

Onchan District Commissioners

# Tenants Newsletter

## WELCOME



Welcome to this edition of the tenant's newsletter for residents in Onchan. Spring is in the air, with the promise of summer just around the corner. That's the good news, along with the fact that work on our refurbishment scheme has progressed very well despite the cold and snowy winter.

The bad news is that an increasing number of tenants are reporting incidents of antisocial behaviour from their neighbours, and I would draw your attention to the main article in the middle of this newsletter for further information.

The Commissioners recognise that everyone has the right to live in a manner of their own choosing, but that does not extend to interfering with the quiet life of their neighbours, so please be considerate towards those in properties around you.

Further bad news that you will all be aware of by now is the 5% rent increase, although this is fixed by central government rather than the Commissioners, and it is lower than the current 6% inflation rate.

We know times are hard, but if you are having difficulties meeting your rent payments, there are a number of ways you can get help.

Please make arrangements to talk to our Finance staff at an early stage, as there are a number of ways we can assist you to manage your budget.

And finally a reminder, the Estate Gardens Competition is run annually, with judging to be done in the late summer. Now is the time to start planting for that winning entry, so in the eternal hope of good weather, good luck and good gardening.

*"How many motorbikes can you see?"*



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## Refurbishment of 118 Properties

We are pleased to say that the works at School Road are progressing well and the first block of houses is nearing completion.

We would like to express thanks to the tenants of this scheme for their co-operation whilst works are ongoing.



## The CHAT Bus

The Community Health Advice and Training Bus is brought to you by AGE Concern.

The bus travels around the Island to reach out to local communities acting as a meeting place where people, such as mothers with young children and older people, can socialize over a cup of tea. The bus has a disabled access and is equipped with the latest technology.

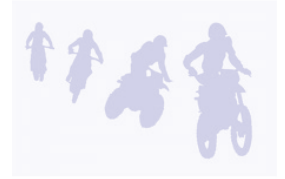
The bus features a kitchenette, lounge area with upholstered seating and plasma screen TV, laptop workstations, a private room for services such as healthcare checks and advice and information consultations, a toy box and storage for voluntary organisations' promotional literature.

**You will find the CHAT Bus at the Youth and Community Centre in Onchan every Monday morning from 10.00 a.m. till 12.00 noon.**



Deputy Clerk

## What is Anti-Social Behaviour?



## Legal Terms explained: “Quiet Enjoyment”

This phrase has meaning and effect in two different ways: the first is in the relationship between the landlord, (Onchan District Commissioners in this case) and the tenant. There is an obligation on a landlord, whether it is actually written into the lease or not, to permit their tenant to enjoy proper and unhindered use of the property they have rented, otherwise known as “quiet enjoyment”. This means that as long as the property is being used within the terms of the lease agreement, the landlord should not interfere with the use unless it is for a reason set out in the lease.



Where more than one property is let, this phrase also means that the landlord has an obligation to prevent the other tenants interfering with that original grant of proper and unhindered use. The normal way a landlord does this is by placing restrictions in the lease of each tenant which will require them not to do anything likely to cause annoyance to their neighbours. In the case of a Commissioners’ lease, these restrictions are listed but not limited to those in clause 2 (l). There is a further explanation of these restrictions on pages 26 to 28 of your Tenant’s Handbook.

The Commissioners also have a policy which sets out how they will deal with any report of antisocial behaviour from a tenant. This indicates that they are not being able to obtain quiet enjoyment of the property they are renting, and the policy is set out in full on the opposite page.

If the problems are resolved by using some or all of the steps set out in this policy, then the obligation on the landlord to permit quiet enjoyment to their tenant is fulfilled. If the steps in this policy do not resolve the issues, then the Commissioners would be obliged to issue a notice to quit to the disturbing tenant, and seek recovery of the property through the Courts from those causing the problem.

Please bear these points in mind and act with due consideration for your neighbours. The consequences of not doing so could be the loss of your home.

**At the Board meeting held on 21st February 2011, the following policy for dealing with anti-social behaviour was approved.**

1. Any allegation of antisocial behaviour made against a tenant or occupant of the Authority's housing should be made in writing and will be treated as a serious matter. It will be investigated by an officer of the Authority and, where possible, in partnership with a member of the Eastern Neighbourhood Policing Team and other identified stakeholders.

Identified Stakeholders will be such bodies as the Department of Social Care, Youth Justice Team, Social Workers, Department of Education and Children, etc.

2. Evidence will be gathered from the complainant and any verifiable third-party source, such as Police incident records.
3. When evidence has been gathered, the alleged offender will be invited for interview (in the case of a minor or non-tenant, the tenant will also be invited) to discuss the findings.
4. If it appears to the investigating officer that there is sufficient evidence to prove the complaint, the alleged offender will be advised as such by the officer of the Authority, and will be advised that they are to be offered a voluntary Acceptable Behaviour Contract to assist in bringing their behaviour to the standard which permits other residents peaceful enjoyment of their property.
5. If the voluntary Acceptable Behaviour Contract is accepted, the appropriate document will be issued and time bound with either a 6 or 12 month expiry date. The situation will be monitored by both the Authority and the Eastern Neighbourhood Policing Team, and other identified stakeholders, if appropriate, to ensure adherence to the terms.
6. If the offer of an Acceptable Behaviour Contract is declined, the offender is to be advised that the matter will be referred to the Board for consideration of terminating the tenancy in favour of a licence to occupy.
7. In the event of continued refusal to accept a voluntary agreement, the matter is to be referred to the next available meeting of the Board to consider terminating the tenancy in favour of a licence to occupy.
8. If a licence to occupy is approved by the Board as an appropriate way forward, the tenant is to be served notice to quit with the offer of a licence to replace their lease.
9. If the offer of a licence is declined, the Notice to Quit will be progressed through the Courts in the usual manner.
10. If the licence is accepted, the appropriate document will be issued and time bound with either a 6 or 12 month expiry date. The situation will be monitored by both the Authority, the Eastern Neighbourhood Policing Team and identified stakeholders, if appropriate, to ensure adherence to the terms.
11. If there is a return to acceptable behaviour for the period, the matter is to be brought back to the Board for the approval of a new tenancy.
12. If there is insufficient or no improvement, the matter is to be brought back to the Board for approval to take possession action through the Courts.
13. While a licence is in place, no consideration will be given to any transfer request



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*“Anti-Social Behaviour is behaviour that lacks consideration for others and that may cause damage to society”*

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Can you spot the 15 Anti-Social Behaviours in this scene?



## BOGUS CALLERS



Bogus caller complaints are very unusual events on the Island. However, this is not a reason to drop your guard!

When anyone calls at your home and claims to be an official of any organisation or local authority department, here's what you should do:

**Don't** open your door without using the DOORSTEP CODE:



**Observe** first—look through a window or door viewer.

**Only** open your door after connecting a chain or limiter

**Record** the callers description and car number

**Switch** on outside lights when its dark to see who's there. Think 'thief', don't leave strangers alone in your home.

**Examine** identity cards. Genuine officials always have them.

**Protect** yourself, if you are unsure, send the caller away and contact a neighbour.

**If in doubt! Keep them out!**



**Always remember to never let strangers into your home unless they provide official identification. Genuine callers will always be happy to produce this on request.**

## ROGUE TRADERS

Tenants are urged not to allow anyone cold calling at the door to carry out work. If their house requires work, residents should contact the Property Maintenance Manager. If the works are the tenants responsibility, you should get written quotations and ask for

personal recommendations from neighbours - and never pay all the money upfront.

If you think you have been cheated or have paid a deposit to a trader and you now have concerns, you can contact the Office of Fair Trading on 686500.



## I.D. CARDS

All Commissioners' staff and contractors have I.D. Cards. If you have any concerns, please request to see their Identity Cards or contact the Commissioners who will verify the identity of their workforce.



## Untaxed/unused vehicles

The Department of Infrastructure are responsible for removing untaxed or unused vehicles from the public highway and have now included Onchan in the areas visited by their Parking Controllers. If your vehicle is no longer roadworthy, untaxed or uninsured it should not be parked on the road.



If the vehicle is surplus to your needs, why not sell it for scrap? Adverts appear in the local press each week offering to collect old cars, so all it takes is a phone call and you could have money in your pocket rather than a fine!

If your vehicle is parked in a car park controlled by the Commissioners, the same rules apply, except that you will have to pay the fine and removal costs to the local authority.

If you are unsure of the best way to deal with an old vehicle, please contact either our Community Warden on 624967 or the Highways Division of the Department of Infrastructure on 686665.



## B-B-Q Summer

*Long warm evenings are the perfect time for a barbi, but please follow the Code:*

- If you have a BBQ, try to site it where the smoke and odours won't affect your neighbours too much
- If you are playing any music outside, keep the volume down, especially late in the evening.
- Make sure food is cooked thoroughly and keep to modest amounts of alcohol. Booze and cooking do not mix.
- Finally, keep young children well clear of hot surfaces. It's their party too, and a burn scar is no way to remember it.



## B-B-Q Chicken Burgers

*These sticky burgers can easily be rustled up on a warm evening for a last-minute barbecue*



**Serves 4**

*Ingredients can easily be doubled*

**Prep** 10 minutes.

**Cook** 15 minutes

### Ingredients:

4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts  
4 rashers bacon (optional)  
4 large burger buns, sliced in half  
lettuce, tomato and red onion, to serve

### For the marinade:

4 tbsp tomato ketchup  
4 tbsp brown sauce  
splash chilli sauce (optional)  
2 tsp clear honey  
2 garlic cloves crushed



### METHOD:

1. Make the sauce and marinade by mixing everything together in a large bowl, then put a few spoonfuls aside. Slice halfway into the thickest part of each breast and open it up like a book. Flatten down slightly with your hand, then toss in the bowlful of marinade to coat. Chill for as little, or as long, as you have time to.
1. Barbecue the chicken for about 10 mins until completely cooked through, turning so it doesn't burn but is nicely charred and sticky. Cook the bacon at the same time until crisp, if using, and toast the buns. Assemble the burgers with lettuce, slices of tomato, onion and the reserved sauce on the side for dolloping on top.



## MAKE YOUR KITCHEN SAFE

Following a number of recent fire alarms in Commissioners properties triggered by incidents in the kitchen, we have been asked by the Isle of Man Fire and Rescue Service to publish this helpful safety advice. Nearly two-thirds of all domestic fires start because of something to do with cooking, and this guide is to how to keep safe while cooking - and what to do if a fire does start in your kitchen.



### The cooker

- keep electrical leads from trailing over or going near the cooker
- don't hang tea-towels or cloths on or over the cooker and don't put oven gloves down on the cooker after you've used them
- keep the oven, hob and grill clean as a build-up of fat and bits of food can start a fire
- don't leave pans on the hob when you're not around - take them off the heat if you have to leave the kitchen (even if you think it will only be for a moment, while you answer the door or phone)

### The microwave

- don't put anything that is made of metal, or has a metallic finish or parts, in the microwave
- don't dry clothes in the microwave



### Electrical items in the kitchen

- keep electrical leads away from water
- don't put a plant pot or anything wet on top of an electrical appliance
- check the toaster is clean and well away from curtains; empty the crumb tray regularly
- don't overload sockets - one plug per socket is the rule, especially if the appliance takes a lot of power (like a kettle)
- don't run extension cables across the floor, as they can become worn
- electrical appliances - especially those that work at high speeds, such as the washing machine - should be serviced each year
- don't leave appliances such as washing machines or dishwashers on at night
- check that your kettle is not leaking – this can be dangerous

### Ventilation

- check regularly that the ventilation in your kitchen is working properly and is not blocked up, especially if you have a gas cooker

### Protection

- buy a smoke alarm fitted with a "hush button", so if it goes off accidentally you can silence it instantly and aren't tempted to remove the battery (except to change it for a new one)
- consider having a fire blanket in your kitchen, mounted on the wall where you can get to it easily and quickly



## MAKE YOUR KITCHEN SAFE



### Cook safely

*Most kitchen fires occur when people are distracted or leave things unattended, so remember:*

- if you're called away from the cooker - by the phone or someone at the door, for example - take pans off the heat
- don't let yourself be distracted while cooking
- don't cook if you're affected by alcohol or prescription drugs
- turn saucepans so that their handles don't stick out (and aren't over another ring)

*Deep-fat frying presents more dangers in your kitchen. Follow these tips for safer deep-frying:*

- never fill a chip pan (or other deep-fat fryer) more than one-third full of oil
- consider using a thermostatically controlled deep-fat fryer - this will ensure that the fat does not get too hot

### If you do have a chip pan fire:

- call 999 immediately
- never move the pan
- turn off the heat - only if it's safe for you to do so
- never use water on chip pan fires as this will cause a fireball



### Dealing with a fire in your kitchen

*If you do have a fire in the kitchen, don't take any risks - get everyone out of your home and call 999.*

*If a pan catches fire:*

- don't move it - it is likely to be extremely hot
- turn off the heat if it's safe to do so - but never lean over a pan to reach the controls
- if you have a fire blanket, put it over the pan if safe to do so
- don't use a fire extinguisher on a pan of oil - the force of the extinguisher can spread the fire
- if you have put the fire out, leave the pan to cool completely
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*Anyone requiring fire safety advice can contact the Community Safety Team on 647303 or go to the website [www.iomfire.com](http://www.iomfire.com)*



## Testing Smoke Alarms

Examine your smoke detector each month in order to test it is still working as intended. Push the test button to hear the alarm sound. If it does not sound, check your battery-operated unit to be sure the battery is inserted properly or replace if needed. If it is an electrical connection, be sure the circuit breaker has not tripped and that the power is turned on to the detector.

- If your smoke alarm starts chirping or beeping, it's time to change the batteries.
- Avoid lighting candles under the detector to see if the alarm goes off. Repeated use of smoke to activate detectors can cause them to fail when a real fire occurs.
- Avoid getting any paint or dust on your smoke detector.



Onchan District Commissioners  
Hawthorn Villa,  
79 Main Road,  
Onchan,  
Isle of Man,  
IM3 1RD

Andrea Dentith ,  
Tenant Liaison Officer  
Tel: 675564  
Fax: 663482  
email: admin@onchan.org.im

## Estate Gardens Competition

This is an amended list of results for the Estates Gardens Competition, and apologies are expressed to those who were missed out from the previously published winners list.

The John Fargher Trophy and Ballachrink Estate —Mrs J Alker, 40 Ballachrink Drive  
J.C. Skillicorn Cup—Mrs M.A. Moody, 35 The Park  
Universal Cup—Mrs J. Alker, 40 Ballachrink Drive  
Houses without gardens—Mrs E. Wrigley, 56 Springfield Court  
Dandara Cup—Mr and Mrs J.B. Druggan, 66 Heywood Drive  
The Onchan Commissioners Trophy—Mr and Mrs T.S. Cubbon, 43 Ashley Park



## CHIMNEY SWEEP

It is recommended that if you have an open fire that you have your chimney swept once a year. This falls under the tenant's responsibility. Having your chimney swept would help reduce the risks of chimney fires, dangerous fumes and prevention of house fires and this will also improve the efficiency of your fire.



## RENT

All tenants received a letter advising them of their new rent effective from 1st April 2011. If you are on benefit, please check with the DHSS that the new rent is being taken in to account when assessing your benefit entitlement.

If you pay by Standing Order, do not forget to let your bank know the change in the amount. If paying by Direct Debit you will have been notified of the new amount, and no further action is required by you. If you would like to pay your rent by Direct Debit please contact the Finance Office

**Finance  
Department**  
☎ 675564

If you are in arrears with your rent please be careful as you need to keep up your payments to reduce what you owe.

If for any reason you are unable to maintain your agreed rent payments, you must contact the Deputy Finance Manager immediately to prevent legal action from being taken. Ignoring the problem will not make it disappear. Your home is at risk if you fail to maintain your rent.

## ONCHAN PARK

Childrens Playground  
Boating Lake  
Motor Boats  
Bumper Boats  
Battery Operated Kiddi  
Cars  
Mini-Golf  
Crazy Golf  
Putting Green  
Bowling Greens  
Monster Truck Rides  
Go-Karts  
Stock Car Racing  
Coffee Shop  
Views Restaurant

### Open Daily

11.00 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

### SPECIAL OFFER

**Unrestricted ticket  
per family per day**

(Two adults and two children over 5)

only

**£20.00**



*“Did you find them all—there  
should be 36*”

## HOUSING SURGERY

Just a reminder that you can talk to two Commissioners in private regarding your housing issues.

All surgeries are run on a drop-in basis, so it is not necessary to book an appointment or ring in advance. Surgeries are held on the first Tuesday of each month at the Commissioners Office from 6.30 p.m.