



# TENANTS NEWSLETTER

**Issue 5 — September 2009**

## **FIRE SAFETY**

Two recent incidents have highlighted the importance of maintaining your smoke alarm. In the first case, a smoke alarm alerted the tenants to a fire which had started in a bedroom. The family were able to evacuate the property safely and no-one was injured. A second incident involved a cooker which had been left on when the family had left the house. The alarm was activated and alerted a passer-by who contacted the Town Hall. Again on this occasion no one was injured and a more serious incident was avoided.



In new houses and where a re-wire has been carried out, smoke alarms will be hard-wired to the mains electricity supply. Some properties however are still provided with battery powered alarms.

In both instances tenants should test their alarms once a week. If the alarm is battery operated the battery should be replaced annually. You should also replace the battery if the low battery warning sounds (an intermittent bleep). Twice a year, open the case and gently vacuum the inside using a soft brush attachment to remove dust from the sensors. If the alarm doesn't open, vacuum through the holes.

## **REMEMBER LOOKING AFTER YOUR SMOKE ALARM MAY SAVE A LIFE.**

The IOM Fire & Rescue Service is currently running a campaign encouraging people to PARK SMART and ensure that inconsiderate parking doesn't prevent fire engines and ambulances getting to emergencies. Parked cars can sometimes prevent access in emergencies putting lives at risk. Everyone is asked to think carefully about where they park.

The Fire Service will also provide a free home fire risk assessment where local officers will visit and provide advice on fire safety in the home. A visit can be requested through the Fire Safety Department by ringing 647303.

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## TENANT CONSULTATION

The Commissioners are interested in your views about the service we provide. Every year we circulate a questionnaire which provides us with details of the profile of tenants and seeks feedback about our performance.



Details about the number of people living in our houses, any specific housing need, either as a result of changing family circumstances or the need to provide aids and adaptations due to age or health problems, enable the Commission to plan for future development and consider the demand for different house types – such as ground floor accommodation, wet bath rooms and extensions to meet the needs of family members who may require long term care. In addition to the survey data we also meet regularly with DHSS officers to review the provision of aids and adaptations and support for tenants in Commissioners housing. In some cases we will meet to discuss individual cases to ensure that the Commission and any other agency, such as DHSS, are working together to provide the best possible support where needed.











This year's survey responses were lower than previous years with only 11% of tenants responding, which is disappointing. However, the number of responses was sufficient to provide a valid sample of views about housing services. Although we are not able to report on personal responses about households the following responses were received in relation to other questions raised in the survey.

Tenants were asked about anti-social behaviour and the responses show that 5% of tenants think that anti-social behaviour is a problem, with 38% of those responding telling us that they have reported these problems to the Commissioners, Social Services or the Police. Some tenants do have genuine concerns and 48% of responders felt that anti-social behaviour is handled well. Examples of anti-social behaviour included dog fouling, littering, barking dogs, noisy late night parties, kicking balls, inconsiderate parking, and vandalism. Suggestions to deal with these issues included more police foot patrols, eviction of bad tenants, monitoring how many people living in each house, more lighting, CCTV, applying curfews and giving children more things to do.

The comments in the survey have been discussed with the Northern Neighbourhood Policing Team. The Commission already works closely with the Police and a formal Community Safety Partnership in Ramsey is being discussed.

Where specific difficulties have been identified the Police have introduced target policing arrangements and some success in this area has already been achieved. However, it is important to gain the support of the community in reporting crime and disorder in order to target those responsible.

We asked about the way tenants felt about the housing service, both at the Town Hall and the maintenance provision, and found that:-

-  **95% of responses said that we do well or better at keeping tenants informed about what is happening on their estates**
-  **81% said that the Commissions new website [www.ramsey.gov.im](http://www.ramsey.gov.im) would prove useful to tenants**
-  **98% were overall satisfied with the way staff deal with tenants, 65% said that the manner of the Town Hall staff was excellent.**
-  **96% of responses said we respond well or very well to requests for emergency and urgent repairs**
-  **96% were satisfied with work done in their homes, 74% felt that the quality of workmanship was good.**
-  **100% of tenants found our workforce to be friendly and helpful with 82% saying they were very helpful**
-  **98% felt that our housing provides reasonable or better than reasonable value for money in relation to the rent paid**
-  **Although only 11% of tenants responded on this occasion we hope that those who chose not to do so did not have any issues they wished to raise with the Commission.**

The next full tenants survey will be sent out in March 2010. We also survey tenants where refurbishment works and capital schemes have been completed. We hope that tenants will respond to these surveys as they do make a difference to the way we plan work and help us to find ways of improving our services.

We also welcome contact from tenants by personal visit, telephone or through the contact forms on our website [www.ramsey.gov.im](http://www.ramsey.gov.im) and always appreciate feedback about the work we do.

## **NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH**

As part of the survey tenants were asked about their interest in learning more about or participating in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme for their area and 41% of those who responded said they would be interested in a Neighbourhood Watch scheme.



Neighbourhood Watch schemes already exist in some Commissioner's estates, such as Close Y Chibbyr Ghlass and Bircham Avenue Close, and the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator for the North of the Island is working with the Police and the Commission to establish new areas.

A residents meeting is being held in the Town Hall at 2:30pm on the 31st October to discuss the Gladstone Avenue area. The meeting will be open to all residents in the area and leaflets have been distributed to homes to notify about the meeting. If you live in the area of Gladstone Avenue and are interested in taking part in the scheme, or just want to find out more about Neighbourhood Watch, please come along. Further meetings will be arranged for other areas of the Town in the near future.

## **PROPERTY IMPROVEMENTS CONTINUING**

Work has now started on the last phase of the programme to install gas-fired central heating in Commissioners' properties as part of the Department of Local Government and the Environment framework agreement for central heating. This final phase includes houses in Lower Queen's Pier Road, Albert Terrace, Princes Road, Westbourne Road and Gladstone Avenue which have already benefited from schemes to improve insulation and replace windows and doors where required. These works will be completed this year.

## **BROOKHILL AND SEAMOUNT ROAD REFURBISHMENT**

Planning consent has been sought for the external works which will form part of the refurbishment of Commissioners' property at Brookhill Road and Seamount Road. As part of this process a series of sample wall finish panels have been created to show the various colour finishes which could be achieved.

The Commission has also sought expressions of interest from local contractors to be included on the select tender list. Tender documentation is due to be issued in November with a start on site early in the New Year. Due to the extent of works being undertaken families will be relocated into temporary accommodation during the works. Meetings will be arranged with tenants in advance of the contractor starting to explain the transit accommodation arrangements and the programme for the works.