfree is governed by a Board of Management, and we are pleased to welcome a new Chair.**

We say goodbye to our previous chair, Kevin Hartnett, who served Innisfree for seven years, with four of those as Chair. We would like to thank Kevin for his dedication and support over the years, and we wish him well!

We welcome **Sean McLaughlin** as our chair from September 2023. Sean brings a variety of skills and experience to the Board and he shares our commitment to support Innisfree residents to be able to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

You can see more about all our Board Members on our website: [www.innisfree.org.uk](http://www.innisfree.org.uk).

## Sara joins our team



We are delighted to welcome Sara Joban as our new Housing Assistant. Sara will generally be the first point of contact when you call the office and will be able to assist with housing queries and tenancy matters.

## Would you be interested in joining our Board in the future?

When we have vacancies, we identify the particular skills we need at that time (e.g. financial, legal, development etc) and would welcome applications from our residents.

Want to know more?  
Contact George Kirby on  
[residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk).



## Home and Wellbeing visits

Our Housing Officers aim to carry out a Home and Wellbeing visit with all residents annually, so don't panic if we ask to come and see you, you are not being singled out. The reason for these visits is to:

- ensure we are providing the right services and listen to your feedback.
- improve services where necessary
- enable us to get to know you and
- discuss the best way to engage with you ensure we provide the correct
- support and advice to help you maintain your tenancy signpost you to support or advice agencies, if necessary, so that you can maintain your tenancy
- identify any tenancy or neighbourhood issues.



During the visit we will complete some forms regarding your household information and conduct a property inspection. It is extremely important that you allow us into your home.

If you have any concerns about these visits, please speak to your Housing Officer. We are here to help should you have any issues with your tenancy or home.

## Resident Engagement

### Local Resident Forums – hearing your voice

We have now completed five local resident forums. The forums are all about giving residents a collective voice on what's important to you and how residents experience living in the block and sharing communal areas.

The forums also give us the opportunity to listen and be accountable to residents in a new and more direct way at a local level.

How do they work? Resident forums happen at a local level and involve just one or two blocks of flats. Residents are invited to an online meeting with the local Housing Officer and Resident Engagement Officer.



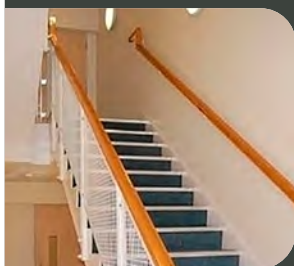
On the day of the meeting all residents are called to see if they are attending the meeting and any residents who are not able to attend can give their views and raise any issues of concern to them during the call. That way every resident has an opportunity to contribute to the topics discussed.



Feedback from the forums is reported to the Board so they can also see what is important to residents at a local level. We aim to complete at least 8 resident forums this year and your block could be next!

### Consultations on Home Improvement and Aids and Adaptations Policy

We have recently updated our Management of Communal Areas Policy and are asking for feedback from residents again. Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions on the Policy by Friday 29 September 2023. See the website for the draft policy.



Thank you to everyone who had a look at our Home Improvement and Aids and Adaptations policies during the last consultation period. The consultations are now over, and the policies have been updated.

### Allotment offer

Final call on offer of two FREE allotments located at the Brent Council Sudbury Court Road allotments, Harrow, HA1 3SD.

This is a great opportunity to grow your own veg and join a great community of gardeners on the allotments. No previous experience needed, just enthusiasm and effort to get things growing.

If you are interested, please contact George Kirby, Resident Engagement Officer email [george.kirby@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:george.kirby@innisfree.org.uk) and mobile 07879 818 645.





## Resident Engagement

# Innisfree Creative Gardens Competition 2023



**Congratulations to all winners. Once again residents have been hard at work tending to their own private or communal gardens and once again the standard of gardens on show is amazing.**

Our Chief Executive John said *"every year I just can't believe how good the gardens are looking and how much time and effort people are putting into them. I just want to say well done to all the residents who entered, and I am glad we had so many winners for the different categories."*

This year again we had perennial winners (notice the gardening term there) Margaret at Clochar Court and

John & Peter at Innisfree House. The Clochar Court garden always looks lovely, and Margaret is always adding new touches to it. As well as the gardens the hanging baskets are a big feature at Innisfree House as they hang all around the building giving out beautiful summer colours.

Also, this year we have a winner at Charterhouse Avenue for best communal garden for a shared house, tended to by Thomas. This is the first such entry, and the garden has a lovely calm feel to it.

Other winners included best private garden and best edible garden. It has been a real pleasure and highlight of our summer to see all the beautiful gardens.

Congratulations and thank you to all our winners.

## FourMillionHomes – training to empower residents

**Residents living in social housing now have access to a new government-backed training scheme, helping them to raise issues with their landlord. This is all part of wider government reforms that will give social housing residents a stronger voice.**

A partnership of experts in the sector has received a £500,000 government grant to roll out a new training package open to anyone living in social housing in England. The scheme aims to help residents engage effectively with their landlord to demand a higher quality of service, where needed.

Residents can learn how to take an active role in how their home is managed – through a series of workshops, forums and online resources that will run over the next two and a half years. For example, this could include advice on how to set up a residents panel or how to challenge a landlord if they fail to meet required standards. The aim is to ensure every resident is heard and can be actively involved in how their home is managed.



To access the training google FourMillionHomes Four Million Homes – Knowledge and action for change in social housing and book on a course of interest.



## Your Homes

# Fire door safety

In January 2023, The Fire Safety Act 2022 and The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 came into effect. These new pieces of legislation set standards for fire safety and fire prevention in housing.

Innisfree will be checking all communal fire doors on a regular basis as part of our Estate Inspections, which take place every 3 months. Our Housing Officers will check that the doors have appropriate signage, have an effective self-closing device, are well maintained, and do not have any defects that would stop them from doing their job in the event of a fire.

A fire safety specialist will carry out annual inspections of communal and flat entrance fire doors, in line with the Fire Safety Act 2022. We are asking all residents to look at the fire doors inside their home and let us know if you think there is an issue with any of them.

The Government have issued guidance for residents:

- Fire doors should be kept shut when not in use



- Residents or their guests should not tamper with self-closing devices
- Residents should report any fault or damage immediately to the Responsible Person (Innisfree).

If you have any concerns, questions or would like to report an issue with a fire door, please give our maintenance team a call on **0207 625 1818**.

## Bins, rubbish and recycling

We regularly receive reports of missed collections of household waste, primarily happening on schemes where there are shared bins.

Households are responsible for their waste management, and you pay for rubbish removal through your Council Tax. The waste disposal is between your local authority and in most cases, Veolia their contractor.

In most boroughs, you can report a missed collection on the council website. This is the fastest and easiest way to report an issue with your bins. We recommend that you report any issues as soon as possible – even if you think your neighbour may have already lodged a complaint.

There may be several reasons why a bin has not been collected, for example:

- excess rubbish is left outside of the bin or bag
- the bins are too full, and the lid can't be shut
- incorrect rubbish is placed in the bin, bags or containers
- bins, bags or containers have been put out on the wrong day
- bins were put out after 7am on the day of collection
- bins have been placed in the incorrect position
- the bin does not have a valid bin sticker attached it
- recycling is mixed with things that cannot be recycled.



*The best way to check your recycling and rubbish collection days, order containers or report a missed collection is through your local council's website.*



## Your Homes

# Electrical Testing

Electricity is part of our lives. We use it from the moment we wake up and throughout the day. As a result, we sometimes forget how powerful and dangerous it can be. So, as a landlord, Innisfree has a responsibility to carry out a periodic safety check on the electrical installations in your home to ensure that they are in a satisfactory condition and are safe for use.

We will let you know when your home is due for an electrical safety check, and our contractors will then contact you to arrange for an appointment. It is essential that you provide our contractor access to your home so they can carry out the inspection.

A periodic inspection will:

- reveal if any of the electrical circuits or equipment are overloaded
- find any potential electric shock risks and fire hazards
- identify any defective electrical work
- highlight any lack of earthing or bonding.

Tests are also carried out on wiring and fixed electrical equipment to check that they are safe. Any defects or remedial works identified will be rectified as part of the inspection and testing process, and a certificate of compliance will be issued to us as landlord.



# Paying too much for your broadband?

More than half of low-income households in the UK are not aware of special broadband deals, according to communications regulator Ofcom. It is concerned people are not getting the right advice when it comes to switching to a social tariff.

Social tariffs are low-cost broadband deals offered to customers on benefits and cost between £10 and £20 a month. Ofcom says millions of families could save around £200 a year by switching.

Providers who offer social tariffs include BT, EE, SMARTY, Community Fibre, NOW, Sky, Virgin Media, KCOM, Hyperoptic, G Network and VOXI. If you are with any of these companies it would be worth checking their social tariff.



## Money Matters

# Cost of Living Crisis Fund – How Camden help



Camden continuing to invest

# £2.25m

into Cost-of-Living Crisis Fund



Household Support Fund – further £4m – supermarket vouchers for families in hardship, targeted support at those households missing out on the payment and a specific hardship scheme for pensioners, disabled people.

### Advice outreach

in Family Hubs and in partnership with adult social care, Camden Carers and other services that work with vulnerable groups.

### Universal free school meals in primary schools –

Camden has committed to extend beyond next year.



New money advice self-referral pathway is live. Scan the QR code to find out more.

It's always worth looking at your local authority website to see if they are offering assistance.

## Who to contact

When contacting us, please dial **020 7625 1818** and select one of the following options:

# Innisfree

Innisfree Housing Association, 190 Iverson Road, London NW6 2HL

Tel: 020 7625 1818 | Email: [housing@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:housing@innisfree.org.uk) | [www.innisfree.org.uk](http://www.innisfree.org.uk)

- to report a fault with your heating or hot water system press 1
- for all other repair and maintenance enquiries press 2
- to discuss your rent account or make a rent payment press 3
- for all other tenancy matters and general enquiries press 4



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