

Tuath Housing Residents' Magazine



The Meaning of Home

The theme of this edition of our Spring/Summer newsletter is the "Meaning of Home". The title was chosen by our staff before the Covid-19 pandemic became a reality, a situation that over the past few months has changed what home now means to many of us.

We hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter which includes updates on the work Tuath Housing is doing to provide more forever homes, interviews with tenants about what home means to them and how residents' groups are successfully building community spirit where they live. We would also like to thank Pete Wedderburn, 'Pete the Vet', for writing an article for us on the importance of cleaning up after our dogs when in public.

In this edition, we also have useful information about housing inspections and making approved alterations to your home, a recipe to try at home and a home and garden design competition, with a Woodies voucher to be won.

We would love to hear from you -

send us your news, stories and comments to info@tuathhousing.ie. You can also like our Tuath Facebook page to see updates on tenant tech tips, competitions and tenant stories.


Tuath
Housing



Vet Spot with
'Pete the Vet'



Tuath
Housing
National Tree
Planting Day
2020



Residents' Group Training

A Message from Alison O’Gorman

Director of Housing Services

In the mist of this global pandemic most businesses, communities and people are adapting to a “new normal”. Tuath Housing has shifted to a work from home model to ensure staff safety and continued operations. With a large amount of creative thinking and flexibility we have been able to carry out the majority of our services that are typically person to person by moving these services online. I’m very proud of my staff who are working so hard in these abnormal circumstances to continue the services to you, our tenants within the current restrictions.

I would also like to say a big **THANK YOU** to you, without your understanding and co-operation with our new working environment it would make these times even harder.

March 2020 will stand out in history as a world changing event, however one wonderful positive that I see emerging is the community spirit and people working, supporting and sacrificing together so that we will get through this outbreak. It is a trend that I hope continues long after the Covid-19.

I hope you all keep safe and well during this time and please remember to adhere to the government guidelines and look after each other.



Thank you

Front cover photo

At the beginning of March, tenants from Cork received keys to 47 new properties. We wish residents many years of happiness in their forever homes.

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Development Updates

2019 Housing Management Performance

5,389 units

in management with a total of
15,760 tenants (figure as of 16/04/20)



99%

of complaints
responded to within a
set target of 10 days



3.7%

Voids



19

residents'
groups
established



95%

of reactive
repairs
completed
in target

Over 250

resident events held



475,872

Tenant's calls
answered

98%

Tenant satisfaction



Our Community

Wellbeing calls

Since Mid-March, our housing staff have made nearly 1200 welfare calls to our tenants (as of 16/04/2020). We are attempting to call as many residents as possible to see how they are managing during this difficult time. We ask our tenants if there is anything we can assist with and are helping our tenants to link into the community services they may need. We are here to help, if you need us, please get in touch with your housing services co-ordinator.

There are also a number of support services available to residents, such as ALONE, if you have concerns about your own wellbeing, or the wellbeing of an older person you know information can be found on the ALONE website www.alone.ie or telephone 0818 222 024.

Each local authority (council) has established a Community Response Forum to coordinate COVID-19 related community supports. As part of this, each local authority has established a helpline that vulnerable people can phone if they are looking for basic services such as delivery of food or meals, or transport for essential trips. For more information please see www.gov.ie.

Keeping in touch with family and friends online

Over the last number of months, we have had to change how we live, work and most importantly how we stay in touch with family and friends. There are many ways technology can help us continue to connect with our community and link in with the services we need. Philip from our Dundalk office has created a series of Tech Tip guides to help people use the different applications listed below. These video guides are available to view on the Tuath website www.tuathhousing.ie.



WhatsApp

WhatsApp is a free application or 'app' that you can have on your smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer. WhatsApp allows users to video chat, voice call, online message and - one of their most popular features - group chat! You can do all of this free of charge if you have an internet connection. WhatsApp will work on Android, Apple and all brands of devices.

Zoom

Zoom is a web-based video conferencing tool that is now becoming popular as a way to spend time with family and friends online. You can download the Zoom programme to your laptop or computer or install the mobile app on your smartphone or tablet. Zoom allows users to meet and talk online, with or without video. Zoom has a feature-rich, mobile app for both iOS and Android, allowing you to virtually connect from anywhere with an internet connection.

Netflix Party

Netflix Party is a new way to watch Netflix with your friends online. Netflix Party synchronizes the video playback so everyone can watch the film at the same time as if they are in the same room together. Netflix Party also adds group chat so you can all chat about your favourite Netflix shows as you watch them together. Netflix Party is available in the Chrome browser on desktop or laptop computers.



Caroline from our Cork office making tenant welfare calls

Jason, caretaker at one of our Dublin schemes delivering groceries to our tenants who are self-isolating and cocooning



Our residents' groups often speak to us about the difficulties they face encouraging dog owners to clean up after their dogs when in public. 'Pete the Vet' tells us why it is important to "scoop that poop!". We would like to thank Pete Wedderburn for contributing to this edition of our residents' magazine.

Vet Spot

by Pete Wedderburn BVM&S MRCVS

I live in a seaside town, and one of my favourite local walks is along the promenade, with the open sea on one side and the hills overlooking the town on the other. The seafront is a popular strolling place for many people, and indeed for many dogs as well. In recent years, the dogs have been the cause of some controversy, as indeed have dogs in many other popular public walking areas all over the country.



The problem is not the dogs themselves, but rather the substance that dogs leave behind them. This has many names, from the most scientific (e.g. faeces) to the most colloquial (too colloquial for this column!). The term which is used most widely in the context of public places is 'poop'.

Dogs leave poops behind them, and dog owners are supposed to pick up their dog's poops with a 'poop scoop.' In some public places, the local authorities have provided 'poop bins' which are designed for the depositing of poops which have been scooped. These are an excellent idea, and there are on-the-spot fines for people who do not clean up after their dogs. Unfortunately, it is difficult to enforce such rules. If anybody was interested enough to count, I am sure that they would find more poops on the pavement than in the poop bins.

I have heard it said that it is ridiculous to expect dog owners in Ireland to start to 'poop scoop'. After all, dogs have lived happily alongside humans for centuries in this country. Why should dog poops suddenly be so offensive to society? Some people seem to suspect that keeping the streets poop-free should only be a priority of a society which little else to worry about. Poop scooping may be important in California, but not in Carlow or Carrickfergus!

This view is misguided and misinformed. Nobody likes dog poops. But poop scooping is not recommended just so that people can stroll in public without having to worry about

inadvertently getting their feet dirty. Poop scooping is essential for public health reasons, because some dog poops contain worm eggs which can, rarely, infect humans.

The worm is called *Toxocara Canis*, the common dog roundworm. Most dogs are born with an infestation of worms which is passed to them by their mothers. The worm is harmless to most humans, but in certain circumstances, if a child is exposed to worm eggs, an infection may follow. In a minority of such infections, a worm cyst can form in the child's eye, and blindness may result. Children can be infected with the worm by direct contact with dog poop.

In a dog owning family, the risk of an infection can be almost eliminated by regular worming of the family pet, every three months, using a good quality wormer. To be absolutely safe, dog poops should be picked up from the garden and deposited in the domestic rubbish.

In public, to avoid any risk, it must be presumed that every dog poop is potentially infectious, and hence the importance of proper poop scooping. Every responsible dog owner should be prepared to scoop their dog's poops in public places. Scooping is simple if you are properly prepared. Before you leave home, put a plastic bag or disposable plastic glove in your pocket. **As soon as a poop is produced, think about the risk to a child, close your nose, and scoop that poop!**

Our Community

Thank you for being a good neighbour!

Given the social distancing requirements and other restrictions put in place during the COVID-19 alert, our homes have become places where we work, take care of our children, self-isolate or cocoon. On behalf of Tuath Housing, thank you to every resident who has over the past months shown community spirit and how to be a good neighbour. We have seen neighbours and volunteers in our communities go above and beyond to help those most vulnerable where we live. Here are a few tips to help us continue to be good, responsible and kind neighbours.

- ▶ Look out for your neighbours, particularly those who may be vulnerable, especially in difficult times.
- ▶ Look out for signs that something may be wrong, and if you do see something wrong, let us know.
- ▶ Be kind and respectful (keep loud music to a minimum or use headphones).
- ▶ If you are able, please play your part in cleaning outside of your home, pick up litter, sweep up leaves etc. - many hands make light work!
- ▶ If there are community events taking place in your area, get involved with residents'/residents' groups, and offer support to those organising events.
- ▶ Be aware and considerate that your neighbours may have a different lifestyle to you and may work different shift patterns.
- ▶ If you see something amiss in your community, such as fly tipping or dog fouling get in touch with your Housing Services Co-ordinator.

Oh Yes They Did! January

In November we ran our annual children's Christmas card competition. The winning entry was Emily, aged 12 from Swords, Dublin. In January, the winning entries received tickets to see pantomimes Aladdin at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin and Jack and the Beanstalk, in the Everyman Theatre, Cork.



Homestead Court

Recycling project February

Homestead Court residents and a recycling ambassador from VOICE Ireland held an information to promote waste recycling in Homestead Court. This is part of the VOICE REPAK 'Upgrading Shared Bin Experience' project.



Residents in Kildare enjoying the sun while social distancing

Residents in Dublin keeping fit together while keeping 2 meters apart



Tuath Housing National Tree Planting Day February

Planting a tree is one of the easiest and most powerful things we can do to have a positive impact on the environment. Trees don't just absorb CO₂, they also absorb odours and pollutants like nitrogen oxides, ammonia, sulphur dioxide and ozone. It's estimated that one tree can absorb nearly 10 pounds of polluted air each year and release 260 pounds of oxygen.

In February, Tuath Housing held its first ever National Tree planting day in association with Trees on the Land. Over 23 housing schemes and residents' groups got involved and trees were planted all over Ireland. The wet and windy weather didn't dampen residents coming out and getting involved in planting trees and flowers where they live.

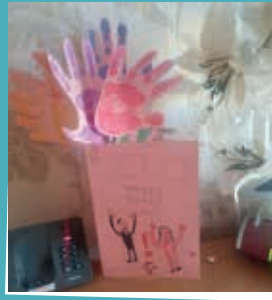
Trees on the Land is a cross-border initiative covering the 32 counties of the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Trees on the Land focuses on native Irish trees. All the trees are grown in Ireland and are of certified native seed provenance.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered, participated and contributed to the National Tree Planting Day. We would especially like to thank the residents' groups, city and county councils for organising and helping us run so many events around the Country. We hope to run more clean up and planting days later in the year.



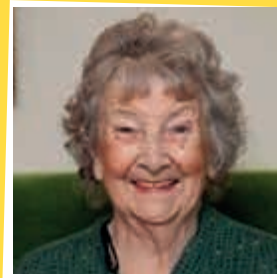
Mother's Day Competition March

To celebrate Mother's Day, we ran a Facebook competition. We asked children to send us their pictures and handmade cards. The winning entry was Callum, aged 7 from Blackrock, Co. Louth. He made his mum Leane a handmade card and hand flowers. Thank you to everyone who entered the competition.



Special 90th Birthday Wishes!

We would like to send birthday wishes to resident Catherine from Cork who celebrated her 90th birthday in April. We will celebrate with Catherine, her family, friends and neighbours in Arus Mhuire later this year!



Easter Children's Art Competition April

We ran our annual Easter children's art competition with the theme this year of "Easter and the Meaning of home". We received some fantastic pictures and the winning entries were Enrico, aged 7, Co.Wexford, Nicole, aged 11, Co. Cork and Josh, aged 9, Co. Dublin. All our winning entries and runners up received a prize in the post for taking part in the competition. All entries are available to view on the Tuath Facebook page.



Spring/Summer Home & Garden Competition

Enter Now

We have a new home and garden competition for our spring/summer magazine. To be in with a chance of winning a €50 Woodies voucher please see the details here. Closing date for entries is Friday 10th July 2020.



Tuath
Housing



HOME AND GARDEN COMPETITION !

Do you have pictures of your home decorating,
DIY, upcycling or garden projects.
Send us your pictures and you could win
a €50 Woodies voucher.
Email your name, address and pictures to
m.hanrahan@tuathhousing.ie
Closing date for entries Friday 10th July 2020

Win a
€50
Woodies
voucher

Jo's Chocolate Brownies



We asked our Tuath Housing office Bake Off champion Joanne Deegan to share one of her favourite baking recipes for kids and parents to bake at home. Jo says, "this is a really easy brownie recipe, it's handy as you only need two bowls and the end results are delicious!"

Ingredients

Semi-sweet dark chocolate 200 grams

Butter 115 grams

White sugar 100 grams

Brown sugar 100 grams

Eggs 3 medium size

Salt 1/4 teaspoon

Vanilla essence 1 teaspoon

Plain flour 60 grams

Cocoa powder 25 grams

Instructions:

- ▶ Preheat your oven to 180°C.
- ▶ Grease a 7×7-inch metal pan with melted butter and line with parchment paper, leaving overhang on all sides.
- ▶ Next, melt the chocolate. First put a few inches of water in a saucepan and bring it to a simmer.
- ▶ Cut the chocolate into small pieces and place them in a heat resistant bowl.
- ▶ Place the bowl on top of the simmering water making sure that the bottom of the bowl isn't touching the water.
- ▶ Then add the 115g of butter to the bowl.
- ▶ Now whisk the chocolate and the butter together until melts.
- ▶ After the chocolate completely melts and becomes smooth, take it off the heat and let it cool.
- ▶ In the meantime, in a separate bowl, put in both the white and brown sugar.
- ▶ Now add 1 egg at a time and mix properly using a hand whisk.
- ▶ When the mixture is a little creamy add the salt, the vanilla essence, and the cooled chocolate and butter mixture.
- ▶ Mix everything well. The batter will have a thicker consistency.
- ▶ Finally, sift the flour and the cocoa powder into the bowl and carefully fold them into the mixture using a spatula.
- ▶ Now pour the batter into the prepared baking pan then gently shake and tap the tin couple of times to spread the batter evenly.
- ▶ Bake it in preheated oven for about 30 minutes.
- ▶ When your brownie is baked take it out of the oven and let it cool for at least 15 minutes.
- ▶ Slice them into squares and enjoy!



Do you have a favourite recipe you would like to share? Send it to our tenant engagement team at info@tuathhousing.ie and we will publish it in the next edition of our Residents' Magazine.

Your Home

Annual Property Inspections - Why we do what we do?

Each year, Tuath Housing staff carry out annual property inspections to over 5,500 properties around Ireland. Miriam, our Housing Services Co-ordinator (HSCO) explains why we need to carry out an annual inspection and how you can help us on the day of your home inspection.

In Tuath Housing, we want to ensure that we provide safe, efficient, durable, comfortable and sustainable homes for our tenants. By carrying out annual inspections we meet our statutory obligations to our stakeholders, investors and local authorities, as well as updating and improving standards to ensure the quality of accommodation for our tenants.

How often will my home be inspected?

Tuath Housing carries out one property inspection per calendar year e.g. January to December. However, you may feel you have just had an inspection. This may be due to inspection schedules, for example an inspection may take place in November 2019 and the following year the inspection could be in May 2020. Before a house inspection takes place the HSCO will give a minimum of 2 weeks' notice by letter to let you know the date and time of your inspection.

What is the HSCO inspecting?

Housing Services Co-ordinators welcome and understand your home is where you live, we do not expect to walk into showrooms. We often find on inspection day some residents panic and apologise for their home, there is no need to do this. You are treating the property as your home and this means it is lived in and there will be some wear and tear. Sometimes the washing is piled up and this is the day-to-day reality of running a household. These are not things that your HSCO is going to be overly concerned about.

The HSCO visits properties to complete checks that ensure your home complies with minimum regulatory standards. We can reference back to the previous year's inspection and see if a repair was noted and fixed. Minor repairs that residents often do not report can become a major repair in the long run e.g. small leaks, storage heaters not working, a faulty smoke detector, fire door closer removed or not operating correctly. Doing these inspections allows us to maintain and provide a high standard of housing and allows you full enjoyment of your home.

What will the HSCO do on the day of my inspection?

During the inspection your HSCO will take pictures, these are used as a visual record of the condition of the property over the life cycle of your home. Photographs are also used to assist with the logging of repairs and assist our contractors when required. They are a visual record to show that the HSCO carried out the annual inspection, pictures are not taken to be intrusive or a means of recording any personal information.

We may sometimes use images of your home to reference tenant welfare. Housing Services Co-ordinators get to know their residents over many years, circumstances and needs can change for a resident, this can sometimes be spotted by an HSCO. If

they notice a change in how a household is being maintained and looked after, it can enable us to link you if needed to additional community supports and advice.

Why did a different Tuath HSCO carry out my inspection?

Due to the number of properties to be inspected, there may be more than one HSCO who will carry out inspections on the same day. This often happens on days where there is in excess of 50 properties to be inspected by Tuath staff. Our HSCOs identify themselves and will ask you for a proof ID, proof of utility bills and check if bin services have been set up. All Housing Services Co-ordinators will be able to assist you with queries on inspection days and all queries will be communicated back to your scheme HSCO.

How can you help us on the day of your inspection?

If you are not going to be home or need a specific time for an appointment, please let us know before the day of your inspection. On inspection day HSCOs often have limited access to telephone messages or emails regarding appointments so it is best to let us know if you can in advance. If you are not going to be home or someone else is going to be there on your behalf let us know. Where a person is under 18 and is at home alone, we cannot complete an inspection without your previous permission/consent.

How can we help you?

As part of our tenant engagement initiative our HSCOs sometimes ask to share your interior home creativity, use of space or gardens to inspire others and with your permission post pictures on our Facebook page or in our Residents' Magazine. When it comes to seasonal events such as Easter, Summer, Halloween and Christmas we love to show schemes that have gotten into the spirit of the holidays. Pictures will be anonymous, and we will always avoid posting house numbers.

We also have a tenant engagement working group which meets on a quarterly basis to review the tenant engagement strategy and housing management services. Please contact us if you would like to get involved in our tenant engagement working group.

Miriam, Tuath Housing, Dublin

Gilet and Tag

As well as our ID tag we have introduced our new Tuath Housing gilet as an additional form of identification. Our housing staff will wear the gilet onsite, so you know there is a HSCO carrying out inspections in your scheme. If you see your housing services co-ordinator, please come and say hello. We are always happy to speak to you!



Your Home

Housing Adaptations and Alterations

Are you thinking of making alterations or adaptations to your home? Perhaps you want to adapt a bathroom, build a shed, install a stair lift, or some other type of work on your house or garden. Tuath Housing always wants to ensure that all our tenant's homes are safe and meet regulations. Therefore if you are making a change, adaptation or alteration to your home or its grounds **you must get permission from Tuath Housing first.**

Getting permission

- ▶ The first step is to talk to your Housing Services Co-ordinator (HSCO) about what you are planning to do. They will be able to advise you whether the work you are planning is likely to be allowed.
- ▶ Your HSCO will give you a form to complete, called a 'Request for Authorisation to carry out Alterations & Improvements Form'.
- ▶ For major works which alter the structure of the building your HSCO may need to seek guidance from our Property Services team before a decision to approve or reject the proposed works can be reached.
- ▶ For improvements that alter the structure of the dwelling you will also need to provide a full and detailed written description of what you want to do including any designs, drawings, and calculations. A professional such as a builder, architect or in the case of a disability adaptation, an occupational therapist, could help you with this.
- ▶ You will also need to provide proof that:
 - Your contractor is qualified and certified.
 - Your contractor has adequate insurance cover.
 - Your contractor's insurance indemnifies the property owner, the management company and Tuath Housing.
 - The works will be carried out in accordance with Health and Safety legislation requirements.
 - Your contractor has produced a Health and Safety method statement for the proposed works.
 - The information you provide is then reviewed by our property services team to make sure that the proposed work meets Health and Safety regulations, fire safety and other relevant regulations.
- ▶ Once the works are approved by the Property Services team you will receive written permission to carry out the works. Work should not start until you have received this written permission.

After the works are complete

Tuath Housing may wish to inspect the works once complete to ensure improvements meet building minimum standards and comply with fire safety regulations.

Adapting a home to improve accessibility

You may want to make adaptations to your home to improve the accessibility for an older person or someone with a disability. Examples of this kind of adaptation include a stair lift, a bathroom adaptation or grab rails. These types of adaptations also need to be approved by Tuath Housing before work starts.

If you are carrying out a disability adaptation with Local Authority funding, we will also ask you to provide an occupational therapist's report in addition to the documents listed above.

Funding for adaptations

Your HSCO can advise you about grants available for disability adaptations and point you in the right direction. Funding is available from Tuath Housing for low cost adaptations such as grab rails. This is at the discretion of the Housing Services Manager – talk to your HSCO for more information.

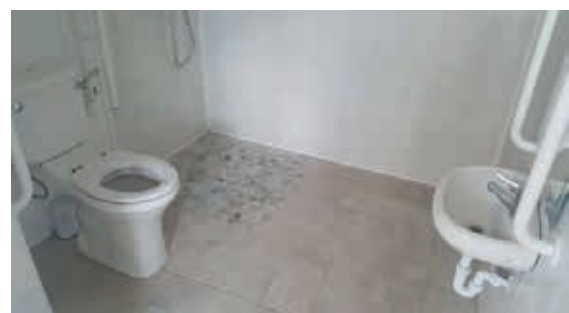
If you have a disability or are over 66 and wish to make adaptations to your home, you may be eligible for a grant towards the cost of the works from your Local Authority.

More information on grants can be found on your Local Authority website or at citizensinformation.ie/en/housing/housing_grants_and_schemes.

Unapproved alterations or adaptations

Carrying out works to your home or grounds without the prior approval and consent of Tuath Housing would be considered a breach of your tenancy agreement. You may be asked to remove the adaptation and reinstate the property as it was, at your own cost – so always check with your Housing Services Co-ordinator before you make any changes to your home or grounds.

Get in touch, we are always happy to help!



Tenant Engagement

What is Tenant Engagement?

Tenant Engagement is about how Tuath Housing connects, consults and communicates with our tenants. We want to give our tenants an opportunity to have a say in the services we provide and how we deliver them. Tenant engagement covers a range of initiatives, including the different ways that we communicate with our tenants, the ways we get feedback and the services we provide to our tenants. Our tenant engagement officers support tenants to set up or get involved in residents' groups to build their communities and provide opportunities for our tenants and staff to connect and learn from each other.

Here's an update on what we've been working on:

Free training for Residents' Groups

This year, for the first time Tuath Housing has been running free training sessions for our residents' groups. This training was developed in response to feedback given by residents at our National Tenants Forum in September 2019. The purpose of the training is to build the skills and abilities of residents' group members, helping them to achieve more and be more confident in what they do. The training has also been attended by our Housing Services Co-ordinators to enable them to better support residents' groups in the future.

In January, we ran the first in the series of training called "Residents' Group Induction" training in Dublin and Cork given by Boardmatch Ireland. The training included topics such as the purpose of the residents' group constitution, the roles of different committee members and how to run a well organised meeting. In February, we ran training on "Effective Fundraising for Residents' Groups" given by Evelyn Fitzpatrick. Unfortunately, our March training sessions on "Running a Successful and Safe Community Event" was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic but we look forward to rescheduling it soon.

The feedback received from attendees at the training has been very positive, and our intention is to run further training sessions throughout the year on other useful topics for residents' groups such as social media and communications, data protection and managing group dynamics.

This training is also open to tenants who are interested in setting up or getting involved in a residents' group so if you are interested in taking part please get in touch with Tuath Housing's Tenant Engagement Officers.



Effective Fundraising training in Dublin



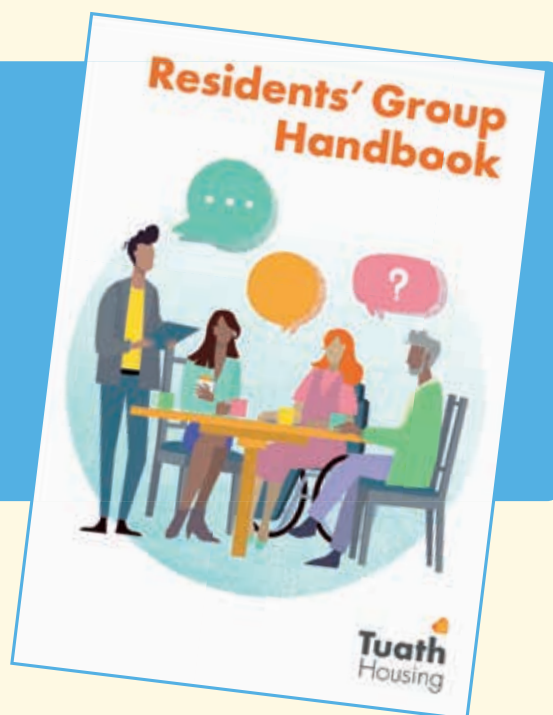
Trainer Evelyn Fitzpatrick with Tuath Housing staff



Residents' Group Induction training in Cork

Residents' Group Handbook

We will soon be launching our residents' group handbook, a printed guide for residents' groups who are in the process of getting set up. The handbook provides useful guidance on topics including the different roles of committee members, how to run meetings and AGMs, where to look for funding opportunities and guides for creating minutes, agendas and committee reports



Tenant Engagement Working Group

In early March, we were excited to hold the first meeting of our tenant engagement working group. This is a consultation group made up of Tuath Housing staff and Tuath Housing tenants. Its purpose is to enable staff and tenants to work together to develop the services Tuath Housing provides, and looks at how we communicate with our tenants. The first task of the working group will be to review and update our Tenant Engagement Strategy.

The tenant engagement working group will meet quarterly, and participating tenants are reimbursed their public transport costs to meetings. If you are interested in being on the tenant panel of the working group or would like to find out more about it, please contact your HSCO or your Tenant Engagement Officers.



Get in touch with our Tenant Engagement Team!

Tuath Housing has a dedicated tenant engagement team: Margaret Hanrahan is the Tenant Engagement Officer for the Connacht and Munster regions and Laura Howe for Leinster. You can contact Margaret on **091 393280** or **m.hanrahan@tuathhousing.ie** or Laura on **01 6761602** or **l.howe@tuathhousing.ie**. If you are interested in getting involved in a residents' group or any of our tenant engagement activities, please contact Margaret or Laura for more information.



Laura, Tenant Engagement Officer for Leinster

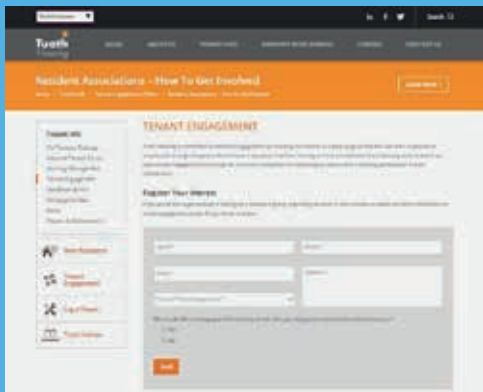


Margaret, Tenant Engagement Officer for Connacht and Munster

Our Tuath Website...What's New!

Tenant Engagement Register of Interest

To help our residents to take the first steps to getting involved in tenant engagement and improving the range of customer services we provide, we have introduced a new tenant engagement register on our website. Tenants who would like to get involved in a residents' group, take a tenant survey, organise an event, become a resident scheme inspector, write an article for the residents' magazine or take part in the tenant engagement working group can register their interest on our website. Our tenant engagement officers will then follow up on the enquiry and help residents to get involved in a way and time that suits them.



Residents' Group Web Portal

A portal for our residents' groups is in development and will be within the tenant engagement section of the Tuath Housing website. Here residents' groups can log on to network and share information with other residents' groups. The portal also contains guides and templates from our tenant engagement officers that residents' groups may find useful, such as how to run committee meetings, how to apply for funding, how to set up a bank or credit union account for the group. Each residents' group will receive a login and password for the portal.

New language translation web facility

We recently introduced a new translation facility on our Tuath Housing website to allow users to translate information into over 100 languages. We hope this service will help our tenants for who English is their second language. Lenka, our Customer Service Co-ordinator from our Galway office, explains how this new service will assist with tenant communication and strengthen correspondence to answer tenant queries.

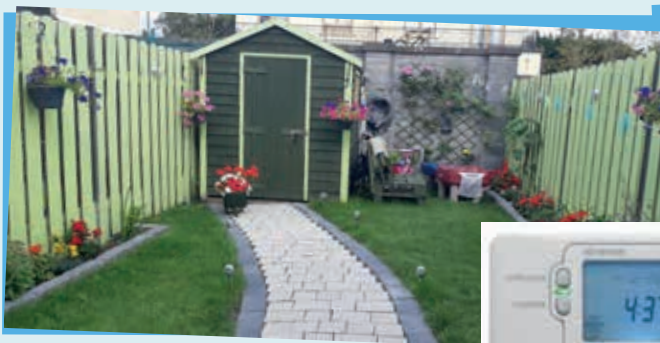


"Ireland has become a home to many nationalities, and we are aware that our tenants are part of this multicultural community. I also came to Ireland from my native country almost 16 years ago. I know that not being able to speak and understand the same language everyone else uses can feel isolating and can make us feel dependent on the help of others"

Please see www.tuathhousing.ie for more information

'How to' Guides

The tenant engagement section of our website also has a series of tenancy information and 'How to' guides for residents on useful household information about your home, garden, how to report a repair, gas heating, home safety information, DIY and recycling and environmental tips.



The Meaning of Home

a Tenant's story

Like the rest of us, Margaret Lally and her family are finding ways to cope with social distancing during Covid 19 – “We are lucky where we live to be able to go out for walks into the fields and up the hill nearby. We found tadpoles the other day!”

Margaret and her family moved into their Tuath Housing home in County Wicklow in October of last year. Prior to that they were homeless, staying with friends and relatives while Margaret did everything in her power to find somewhere for her family to live. Constantly checking Daft.ie, she went to every viewing she could, even asking builders she saw renovating houses if they knew if the house was going to be up for rent. “I received so many knockbacks, I believe because of the stigma of being a single mother and being homeless. Private landlords ask, ‘well why is she homeless, what’s wrong with her?’. They look down on you because you’re not a conventional family.”



In August, last year Margaret received a call to say she had been put forward for an apartment with Tuath Housing. “I was in shock, it’s like I was listening but not hearing what was being said to me, I was so overwhelmed by the news.” she says. She then got a call from one of the Tuath Housing Services Co-ordinators inviting her to come for an interview. “I still didn’t understand – on the one hand I was thinking, ‘it’s just an interview, there’s no guarantee I’ll get it’ and on the other hand I was telling myself ‘perhaps they’ll realise you’re a good person, maybe they’ll give it to you.’ When Liz, the Housing Services Co-ordinator finished the interview by telling me how much my rent would be, it hit me – this is it, we have a place to live!

Margaret says the first night in their new home was magical. **“We just couldn’t believe that we were finally here and how beautiful our new home and local area was, it was surreal. The next day everybody woke up smiling!”** Christmas that year was really special because Margaret’s extended family were able to come and visit.

Now Margaret says, she and her family are just taking their time to settle into their new home. She feels that the relief of having their own place to live is still hitting them. Even little things like the children being able to mark off how tall they are against the wall are significant – “now we’re allowed to do that, and we can keep on doing it!”

Margaret says she is very grateful that housing associations like Tuath Housing exist and are providing housing for families. “I feel so blessed and so grateful to be dealing with a team of professionals; that they do what they do, provide the service that they do, is such a lifeline.”

When asked how she feels now Margaret says “I feel relief that someone has recognised that I’m a good person, a good tenant and that we are a good family. Having your own space to be yourself is so important. The relief of finally being able to be ourselves in our own home; we always just wanted to be good tenants and good neighbours and now we can just let that happen.”

Residents' Group Profile - Liscorrie Residents' Association

For the past few years, Liscorrie estate in Drogheda, Co. Louth has had a very successful residents' association, run by a proactive and energetic committee of Tuath residents and private homeowners. Laura, our Tenant Engagement Officer got in touch with the committee members to ask them the secret of their success and what experience they can share with other residents' groups just starting out.

How did Liscorrie Residents Association come about?

We had an active residents committee for a number of years in Liscorrie when the estate was only 30 privately-owned houses. Over the years the original residents' association wound down and the estate had more houses built in it, some of which Tuath took over. So, when Tuath contacted us with the idea of starting a new committee we decided to give it another go, especially considering how many new people were moving into the estate. It was put to us that **a residents' committee isn't about telling people what to do or dealing with negativity, it's about creating community spirit, creating a safe and caring environment for people to live.**

Were there any initial concerns you had about setting up a residents' group?

There were some concerns at the beginning for sure, like how would the other residents perceive the new residents' group committee? How would the committee work between the private homeowners and Tuath residents? A lot of the private homeowners were initially concerned about how it would work with Tuath having houses in the estate. We found that having a residents' group committee of Tuath residents, people who rent privately and homeowners has helped to build strong relationships within the estate.

What have been the challenges for the residents' group committee?

There have been challenges and we have dealt with them together as a committee. For some problems we have called on the help of our housing services co-ordinator and our community Garda and with help and advice from both we have been able to deal with these issues respectfully and as quickly as we can.

We have had to be clear about the remit of the residents' group committee, what we can and can't help with. If residents have a question or concern, we ask them to contact the committee through the committee email address rather than contacting individual members so we can deal with issues privately and together as a committee.

Originally, we had a Facebook page which all residents could post on, but this could become a focus for negativity. So, we changed it that only the administrators can post on the page and we turned off commenting on all posts. This has helped a great deal to cut out any negativity and have a better community spirit.



What have been the positives for the committee?

The most positive thing that we have achieved so far has been our first summer sports/family fun day which was held August 2019. It took a lot of organising. Each committee member asked different businesses and local shops for donations and we had sports equipment from the local GAA club. We asked for volunteers from the residents and quite a number of people contributed and helped. We also asked people for a donation. To publicise the day, we sent out a newsletter about it to residents and posted it on the Facebook page.

The summer sports/family fun day started with bulb planting on the estate that morning and then we had a number of sports games including an egg and spoon race and a 3-legged race. We had the Fire Brigade and Gardaí which all the kids loved so much, and the day finished with an ice cream from the ice cream van for everyone. It was a huge success and we made wonderful memories! We hoped that the day would show residents what the residents association was all about, which is being part of a community.

We have all benefited from being a part of the residents' association committee, it has brought us closer together and we have all learned a lot. Taking part in the training for residents' groups that was provided by Tuath this year was so helpful to us and we are lucky to have the support of Tuath Housing.

Does Liscorrie Residents' Association have any projects you are working on now or what are the plans for future events?

Our big plan for this year is to start our very own biodiversity garden, we have received funding for this and aim to have it completed by August. We hope to have all the children involved and have bee hotels, insect hotels, wildflowers, trees, the whole lot. It is something that we feel all residents will benefit from.

We hope that by encouraging these ideas that people will be proud to be from Liscorrie and will want to be involved with future plans. We have so many ideas how we can make this estate a great place to live. We are also aiming to have the summer sports/family fun day annually. We held a Halloween decoration competition last October and this year we will change it to a Christmas decoration competition. It's so nice to see people getting involved with everything we do.

What do you think is the key to the success of Liscorrie Residents Association so far?

We are a tighter community and we watch out for each other. We were hoping to launch our Community Watch program, but it's been delayed slightly now due to recent events. This program will hopefully bring a great boost to the estate where people feel that they can rely on their neighbours and the committee. We listen to people and want the best for our estate, that is essential for any residents' committee to be successful.

What would your advice be for new residents' groups starting out?

Our advice would be to give it time, a committee really isn't formed overnight, it takes time to get to know people and to understand what the main concerns for all the residents are. It takes time to build trust, with each other and with residents. Plan, plan, plan and communicate! It's essential! Understand what community means. Have fun! Get people involved, get out there and talk to your neighbours. Show people you care, and you want what's best for your community.



Development Updates



We had an extremely busy Quarter 1 2020 with many turnkey, long term lease and own construction projects delivered. With Turnkey/Long Term Leased projects we delivered the following:

Drynam Heath

Phases 1 and 2 at Drynam Heath, Feltrim Road, Swords, Co. Dublin – a beautiful stand-alone scheme of 17 homes comprising 3-bedroom terraced houses and 2 and 3-bedroom apartments. It was a great opportunity to deliver quality homes in Fingal County Council area. All homes are now fully allocated to delighted tenants who are well settled in. We delivered these homes in partnership with Fingal County Council and Victoria Homes and funding was a blend of CALF and private finance via the Housing Finance Agency.



Gleann An Ghairdin

We also delivered Phase 2 in Gleann An Ghairdin, a beautiful development located on the edge of Gorey town. These homes comprised of 9 x 2-bedroom homes built to the highest A rated NZeb standard. We are contracted to deliver a further 33 homes in a mix of 2-bedroom apartments and 3-bedroom semi-detached homes in Gleann An Ghairdin throughout 2020. There is an extensive housing list in Gorey and Tuath is delighted to have the opportunity to deliver such quality homes for allocation to tenants from this list. Adamar Developments Ltd are the developers of this scheme and in partnership with Wexford County Council, the Department of Housing and the Housing Finance Agency we are very pleased with the smooth delivery of these homes.

Maryborough

Tuath handed over the keys to 52 lucky new tenants in Maryborough Ridge, Douglas last month. This development was delivered in partnership with Cork City Council and Glenveagh Homes using a combination of CALF funding from the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and private finance from the Housing Finance Agency. Tuath now manage 115 homes within the Maryborough development and more than 800 homes in Cork.



Development Updates (continued)

Dunville Meadows

In Quarter 1 we also delivered Phase 1 of our Long-Term Lease project in Dunville, Navan. These homes will be leased from the landlord on a 25 year lease providing much needed fully furnished accommodation in the area. 18 homes have now been delivered in a mix of 2 and 3 bedroom homes. Further phases will be delivered under this long-term lease arrangement throughout 2020. We are especially grateful to Meath County Council, Grandbrind and the Department of Housing for their contribution in getting this scheme across the line.

We have really ramped up delivery via our own construction projects with more than 10 schemes currently on site. Quarter 1 2020 saw the completion of another 2 phases in Fitzherbert Wood and Collinstown Grove.



Fitzherbert Wood

Fitzherbert Wood is located just off the Slane Road on the edge of Navan town. The development will comprise a total of 44 3-bedroom homes and we have already completed 29 homes with Phases 4 and 5 delivered in Quarter 1. The remaining 15 homes will be delivered in Q3 2020. The development is in partnership with Meath County Council and BuildR Project Management and funded using CALF from the Department of Housing and Private Finance via the Housing Finance Agency.

Collinstown Grove

Tuath Housing was grateful for the opportunity to work in partnership with SDCC (South Dublin County Council) in the delivery of four houses at Collinstown Grove, Clondalkin, particularly the two homes which were designed to enable independent living for persons with disabilities. Tuath Housing recognize the positive impact that can be made to a person's circumstances by providing them with a home that is tailored specifically to their needs. Both SDCC and Tuath Housing aim to provide safe environments for their tenants where they can have dignity and independence, therefore improving their sense of well-being.

In addition to the general standards set out in Part M of the technical guidance documents, the homes incorporate many additional measures including extra wide driveways to accommodate safe and comfortable access and egress to cars, large ground floor bedroom with accessible shower and toilet facilities in close-proximity and flush thresholds to front and rear with extra-large accessible rear doors offering access to a generous landscaped rear garden.



Tuath Housing

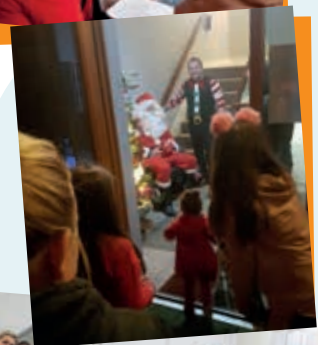
supporting vibrant communities

Thank you for continuing to send us your photos and stories. We appreciate all the positive work you do within your communities. Here are a few of the fantastic photos we have received over the last couple of months. We look forward to planning and running events with you again in the future.



"We know that things are not easy right now but we are all in this together, know that we are here to help if you need us"

Sean O' Connor,
CEO, Tuath Housing



TUATH HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Changing Housing for the Better

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