

# Oaklee News

**Winter 2017**  
The newsletter for  
Oaklee Housing



## *New family Homes for Kilkenny*



**Winter Weather  
Advice**  
Page 12



**Fire Safety  
at Home**  
Page 14



**Community  
Grants**  
Page 16



**Out and  
About!**  
Page 17

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oaklee.ie  
01 400 2650

**Sharing Our Success** Page 03  
**Delivering New Homes** Page 05  
**Managing Debt** Page 06  
**New Homes for Kilkenny** Page 08  
**Colouring Competition** Page 20

## A message from our Chief Executive Officer

Sharon Cosgrove



Welcome to the Winter 2017 edition of Oaklee News.

As CEO it is my responsibility to ensure that all our homes are of a high standard, well maintained and that our services are responsive to your needs. Oaklee strives for excellence and continuous improvement is something we give great attention to.

Getting our tenants involved in our decision making process is vital to improving our services and tenant feedback is used by our staff to understand and respond to your needs. In Oaklee we offer a number of opportunities for tenants to engage and we call this our 'Menu of Involvement', which includes estate walkabouts, editorial team and the Tenants' Forum. Our Housing team works closely with tenants in our housing schemes around the country so that we can assist you with local events and encourage you to get involved. You can read more on pages 16 about setting up residents groups and availing of our community grants scheme.

If you would like to help shape the future of Oaklee and our services then please get involved. You can find out more about tenant involvement through the Tenant Forum section of our website and throughout this edition.

The lead up to Christmas, is an expensive time for everyone, so we have a few articles which give information, advice and helpful tips, we hope you will find useful. We have information on the new Credit Union initiative, on managing debt with the help of MABS, as well as advice and information on how to save energy and money.

Finally, you will see that we have opened a number of new developments in Kilkenny, Carrick on Suir and elsewhere around the country. We also have a number of developments under construction with a significant number to be completed in 2018.

Wishing you all the very best for a happy and

Working together for positive change.

**oaklee**  
housing

### We welcome your input

This is the Oaklee Housing newsletter, Oaklee News, which we will be sending you twice a year. We hope to provide you with a range of interesting and enjoyable articles that provide important information, reports on staff and residents, offer hints and tips about lifestyle and include the occasional competition and quiz.

Please let us know what you think of this initiative and how you feel your newsletter can be improved further. We welcome letters, recipes, photos or other contributions from you to make these publications feel closer to you.

#### GET IN TOUCH

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# SHARING OUR SUCCESS

ABBEY VILLAGE

Oaklee were delighted that Abbey Village was shortlisted at the recent Irish Council for Social Housing's annual awards, in the Collaboration & Partnership Initiative for Delivery category.

Abbey Village is nestled in Kilmacrenan, County Donegal and provides housing options for a wide client base, from family housing and sheltered living accommodation to supported homes for those with disabilities. Originally planned primarily as a scheme for families and sheltered living, Abbey Village is now a cohesive community for all.

As the scheme was in development Oaklee recognised the low demand for the sheltered living

homes. By creating tenancies for people with intellectual disabilities and re-designating former sheltered living homes, Oaklee and partners created an innovative solution to an otherwise significant void problem.

The awards were held in September and opened by the Minister for Housing Eoghan Murphy at the Strand Hotel, Limerick. Although unsuccessful on the night, it was a fantastic opportunity to showcase our work and in particular the positive partnerships with Donegal HSE and Donegal County Council. Abbey Village sets an excellent example of inclusive housing for all and demonstrates how each individual is an integral part of any community.



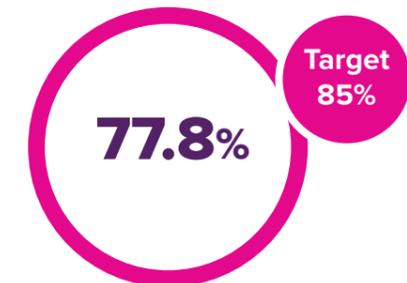
Abbey Village in Kilmacrenan

# How we're performing

Oaklee Housing are at the forefront in the provision of social housing and are committed to delivering quality housing and excellent customer services that enhance the lives of customers and communities.

It is important that your voice, in relation to our services, is heard as the feedback that we receive is vital for Oaklee Housing to identify and correct any problems within our service delivery and to ensure that we meet the needs of all our customers.

## Customer Enquiries



of enquiries resolved at first point of contact



of customer satisfaction rating of Oaklee Housing Services Centre



average working days to respond to stage 1 complaints

## Customer Services



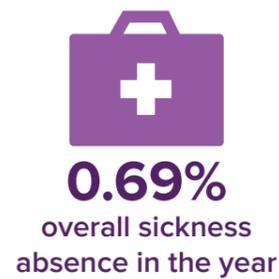
Call Advisor Call Quality

## Gas Safety



of gas boilers were serviced within a year

## Human Resources



## Repairs



Emergency repairs completed within 24 Hours



Urgent repairs completed within 4 working days



Routine repairs completed within 20 working days

The performance figures are for the period April 2017 - September 2017

# Delivering New Homes

Our Development Team are working on new housing schemes to deliver much-needed homes across Ireland.

Since the last edition of our newsletter a number of developments have been handed over and tenants have been able to move into their new homes.

## Family Homes in Co. Kilkenny

Located on the outskirts of the Castlecomer village of Kilkenny, the Moneenroe development sits on the Castlecomer-Athy road. This development consists of nine bungalows consisting of 2 and 3 bed dwellings, providing general needs support. Additionally, these properties have been designed to allow for disabled access, in order to meet the needs of all prospective tenants.

This project is due for completion at the end of November, just in time for the Christmas season.

## Cluainin, Mountrath, Almost Complete

Due for completion in January 2018, this development will bring 21 new homes to the small town of Mountrath, County Laois.

This development holds 21 dwellings in total, consisting of two and three-bed houses. These dwellings are a mix of semi-detached, end-of-terrace and terraced properties. Additionally, parking facilities will be available to prospective tenants.

This development is approaching its final stages meaning the tenants will have a happy new year in their happy new homes in 2018.

## Much Needed Homes Coming to Ballymun, Dublin 9

Oaklee are proud to provide 42 much needed homes in Ballymun, Dublin. This general-needs development is a mixture of apartments and houses.

This development is on track for completion in March 2018, while allocations for occupancy is scheduled for April 2018.

## New Homes on Poplar Row

Poplar Row is a sheltered accommodation project, aimed to meet the general needs of over 55's. Located in Ballybough, this development has easy access to Connolly station and Dublin's city centre via a range of bus transport links.

This development will provide 29 new homes and is scheduled for completion March 2019, and Oaklee Housing has an exciting road ahead in the delivery of this much-needed development.

## The Galleries Donabate Dublin

Located in North Dublin, The Galleries, Donabate is an idyllic apartment complex situated close to many local amenities in the Donabate Village.

This site involves the development of 43 spacious apartments, ranging from one to three bed dwellings.

This development is progressing smoothly, and is on schedule for completion July 2018.



The Galleries, Dublin

## Fully furnished homes ready in time for Christmas

The Station Court development in Gorey, Co. Wexford, comprises of 14 homes and range from 1 to 3 bed apartments. On-site surface and underground car parking is provided and the properties will be leased furnished to tenants.

A number of tenants have moved into their new homes and it is planned that Station Court will be fully occupied for the Christmas season.



Due July 2018

Due March 2019



# Support for Managing Debt & Budgeting your Finances

We all know people can get into money difficulty all too easily – from falling behind with your rent or getting into difficulty with paying loans back. Money difficulties can affect everyone, from people on low incomes to high-income earners. It can have an impact on people's mental health and overall wellbeing.

Money difficulties can arise for various reasons, such as illness, unemployment, relationship breakdown, a drop in income, or increased expenditure due to lifestyle spending.

Dealing with Mortgage and rent arrears is particularly important because you could lose your home if you do not keep up your payments.



## Accessing Advice and Support

Sometimes we need advice and support to sort our financial problems out - sharing your concerns can help – it may be the kick-start you need to sort out your money problems and get back on an even keel.

In relation to managing rent arrears, Oaklee Housing staff are available to provide assistance and support and agree a realistic payment agreement to help you clear arrears if you fall behind. Please always contact Oaklee Housing if you are finding it difficult to pay your rent.

When you require additional assistance in relation to financial difficulties, we will refer you to the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS).

### What is MABS?

The Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), is a free money and debt advice service. MABS work with all kinds of people, who may have all kinds of personal debt. The service is independent, with no links to any banks or credit unions, and all dealings with MABS are

confidential. With more than sixty offices all around the country, MABS are available in every county. They also have a website – [www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie) and their Helpline can be contacted Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm - T: 0761 07 2000.

### How can MABS assist?

MABS works with people who may be struggling with debt or who need help in managing their money. They also talk to government and lenders to find better solutions for those who have money problems, as well as developing tools and resources to help people avoid getting in over their heads.

MABS does not give out any money – instead, they work with clients to ensure that they are getting all income they are entitled to, that they are getting the best value out of this income, and in working out sustainable payment plans with creditors, where debt becomes a problem.

### How to use MAB services

There are three ways of getting support from MABS

#### 1. MABS Website

[www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie)

You'll find easy to use advice and tips on this site, with lots of resources to help you to help yourself. The website offers lots of tools for managing your money.

#### 2. The MABS Helpline

The MABS Helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm, and can be reached on 0761 07 2000. Helpline Advisers will ask some initial questions to work out the nature of your problem, and determine how best to assist you. You might use this service because you have received a letter or a call from a creditor, or maybe you've missed a payment and are unsure what to do next. In some cases, the Adviser may believe that you would benefit from meeting face -to-face with one of the advisors in the MABS offices.

#### 3. MABS Local Offices

MABS Local Offices operates a network of 65 offices all around the country. Each office is staffed by a team of Money Advisers and Administrators, all trained and highly skilled in their work.

Contact Oaklee Housing if you are finding it difficult to pay your rent.

01 400 2650

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, or if you have fallen behind with your rent or other payments, then get in touch with Oaklee Housing staff

Tel: 01 400 2650, alternatively you can get independent advice from MABS

Tel: 0761 07 2000, [www.mabs.ie](http://www.mabs.ie)

## The Money Advice Process

Following your first appointment, the MABS Adviser will develop a plan to work with you. The adviser will try to achieve two things through the money advice process:

- Firstly, to support you in finding a sustainable solution to your problem debt
- Secondly, help you develop your skill and knowledge so you can have better control over your money

The Money Adviser will work with you to prepare a budget and a financial statement; this will form the basis of any negotiation undertaken with any creditor.

Once a negotiation has been completed, the Money Adviser will assist you in setting up a payment system to keep to that new agreement. You will be supported for as long as you need, post-agreement, and MABS will continue to provide assistance as your circumstances change.



# New Homes for Kilkenny

**Minister of State at the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government with responsibility for Local Government and Electoral Reform, John Paul Phelan T.D. visited County Kilkenny to view progress at two social housing projects being developed by Oaklee Housing.**

The schemes will provide 30 new homes, 9 bungalows in Moneenroe and 21 apartments in Thomastown to be allocated to households on the Kilkenny County Council housing list. The homes are designed to meet a range of tenancy needs including those of families, older people and individuals with limited mobility.

As an Approved Housing Body (AHB), Oaklee has secured funding for the schemes through a combination of finance from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's Capital Advance Leasing Facility (CALF)

and Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS); and the Housing Finance Agency.

Minister Phelan noted:

*"The housing crisis is one of the key challenges facing the state and, in responding to that challenge, it is encouraging to witness part of the significant investment programme being provided under Rebuilding Ireland coming to fruition here in County Kilkenny. These 30 new homes are an example of the successful joint working between Kilkenny County Council and Oaklee at a local level, with Oaklee harnessing the financial supports available to it from my Department. If we are to realise the full ambition of Rebuilding Ireland, we must continue to develop the strong pipeline of social housing projects around the country, many of which use new and innovative ways of delivering social housing, and harness the capacity of the approved housing bodies to deliver high quality houses and supported, sustainable homes for tenants."*

The nine new bungalows at Moneenroe, near Castlecomer, are due for completion during the winter 2017 and include a mix of two and three-bedroom units. Meanwhile at Logan Street, Thomastown, we acquired a scheme that was abandoned during the downturn and will now provide 21 new homes comprising of a mix of one, two and three-bedrooms apartments.

Sharon Cosgrove, our Chief Executive said:

*"There are many demands for housing in today's society and it is important that we get more homes underway. We are working in close partnership with a range of local*

*authorities, government agencies and developers to accelerate the delivery of social and affordable homes for a range of needs. We believe a collaborative approach can enable us to provide an effective response to the Rebuilding Ireland agenda.*

"These are two exciting developments that will provide 30 much-needed new homes that can support a range of tenures in Kilkenny. We look forward to welcoming the tenants and officially opening the schemes later this year. We are grateful for the support from Kilkenny County Council, the Department of Housing and the Housing Finance Agency."

Mary Mulholland, Acting Chief Executive of Kilkenny County Council said she wished to 'thank Oaklee for their perseverance in delivering these 21 apartments on a site that was once a derelict unfinished estate in the heart of Thomastown and wished the tenants all the best in their new homes.'



# Oaklee Housing Tenants' Forum

Oaklee Housing Tenants' Forum held their AGM on 18th October when the election of both Chair and Vice Chair of The Tenants' Forum took place. Bill Cusack was duly elected for the position of Chair and Anton Mahon for Vice Chair, both tenants reside at Hawthorn Court in Celbridge and will serve in these positions for 3 years.



The Tenants' Forum have a number of objectives but their main goal is to encourage more tenants to get involved and have their voice heard.

Bill Cusack accepted his position with enthusiasm and looks forward to developing the Forum; further Bill said "over the past year Oaklee Tenants' Forum has become a more proactive group, with the help of staff, we have been involved in Estate Walkabouts and The Tenant Satisfaction Survey and we want to build on that. We want to visit different localities in 2017 with the staff, promote Tenant Involvement and highlight how by getting involved tenants really do make a difference."

Bill expressed his thanks and appreciation to Anne Jordan the outgoing Acting Chair for her contribution. The group were indeed very grateful for Anne's work over the past number of years. Bill, by virtue of his position as Chair of The Tenants' Forum, also sits on the Board of Oaklee Housing. The Tenants' Forum meet four times throughout the year at our offices in James's Street, Dublin.

## MENU OF TENANT INVOLVEMENT – Together we will achieve more

### Get involved?

Being involved with Oaklee will give you the chance to:

- 1 Be active in shaping Oaklee's services
- 2 Make your area a better place to live in
- 3 Give Oaklee your views on the services you receive
- 4 Be part of a group to review and improve services
- 5 Help Oaklee better understand the needs of tenants
- 6 Gain useful skills
- 7 Receive relevant training
- 8 Meet new people

**Oaklee would be delighted to hear from you**  
Get involved with Oaklee Housing and help make a difference to your Housing Association. Oaklee actively supports tenants getting involved and we are keen to hear your views.

Opposite is the Oaklee Menu of Involvement which provides a wide range of options for you to participate in. You can get involved in a level that suits you. It really depends on your interests and how much time you have to spare. The aim of your involvement is to improve the housing and maintenance services to you and other Oaklee tenants.

We understand you lead busy lives but there are plenty of options to choose from. With so many options we're sure there is something of interest for all!

Consider becoming a Tenant Forum member so you can vote, attend meetings and have your say. Or why not set up a residents group in your area or become a Community Champion and be the eyes and ears, working together with Oaklee.

You may want to be involved in the comfort of your home and just twice a year receive a survey by post or email and you provide comment on the services you receive. It's up to you but we'd love to have more Oaklee tenants involved.

# IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED WITH OAKLEE



If you would like to talk to someone about getting started please contact Oaklee on 01 400 2650. Or complete the Menu of Involvement in this newsletter and send to Oaklee at **132 James's Street, Dublin, D08 Pk25**

## Menu of Tenant Involvement

- ✓ **Resident Groups** – Represent your community on a wide range of issues by being part of a Resident Group in your area.  
[Meets as and when required – 2.5 hours per meeting]
- ✓ **Tenant Champion** – Where no formal Tenant Association exists become a Tenant Champion to represent your local community, working beside Oaklee housing staff to address any issues in your area.  
[1 hour per week]
- ✓ **Tenants' Forum Group** – We currently have one Forum which meets to discuss housing related issues and sharing best practice ideas.  
[Meets every 10 weeks – 2.5 hours per meeting]
- ✓ **Tenant Inspectors** – Carry out an inspection of our services alongside housing staff to identify areas for improvement. Training is provided and expenses paid.  
[Meets quarterly – Additional project work every 6 months]
- ✓ **Editorial Team** – Write and review articles for our Tenant Newsletter and website and report on the work of the Tenants' Forum.  
[Meets quarterly – 2 hours per meeting]
- ✓ **Estate Walkabouts** – Walk around your estate with your Housing and Property Services Officer to identify areas of concern and agree priorities for the local community.  
[Meets annually – 2 hours per meeting]
- ✓ **Policy Consultation Group** – Assist with the development and review of policies and procedures as and when required.  
[We anticipate approximately 2 meetings per year – 2 hours per meeting]
- ✓ **Mystery Shoppers** – Test services and provide feedback as a mystery shopper by carrying out a series of pre-agreed tasks, such as telephone calls or reception visits, and report on findings. Training will be provided.  
[Meets quarterly over set days]
- ✓ **Tenant Satisfaction Survey** – Assist with the development of a Tenant Satisfaction Survey to help us identify our strengths and weaknesses.  
[Meets with staff and Consultant as required before and after the survey issue.]
- ✓ **Register of Tenants** – Respond to surveys or comment on specific service areas which you are interested in. We can contact you by text, post, email or telephone call.  
[As and when required – time commitment can be as little as 20 minutes]
- ✓ **Tenant Translator Team** – Offer your services to other tenants in explaining documents or correspondence to help ensure they are understood.  
[As and when required.]

## Your Details

Name	Telephone
Address	Please detach this page by cutting down the spine and then posting it to the following address: <b>Oaklee Housing, 132 James's Street, FREEPOST, Dublin, D08 Pk25</b>

# Protecting your home from cold weather

Protecting your home from extreme cold weather is vital during the winter months. This information will help you prepare and assist you if you experience any problems during the cold weather.

It is important to recognise that when there is extreme weather and subsequent high call volume we will prioritise repairs such as complete heating failure where there are young children, elderly or people with medical or mobility problems. Due to call volume, access difficulties or where other agencies are responsible, repairs may not be completed within the designated time frames. Once you have reported your repair, try to avoid repeat calls to our Services Centre. Our contractors will deal with repairs issued in order of priority.

We appreciate that this may be a difficult time for tenants and your co-operation is very much appreciated.

## Prevent your pipes from freezing

The following tips will help stop the pipes in your home from freezing:

- Turn your heating on for short periods throughout the day and night.
- Leave the heating on at a low level when you are away from home. This can be done by lowering the main heating control thermostat and turning thermostatic radiator valves down but not off. Consider leaving a key with a family member, friend or neighbour who can check your home regularly.
- Don't leave taps dripping or running as the water in waste pipes can freeze.

- Allow hot air from the main house into the loft, this may mean opening a trap door during extreme cold periods.
- Open the cupboard under the sink to ensure warm air can circulate round the piping.
- Ensure that all doors throughout the house are slightly open for warm air to flow around the house.

## How to deal with frozen pipes

- Turn the water supply off at the stopcock. The stopcock is a valve for turning off and on the cold water system in your home. Stopcocks are usually found in your kitchen below the sink unit. However, in some houses the stopcock is found in a front or back hall. Please ensure that you know where the stopcock is located. You can shut off the supply by turning the stopcock in a clockwise direction. To turn the supply back on, turn the stopcock in an anti-clockwise direction.
- To thaw frozen pipes put hotwater bottles or a thick cloth soaked in hot water over the frozen pipe. A hairdryer at its lowest setting can

also be used. Please be careful not to warm the pipes too quickly as this may lead to the pipe bursting. It is important that you thaw along the pipe starting from the end nearest the tap.

## What to do if a pipe bursts

- Turn off the stopcock by turning it clockwise
- Try to block the escaping water with thick cloths such as towels to stop the leak spreading.
- Turn off your central heating, immersion heater and any other water heating systems. If the central heating uses solid fuel, let this die out.
- Once you have shutdown your water heating, turn on all your taps to drain the system. Flushing your toilet several times may help.
- If water leaks near anything electrical switch off the mains electricity immediately. If the mains switch is wet, don't touch it as you risk electrocution.
- If water has been leaking for sometime and ceilings are bulging, the room may not be safe to enter.

If the ceiling has started to bulge or water is leaking through a ceiling, you could punch a small hole in the ceiling with a screwdriver. Use a bucket or basin to collect dripping water.

To report burst pipes please contact the Oaklee Services Centre on **01 400 2650**.

## Common faults with gas heating

**Frozen condensate pipes**  
Modern boilers produce significant volumes of condensate (water) which normally discharges into a gully. In very cold weather this condensate may freeze particularly where it discharges to an external gully. To prevent this you can place a hot water bottle on the pipe close to where it discharges (this advice also applies to some oil boilers). In exceptional circumstances we may need to disconnect the condensate

pipe internally and allow it to drain into a basin. The basin will need to be emptied regularly and the pipe reconnected when the weather improves.

## Frozen Gas Regulators

There may be a small amount of water vapour in the gas regulator which if it freezes will cause the gas supply to your boiler to fail. You should cover your meter with a towel or old clothing to provide some insulation. Place a hot water bottle on the regulator (grey metal fitting on the top left hand side of the meter) and remove once it has thawed any ice. Dry the regulator immediately.

## Home Contents Insurance

Please be aware that it is your responsibility to insure your home contents. Oaklee insures the buildings only. Any damage to your

property, regardless of the cause, is not insured by Oaklee.

## Help your neighbour

During extreme weather conditions please check on your neighbours if they are elderly, have a disability or are housebound as it can be a difficult time for them to get out and about. A friendly visit from a neighbour will be appreciated.

Further advice is available from your gas supplier and water service, which may include helpful hints and video tutorials.

## How can I find out more?

For further information please contact Oaklee at:

**Oaklee Housing**  
132 James's Street,  
Dublin, D08 PK25

Telephone: 01 400 2650

Email: [enquiries@oakleehousing.ie](mailto:enquiries@oakleehousing.ie)



## Don't tip your oil tank!

Oaklee are aware of increased incidences of tenants wedging or tipping oil tanks before arranging a refill.

Whilst we appreciate that many of our tenants suffer from fuel poverty, it is extremely important that you do not tip your tank to increase the oil flow as this often results in damaged oil lines, oil leaks, environmental contamination, damage to oil burners and makes the tank unstable and dangerous. Oil tanks are designed to retain a small amount of oil at the bottom of the tank. This is intended to act as a reservoir for sediment and moisture, which may damage the oil burner if used. Where damage is caused by tenant misuse, we will recharge all costs and your tenancy is at risk.

For further information on oil buying clubs please visit our website [www.oaklee.ie](http://www.oaklee.ie)

If you require any further information and advice on refilling your oil tank please contact Oaklee on **01 400 2650**

## USEFUL TIPS FOR REFILLING YOUR OIL TANK...

- Never tip your tank
- Always refit and secure the lid
- Avoid running out of oil and check oil levels regularly
- Avoid refilling with small drums as these are expensive and increase the likelihood of contamination
- Consider joining an oil buying club in your area to help budgeting for oil.



# Fire Safety at Home

Following the tragic fire at the Grenfell Tower Block in London, we would like to offer both assurance and fire safety advice to all tenants. Your safety and the safety of your home is our main priority.



Whilst Oak is committed to ensuring our homes are managed to the highest standards, fire safety is a shared responsibility. We have set out some useful fire safety advice below:

Fire may cause serious injuries and extensive damage to property and possessions. By following a few simple steps and maintaining a basic level of awareness you can considerably reduce the chances of fire in your home.

Your home is already equipped with smoke alarms which you should test weekly. Never remove your batteries, disconnect or cover your smoke alarm. Where alarms are connected to a communal building fire alarm system they will be tested by Oaklee staff and contractors.

- Use the heating system provided. Do not use additional heaters that have flames (gas and paraffin) or electric bar heaters.
- Do not store things in gas or electric meter cupboards.
- Always treat an alarm as a real fire – it might be someone burning toast, but it might not.
- Make a fire action plan so that everyone in your home knows how to get out if there is a fire.
- Keep the exits from your home clear so that you can escape if there is a fire.
- Make sure that everyone in your home can easily find the keys for doors and windows.
- Take extra care in the kitchen – accidents while cooking account for over half of fires in homes. Never leave young children alone in the kitchen.
- Take extra care if cooking with hot oil and never throw water onto or try to move very hot or burning oil. Consider buying a deep-fat fryer which is controlled by a thermostat (if you don't already have one).
- Never leave lit candles in unoccupied rooms or in rooms where children are on their own.
- Make sure candles are in secure holders on a surface that doesn't burn and are away from any materials that could burn.
- Make sure cigarettes are stubbed out properly and are disposed of carefully, and never smoke in bed.
- Get into the habit of closing doors at night. If you want to keep a child's bedroom door open, close the doors to the lounge and kitchen; it might help to save their life if there is a fire.
- Regularly clean the filters in tumble dryers and kitchen extractor hoods.
- Keep matches and lighters where children can't see or reach them.
- Take special care when you're tired or have taken alcohol.
- Don't overload electrical sockets. Remember, one plug for one socket.
- Don't leave the TV or other electrical appliances on standby. Always switch them off and unplug them when not in use.
- If you or a member of your household has any difficulty seeing, hearing or moving about your home, you will need to take extra care to deal with the risk of a fire.
- Flats are built to be fire-resisting and should contain fires until the NIFRS arrive provided doors are kept shut.



- Walls, ceilings and doors will hold back flames and smoke, so if there's a fire somewhere else in the building, you're usually safest staying in your flat unless you're affected by heat or smoke.
- If you live in a flat you should plan how to escape if there is a fire in your home or your block. It is likely that a flat will share common areas with other flats, such as corridors and stairways. The owner of the building will have the responsibility of making sure that the necessary fire safety measures needed in these areas are installed.
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- For example, there may be a communal fire alarm, fire doors and other fire safety features of the common areas which will need to be regularly maintained. Never interfere with fire detection equipment or fire safety measures such as fire doors and never leave rubbish, unwanted furniture etc in the communal areas. If you come across materials that have been left, they may present a risk to you and your family. Please contact us immediately.
- It is important to understand the fire safety measures built into the common areas; contact Oaklee if you want us to explain the safety plans for the premises and make sure that you are familiar with what you should do if a fire happens.
- You should not use a lift if a fire happens
- If you cannot escape because of smoke in the corridors, you will need to stay in your flat, near a window, where you can wait for assistance. Call 999 and tell the fire service operator which flat you are in. The operator will tell the fire fighters to come and assist you or let you know that your flat is not in danger. This is particularly important if you have difficulty moving around or using the stairs. Tell your Housing Officer or let the Fire Service know that you would be unable to evacuate if there was a fire in your building.
- The consequences of a fire can be devastating, even if it doesn't result in the loss of life or injury. While Oaklee will repair or replace damaged fixtures and fittings, we will not replace your personal items.
- You are therefore strongly advised to take out home contents insurance to cover your personal affects in the event of fire.



# Community Grants



## What is the Community Grant?

The Oaklee community grant is available to fund projects that involve people in their developments. The Association believes that by supporting communities and residents groups, they will be capable of delivering creative solutions to community issues and will enhance the place where they live, particularly when they work together. Examples of projects include; environmental projects, social events, kids clubs and community arts projects.

The projects which we will support include those projects that demonstrate strengthening communities and which deliver direct benefit to our tenants, their families and communities, which will help contribute to our overall vision of creating places where people are proud to live.

*A formal residents group does not need to be set up initially to avail of a grant but a Residents Group will need to be established for ongoing funding.*

*Applications for projects can be made throughout the year.*

### Residents Group - Start Up Grant

A start up grant of up to maximum of €150.00 per group will be made available to help fund the start up of projects and the formation of a Residents Group.

A group of tenants with a creative idea can apply for funding. The group will have to demonstrate an ability to deliver the proposed project which they wish to have funded.

### Residents Group - Ongoing Project Funding

An annual grant up to a maximum of €500.00 per group will be available to help fund ongoing projects.

To avail of ongoing project grant funding, a formal Residents Group should be in place. The group should have the following in place; a constitution, group structure and confirmation that an AGM has been held, copies of financial accounts and bank statements to show how the grant has been spent and evaluation of the success of projects.

## Hawthorn Court Residents Association

Hawthorn Court Residents Association have received ongoing grant funding for gardening projects within their development for a number of years. The funding has allowed them to purchase a poly tunnel, green house and equipment which allow the keen gardeners in the scheme to grow flowers and vegetables from seed.

The project has given tenants, their friends and family the opportunity to socialise and create a community spirit and chat about something really positive. This community spirit has benefited tenants by reducing social isolation and has improved the environment greatly for the tenants, some of whom are unable to get out an about.



Sprucing up the planters in the courtyard at James Street



## Rowantree Court Gardening Group

Rowantree Court Gardening Group have recently received start up grant funding to purchase paint to refurbish garden furniture and sheds and additional equipment and plants to brighten up the patio area in the scheme. The project has brought tenants from different backgrounds together and has created a great community spirit.

## How to apply...

An application form should be completed and returned to;

**Oaklee Housing,  
132 James's Street,  
Dublin, D08 PK25.**

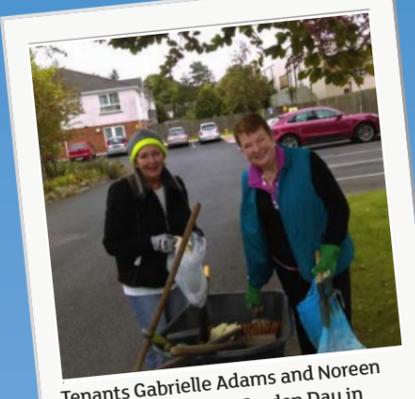
The application should include the following information:

- Details of the tenants' group
- Details of the proposed project to be funded
- Proposed costings for the project
- Evidence that all relevant tenants / communities have been consulted and invited to take part
- Details of how the group intends to monitor and evaluate the success of the project

## Out & About



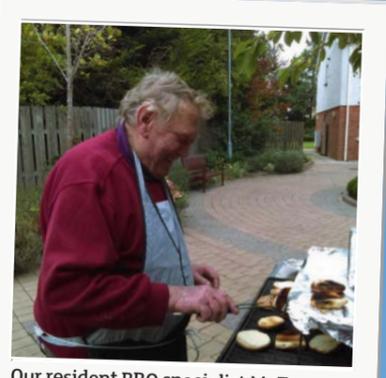
Community Day Garden Party in Aras an Uachtarain in July'17 attended by Hawthorn Court Representatives.



Tenants Gabrielle Adams and Noreen Neville enjoying our Garden Day in September'17.



Tenants planting daffodils and tulips at front of the scheme (Garden Day Sept '17)



Our resident BBQ specialist Mr Terry Dallas making sure all gardeners were fed. (Sept '17)

# Gardening Competition Winner 2017

Thank you to everyone who participated and congratulations to the winner. If you are a keen gardener, you too can enter next year's competition, simply send in your entries to be in with a chance of winning!

**Maureen Lawler**  
Hawthorn Court, Kildare

The winner of this year's Gardening Competition is Maureen Lawler at 9 Hawthorn Court. There were many beautiful entries but Maureen's garden really stood out with her creative use of props and colour. Congratulations Maureen and thanks to everyone that entered!



**Maureen Lawler**  
Hawthorn Court, Kildare  
Best Window Sill Display

**Florence Gillespie**  
28 Cuirt Na hAbhann

Best Front/Back Garden



## Homes Available immediately!

### Abbey Village in Donegal

Flat 18 is a 1 bed first floor flat. Abbey Court consists of 18 apartments which are a mix of sheltered and HSE units which are used for housing people with intellectual disabilities. There's a scheme coordinator on site 3 days a week as well as a cleaner to clean the communal areas. To apply call 01 400 2650.



## Different Ways to Pay Your Rent

There are a number of methods which are available to pay your rent including;

### Payment Card

The payment card can be used at any PostPoint outlet in Ireland displaying one of the PostPoint signs below or it can be used at any Post Office.

### Household Budget

Rent can be deducted from Welfare Benefits via the Household Budget Scheme, administered by An Post. A deduction form can be downloaded from [www.anpost.ie](http://www.anpost.ie) or call 1800 707172 or contact our Services Centre on 01 400 2650.



### Coming Soon!

We are currently setting up a Direct Debit payment facility for tenants to pay rent. Further details will be made available at a later date.

### Standing Order

A standing order can be set up to pay rent via your bank or you can use your internet online banking facility. Further details are available from Oaklee Housing Services Centre - T: 01 400 2650.

### mybills.ie

mybills.ie is a free service from An Post providing a 'one-stop-shop' for paying bills online including your weekly rental payment. Tenants can also set up payments to pay a regular amount automatically.

### Problems Paying your Rent

If you are having difficulties paying your rent, please do not ignore the problem – contact your Housing Officer to discuss the issues. We can provide assistance and advice regarding debt management and budgeting.  
Tel: 01 400 2650.

### Changes in Circumstances

If your rent is calculated on the basis of your income. You must advise the Association of any changes in your circumstances as soon as they occur, including;

- changes to household income (including additional income from training schemes or increases in welfare benefits)
- if anyone moves in or out of your property
- if additional children join the household.

## Credit Union Loans

A new loan scheme is being rolled out in Credit Unions nationally specifically aimed at those on social welfare. This initiative is about combating the grip of moneylenders on low income individuals and households in receipt of social welfare.

The scheme was developed in conjunction with the Citizens Information Board, MABS, An Post, the League of Credit Unions and the Social Finance Foundation and is supported by the Government and Department of Social Protection.

The "It Makes Sense Loan" is available in over 100 credit unions across the country. The loan is available at a rate of 12.68% APR in contrast to excessive rates of circa 200% charged by some moneylenders. When the unexpected bill arrives for home repairs, a family occasion or to purchase a new fridge rather than turn to moneylenders, the credit unions are offering micro credit loans to social welfare recipients.

Applicants for the 'It Makes Sense' loan do not already have to be members of the credit union. Once the person lives or works in a credit union's common bond area and over 18 years of age, the credit union can process a membership application and then accept their loan request. There is no automatic entitlement to a loan under this scheme. Potential borrowers must be able to show a capacity to repay the loan.

For applicants who receive their social welfare payments in cash (via a post office), the repayment for this loan must be made via the Household Budget Scheme, operated by An Post. Borrowers must be willing to sign up to and use the Household Budget Scheme to enable loan repayments.

For those who receive social welfare electronically (into a bank or credit union account), repayments for must be made by standing order or direct debit, directly from the account which receives the social welfare payment.

Additional information on the scheme is available at [www.itmakessenseloan.ie](http://www.itmakessenseloan.ie)

# Colouring Competition

It's really easy to enter, just pull out this page and colour it in anyway you like! Then pop it in the post along with your name, age, address and telephone number in the reply slip below to The Editor, Oaklee Housing (News), 132 James's Street, Dublin, D08 PK25. One lucky winner will receive this great prize! Entries must be received by 15/01/17. *(Please note that the parent must be a tenant of Oaklee Housing).*

Hey kids this is your chance to show-off your colouring skills

Win a family Cinema Pass!



Name

Age

Address

Daytime Telephone

Evening Telephone