

*"Go n-éiri an bóthar leat..."*

*(May the road rise up to meet you)"*



## Welcomes and farewells



***As we come towards the end of the Calendar year, there are extra opportunities to look back at the year that's just finishing – but also to think ahead to the new year that's coming too – with the Christmas holiday period providing the backdrop for doing that.***

Many of us find time to reconnect with family and friends, with the conversations about how we “can’t believe another year is over!” As well as remembering tenants that we’ve lost during the year, in the last few weeks we have had the pleasure of welcoming tenants to our brand-new flats at Humphrey House in Mill Hill, our first homes in the LB Barnet.

My view of the last year is that it’s been a difficult one, but we’ve had some really positive things happen too, with the highlight being the new homes we’ve built. We continue to be very conscious of the cost-of-living pressures that affect us all – and we offer a range of support to anyone who is having particular difficulty, so please ask us about that.

It is so important that we know how things are going for you all. We’ve continued to carry out surveys and are really pleased at the high satisfaction rates that you’ve expressed. This year we’ve also had our group of Involved Residents meeting and offering their thoughts on our service, as well as a number of local resident forum meetings, so thank you to everyone who gave their time to be involved with those.

As I finish, I’m including some words from the London Irish musician, Shane McGowan, who died on 30 November – the same anniversary as two other Irish writers, Patrick Kavanagh and Oscar Wilde. Shane’s Irish roots were in Tipperary (the same County as my father) and he mentions some of the home places in this extract. But the message is one about longing for “home” – whatever city or country we’re from.

So with that note of fond memories can I wish everyone a very peaceful and Happy Christmas and New Year.

Nollaig Shona Duit

Best wishes

**John Delahunty, Chief Executive**



### The Broad Majestic Shannon

*I sat for a while at the cross at Finnoe*

*Where young lovers would meet when the  
flowers were in bloom*

*Heard the men coming from the fair at Shinrone*

*Their hearts in Tipperary wherever they roam*

By Shane McGowan

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## Our News

# We are looking for new Board Members



Like most housing associations, Innisfree is governed by a Board of Management and at the moment we are recruiting for two new Board Members – and we are particularly looking for people with skills in finance, audit and risk.

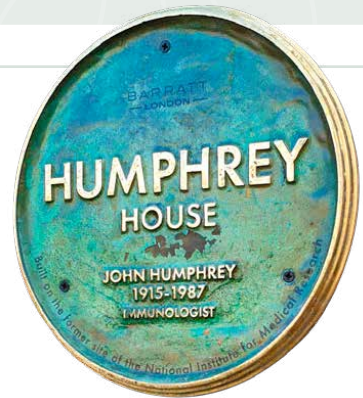
There are more details about the process and about our current Board Members on our website.

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 tenants. Board Members receive an allowance of £1500 per year to reflect the time commitment of preparing for and attending meetings.

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

## Welcome to our new tenants at Humphrey House, Mill Hill

We've mentioned the new homes we were having built in LB Barnet in previous editions of the newsletter – and right at the end of October we finally got the keys!



All of the new residents moved in during November and we want to thank them for their patience because there were a few weeks delay right at the end of the process – so they (and the Innisfree Team) were waiting and checking to find out when they'd all be able to move in. We got there in the end!

This is our opportunity to welcome the new residents to Innisfree – and we hope you'll all enjoy your new homes.

There are 13 new flats in the block which is called Humphrey House and it feels like it's perched on the top of the hill at Mill Hill! There are some great views out over the countryside from there.





# Irish in Britain – 50th anniversary 2023



We'd previously let you know that Irish in Britain, the organisation which supports lots of Irish organisations in the UK, had reached it's 50 anniversary and to celebrate, launched a major heritage project to mark the Anniversary this year. The project was made possible with generous funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and celebrates the enormous contribution made by the Irish community to life in Britain over the past half century.

The project involved getting people to tell their own stories about their journey from Ireland, what it was like when they arrived in Britain – and all sorts of details about the jobs they did, the hobbies they had, the people they were friends with – everything that helps to give an understanding of what it was like to be Irish in Britain. The conversations were recorded on audio (so no cameras!) and sometimes people shared items that had strong memories for them – tickets for concerts they had been to, letters from home, Irish Dancing dresses – and photos.

Our Innisfree Chief Executive, John Delahunty, volunteered to be trained to be one of the oral historians and recorded a conversation with his Mother and two of her friends, about their experience in the early 1950s going dancing at the Tara Club in Newcastle. The idea for the conversation came about because one of the signing in

books for the Club from 1946 to 1956 had recently been found and the three friends were remembering the people whose names and addresses were recorded there.

The exhibition has been on display in London, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham and all the items in it are going to have a permanent home in the London Metropolitan University archive of the Irish in Britain. It's all going to be available on-line so that people anywhere in the world can look at and listen to all the stories told.

We think we have some great stories that we could gather from some of our tenants too – so we'd love to hear from anyone who'd be happy to share their own experiences (and we might get John Delahunty to come and do some of the recordings!)



## Your Home

# Damp and mould

In most cases, the cause of condensation and mould in homes is due to too much water vapour in the air. Damp can be caused by everyday living or could be because of a fault in your home.

Our leaflet – available on our website – identifies the different types of damp, what can cause it and what you can do to reduce it. It also helps identify where it could be a fault in your property and how to report it.

Examples of problems that may cause damp and mould where a repair would help are:

- a leaking roof
- blocked gutters
- leaking pipework
- defective brickwork or rendering
- defective damp proof course
- defects around window frames

If you think mould is being caused by one of these issues you should report any concerns to our Maintenance Team on **020 7625 1818 (Option 2)**.

We will ask you some questions about damp or mould in your home and we may ask you to take some photos. We will probably arrange for one of our contractors to visit your home and provide us with a report on their findings. We will share that report with you and make a plan to resolve the issues.



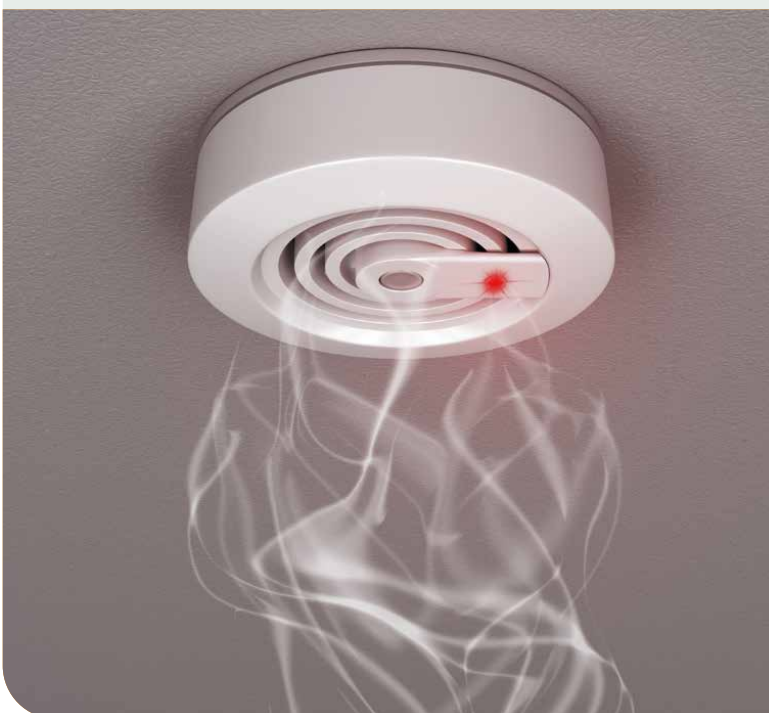
## Gas and carbon monoxide emergencies



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

- Do turn off the gas at the meter unless the meter is in a cellar/basement
- Don't smoke or strike matches
- Don't turn electrical switches on or off
- Do put out naked flames
- Do open doors and windows
- Do keep people away from the area affected.

If there is a fire you should dial 999 to call the Fire Service and follow the fire safety procedure for your building or the instructions given by the Fire Service.





## Our News

### Building safety works

We 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**.

### How long should repairs take?



When you report a repair to us, we will tell you which category your repair falls into and the estimated time we will take to deal with it. These categories help you know the estimated time we will take to deal with the repair. Some examples are:



More details and examples can be found at [www.innisfree.org.uk/residents/your-resident-handbook](http://www.innisfree.org.uk/residents/your-resident-handbook).

#### Emergency repairs

These affect your health and safety or the basic security of your home. We aim to deal with these within 24 hours though they may require some follow up work.

*Examples include total loss of power or water or a burst pipe.*

#### Urgent repairs

These are repairs which are not an emergency but may mean the loss of a basic facility or further damage may occur if it is not dealt with. We aim to deal with these within seven calendar days.

*Examples include stopcock problems, toilet not flushing (if it is the only one in the house) or taps which cannot be turned on.*

#### Non urgent repairs

These are repairs that can wait without causing major inconvenience. We aim to complete these within 28 calendar days.

*Examples include repairs to windows or internal doors (which are not a security risk), repairs to sanitary goods or repairs to letter boxes.*



## Tenant Issues

# We want to hear from you about how well we are doing!

**We welcome all feedback from our residents, whether it's a compliment, a suggestion, or a complaint.**



All the details about our policy on complaints is on our website and is included in our new tenancy packs as well. If you'd like a printed copy of the information, just call us on **020 7625 1818** and we'll pop one in the post, so you have it to hand at home.

To make sure that we don't miss out on anything that's been a disappointment for you with our service, we want to make it as easy as possible to let us know about any concern. Just call us, drop an email or use the website to give us the details.

Don't be surprised if you've let us know about something and we've responded to you to say that we are dealing with your "complaint" even if you haven't called it a complaint yourself!

Sometimes it works the other way too. If you let us know that you want to "complain" that there's been some fly tipping near your home, we will probably record that as a request to get it cleared away rather than as a "complaint".

The really important message from us though is that we just want to make sure we have heard if anything needs to be dealt with.

## Introducing Tenant satisfaction measures

All social housing landlords are regulated by the Regulator for Social Housing. They have set 22 measures that all landlords must measure and publish annually. These are called Tenant Satisfaction Measures or TSMs.

Some of these measures are based in information that Innisfree has already (10 landlord management information measures), and others are captured by surveying residents (12 tenant perception measures).

These measures are used by the regulator to track our performance and are also for you – so that you can see how we are doing in all the areas that are important to you.

## Staying safe online guidance



**It can be quite easy to be taken in by online fraudsters so here are some tips to help you stay safe online.**

- Choose your passwords carefully and try to use a different one for each online account.
- Make sure you have some internet security software installed and updated on your computer.
- Be careful in wi-fi hotspots such as cafes – they may not always be secure.
- Don't give away too much personal or financial information in emails or on social media.
- Don't click on links in emails or posts unless you know who has sent it to you.

Take your time and think twice, because everything may not be as it seems. For more advice go to [www.getsafeonline.org](http://www.getsafeonline.org).



# Budgeting tips for Christmas

Our top tips to avoid over-spending this Christmas.

- Make a list and check it twice – buying on impulse can be dangerously expensive.
- Make your own Christmas cards – it's a great way to spend time with your family, gives a personalised greeting, and can save you money.
- When decorating your Christmas tree and house, switch to LED Christmas lights to reduce your energy consumption by up to 90%, and they last longer!
- Turn your fairy lights off when you leave the house or go to bed, this will save on your bills and reduce the risk of fire.
- Watch out for illegal money lenders or loan sharks. Try a credit union instead!
- Give an IOU – If you're planning a large purchase like a TV or games console, consider waiting for the January sales. Instead give a nicely wrapped IOU, telling them you're waiting for the sales.

You can find more Christmas money tips from [www.nationaldebtline.org](http://www.nationaldebtline.org) and [www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com).



## Staying warm this winter

As temperatures drop, we need to make the most of the heat from our heating. Here are some useful tips:



- When it gets dark, close your curtains to keep your room warm.
- Turn down the radiator and close the doors to rooms you don't use.
- Make sure your radiators are not blocked by furniture or curtains, as there needs to be space around them to heat your rooms fully.
- Turning the thermostat down can reduce your energy bills but 18C is a good level if you are older, vulnerable or have young children.

For more useful tips, visit [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) – Keeping warm and well: Staying safe in cold weather.



**My Home**  
Contents Insurance

Your tenancy agreement with us does not cover insuring the contents of your home – that is down to you. It's a good idea to consider what a home contents insurance policy would cover you for to help you decide whether you need one.

Contents insurance is designed to help protect your possessions. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged or stolen.

Thistle provides the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme, a Tenants Contents Insurance policy designed for tenants living in social housing. The My Home Contents Insurance Scheme can offer you insurance for the contents of your home including cover for items such as furniture, carpets, curtains, clothes, bedding, electrical items, jewellery, pictures and ornaments.

How do you get further information?  
Call Thistle Tenant Risks on **0345 450 7288** or visit [www.thistlemyhome.co.uk](http://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk) for more information or to request a call back.

## Opening Hours

# Christmas opening hours and out of hours service



Monday	25th December	Christmas Day	Closed
Tuesday	26th December	Boxing Day	Closed
Wednesday	27th December		Closed
Thursday	28th December		Closed
Friday	29th December		Closed
Saturday	30th December		Closed
Sunday	31st December		Closed
Monday	1st January	New Year's Day	Closed

While the office is closed, emergency repairs will be dealt with by our out-of-hours repairs service. Please call **020 7625 1818** and select **option 1**. Please note, non-urgent repairs will be dealt with when the office re-opens.

To find out which repairs qualify as an emergency, please see our webpage [www.innisfree.org.uk/residents/your-resident-handbook/repairs-and-maintenance](http://www.innisfree.org.uk/residents/your-resident-handbook/repairs-and-maintenance)



*Season's greetings and a happy new year to you all!*

### 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



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE  
We invest in people Silver

Irish  
in Britain

BME  
national



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade