

Onchan District Commissioners

# Tenants newsletter

## WELCOME

Welcome to the latest edition of the tenants newsletter for residents in Onchan.

Beginning with the good news - we have now completed all of the planning and funding aspects of the major refurbishment project, and work on site starts in October. A big "thank you" to all tenants who took the time to advise us of any issues they may have once work gets underway. This project is phased to run in different areas over four years, so if your property is not being worked on straight away, please don't worry.



Photo of Winners of Fancy Dress Competition held at Village Fair

The bad news is that winter is on the way, and that means the chances of drying washing and other wet clothes outside are much reduced. Having damp clothes in the home increases the moisture content of the air, so it is vital to keep your home well ventilated to avoid mould. There are other useful tips in the article inside, and advice can be obtained either from the Commissioners Office or the Environmental Health Department.

Finally, a reminder to think about home contents insurance. While the Commissioners insure the bricks and mortar of the property, you should make arrangements for your furniture and possessions to be covered - especially if they are subject to finance arrangements.



Photo of Village Fair held in Onchan Park, 28th August

## Alterations to your home

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You must not make any alterations (including improvements) to your home without first obtaining our permission. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld, unless the alteration will make your home less safe, cost us money to maintain, or reduce the value of the property. You will also need

to comply with planning requirements and building regulations if applicable.

If you install new permanent fixtures like baths, toilets and heating systems then you may request that we take over the responsibility for their maintenance.

We will inspect any fixture before we agree to be responsible for maintaining

it, so always ensure that you employ a reputable Contractor. We will only take responsibility for fixtures which you install with our written permission and which you agree to leave in the property should ever move elsewhere.

For further information see ages 24 and 25 of your Tenant Handbook.



**Remember, you must get our written agreement before you carry out any improvements inside or outside your home.**



## HOME CONTENTS INSURANCE



If you do not insure your contents, you will have to pay for any damages or loss you suffer in the case of fire, flood, burglaries or other accidents.

Your insurance should cover:-

- Furniture & Decorations
- Household goods
- Clothing & personal belongings
- Jewellery, valuables & personal money
- Lost or stolen keys

Your insurance cover should also cover any necessary hotel or alternative accommodation costs if you have to leave your home temporarily due to a major problem such as a fire or flood.

The Commissioners are **not** responsible for providing or paying for temporary accommodation under these circumstances.

You will need to ensure that you cover yourself with your own contents insurance to cover yourself against theft or loss of your possessions as the landlords insurance will not protect you.

**Check your policy is up-to-date.**



## OVERGROWN GARDENS

Most people will take some pride in their gardens to one degree or another.

Some tenants will be keener gardeners than others and will want to create a spectacle of colour through the addition of flowers and keep their lawn well manicured.

There are others that do not share the same enthusiasm when it comes to gardening and will simply give their gardens a 'once over' with the lawn mower every few weeks.

We do have some problem neighbours who see their gardens as an excuse to use it as a makeshift storage area in which to keep old furniture or white goods.

Overgrown and untidy gardens can not only be an eyesore, they can cause additional problems for neighbourhoods by attracting fly-tippers, general rubbish, rats and other pests.

We ask all of our tenants to ensure that their gardens are maintained and tidy at all times and that hedges and lawns are cut regularly.

### When do the Commissioners consider a garden anti social?

In general we may consider a garden as anti social if:

- If it encourages rodents.
- It is a health hazard in some way; ie gives rise to smells.
- It is to the detriment of the area.

### Clearing litter and ground maintenance

If you have rubbish or unwanted items in your garden, you should dispose of them properly.

Garden rubbish or unwanted items can be taken to the Eastern Civic Amenity Site, Middle River Industrial Estate, Douglas.

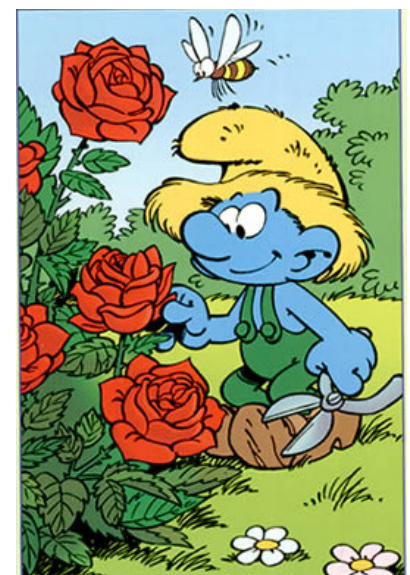
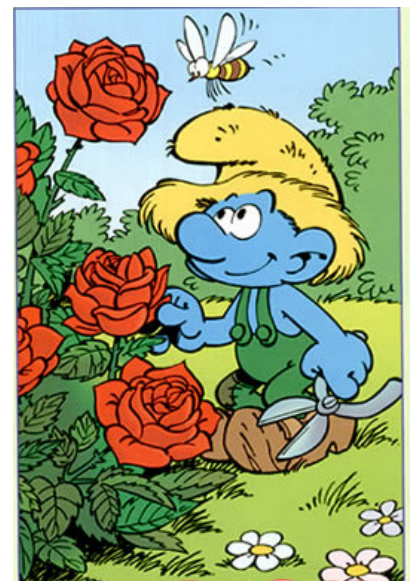
### What we can do to help?

When it comes to overgrown gardens we will always investigate the matter.

The Estates are inspected on a regular basis and Onchan District Commissioners have powers under the Housing Byelaws and your Tenancy Agreement to serve notice on you over your overgrown or messy gardens.

If the garden is overgrown the Commissioners can clear it and charge the tenant for the cost of work if there is a good reason why the tenant has not cleared it when asked.

**Spot the Difference—5 to find**  
Answers on back page



## High Hedges—can I make a complaint?

You can only formally complain to the Community Warden if:-

- there is loss of light to your house or garden
- The hedge is on land owned by someone else
- The hedge that is causing the problem is made up of two or more trees or shrubs
- The hedge is mostly evergreen or semi-evergreen. The hedge is over 2m high
- There are gaps or breaks in the hedge, but it still obstructs light or views
- The property is residential

If you are severely troubled by someone else's plants or hedges, the best way to deal with the issue is to talk to them about it. After all, you have to continue to live near each other and so it is better if you are on good terms.



**The Commissioners have the powers to order you to prune back your overgrown hedge or tree**

## Overhanging Hedges and Trees

Your common law rights allow you to remove branches that cross over your boundary without the need to seek your neighbour's permission, however you must not cross the boundary to do so, not even by leaning a ladder over the boundary to rest against the trunk of the tree as this could be classed as trespass. However, it is neighbourly to notify your neighbor of your intentions to carry out works to their tree or hedge.

You should not dispose of the branches or any other waste material from the tree or hedge over your fence in to your neighbour's garden, but you should first ask your neighbor if they wish to have the material, including any fruit, returned to them. If they do not want it, it will be your responsibility to dispose of it.

## Is the tree protected or in a conservation area?

Even when work is needed for safety reasons, you may still need planning consent if there is a Tree Preservation Order, or if it is located within a conservation area. You will need to seek formal permission before undertaking work to living parts of the tree.



**If an overhanging branch causes a hazard, you may be responsible for any injuries resulting from it. This could include poisoning by leaves, berries or flowers.**

## Doggie Do!!

We are receiving many complaints over the amount of dog fouling in Onchan. Such fouling is offensive and in certain cases may cause serious illness, particularly in children.

Not clearing up after your dog, or disposing of the faeces in an inappropriate way, is against the law.

The majority of dog owners now bag and bin their dog's waste.

However, there are still those that think they do not have to clear it up.

**Anyone who does not clear up after their dog or disposes of the faeces incorrectly may be issued with a fixed penalty notice of £75.**

**When walking your dog, always carry a doggie bag to pick up your dogs faeces.** These can be put in a dog waste bin or taken home for disposal. If this is not

possible, place them in an ordinary litter bin.

Being unaware that the dog has fouled, or not having a suitable means of removing the faeces is not a reasonable excuse for failing to clean up after your dog.

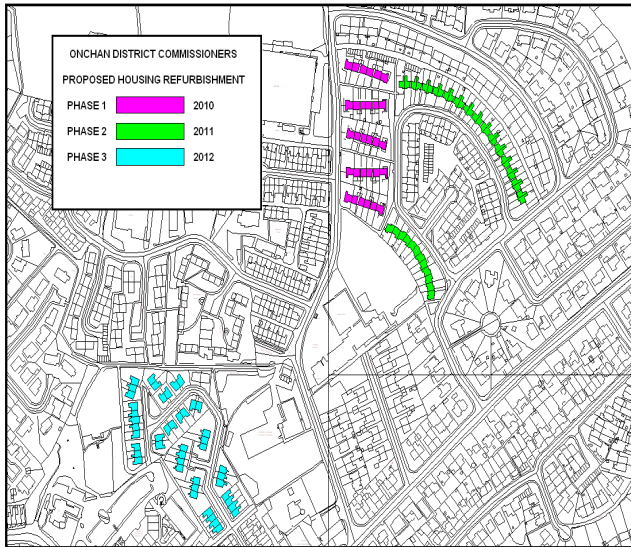
If complaints are received regarding excrement on a tenant's property, the Commissioners have the right to insist that the animal be removed. Please don't lose your pet—clean up every time.



**Clean up after your pet!!**



**People can lose their sight from disease in Dog Faeces called toxocariasis.**



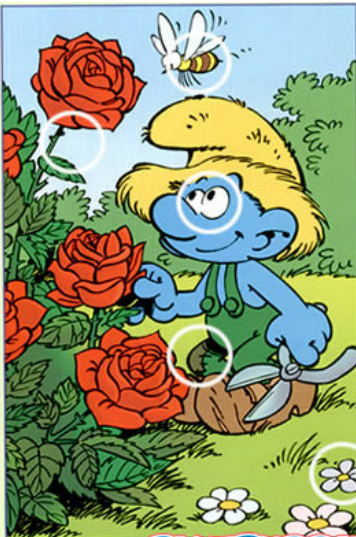
## Refurbishment of 118 Properties Phase 1—School Road



The refurbishment scheme will include:-

- Rendering
- Re-roofing
- Updating of porches/ canopies
- New rear access footpaths
- Resurfacing of existing footpaths
- New fences with gates to the front and rear boundaries
- Provision of extractor fans
- Faulty double glazing will be fixed at the conclusion of works

Spot the difference—Did you find them all



## COMMUNITY ISSUES

Everyone has the right to enjoy life in their own way providing they do not upset people living near them. A good neighbour will tolerate and understand the different lifestyle of others.

We believe that everyone has the right to peaceful occupation in their home free from harassment, nuisance and annoyance.

## SURGERY DATES

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 6.30 p.m. at the Commissioners' Offices

Contact details:-



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## PROBLEMS WITH CONDENSATION?

At this time of year, our maintenance team receive many requests to inspect black spots on walls, ceilings, and peeling wallpaper.

The cause of this problem is often condensation. This occurs when cold air from the outside lowers the temperature of internal walls which are warmed by central heating. This results in a collection of water droplets forming on the internal surfaces.

It is quite normal to find your bedroom windows misted up in the morning after a cold night.

The following are handy tips and advice to help reduce the cause of condensation:

- Open the window(s) and shut the door in the bathroom after a bath or shower.

- Dry clothes outside, do not put wet clothing on radiators.
- Use bathroom/kitchen extractor fans.
- Open windows or trickle vents whenever possible, to increase the air-flow. If it is cold outside try to increase the air flow by opening curtains and nets
- Keep your home warm.

