



## *A message from our Chairperson*

I am delighted to introduce this winter edition of the Oaklee Tenant newsletter. I hope that you find the content both informative and relevant to you as an Oaklee tenant. The Tenant Newsletter is now jointly produced by our tenant representatives that sit on the editorial panel working alongside Oaklee staff that are responsible for marketing and communication. This gives the tenant voice much more influence and prominence in helping to shape this and future publications.

As we enter the dark and cold winter period it is good to see some of the helpful practical advice included in the newsletter for tenants, helping to keep us all safe and warm this winter. I am also delighted to see the roll out of the '12 Days of Christmas' initiative again this year, hopefully many of you will be prize draw winners in the daily draws, benefiting from the fantastic range of prizes available helping with the current cost of living crisis that we face. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the wide range of Oaklee partners that so generously contributed donations for this initiative.

I hope you enjoy this publication, if you would like to get more involved with the work of the Tenant Forum or editorial panel just contact us through the [tenantengagement@oakleehousing.ie](mailto:tenantengagement@oakleehousing.ie) email address with your details and our tenant engagement officer will be in touch. We would love to hear from you.



*Dr. Robert Sinnott*  
*Chairperson*



## **New Communities**

We were proud to recently complete and handover 41 homes at Kearney's Field, Tullamore, County Offaly, and offer a warm welcome to all our new residents.

The development comprises a mix of one to four bed general needs homes, and is a testament to the excellent working relationship Oaklee has with the housing team in Offaly County Council.

# Winter Wellness

It's really important to look after your well-being over the course of the winter months. In spite of chilly weather, you can follow some simple winter wellbeing steps that Mental Health Ireland suggests help us all to stay well this winter.

## Keep active, be healthy

Yes, it's cold out but, provided you wrap up well, it is important to try to get outdoors. Breathing in the fresh, crisp air and enjoying the sights and sounds of winter keeps your mind sharp. Why not set up a walking group in your estate? Our Community Development Officer can help you with this and supply you with reflective safety jackets.

## Stay connected

Loneliness and isolation can hit you at this time of year, lots of people can go into hibernation with the dark and long days. Try to meet up with friends and family, get out for a coffee, or join a local community group of your interest to meet like-minded people. You can help to spread some seasonal cheer by checking in on older neighbours or getting involved with your community.

## Get some shut-eye

Your mood and how you sleep are inextricably linked. Good sleep keeps us on top form and it's one of the most important parts of day-to-day wellbeing. Sleep lets your brain and body rest and recharge. A good night's sleep will improve your concentration and immune system, which is particularly important during winter when there are so many viruses circulating.

## Be gentle, generous, and patient with yourself

It's ok to prioritize your own well-being during Winter. Think about what you need and what you need to do to get it. How you can make the seasonal holidays meaningful for yourself? If you're worried about feeling lonely or isolated this Christmas, think of some ways to help pass the time.

Do something creative

Spend time in nature

Plan a treat for after Christmas

These steps can make a huge positive impact on your mental health. Remember to talk to someone if you need support or connection, any time of year.



## Award Winners



The Oaklee, Walkin Street development in Kilkenny took home the silverware in the Regeneration and Renewal (regeneration project) category at the Irish Council for Social Housing Awards in October. Well done to all involved!

## New Stormanstown Tenants Group

Oaklee Housing welcome the launch of the new Stormanstown Community Group, launched at a public meeting held in Ballymun Library on Thursday 23rd November. The Oaklee Tenant Engagement Officer Richard Mealey has been engaging with the tenants from the scheme over the past couple of months helping them through the process of forming the group.

The key aims of the group as outlined within their constitution are:

- To work with Oaklee Housing and other relevant agencies, on behalf of all residents at our scheme, to ensure that the upkeep, maintenance and safety at our housing scheme is of the highest standards.
- To enhance community spirit in our scheme.
- To promote cultural, educational, and recreational activities for all residents of the scheme helping to reduce social isolation for some of our neighbours.
- To help build relationships between neighbours creating a safe, sustainable and settled community.

We would like to congratulate the new committee of the Stormanstown Community Group that was voted in on the night of the public meeting and wish them every success in working towards achieving their aims. Oaklee will continue to support and guide the group moving forward.

If you would like to discuss establishing a community group in your area please contact our Tenant Engagement Officer on [tenantengagement@oakleehousing.ie](mailto:tenantengagement@oakleehousing.ie)

## Congratulations!



Congratulations to Marta Wołczyk, a resident in our Mac Uilliam Lane development, for winning 'Tallaght Person of The Year - Special Needs and Care' at the recent awards ceremony. We're all extremely proud of you!

## Welcome



We're delighted to announce Enda Higgins as Oaklee's new Marketing and Communications Manager.

He will spearhead the strategic development and implementation of marketing campaigns, in support of business development and resident engagement goals, across all Oaklee Housing locations.

# Oaklee Out and About



## Rowantree Ct. Residents Visit Hawthorn Ct.

Tenants from Rowantree Ct. took Residents from Hawthorn Ct, Celbridge were delighted to host a visit to their scheme from a delegation of residents from Rowantree Ct Monaghan. This was a great opportunity to build friendships between our tenants, and showcase the fantastic facilities and tenant activities that Hawthorn Ct provides. A reciprocal visit to Rowantree Ct is planned for the new year.



## Family Fun at Stormanstown

Oaklee staff and residents worked together in Stormanstown to deliver a fantastic family fun event at Halloween. With funding secured from the Social Investment Fund for the event we were able to provide a range of activities for all the family to enjoy. This was the first of community events planned for the scheme which will be rolled out in the new year.



## Winter Celebrations



Santa visits Walkinslough  
Co. Kilkenny



Tree decorating at Rowantree  
Ct. Co. Monaghan



Hawthorn Court residents visit Ireland's US  
Ambassador at Phoenix Park

## Meet the newest member of our Housing Team

I'm Susan Byrne, and I feel honoured to step into the role of Senior Housing Officer at Oaklee Housing. With previous experience in other Affordable Housing Bodies (AHBs) within the sector, I look forward to bringing the valuable lessons learned from those engagements to Oaklee, and I'm excited about the fresh opportunities that lie ahead. I am a firm believer in collaboration, and I am thrilled to be working with such an experienced team.



# Oaklee's 12 Days of Christmas

Due to the enormous success of last years 'Oaklee's 12 Days of Christmas', we are once again providing an opportunity to win some exciting prizes ahead of the festive period including hampers, toy shop vouchers, and much more!

With thanks to the generosity of some amazing Oaklee Housing suppliers, we're holding draws everyday for 12 days. No need to enter, as an Oaklee Housing and Comhar Housing tenant, you're already in the draw.

All you have to do, is wait and see if your housing officer calls you with some good news.

Our last draw will be held on December 15th with some extra treats thrown to win.

Best of luck everyone.

The Oaklee Housing team



# Winter Recipe Suggestion

Thanks to Betty Joyce in Hawthorn Court for providing her recipe for making plum pudding this winter!

## Plum Pudding Ingredients:

- 10 oz butter
- 10oz Sugar
- 11oz white breadcrumbs
- 12oz raisins
- 6oz currants
- 6oz sultanas
- 8oz mixed peel
- 8oz glace cherries (quartered)
- 2 teaspoons plain flour
- 4 large eggs
- 1 large cooking apple (grated)
- ¼ cup of whiskey or brandy
- 4oz ground almonds
- 4oz chopped almonds
- 1 bottle Guinness

## Method:

1. Mix all the dry ingredients and fruits together thoroughly.
2. Whisk the eggs and add them with the grated apple and whiskey or brandy. Mix well. Pour ½ the Guinness, mix and cover, leave to soak overnight.
3. Next morning pour in the rest of the Guinness and mix well.
4. Pour into 2 x well greased with butter pudding bowls.
5. Cover with a round greaseproof paper, pressed down on top of pudding.
6. Cover bowl with a double layer of greaseproof paper which has been pleated in centre and tie it firmly under the rim of bowl.
7. Place bowls in 2 saucepans 1/3 full of boiling water and simmer for 10 hours
8. Do not allow the water to boil over the top and do not let it boil dry either.
9. Store in a cool place until needed.

# 2023 Photography Competition

Thank you to everyone who entered the Oaklee Housing 2023 Photography Competition. We look forward to announcing the winners in January but we are delighted to share a sample of some of the wonderful entries we received.



# Winter Energy Saving Tips

## How to reduce energy consumption



### Lighting

An LED lightbulb uses around 80-90% less electricity than a standard bulb and will last up to 10 times longer. Replacing all the lightbulbs in your home could easily save you up to €60 a year depending on how many lights you have.

### Fridge/Freezer

Close the fridge door as quickly as possible. If it's open for even 20 seconds, it takes 45 minutes for the fridge to cool down to its original temperature.

Defrost your freezer regularly. Ideally every six months to help it run efficiently.



### Kettle

Only boil the kettle for water you need. There is a measurement on it to help you.

### Tumble Dryer

If the dryer must be used, turn it on during off-peak hours and keep the filters clean. Do not run your dryer overnight as this is a fire safety risk.

### Dishwasher

Only turn on the dishwasher when it is fully loaded.

Use a low temperature setting and an eco-setting, if it has one.



### Washing Machine

Use a lower temperature of 30 degrees and wait until you have a full load before turning it on, but don't overload it.

### Heating

A heating bill could be reduced by 10% by lowering room temperature by just one degree.

Use timers to control when heating and the immersion comes on.

Don't leave the hot tap running too long "as you're literally pouring money down the drain."

## Income Supports

You may be eligible for the Additional Needs Payment, it is a once off payment to help you with an expense that you cannot pay. An application can be sent to your local welfare service. For more information go to [gov.ie](http://gov.ie)

Over 70's may be eligible for the household package more info at: [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie)

You may also be eligible for the fuel allowance this winter, to check your eligibility go to: [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie)



## Advice

If you need more information on how to manage bill payments go to MABS - Money Advice and Budgeting Service - at [mabs.ie](http://mabs.ie)

To find better deals on gas and electricity compare deals at [bonkers.ie](http://bonkers.ie) and [switcher.ie](http://switcher.ie)

For information on current oil prices visit Oil Prices Ireland at [oilprices.ie](http://oilprices.ie)

If you need to find out your meters MPRN, please contact the Customer Service Center at [enquiries@oakleehousing.ie](mailto:enquiries@oakleehousing.ie)

For information on the following topics, just search:

- Additional Needs Payment on [gov.ie](http://gov.ie)
- Household benefit package on [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie)
- Fuel Allowance on [citizensinformation.ie](http://citizensinformation.ie)
- Vulnerable Customers - commission for regulation of Utilities on [cru.ie](http://cru.ie)



# Paying your rent made easy



## Standing Order

We all lead busy lives, why not take the hassle out of paying your rent by setting up a standing order with your bank?

A standing order is an instruction from you to your bank to make regular payments of a fixed amount to a beneficiary, in this case, Oaklee Housing.

You can set up a standing order on your phone or computer or in-branch and have payments made to suit you and your income.

- Weekly
- Fortnightly
- Monthly

### The benefits include:

- ✓ **Your rent is always paid on time**
- ✓ **You're always in control**  
You decide when and how much
- ✓ **Saves you time**  
No more queuing to pay
- ✓ **Safe way to pay**  
No need to carry cash
- ✓ **Hassle Free**

Why not download a standing order form [HERE](#) today

## Household Budget Scheme

The Household Budget Scheme is a scheme that allows people to use certain social welfare payments to pay regular amounts towards their rent and household utility bills.

Under the scheme, a fixed amount is deducted from your social welfare payment each week.

To qualify, you must be in receipt of specific social welfare payments and your payment must be made through your local post office.

The scheme is operated by An Post and is completely free of any charge.

All you need to do is complete the enclosed Household Budget Scheme form and return it to the team in Oaklee Housing who will then set it up on your behalf with An Post.

### The benefits include:

- ✓ **Your rent is always paid on time**
- ✓ **Saves you time**  
No more queuing at the post office
- ✓ **Safe way to pay**
- ✓ **Hassle Free**  
No more looking for that payment swipe card

For more information on the An Post Household budget scheme [CLICK HERE](#)

You will  
always pay  
rent on time!



# Oaklee Tenant Forum

**At Oaklee Housing, we are committed to involving our tenants in the shaping and improving of our services with the ultimate aim of delivering positive outcomes for our tenants and their communities.**

The appointment of our Tenant Engagement Officer Richard Mealey earlier this year is a demonstration of that commitment.

But this is a two-way commitment: To credibly deliver a meaningful tenant engagement programme of activities and initiatives we need the involvement of our tenants. In other words, we need you!

Only by working together can we truly and credibly begin to improve our services, build stronger communities and drive tenant centric change.

**Some of the benefits of effective tenant engagement are as follows:**

- Improved services
- Providing services that reflect tenants' needs
- Increased tenant satisfaction
- Better relations between Oaklee Housing and tenants, each being more aware of each other's position and perspective
- Improved efficiencies and better value for money
- Meet new people
- Increased knowledge and understanding
- Sharing ideas and finding solutions
- Building mutual respect and trust
- Increased communication between tenants and staff
- Creating a sense of community where tenants feel valued

## Opportunity: **TENANT FORUM** 1

### What is it?

The Tenant Forum is a group of Oaklee Housing tenants from various housing schemes around the country. Its purpose is to work in partnership with Oaklee Housing to improve service delivery by:

- Providing feedback on plans, policies, and strategies
- Overseeing all tenant related procedures & publications and
- Keeping tenants informed

#### TIME COMMITMENT

The Tenant Forum meets at least 4 times per year. Meetings last no longer than 2 hours and can be held in person at an agreed location, online or a mix of both.

## Opportunity: **HOUSING SERVICES COMMITTEE** 2

### What is it?

The Housing Services Committee is a committee of the Oaklee Housing Board. At committee meetings, Board members and members of the Senior Management team meet with two nominated Tenant Forum members to present policies and performance related information.

#### TIME COMMITMENT

At least 4 meetings per year.

## Opportunity: **RESIDENTS ASSOCIATIONS** 3

### What is it?

Tenants in particular housing schemes come together to address locally based issues. Oaklee Housing recognises the importance of resident associations and can assist groups to get started. If you are interested in setting up a Resident Association for your area, please contact your Housing Officer.

#### TIME COMMITMENT

This is very much dependent on the residents themselves.



## Opportunity: **ESTATE WALKABOUT** 4

### What is it?

This is an opportunity for the Oaklee Housing team and tenants to conduct a joint walkabout in their estate / area to help identify issues that are having an impact on their neighbourhood.

#### TIME COMMITMENT

1 estate walkabout per annum.



## Opportunity: **EDITORIAL PANEL** 5

### What is it?

The Editorial Panel is a small group of tenants whose role is to assist the Oaklee Housing communications department to collate and produce regular newsletters per year as well as the annual calendar.

#### TIME COMMITMENT

There will be a maximum of 4 newsletters produced per annum.

## Opportunity: **SURVEYS** 6

### What is it?

This involves tenants' completing surveys to provide feedback on specific issues and responding to the Oaklee Housing annual tenant satisfaction survey.

#### TIME COMMITMENT

At your own discretion.



## Opportunity: **FOCUS GROUP** 7

### What is it?

From time-to-time Oaklee Housing may wish to seek your views and opinions on a specific service area to assess how it is being delivered and more importantly how it can be improved.

#### TIME COMMITMENT

Focus groups can be held in person, online or a mix of both and should last no longer than 2 hours maximum.

## Opportunity: **ARMCHAIR PANEL** 8

### What is it?

Would you like to provide your feedback on Oaklee Housing policies, procedures and consultations without the need to attend a meeting? Then this opportunity allows you to do so from the comfort of your own home.

#### TIME COMMITMENT

At your own discretion.



## Get Involved!

There are plenty of ways to get involved.

## Interested?

If you're interesting in being part of something great, then email Richard with your name, contact telephone number and the area you'd like to get involved in to:

[tenantengagement@oakleehousing.ie](mailto:tenantengagement@oakleehousing.ie)