



Oakleaves

The Newsletter for Oaklee Tenants

www.oaklee.org.uk

August 2006 Issue 25

Castlerocklands Unveiling

Wednesday 24th May 2006 saw the unveiling of the Best Kept Sheltered Housing Area award plaque at Castlerocklands, Carrickfergus. The Scheme had won the award in the Supervalu Best Kept Awards run by the Northern Ireland Amenity Council.

Tenants, Board Members, staff, and guests including NIAC Chair Doreen Muskett and two representatives of Supervalu (Iris Collins, Supervisor and Cathal Wilde, Manager) attended the unveiling ceremony.

At plaque (l to r): Ian Elliott (Chief Executive), Doreen Muskett (NIAC Chair), Joyce Topley OBE (Board Member), Cathal Wilde (Manager, Supervalu), and Ann Mayne (Scheme Co-ordinator)



Jack Allen Court – Quiz Winners



Doreen Guy, widow of former Councillor Jim Guy, presents the Age Concern Jim Guy Perpetual Quiz Shield to the winners of the final at Malvern House. The team are from left (seated) Joe Nelis, Ruby Jordan, Billy Wright and Arthur Thompson, all of Jack Allen Court, Londonderry. Included (standing) are from left Albert Smallwoods (President Age Concern, L'Derry), Roger O'Doherty (Company Secretary), and Tom Stinson (Pensioner of the Year).

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DELIVERING EXCELLENT CUSTOMER CARE

Message from the



Rothesay Court, Coleraine

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of Oakleaves, the newsletter for you, the tenants. A lot has been happening (as usual!) since the last edition, and one of the occasions marked was the retirement of our esteemed colleague, Margaret Deeney. Margaret has served the Association for nearly 30 years as Scheme Co-ordinator at Rothesay Court, Coleraine, and it was a pleasure for me to speak at her recent retirement party on Friday 7 July 2006 at Rothesay. These are my words, which I share with you:

“Margaret, Joseph, Peter and James, friends, it is my pleasant duty today to celebrate the work of Margaret Deeney with James Butcher Housing Association and Oaklee. She has completed 27 years exactly in June this year, and uniquely was sent to Reading to train with James Butcher HA for her first few days. It is so pleasant to have the person who looked after her all those years ago, Laurance Smith, here with us today, along with his wife Janet, all the way from Reading, you’re very welcome.

In the early days there was no helpline, and so Margaret had to maintain the constant cover, with a relief warden one evening during the week and at weekends. It is nice that some of the past relief staff have been invited along, including Mrs Winnie Miller the first relief, Mrs Hazel Dean, and Mrs Bridie McConville, who is here along with her husband Dessie.

Other guests today who reflect the work and social life of the scheme over the years include Lawrence Brolly and Tommy O’Kane, neighbours of the scheme who help with any problems including re-setting the lift when the Deeneys were away. Tommy’s wife, Anne O’Kane, who is also here today, sang at many of the social events over the years, and she has kindly agreed to sing an old favourite later... ‘Just like old friends do’.

Charlie Shott is here, and worked with the scheme through Age



Margaret and Joseph with sons James and Peter – THEN

Concern. Two of Margaret’s sisters, Geraldine and Kathleen, are here and both helped with the scheme including functions and cleaning. Lorna O’Brien who helped with social events in the scheme after she retired as a social work assistant. Likewise helping at social events have been Mr & Mrs Jim Shaw, Elder in First Coleraine Presbyterian Church, along with Tony and Margaret O’Brien who are friends of the Deeneys and the scheme.

I understand that every Christmas the children from the Loreto Convent came in to entertain tenants, and it is very pleasing that Miss Geraldine Doherty is here who brought the children over the years. Also another entertainer, Miss Nora Flanagan, who



Margaret Deeney receiving her MBE



The Official Opening of Rothesay Court with Philip Goodhart MP and Leslie J Morrell OBE (current Oaklee Secretary)



*Front (l to r): Joseph Deeney, Margaret Deeney MBE, Jean Todd MBE (Vice Chair), and Catherine Devlin (Housing Manager)
Back (l to r): Ian Elliott (Chief Executive), Brian Robinson (Maintenance Officer), and John Allen OBE (Treasurer)*

e Chief Executive

brought the 'Campaigners', along with Mrs Mary Alcock who provided crafts demonstrations. The contractors who serviced the scheme included 'Homemakers' and it is nice that Mr Brendan Loughrey is here to help us celebrate too.

I looked back in the tenant meetings' minute book over the past 27 years, and I see it cost only 20p to attend any function in the early days, and that Joe's noble act in buying roses was eventually recognised and he was reimbursed for his kindness. Also, the need for a piano was resolved when they asked Margaret to contact Gloria Hunniford in 1981 to get one in response to a recent TV appeal. Typical of Margaret, she not only succeeded, but also found a piano tuner from among the tenants' friends to service it over the years – and it is still in the common room today in fine tune!

Margaret has always said that it has been about teamwork. So today it is pleasing that her Maintenance Officer over all those years is here – Brian Robinson. Likewise her current Housing Officer Caroline Booth and some former colleagues have been invited too. More recently, Jackie Scullion has been running the show at Rothesay, and everyone agrees that she is doing a fine job, and we thank her for all her efforts today. Likewise, Housing Manager Catherine Devlin, who has been working with Margaret for over 20 years. The scheme is about to enter a new era, with the Scheme Co-ordinator service



Margaret and Joseph with sons James and Peter – NOW

provided over 25 hours weekly, and I am glad that the tenants have unanimously accepted this approach

We were all delighted when Margaret received the MBE a few years ago, and the party we had to share her well-deserved recognition. She even told Jamie Oliver off for being so untidy going to meet The Queen!

Mr Morrell is very sorry he cannot be with you today and sends his best wishes, and we noted the picture in the hall of the official opening in 1979 with Philip Goodhart MP, and that this was the first James Butcher Scheme in Northern Ireland. Likewise, the Rev Edgar Boyd has sent his heartfelt apologies, along with our current Chairman, Mr Liam Deane

We will miss you Margaret, you have been a shining example to us all in how to provide quality service with a smile, and to make everyone

welcome who came through those doors. We wish you a long and happy retirement, and please keep in touch.

It is now my pleasant duty to ask Mrs Todd, Mr Allen and Mr Neill from our Board to make some presentations, and then Catherine Devlin to mark the warm fellowship of staff over the years... and then this lovely lunch that we see before us!"

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the registration of the Associations (James Butcher and Nih in 1976), and Oaklee Housing Association hopes to celebrate this with the production of a booklet containing tenants' special memories of their lives or the local area where they live, special events in their schemes over the years, and funny stories, etc. I am planning to make my annual visits to Oaklee schemes in the Autumn and look forward to seeing you all then. However, if you would like to send me any of your stories in advance, with photographs if possible, I would be delighted to receive them... and you never know you might see your story in print!

Please post them to:

Ian Elliott, Chief Executive
Oaklee Housing Association
FREEPOST BEL2371
Belfast BT1 6BR

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ian Elliott".

Ian Elliott
Chief Executive



Jackie Scullion (Temporary Scheme Co-ordinator), Brian Robinson (Maintenance Officer), Joseph Deeney, Margaret Deeney MBE, Caroline Booth (Housing Officer), and Catherine Devlin (Housing Manager)

EQUALITY MATTERS

Some time ago, the Association was designated as a Public Body in order to comply with the requirements of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

Section 75 requires Oaklee Housing Association in carrying out all powers and duties to have due regard to the need to promote equality of opportunities:

- In its functions between persons of different religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, marital status or sexual orientation;
- Between men and women generally;
- Between persons with a disability and persons without; and
- Between persons with dependants and persons without.

In addition to the responsibilities stated above, the Association in carrying out its functions and duties relating to Northern Ireland needs to have regard to the desirability of promoting good relations between persons of different religious belief, political opinion or racial group. In order to comply with these obligations the Association has produced an Equality Scheme detailing how it intends to implement the statutory duty.

The Equality Scheme outlines the Associations duties and responsibilities and details the arrangements for assessing compliance with Section 75 duties. It also outlines arrangements for consultation with the public and the methods of assessing the impact of policies on the promotion of equality of opportunity.



Oaklee staff with fellow Housing Association representatives at the launch of the Equality Commission's Guidance Manual for Implementing Section 75

In order to fully implement these new responsibilities, Oaklee has been working closely with 38 other Housing Associations under the coordination of the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations. We assisted each other to prepare and submit a model equality scheme for approval of the Equality Commission and the Secretary of State. Associations have also worked together to establish if any existing policy areas have created any adverse equality impact for any of the main groups stated above.

Following this review of key policy areas, Oaklee has identified a number of policy areas to be considered for further Equality Impact Assessment. In the past year, two key policy areas of Access and Communications and Complaints have been reviewed. Copies of the reviews can be obtained from the Association's Personnel Department by contacting 028 9044 1391. Any comments from tenants would be welcome and should be returned to the Association by Friday 15th September.

The assessment of Access and Communications has involved a comprehensive review of how the public makes contact with the Association and has access to our service, and the range of forms of communication that are presently used to engage with the public.

A number of action points have been drawn up following the review, including;

- Amendments to the website to make it more accessible for people with disabilities.
- Introduction of a text phone for people with speech and hearing difficulties.
- Partnering with a language line service

The review of complaints involved a consideration of our existing complaints procedure to ensure that there was no adverse impact on the 9 social groups defined by legislation.

The Association aims to have a complaints process that is easy to understand and accessible to all members of the public. A more detailed explanation of the complaints review is outlined in a separate article below.

REVIEW OF COMPLAINTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

As stated in the Equality article above, the Association has undertaken a full review of the Complaints Policy and Procedure as part of the joint equality process led by the Northern Ireland Federation of Housing Associations. In addition to this aspect of the review, the Equality Steering Group, consisting of staff, board members and tenants, also considered the internal auditor's recommendations. The group was keen to ensure that this important policy was made as simple and accessible as possible, and I hope you agree that this has now been achieved.

The following amendments have been introduced to the existing policy:

- 1 Procedure reduced from 3 stages to 2, i.e.
First Stage - Chief Executive, who can nominate a Director to carry out the investigation on his behalf.
Second Stage - Chairman of the Board.
- 2 The option for the complainant to have their complaint considered anonymously by the Tenants' Forum Officers has been removed due to the fact that complainants were not availing of this opportunity. Instead, the Tenant Forum Board Representative will be involved in any future 2nd Stage investigation (unless the complainant resides in the same development/scheme as the Forum Officer).
- 3 Complainants can submit their complaint in writing (either by a letter or on a form), by telephone (through the Oaklee Services Centre), by textphone, by email or via the website.
- 4 Oaklee will supply the Complaint Form and Policy in any other format upon request, and have made arrangements for translation to accommodate tenants from an ethnic minority.
- 5 Tenant Disputes/Anti-Social Behaviour Complaints will be dealt with in the first instance by Housing Management, but progress will be monitored by the Chief Executive's Office.
- 6 The Association welcomes the inclusion of an advocate/representative at all stages of the investigation.
- 7 The Association has also made arrangements with Housing Rights to obtain an objective view of how an investigation is being undertaken by the Association.
- 8 The Complaint Form allows complainants to state what action they would like the Association to take to resolve the problem.
- 9 All complainants will be sent a monitoring form, to be completed voluntarily. This will let the Association establish if there are any particular groups of individuals who are not accessing the procedure, and take appropriate action, where necessary.
- 10 Complainants will receive a follow up call upon completion of the investigation to determine their satisfaction with the process.

Official Openings

All Aboard to New Housing Development

Oaklee Housing Association paid tribute to esteemed Board Member Joyce Topley OBE with the official opening of Topley Terrace in Coleraine on Wednesday 14th June 2006.



Joy Hastings and Joyce Topley OBE

This accommodation consists of three two bedroom supported housing bungalows for adults with physical disabilities, providing level access and a community living environment. The scheme is managed in partnership with the Presbyterian Board of Social Witness; and the properties are built on a site formerly owned by the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company.

Mr W. Joyce Topley OBE was born in Belfast in 1912 before moving to Glaslough in 1917 when his father was appointed as Station Master there with Great Northern Railways. After leaving school, he himself followed in family tradition and began a long association with the railway; holding a number of positions with Great Northern Railway, the Ulster Transport Authority and Northern Ireland Railways before retiring in 1977. He was recognised in the Honours List for his distinguished service and received the MBE from HM the Queen in December 1971.

Joyce Topley has given almost 26 years service to social housing, beginning with his joining the Board of Nih Housing Association in 1980 and his subsequent membership on the Board of Oaklee Housing Association.

Oaklee Chief Executive, Ian Elliott, said "It is so appropriate that we are calling this Scheme after Mr Topley, due to his long held position with the Association as a Board Member dedicated to caring for tenants, as well as his historic railway connection with the site. The Association is honoured that

former Oaklee Board Member, Mrs Joy Hastings, has agreed to officiate at the opening in his honour, marking the high regard and affection in which he is held."

Lindsay Conway, Director, Presbyterian Board of Social Witness said "Last week the General Assembly confirmed the formation of a Disability Committee under our Family Services. The opening of Topley Terrace is our first venture into services for the Physically Disabled and we would like to see further similar schemes developed. This also reinforces our relationship with Oaklee Housing Association."



Front: Simon Leslie (Tenant, Topley Terrace)
Back: Lindsay Conway (PBSW), Ian Elliott (Chief Executive), and Linda Wray (PBSW)

Vision of a Home for Life a Reality

Oaklee Housing Association has paid tribute to Maureen Casey, wife of esteemed Board Member, the late Donal Casey, with the official opening of Maureen Casey Close in Derry on Monday 26th June 2006.

This accommodation consists of six three person two bedroom bungalows for elderly persons. Three of the six dwellings are Lifetime Homes bungalows, i.e. suitable for both pensioners and for small households under pensionable age with a particular requirement for mobility housing. The accommodation is adjacent to Donal Casey Court.



Maureen Casey with Tenants of Maureen Casey Close

Mrs Maureen Casey is the wife of the late Donal Casey who served on the Board of James Butcher Housing Association and Oaklee Housing Association for almost 20 years.

Maureen had a long and illustrious career as a primary school teacher, and is held in high regard in the wider community and also by her former pupils and colleagues at Carnhill Primary School, where she ended her career.

Donal campaigned vigorously and ultimately successfully for the acceptance of the concept of frail elderly accommodation and Lifetime Homes with Oaklee, and it is to be regretted that he did not survive to witness the development of Oaklee's first frail elderly scheme in The Maples, Belfast, and the inclusion in its development programme of Lifetime Homes. It is as measure of his enduring influence that in this particular development adjacent to Donal Casey Court three of the six dwellings are Lifetime Homes.



Liam Deane (Chairman) and Maureen Casey

Maureen and Donal were married for 43 years and have a family of three sons – Niall, Bernard, and Danny – and one daughter Emer.

Oaklee Chief Executive, Ian Elliott, said "This Scheme celebrates the partnership between Maureen and Donal Casey, and their vision for an inclusive society, where older people could have the security of a home for life. It is also an example of the enduring influence of Board Members in our work, how they bring their skills and experience to bear upon the design of quality accommodation and community life."

Anniversaries

Knockagh Court celebrates 20 years

Knockagh Court, Greenisland, celebrated its 20th Anniversary on Friday 24th March 2006 with a party at the Scheme attended by tenants, staff and guests.

One of the first tenants of the Scheme, Mrs McBride, attended the party in Knockagh Court. She set up the first committee there & organised outings, parties & functions. Lucy Campbell & Gordon Robinson, previous Scheme Co-ordinators, and Sidney Craig & Joan O'Callaghan who have been the Scheme's 'resident gardeners' for the past two years were also present at the party.

Special mention also goes to party attendees - tenant, Margaret Gracey, who according to Scheme Co-ordinator Elaine Beattie, has always been there for everyone in the scheme. Whether someone needs taken somewhere, or has to attend the hospital or the doctor, she is always there. Also to Jim Ferson, Knockagh Court's active tenant, who is described by Elaine Beattie (Scheme Co-ordinator) as one in a million! He helps organise trips, functions & is also on the Tenants' Forum and is considered to be part of the backbone of Knockagh Court.

The Mayor, Alderman David Hilditch MLA, also attended the party.



Rev & Mrs Edgar Boyd (guests) blow out the candles with Elaine Beattie (Scheme Co-ordinator)

Mrs McBride being presented with flowers by William Palmer (Board Member)



20th Anniversary at Sperrin Court

Sperrin Court, Cookstown, celebrated its 20th anniversary on Tuesday 24th January 2006 with a party at the Scheme attended by tenants, staff and guests.



Mrs Sandford and Mrs Taylor with Caroline Monroe (Scheme Co-ordinator)

Among the guests were two original tenants of the Scheme, Mrs Sandford and Mrs Taylor, plus Cookstown District Council Chairperson Patsy McGlone, Rev Brian Sweeney, and Cllr Trevor Wilson.

One of the original tenants, Mrs Sanford, was originally a Miss Darling from Derrylin in a neighbouring townland to where Oaklee Chief Executive, Ian Elliott, grew up in Fermanagh. It turns out that his father knows her brother and family quite well, so they were able to spend time reminiscing as well as enjoying the celebrations.



The Milewater celebrates 10 years

The Milewater celebrated its 10th Anniversary on Saturday 29th April 2006 with a party at the Scheme attended by tenants, staff and guests.

Among those present at the party were original tenants, Minnie Ritchie and Jean Terry, as well as the current (Paul Hutchinson) and former (Liz Hill) Scheme Co-ordinators.



John Campbell (Board Member) with Minnie Ritchie (Tenant) and Jean Terry (Tenant)



Tenants' Forum

Working together for a better future

Oaklee Tenants' Forum



Welcome to the new Tenants' Forum information section of Oakleaves. I am pleased to announce that the Tenants' Forum will now have a dedicated page on the work of the Forum in each edition of Oakleaves.

Tenants' Forum AGM

The annual conference was held in the Europa Hotel on 20th June 2006. One hundred and thirty tenants attended the event, with the general opinion being that it was both an enjoyable and informative occasion.

Guest speakers included Barbara Faloon from the Water Service who delivered a presentation on how the implementation of the water charges from April 2007 will impact on our tenants. The main points of the presentation focused on the phasing in of the charges over a three-year period.

Copies of the presentation are available on request to Caroline MacRory or Danielle Casey on 0845 073 0005 (Leslie Morrell House).

Jim Durkin from the NIHE Policy Unit also delivered a presentation on the impact of water charges and the introduction of the 'Rates Release Scheme' also to be implemented in April 2007.

In addition there were several speeches delivered by Peter Neill (Chairperson of the Forum), Muriel Smyth (Vice Chair), Mildred Cross (Secretary) and Caroline MacRory (Tenant Participation Officer).

Speakers at the AGM highlighted achievements of the Tenants' Forum over the past year, including:

- 1 All Oaklee Tenants will now receive rent statements twice yearly. Previously this was once per year.
- 2 A one off meeting was held on 2nd May 2006 with Oaklee's Property Services Manager to address a number of issues. The majority of these issues were resolved.
- 3 Forum members will now meet with the Property Services Manager three times per year to allow for any outstanding issues to be addressed.
- 4 Forum members will be provided with copies of the Association's three-year maintenance plan.
- 5 Historically agenda points for Tenants' Forum meetings have focused primarily on maintenance issues. The Forum is now working towards a more diverse and comprehensive agenda, allowing our tenants the opportunity to have their voices heard on a wider spectrum of issues. This will be delivered through Forum meetings and members sitting on various Continuous Improvement Teams within the organisation.
- 6 Tenants' Forum Office Bearers and the Tenant Participation Officer now have dedicated office space within Leslie Morrell House.
- 7 The Tenant Participation Officer post is now full time.



Front (l to r): Mildred Cross (Secretary, Tenants' Forum), and Muriel Smyth (Vice Chair, Tenants' Forum)
Back (l to r): Ian Elliott (Chief Executive), Maureen Walker MBE (Board Member), Caroline MacRory (Tenant Participation Officer), Barbara Faloon (Water Service), Jim Durkin (NIHE) and Peter Neill (Chair, Tenants' Forum)

The Forum feel strongly that the advances we have been able to make over the past twelve months are a testament to the level of commitment the Association gives to tenant participation, and therefore to you the tenant.

As you are all aware I have been to all but two of Oaklee's Sheltered Housing Schemes to deliver my presentation on tenant participation. A timetable was set and has been met with the exception of two schemes, previously referred to.

What for the future?

In moving forward, the Tenant Participation Officer will deliver presentations to Oaklee's direct managed complex needs group by October 2006 and to general needs tenants by March 2007. This will ensure that all Oaklee tenants have been provided with the same opportunities. The ultimate goal being to have proportional representation on the Tenant's Forum.

Within this current edition of Oakleaves you will find the names of the Forum representatives who were nominated by you the tenants for the period 2006-2007. At the time of this feature going to press there were still confirmations required from a few tenants. These names will be recorded in the next edition of Oakleaves.

Regional Forums

As you will all be aware during my Tenant Participation Presentations I informed you that Regional Forums would be re-introduced. I can now confirm that these will commence in September 2006.

The Regional Forums will be within four areas. Greater Belfast South & East Region, Greater Belfast North & West Region, Western Region, South Western Region & Southern Region.

Due to concerns raised through the Tenants' Forum a number of Forum members will, over the next twelve months, undertake roles within working groups focusing on specific issues such as rent increases, rent statements and maintenance issues.

In Conclusion

I am looking forward to the challenges we will face in 2006-2007 and have every confidence that the Tenants' Forum can work alongside Oaklee staff in delivering a high quality service to all our tenants.

Regional Forums ~ Nominated Representatives 2006/07

Rothesay Court	Mr Neill	Mr Dowds
The Rosses	Mr Furness	Mr Haire
Belle Bashford	Mrs Smyth	Re-Vote
The Maples	Mr Bill Knowles	Mrs Anne Kilpatrick
Knockagh Court	Mr Jim Ferson	Miss Gracey
The Milewater	Mrs Elizabeth Hill	Ms Leah Rosbotham
The Beeches	Ms Agnes Thompson	Mr Charles Pollack
The Rowans	Mrs Feeney	Ms McCroy
Strand Court	Mrs Muriel Smyth	Mr Joe Boyd
Craignagore	Mrs Pat Westcott	Mr Ken Westcott
James Court	Miss R Sawyer	Mrs Wylie
Jack Allen Court	No Representative	
Lisnavar Court	Mr David Leek	Mrs K Murphy
Pound Green Court	Miss Roddie	Mr McCalmont
Fitzroy Court	Mr Gerry Watson	Mrs Green
The Belgravia	Ms Moya Rooney	Mr Williamson
McNeill Court	Mrs McWilliam	Mrs A Brady
Cabinhill Court	Mrs Judy Brown	Mrs McKeown
Bearnagh Glen	Mrs Pat Cinnamond	Mr Cinnamond
Edgar Boyd Court	Mr Jim Patterson	Ms Lillian McKee
Pembroke Lodge	Ms Joan O'Halloran	Re-Vote for 2nd rep
Galway Court/Mews	Mr Gordon Hull	Mr Jim McKenzie
Tughan Court	Mr David Kernohan	Ms Olive Kennedy
Castlerocklands	Mr David Wilton	Mr McBride
The Metropole	No Representative	
Ellis Court	Mr Fred Taggart	Ms Ella McKeown
Elm Court	Mr B Jeffrey	Ms Elsie McCrery

Oriel Supported Housing

Ethel McToal and Louise Reid



Trip to Disney

Tenants and staff from Oriel Supported Housing recently enjoyed a visit to Euro Disney. Ethel McToal (tenant) was celebrating her birthday with a trip to Euro Disney with Keyworker Shelley Bedford, accompanying them were Louise Reid (tenant) and Keyworker Julie McKendry.

Julie McKendry and Shelley Bedford



Here are two accounts of their visit by Ethel McToal and Louise Reid, both tenants of the scheme.

“Louise, Ethel, Shelley and Julie went to Euro Disney to celebrate Ethel’s 40th birthday. We went on many rides but our favourite one was the Haunted House and the Pirates of the Caribbean – Shelley and Julie got ‘right in’ and did their own dance for us. The restaurants were all good but the best was Buffalo Bill’s Wild West Show where we were entertained with a live show and an authentic cowboy dinner.”

Ethel McToal

“We couldn’t go to Paris without seeing the sights. We took a tour bus all around the city where we got off at the Eiffel Tower and went all the way up to the top, the view was amazing.

We spent all our money on souvenirs and presents for our friends at Oriel Supported Housing and not forgetting ourselves in the Disney shop.

We had a wonderful time and didn’t want to come home!”

Louise Reid



Ethel McToal, Julie McKendry and Louise Reid



Shelley Bedford and Louise Reid

FUNDRAISING FUNDRAISING FUNDRAISING

Oaklee staff support Autism Charities

The Fundraising Committee of Oaklee Housing Association has handed over £5,500 in support of their chosen charities for this year. Funds were donated to Autism Initiatives, and Parents’ Education as Autism Therapists (PEAT).

PEAT is a self-help group of parents who are learning to use Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) with their children who have autism or Asperger syndrome. The charity was set up to help children with autism realise their potential by providing ABA training and support to their parents and carers. ABA is a scientifically proven approach, tailored to individual needs, offering choice to parents and professionals. PEAT plan to use the funds to bring an accredited Behaviour Analyst from the United States for the summer months to work with families on their home based programmes, helping them to utilize the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis in all areas of their child’s needs.

Autism Initiatives, a partner organization of Oaklee Housing Association, assist service-users by helping them to develop successful and independent communication, according to each individual’s skills, needs and preferences, working within a total communication environment. They provide a structured environment according to individual need to assist the person with ASD in managing the impact of their rigid thought patterns, enabling them to take ownership and direction of their lives.

Ian Elliott, Chief Executive of Oaklee Housing, said “we are delighted to contribute to both charities who work in different ways to enhance the lives of people with Autism and their families”.



Representatives from Autism Initiatives and PEAT with Oaklee Housing Association’s Fundraising Committee (l to r) Danny Diamond (Treasurer, PEAT), Olivia Gorman, Caroline Booth, Hildegard McKeefrey, Sarah Walker, George Walker (Chair of Fundraising Cttee), Denise Middleton (with baby Frazer) and Jill Belch (both from Autism Initiatives), and Ian Elliott (Chief Executive)

Busy St. Bronagh's

St Bronagh's, Rostrevor, celebrated a very special occasion this year – the 100th birthday of tenant Alice Gallagher. Alice's extended family celebrated her very special birthday with her on the 12th of March 2006.



Mrs Ross



Mrs Marney

Main picture, far left:
Alice Gallagher and family
(Alice is in the centre of the photo)

On a sadder note, tenants and staff at the Scheme recently mourned the passing of fellow tenant John Conlon. He was a much-loved resident and will be sadly missed by all. He was photographed enjoying a bingo morning at the Scheme prior to his passing and his family have kindly given permission for the photograph to be printed. With him in the photograph is fellow tenant Mrs Lawrence. Mrs Lawrence presented a cheque for £100 this year from the Scheme to a charity supporting people with Autism and their families.

We have been reliably informed that St Bronagh's top keen gardener caring for and tending to the plants within the Scheme is tenant Mrs Ross. Her green fingers lovingly care for the plants and flowers brightening the Scheme, ably assisted by fellow tenant and equally enthusiastic gardener, Mrs Marney.

Mrs Lawrence & Mr Conlon



St. Bronaghs



St. Bronaghs

End of an Era at Ainsworth

Oaklee Housing Association and the Housing Executive looked on as work got underway on a further 31 new homes in the Ainsworth area of the Shankill. This is the final phase of the redevelopment project at Ainsworth and when completed a total of 65 new homes for rent will have been built.

The Housing Executive determined the need for the redevelopment of the Ainsworth area and Oaklee Housing Association were brought on board to develop and manage the new homes; which are being provided as part of the Housing Executive's Greater Shankill Housing and Regeneration Strategy.

Derelict homes at Bainesmore Drive were demolished recently to facilitate the new homes and Gordon Reilly, the Housing Executive's local District Manager said:

"The Housing Executive recently transferred its land at Bainesmore Drive to Oaklee Housing Association, so I'm delighted to see the final phase of new homes getting underway. You only have to look at the new housing already provided in the previous phase of the redevelopment process, and the private homes built at Lanark Way, to see the major role which housing has played in transforming the Ainsworth area in recent years.

The Housing Executive remains committed to the regeneration of the Shankill area. Indeed the provision of decent social and private housing is one of the key themes of our Greater Shankill Housing and Regeneration Strategy. We will continue to work closely with our partners in the Housing Association movement and private developers to achieve this throughout the Shankill area."

Ian Elliott, Chief Executive of Oaklee Housing Association echoed those sentiments and added:

"Oaklee Housing Association has a long track record in investing in the regeneration of areas such as the Shankill. Together with the Housing Executive and the local community I feel we have come up with a housing development in which everyone can take great pride.

This final phase, which will be constructed to Lifetime Homes Standard, underpins Oaklee's commitment to provide a high quality environment for the local community and reconfirms our quest to develop properties that can cater for modern day living and all its requirements. Furthermore we undertake to provide the highest possible standards of housing management services to all tenants of the new homes."



Gordon Reilly (NIHE), Anne McAleese (NIHE), and Ian Elliott (Chief Executive) check plans for the new development

Official Opening of Ramona House

Wednesday 17th May 2006 saw the official opening of Ramona House, Omagh, by Professor Roger Williams (George Best's liver consultant).

Ramona House, consists of an 8 bed unit – 4 emergency and 4 short-term, and is managed by way of a joint managed agreement with First Housing Aid & Support Services, Derry, to help people give up alcohol. The Scheme offers independent living coupled with counselling and support.

First Housing are similar to Oaklee Housing Association in that they are willing to diversify to facilitate differing client groups, and the Association will be delighted to continue to avail of opportunities to develop with them in the future. Ramona House is one of three schemes on which Oaklee has partnered with First Housing; one is part of Jack Allen Court (Londonderry), for those suffering from mental ill health, and another is in Limavady for young people leaving care.

The conception of Ramona House emerged from a joint initiative between Oaklee, First Housing (known

then as Foyle Homeless), Western Health Board - Sperrin Lakeland Trust and NIHE. Extensive consultation was undertaken with the local community, particularly with Mullaghmore Community Association, to ensure satisfactory integration of the scheme.



Chris Edge (Supported Housing Manager), John Allen OBE (Treasurer), Professor Roger Williams, Ian Elliott (Chief Executive), and Sean Mackle (NIHE)



Oaklee Housing Trust News

Finance Minister cuts first sod at Family Housing Development

Brian Cowen, TD, Minister for Finance, cut the first sod at Oaklee Housing Trust's new family housing development in Daingean Road, Tullamore, on Monday 15th May 2006.

This new build housing project will provide a total of 46 units of accommodation and will comprise of 30 x 5 person, 3 bed semi-detached homes; 6 x 4 person, 2 bed semi-detached homes; and 10 x 3 person, 2 bed semi detached wheelchair bungalows and there will also be a communal facility on site. Funding of nearly €9 Million was awarded by the Department for the Environment, Heritage, and Local Government and will facilitate Oaklee Housing Trust to continue to deliver its development programme and contribute to the provision of quality accommodation to meet social housing need.

Mr Paddy Harte, Chairman of Oaklee Housing Trust and former TD, said "I am delighted that this desirable family housing scheme on the Daingean Road has commenced which I'm sure will be as successful as Oaklee's developments in Dublin, Donegal and Kildare. It is rewarding to be in a position to offer quality accommodation to the local community."

Oaklee Housing Trust has worked closely with the DOE, Offaly County Council, the Health Service Executive and the Irish Wheelchair Association in the development of this Scheme.



Paddy Harte (Chair, Oaklee Housing Trust) and Brian Cowen TD (Minister for Finance)

Oaklee AGM

Oaklee Housing Association's 14th Annual AGM took place on Thursday 29th June 2006 at Belfast Castle.

Board Members, staff and guests were in attendance to hear speeches by both the Chairman of the Association, Liam Deane, and the Chief Executive, Ian Elliott, with reviews of the past year and plans for the year ahead.

Judy Brown, Scheme Co-ordinator of Cabinhill, Belfast, was presented with a 20 Years Service award. Whilst Sara Campbell, Project Supervisor of The Maples, Belfast, and Michael Rafferty, Director of Finance both received awards for Outstanding Contribution.



Liam Deane (Chairman), Sara Campbell (Project Supervisor, The Maples), and Michael Rafferty (Director of Finance)



Judy Brown (Scheme Co-ordinator, Cabinhill) and Liam Deane (Chairman)

APOLOGY

We would like to apologise to Mr Norman Thompson of Strand Court, Belfast, for an error printed in the January 2006 edition of Oakleaves. In an article celebrating the occasion of Mr Thompson's 100th birthday his surname was printed as Lamont instead of Thompson. May we again apologise for this error, and hope that it did not cause Mr Thompson or his family any undue distress.

Top Energy Saving tips from Bryson Charitable Group



No Cost Energy Saving Advice

a) Saving Energy in the Kitchen

Switch off

To cut down on wasted energy, avoid leaving appliances on standby and remember not to leave appliances on charge unnecessarily. Check the operation manual to make sure that this won't reset the appliance memory. Appliances on standby still use electricity and cost you money.

EXAMPLE

Leaving a TV on standby will cost approximately £5 for one year.

Leaving a microwave on standby will cost approximately £7 for one year.

Kettles

Heat the amount of water you really need – and if you're using an electric kettle, make sure you cover the elements. Jug-type kettles use less water as they have smaller elements.

Washing Machines and Tumble Dryers

Always wash a full load – and if you can't, use a half-load or economy programme if your machine has one. Always use the low temperature programme bearing in mind that with modern washing powders this will be just as effective. Wash clothes at 40 degrees rather than 60 and use a third less electricity. Don't put really wet clothes into a tumble dryer; wring them out or spin-dry them first. It will dry much faster and save you money.

Dishwashers

Always wash a full load – and if you can't, use a half-load or economy programme if your machine has one. Also try and use the low temperature programme.

Fridges and Freezers

Don't leave the fridge or freezer door open for longer than necessary, as cold air will escape. Avoid putting hot or warm food straight into the fridge or freezer; allow it to cool down first. Defrost your freezer regularly to keep it running efficiently and cheaply. If it tends to frost up quickly, check the door seal – do this by closing the door with a piece of paper inserted – if the paper stays in place the seal is fine – if the paper falls or slips the seal is not working properly and it will cost you more money to run. Also if you absolutely have to site your fridge or freezer next to a cooker or boiler, leave a good gap between them. If your freezer is not full of food put crushed up newspaper in the freezer to fill the empty spaces.

Pots and Pans

Choose the right size of pan for the food and cooker (the base should just cover an electric cooking ring) – and keep lids on when cooking. With gas, the flames only need heat the bottom of the pan. If they lick up the sides then you're wasting heat. Use a microwave to reheat or defrost food – it is cheaper to run than a conventional oven.

b) Heating, Hot Water and Lighting

Central Heating

Too Warm? Stop wasting money and turn your thermostat down by 1°C.

This could save you up around £40 per year.

Hot Water

Water needs to be hot, but never scalding. For most people, setting the cylinder thermostat at 60°C or 140°F is fine for bathing and washing.

Plug it

Always put the plug in your basin or sink! Leaving hot water taps running with the plug removed is akin to washing money down the plughole. In just one day, a dripping hot water tap can waste energy and enough water to fill a bath. Make sure they're turned off. Fix a dripping tap.

Have a shower

When you can, use the shower instead of the bath. It uses only two-fifths of the amount of hot water needed for a bath.

Natural light

Make the most of the natural light by opening curtains, blinds, inside doors that let in as much light and heat as possible during the day.

Curtains

Close your curtains at dusk to stop heat escaping through the windows.

Lights

Always turn them off when you leave a room and adjust your curtains or blinds to let in as much light as possible during the day.

Be switched on – take the FREE Home Energy Check

For a report on how much energy can be saved in your home call the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre free on 0800 512 012. You will also find out if there are any grants or cashbacks available to install energy efficiency measures in your home.

Save up to Two Week's Free Electricity

Pay for your electricity by Direct Debit
Call NIE on 08457 455455 for more information.

For further information or advice please contact the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre on freephone 0800 512 012 or log onto

www.est.org.uk/northernireland

ERoSH

speaking up for sheltered housing

ERoSH Members at the launch of the new directory



ERoSH NI, the Consortium of Sheltered Housing Providers, at its AGM on Friday 20th January 2006, launched the first directory containing information about all sheltered housing schemes across Northern Ireland.

The directory is an invaluable and comprehensive source of information for anyone seeking a sheltered housing property in Northern Ireland and also useful for housing, health and social care professionals and other agencies in advising older people on housing options.

The directory is the collaborative work of ERoSH members in Northern Ireland, and was project managed by Catherine Devlin, Housing Manager at Oaklee, with assistance from Housing Managers in North & West and Abode Housing Associations. Funding for its production and printing was made possible by a £4,000 contribution from Northern Ireland Housing Association's Charitable Trust.

The directory is also available on ERoSH's website:

www.shelteredhousing.org and copies have been distributed to the Association's sheltered schemes.

Oriel Lodge Trip to Liverpool

Tenants and staff from Oriel Lodge recently enjoyed a visit to Liverpool. Here is an account of their visit by Project Worker, Siobhan Herbison:

"We left Oriel at 8.15am, heading to the airport was myself, Siobhan Herbison, Tony Brady, David Crothers and David's brother Ian.

On arriving in Liverpool, we hired a car and set off into town; we were all so excited about the big match 'Liverpool vs Aston Villa'. Before going to the stadium we had lunch in the city centre, and went to the Liverpool shop to get our programmes and presents. Walking through the gates, the adrenalin was overwhelming and the amounts of people scary but exciting.

The match was great and the end result even better – Liverpool had won! Heading back to the airport was great and we were all in good spirits, but with throats sore from shouting. We were delayed by twenty minutes, and by this time we were exhausted. Flying home, it was all we could do to keep awake.

What a fantastic day!"



David Crothers, Ian Crothers, Tony Brady, and Siobhan Herbison



Siobhan Herbison, Tony Brady, Ian Crothers, and David Crothers



Mr & Mrs Park of The Silvergrove, Belfast, celebrated 60 years of marriage (their Diamond Anniversary) on the 20th March 2006. Their family held a dinner for them and presented them with an album of photos, which took them right through from their first meeting to their wedding to the births of their children, and special events in their family's life. Then the births of their grandchildren, their weddings and the births of their great children. The album finished off with photographs of the celebration of their Pearl Anniversary (30th).

**BEST KEPT GARDEN
COMPETITION 2006**



YOUR DETAILS

Name

Address

Daytime telephone number

Evening telephone number

DETAILS OF NOMINEE (if different)

Name

Address

Daytime telephone number

Evening telephone number

Calling All Keen Gardeners!

It is the beautiful summertime when buds are in full bloom.

It's also time to remind you of the annual Best Kept Garden Award.

You can nominate your own or another tenant's garden, or a scheme garden providing it is tended by the tenants and not Oaklee contractors.

If you wish to submit an entry please complete and return the attached slip plus a photo or photos of the nominated garden by Friday 20th October 2006 to:
The Editor, Oakleaves, FREEPOST BEL2371, Belfast BT1 4BR

Prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place gardens so get those entries in!



**OAKLEE CHRISTMAS CARD
COMPETITION 2006**



Name

Address

Daytime telephone number

Evening telephone number

Description of artwork (i.e. image depicted)

Calling All Artists!

For the past number of years we have held this competition for tenants of the Association to submit their artwork for use as the Oaklee Corporate Christmas Cards. We have always been so impressed by the beautiful artwork received, and appreciate every entry sent in and the work that has gone into it.

Although it is the summertime (and way too soon to be thinking about Christmas! ...unless of course you want to!) we would like to offer the opportunity to any accomplished or budding artists among our tenants to contribute ideas for this year's card. The closing date is not until the autumn, which will come round sooner than you think – so it is time to get your thinking caps on!

If you would be interested in submitting an original painting or drawing in full colour for this year's card, please complete and return the attached slip plus original artwork by Friday 20th October 2006 to:

**The Editor, Oakleaves
FREEPOST BEL2371
Belfast BT1 4BR**

The winning entry will receive a cheque for £100 plus the chance to have their artwork as the Oaklee Corporate Christmas Card for 2006 – so get those entries in!



Last year's Oaklee Corporate Christmas Card – painted by Georgina Hunt (Tenant, The Rosses)

Poet's Corner

We would like to keep this as a regular feature of Oakleaves so please continue to send your poems, prose and short stories to The Editor (see 'We Welcome Your Input').

John Clark, tenant of James Court, Belfast, sent in the following poem about 'Belfast Town'.

Feeding the Green Grass

Wandering around old Belfast Town
While the fog hung over Napoleon's mound
A heartbeat was the only sound
Fresh winds weaved from Antrim's glens
As a thought came to mind
Of those wandering men
That went out to wider plains
Without thought of profit or other gain
But to see for themselves where the earth began
What was the cause of the wind and the rain
The sun in the blue and the moon in it's train
Years later wondering if ever again

They'd return to the cave hill
Pull away from the plains
That tug at the heart's strings
With a sense of restrain
Which knawel at the mindset
And caused them such pain
To wither and fade there
Without feeling soft rain
That weathered those wide hills
Which stretched in a chain
Feeding the green grass
And dear Lagan Weir

**We
Welcome
Your
Input**

Here is your chance to become involved in future editions:

If you would like to submit a feature for consideration – such as a poem, a personal achievement, an interesting story or memory, or indeed anything you feel would be of interest to other Oaklee tenants – then please send your article(s) to: The Editor, Oakleaves, Oaklee Housing Association, FREEPOST BEL2371, Belfast BT1 6BR. Similarly, if you would like to be interviewed in your own home/scheme, on the above basis, please call Lara on 028 9044 1316. [Please note that these interviews are solely for those tenants interested in contributing an article of interest (example: an event such as a fundraiser or birthday, a personal achievement, a poem, etc) to Oakleaves.]

All contributions gratefully received! And of course, we always appreciate any comments or suggestions you may have for Oakleaves in general.

After all, it is the Oaklee newsletter for YOU!

Leslie Morrell House



Oakleaves is published by Oaklee Housing Association on behalf of its tenants. While all reasonable care is taken in the preparation of the material, the Editors accept no responsibility in law for the accuracy and content of each issue. Readers should be advised that opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the opinions of Oaklee Housing Association.

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