

An NÚacht “The News”



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

Learning to live in a year of constant change



As I’ll be writing in many of my Christmas cards –
*“I can’t believe another year is nearly over!
 It’s been another year unlike many we’ve had before.
 How’s everyone been?”*

But it’s strange how lots of us have also found some good in the unusual times – and that’s the case for us at Innisfree too.

During this time, we are even more keen to hear how things are going for you. We’ve mention of our Board members being really interested to have a chance to have conversations with you and also the opportunities to get more involved in our formal processes – as well as a new opportunity to join with tenants of some other London Housing Associations in a new BME tenants Forum.

During lockdown, one particular poem of the Belfast-born writer Derek Mahon seemed to lift the mood:

*The sun rises in spite of everything
 And the far cities are beautiful
 and bright
 I lie here in a riot of sunlight
 Watching the day break and the
 clouds flying.
 Everything is going to be all right.*

I think you know what I mean.

We all probably expected the effect of Covid-19 on our day-to-day lives to have reduced a lot by now – and to some extent is has. But it’s not back to normal like before the pandemic. We’ll all have to get used to some permanent changes.

On Covid-19, I’d mentioned earlier in the year the great prospect of the vaccine being available – and the importance of us all taking that opportunity to protect both ourselves and others. The latest news of a new variant of Covid is making me expect that we’ll have to take precautions again – possibly for much longer than we expected.

In the newsletter, we mention some new ways that we’ve adopted to improve services – the Noise App and the Estate Inspections App. Technology is great in its place, but nothing will replace the personal touch that we still think is the best way for connecting to you.

We are also very conscious of the rising cost of living – and we’re seeing costs rise for the organisation just as all of us are seeing the higher prices in our household budgets for essentials like fuel and food too. We’ve got some money saving tips in this newsletter and we’ll continue to look for others like this to pass on to you.

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

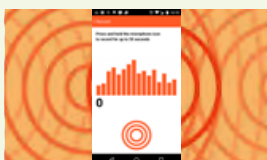
Nollaig Shona Duit

Best wishes



John Delahunty
 Chief Executive

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Our service improvements

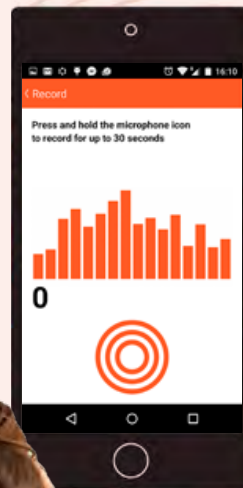
Suffering from noise nuisance? Download The Noise App.

Noise can be really difficult to resolve without evidence. We try really hard, but unless we know what the issue is and there is evidence, it can be really complicated. Up until now, you would have had to fill out time consuming paper diary sheets for submission to your Housing Officer for investigation.

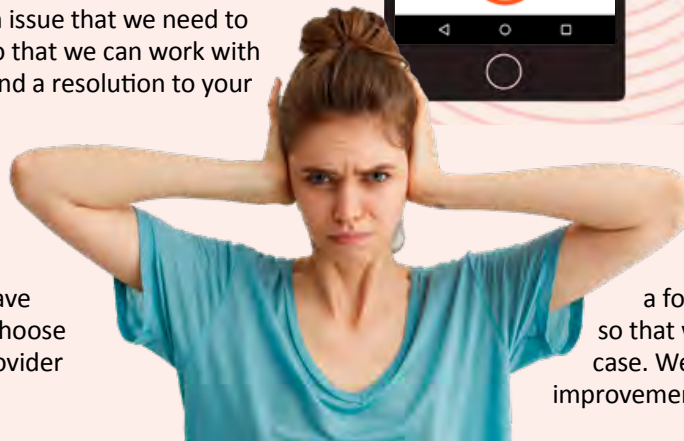
NOW! Introducing the 'Noise App'! This gives you a simple way to capture noise on your smart mobile or tablet if it is too loud and you feel it is causing a nuisance. It allows you to report it – safely and securely – directly to your local authority's anti-social behaviour unit.

It also helps us if you have an issue that we need to investigate on your behalf, so that we can work with your neighbours to try and find a resolution to your noise problems.

You can download the app to your smart phone or tablet using either Google Play or Apple. Just search for 'The Noise App'. Once you have created your login, you can choose 'Innisfree' as your service provider from the dropdown list.



the
noise
app



It will then give you the opportunity to download a 30 second recording, complete a form and submit your report so that we can help investigate your case. We hope you find this service improvement useful.

You said, we did: Estate Inspections

We've been listening to you. One of the things you have told us is that sometimes our estates aren't looked after as well as they could be.



To help improve our services in this area our officers have started using an application called **Photobook**.

This is an online application that enables us to conduct building and estate inspections quickly and report directly back to HQ. The application will help our frontline teams ensure that we are meeting the standards you expect from us. We hope that you will see an improvement over the coming months.

Our Housing Officer, Holly, said "The new Photobook app has made estate inspections so much easier! No more carrying lots of paperwork around, struggling to write notes while you take pictures. The app lets you make notes and take photos as you walk around the estate, then it sends the final report to you back at your desk."

If you would like to join your Housing Officer on an estate inspection please let us know residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk or call **020 7692 1247**.

Green Doctors: support to save on your energy bills this winter



As part of the charity 'Groundwork London', Green Doctors are a team of expert energy advisers. For 15 years Green Doctors have been helping households in London save money, stay warm and improve energy efficiency in their homes.

Green Doctors can provide you with access to free phone consultations or home visits in which energy advisers can give you personalised advice and support on how to save money and stay warm this winter.

This can include support to install a free Smart Meter in your home, installing energy saving items such as draft proofing strips, as well as fuel debt management advice.

Green Doctors can also complete referrals for support services and financial aid to help you keep on top of your bills, including:

- The Warm Home Discount (£140 one-off discount on your electricity bill)
- Water Help (50% discount on your water bill)
- Water Sure (to cap your water bill)

If you require any support in making a referral to Green Doctors, Innisfree can help you. Please contact your Resident Engagement Officer:

- By telephone: **020 7692 1247**
- By email: residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk



Warm Home Discount Scheme

If you are on a low income or receive the Guarantee Element of Pension Credit you could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2021 to 2022 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The money is not paid to you – it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between October and March.

You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out. You can still qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter.

The discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

Pre Payment Meters vs Credit Meters

Switching from a prepayment meter to a credit meter or smart meter could save you money on your energy bills.

A prepayment meter is a type of domestic energy meter that uses a 'pay-as-you-go' tariff and requires consumers to pay for their gas and electricity in advance. With a credit meter, you pay for energy used in the preceding month or quarter but this should put you on a better tariff.

Switching from prepayment to credit means a new meter has to be physically installed in your home, you would need to check with your provider to see if there is a fee for this. If you owe money to your energy supplier you can still make the switch provided you owe no more than £500, and you'll have to arrange a payment plan to get this debt settled.

Contact your energy supplier to find out whether you are eligible for a credit meter, or call Green Doctors (above) for more advice.

Struggling with your energy bills?



We can help.

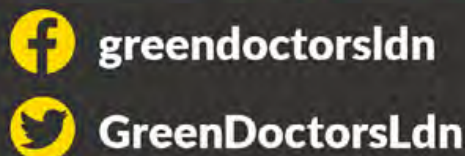
We are a charity which helps residents to save money, stay warm, and improve energy efficiency in their homes by offering free and impartial telephone energy and wellbeing advice.

Our advice sessions are available to anyone on a low income OR over 65 years-old OR with a long term health condition or disability OR with children under 5.

Your Green Doctor will help you:

- Save money on your energy bills
- Switch energy providers
- Access prepayment meter support
- Access the Warm Homes Discount
- Apply for grants for energy or water debt
- Get additional wellbeing support

Visit greendoctors-london.org or call **0300 365 3005** to book an **energy and wellbeing advice session** or to find out more.



Innisfree Board members to join satisfaction calls to residents

This is a picture of all of the Innisfree Board Members. One of the questions they regularly ask at meetings is *“How is it going for tenants?”*



Every three months we report the results of the surveys we send out to you – giving the figures for how satisfied you are with the service.

During the last year, you may have noticed we have been giving you more information about ways you might want to get more involved with us at Innisfree. Iona, our Resident Engagement Officer, has had many conversations with tenants to explain the options and encourage more people to be involved. For us, the result we hope to get from hearing more from you is that we can provide a better service.

Board Members are also very keen to hear directly from you. For the Spring, we are planning visits to schemes to involve both the Staff Team and Board Members – all of us coming to knock on your doors to get your feedback. (Don't worry, we'll let everyone know before we land on your doorsteps!). In the meantime, we are also going to have Board Members join us on some of the calls we make to you already for our satisfaction surveys – and they are looking forward to speaking to some of you then.

Resident Involvement

TPAS Membership and Training



The Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) is a non-profit organisation seeking to promote, support and champion tenant involvement and empowerment in social housing across England.

Innisfree want to make sure that our residents' voices play a central part in shaping our services. To ensure you feel best equipped to do so, we wanted to make you aware of the TPAS membership opportunities available to you, free of charge, as a tenant with Innisfree.

As an Innisfree resident, you have access to a TPAS resident membership, free of charge.

This membership enables our residents to access;

- TPAS resource HUB;
- TPAS advisory service for tenants;
- TPAS online tenant networking group;

- A variety of training and self-development opportunities;
- As well as the opportunity to participate in live webinars, roundtables, focus groups and workshops; giving you the opportunity to share your experiences, gain expert advice and shape policy developments on key issues that matter to you.

If you have any further questions or you would like to express your interest in getting involved, please contact your Resident Engagement Officer:

Telephone: **020 7692 1247**

Email: residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk

More information on TPAS can be accessed at:

TPAS website: www.tpas.org.uk

Telephone: **0161 868 3500**

Email: info@tpas.org.uk

Join the new BMELL Tenants Forum

Since our founding, Innisfree has drawn from the experience of the Irish communities migrating to London to speak up for the communities we work with. In recent years, as well as continuing to represent the Irish community, we have started to engage in the wider conversation about the inequalities faced by people from all Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities.



As part of this commitment, we are a member of BME National, a collective of housing associations around the country with their roots in different BME communities, and have also been working with other London-based BME housing Associations.

BMELL, the London-based group of 13 BME landlords, is setting up the first BME Tenants Forum. This Forum will bring together tenants from all of those landlords, and is intended to be an opportunity to have tenant voices heard and influence policy delivery on the issues that matter to you. We expect that the new BME Tenants Forum will be able to speak directly to London politicians and decision makers so that your experiences of living in London today are heard loud and clear.

If you identify as being part of any ethnic minority background – and remember that includes Irish and Gypsy/Roma/Traveller backgrounds too – and would like to be involved in shaping service delivery and policy design, Innisfree want to make sure your voice is heard within this Forum.

Your involvement will be flexible based upon your schedule and availability. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 27th January and will be held online.

If you would like to hear more, please get in touch with Iona, your Resident Engagement Officer, via:

Email: residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk

Telephone: **020 7692 1247**

Repairs: Your responsibilities – a reminder

Just a quick reminder of some of the repairs to your home that would be your responsibility, they are:

- internal redecoration
- blocked sink/bath/basin wastes (blocked by waste/food/hair etc)
- blocked toilets (blocked by nappies, sanitary towels/excessive toilet paper/baby wipes/anything else that has been put in or fallen into the toilet by accident)
- re-lighting pilot lights and re-setting the boiler (including resetting your timer after a power cut)
- repairs, where necessary, after alterations, improvements or other work you have carried out or organised
- replacing clothes lines and rotary dryers (except in shared blocks and sheltered schemes)
- replacing floor coverings except permanent coverings such as quarry/vinyl tiles
- getting back into your home if you are locked out, lost keys (including changing locks, replacing keys, providing new fobs and any additional keys or locks required)
- repair or replacement of chains and plugs on basins, baths and sinks
- minor repairs e.g. tightening loose screws or cupboard door hinges
- broken glass in doors and windows
- repair or replacement of internal doors, including replacing door handles, locks etc
- replacement of toilet seats, toilet roll holders, shower heads and hoses, rails and shower curtains
- minor plaster cracks and gaps between skirting boards and floors
- bleeding radiators
- pest control in your home
- garden maintenance (except in communal areas)
- any damage caused to your home by members of the household or visitors

Please note: if we fix any of the above issues for you, you will be recharged. If you have any queries please contact our Maintenance Department.



Holiday Season Opening Hours and Emergency Repair Service

Thursday	23rd December	9.00am - 5.00pm
Friday	24th December - Christmas Eve	Closed
Saturday	25th December - Christmas Day	Closed
Sunday	26th December - Boxing Day	Closed
Monday	27th December	Closed
Tuesday	28th December	Closed
Wednesday	29th December	Closed
Thursday	30th December	Closed
Friday	31st December	Closed
Saturday	1st January - New Year's Day	Closed
Sunday	2nd January	Closed
Monday	3rd January	Closed
Tuesday	4th January	9.00am - 5.00pm



Whilst the office is closed emergency repairs will be made safe 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/

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

Like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/InnisfreeHousingAssociation/



Have you liked our Facebook page yet? Keep up-to-date with activities and opportunities offered through Innisfree. You can also use the page to send an email to a member of our team.



Innisfree

Who to contact

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

- 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

www.innisfree.org.uk

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

Tel: **020 7625 1818**

Email: housing@innisfree.org.uk