

WINTER 2021



Wirral Methodist
Housing Association

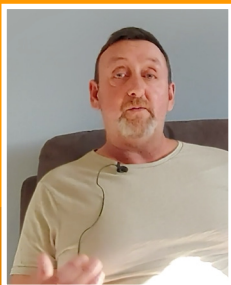
BUZZ

info@wmhaltd.org.uk

TEL.0151 647 5471

www.wmhaltd.org.uk

Let's get together



**A new
start for
Stephen**



**Need a
repair?
Tell US**



**Give your
home an
MOT**

Welcome from the Chief Executive

Thank you for reading this newsletter. I hope it finds you feeling warm, secure and content in your home. Everything we do here at Wirral Methodist Housing Association is about creating the best homes and communities we can so that you and all our tenants can thrive. That means we need you to tell us if there's something wrong so we can put it right. We'd like to hear your ideas about how things could be done better or new things we could try. We've recently been talking to you about our Neighbourhood Plans. These are our commitments to you, your home and your area. It's our job to keep your home in good condition with regular safety checks, inspections and timely repairs – but we want to hear from you about how we can make that process better.

If you live in the Granges you'll know we're talking with all the residents to find out what's good and what we can do differently, now and in the long-term. So please speak up.

If you've recently moved in to one of our homes, then welcome. You're invited to be part of a thriving community of people in the areas we serve.

We know the past couple of years have been tough for everyone with Covid-19 restrictions on what we can do and worrying rises in the cost of crucial things like fuel. Remember, we are here to help you and we can put you in touch with other agencies if you need support. You're not on your own. Please don't struggle. Our Tenant Support Fund is here to help. You can have a grant of up to £250 to help you through financial hardship, education or training needs. You can find out more in our Annual Report or ring the office on 0151 647 5471.

Paul Carhart
Chief Executive Office



Wirral Methodist Housing Association's Board and staff wish you all a safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Our office phone lines and info@wmhaltd.org.uk will close for the festive period on **Friday 24th December 2021 at 12.00pm** and will reopen on **Tuesday 4th January 2022 at 9.00am.**

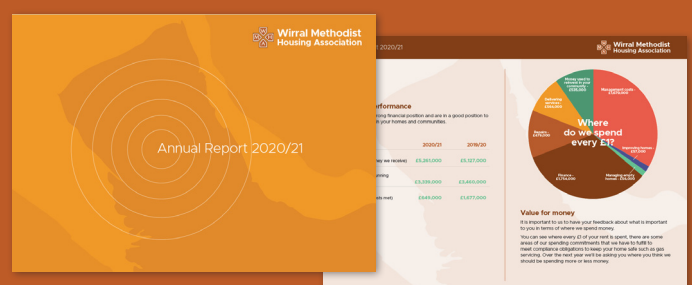
If you have an **emergency repair** during this time you can call **Orbis on 0151 343 2770**

Orbis should only be contacted if there is a **genuine emergency**. Please report all other repairs from **4th January 2022.**

Have you read our Annual Report yet?

It's how we let you know about our performance so you can tell us what you think. You can find it on our website www.wmhaltd.org.uk/annual-report-to-tenants-2020-21 or if you prefer a printed copy, please ring the office on **0151 647 5471.**

Your feedback on our performance is important to us and will help us improve our communication with you. Please send your views to info@wmhaltd.org.uk



The resident who came in from the cold



We all know how tough the last couple of years have been. But for new resident Stephen Ford, we're delighted to say that WMHA was able to help him when he needed it most.

Stephen is now happy in his home in Higher Bebington but it's been a difficult journey to get there. "It all started in 2019. It was a rough year," explains Stephen. "My marriage ended, I lost my home, I got cancer and then in March 2020 the pandemic hit."

Before the pandemic, Stephen had been 'sofa-surfing' with relatives to start with but that wasn't sustainable. He found himself living in his car and trying to cope with the unpleasant side-effects of chemotherapy.

"It was pretty degrading," says Stephen. "The chemo was intravenous in hospital once a month but for the following three weeks, I had to take a chemo tablet at 6am and 6pm every day. I was doing it in McDonalds, in the car, wherever I could. I didn't know where to turn."

Then the pandemic started. But there was an unexpected upside for Stephen.

"The Government decided they had to get all homeless people into some accommodation and off the streets. For two weeks I had a little

bungalow in New Ferry. I was made up. I had my own key."

But there was still uncertainty. "Then out of nowhere I got a phone call from Wirral Methodist Housing Association offering me a property. It's the best thing that's ever happened to me in my life."

Things were a bit strange because of the pandemic – everyone with masks and all the rules around not mixing but Stephen was overwhelmed when he came to view the property. "Honest to God, it felt like I'd won the lottery. I felt like a millionaire. I felt like my life was coming on track again."

Since then, Stephen has done a bit of decorating and is looking forward to returning to work and making the most of his garden in the spring.

"The Association helped me to be in a safe, warm environment where I could eat meals rather than eating bread in my car while having chemotherapy. It's my home and my grandkids come and visit, they love it up here."

"I can't thank WMHA enough. They've given me a new start and I don't think they'll ever understand what that means to me. It's a gift, not just for my life but for my head. It's brought me to a new place."



Beware the disrepair claim temptation



You and your home matter to us. It's in our interests to make sure all our property is in a good state of repair. So if you get a knock on the door or a phone call telling you that someone will help you get compensation through a disrepair claim, tell them to go away then tell us about their visit.

We know disrepair companies have been trying to get our tenants to sign up to make a claim. They can be very forceful. They may say they work on behalf of Wirral Methodist Housing Association to try and get into your home. **THEY DO NOT.**

The way these people make money for themselves is to get you to sign a piece of paper which means they can send on your details to a solicitor. The solicitor pays them for the referral. You get nothing.

Each referral is worth £100s to the person getting you to sign. That's why they are so persistent. They get paid whether the claim is genuine or not.

They will make it sound like you will get a lot of compensation and there's no risk to you in making a claim. But unless you look at the small print, you don't know what you've signed

up to at the next stage – there may be hidden fees, there may be a lot more calls. Once they've got money for passing on your name, they don't care.

Only genuine claims would ever attract compensation, where a landlord had badly neglected their responsibility to their tenant. Here at WMHA it's our job to make sure your home is kept in good repair – so it's highly unlikely there would ever be a successful claim against us.

But once it gets referred to a solicitor, we have to spend substantial amounts of time and money defending the Association against bogus claims – time and money that we'd rather spend on doing genuine repairs.

So please – if you have a repair that needs doing – **TELL US** – because we care about you and your home, today, tomorrow and forever.

What to do if a disrepair claims agent calls

- Tell them to go away
- Don't sign anything
- Don't let them in your home
- Ask for an ID card
- Tell them you'll ring our office to check
- RING US 0151 647 5471



Get a property MOT

Don't get caught out by scammers. Let us give your home a property MOT.

It's free. That's because we want to know if there's a problem with any of our properties so we can put it right. And the sooner we know, the smaller the job – it's the old saying of 'a stitch in time saves nine.'

Ring us on **0151 647 5471** or email us at **info@wmhaltd.org.uk** to book your property MOT.

Or you can join more than 100 tenants that have already signed up for the My Home portal on our website. Just go to **www.wmhaltd.org.uk** and click on the brown button at the top of the page that says 'Login to My Home.' You can register



for the portal and in future find out everything you need to know about your tenancy without having to ring the office. You need your tenancy reference number to sign up or you can ring us if you need help.

Use My Home portal to:

- Pay your rent
- View your account
- Report repairs
- Complete forms
- Give feedback
- Update household details

Award winning HMS appointed by WMHA

The Association is pleased to announce we have awarded our 4-year Repairs and Maintenance contract to HMS.



They're based in the North West and we believe their approach is a good fit with ours. They're an independent commercial business with a social heart. They invest 100% of their profits into local projects and charities. Since 2011 they've gifted £20million to projects and organisations who transform communities, improve people's health and increase access to training and employment. They believe in building positive relationships and putting the



customer first. We are delighted that the HMS team will be working with us to make sure your home is well maintained, safe and secure.

Remember the WMHA team and our contractors carry ID and arrange appointments in advance. Don't let anyone in who doesn't have an ID card and a booked appointment. Ring us on 0151 647 5471 if you are unsure.

Let's work together to make sure your repairs and all the crucial safety checks on gas and electricity are done every year.



Wirral Methodist Housing Association

Let's get together



It's been great to get out and about again, meeting up to find out how you are and what needs doing in your community.

After a year of staying in, our summer walkabouts were a welcome opportunity to catch up on how everyone was face-to-face. For many of our team it was the chance to restart doing what they do best – working directly with you to provide a home and community that allows you to thrive.

By September we were feeling bold so we developed two community projects based on suggestions from you.

At The Candle Factory, one of our supported housing projects for people with learning disabilities, we were asked to create a mural in the communal area so it looked less clinical.

The tenants and team worked with Scouse Art Attack to create the mural and an apple tree was planted.

For staff, residents and their parents, it was a fantastic outcome and worth the hard work.

Over in Birkenhead, the park at Church Street was the venue for another community initiative.



In the past, the Association and local volunteers had painted the play equipment. Once everyone was allowed out to play again, it was clear that the equipment needed some TLC.

The plan was to tidy up the grounds, replant the planters and paint the play equipment with the help of the wider community but insurance limitations meant on the day it was up to the team from WMHA to get the job done.

By the end of the day, the team were tired but had a great sense of achievement when they saw the difference they'd made.

Celebrating Winnie



Congratulations to Winnie Hunnikin from the Board, the Chief Executive and members of the WMHA team on her 36 years of loyal and dedicated service to the Association.

Winnie became part of the team as a cleaner in 1985 when 'The Power of Love' dominated the UK singles chart. She was joined at her celebration meal by Frances Deacon and Sandy Davies.

Day in the life of Katie Jones - Housing Officer

If you've met Katie Jones then you'll know she's an energetic, cheerful character who loves to be around people, doing the best she can for them. So the lockdown was a tough challenge. "I'm a people person. I love my job because it's very sociable, very interactive, so it's been a difficult time having to work remotely." But she's proud that WMHA has still managed to give people the service and support they need. "We can do virtual viewings of a property now. We walk around a house with phones so the person can see inside. We look a bit odd but it's worked."

Katie says, "It's vital that we make sure we've got safe homes for people, especially if they've been struggling. We've just been doing our best to keep that social distance but still provide the service we're known for."



For Katie, that can include helping someone get support with their utility bills or encouraging them to make their house into a home that's personal to them. She can also help with making sure houses are listed for safety checks or repairs or help you with that first step in becoming a WMHA tenant. "I love my job, it's all about helping people."

AGM Tenant Engagement Session - the results are in

We were delighted to be joined by 40 tenants and stakeholders at the 57th Annual General Meeting at Port Sunlight on 24 September 2021. We discussed our Neighbourhood Plans and Value for Money strategy.



We explained that we want to get value for money from every £1 of rent we gather. We asked those present to tell us what they think the spending priorities should be and they told us:

1. Improving Homes
2. Tenant Involvement & Scrutiny
3. Anti-Social Behaviour & Estate Management
4. Developing New Homes
5. Repairs
6. Reporting to Tenants

Knowing that improving homes is the most important thing means we can focus on that.

We'll survey each home to see what condition it's in. Then we'll work out what needs doing, things like kitchens, bathrooms, heating and making our homes better for the environment.

Then we'll share this information with you so you know what we'll be doing to invest in and improve our housing stock.

We asked for feedback on the day about the AGM and the results were:

Please rate this event:

Good or Very good 77%

Were your views listened to? **Yes 88%**

Would you attend another event? **Yes 88%**

Ways to get involved with the Association:

Become a tenant champion 25%

Complete surveys on My Home portal 50%

Take part in walkabouts 25%

Thank you again to all those who took part and gave us their feedback. We'd like to welcome even more of you to our next AGM.

Meet the Board



Bryan McPaul
Chair of WMHA Board
Tenants & Communications Sub
Committee Member



Claire Fouracre
Deputy Chair WMHA
Tenants & Communications
Sub Committee Member



Noel Schorah
Hon Secretary WMHA



Michael Thorne
Chair of the Tenants & Communication
Sub Committee



Tom Sault
Chair of Governance & Internal
Controls Sub Committee



Ian Cubbin
Governance and Internal Controls Sub
Committee Member



Chris Page
Tenants & Communications
Sub Committee Member



David Smith
Tenants & Communications & Sub
Committee Member; Governance & Internal
Controls Sub Committee Member



Maggie Cornall
Governance & Internal Controls
Sub Committee Member

Greetings from Bryan McPaul

Chair of Wirral Methodist Housing Association Board

My colleagues and I are privileged to serve all our tenants and residents and guide our dedicated team on how to meet your needs. After the restrictions of lockdown, it was great to get out and about and meet with you on the walkabouts to hear from you about how we're doing.

Our job as a Board is to set the standards for how WMHA operates and ensure we live up to our values. The two sub-committees, one focused on Tenants & Communications, the other on Governance & Internal Controls, make sure we deliver on what we promise to you.

So please tell us what you think – either when you see us out and about, via the info@wmhaltd.org.uk or ring the office on **0151 647 5471**. And don't forget TAG – the Tenants Advisory Group. Join TAG today and really keep us on our toes.

We're always on the look out for people who may want to join our Board in the future.

If you'd like to join us, please ring the office and let us know.

