

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



## Welcome to the Spring edition of our newsletter

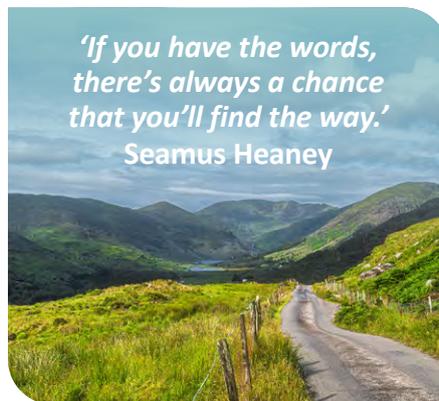


***When will that "new normal" be starting?  
Because it does seem as though there's still a lot  
going on in the world at the moment.***

I know nearly a dozen people (my own Mother included) who've just had Covid-19. The lockdown rules might have been relaxed, but there are still precautions that we need to take.

And then there's the inflation on energy and petrol prices. A few of us in the office are big fans of Martin Lewis' MoneySavingExpert - and we're all going to need a few Best Buy tips in the next few months.

But don't these things fall into perspective when we see the news coverage of people in Ukraine fleeing their homes because of the Russian invasion? It's shocking and sad – and it



creates a natural worry for many of us about what will happen next.

So, we need to stay grounded. Feel our feet and the ground under them.

We're going to be alright.

For Innisfree, the big picture for us is to see people "enjoying healthy and fulfilling lives" with the best contribution we can make to that being to keep your homes comfortable, safe and secure.

Our Innisfree Team are still here ready to help. We've still got a great set of contractors who get the jobs done in your homes. So, please just ask if you think we can help.

Best wishes

**John Delahunty**  
Chief Executive

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## Competition

# Just Launched: Innisfree Creative Gardens Competition 2022

Back in 2019, we ran a brilliant Gardening Competition and had some wonderful entries. Unfortunately, the pandemic put paid to continuing it for 2020 and 2021, so we are really excited to finally be able to launch our 2022 competition!

As the weather warms up and the flowers begin to bloom, we want to showcase your gardens and outdoor spaces! Are they full of colour, bees and wildlife, do you have some fantastic trees or have you created some amazing edible goodness? Have you been busy in lockdown creating some amazing gardens? We would like to hear from you!

Early Bird entries that are received by **30 April 2022** can receive a small grant to help buy plants and materials. Grants available are £15 for hanging baskets or window boxes, £20 for a small space patio or balcony edible garden, £25 for an individual garden/wildlife garden, and £25 for a communal garden.

To enter you will need to contact Innisfree for application details and terms and conditions – so give us

a call on **020 7625 1818**. You can also contact us by email at: [housing@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:housing@innisfree.org.uk) or you can find competition details on our website here: [www.innisfree.org.uk/news](http://www.innisfree.org.uk/news)

The final closing date for ALL entries is 1 June 2022, the judging day will be at the end of June.



The voucher prizes and categories are as follows:

- Best individual garden – £100
- Best hanging baskets or window boxes – £50
- Spectacular small space patio or balcony – £75
- Best garden for wildlife – £100
- Best community project or communal garden (with proof of communal working) – £100
- Best edible garden – £75

We look forward to receiving your entries!

## More new homes for Innisfree

We told you about the new homes we had completed at the end of 2020 at Waterfront Heights in Alperton, Brent and we are pleased to let you know that we have more in the pipeline!

We are going to have our first homes in the LB of Barnet later this year, with a scheme in Mill Hill on the site of the old National Institute for Medical Research and we'll have 16 new flats

on a bigger development being built by Barratt London, with other homes being managed by L&Q Homes.

Closer to home, on Aylesbury Street in Neasden, Brent we have just signed the contract with Helix Construct to build us nine new flats on a piece of land that was an unused site owned by TfL. For any of you passing the site, the hoarding is up and the signs will be going up soon – for Innisfree and also for the GLA, because we've had funding from City Hall to help meet the cost of the new homes.



This scheme should be ready for people to move into by the summer of 2023 and we have an artist's impression of the way the building will look here.

## Resident Involvement

# Our annual report to you

Enclosed with this newsletter is our annual report to you. We hope you find it interesting and would appreciate your feedback on any of the content, or if you feel we should include information on other things for next year.

## Resident involvement

Some of you will have met or spoken to Iona who was leading our work at Innisfree on our Tenant Engagement Project. She had joined us on a scheme for new graduates run by an organisation called Charity Works who help to get new graduates their first work opportunities after leaving study.

We are delighted that, based on the experience of working at Innisfree, Iona was successful in getting a role with a Government Department – although we are sad to see her go.

We are recruiting a new member of the team to take a lead on our Resident Engagement Work, so we'll make an introduction in a future edition of the newsletter. We'd be delighted if some of you would be willing to be involved in choosing that new person – so please contact us on [residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk) if this would be something that would interest you.



We've previously mentioned the new BME London Tenants Forum for tenants of the twelve BME landlords in London, which includes Innisfree. The group have had two online meetings so far but none of our tenants have been able to join the meetings yet. Again, if you'd be interested, please let us know and we could arrange to have you speak to Khalid, who is coordinating the meetings, to explain how it works.

## Board members join our satisfaction calls!

As reported in the last newsletter, one of the questions our Board regularly asks is "how's it going for tenants?"

Early in January some of our Board members joined in with our satisfaction calls so they could talk to you directly. Some of you may have spoken to them when we called.



Board Member – Ciara Chivers said *"I found it useful to hear the sorts of issues that tenants raised on the calls and to see how they were dealt with – I was impressed with how well Holly handled them. It was also lovely to hear the very positive comments about Innisfree staff."*

We will be reporting back to the Board at its next meeting in May with a view to this being a regular exercise.

Thank you to everyone who took part and giving such positive feedback.

**Our policies:  
thank you for  
your feedback!**

Thank you to every one who responded to our policy consultation! We have taken your comments on board and we will be publishing the policies on our website shortly.

## Our Services

# Welcome to our new website!

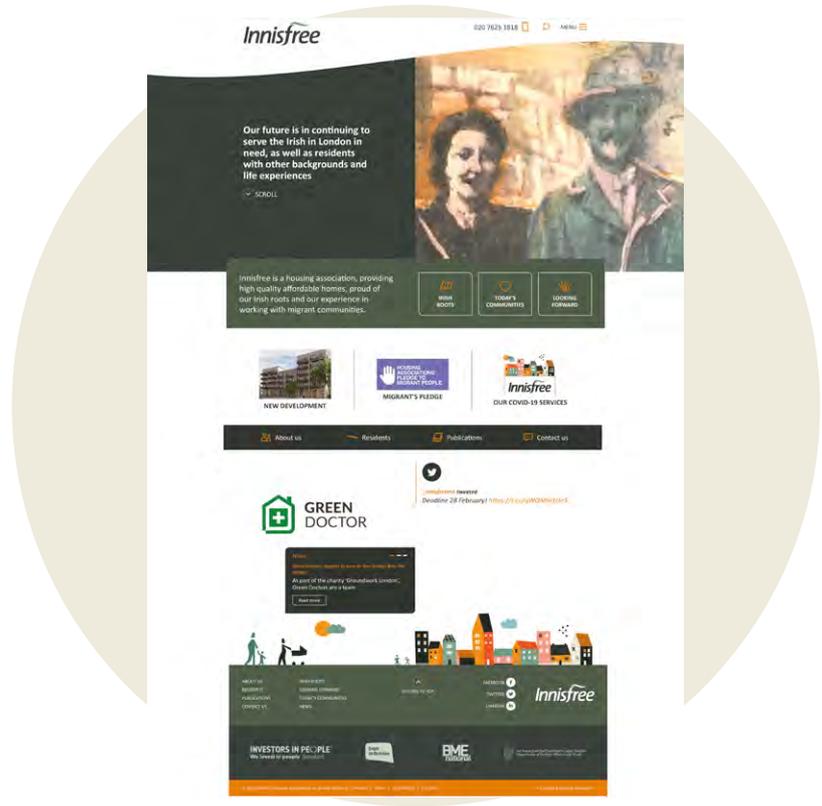
Innisfree is really pleased to launch its new website [www.innisfree.org.uk](http://www.innisfree.org.uk). The overhaul was long overdue and we hope that you find the new site more attractive and user friendly when accessing information.

The site has a brand new 'Residents' section where you can report repairs and view your rent statements using My Tenancy, you can pay your rent, and we also have a new online complaints form.

We have also included three new sections which tell our story – Irish Roots, Today's Communities, and Looking Forward. Please have a look and let us know what you think!

If you have any feedback on the new website please email us at [info@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:info@innisfree.org.uk).

The eagle eyed amongst you will also see that our newsletter has had a refresh in line with the design of the new website! We will be rolling out this refreshed branding over the next few months. We hope you like it!



## Just a nudge – 'My Tenancy'

Are you a busy working person who struggles to get in touch with us during working hours? Don't forget that you can sign up to My Tenancy on our website here: [innisfree.mytenancy.co.uk/signin](http://innisfree.mytenancy.co.uk/signin)

My Tenancy allows you to:

- pay your rent online;
- look at your rent account to see recent transactions;
- place a repair request;
- view your repair order history and see any outstanding repairs;
- download documents relating to your tenancy, such as your tenancy agreement;
- see the personal information we have about you.

And you can do this 24/7! If you would like to find out more, call us on: **020 7625 1818** for a chat or check out our web article here which explains how to sign up: [www.innisfree.org.uk/news/how-to-use-your-online-account/](http://www.innisfree.org.uk/news/how-to-use-your-online-account/)





## Our Services

# Our repairs promise to you

When you report a repair to us, we will tell you what category we consider the repair falls into and the estimated time we will take to deal with it, as set out below.

**Emergency Repairs** – these are repairs which may affect your health and safety or the basic security of the property, such as loss of electricity/gas/water, insecure door/window/locks, lift failure, fire alarm failure.

We aim to attend to emergency repairs within 24 hours to make sure your health and safety is not at risk or to avoid damage to the building structure. Any follow-on works will be attended to within our repair timescales.

**Urgent Repairs** – these are repairs which 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, such as running overflows or blocked sinks.

We aim to attend and complete urgent repairs within seven calendar days of the repair being reported.

**Non-urgent Repairs** – if your repair is non-urgent, you can email details 24 hours a day 7 days a week to [maintenance@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@innisfree.org.uk). Or you can report it to us using 'My Tenancy'.

These are repairs that do not require immediate attention and can wait to be repaired without causing inconvenience to you and will not cause further damage to your home in the short-term.

We aim to attend and complete routine repairs within 28 calendar days of the repair being reported.

If you have a suspected gas leak or your carbon monoxide detector is activated, you should contact Cadent on **0800 111 999** immediately at any time of the day or night.



## Health & Safety

# Escape of water – what should you do?

Escape of water is when water enters your property by the mains water supply and has escaped from a pipe or tank and has caused damage to your property. This could be because of blockages and overflows, faulty heating, burst pipes or even a faulty washing machine.



## If you have a leak, what should you do?

Providing it is safe to do so, you should:

- turn off the main water supply for your home to prevent further damage;
- turn off the power. Do not touch your electrical supply if you have to stand in water to turn off the mains electricity;
- contact us as soon as possible;
- move any furniture or personal items away from the water to prevent further damage being done;
- take some photos of the damage.

Once you have reported the issue, we will get someone out to carry out emergency repairs within 24 hours. Once we have received a report back we will then contact you to let you know the timescale for any further repairs that may be required.

Please note, although we can repair your property, you will need to have home contents insurance to cover your belongings and other things such as carpets and furniture.

## Lost or stolen house keys?

Whether you have misplaced them, they have been stolen, or maybe you've damaged them – losing your house keys can be extremely stressful and rather inconvenient.

As an Innisfree tenant you are responsible for lost keys and should report this to us immediately, especially if you live in a communal block. If you think your keys have been stolen, you should also report this to the police.

Here are our top tips on how to help keep your house keys safe:

- give your keys a home or designated spot, so you can put them in a safe place and always know where they are;
- attach a big, bold keyring to your keys so it makes them easier to see as well as grip. A key on its own can be easily dropped or hard to find;
- when out and about, keep your keys secure in a safe place such as a secure bag or pocket;
- consider attaching a tracking device to your keys, most of these devices work in conjunction with an app on your smart phone;
- if you have misplaced your keys, try to remain calm, the more stressed you become, the harder it will be for you to recall where you had your keys last;
- have a replacement key handy just in case, keep your spare key somewhere safe and out of sight, or even with a trusted friend or neighbour.

We do not keep spare keys for your home. You are responsible for looking after your own keys and must pay for any replacement or changes of locks should you lose them or if they are stolen. If you have Home Contents insurance you may be covered for lost/stolen keys so check your policy before getting in touch.

We do keep extra copies of communal door keys (eg for block entrance doors to flats) so you can buy a replacement from us if needed, but you will need to collect them from the office.



The My Home Contents Insurance Scheme is part of our partnership with the National Housing Federation. As well as all your other contents, this covers the replacement and installation of locks for outside doors or windows, and alarms for your home.



**My Home**  
Contents Insurance

For more information call **0345 450 7288** or visit [www.thistlemyhome.co.uk](http://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk).

## Sustainability

# Sustainability begins at home!

The spring storms have shown that climate change is no longer a minor issue.

Innisfree, as a housing association, has a critical role to play in delivering the government's ambition for net zero carbon emissions by 2050 as a response to the climate crisis. Over the next year we will be consciously looking at how we can improve the energy efficiency of our homes. But we would like you to help us too!

So, what can you do? We all need to look at the demands we make on nature while ensuring that people's needs – both this generation and future ones – can still be met. But this doesn't have to be difficult, it will just take a thoughtful approach to how and why we make our household decisions.



### For example:



#### Before you use your gas, electricity or water ask yourself:

- can I reduce my use?
- can I get the same service from a renewable source?
- can I be more efficient?



#### Before shopping ask yourself:

- do I really need it?
- how was this item produced?
- how does this product affect my health, chemical ingredients etc?
- what will I do with this when I no longer need it?



#### When travelling ask yourself:

- do I really need to go?
- can I go somewhere local?
- can I use public transport or walk?



#### Before throwing something away ask yourself:

- can I reuse this?
- can someone else reuse this?
- can I recycle this?
- can I reduce my waste, composting etc?

We will be featuring sustainability a lot more in our newsletters but, for now, please have a look at: <https://www.which.co.uk/news/2021/11/the-10-best-simple-ways-you-can-be-more-sustainable/>

# Green Doctors – saving you money

We just wanted to remind you about our partnership with Green Doctors London. We have put a number of people in touch with them, and all have found it useful.

Looking at recent reports, inflation is likely to rise to at least 5.5% and our fuel bills are going through the roof. Green Doctors are a team of expert energy advisers who, for 15 years, have been helping households in London save money, stay warm and improve energy efficiency in their homes.

Please do give them a ring if you are struggling, or would like to know what you can do to save on your energy bills. You can have a free phone consultation or even a home visit where their energy advisers can give you personalised advice and support on how to save money and stay warm. This can include support to install a free Smart Meter in your home, installing energy saving items such as draught proofing strips as well as fuel debt management advice and potential funding to help you through the hard times.

Contact Green Doctors here:

- online: <https://groundwork.secure.force.com/enquiry>
- by telephone: **0300 365 3005** (freephone number)
- by email: [greendoctorsldn@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:greendoctorsldn@groundwork.org.uk)



## Credit unions

Times are hard, and they are getting harder. Here at Innisfree we would implore you not to use loan sharks or payday loans. An alternative is credit unions, they are a different kind of bank. They make it simple to borrow at low rates, and to build savings for the future. As a credit union, they are not-for-profit, and exist to serve the community.

As a member of a credit union, you would own part of the credit union through your shares. The members own, control, and administer the Society (the credit union). Because you are a member and partial owner, the credit union works for you. You would have access to ethical and affordable loans and more financial advice as to which loan product is best for you.

You can join at the same time as you apply for a loan or savings account. To find out more about your local credit union go to [creditunion.co.uk](http://creditunion.co.uk) or call **020 3773 1751**.

## How we can help you!

Because of the pressures on household budgets, our Board wanted us to offer more support to anyone who was struggling to balance their spending against their income.

Therefore, we are planning to provide a new, specialist service for tenants – advice from a Tenancy Sustainment Officer who will be able to give guidance on a wide range of personal finance topics, including dealing with debt, maximising income from benefits and dealing with sudden unexpected costs (such as if your cooker or washing machine breaks down).

We are joining with three other smaller housing associations to provide this service and we are recruiting someone to take on this role now. When the service is up and running, we will let you know and explain how to arrange to use it.

## Community

# London Irish Centre: Information and Advice



Did you know that the London Irish Centre provides specialist accredited information and advice on a wide range of welfare issues to the Irish Community?

The LIC also provides support to people who are in crisis or need logistical help. They offer advice in the following areas:



- welfare benefits;
- housing;
- obtaining Irish birth certificates and passports;
- returning to Ireland;
- moving to London;
- applying for a National Insurance Number;
- opening a bank account;
- Irish & UK pension advice.

They also have two types of hardship grants available for those who are struggling or in crisis.

For full details on any of the above issues, including The Benevolent Society of St. Patrick grant, and the Irish Youth Foundation grant contact them at: [info@londonirishcentre.org](mailto:info@londonirishcentre.org) or call **0207 916 2222**.

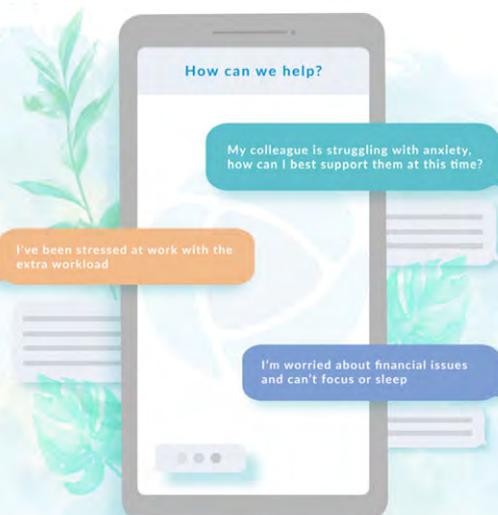
## Looking after your mental health

Many of us are finding life particularly challenging at the moment. It's important that we take time to reflect on our own mental health needs and those of others.

If you or someone you know is struggling, you can find a range of advice and resources on the NHS website: [nhs.uk/mental-health](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health).

There is also NHS Thrive a game-based app that helps you prevent and manage stress, anxiety and related conditions.

If you feel you need to speak to someone urgently, whatever you are going through, you can call the Samaritans free at any time, from any phone, on **116 123**.





## Help to work: Learn Plus Us Free Accredited Courses to Develop Your Skills

Sometimes we all need a hand. Could you do with some additional skills to help you into employment, or to help you progress in your current job?

Learn Plus Us offers fully funded, free and accredited self-development courses for individuals living across London. The English course can help you demonstrate your ability to read, speak, write, listen and communicate, and the Maths

course will give you the basic fundamentals in mathematical knowledge and skills. Both can be completed remotely and flexibly, based upon your personal commitments.

### Learn PLUS US

Various courses are available, dependent upon your availability and goals:

- **Entry Level 1 & 2 Functional Skills English and Mathematics**  
Awarding Body: NCFE / CACHE  
Total Qualifying Time: 61 hours
- **Level 1 Functional Skills English and Mathematics**  
Awarding Body: NCFE / CACHE  
Total Qualifying Time: 12 weeks / 66 hours
- **Level 2 Functional Skills English and Mathematics**  
Awarding Body: NCFE / CACHE  
Total Qualifying Time: 12 weeks / 66 hours



If you would like to hear more information about available courses, you can visit the Learn Plus Us website at: <https://learnplusus.co.uk/>

Alternatively, you can contact a member of the Learn Plus Us Team: telephone: **020 8444 4304** (between 9am-5.30pm Monday to Friday) email: [sandile@learnplusus.co.uk](mailto:sandile@learnplusus.co.uk)

## Love London Working programme

The Love London Working Programme is an employment support programme run by a partnership of Housing Associations.

The Love London Working Programme is a pan-London employment programme designed to support any unemployed London resident over the age of 16 into employment through a tailored programme and a range of interventions including vocational training, online training, digital skills, CV writing, mock interviews and direct access to employers.

You would be enrolled onto the programme and allocated an adviser who will work with you on a 1-1 basis in a holistic way to address any barriers, improve confidence and equip you with the tools to improve your readiness for work.



Please contact your housing officer for more information – **020 7625 1818** or go to [www.lovelondonworking.com](http://www.lovelondonworking.com) for more information.

## Our News

# BRENT: Skip it don't fly-tip it – get rid of your bulky waste for free!



Are you wondering what to do with an old sofa, washing machine or mattress? Looking to clear out a room or freshen up your home?



Brent Council's community skips are back again, ready to take your unwanted bulky waste and recycle it or give it a new home. The skip will be touring the borough, visiting each of Brent's 21 wards.

You can drop off up to five bulky items free of charge, as long as you can show proof of a Brent address.

You can find out when the community skip is coming to your area here: [www.brent.gov.uk/news-in-brent/2022/february-22/community-skips](http://www.brent.gov.uk/news-in-brent/2022/february-22/community-skips)

If you live in a different borough please check with your local authority to see what services they offer.

## Like us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/InnisfreeHousingAssociation/](http://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.



### 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



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