

# Ross Walk News Winter 2022

Ross Walk Housing Cooperative  
members' newsletter

New homes boost  
Family fun at AGM  
Tenant Conference success  
Cost of living support  
Have your say



# Contents

<b>Holiday office closing</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Dates for your diary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Cost of living crisis</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Conference success</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Back to business</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Don't ignore damp and mould</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Have your say</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>How are we doing?</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Frequently asked questions</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Need to report a repair?</b>	<b>12</b>

Welcome to the winter edition of Ross Walk News, as we all look forward to celebrating the festive season with family and friends following a tough two years of lockdown restrictions.

I am delighted that we were able to gather in person again, at last, for various successful social events and business activities over the summer and autumn months.

However I appreciate that we currently face difficult times, as the cost of living crisis and rising energy bills start to bite. If you are struggling, please do get in touch with the co-op team as we are keen to help our tenant members as best we can.

You can find out more about the support available in this newsletter, as well as answers to some questions the co-op is often asked in relation to our homes.

I am also pleased to report that we have recently acquired two more properties, which we will soon be able to rent out to new tenant members.

I look forward to seeing you at our future events in 2023 but, in the meantime, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year – and I hope you enjoyed a good Eid and Diwali.

**Kishor Jadavji**

*Chair of Ross Walk  
Housing Cooperative*





# Holiday office closing

The PA Housing office, at 3 Bede Island Road, will be closed on:

- **Monday 26 December**
  - **Tuesday 27 December**
  - **Monday 2 January.**
- To get in touch with the co-op team, please call our Customer Contact Centre on **0116 257 6800** or e-mail us on **coops@pahousing.co.uk**



## Did you know?

**Did you know you can book an appointment to discuss any housing issues with us through our newly revamped website?**

If you want to chat to our housing management officer, you can book a slot at our regular Wednesday housing surgeries by going to <http://rosswalkcoop.org.uk/contact-us/> – and you can attend the appointment online or in person at our office.

Such appointments can still be booked by phone or email, if you prefer.



# Dates for your diary

## Committee meetings 2023

Held online, from 7pm:

- **January – no meeting**
- **Monday 13 February – Strategy and Housing Services**
- **Monday 6 March – Development and Finance**
- **April – no meeting**
- **Monday 15 May – Strategy and Housing Services**
- **Monday 5 June – Development**
- **July – no meeting**
- **Monday 7 August – Strategy and Housing Services (including presentation of year-end accounts for AGM)**
- **Monday 11 September – Development and Finance**
- **October – no meeting**
- **Monday 6 November – Strategy and Housing Services**
- **Monday 4 December – Development and Finance (plus rent)**

## Other key dates:

- **Date to be confirmed – Summer trip**
- **Friday 8 September – Annual General Meeting (including nomination of management committee) at The Sapphire Suite**

# Ross Walk needs you!

Ross Walk co-op's management committee is appealing for new members, following a number of people stepping down.

By joining the committee, you can have more say on our homes and services, help shape our future plans and develop new skills – as well as getting to know your fellow tenant members better.

To find out more, please call Nicola Parby on **0116 204 4135**.

# Cost of living crisis

**As energy bills, fuel costs and the inflation rate spiral, we know this is a worrying time for everyone as we all struggle to make ends meet.**

The government is providing various types of assistance, including help with energy bills, council tax and cost of living payments, which you should receive automatically.

But, if you are still facing financial difficulties, we are here for you – so please get in touch so we can do our best to help.

Our Housing Management Officer, Pankaj Rathod, or Tenancy Sustainment Team can support you with money management, budgeting, debt and benefits advice.

You can also check what you may be entitled to through the free benefits calculator on the My PA app.

- **To get in touch with a member of our friendly team, just call us on 0116 257 6800 to see what we can do to help.**



## Help with energy bills

**The government's Energy Bill Support Scheme aims to cut everyone's energy bill by £400 over six months.**

You should have had your first £66 reductions on your bills in October and November, followed by £67 reductions every month from December to March 2023.

If you have a pre-payment meter, you should get vouchers from your energy supplier by post, email or text.

Vouchers usually arrive in the post by the 17th of each month but remember – **they are only valid for 90 days**. You must use them in that time, so make sure you check your post so you don't miss them.

- Find out more about the Energy Bill Support Scheme at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/getting-the-energy-bills-support-scheme-discount>

## Rent update

**Although the government usually allows social landlords to raise rents in line with inflation, we appreciate that would be unaffordable next April for our tenant members.**

In previous years, social rents could rise annually by the Consumer Price Index rate plus 1% – but current soaring inflation would have meant an 11% hike next year, so the government has capped it at 7%.

We will let you know how much your rent will go up as soon as possible, but we want to reassure you that we will keep any increase as low as we can

# Conference success

We were delighted to welcome a crowd of 60 people to our Tenant Members Conference this summer, the first we have been able to hold since the pandemic.

Held at The Sapphire Suite in July, the event included a host of informative talks, presentations and question-and-answer sessions.

Tenant members got to learn about our new gas contractor, our money advice service, the My PA self-service app and what being a committee member involves.

The day also included a three-course lunch and free health checks.

We had lots of positive feedback from our tenant members, including:



“Most useful was the Q&A session – an opportunity to not only ask questions but listen to other people’s ideas and opinions.”

“The presentations were easy to follow and points were short and precise. Translation was very helpful for non-English speakers. Ice-breaker Treasure Hunt activity was extremely fun and engaging.”



## Future plans

**Ross Walk’s committee members gathered to discuss the co-op’s possible future plans, along with challenges and opportunities, at our business planning away day in October.**

The committee also joined members of other co-ops from across the country for the Confederation of Co-operative Housing conference in October, where they

discussed subjects ranging from climate change and rising energy prices to dealing with complaints and promoting diversity.

Our Co-ops Service Manager Imtiaz Vohra spoke at the event about previous and planned insulation projects on Ross Walk homes, as an example of successful work to improve properties’ energy efficiency.



## Back to business

**Ross Walk families enjoyed a fun-filled evening, full of music and dancing, at our co-op's annual general meeting this autumn.**

We were pleased to see so many tenant members join us for the event, held at The Sapphire Suite in September.

A total of 124 people came along for the evening, making the most of the spread

of delicious food, dance displays, a guest caricaturist, plus face-painting and balloon modelling for the children.

RWHC Chair Kishor Jadavji said: *"It was fantastic to see so many tenant members of all ages gathering together for this year's meeting, after the past two years' AGMs had to be held virtually due to pandemic restrictions."*



# Don't ignore damp and mould

**Your safety and wellbeing are our top priorities, and we are committed to providing you with safe, dry, warm homes.**

So, if you have any problems with damp and mould in your home, please get in touch with us straightaway so we can tackle the issue.

We will send out our surveyor to inspect the property and arrange any necessary work.

So, even if you have reported such issues before, please contact us so we can make sure we are doing all we can to sort out the problem. Call our Customer Contact Centre on **0116 257 6800**, and select the repairs option.



For tips on how to reduce condensation, damp and mould in your home, go to our managing agent's website at <https://www.pahousing.co.uk/customers/reporting-a-repair/condensation-damp-and-mould/>

## Improving homes

**We are currently forging ahead with plans to better insulate our homes, having won government funding earlier this year to pay for this type of work.**

Our £440,000 share of the national Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund should help make 46 of our properties warmer, more energy efficient and cheaper to run.

We are now inspecting the buildings and assessing internal insulation costs, before

carrying out the necessary work.

Our team is also continuing our rolling programme of replacing old kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors at homes where this is needed.

Jan Wolloff, our Area Surveyor, recently carried out a stock condition survey to inform our future plans. Necessary work will be scheduled in over coming months and years, depending on its urgency.

## New homes boost

**Ross Walk recently bought two new homes so that we can offer affordable housing to more families in our area.**

We acquired a three-bedroom terraced house in Law Street in September, followed by a similar property in Westbourne Street in November.

Our team is now working to refurbish the

buildings, so they can be rented out as soon as possible to people in housing need.

We bought them with the help of 30% funding from Leicester City Council, bringing our total stock up to 121 homes.



# Have your say



**We want you to be happy with your home and the services we provide for you.**

So, to check how well we are doing, we will be sending out a tenant survey for you to complete in the New Year.

The form will include new questions about tenant satisfaction, in line with recent

guidance from the Regulator of Social Housing aimed at making it easier for social housing tenants across the country to assess landlords' performance, compare them and hold them to account.

These questions will cover a range of subjects, including:

- **overall satisfaction**
- **repairs**
- **maintenance**
- **safety**
- **whether we listen to you, keep you informed, and treat you fairly and with respect**
- **how we handle complaints and anti-social behaviour**
- **communal areas**
- **your neighbourhood.**

*The feedback you give us will help us improve what we do, so please take the time to fill in the questionnaire when it arrives.*

## Gas service survey

**Thank you to everyone who took part in our recent survey to see how satisfied you are with the service provided by our new gas heating contractor.**

Aaron Services took on our gas servicing and repairs work in April this year, so we wanted to make sure everything has been going well.



Feedback was very positive, with:

- **100% of people taking part saying that the overall service was 'good' or 'excellent'**
- **87% of appointments were kept**
- **100% said the gas engineers' attitude was 'good' or 'excellent'**
- **100% said they were 'good' or 'excellent' at keeping dirt and mess to a minimum.**

One tenant member commented:

**"Engineer was very kind and did a very good job."**

# How are we doing?

Here are our performance figures for April-September this year.

## Emergency Repairs



Target

**99%**

(within 24 hours)



Achieved

**100%**

(32 jobs)

## Arrears



Target

**3%**



Achieved

**1.45%**

## Routine Repairs



Target

**95%**

(within 21  
calendar days)



Achieved

**98.45%**

(129 jobs)

## Rent collection



Target

**100%**



Achieved

**99.66%**

## Customer thumbs-up

We are always pleased to get your feedback, particularly compliments like this one that we recently received:

*"We have nothing but positive feedback. We were treated well throughout our tenancy, and any queries and repairs were quickly handled. I really appreciate you going through extra lengths to explain things to my mum when I've not been there, as it has helped her to understand things better since dad passed away. The moving out process has been relatively painless and, once again, thank you for all your help during the process."* – **Yasin, co-op customer**



# Frequently asked questions

We often get asked certain questions by our tenant members about their homes. Most frequently asked are the questions below.



## **Q: Can I buy my home?**

**A:** As RWHC is a community-based housing co-operative, our tenant members do not have the right to buy their home. But, by joining our management committee, you can have more say over our homes and services than most social housing tenants have over their landlord.

## **Q: Can my adult child carry on living in this house after I die?**

**A:** We always look at such situations sympathetically, on a case-by-case basis, but generally the rules are quite clear – there can only be one ‘succession’ to the tenancy.

To be qualified to succeed, you must have been living in the house when the tenant died and either be their spouse or partner or another family member who has been living there for at least 12 months.

However, if the spouse or partner has already taken on the tenancy after the original tenant’s death, this counts as a succession. So any adult child still living with them will not be able to succeed to the tenancy when their remaining parent dies.

# Beware direct debit scams

With the festive season and cost of living crisis upon us, we want you to be on your guard against a scam where fraudsters offer to help you reclaim rent or council tax paid by direct debit.

Posts have been circulating on social media about how to recover such money paid ‘in error’ to social landlords or local authorities.

Victims of this scam have been asked to provide their bank details to a third party who reclaims the money from their bank (taking all or a share of it) and cancels the direct debits – plunging the victim’s rent account into arrears.

If you have been affected by such a scam relating to your rent, please get in touch. Call us on **0116 257 6800**.



## Need to report a repair?

If you have a repair that needs doing, please get in touch straightaway so we can organise getting it fixed.

- Call our Customer Contact Centre on **0116 257 6800** and select the 'repairs' option.

OR:

- Book a repair via the My PA app, which you can download by going to [www.pahousing.co.uk](http://www.pahousing.co.uk)



## Get the cover you need

As your landlord, Ross Walk housing co-op has buildings insurance cover for your home. But you need to make sure you have your own contents insurance to cover your belongings in the event of an emergency.

The Crystal Insurance Scheme offers discounted rates for social housing tenants and is recommended by the National Housing Federation.

You can take out a policy with them which covers furniture and other personal possessions in your home against theft, fire, vandalism, burst pipes and other household risks.

- To find out more, call Crystal on **0345 450 7286** or visit [www.crystal-insurance.co.uk](http://www.crystal-insurance.co.uk)

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