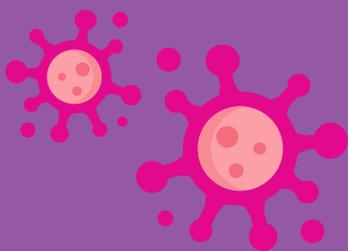


Oaklee News

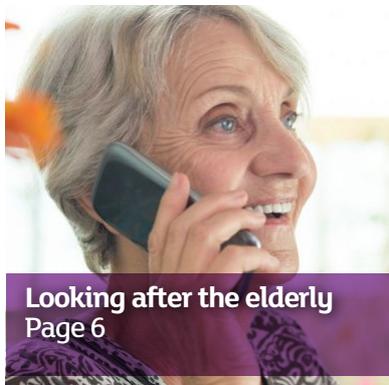
Spring 2020

The Newsletter for
Oaklee Housing
Tenants

*3 fantastic
competitions
to keep you
busy this
spring.*



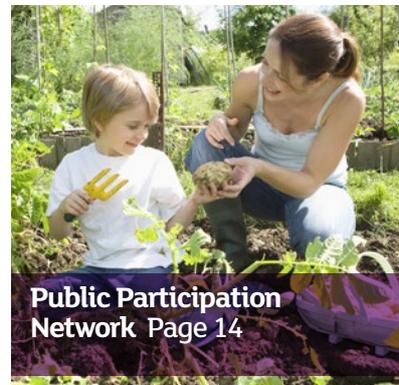
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A message from our Chief Executive Officer

Sharon Cosgrove



Welcome to the Oaklee News Spring 2020 edition.

As we come to the end of our financial year we take the time to look at what we have achieved in the last 12 months. It has been a busy year for us with the delivery of 206 new homes across the Republic of Ireland, that's 206 new families that we'd like to welcome into the Oaklee Housing fold.

I'm delighted to say that this edition sees a number of new articles and features, we're launching our Calendar 2021 photography competition as well as our writing competition, we're welcoming back our gardening competition and introducing our wonderfully entertaining and slightly irreverent agony aunt, Lizzy.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who participated in our customer satisfaction survey which we issued in January. We have used the insights from this survey to inform the next phase of our business strategy and as a result look forward to a busy 12 months ahead and beyond to 2023.

All participants were entered into a competition to win one of 5 SuperValu hampers and we're delighted, in this newsletter, to announce the lucky winners on page 10.

We've got some great articles about caring for the Elderly in our community as well as some sound advice on how to save energy in your homes. We've got a colouring page for the kids, a brain-teasing sudoku for the adults and some

tasty spring recipes to see you through to Easter.

On a more serious note, as COVID-19 (Coronavirus) continues to take hold, we've got advice from the HSE on how to stay safe and what to do if you are worried about either yourself, your family or your neighbours.

And finally, we are enormously appreciative of the contribution made by our Tenant Forum to Oaklee Housing and encourage those interested in getting involved to make contact with your Housing Officer who will put you in contact with your Tenant Champion.

On behalf of myself and my team here at Oaklee Housing we wish you the very best for 2020.

We welcome your input

This is the Oaklee Housing newsletter, Oaklee News, which we will be sending to 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.

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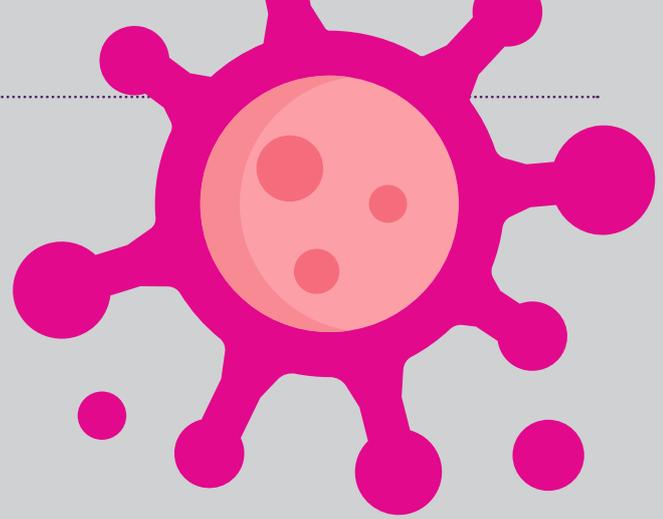
GET IN TOUCH

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

T: 01 400 2650

E: enquiries@oakleehousing.ie
www.oaklee.ie

What is Coronavirus?



What is Coronavirus?

COVID-19 is a new illness that can affect your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called Coronavirus.

What are the symptoms of Coronavirus? Symptoms are:

- ✔ A cough – this can be any kind of cough, not just a dry one.
- ✔ Shortness of breath
- ✔ Breathing difficulties
- ✔ A high temperature – 38 degrees Celsius or higher or chills
- ✔ Fatigue,
- ✔ Headaches,
- ✔ Sore throat
- ✔ Aches and pains



It can take up to 14 days for symptoms of Coronavirus to appear.

What do I do if I develop these symptoms?



If you develop symptoms you and anyone who lives with you will need to self-isolate and phone your GP.

Do not go to a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Your GP will assess you over the phone and if they think you need to be tested for Coronavirus, they will arrange it for you.

How can I catch the virus?



Coronavirus is spread in sneeze or cough droplets. You could get the virus if you:

- Come into close contact with someone who has the virus and is coughing or sneezes
- Touch surfaces that someone who has the virus has coughed or sneezed on.

[Coronavirus Information Continued>](#)

How can I protect myself from the virus?



Social Distancing

DO

- Keep a space of 2 metres (6.5 feet) between you and other people
- Reduce interactions with people outside the workplace and home
- Reduce the number of people you meet every day
- Avoid communal sleeping areas
- Avoid crowded places
- Work from home if possible
- Stay at home if you are sick to help stop the spread of whatever infection you may have.

Don't

- Shake hands or make close contact, if possible

Practice good personal hygiene

DO

- Wash your hands properly and often, especially after you have been outside and / or in the shops, before and after preparing food.
- If possible use hand sanitiser before and after you touch surfaces outside your home.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze.
- Put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Don't

- Touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean.
- Share objects that touch your mouth – for example, bottles, cups.
- Shake hands

Disposable gloves

Do not wear disposable gloves instead of washing your hands. The virus gets on them in the same way it gets on your hands. Also, your hands can get contaminated when you take them off.

Disposable gloves are worn in medical settings. They rip easily and are not as effective in daily life.

Wearing disposable gloves can give you a false sense of security.

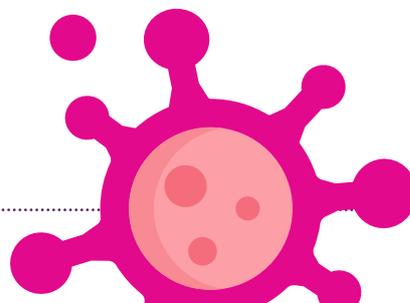
You might:

- Sneeze or cough into the gloves - this creates a new surface for the virus to live on
- Contaminate yourself when taking off the gloves or touching surfaces
- Touch your face with the gloves

Face Masks

Using masks is unlikely to be of any benefit if you are not sick.

Sick people will be advised by their doctor when to use a mask. Healthcare workers need masks and other personal protective equipment to protect them from infection during their work.



How to wash your hands with soap and water



1

Wet your hands with warm water and apply soap.



2

Rub your hands together until the soap forms a lather.



3

Rub the top of your hands, between your fingers and under your fingernails.



4

20
Seconds

Do this for about 20 seconds.



5

Rinse your hands under running water.



6

Dry your hands with a clean towel or paper towel.

How long is this going to last?

Unfortunately we don't know for sure how long this is going to last. But if we all take heed of the advice we've been given by government and health officials, make sure to practice social distancing, good personal hygiene and where possible, stay at home, we can help make it as short a time as possible.

What do I do if I cannot work because of Coronavirus.

If your financial situation changes because of Coronavirus you should contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible by calling the Oaklee Service Centre on 01 400 2650 or by email at servicescentre@oakleehousing.ie

If you are entitled to the recently announced unemployment benefits, search COVID-19 pandemic unemployment payment where you will find all the information you need about how to apply for the new social welfare assistance payments.

Will Oaklee continue to deliver services?

Due to the on-going COVID-19 (Coronavirus) crisis and in line with both government and HSE advice Oaklee have had to make some temporary changes to the way we carry out our day-to-day business. These changes are necessary in order to keep our tenants, colleagues, contractors, stakeholders as well as our friends and families safe and well. These changes are as follows:

Access to our Office & Hubs

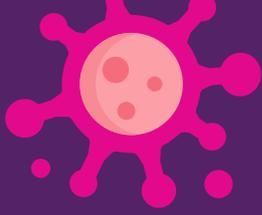
Our head office reception and local hubs are now closed to the public until further notice. If you need assistance, you can still contact us through our Services Centre on 01 400 2650 or by email at servicescentre@oakleehousing.ie

Delivery of our services

Our team continue to deliver services but with reduced face-to-face contact. All requests received will be assessed by the team in the Services Centre and responded to accordingly. Only urgent and emergency calls are being responded to at the moment, however, in the interests of the health and safety of our residents, we will continue to carry out planned maintenance of gas boilers. We would ask residents to only cancel these appointments if you are in self-isolation or quarantine.

Our contractors will at all times follow best practice principles around personal hygiene and social distancing.

All arranged interviews for new tenants, where possible, will now take place by phone. All arranged interviews for new tenants, where possible, will now take place by phone with keys being posted to you.



Payment of your rent

Due to these uncertain times and the financial difficulties we all face, Oaklee Housing has paused it's planned rent review process. This means that there will be no rent increase for the time being.

Despite the pausing of the rent review process, it is still very important that you continue to pay your rent as usual. However, if you are experiencing financial difficulty as a result of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) then please make contact with your Housing Officer through the Oaklee Services Centre on 01 400 2650 or by email at servicescentre@oakleehousing.ie

Pandemic unemployment benefit

If you are entitled to the recently announced unemployment benefits, please search COVID-19 pandemic unemployment payment or copy the following address and paste it into your browser:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/service/be74d3-covid-19-pandemic-unemployment-payment/>

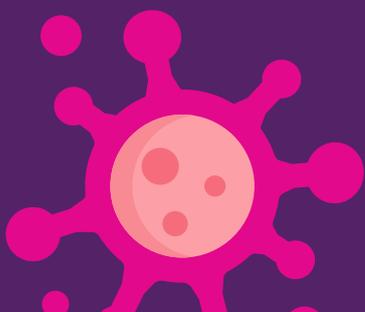
Our advice to you:

It is really important at this time that you remain calm and stay informed.

For information in relation to COVID-19 please visit the HSE website at HSE.ie

AND REMEMBER

Practice Social Distancing -
Wash Your Hands Often –
Stay Safe.



Looking after our Elderly

The winter is upon us and for many people throughout the country this can mean dark, long and lonely nights.

Keeping warm and being inside for many hours each day can heighten feelings of isolation and loneliness. This is especially emphasised for many people who are elderly or living alone.

It has been reported that one-third of Irish adults over 50 report feeling lonely at least some of the time, especially at this time of year.

In Ireland today, we are living in a fast-moving society with all its changes can leave older people feeling more alone and feeling disconnected.

But help is at hand. Being indoor due to ill-health, age or life circumstances doesn't mean you have to feel isolated once you have a phone, either landline or mobile. You can help yourself by calling any of the helplines out there.

There are some excellent confidential listening services now available for older people provided by trained older volunteers.

Senior Help Line

Seniorline is available 365 days a year from 10am-10pm. All calls to 1850 440 444 are handled in strict confidence.

Seniorline is part of Third Age, a national voluntary organisation celebrating the age in life when people may no longer be in paid employment, but can remain healthy, fulfilled and continue to contribute to society.

The longer people are encouraged to remain in this life stage, the better for older people themselves, their families, communities, and society as a whole.

Third Age recognises and celebrates the fact that older people are a diverse group with different needs, abilities, backgrounds, and experiences. It offers choices and provides opportunities for lifelong learning, volunteering, community development, and social inclusion.

Help is at hand, make that call today!

The Third Age group is part of the Active Ageing Partnership, and we believe that it is through working together as a sector that we can maximise the opportunities and meet the challenges of ageing in Ireland.

Seniorline remains open when many statutory services are closed, and is recognised as a primary health care service helping to support older people in their community.

Phone - 1850 440 444

Age Action Ireland

Phone: 01 475 6989

Email info@ageaction.ie

Age Action Ireland is based in Dublin and again offers various other services including computer training for older people. Computers can be very intimidating and the thoughts of 'surfing the net' can be even more frightening but learning how to use a computer is a great way to keep in touch.

Age Action Ireland, in association with DCU Age Friendly University, established the *Silver Surfers Awards* to raise awareness of the importance of digital literacy amongst the older population and this year this great initiative celebrates its 10th Anniversary.

Now's your chance to help yourself or help someone you think might be feeling lonely and isolated. Take the time today to make that call to that person and help. Or take that first step yourself, don't feel alone, don't be afraid to ask for help. We're all the same inside and can feel vulnerable, pick up the phone and make that call, today!

Drogheda and District Support 4 Older People

Free Phone: 1800 200 100

Email: dds4op@eircom.net

The main objective of this organisation is to provide support for the health, safety, wellbeing, and community involvement of older people residing in Drogheda and the surrounding area.

Good Morning Drogheda!

This free and confidential service offers a telephone call (during the normal working week) to check that people are safe and well. This reduces feelings of isolation, insecurity, loneliness, and vulnerability. We can remind you of hospital/doctor appointments, for example. If we do not get a reply we will speak to your nominated contact person (family member or neighbour).

The "Care and Repair Team" – mostly retired handymen or tradesmen assist us in giving a minimum cost service to older people doing small maintenance jobs and repairs in their homes and gardens.

Computer Classes – volunteer tutors assist older people on a one-to-one, one afternoon a week, to get them up and running with e-mail, exploring the internet, Skype etc.

Befriending – matches older people with a suitable volunteer who will visit them at home on a regular basis. Our volunteer Befrienders are trained and Garda vetted to provide a confidential service.

Support – an office where older people can go to find out about their rights and entitlements, and be given information and advice on grants and anything else they may be having problems with, as well as filling in forms and making phone calls on their behalf.

Author: Betty Clarke, Tenant Forum Member

April is the time to get busy in your garden

Spring is here! The days are longer, the ground is getting warmer and the daffodils are beginning to flower. Spring also heralds the start of the gardening season so get yourself ready because it's time to get outside and prepare your garden for the summer. So here are some gardening jobs and tips for you to focus on this April.

Now is an ideal time to plant herbaceous perennials.

Hydrangeas will require some attention during March. Remove the dead flowerheads in early spring, cutting back the stem to the first strong, healthy pair of buds down from the faded bloom. Hydrangeas flower on new growth, so avoid cutting into 'old wood', as this can reduce flowering for the next couple of summers.



Prepare and reseed any bare patches on your lawn that may have appeared during winter - rake off any leaves and add a layer of lawn compost before sowing. It is a good idea to net and protect larger patches once seeds have been scattered, as pigeons are particularly partial to them! If the weather is dry enough, you may be able to cut your lawn; make sure the blade of your lawn mower is not too low and cut long grass with a strimmer before mowing.

Clear Flower Beds

Rake leaves and mulch away from garden beds to allow the foliage of spring-flowering bulbs and perennials to poke through. During the winter, leaves can pack down, forming an impenetrable barrier to new growth. Plus when you pull back the mulch, the soil will warm faster because it's exposed to the sun.

Tip: Use a plastic leaf rake when you remove mulch. Metal garden rakes with sharp tongs can rip tender foliage from emerging plants.



Fertilise your beds. Once your soil is workable, dig a 5cm (or more) layer of compost or well-rotted manure into your beds to prepare for the growing season ahead. You can also work in a general-purpose fertiliser, such as pelleted chicken manure, or fish, blood and bone.



Sow your veggies from seeds. Lettuce, spinach, radishes, peas, and other cool season crops can be sown directly in the garden in March. In frost-free regions, plant warm weather vegetables such as tomatoes and squash. Cover the plants if an unexpected frost threatens.

Tip: Sow radishes, spinach, beans, and peas in wide rows instead of single file. You'll get more produce per square inch if you scatter seed in a 6 to 10 inch wide band.



An invitation to our green-fingered tenants

Oaklee Housing is delighted to announce the launch of the **How Does Your Garden Grow 2020** Gardening competition.

Whether you have the perfectly manicured lawn complete with flourishing flower beds, an array of potted plants on your balcony or a simple collection of beautifully blooming baskets, this competition has been established to reward tenants who take pride in their outdoor spaces and recognise the positive impact their efforts have on their communities.

The competition is open to both individuals and community groups with two categories to enter:

1. Private planted displays

This includes private gardens, balconies, front door / steps or anywhere that you have planted your own display of plants and shrubs. This includes displays of flower beds, grass areas, potted plants and hanging baskets.

2. Common open areas

Open spaces within your scheme or estate. This can be either grass or paved areas, or a combination of both, with planters, pots and baskets.

The garden or outdoor display must be your own and / or your communities work.

How to enter:

Send high resolution pictures of your gardens and open spaces to communications@oakleehousing.ie

Pictures should be received no later than 1st August 2020.

Winners will receive a €250 Woodies voucher and have their pictures published in the autumn edition of Oaklee News.

Feed your plants. Feed trees, shrubs and hedges with a slow release fertiliser by lightly forking it into the soil surface. Feed your roses with special rose feed or balanced fertiliser as they come into growth and don't forget to prune your roses to encourage strong new growth.

Plant Bulbs. This is the time when early flowering bulbs like caladiums, dahlias, crocus, and hyacinth should be taken out of storage for leaving the foliage to break dormancy naturally.

Plant tender bulbs of begonia tubers in a pot containing moist compost, covering only the top. These pots should be ideally kept in well-lit spots and occasionally watered whenever the growing medium dries out. As soon as the shoots elongate, they should be potted individually.

TIP: You can also start potting up stored geraniums. The warm, sunny days help stimulate new growth and lead to fuller plants by the time summer arrives.

Enjoy spring... April is a busy time of year for gardeners and before you know it, summer will have arrived. Make time to enjoy the spring, take the time for your 2km walk or simply sit in your garden with a nice cup of tea and listen to the birds sing.



Resources

Bord Bia have a really great on line gardening page with expert advice on how to best grow plants, herbs, flowers, fruits, vegetables. Search Bord Bia Gardening to find out more.

Oaklee Tenant Survey 2020

As you know we issued our invitation to participate in our tenant survey in January. Many thanks to everyone who answered the questionnaire – we had over 350 participants, which is a very strong response rate.

The tenant survey is a very important and useful activity for both the Oaklee tenants and the Oaklee team. Not only does it give our tenants the chance to have their say, it also helps us understand our tenants needs.

The outcome from this year's survey has helped us craft the next stage of our business strategy which will be published in May 2020.

Tenant Survey Hamper Winners!

Every participant who completed the survey and filled in their details were entered into a draw to win one of 5 hampers from SuperValu.

The draw has taken place and the winners are: **Claire O'Driscoll, Kim Thompson, Anthony O'Reilly, Rizwan Rana Zaid and Ciara Curran Soussaine.** Congratulations!

2021 Calendar Photography competition

As you know, every year Oaklee publish an annual calendar. We try to make this as personal and connected to Oaklee as possible by using images of our own tenants, their families and communities.

This year, in preparation for the 2021 calendar, we have decided to run a photography competition and invite you, our residents, to send in your photographs for us to use.

We are looking for pictures that are relevant, month-by-month, to the seasons; images that we can use across the 12 months of the year.

You can send in your entries any time from now until 5pm on Friday December 11th 2020 to communications@oakleehousing.ie

The winning photographs will be published in the Oaklee Housing 2021 calendar with the winner getting a framed copy of their image along with €50 One4all voucher.



- By submitting your photograph you are handing Oaklee full rights to use the image both in print and online as it wishes.
- The competition is open to all Oaklee residents and their families.
- You can enter this competition as often as you like, but each entry must feature a different picture.
- Images can be submitted by email – no hard copy prints will be accepted - as a jpeg and must be of sufficient quality and high enough resolution to print (Greater than 1mb in size).
- All images must be received by 5pm on 11th December 2020.

Best of luck to everyone – Happy snapping!

Writing Competition

Most people know writing is 'good for the soul'. If nothing else, it's a great way to record your memories or reflect on how much has changed in your own personal timeline.

Here at Oaklee, we're delighted to launch our 2020 Writing Competition for our tenants to record their fondest memories.

So, if you've got a short story or a poem that you've already written or are simply in need of a gentle push to take the bold first step and write your story down, then now is your time.

Using 'I remember' as the theme, send us your

- short story of no more than 1000 words
- poem or monologue

Send your entry by

- email to communications@oaklee.ie or
- by post, Short Story Competition, Oaklee Housing, 132 James St., Dublin 8, D08 PK25

**Entries should be received by
12 noon on Friday 29th May 2020**

The winning entry will be published in the Autumn edition of Oaklee News and featured on our website, Oaklee.ie

The winning entry will also receive a €100 One4all voucher.

By entering this competition you agree to your entry being published by Oaklee Housing in print and on-line.

This competition will be moderated by Betty Clarke, Tenant Forum member.

Entries will be judged by Sharon Cosgrove, CEO, Siobhain Bunni, Head of Communications & PR and Betty Clarke, Tenant Forum Member.

Sudoku

The objective is to fill a 9x9 grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits from 1 to 9.

A cell is the smallest block in the game. A row, column and region consists of 9 cells and the whole game consists of 81 cells.

Have a go and you can find the answer on page 23.

9	2			1		3		
8	5			9			2	
		3						
					2			
3					1	6		
1	9	7				2	5	
			5		9		6	2
	8	5		2		4		
		9	7	4			3	

Save Energy, Money and the Environment

In the last few years there has been an increase in public interest in climate change and our impact on the environment. The Government has taken significant steps which includes the development of a 'Climate Action Plan' with many challenging targets.

Oaklee has been active in this area for several years, and as part of our Group we have an Energy Management Team, with four full time staff. Last year we launched our new 'Energy and Sustainable Development Strategy' which sets ambitious targets for our organisation.

The way we use energy in our homes not only has an impact on the environment, but it can be expensive, and is linked to other concerns such as energy poverty.



There are many things you can do to save energy, money and the environment, with some examples provided below:

Save Energy

- Use low energy light bulbs or LEDs
- Turn off unnecessary lighting
- Familiarise yourself with how to use any heating controls
- Consider purchasing energy efficient appliances
- Switch off appliances that are on standby
- Close curtains at dusk to keep heat in
- Only open windows when needed for ventilation
- Only boil the water you need in your kettle
- Avoid blocking your radiators
- Use your washing machine wisely

Reduce Energy Costs

Consider reviewing how you pay for your electricity and natural gas :

- You may be able to request a change of meter type so you either receive bills or pre-pay using a card
- You could consider paying for your energy in a different way e.g. by bill, direct debit or standing order
- Consider alternative billing options such as paperless or online billing.

One of the most effective ways to save money is to consider switching electricity or natural gas providers. Further information is available from a range of websites such as;

www.bonkers.ie

www.switcher.ie or

www.moneyguideireland.com

Some suppliers may be able to supply both gas and electricity and may offer additional discounts for customers who switch both energy supplies.

Benefits and Financial Support

There are many different benefits available as part of the social welfare system in Ireland. Entitlement to these benefits is generally based on satisfying personal circumstances. We would advise all of our customers to regularly check for updates in this area and to advise the relevant bodies such as the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, about any changes to personal circumstances.

Further information is available from this Government Department or by contacting Citizens Information on 0761 07 4000, or by emailing www.citizensinformation.ie



If you are struggling to pay your rent we would advise you to contact your Housing Officer at Oaklee Housing as soon as possible on **01 400 2650**.

.....

Further support is available from organisations such as Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS) who can be contacted at **0761 07 2000**, or by email at www.mabs.ie



Further information is available in our energy booklet, which is available to download from our website at www.oaklee.ie/energy. Our website also contains other relevant information including advice on how to use heating controls.

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For any further assistance you can contact our Energy Management Team by emailing energy@oaklee.ie



Energy Team visit to Hawthorn Court

On Monday 16th December our Energy Team attended a coffee morning at Hawthorn Court and provided advice and information to a group of around 15 tenants. Advice was provided on how to save energy and money, with links provided to useful guidance and organisations who are able to provide further support.

We would like to thank those tenants who came along, the Scheme Coordinator Ger, and all those who helped to provide an impressive spread of food!

The Public Participation Network

The Public Participation Network (PPN) could be for you and your group:

The message from the EU earlier in this century had been that local authorities needed to use the expertise of ordinary people in an organized and formal way. Yes, we had elected councillors, and yes, we had the expertise of planners etc. in the council executive, but a third component which was being used informally, needed to be put on a more official basis. So, in 2014, legislation was passed which created a Public Participation Network for every council in the 26 counties. Effectively, the only condition is that your group has to be more-or-less organized, and consist of five people or more. Each PPN is divided into three pillars, reflecting three types of group.

Who can join? (the Three Pillars):

1 Community/Voluntary pillar

The largest in terms of numbers, is the Community/Voluntary pillar. This includes all interested residents associations, any sports clubs, special interest groups, arts groups, cycling or pedestrian associations, astronomy societies, or just about anything the imagination could conjure up that involves communities of similar interest.

2 Social Inclusion pillar

The second most popular pillar is that of Social Inclusion. This effectively incorporates any group dealing with minority issues, for instance, the those who come under the nine grounds of discrimination in the Equal Status Acts (2000-2015). Some groups who would come under this umbrella are youth groups/clubs, groups with particular interest in older people or disabled, Traveller groups or groups set up with inclusion of ethnic minorities in mind; LGBTTQI groups; women's groups and men's sheds etc.; unmarried family groups, if there are any, and a bit of whatever you're havin' yourself. Outside of the Equal Status Acts, there's no reason why anyone who has set up a group to deal with poverty issues wouldn't be entitled to be involved, since the wealthy, traditionally, have had disproportionate direct access to the levers of power, and it'd be nice to think that some of the power imbalance could be redressed.

3 Environmental pillar

The third pillar is the Environmental pillar, but it is by far the smallest, because it has to be officially a designated 'Environmental NGO', which requires a lot of red tape.

Why Join?

- 1 Joining is free, and commitment isn't obligatory.
- 2 Your organization is regularly updated with relevant grant and funding opportunities.
- 3 Your organization is regularly updated with regular council activities, including planning projects that require public consultation.
- 4 The PPN is a good place to get in touch with similar organizations to yours, both in your local area or town, or throughout the county or urban area.
- 5 Your voice will be heard at the highest levels of council decision-making. This happens because each pillar, usually, is given a seat on your local authority's Strategic Policy Committee; for example, your resident's association can make its voice heard through the representative elected by your pillar (community/voluntary pillar in this case), to the Planning SPC, the Traffic and Transport SPC, the Housing SPC, the Arts and Culture SPC, the Finance SPC, the Joint Policing Committee, and the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) which is used in distribution of Council funds to local projects. Each SPC is usually made of two-thirds elected CountyCity Councillors, and one third external experts, including PPN reps.

By the way...the PPN is independent of the Council, and cannot be told what to do by the Council.

*Author: Robbie Sinnott,
Tenant Forum Member*

What to do?

If you think the PPN is something your organization might be interested in, it is very easy to join. Your own Council PPN has a website and very basic form to be filled in – that will probably take less than a minute. Otherwise, you can call your Council, and they will put you in touch with your local PPN. Once your group has joined, it has full voting rights in the PPN, will receive relevant information regularly, and will have access to contact details for a large network of similar and diverse organizations.

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine



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.

There are two types of Community Grant:

- A Residents Group start up grant;
- An annual grant for established Residents Groups for ongoing projects.

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 made 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.

How to apply

An application form should be completed and returned to Oaklee Housing. 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.

Groups who have availed of Community Grants

Hawthorn Court Residents Association

Hawthorn Court Residents Association have received on going 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.

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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.



If you are interested in setting up a group in your development and you have a project in mind. Please contact Oaklee for information and an application form:

Oaklee Housing
132 James's Street
Dublin 8

Tel: 01 400 2650
E-mail : enquiries@
oakleehousing.ie

Application for Start Up Project Funding Conditions

1. Any amount awarded must be used solely for the purpose outlined in the application. The amount awarded will be final and will not be increased in the event of any overspend.
2. If you do not spend the whole amount, any unspent funds should be returned to Oaklee Housing Association.
3. For audit purposes, expenditure receipts, balances and details of planned expenditure must be provided on request.
4. The Association will not be responsible for any expenditure on your project prior to you receiving your letter confirming any awards given.
5. Once funding has been given there is no on-going commitment from the Association to issue further funds for a project. We will consider subsequent funding bids, but this is not guaranteed.
6. You agree to acknowledge support in all subsequent positive publicity relating to the project. You will contact the Association to check that they wish to be included in such publicity, before publicity goes out.
7. Oaklee Housing reserves the right to inform media organisations of the support given to your group.
8. Oaklee Housing reserves the right to refuse to provide an explanation when a funding application has been refused.
9. Oaklee Housing will withhold payment/ part payment if:
 - It becomes apparent that the application form contained incorrect information.
 - If your group/organisation ceases to exist, the project closes or the purpose of your organisation changes in any way that is not in line with the grant given.
 - If you do not return financial or monitoring information when requested.
10. You agree to allow Oaklee Housing representatives to visit your project and talk to participants.

Fire Safety at Home



Whilst Oaklee Housing 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 Housing 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.
- Apartments are built to be fire-resisting and should contain fires until the Fire Brigade 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 apartments unless you're affected by heat or smoke.



- If you live in a apartments you should plan how to escape if there is a fire in your home or your block. It is likely that a apartments will share common areas with other apartments, 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.

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 Housing 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 apartment, near a window, where you can wait for assistance. Call 999 or 112 and tell the fire service operator which apartment you are in. The operator will tell the fire fighters to come and assist you or let you know that your apartment 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.

Your guide to gas safety



Lots of homes rely on gas for heating, hot water and cooking. Whilst well maintained gas equipment is generally very safe, faulty gas boilers, fires and cookers can be deadly. Appliances which are not regularly serviced by Oaklee Housing can cause gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning.

● Safety checks

Oaklee Housing is fully committed to ensuring your safety within your home and that all gas appliances are maintained in a safe condition. By law, we have to check all gas appliances in your home every year, to make sure that they are safe. A gas engineer needs to visit your home to carry out this free safety check and service.

● How do I know when my gas service is due?

The safety check and service is carried out annually. Our gas engineers will contact you approximately 12 weeks before your service certificate expires to arrange an appointment for the safety check and service to be completed.

We start the process at this point to ensure that the service is completed before the current certificate expires. The next service will be due no more than 12 months following this service.

● How long does the safety check take?

The check takes about 40 minutes. Once the safety check and service is completed the contractor will provide you with a Gas Safety Certificate, please keep this in a safe place for your records.

● Who does the check?

A qualified Registered Gas Installer (RGI) engineer will do the check. Please ask to see their identity card before you let them in.

● Do I have to let the engineer in?

Yes. Your tenancy agreement says that you must let the engineer in. Gas checks save lives. By law, we have to do them. If you repeatedly refuse to let us in, we will have to take you to court. We will also seek to recover any additional costs incurred.

No Access Procedure:

It is vital that you provide access to allow Oaklee Housing to check and service your gas boiler. If you do not contact us and our engineers are unable to gain access to your property, Oaklee Housing will enter into our no access procedure, which could result in your gas supply being shut off; your tenancy may also be at risk and we may commence legal proceedings to ensure access is given. **Our number one priority is to ensure you are safe in your home.**

● What should I do if I will not be at home for the appointment for the Gas Safety Check?

Our engineers will endeavour to arrange the service to suit you, however, your new appointment must take place within 7 days from the original appointment date. If you need to change the appointment please contact the gas contractor directly - their contact details will be noted on the appointment card you have been sent, alternatively contact Oaklee Services Centre immediately on 01 400 2650 or by e-mail to repairs@oakleehousing.ie. If you do not contact us and our contractors are unable to gain access, Oaklee Housing will enter into our no access procedure, which could result in your gas supply being shut off and your tenancy may also be at risk.

● What will the engineer check?

The engineer will check and service all the gas appliances that Oaklee Housing owns, such as gas boilers and appliances. They will also check the gas supply pipes and complete a visual check of gas appliances that you own, such as gas cookers. They will not complete a service of your appliances as they are your responsibility. The engineer will also be able to answer any gas questions that you have. They can show you how to use the heating and hot water system, and can also give advice about saving energy.

● What if an appliance is faulty?

The engineer will fix faults straight away if they can. If they can't, they will arrange follow-up repairs. They will disconnect appliances that are unsafe where they are unable to repair immediately. We will fix the problem as soon as possible, for free.

● Benefits of Servicing your Boiler

In addition to the obvious safety benefits of boiler servicing, a well maintained boiler will also ensure the boiler is operating efficiently, thereby reducing your fuel costs.



Never reconnect an appliance that has been disconnected for safety reasons as this is dangerous.

Gas safety: top tips

- Always follow the appliance manufacturer's operating instructions for your gas appliances.
- Ensure you give access to Oaklee Housing Registered Gas Installer engineer to check the appliances in your home annually as requested.
- Make sure you know where and how to turn off your gas supply.
- You must request permission from Oaklee Housing to install a gas appliance.
- If you think an appliance might be faulty, turn it off and call Oaklee Housing immediately to report it.
- Test your carbon monoxide detector regularly and report any faults to Oaklee Housing immediately.

Important:

If you smell gas, or think that there may be a gas leak:

call the 24 hour Gas Emergency Service immediately on:

T: 1850 20 50 50

don't use electrical switches
shut off the gas supply at the meter
put out all naked flames
open doors and windows
leave the house

Dear Aunty Lizzy

dearauntylizzy@gmail.com



We are thrilled to introduce you to Aunty Lizzy, our new and delightful agony aunt who will answer all your questions and love life problems in a light-hearted common-sense way. Aunty Lizzy is a writer of fiction, comedy and a radio broadcaster. She has a direct, kind, and concerned approach to life and all its challenges and will guide you in a frank and honest way.

Have Aunty Lizzy help you with your love life and simple life problems by sending in your questions to her at 'dearauntylizzy@gmail.com'. All questions will be held and dealt with in the strictest of confidence.

Problem 1 – Hairy Boyfriend.

Dear Aunty Lizzy,

I have a problem if you could help. Myself and my boyfriend of 10 months are both aged 35.

He ticks all the right boxes. He's handsome, good job and great in bed. And time is against me as I would like to start having babies soon.

But in the last few months he has decided to grow a beard. I've told him I don't like his new look, but he just laughs it off. He's now telling me I'm getting fatter and to lose some weight.

What's really bothering me is that I've recently discovered pieces of food and dirt in his beard. It disgusts me and makes me want to gag, never mind kiss him.

Help: distracted.

ANSWER = Aunty Lizzy replies:

Dear Distracted.

The simple answer here is for you to finish this relationship, as neither of you are happy.

You are right to be disgusted by your fella's dirty food ridden infested beard, I can only imagine what other living things might be nested there!!

This is gross and should not be tolerated. Come on, how much is a bar of soap today? But getting him to use it is the problem!

No, get out. You are obviously worried about your biological clock ticking like 'Big Ben' in your head.

This is no excuse to cling to a smelly fella, especially one who not only calls you 'fat' but has taken the 'Caveman' and 'Neanderthal' look to a whole new level.

(Aunty Lizzy is not an expert and will always advise readers to call the Samaritan's on Freephone 116 123 in the case of emergencies)

Problem 2

I'm a 55-year-old separated woman living alone in Cork City. I am feeling very lonely, long for love and someone to share my life with.

Recently I've met a man online through one of the dating sites. I arranged to meet him in the lobby of a big hotel in the city. As soon as I met him, I got a warm fuzzy feeling in the pit of my stomach and could hear wave sounds in my ears. Chatting over coffee, his smile just melted me into the chair, and I couldn't feel my feet.

He said he felt the same and wanted to book a room for the night in the Hotel, even though it was only 4pm in the day.

The problem is he admitted he is still married to his wife of 30 years, and firmly told me that he has no plans to leave her as she suffers with her 'nerves'.

I resisted the temptation, this time, but the trouble is I can't stop thinking about him and wondered if this was 'love at first sight', that so many people talk about?

Tempted lonely lady.

ANSWER = Auntie Lizzy replies:

Dear Tempted lonely lady,

Let's face it, we all get lonely in this fast-paced world we now live in. With the increase in social media and the internet, strange as it might seem, we now have many new ways to communicate to each other, but as humans reports of isolation and loneliness have never been so high.

But getting yourself entangled with a married lover will only lead to pain and more loneliness for you.

He is obviously a very selfish man who 'wants his cake and to eat it'. This 'love at first sight' is 'bullcrap' that the movie industry feeds to us like candy to a child in a sweet shop.

When you were having coffee in the hotel this 'double crosser' selfish man, the fuzzy feeling in the pit of your stomach was more than likely 'indigestion' whereas the waves in your ears could be 'Tinnitus'.

Cop on to yourself. You are worth more than this womaniser man can offer you.

YES you are lonely, YES you would like to meet a nice man to share your life with, but NO you won't find him in hotel rooms with 'afternoon sex romps'.

Do yourself a favour and get out there, not to some sleazy hotel, but by joining up and volunteering for some local charity or community-based project near you in the city. Something like homeless, older people, young people with mental health problems. You will be amazed, by 'giving back' you will not feel so isolated or alone. Then you can enjoy all the feel-good hormones of giving back and just wait and see, someone will cross your path that deserves the love of a wonderful woman like you.

Hang in there and don't sell yourself short.

Sudoku

Answer from page 11.

9	2	6	8	1	7	3	4	5
8	5	1	3	9	4	7	2	6
4	7	3	2	6	5	8	9	1
5	6	8	4	7	2	9	1	3
3	4	2	9	5	1	6	8	7
1	9	7	6	3	8	2	5	4
7	3	4	5	8	9	1	6	2
6	8	5	1	2	3	4	7	9
2	1	9	7	4	6	5	3	8

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 Thursday 30th April 2020.

(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 Butlers Chocolate Bunny

Name

Age

Address

Daytime Telephone

Evening Telephone