

Ross Walk News

Summer 2022

**Ross Walk Housing Cooperative
members' newsletter**

Warmer homes funding success

New gas contractor

Co-op rules change

Website refresh

Rent update



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Welcome to the summer edition of Ross Walk News. I hope you'll enjoy the latest round-up of our news and activities.

There's been lots going on in recent months, with the launch of our new website, a change of gas heating contractors and a special meeting to adopt updated rules about Ross Walk housing co-op's future management.

We are also delighted with news hot off the press that we have won government funding towards insulation work which will improve the energy efficiency and warmth of many of our homes.

Following the last two years' lockdown restrictions, I very much look forward to seeing you all at the many social events we have planned for 2022. In the meantime, I hope you enjoyed a Blessed Ramadan and Eid.

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 29 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

Revamped website goes live

We recently unveiled our new-look website, which provides a variety of handy information and the latest news for our tenant members.



As well as featuring a gallery of colourful photos from our varied social activities, you can find out about how the co-op is run, how to report repairs and how to apply for a home.

The website – at www.rosswalkcoop.org.uk – also includes details of forthcoming events and links to other organisations' websites, which contain further useful information and support advice.

In addition, you can now use the website to book an appointment for our regular housing surgeries – which you can attend in person at our office or online. But appointments can still be booked by phone or email, if you prefer.

Dates for your diary

After having to cancel many of our usual social activities during the pandemic, we look forward to seeing you again at the various events planned for the rest of this year. Do come and join us!

Committee meetings 2022

Held at the Wolsey Building, from 6.30pm:

- **July – no meeting**
- **Monday 8 August – Strategy and Housing Services (including presentation of year-end accounts for AGM)**
- **Monday 12 September – Development and Finance**
- **October – no meeting**
- **Monday 7 November – Strategy and Housing Services**
- **Monday 12 December – Development and Finance (plus rent)**

Other key dates:

- **Wednesday 6 July – Tenant Members Conference**
- **Summer trip – date to be confirmed**
- **Friday 9 September – Annual General Meeting (including nomination of management committee) – at the Sapphire Suite**

Join our committee

We are always on the look-out for new tenant members to join our co-op's management committee.

If you're interested in finding out more, please contact Nicola Parlbay on **0116 204 4135**.



Warmer homes boost

More of our tenant members can look forward to warmer, cheaper to run homes following our successful bid for a share of the national Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF).

We have been awarded nearly £440,000 to help pay for installing external wall insulation in 46 of our properties which are lowest rated for energy efficiency. This work will be carried out over the coming year.

The government set up the SHDF to improve energy efficiency in social housing homes, for the benefit of residents and the environment.

The first wave of funding, totalling £179 million, has been shared between 69 housing providers and supports the government's target that all social housing should achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) 'C' rating by 2030.

Modernising our stock

New kitchens have been installed at five of our homes in recent months, as part of our ongoing programme to maintain and improve our housing stock.

Over the coming year, we plan to replace more kitchens and bathrooms in our properties.



We are pleased to have resumed this type of work, after such non-emergency projects were temporarily suspended during the pandemic.

At the moment our Area Surveyor Jan Wolloff is continuing to visit Ross Walk homes for our stock condition survey, which was also suspended due to lockdown restrictions.

Please let Jan in to your home when he calls, as these visits will help us plan future improvements at your property. The visits only last around half an hour, allowing him to take a look around to see what work may need carrying out.

Rent rise

Your rent will have increased by 4.1% in April.

We always strive to keep our charges as low and affordable as we can.

But this year, due to rising costs of materials and labour, we are having to raise our rents so that we can carry out the necessary repairs, maintenance and improvements to keep all our homes to a good standard.

- The simplest and easiest way to pay your rent is by direct debit. To set this up, just go online and log into your My PA account or call us on **0116 257 6800** and ask to speak with your Housing Management Officer.



Help with money worries

At the co-op we appreciate how the rising cost of living, along with spiralling energy bills, is making it harder for many of us to make ends meet.

The government is offering various types of assistance to help people through this tough time, including council tax rebates and grants to help with energy costs.



You can find out more about the kind of help available at <https://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency>

Our Housing Management Officer, Pankaj Rathod, or Tenancy Sustainment Team can support you with welfare benefits advice – or you can see what you are entitled to by using the free benefits calculator on the My PA app.

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



Rules change brings co-op up to date

Ross Walk Housing Cooperative (RWHC) has adopted new, updated rules about the way our organisation is run.

We held a Special General Meeting in March for tenant members to discuss and vote on the changes, with 22 votes in favour of the move.

The previous rules, which were also used by many other co-ops all around the country, were drawn up in 1981 so were out of date.

Our management committee was keen to replace them with new ones which have been drafted by the Confederation of Co-operative Housing (the national representative body for housing co-ops).

The new rules are clearer, more detailed, use more modern terminology and reference the latest relevant legislation.

The changes also cover:

- **electronic communication with committee and tenant members**
- **a commitment to diversity, equality and respect**
- **committee size, election and nominations**
- **disputes.**

RWHC Chair Kishor Jadavji said: “The co-op’s previous set of rules was out of date and did not properly reflect how housing co-ops operate in the 21st century, so we felt it was important that we move with the times.

“Apart from these key changes and more detail being included, the essence of the rest of our rules remains predominantly the same.”

Welcome to Aaron Services

A new gas heating contractor has taken over work for Ross Walk housing co-op from April this year.

The Aaron Services team will carry out:

- **annual gas service and safety checks of all gas appliances in your home**
- **annual servicing of your carbon monoxide detector and smoke detector**
- **all heating repairs**
- **new heating installations where required.**

Established in 1985, Aaron Services works throughout the Midlands and East of England providing gas servicing, maintenance, repairs, electrical inspections and new boiler installations to over 45 public sector, local authority and social housing providers like PA Housing.

Their engineers work to a strict code of conduct and pride themselves on high standards of workmanship.

Co-ops Services Manager Imtiaz Vohra said: "Aaron Services was chosen following a thorough procurement exercise and because the team shares many of our values around



customer service, sustainability and trying to give back to the communities we serve.

"We're confident they will be an excellent addition to Ross Walk housing co-op and that our tenant members will be very happy with the services they provide."

Aaron Services will contact tenant members when their annual safety checks are due but, if you need to report a gas heating repair, you should contact RWHC on **0116 257 6800** and press option 4 or email our managing agent PA Housing on repairs@pahousing.co.uk

Aaron Services employees all carry photographic identification, so always ask for this before letting anyone into your home. If you have any doubt about them, close the door and phone us on the number above.

House hunt continues

Ross Walk Housing Cooperative is still actively seeking homes to buy in the Belgrave area of Leicester.

We purchased and refurbished three terraced houses over the past two years, growing our affordable housing stock to 119 properties.

Over the coming year we hope to acquire three more properties, supported by 30% funding from Leicester City Council.



Take it easy

The quickest, easiest and most secure way to contact us and manage your home is online via the My PA app.

All you have to do is download it to your computer, laptop or mobile phone to get 24-hour access.

Around 70 of our tenant members have already signed up to use the app, which allows you to:

- check and update your details
- diagnose repairs
- request, book and cancel repairs appointments
- give feedback on repairs
- make payments
- set up a direct debit
- view your rent statement
- work out what benefits you may be entitled to with our free budgeting and benefits calculator
- suggest how we can improve our services
- contact us with any other queries
- see job vacancies at PA Housing, our contractors and suppliers
- apply to advertise your business for free to other My PA users.

The My PA app can be translated into 85 different languages using Google translate and has the BrowseAloud accessibility toolbar to help tenant members with sight impairment.

Check out www.pahousing.co.uk to find out more.

What is My PA?

My PA is the fastest, easiest and cheapest way to manage your home issues. It's available 24 hours a day, at any time convenient to you - no more waiting or phone queues.

Many more repairs are being fixed first time thanks to an effective reporting process.

It's secure and really simple, just like online banking or shopping. Use it on your computer or laptop or download the app to your phone.

You will need:

- an email address that will double as your username
- your payment reference number (PS on your latest council statement)
- a device that connects to the internet

To get started with My PA, visit pahousing.co.uk/mypa

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play

PA Housing

To register for My PA you need your payment reference, found on your rent statement or by contacting us to request it. You can book an appointment at one of our housing surgeries if you need help to set it up.



How are we doing?

Here are our performance figures for April-December 2021.

Emergency Repairs



Target

99%
(within 24 hours)



Achieved

100%
(42 jobs)

Arrears



Target

3%



Achieved

1.09%

Routine Repairs



Target

95%
(within 21
calendar days)



Achieved

97.92%
(192 jobs)

Rent collection



Target

100%



Achieved

101.32%

Ross Walk News – have your say

As well as this printed newsletter that we send out to you, Ross Walk News is also available to download and view on our website.

We are currently discussing whether we should continue producing printed versions of this newsletter, in a bid to reduce costs and be more environmentally friendly.

Before we make a decision, we want to know what you think – whether you still want a printed version delivered to you or if you would be happy just to read it online.

We would really appreciate you taking the time to fill in this quick survey (see below) and sending us your answers either by post to Ross Walk Housing Cooperative, 3 Bede Island Road, Leicester, LE2 7EA, or by emailing info@rosswalkcoop.org.uk

Your name: _____

Your address: _____

Your telephone number: _____

Do you want to carry on receiving a printed copy of Ross Walk News?

YES NO

Would you like to receive a copy via email instead? YES NO

Do you like the way the newsletter is designed? YES NO

If not, what would you change? _____

Do you like the kind of articles we include? YES NO

If not, what kind of articles would you like to see? _____

Do you like the kind of pictures we include? YES NO

If not, what kind of pictures would you like to see? _____

Please give any other comments you'd like to make below

Ross Walk Housing Cooperative

3 Bede Island Road,
Leicester LE2 7EA

Tel: 0116 257 6800

Email: info@rosswalkcoop.org.uk
www.rosswalkcoop.org.uk

