

teachers' housing association

Celebrating 50 Years 1967 - 2017

Summer Newsletter 2017 **Issue No. 48**



Welcome to our Summer Newsletter

This has been an exciting year for Teachers' Housing Association. May 2017 marked our 50th Anniversary and we celebrated this significant milestone with events in London and at our schemes across the country where we were joined by so many of our tenants. In addition to a number of regular updates, we are delighted to focus a large section of this Newsletter on our 50th events.

In particular this year, we say a big *thank you* to staff and tenants who gave their time and commitment to organise and attend our celebrations, making them all a huge success.

Development Update

After some delays during construction we were pleased to take handover of our new development at Holmesdale Road in Croydon at the end of February. All 8 flats were let immediately to people working in education and in housing need. Whilst there are a few outstanding issues with the building to be resolved we are pleased with the results overall and have received some very positive feedback from our new tenants. We are now seeking new loan funding for further developments.



Fire Safety

The tragic Grenfell Tower fire has put fire safety at the forefront of everyone's mind. As an Association we carry out a planned programme of Fire Risk Assessments on our properties and staff undertake regular checks on all buildings and escape routes. Fire safety is the responsibility of both staff and tenants.

Most fires in the home start accidentally and the effects can be devastating. It's important that you know how to reduce the chances of a fire starting in your home and keep yourself, your family and your property safe from fire.

We have recently re-issued some fire safety guidance to all tenants in our General and Teacher housing. Please do take a moment to read this if you have not done so already. Thank you to those tenants who have contacted us following receipt of this guidance. We are always pleased to receive feedback and comments.



A copy of the London Fire Brigade's 'Home Fire Safety Guide' has been included with this Newsletter for all non-sheltered housing tenants.

If tenants have questions or concerns regarding fire safety they should contact their Housing Manager, or call Head Office.

Our Sheltered housing schemes are a mixture of 'Stay Put' or 'Evacuate' in the case of fire. We will be writing to tenants in these properties to confirm the action to be taken at their scheme so that tenants are clear about the fire policy at each scheme. Sheltered tenants who have queries or concerns about fire safety should contact their Scheme Manager.

Celebrating 50 Years of housing people in need, particularly those

Summer Walkabouts

The annual Summer Walkabout events have either taken place, or are scheduled as follows:

- New Park Gardens – 6 July
- Peter Kennedy Court – 13 July
- Romaleyn Gardens – 26 July
- The Dene – 1 August
- Dunham Gardens – 16 August
- Queen Mother Court – 24 August
- The Anchorage – 7 September

Letters will be issued to tenants in the coming weeks confirming the time of the walkabout and information will also be displayed around the schemes where possible.

Turnout at these events has been low in previous years and we would like to remind tenants that this is your opportunity to meet with THA staff and raise any concerns you may have. There will be the opportunity after the walkabout has taken place to chat to staff over coffee for those tenants who are unable to complete a walk of the scheme.

Red Nose Day

Peter Kennedy Court held a Bake Sale in aid of Red Nose Day and raised £205 for this charity which helps so many people in this country and abroad. Residents are always happy to support a worthy cause; some even donned a red nose.



50th Celebrations

Our 50th Anniversary in May was a significant milestone for the Association and an opportunity to mark our achievements with a series of celebratory events and promotional material. We began with a party in London on the anniversary of our first registration which was attended by staff, board members, shareholders, contractors, consultants, partners and many others who have supported our work.



Events have been held at our sheltered housing schemes and we developed a number of promotional items for distribution. An "anniversary prize draw" for our general and teacher housing resulted in 5 tenants each winning £50. We've also made a short film illustrating the importance of our work which you will shortly be able to view on our website.



Alongside the fun of the celebrations this has been an opportunity for us to take stock and reflect on the Association's achievements over the last 50 years. We are proud of what we have achieved and the number of people who the Association has housed and supported.

We are a small specialist association and our commitment to providing safe, secure and affordable housing is as strong as when we were established 50 years ago.



From our Schemes...

Our celebration has been shared by all THA schemes this year. 50th Anniversary parties have been held across the country, and while there have been many other newsworthy events, we are focusing on the THA's 50th in this summer's report.

Parties were organised locally by scheme staff and a range of buffets, teas and entertainment were laid on. Each scheme arranged a special celebration cake, and banners and balloons made the communal areas look suitably festive for the occasion.

Residents and scheme staff were joined by local councillors, contractors and support organisations as well as Board Members and Head Office staff. The photos here are a small selection from all schemes and reflect that they were all well organised, thoroughly enjoyable and a fitting way to mark such a significant milestone.



Dunham Gardens



Queen Mother Court



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From our Schemes...

Of course, normal life at the schemes has seen a full calendar of trips, parties, charity events and regular lunches. Significant birthdays have been celebrated, and music afternoons, fetes, bingo, fish and chips and even a piping of the haggis for Burns Night have been enjoyed by residents up and down the country. Our dedicated staff at the schemes, together with many enthusiastic residents, deserve huge praise for the efforts they put in to make everyday scheme life varied and interesting.

Romaleyn Gardens



The Dene



Peter Kennedy Court



New Park Gardens



The Anchorage



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“Celebrating 50 Years of
housing people in need,
particularly those associated
with education.”

www.teachershousing.org.uk



Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Thank you to all tenants who returned completed forms to the Feedback Service for our Satisfaction Survey carried out by Acuity earlier in the year.

Over 300 of you responded (48%) and the results were distributed with the annual report. The results were positive with overall satisfaction with the services we provide scoring 88%, though we are mindful that this represents a 4% drop on the previous set of results reported in 2013. Our tenants in sheltered schemes are more satisfied than tenants in our general and teacher housing and we have some work to do to address the concerns that tenants have raised through the survey results.

The most significant decreases in tenant satisfaction have been with the appearance of the neighbourhood (-11%) and keeping tenants informed (-10%). There were decreases in satisfaction with being told when contractors would call, cleaning internal communal areas and listening to tenants' views (-8% to -9%). Satisfaction with getting hold of the right person, the time taken before repair work starts, repairs being done right-first-time, making a repair appointment and the repairs service in general decreased by between 5% and 7%.



We are currently analysing the results and we will put together an action plan to address the concerns raised and to identify any areas of our service that need improvement. The Satisfaction Survey remains an important tool in helping us understand what tenants think of the service we provide and we will carry out a further survey in 2020.

Value for Money

We are pleased to report that the Value for Money Strategy adopted by the Board in 2013 continues to yield better value particularly in the commissioning of service contracts such as water testing and fire safety, and the tendering of our external audit service.

We continue to focus on our Operating Costs and review ways in which we can maximise the returns we receive from our assets, particularly in relation to developing more properties for rent to teachers. 2016/17 saw us develop a further 8 properties to let to working teachers in Croydon which assists the Association in delivering its primary objective.

If you have any suggestions for how we can achieve greater VFM please contact us.

Our VFM Annual Report for 2017 will be published on our website. Please contact this office or your Scheme Manager should you require a paper copy of this report.

Annual Report 2016 - 2017

The Teachers' Housing Association Annual Report 2016-2017 has been published and distributed. This year, to mark our 50th anniversary, the report has been produced as a calendar for the academic year which we hope will be a welcome addition on notice boards and walls for many of our tenants, consultants, contractors and other partners.

As always, the report outlines the Association's aims as well as reviewing the past year's work and achievements, including development progress. There is a summary of our performance in key areas and headline financial accounts. The report incorporates our Annual report to Tenants which details the Association's performance in respect of service delivery and targets.

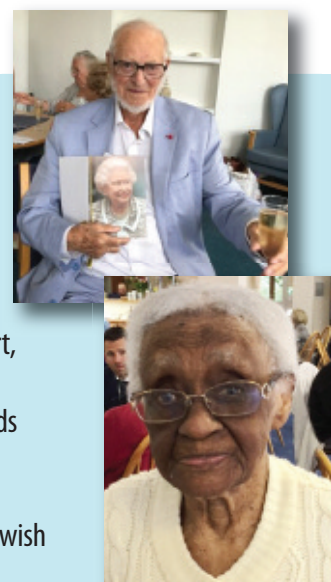
Copies of the report can be obtained from Head Office, or through Housing Managers or Scheme Managers.



Claire and Ken celebrate

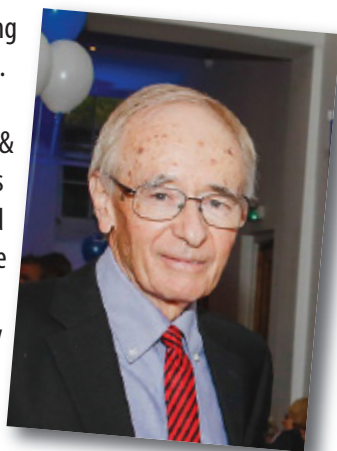
Two of our residents celebrated their 100th birthdays recently. Claire Goldson at Peter Kennedy Court, and Ken Stevens at The Dene. Both marked the occasion with friends and family at their schemes.

All at THA offer congratulations, and wish them a very Happy Birthday.



Management Board Update

At our AGM in July, our longest serving Board Member, Roger Hinton, retired. Roger joined the Board in 2001 and served as Chair of the Finance, Audit & Development Committee and then as Chair of the Board between 2010 and 2016. During his office, Roger led the Association through a number of changes, focussing always on our key strategic objectives whilst recognising and supporting our operational activities. We record our thanks to him for all his support, encouragement and advice as we wish him well for the future.



We were pleased to welcome Maurice Rumbold – a retired charity CEO and Felicia Wright – an accountant, who were co-opted to the Board in February this year.

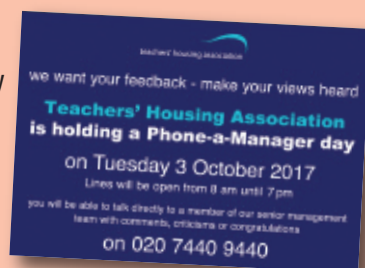


Old Etonian Housing Association (OEHA)

The Management Committee has just approved its Annual Report to Tenants which includes a summary of its performance against the service offers to tenants. This will be issued in August. The Committee has also adopted its annual Statement on Value for Money. Copies are available on request or it can be viewed online on the OEHA section at www.teachershousing.org.uk

Annual Phone-a-Manager Day 2017

THA's annual Phone-a-Manager Day will be on Tuesday 3 October 2017. Tenants are invited to telephone Head Office on that day to speak directly to a member of the Senior Management Team to raise issues they may have or to offer feedback on any aspect of their scheme, property or tenancy in general. Nearer the time, cards will be sent to all tenants and residents reminding them of the date.



Staff News

We have seen very few staff *ins and outs* since the turn of the year. Our only joiner has been Stephen Jennings who started at Queen Mother Court, Bourneville, as a Handyperson in February.

There have been a number of changes to the Housing Management Team at Head Office, London in the past twelve months and we would like to thank tenants for their patience during this period. We are currently recruiting to a vacant Housing Manager role and expect to have this position filled in the near future.

Rent Payments - Callpay

You are now able to make payments to your rent account using a debit or credit card.

Payments are processed using the Callpay system and can be taken during our normal office hours. We are not yet able to process payments outside of these hours.

Our standard payment methods are still available (Direct Debit, Standing Order, Bank Transfer) but we are pleased to now be in a position to offer card payments to tenants.

For tenants in arrears; this offers a quick and easy way to pay amounts outstanding on your rent account.

Should you wish to know more about Callpay and how it works, please speak to your Housing Manager.

Rent Arrears - Evictions in 2016/17

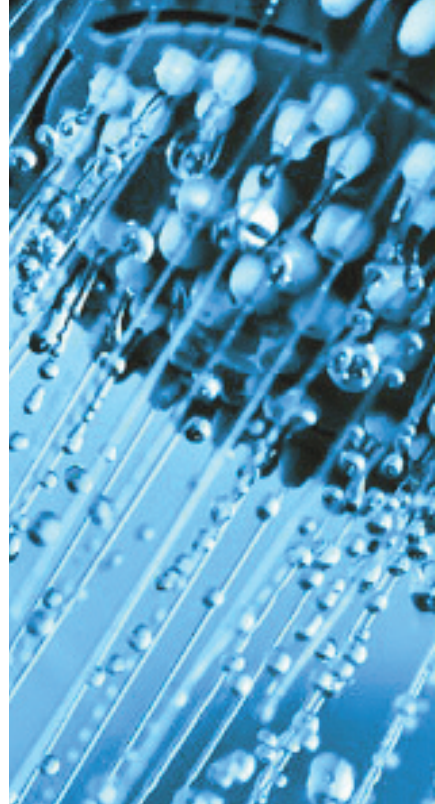
Between April 2016 and March 2017 we carried out a total of six evictions for rent arrears across our general and teacher housing. In the current year we have several cases that are under review and these are likely to progress to court for a possession hearing.

Please do not jeopardise the security of your home by not paying your rent. It is your responsibility as a tenant to make rent payments in a timely manner and there are various options available to you including Direct Debit. Your rent is a priority debt and while it can be tempting to spend the money that you need for rent on other luxury items, the most important thing is to ensure your tenancy is not at risk.

All rent accounts are monitored continuously and non payment will be dealt with in accordance with our Arrears Control Policy which includes, where necessary, court proceedings to secure possession.

If you need any financial advice or assistance, please contact your Housing Manager or alternatively call the National Debtline for free financial advice on 0808 808 4000.

OUT OF OFFICE HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS Contact Details



	Plumbing Emergencies	Gas, Central Heating, Hot Water Emergencies	Electrical Emergencies
Bexley	Renford Services Relative Group	Renford Services	Renford Services MAC Services Relative Group
Brent	Juniors Plumbing Relative Group	Taylor Heating Ltd	MAC Services Relative Group
Firmans Court	Juniors Plumbing Relative Group		MAC Services Relative Group
Haringey	Juniors Plumbing Relative Group	Taylor Heating Ltd	MAC Services Relative Group
Verona Drive & Sydney Court	Renford Services Relative Group	Renford Services	Renford Services MAC Services Relative Group
Old Etonians Housing	Juniors Plumbing Relative Group	Taylor Heating Ltd	MAC Services Relative Group
Peter Kennedy Court	Renford Services Relative Group	Renford Services	Renford Services MAC Services Relative Group
Queen Street	Renford Services Relative Group	Renford Services	Renford Services MAC Services Relative Group

Taylor Heating - 01920 870 658 or 07825 560 187

Renford Services - 07958 419 591 or 020 8777 1674

Juniors Plumbing - 07983 111 091

MAC Services - 0207 486 9075

Relative Group - 0800 023 5996

For Clarification, we define emergency works as follows:

- Dangerous structures
- Gas Leaks
- Blocked/overflowing external drains
- Serious flooding or leaks
- Loss of water supply
- Complete failure of electricity supply
- Blocked WC (if there is only one WC)
- Total loss of space and water heating

Please note that if you call out an emergency contractor for non-urgent work you may be charged by Teachers' Housing Association.

We also ask that you report any emergency repairs, and details of any call-outs, to Teachers' Housing Head Office as soon as possible (0207 440 9440). **Please retain this information sheet for future reference.**

Legionella Control

THA works with ACP Environmental Ltd across all schemes where there are shared water tanks. The tanks are inspected on a regular basis and samples taken to check the water quality. When required the tanks are also disinfected to keep the system clean.

A reminder that tenants should clean the taps and showerhead in their flat, every three months, with a descaling product. This keeps these outlets clean and will prevent the build up of lime-scale which can harbour harmful bacteria.