

GROVE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD

171 YORK ROAD, BELFAST BT15 3HB

Tel: (028) 9077 3330

Email: info@groveha.org.uk

Web: www.groveha.org.uk

NEWSLETTER JUNE 2016

GET INVOLVED WITH THE NEW COMMUNITY GARDEN



Grove Housing Association is keen to get involved in more community projects and now work is nearly complete on the Community Garden created

on underused land between Ivan Street and Ritchie Street. This project has been funded through grants from Belfast City Council and the Alpha Programme, with consultancy work from Groundwork NI. (Alpha spends money raised by landfill taxes on projects within 10 miles of the Mullaghglass Landfill Site.)

The Garden has raised beds for planting, a polytunnel, a storage shed and sitting space. As part of the project, a mural is also being created along the 'railway wall'.

To make it a success, we hope that younger and older people from all round Grove area will get involved in growing and socialising.

Please contact us if you are interested.

HOUSING BENEFIT FRAUD INITIATIVE

Some time ago the National Audit Office started an initiative to deal with social housing tenancy fraud such as non-occupation and getting tenancies by deception. The new government department responsible for housing is the Department for Communities and one of their first initiatives is to look at Housing Benefit fraud in social housing. Part of this requires housing associations to put much more resources than before into checking tenancies. Any suspected Housing Benefit fraud (e.g. not disclosing all non-dependents living in the property) must be reported by associations so matters can be investigated by the authorities.

JMC APPRENTICESHIPS

JMC Mechanical & Construction has won a maintenance contract with Grove and 4 other housing associations. They have contacted us saying that they will be offering apprenticeships for 16-19 year olds for mechanical, electrical, joinery and plastering trades. Applicants must have GCSE grade C or above in Maths, English, ICT and 2 other subjects to be accepted into the courses.



JMC's phone number is 028 3832 4844. Their office is in Waringstown, (Craigavon), but they operate throughout Northern Ireland.

PLANNED MAINTENANCE SCHEMES

Grove will be cleaning gutters again this year and also replacing older smoke alarms with new ones.

SURVEYS

Grove is carrying out surveys about tenant satisfaction, disabilities and maintenance needs, and tenant participation. If you have not been contacted yet, please try and make time for the surveys as we hope they will help us provide a better service and help you as well.

WELFARE REFORM & HOUSING

The housing aspects of Welfare Reform affect people of “working age”, i.e. those from 16 to 65. A number of benefits including Housing Benefit will be paid through Universal Credit when this is gradually introduced during 2017.

Under Welfare Reform, working age households will only be entitled to receive Housing Benefit for the number of bedrooms they are deemed to require. This is the “Social Sector Size Criteria”, more commonly called the “bedroom tax”. Measures in Northern Ireland mean that this Housing Benefit loss will be made up under the mitigating measures that have been agreed. We do not know yet if this top up benefit will have to be applied for by each household or if there will be some automatic system.

Rates will not be paid through Universal Credit, so there will be a new Rate Rebate Scheme for those on benefits to apply for help with this part of their rental payment.

We will advise you when we know more about when the new system will be introduced and how and where to claim.



IMPORTANT CONTACT NUMBERS

Grove out of hours repairs (Fold Telecare): 0800 731 3081

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Gas emergency service if you smell gas | 0800 002 001 |
| Electricity supply faults | 0345 7643 643 |
| Police Service of N Ireland – emergency: | 999 |
| Police Service of N Ireland – non-emergency: | 101 |
| Crimestoppers | 0800 555111 |
| NI Water – emergency/flooding | 0345 744 0088 |
| Roads Service – flooding incident line | 0300 2000 100 |
| Citizen’s Advice NI | 028 9064 1120 |
| Housing Rights Service | 028 9024 5460 |
| Women’s Aid Helpline | 0800 917 1414 |
| City Council Noise Hotline | 028 9037 3006 |
| Reporting dog fouling | 028 9027 0431 |



OFFICE HOURS

Reception is open Monday to Thursday from 9.30 to 1.00 and 1.45 to 4.30. On Fridays it is open from 9.30 to 1.00.

Phones will be answered 9.00 to 1.00 and 1.45 to 5.00 (4.30 on Fridays). You can leave a message on the answering phone outside these hours.

Thank you for your support.

If you would like this Newsletter in a different format such as larger print, please let us know.

TENANT’S HANDBOOK – REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE

We have enclosed a copy of the section of the Tenant’s Handbook relating to repairs and maintenance along with this newsletter. We hope you will look through it.

If you do not have your copy of the full Tenant’s Handbook, it is on our website under the ‘Tenants Information’ section or you can request one from the office.

COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

If you have comments or helpful suggestions about Grove, please let us know about them in person or by phone, letter or email. This will help us to know where we can improve.



CONTENTS INSURANCE IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

Grove insures the building structure, but not what you own. There are different levels of contents insurance, with quite low premiums for limited amounts of cover. We recommend that you take out contents insurance cover if you do not already have it.

FIRE ESCAPE WINDOWS – KEEP CLEAR

You will have one or more upstairs windows designed to escape through in emergency. Please check they open and close properly and tell us if there are any problems. Also, do not block access to them with anything.

