

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



Nearly Christmas? Has winter even started yet?



I'd expect that many of you would have heard – or even said – something like this. And the weather is not just confusing us – I saw some geraniums blooming this week, outside a building I was visiting!



But in the conversations about preparing for the holiday celebrations, a regular theme has been the cost-of-living pressures that we are facing – and that's something that we are looking at constantly at the moment at Innisfree too.

Some of you would know that because we've been doing some extra surveys recently, wanting to know how you are dealing with things in your own homes.

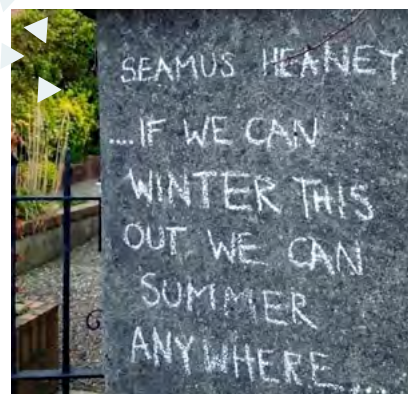
I hope you don't feel that we've been prying into your business by asking the questions? For us, we just want to have an understanding of how things are going so that we can try to

help – and you'll see there's a range of types of support mentioned later in the newsletter.

As we get ready for the start of a New Year, I'd take the opportunity to say again we'll always be keen to be in conversation with you, knowing what's going on for you – so look out for ways to connect with us in 2023.

I've used these words of the poet Seamus Heaney before – but I'll get them out again (see opposite).

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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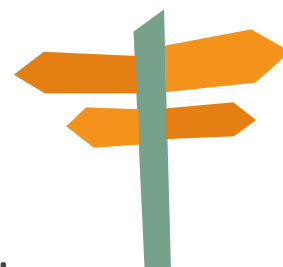


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Our news

Our Board – on tour!



As part of our Resident Engagement Strategy, our Board requested that they make regular visits to some of our properties and meet our residents.

This year we took them to see Innisfree House, winner of one of our 2022 Creative Gardens Competition Awards, where they met up with one of the residents and had a tour of his amazingly immaculate flat. After that they popped to Clochar Court also one of our Garden competition winners, where they had a tour of the grounds, a visit to the Men's Shed, and a quick cup of tea. We also drove by some of our other properties such as Belsize Road to give Board members a view of the range of properties we manage.

Our Chair, Kevin Hartnett said: **"Our residents are at the centre of every decision we take at the Board. We get a lot of feedback on our services throughout the year, but nothing beats getting out and talking to people. I really appreciated our discussions and look forward to speaking with lots more residents in the coming months."**

“ ”

We hope that in future, when our Board members go on visits to our properties, they will be able to meet up with more of our residents so that they can talk to you directly about our services.

Innisfree House



Clochar Court



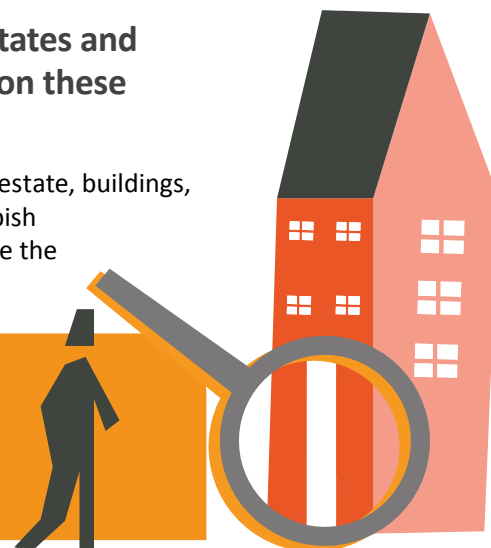
Our services

Join us for our Estate Inspections

Innisfree carry out regular estate inspections on all of our estates and blocks. We welcome and encourage our residents to join us on these inspections and to get your views.

As part of the inspection, you will be involved in checking the condition of your estate, buildings, and communal areas. You can advise on issues such as communal cleaning, rubbish and fly-tipping. As well as reporting any repairs on your estate, you will also have the opportunity to suggest areas for improvement.

The estate inspection will be led by your Housing Officer. Please contact the housing team on **020 7625 1818** or at housing@innisfree.org.uk if you wish to attend an estate inspection, or simply say hello to your Housing Officer when you see them on site.



Residents who need to downsize

We have become aware that many residents are living in properties that are too large for them and subsequently are having to deal with paying bedroom tax for spare bedrooms and are struggling with high gas and electric bills.

If you need to move to a smaller property, for whatever reason – whether it be for money reasons or to move closer to family or to live in a chosen area of London or in the rest of the country, then you could consider a mutual exchange.

A mutual exchange involves you swapping your home with another social tenant in a housing association or council with a similar tenancy and it represents a more realistic option of securing a move than waiting on the transfer list. A mutual exchange puts you in control, you have a greater choice of properties, you can choose the area you want to move to, and a smaller property should mean it will be more affordable. Most people want a larger property, so if you are swapping a larger property it puts you in the driving seat to pick and choose the smaller property that's right for you.



HomeSwapper has 200,000 live adverts with people looking for a mutual exchange swap, with 5,000 new



members joining every week and most people looking to downsize get a good match within a few days of posting on the site. If you are thinking you need to move, please check out the HomeSwapper web site www.homeswapper.co.uk. If you need assistance let us know.

Resident Engagement

Consultation on the Draft Resident Engagement Road Map

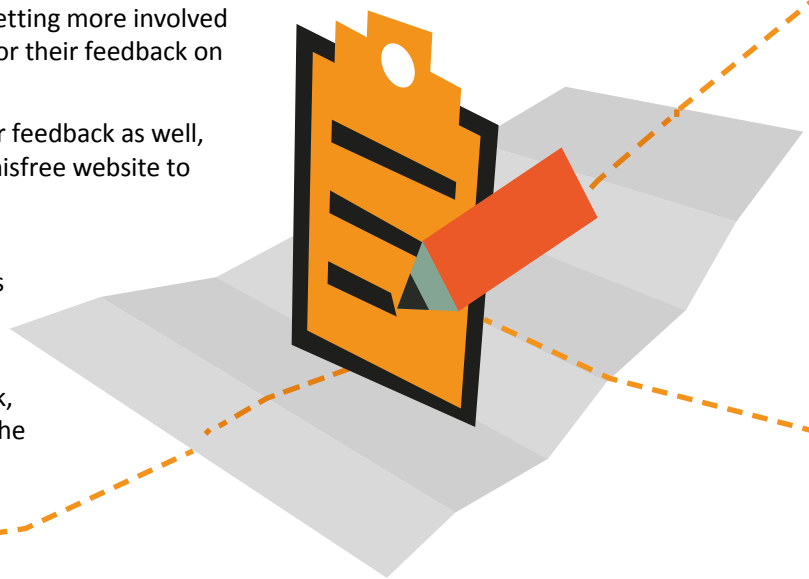
This consultation is open to all residents. Our Draft Resident Engagement Road Map provides a 3-year plan for promoting, supporting, and embedding resident engagement in all aspects of the Innisfree business and ultimately aims to create an environment where residents and Innisfree can go forward together with shared interests to build a better future.

We currently have around 50 residents interested in getting more involved in Innisfree and each of these residents will be asked for their feedback on the road map.

If you are interested in being consulted and giving your feedback as well, please see the Resident Engagement section of the Innisfree website to view the road map and how to provide your feedback.

If you would like a copy via email, please contact us on residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk. There are lots of ways for residents to become more involved so it's worth a read.

Once residents have been consulted and have fed back, the draft road map will be updated and presented to the Innisfree Board for approval.



Who is Acuity and why are they calling me?

It's right to be suspicious and on your guard when you get a call out of the blue from someone wanting to do a survey which requires asking you personal questions.

We sent a letter to all residents in early September 2022 notifying you that Innisfree are now working with Acuity, one of the leading surveying companies in the country, who are conducting our monthly repairs survey and quarterly satisfaction survey.

If you have any concerns about Acuity, should they phone you, please do call us for reassurance.



Resident Engagement

Resident Surveys – Thank you for playing your part

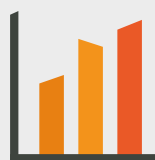
Thank you to all residents who have recently taken part in one or more surveys which has greatly contributed to Innisfree understanding how it is performing, how satisfied you are, and how you are doing during these cost-of-living tough times.

A huge 'thank you' for your ongoing support and contributions. For some of the surveys there was a prize draw and the winners are being contacted.

We will be reporting to you on the results of all the surveys after the end of March 2023.



Data Census Survey



We recently carried out a data census survey to make sure our tenants' information is accurate and correct. This

includes who lives in your home to ensure the services we provide are inclusive and meet the needs of our residents. We also used this opportunity to find out how people are coping with the cost-of-living increases.

Clearly people are having to be a lot more careful using electricity and gas, and how they shop. Look out for some helpful money matters articles in this newsletter.

Thank you to everyone for responding and congratulations to **Rebecca**, from Kilburn Lane, who was the **WINNER** of the £100 One4All voucher.

Home & Wellbeing Survey

The Innisfree Board commissioned Acuity to do a special in-depth Home & Wellbeing survey, conducted in October, and about 20 residents participated. This survey provided the Board with real insight into how residents are currently coping, what their issues and concerns are about their home and wellbeing, and how Innisfree is performing.



The Board is using the data from all surveys to set priorities for Innisfree in responding to residents' issues and satisfaction levels.

Health and Safety

Keeping you safe – gas and electricity

Electricity and gas are 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 all gas and electrical installations in your home to ensure that they are in a satisfactory condition and are safe for continued use.

We will notify you when your home is due for a safety check and our contractors will then contact you to arrange for an appointment. It is essential that you provide access to your home for our contractor to undertake these inspections.

Any defects or remedial works identified will be rectified as part of the inspection and testing process, and a certificate of compliance will then be issued to ourselves.

Please make sure you always ask for ID. If you have any concerns then please let us know.



Get help from your supplier – Priority Services Register

**PRIORITY
SERVICES
REGISTER**

Power cuts don't happen very often but if the electricity network is damaged or there is a blackout, being on your supplier's Priority Services Register will ensure you will receive extra support if you experience a power cut.

You can register if you or someone in your household:

- are of pensionable age;
- rely on medical equipment;
- have refrigerated medicines;
- have a serious or chronic illness;
- have a disability;



- are living with dementia;
- have children under five in your household;
- have mental health difficulties.

Contact your energy supplier to register for free extra help and support with your gas and electricity supply.

Staffing update

Staffing update

Our Housing Officer, Juliet Salt, left us for pastures new in September. We wish her all the best in her future endeavours. We would like to welcome Felicity Singh who will cover her housing patch. Also, Julie Walcott, who joined us temporarily in 2021 as Housing Officer, has now become a permanent member of staff.



We have also recently been joined by **Mark Ryan** as Housing Data Assistant – you may have recently heard from Mark as he led on our recent Tenant Census.



If you call the office, our first point of contact person for the Housing Team is now **Akmal Hussain**, Housing Assistant.

We are delighted that our previous Customer Service Advisor, Carolina, has moved over to our Finance Department.

All our housing officers are available on our normal office number **020 7625 1818**, however please note that our office building at 190 Iverson Road is open to visitors by pre-booked appointment only. Appointments can be made by phone or by email at housing@innisfree.org.uk.

Who is your housing officer?



Kathy

BRENT

- Innisfree House

CAMDEN

- Aerynn House
- Belmont Street
- Belsize Road
- Belsize Square
- Broadfield
- Claddagh Court
- Cotleigh Road
- Faversham House
- Gladys Road
- Hemstal Road
- Hillfield Road
- Inkerman Street
- Linstead St
- Lir House
- Loveridge Road
- Lowfield Road
- Mansfield Road
- Medley Road
- Messina Avenue
- Parkhill Road
- West End Lane



Felicity

BRENT

- Airco Close
- Cambridge Close
- Carlton Vale
- Claremont Road
- Corcoran House
- Ealing Road
- Harrington Close
- Hirst Crescent
- Kilburn Lane
- Maybank Avenue
- Salusbury Road
- Sellons Avenue
- Shakespeare Drive
- Sudbury Croft
- Tookey Close
- Waterfront Heights
- Westfield Close
- Woodgrange Close

EALING

- Castle Road
- Greenway Gardens
- Holly Park Road
- Newdene Villas
- Whitton Avenue

HARROW

- Glynn Court

HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

- Erconwald Street
- Foliot Street
- Gravesend Road
- Hemlock Road
- Inver Court
- Jeddo Road
- Jeddo Mews
- Kylemore Court
- Starfield Road
- Sundew Avenue
- Waldo Road

HILLINGDON

- Marlborough Road

LEWISHAM & LAMBETH

- Alloa Road
- Brocklehurst Street
- Cheviot Road
- Finch Avenue
- Jerningham Road
- Skiffington Close
- Talcott Path
- Tivoli Road



Julie

BRENT

- Anson Road
- Boyne Court
- Brook Road
- Charterhouse Avenue
- Clochar Court
- Lagan Court
- Liffey Court
- Mowbray Road
- Nore Court
- Paul Daisley Court
- Shannon Court
- Slaney Court
- Warren Way
- Waterford Way

EALING

- Maldon Road
- Vale Grove

ENFIELD

- Burren Court
- Yeats Court

HARINGEY

- Brandon Place
- Buller Road

- Bysouth Close
- Cambridge Road
- Church Road
- Dawlish Road
- Dunloe Avenue
- Elmhurst Road
- Fenton Road
- Ferndale Road
- Frinton Road
- Gospatrick Road
- Greyhound Road
- Kenmare Court
- Kimberley Road
- Philip Lane
- Sherringham Avenue
- Seymour Avenue
- Tenby Close
- Vicarage Road
- Whitbread Close
- Winchelsea Road

HERTS

- Welham Close

ISLINGTON

- Julius Nyerere Close

Money Matters

Christmas on a budget

This year, with the cost-of-living crisis adding to many people's money worries, it is more important than ever not to overspend on festive treats.

If you are already struggling to pay your day-to-day bills on a tight budget, the thought of Christmas expenses can be stressful, but by following our tips and planning ahead you can avoid debt this festive season.

- set yourself a budget of what you can afford and stick to it. Make a list of your Christmas expenses like food, cards, activities and presents, then use a budget planner to help manage your finances;
- don't forget everyday bills like rent, council tax and utilities must still be paid and the consequences can be severe if they're not;
- agree with family and friends to only buy presents for the children and swap Secret Santa gifts for the adults with a limit of £5 or £10. You could even bake some homemade treats and pop them in a pretty box, or use craft beads to make lovely jewellery;
- sending free e-Christmas cards by email will save on the cost of buying and posting traditional cards and is also much more environmentally friendly. Alternatively, make your own!
- make your own wrapping paper – brown paper is cheap and potato prints look great!
- plan ahead and only buy food and drink you realistically need;
- switch to supermarket own-brand products and instantly reduce your grocery bills;
- if you can afford to pay for goods outright don't be persuaded to take out credit unless it really does work out cheaper. Be wary about 'Buy now, pay later' offers. Are you sure you'll have the money then?

If you're worried about debt, don't bury your head in the sand. Talk to our **Tenancy Sustainment Officer, Taju**. Call us for a referral on **020 7625 1818**, he can help you find a way forward and avoid starting 2023 in debt.



Money Matters

How to save money on your energy bills

As we are all having to 'tighten our belts' we thought it would be useful to set out some money saving tips relating to energy usage.



- reduce your thermostat by 1°C. It might not sound like much, but it could save you around £75 each year;
- turn down radiators when rooms aren't in use. A lower setting reduces the volume of hot water, using less energy and saving you money – approximately £70 per year;
- turn your appliances off at the wall. You can save around £35 a year just by remembering to not leave your appliances on standby;
- shower for one minute less. Getting out of the shower one minute earlier every day will save up to £8 a year off your energy bills, per person. And if you can, take a shower rather than a bath. You can save roughly half the amount of water;
- turn your lights off when you are not using them. This age-old tip will save you around £15 a year on your annual energy bills;
- turn water off when shaving, washing hands or brushing teeth. These little gestures all add up and can reduce your hot water usage by 5%;
- wash laundry in colder water. By switching from hot to cold water for an average of three loads per week, you could save up to £15 per year on your energy bill;
- use low energy LED lights. Not only do they use up to 90% less energy than regular bulbs, they also last 10-20 times longer.



Looking for a warm space to go to now the weather is turning colder?

Warm Welcome has over 2,900 registered organisations that have opened or are opening up free, warm, welcoming spaces for the public over this winter across the UK. You can use this map to find one in your area.

www.warmwelcome.uk/#find-a-space.

Money Matters



Latest scams – be aware: be vigilant

Innisfree has been made aware of several scams that are going around, so we wanted to highlight some of them so that you can stay safe. Here is a selection of what we have heard:

- the latest energy scam involves a bogus text posing as the government, asking you to click on a link to apply for the £400 energy grant. This could be a cold call, email or text;
- pension scammers are tricking victims with false promises of a better lifestyle in retirement or more money to support a better life in hard times. They'll use fake adverts offering free pension reviews, guaranteeing better returns on your pension savings. Usually with offers that are too good to be true!
- if you receive a text telling you to take a PCR test for covid, the link will then ask you to pay for postage costs. This is a fake website and will steal your information;
- criminals are calling victims posing as the Police and telling them that their card is being used fraudulently or that their money isn't safe. If you receive a call and are told to move your money for safety reasons – it's a scam! The Bank or the Police will NEVER ask you to do this and would never arrange to come to your home to collect your PIN, bank cards or cash;
- don't click on or download anything you don't trust – for example, if you get an email from a company with a strange email address – doing this could infect your computer with a virus;
- make sure you have a strong password for your email accounts that you don't use anywhere else. If you're worried about remembering lots of different passwords, you can use a password manager;
- treat all unexpected calls, emails and text messages with caution, don't assume they're genuine, even if the person seems to know some basic information about you.

Please call **Action Fraud** on **0300 123 2040** if you think you have been the victim of fraud. If you receive any of the above, by text or email, do not click on the link, definitely do not enter any of your bank account or other personal details. It would be useful if you could let us know if you have been affected by any of the above so please let your Housing Officer know.



Hardship Grants for Irish people in London

The London Irish Centre have two hardship grants available for those who are struggling financially – The Benevolent Society of St Patrick Grant and Irish Youth Foundation.

The Benevolent Society of St Patrick was instituted in 1783 to assist Irish people in need residing in London. The purpose of the grant is to relieve hardship. The Society distributes money by way of small grants to Irish people in London who are in need. These grants range from £50 to £250.

Grants are given for the following purposes:

- to provide items of clothing or footwear;
- to provide essential items of household equipment;
- to give emergency support for winter heating requirements;
- to pay for funeral travel expenses;
- to support moves to new accommodation;
- to support convalescence;
- to provide special educational items.

The London Irish centre also works with the Irish Youth Foundation, and manage a hardship grant for people under 30 on a low income and with no savings. It can be used for household items, clothing, repatriation etc. Please get in touch with them on **020 7916 2222** if you need assistance.

Irish in Britain – 50th anniversary 2023



Irish in Britain is 50 next year! To celebrate, they have recently announced that they are launching a major heritage project to mark the Anniversary in 2023.

The project is being made possible with generous funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and will celebrate the enormous contribution made by the Irish community to life in Britain over the past half century.

Irish in Britain's CEO Brian Dalton said: "There has never been a more important time to champion migrant contributions to Britain, and we are proud to showcase

the Irish community's story in this national project. We look forward to working with members to honour this story faithfully."

Innisfree is therefore asking if you would like to be involved! If you are interested, email 50@irishinbritain.org, alternatively, talk to your Housing Officer and we will put you in touch.

Welcome to our new Board members

Innisfree would like to welcome Jahanara Rajkoomar and Ali Shah who have recently joined the Board.

Jahanara is currently Director of Community Investment and Customer Voice at Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing. Ali, who is also the new Chair of our Audit and Risk Committee, is a qualified accountant and currently works as the Director of Finance at Teachers' Housing Association.

Kevin Hartnett, Chair of Innisfree, said: 'Jahanara and Ali bring some excellent skills to our great Board, we look forward to working with them both to continue to improve our services'.



Jahanara Rajkoomar



Ali Shah

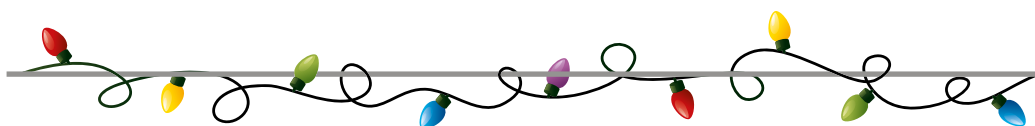
Follow us on Facebook!

Have you liked our Facebook page yet?

We regularly post really useful information on our page to keep you up to date with things happening here at Innisfree, in your area or general stuff that might be useful to you as a tenant.



Opening hours



Holiday Season Opening Hours and Emergency Repair Service



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

Whilst 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/



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 | 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