

Ross Walk News Spring 2023

Ross Walk Housing Cooperative
members' newsletter

Tenant survey – what you told us
Family thumbs-up for new home
Condensation and mould advice
Rent rise
Farewell to Jan



Contents

Bank Holiday closing	3
Dates for your diary	4
What you told us	5
Rent rise	6
Family gives thumbs-up to new home	7
Farewell to Jan	8
Combating condensation and mould	9
How are we doing?	10
Support when you need it most	11

Welcome to the spring edition of Ross Walk News, where you can find out about what's been going on at your housing co-op over the past few months and our plans for the future.

We are pleased to report back on our resident satisfaction survey and what we plan to do to improve, in response to what you told us. You can also read about how we are working to support our tenant members during the current cost of living crisis.

I would like to thank our surveyor, Jan Wolloff, for his years of service and wish him well as he moves to pastures new. I also want to thank our longstanding committee members for their hard work and dedication. Some have stood down recently, so we are keen to recruit new members.

Joining the committee is a great opportunity to develop your skills, gain experience and play your part in the housing co-op movement supported by a friendly, welcoming team – and I am always happy to chat to anyone interested in getting involved.

I look forward to seeing you at the various social events we have planned for the rest of the year. In the meantime, I hope you enjoyed a Blessed Ramadan and Eid – and a Happy Easter.

Kishor Jadavji
*Chair of Ross Walk
Housing Cooperative*





Bank Holiday closing

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

- **Thursday 29 May – Spring Bank Holiday**
- **Monday 28 August – Summer Bank Holiday**

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**

You can also book a repair at any time via the My PA app, which you can download by going to **www.pahousing.co.uk**

Mutual respect

We would like to remind our tenant members to always treat our team with respect and politeness.

Ross Walk housing co-op works hard for the benefit of our residents, so we will not tolerate any rude or abusive behaviour towards our staff or contractors.

Dates for your diary

Committee meetings 2023

Held from 7pm, face-to-face at the Wolsey Building from May to September and online the rest of the year:

- **Monday 15 May – Strategy and Housing Services**
- **Monday 6 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:

- **Friday 26 May – Social Evening at The Sapphire Suite, 88 Surrey St, Leicester, LE4 6FG**
- **Wednesday 5 July – Tenant Members Conference**
- **Saturday 5 August – Summer trip to Buckingham Palace, with some free time in London**
- **Friday 8 September – Annual General Meeting (including nomination of management committee) at The Sapphire Suite**

Come and join us

We are urgently appealing for new members to join our management committee.

There are lots of benefits to becoming a committee member:

- Free training to develop your skills
- IT equipment, including a laptop for meetings
- Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, and support with child care if needed
- Gaining new skills and experience, which may help if you are trying to find employment
- Having more influence over our homes and services.

If you think you might be interested, you can come and have a chat with us, attend a couple of meetings and even shadow other committee members to see if it's for you.

For more information, please contact Nicola Parlbay on **0116 204 4135**.

What you told us

Ross Walk Housing Cooperative recently carried out a resident satisfaction survey to see how happy you are with our services and how we may be able to improve.

We commissioned specialist consultancy firm Acuity to conduct the survey during January and February this year, resulting in 49 tenant members giving their views.

The results were generally positive and compare well with other social landlords, including Maynard Cooperative Housing Association.

There were many excellent ratings, including:

- ✓ 89% are satisfied their communal areas are kept clean and well maintained
- ✓ 88% are satisfied that their home is safe
- ✓ 88% think Ross Walk treats them fairly and with respect
- ✓ 82% are satisfied that their home is well maintained
- ✓ 81% are satisfied with how we handle anti-social behaviour
- ✓ 80% are satisfied with Ross Walk's overall services
- ✓ 79% are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live
- ✓ 79% are satisfied that we keep them informed
- ✓ 71% are satisfied with the repairs service and the time taken to complete their last repair.

However:

- ✗ 45% are satisfied with the way complaints are handled
- ✗ 42% would recommend Ross Walk to other people.

Resident comments included:

"I am happy with the service provided by RWHC. I would like to thank the people involved in taking the telephone calls as they are polite and give rapid response."

"When workers come to do the repairs they leave a mess and do not clean up."

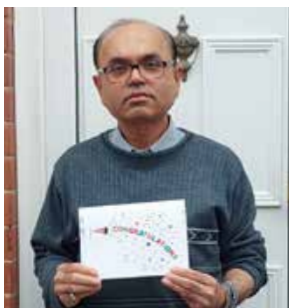
What we will do

In response to these survey results, we are now looking at how we can improve in the areas where there were lower satisfaction levels.

We will:

- 👍 see if we can make our repairs service more efficient
- 👍 investigate how we can handle complaints better.

If you would like to suggest what we can do to improve services, please get in touch – we want to hear from you.



All residents who completed the survey were entered into a prize draw, with £25 shopping vouchers going to Mr and Mrs Thanki (of Cooper Street) and Mr T Nargoliya and N Shah (of Bruin Street).

Pictured left, Mr Thanki receives his voucher



Rent rise

Your rent will have increased by 7% from April, in line with the government's agreed cap on social landlords' rent rises this year.

In normal circumstances, the increase would have been in line with inflation but that would have meant a hike of over 11%.

Ross Walk co-op, along with our tenant members, are all having to cope with spiralling costs but we always try to keep our rents as low as possible.

- If you are struggling to pay your rent, don't let arrears mount up – please contact us as soon as possible so we can discuss how we can help you. Call us on **0116 257 6800**.

Need a helping hand?

We know that many of our tenant members are finding it hard to cope financially in the face of the ongoing cost of living crisis, on top of a tough winter of rising energy bills. But we are here to help in any way we can.



Our Housing Management Officer, Pankaj Rathod (*left*), and our Tenancy Sustainment Team

are on hand to provide information and support around welfare benefits, government grants, debt advice and budgeting to make the most of your money.

They can help make sure you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to and explore what other kind of assistance may be available to you. If you download the My PA app, you can also use the free benefits calculator to see what you may be able to claim.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please get in touch. Call us on **0116 257 6800** to find out what we can do to help.





Family gives thumbs-up to new home

A family-of-four are delighted to have moved into one of our newly acquired and refurbished homes.

Aruna Narsaim has moved to the three-bedroom house in Law Street with his wife and two daughters, after they were previously living in a one-bedroom property.

He said: *“My family were living in a one-bedroom house before, so we are very pleased to have moved into this three-bedroom home.*

“I’m so grateful to Ross Walk and really appreciate the co-op’s support in providing a beautiful house for my family. Thank you!”

Ross Walk housing co-op bought the terraced house in Law Street last September,

followed in November by a similar property in Westbourne Street – which has also recently been rented out to another family.

Our team carried out extensive work to refurbish the homes, so they could be let as soon as possible to local people in housing need.

- **Our waiting list is closed, as we no longer take housing applications direct. If you or anyone you know is interested in renting a Ross Walk home, you need to get in contact with Leicester City Council and register on the local authority’s housing waiting list.**

Farewell to Jan

We are sad to be saying goodbye to Jan Wolloff, who has been Ross Walk housing co-op's full-time surveyor for over three years.

Jan previously worked for us in various roles – including property services manager, surveyor and contact centre repairs coordinator – between 2002 and 2017, before re-joining our team in winter 2019.

He has now joined the stock investment team which plans improvements to homes owned by our managing agent PA Housing.

RWHC Chair Kishor Jadavji said: *"I want to thank Jan for all his hard work for Ross Walk co-op over the course of the past 20 years. As well as being a valued member of the team, he has become a familiar face to our tenant members and he will be very much missed."*

- **We currently have temporary arrangements to cover the surveyor's role and hope to have a long-term option in place over the next few weeks.**



Looking to the future

Our co-op recently drew up a new business plan, outlining what we hope to achieve over the next two years.

The resulting action plan includes these key goals:

- **Visit each of our tenant members every year, to check on any issues or changing needs.**
- **Identify tenant members who are struggling with the cost of living so we can offer them support, and establish a hardship fund to help people in crisis.**
- **Ensure our committee is balanced, in terms of gender and race.**
- **Inspect all work to our homes which costs more than £1,000.**
- **Upgrade our existing homes.**
- **Complete repairs on time and ensure they are done to a good standard through home visits and good record keeping.**
- **Closely monitor our performance, comparing ourselves to other social landlords to highlight where we do well and where we need to improve.**
- **Work to involve more tenant members with the co-op's activities and strengthen the management committee.**





Combating condensation and mould

What is condensation?

When air cools, it holds less moisture so water droplets appear as condensation on cold surfaces. This is different from damp, which is when moisture gets into a building's structure due to (for example) rising damp from the ground or water from a leaking pipe or roof.

Condensation can cause mould which, if left untreated, can be bad for your health as spores can cause coughs, skin irritations and eye problems, as well as worsening asthma symptoms.

Dealing with condensation and mould

- Wipe down windows and sills when condensation appears on them.
- Wash down mould-affected walls, ceilings and paintwork with a fungicidal wash.

Tips to reduce condensation

- 1) Cover pans when cooking and do not leave kettles boiling.
- 2) Do not use paraffin or bottled gas heaters, as they produce a lot of moisture (as well as posing a fire risk).
- 3) Dry washing outside, if possible. If not, dry it in a heated, well-ventilated room with the door closed. Use an extractor fan, if fitted.
- 4) Keep a small window ajar or trickle vent open in occupied rooms. Open windows wider and use extractor fans, if fitted, in kitchens and bathrooms when you cook, wash up, bathe or dry clothes.
- 5) Close kitchen and bathroom doors when in use, to prevent moisture circulating to other rooms.
- 6) Do not over-fill wardrobes, and leave sufficient space to allow air circulation between the backs of large furniture and walls. Avoid putting them against external walls.
- 7) Do not cover airbricks or other permanent forms of ventilation.
- 8) Keep low background heat on all day, even if you are out. This allows the structure of the building to warm up as well as the air.



You can find more advice on reducing condensation in your home at <https://www.pahousing.co.uk/customers/reporting-a-repair/condensation-damp-and-mould/>

If you are worried about condensation, damp or mould, please contact us straightaway so we can work with you to resolve the problem. Call us on **0116 257 6800** (select the repairs option) or report it via the My PA app (which you can download at www.pahousing.co.uk)



How are we doing?

Here are our performance figures for April-December 2022.

Emergency Repairs



Target

99%
(within 24 hours)



Achieved

100%
(47 jobs)

Arrears



Target
3%



Achieved
1.99%

Routine Repairs



Target

95%
(within 21
calendar days)



Achieved

97.26%
(219 jobs)

Rent collection



Target
100%



Achieved
99.57%

Support when you need it most

If you or someone you know is experiencing mental health issues, a Leicester-based charity can help get the support you need.

Lamp (Leicestershire Action for Mental Health Project) provides free, confidential, independent advice on mental health services, including support for families and carers.

The community charity was formed in 1989 to help individuals struggling to find and access such services, supporting those feeling vulnerable, confused and unsure where to turn.

Based at Meridian Business Park, Lamp's mission is to navigate people through the complexities of mental health support and empower them to rebuild their lives.

Its dedicated team of advocacy specialists provides services including:

- exploring a person's concerns and scoping out what options are available to them
- supporting them to attend an appointment with a GP or psychiatrist
- phoning professionals on their behalf to seek answers or updates about their care
- researching their experiences and symptoms to understand side-effects of medication.

You can find out more about Lamp and its services at <https://www.lampadvocacy.co.uk/>

Bank scams – don't be taken in

Fraudsters may try to trick you into transferring money to them by pretending to be representatives from your bank.

If you receive unsolicited phone calls, texts or emails from numbers or addresses you don't recognise which say they are from your bank:

- **DON'T** respond to them
- **DON'T** open any links or attachments in them
- **DO** contact your bank on its usual phone number, if you want to check if the message is genuine.



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