

HATTON HOUSING TRUST LIMITED

NEWSLETTER 2024 – ISSUE 15



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Please contact the Secretary if you require a copy of the Annual Newsletter and Annual Report in A3 or to be sent by email. A copy is also available to download on the Trust's website.

HATTON HOUSING TRUST LIMITED

Introduction

This year, the Annual Tenants Meeting took place on Friday, 4 October 2024 at the Salvation Army Hall in Tunbridge Wells and the Trust were very pleased to welcome all the tenants who attended this year.

Colin Barber, the Trust's Chairman, opened proceedings and thanked all the Trust's volunteers and members of the Management Committee who all give their time voluntarily and without any cost to the Trust, to ensure that the objectives of the Trust are carried out. Colin Barber advised that Jane Clay had taken over as Vice-Chairman at the AGM in 2024 and introduced all the members of the Management Committee, who each look after a particular site.

As all our tenants are aware, Jess Stevens took over as Property Manager from June 2024 and the Trust are very pleased at how well Jess has taken on this role and are indebted to her for all the detailed attention given by her to ensure that the properties are properly maintained.

Colin Barber thanked Claire Mitchell, General Administrator and Mark Davis, the Trust's Legal advisor from Warners. Colin Barber also thanked all the Trust Representatives at each site for their hard work and assistance during the year. The Chairman thanked all the tenants who had participated in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey and returned their completed surveys to the Trust.

This year a talk from Kent Trading Standards on scams and the Trading Standards Checked Scheme was extremely informative. Adam from Trading Standards commented that he really enjoyed talking to all the residents and how engaging tenants were talking about their own experiences.

Questions and informal discussions took place after the address, with the usual delicious homemade cakes and biscuits made by the Committee. Punnets of strawberries were provided as a special treat by the Chairman and distributed to all those attending.

Farnham Close



We have been pleased to welcome two new tenants to Farnham Close this year and hope that they will be happy with us. Sadly, two of our tenants died this year and we send our condolences to their families and friends, and one other has decided to move on to accommodation elsewhere.

Although there had been no major projects planned this year at Farnham Close, two of our flats have required some quite significant work and we were grateful to those tenants for their co-operation.

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Farnham Close continued



A Fire Drill was held in June, and we thank those tenants who responded to the alarm in their block of flats. An important reminder that all tenants are advised to evacuate their flats on hearing the alarm in their block unless they have been specifically and personally advised not to do so by Kent Fire and Rescue.

Thank you to everyone who returned the Tenant's Survey and to Mr Ward for collecting them, and for all his ongoing help as Tenant Representative at Farnham Close.

Thank you to everyone who contributes to making the gardens and outside areas at Farnham Close look so appealing. Please do read the advice in the newsletter about the positioning and use of bird feeders, so that they enhance the outside space rather than cause any problems.

Finally, a reminder please to keep the Trust updated with any personal change of details, including phone numbers, email addresses etc. as well as any changes for your emergency contacts.

Miller House

It has been a peaceful year at Miller House, with no changes in the tenancies nor has it been necessary to carry out any works.

The area to the rear of Miller House is looking rather neglected. We ask, if possible, that anything outside that is redundant be removed or stored in the shed. The Trust will be arranging for the tree and overgrown shrubs to be pruned and will also be installing a new washing line. Any time tenants are able to give to help tend the small flower beds around the property would be appreciated.

In response to the recommendation of Kent Fire and Rescue Service, a Fire Drill was carried out in September 2024 and we thank the tenant who responded to the alarm. This is an important exercise and we advise all tenants to always evacuate the property on hearing the alarm (except for the weekly fire alarm test) unless specifically advised not to do so by Kent Fire and Rescue.



Pembury Close

2024 seems to have been a quieter year for maintenance work following the full exterior decoration in 2023. The hedges bordering the site have grown vigorously and were again cut back to reduce obstruction to the pavements.

Once again the garden areas have been well-tended, with some very colourful displays despite the rather wet weather during the spring months.

We are grateful to Mrs Clifton, as the Trust Representative, for her assistance in bringing any problem areas to our attention.

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Pembury Close continued

We have welcomed 1 new tenant to Pembury Close during the past year and one tenant has transferred from another flat at Pembury Close.



Lady Vane Close

Sadly we lost two of our tenants this year, Mr A Beach and Mrs M Bradley.

We are pleased to welcome two new tenants and hope they will be happy at Lady Vane Close.

A celebration on the 19th April 2024 for Mrs A Simmonds who has been a resident for 25 years and was also her 90th birthday, shown in the photograph receiving her flowers from the Trust.

2024 has been a busy year for maintenance work, fire and safety work carried out which has now been completed. Work has started on the soffits and fascias



Wells House



We are very sorry to report that Miss Pauline Davis died earlier this year and send our condolences to her family and friends. Miss Davis had been a tenant at Wells House for over 20 years. At her funeral, particular mention was made to how happy she had been at Wells House, and the Order of Service included a picture of the garden she had been instrumental in developing and tending. We remain grateful to Miss Davis for being a most diligent Trust Representative over many years.

Mr Hartmann has kindly agreed to take over as the new Trust Representative for Wells House.

This year's maintenance has been limited to roof repairs above Flat 6. Kent Fire and Rescue Service carried out a regulatory visit in the early part of the year which found that the premises currently demonstrate broadly compliant measures to satisfy the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. In response to the recommendation of Kent Fire and Rescue Service, a Fire Drill was carried out in September 2024 at Nos. 1-4 Wells House but nobody responded. We trust this was because no tenants were at home at the time. The Trust would like to emphasise that this is an important exercise and we advise all tenants to always evacuate the property on hearing the alarm (except for the weekly fire alarm test) unless specifically advised not to do so by Kent Fire and Rescue.

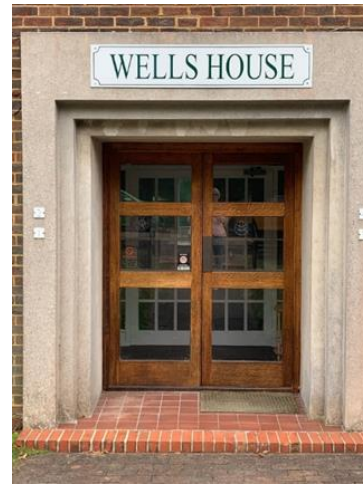
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Wells House continued

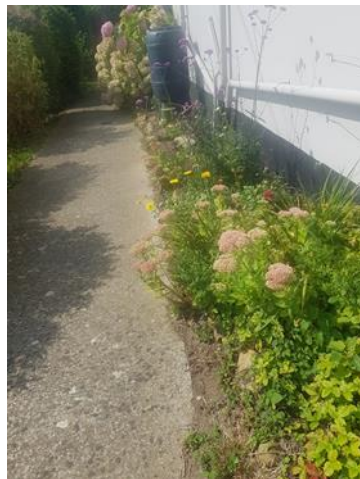
The garden now boasts two new benches and a new garden storage box for use by all the tenants.

Plans are also being made to create a bin storage area away from the back entrance to the building. We are currently seeking consent from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (required as Wells House is in a Conservation area) to fell the two large conifers to the right of Wells House by the path leading to flats 5 and 6 as they are causing damage to the brick wall alongside the pathway.

We extend a warm welcome to our new tenant. One flat is currently vacant and undergoing refurbishment before it is ready for a new tenant.



Grey Lodge



Life at Grey Lodge has continued this year without any major changes. The garden, which has great potential but which had been sadly neglected, is being admirably looked after by one of the tenants Ms Sue Sparrow and is beginning to look lovely again. If each tenant was able to give a small amount of regular time it could be restored to its former glory. The grass is regularly mown by the Trust's contractors but to employ a gardener would cost a lot of money and might mean an increase in the service charge so hopefully with the help of the tenants that can be avoided.

The trust has looked at the possibility of installing stair lifts in the past without success, but have looked at it again at the request of a tenant. However, due to the width of the staircase, and in line the Fire Safety Act, the staircase is not wide enough to meet the clearance width required and therefore it would

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Grey Lodge continued

not be possible to fit a stairlift at Grey Lodge.

The fire alarms are tested weekly and earlier in the Summer a surprise fire drill took place to ensure that our tenants know what to do and where to meet outside in the event of an emergency.

There has been one new tenant at Grey Lodge this year.

Ferbies Close

We are sad to report that two long standing tenants died this year: Mr Charles Turner, who had lived at the Close for 14 years and Mrs Connie Burrows who had been a tenant of the Trust for over 30 years. They will both be missed. We welcome Mr and Mrs Davis who have transferred from Pembury Close.

In other news we are glad that we have been able to reduce some of the problems caused by pigeons roosting in the trees by removing one conifer and by reducing a few branches from trees near the car park. The Trust will always try to retain trees where it can but in these cases there were health and safety implications that needed to be addressed.

The Trust is aware that many tenants have been unhappy with the standard of the garden maintenance and this is being addressed, albeit slowly. The Trust has agreed that a gardener can be employed for a few hours each week, in addition to the lawn mowing provision, to try to keep on top of some of the areas that tenants may previously have maintained themselves or which tenants may need some help to manage. It has proved very difficult to find a well-qualified person with availability. We have some leads for the Spring of 2025 which we will follow up.



A good number of residents and friends of residents supported a cake and bakes afternoon at Ferbies Close on Sunday 28th July and enjoyed tea, coffee and cake in the garden whilst supporting a fund raising event organised by the grandson of one of the residents. He had made all the cakes himself and his Grandma and other family members came along to help. He raised funds totalling £200 for his chosen charity British Heart Foundation and gained credits towards his Bronze Duke of Edinburgh award. In all a pleasant afternoon for a very good cause was enjoyed by all.

Finally we had expected to be able to begin work to refurbish the outhouses this year. In discussion it became clear that re-roofing the outhouses and repairing the brickwork would be very expensive indeed, but would also leave unresolved the problems of water ingress from the ground and through the single thickness brick walls. Whether or not these can be sorted out without a complete rebuild or replacement is something that is being actively investigated. The Trust will be spending a great deal of money on this project and feels that time spent in reviewing all options before work begins is well spent.

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Ferbies Close continued

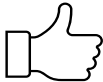




We do appreciate this may be frustrating for some tenants and hope to be able to report further within the next few months. We are very grateful to Mr and Mrs Roff for continuing to act as Trust Representatives at Ferbies Close.

TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES SURVEYS








As you may know the Regulator of Social Housing created a new system to assess how well social housing landlords in England are doing to provide good quality homes. This includes the tenant satisfaction measures we advised about in the last newsletter that have to be completed every two years. We would like to thank all the tenants who took the time to complete and return the questionnaires. Every household was sent a survey and we received 66 completed responses out of 116 eligible households. The surveys related to the twelve month period from June 2023 to June 2024. One of the purposes of the TSMs is to let the tenants know how well the landlord is performing in various areas. Another purpose is so that the Regulator of Social Housing can judge the performance of the landlord and require improvement.

As well as the twelve measures each tenant was asked about there are a further ten measures for us as landlords to complete.

The results of the surveys are going to be published on the Trust website shortly via the Annual Newsletter and Annual Report. In summary the results are:

TP01		Overall Satisfaction Rating	94%
TP02		Satisfaction with Repairs	100%
TP03		Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair	94%
TP04		Satisfaction that the home is well maintained	92%
TP05		Satisfaction that the home is safe	95%

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TP06		Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them	82%
TP07		Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them	94%
TP08		Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect	94%
TP09		Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	38%
TP10		Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained	86%
TP11		Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	61%
TP12		Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour	52%

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Tenant Satisfaction Measures

Derived from management information

Indicator		Number	%	Indicator		Number	%	
CH01	Complaints relative to the size of the landlord	Stage 1 complaints	0	0%	BS01	Gas safety checks	N/A	
		Stage 2 complaints	0	0%				
CH02	Complaints responded to within the complaint handling code timescales	N/A		BS02	Fire Safety checks	Fire risk assessments completed	100%	
NM01	Anti social behaviour cases	Reported cases	1	0.01%	BS03	Asbestos Safety checks	Asbestos management surveys completed	100%
		Involving hate crimes	0	0%				
RP01	Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. <small>(Assumes standard applies to all Hatton houses)</small>	2	0.02%	BS04	Water Safety checks	Legionella risk assessments completed	100	86.2%
RP02	Repairs completed within target timescales	Emergency repairs Target <5 days	26	88%	BS05	Lift Safety checks	N/A	
		Non-emergency repairs Target 20 days	197	72%				
		Routine repairs Target 90 days	13	85%				

The Trust is very pleased with the overall levels of satisfaction that the tenants reported. The satisfaction levels we need to publish are calculated by adding together the number of tenants who were very satisfied and the number who were fairly satisfied and dividing the total by the number of responses received.

The survey responses did make us aware of several things that we feel we can improve. The main ones are:

1. Window repairs

We have noted that several tenants have been disappointed with the time it has taken for window repairs to be completed. This happened because the contractor who had been instructed to do the work was unwell for a long period and regrettably we were not aware soon enough that the works were not being done. We apologise for these delays. Going forward the Trust has been advised that once the seals go in a double glazed unit the most cost effective solution is often to replace the whole unit as repairs will only help to a limited extent and can in some cases cause more problems. Based on this advice the Trust is planning to pause repairs to seals and instead carry out some trials where the whole window units are replaced with bespoke new double glazed windows. These will have a much higher rating of thermal efficiency than the existing windows and should help reduce energy costs for tenants in the long run. We will keep this under review. Please do still let the property manager know of any problems with your windows as other measures may be possible in the meantime.

2. Communal areas

The survey responses suggested that some tenants were not sure who was responsible for cleaning communal areas. It has always been the Trust's policy that it is simpler and cheaper for tenants to agree between themselves how best they can keep their communal areas clean. Tenants might like to have a rota for cleaning duties or employ a cleaner directly to help keep the areas clean. The Trust is not responsible for cleaning communal areas.

3. Gardening

The Trust is responsible for keeping the communal areas of garden at all properties mown and for keeping hedges cut back. The trust is aware that many tenants are not happy with the quality of the work at various sites. The trust has a contract with the current contractor for another two years. The property manager is in regular contact with the contractor to try to ensure that he meets all his obligations. The trust is also monitoring areas which need to be changed or tightened up when the

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mowing contract is up for renewal. The trust is very grateful to all those tenants who maintain their own gardens so beautifully. The more tenants who take care of the gardens the less the trust will have to spend on garden maintenance, the costs of which are largely passed back to tenants in service charges.

4. Complaints

The trust keeps a record of complaints it receives. Its records show that it received no complaints for the 12 months from June 2023. The TSM responses record that 8 tenants feel they made a complaint, one of whom was very dissatisfied with the trust response and three of whom were fairly dissatisfied. As the TSMs were anonymous we do not know who these tenants are but they are invited to contact Claire Mitchell if they would like us to review their concerns again. It is important to note that a complaint for these purposes is a formal complaint against us as your landlords. It is not a complaint in the way we ordinarily use the word i.e. about something you would like to have done at your home that we are responsible for or any anti-social behaviour complaints which are recorded separately. The legislation distinguishes between a service request i.e. asking the property manager for a repair and a complaint because we as landlords have failed to act either at all or too slowly and without explanation. Again please contact Claire if you would like more information on our complaints policy.

£100.00 RAFFLE PRIZE

The raffle ticket for the winning £100.00 prize was drawn at the Tenants Meeting on 4 October. The winning raffle ticket is number 64 and is a yellow ticket. If you have this raffle ticket, please contact Claire Mitchell to claim your £100.00 prize!

HOW TO DEAL WITH OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS

What is classed as 'out of hours'?

Out of hours means outside normal working hours (Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm), together with weekends and bank holidays.

What is classed as an emergency repair?

An emergency repair is defined as something which could cause danger to health, residents' safety or serious damage to property.

Examples of repairs that are considered emergencies:

Total loss of electricity or water supply (Check with your supplier in the first instance, as the loss may be a site or area wide issue rather than a problem in your flat)

Blocked toilets where it is the only toilet in the property

Blocked drains or pipes with sewage leaking out

Significant leaking or flooding from a water or heating pipe, tank or cistern where the water cannot be contained in a bowl

A roof leak which is causing serious water damage

Guttering and loose roof tiles if it poses a health and safety risk such as the tiles flying off.

Examples of non-emergency repairs:

Lounge light not working

Tenant appliances (eg microwave) not working

Leaking gutters or overflows

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Slow draining basins, baths, showers and sinks

A minor leak to a pipe which can be contained within a bowl

Sighting of a rat on the grounds

Who to call in the case of an emergency repair:

In the case of an emergency repair please contact **Jess Stevens** on **07887 096281** or by email at jdpmproperty@aol.com. If you are unable to reach Jess Stevens, please contact Robert Stevens on 07850 880841.

If you are unable to get hold of Jess or Robert Stevens, you will need to source your own contractor. Examples of local contractors you can try are as below but please note that the Trust does not have any affiliation to these companies and cannot take any responsibility for their work, should you call them out:

Plumbing and Electrical emergency repairs - Ability (South UK) Ltd telephone 01892 514495

Electrical emergency repairs - Bright Spark Electrical Services on 01892 531728 or 07775 561363

What to do after the emergency repair?

Following any emergency repair work, please contact the Property Manager at Hatton Housing Trust during normal working hours and arrange to forward any paperwork the contractor has given you for reimbursement by the Trust.

Please note that if you call an emergency contractor for a less serious repair, you may be charged all costs if the Trust feels you have acted unreasonably.

ENERGY ADVICE

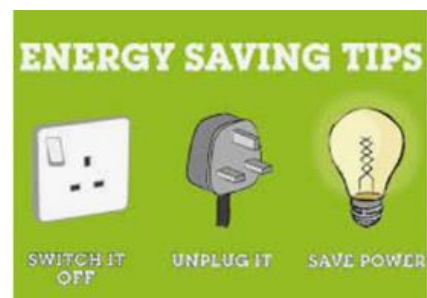
We know that rising electricity prices are a real cause for concern for many of our tenants.

However, there are simple steps that can be taken towards reducing your energy bills without making your home less comfortable.

No-cost energy saving tips

Here are some tips for things you can do right now to cut your energy costs.

- Leave your curtains open in the day to let the sunlight coming through your windows heat your home. Close your curtains at dusk to stop the heat that has built up escaping. Blinds do not stop heat escaping.
- Make sure all appliances are switched off when you go to bed or leave your home.
- Use energy saving lightbulbs – they use 80% less energy.
- Turning down your heater thermostat by just one degree, when you're not too cold inside, can also make savings.
- Move any furniture in front of your radiators to let the heat escape.



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Saving electricity

- When replacing your bulbs, buy energy-saving ones; in the long-run, these can save you 20% compared to the cost of traditional bulbs.
- Put a full load on for your washing machine, tumble dryer or dishwasher. It uses less energy than 2 half loads.
- Set your washing machine to 30°C to wash clothes.
- Turn off your appliances. If it is on standby, it is still using electricity. Switching off appliances rather than putting them on standby can help reduce your electricity bill.

Reduce the amount of water you are using – in the kitchen

- Washing using a bowl rather than under a running tap could save you money.
- Dripping taps waste energy, so if you have one, report it to the Trust to get it repaired.
- Only boil as much water in your kettle as you need.
- Keep a jug of water in the fridge rather than re-using the tap every time you need a drink.

Reduce the amount of water you are using – in the bathroom

- If possible, take a shower not a bath – it uses roughly half the amount of water!
- Do not leave the tap running when having a wash or brushing your teeth. A running tap can use up to 9 litres of water a minute.

See if you qualify for government schemes to help save you money

- [WaterSure Scheme](#) – this scheme caps water bills for people who are receiving benefits and need to use a lot of water for medical reasons.
- [Cold Weather Payment](#) – you may get this if you are getting certain benefits and the local temperature is forecasted below zero degrees for 7 consecutive days.
- [Warm Home Discount Scheme](#) - this could get you a discount on your electricity bill.
- [Winter Fuel Payment](#) – if you were born on or before 25 September 1957, you could get a tax-free payment to help pay your heating bills.
- [The Household Support Fund](#) – A discretionary grant administered by your Local Authority to help households with the cost of food, clothing and utilities.

For further help – You might also like to contact:

Energy Saving Trust (for information on savings and grants available)

Website: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Simply Switch (for assistance on switching utility companies)

Website: www.simplyswitch.com Email: customerservice@simplyswitch.com Tel: 0800 011 1395

Energy Helpline (for advice and tips on switching utilities and related matters)

Website: www.energyhelpline.com Email: customerservices@energyhelpline.com

Citizens Advice Bureau (for free independent advice on problems people are facing)

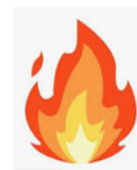
Website: www.catwd.org.uk Email: advice@catwd.org.uk Tel: 01892 518460

Involve Kent - Community Navigators (can help you to access and understand the different services available to you including entitlements, form filling, making referrals and accessing services)

Website: involvekent.org.uk/community-navigation Email: communitynavigation@involvekent.org.uk
Tel: 0300 081 0005

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FIRE SAFETY ADVICE



As a responsible landlord Hatton Housing Trust is committed to providing a safe home for all of its tenants, which is why we have recently carried out improvements to the flat entrance doors and communal areas of some of our blocks. These improvements will improve the fire safety of the properties, but you as tenants can also play your part in making your home a safer place to live.

Here are a few ways to keep you and your neighbours safe:

1. Never disconnect your properties smoke alarm or take the batteries out.
2. Ensure that if you live in a block of flats that the communal hallways are kept clear of belongings or rubbish. These items could cause a blockage and a potential combustible material risk. This could prove fatal should there be a fire and you need to escape from the property.
3. Ensure that the communal cupboards and hallways are free of any combustible items such as paint stripper, paint thinner and aerosol cans, as these can explode if they catch fire.
4. Do not store any items in the electrical cupboards in the communal hallways.
5. Take care when in the kitchen and never leave cooking unattended.
6. Stub out cigarettes properly and dispose of them carefully.
7. Do not overload plug sockets and adapters – watch out for loose wiring, scorch marks and hot plugs and sockets.
8. Keep heaters clear from curtains and furniture and never use them to dry clothes.
9. Plan and practice how you would escape a fire.
10. Never run extension leads out of your flat to the external area unattended, overnight or in wet weather and ensure they do not cause a trip hazard to other tenants.
11. Do not cover the immersion heaters to hot water cylinders that are in the flats (the small round part with the cable to it). Airing cupboard shelves around can be used but always ensure that nothing can smother the immersion heater itself. There is a sign on the cover of the immersion heater advising this.

Should you feel you need some more advice on any of the above, Kent Fire Service offer a free 'Safe and well visit' that will be carried out by one of their friendly home safety officers. They can be contacted on 0800 923 7000 or via email at enquiries@kent.fire-uk.org.

Fire Doors

Fire doors are specialist doors which have been tested against the elements and are purpose built to withstand roaring fires for as long as possible. They enable buildings to compartmentalise and delay the spread of fire from one area to another, as well as forming a crucial part of a passive fire protection strategy.

Certified fire doors are given a fire resistance rating which details the length of time the doorset (a pre-assembled unit including the door, door frame and ironmongery) will be able to withstand smoke and fire. In the original Trust properties the flat front doors and the electrical cupboard doors in the communal hallways have a fire rating of 30 minutes.

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Fire doors are fitted with intumescent strips (or seals) around their edges which expand to fill the gap between the door and the frame should there be a fire. They also often have overhead self-closing devices which help to close the door behind you when you enter or leave the property.

Fire doors have various safety features and can be the difference between life and death. Two of the most important functions fire doors have are:

- When closed, they form a barrier to stop the spread of fire.
- When opened, they provide a means of escape.

Due to the important safety function that a fire door performs, tenants are asked not to attach anything to the doors, paint over them or adjust the overhead self-closing devices on them.

To ensure that the fire doors continue to prove effective during the event of a fire, it is necessary for the Trust to carry out periodic maintenance checks. Should you become concerned over the condition of a fire door at any time, please report this matter to the Trust for further investigation.

What to do if a fire breaks out

Where there is a communal fire alarm in place in the building and a fire starts outside of your property you should make sure:

- Upon hearing the alarm, leave the building by the nearest available fire escape route.
- Before you open a door check it with the back of your hand. If it is warm, do not open it – fire is on the other side.
- Do not delay your escape - leave all personal belongings in your property.
- If your building has a stairlift do not use it.
- Go to a safe place away from the building and call Kent Fire and Rescue Services on 999.
- Await instructions from the fire services.
- Do not attempt to re-enter the property.

If there is no communal fire alarm in place, such as Lady Vane Close and a fire starts outside of your property, the fire evacuation advice is to 'Stay Put' in your flat, closing all doors and windows and then ring the Kent Fire and Rescue Service on 999 to alert them.

If a fire breaks out in your home:

- Dependant on the size of the fire, consider the use of the fire blanket which Hatton has supplied in the kitchen of your flat.
- If the fire is too large or you are unable to use the fire blanket, leave straight away, together with anybody else, then close your flat front door as you leave.
- Do not stay behind to try to put the fire out.
- Close the communal front door and leave the building.
- If your building has a stairlift, do not use it.
- Call Kent Fire and Rescue Services on 999.

If the fire alarm goes off and you cannot leave your home as your access may be blocked:

- Place a rolled-up damp towel at the foot of your front door to block the smoke.
- Keep low to the ground where the air is cleaner and find a safe place to wait in a room with a window that opens.
- Shut the door to the room you are in.
- Call Kent Fire and Rescue Services on 999
- Open the window and call for help.

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Calling Kent Fire and Rescue Services

Kent Fire and Rescue Services should always be called if you suspect a fire has started. This should be done straight away. The way to ring Kent Fire and Rescue Services is as follows:

- 1) Ring 999.
- 2) When the operator answers, give the telephone number you are ringing from and ask for the Kent Fire and Rescue Services.
- 3) When Kent Fire and Rescue Services reply, tell them clearly the address where the fire is.
- 4) Do not replace the receiver until Kent Fire and Rescue Services has repeated the address to you and you are sure they have got it right. Kent Fire and Rescue Services may not be able to help if they do not have the full address.

E-bikes & Scooters Fire hazards

The Guardian reported in May 2023 that there had been 102 fires associated with e-bikes and scooters so far in 2023, with a forecast of 338 for the whole year. At least 190 had been injured and eight people killed.

The batteries within e-bikes and scooters can cause serious fires. When they have started a fire, something called “thermal runaway” can occur this creates an uncontrollable, chemical reaction with a self-heating state causing the internal temperature to rise uncontrollably. If this happens the fire will be extremely difficult to put out.

Most batteries are safe when well looked after and charged correctly, however some batteries and chargers that have been damaged or are from un reputable sellers can cause a problem. If batteries are not looked after properly or used when damaged there is a serious risk of fire.

Please notify the Trust if you are keeping an e-bike or scooter at the property. If you are keeping an e-bike at a Trust property, please follow the below guidelines:

- All batteries and chargers must meet official safety standards.
- All chargers used should be the official correct charger for the battery concerned.
- Batteries should be allowed to cool before charging.
- Manufacturer’s instructions should be followed at all times – in particular, note maximum charge levels and temperature thresholds.
- Batteries should not be tampered with or modified.
- Batteries should be checked carefully before charging to make sure that they have not been damaged (e.g. by being dropped) and that there are no cracks, dents, or leaks in the battery casing.
- Batteries should be kept clean, as dust and dirt build up on the battery contacts can cause them to overheat.
- Batteries should not be left to charge unattended and should be unplugged as soon as they have finished charging.
- Batteries should be disconnected when not in use and kept in a battery case or fireproof bag.
- Do not charge batteries using an extension lead.
- Never cover the battery when charging.

LEGIONELLA

Legionnaires disease is a form of bacterial pneumonia. Infection occurs from inhaling microscopic water droplets that contain legionella bacteria from aspiration of water droplets or working with/using contaminated soil in the garden.

Not everybody exposed to legionella bacteria will become infected, you are more prone to the infection

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for various reasons which include, if you smoke, have a weakened immune system, have a chronic lung disease or other serious condition or are over 50.

There is also a milder illness that is also caused from legionella bacteria, Pontiac fever which causes flu like symptoms. Pontiac fever will usually clear up on its own, legionnaires usually cures with prompt treatment and antibiotics but can be fatal if left untreated.

Although it is possible to get legionnaires disease from a residential plumbing system, it is extremely rare. The simpler the plumbing system, the less risk there is. Most outbreaks of legionnaires have occurred in large buildings with complex systems, care homes and hospitals hold a high risk. Hatton properties have a very simple plumbing system.

The Trust has had legionella surveys carried out on all properties, most are minor or low risk. The highest risk recorded is medium risk and only 16 of 116 properties were given this risk level. The survey noted on all 16 of these that the hot water was not being heated adequately.

The following recommendation was given by the assessor;

Keeping the hot water tank on will eliminate the risk of legionella in the system and its supplying taps.

The surveys have been produced using a simple 6 level risk system as follows:

None	No risk	There is no significant present risk and no action is currently required
Minor	Minor risk	There is a low risk but not under normal conditions.
Low	Low risk	There is a low risk under normal conditions.
Medium	Medium risk	There is a significant risk but not under normal conditions.
High	High risk	There is a significant risk under normal conditions.
Critical	Critical risk	There is an immediate risk and urgent action is required. This may include isolation of the system and water sampling, and could include disinfection if necessary.

As seen on the table above if the plumbing system is operated at correct temperatures even the highest risk level recorded on a Hatton property is very little under normal conditions. The Trust will continue to carry out inspections and repairs where necessary to minimise risks of legionella.

You can reduce the risk of legionella bacteria further, please follow the advice below to ensure your water system is safe,

- Do not interfere with the settings on your hot water system. The hot water should be set so that the water is heated up to 60°C.
- Heat your water to full temperature every day so the water is always kept hot.
- Clean your shower head regularly in line with the manufacturer's guidelines. Descale and disinfect it at least every six months to reduce the risk of legionella bacteria multiplying within the shower head. Showers are responsible for the majority of risk within a residential dwelling as they provide the greatest potential for inhalation of small water droplets.
- If the shower is used only occasionally then flush the shower through by running it for at least 2 minutes once a week. Keep out of the way whilst this is being done.
- Tell the Property Manager if the hot water tank is not working properly, particularly if the water is not coming out of the taps at a sufficiently high temperature. It should reach the taps at 50°C.
- Tell the Property Manager if the cold water is still running warm after you have initially run off any water, which may have accumulated in the pipes. It should not be above 20°C.
- Tell the Property Manager if there are problems, debris or discolouration in the water.

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- When your property is left vacant for more than a few days, please make sure that when it is occupied again at the outset both hot and cold water systems are flushed through by running all outlets for at least 2 minutes.

SHOWER HEADS ON ELECTRIC SHOWERS

In the UK all manufactured electric showers and attachments are tested by the manufacturer and approved for use. Any replacement shower heads must be approved by the manufacture to ensure they are safe for use with the shower and will not affect any of the safety standards and energy efficient standards.

Electric showers work by heating cold mains fed water over electric heating elements to reach the desired outlet temperature. They have multiple safety devices within them to prevent burns and ensure safe operation.

The use of unauthorised shower heads causes a lot of issues with electric showers. They provide additional resistance and backflow into the shower which can cause the pressure relief device or the thermal cut out to pop. When either of these devices are activated, they require replacement, often it will require an entire shower replacement as not all safety devices are available as replacements and many times they will take other parts of the shower out with them.

Start/stop-button showerheads should never be used with instantaneous electric showers. They stop the water flow at the outlet without deactivating the heating elements. This causes the water within the appliance to overheat rapidly, potentially reaching temperatures as high as 80°C. When the shower is resumed, scalding water can be discharged under pressure due to the abnormal stop at the showerhead. Scalding water can lead to severe burn injuries. This will, at most times, also trigger the safety devices within a shower leading to the shower requiring repair or replacement.

Even showerheads that do not have the start/stop button but have beads to “filter” the water can cause the shower to have multiple problems and will require a new shower long before time due to the additional pressure created within the heat exchanger. Always replace shower hoses and heads with manufacturer approved products.

BIRD FEEDER ADVICE - Stopping unwanted visitors such as squirrels and rats from sharing your bird food

Keeping the area around your bird feeders clean and removing any fallen food or seed on a regular basis is essential to keep unwanted visitors from your bird feeders. Rats especially locate food easily and will continue to visit until the food supply stops. This is easier if your feeders are on a hard standing or paving slab. If your bird feeder is placed on grass, it can be difficult to completely clean up all of the food that falls in the grass that attracts squirrels or rats. Placing a bird seed catcher or tray beneath your bird feeder will help to catch any fallen bird food before it makes its way into the grass so will be easier to keep clean.



Keeping the area around your bird feeder tidy is a really good way to discourage rats, they like to hide in dark corners or underneath items or sheds. Checking regularly items that you have around will keep on top of any habitations of rats early.

Putting your bird feeders where rats and squirrels cannot jump or climb onto them will also help. Try to keep your feeders 3m away from anything a rat or squirrel can climb up to jump from.

Using a baffle (a small plastic cone) on your feeders can help, they block the animal being able to access the feeder and are slippery for the animal to climb over.

If rats are seen sharing the bird's food, then removing food is a good way to break the habit of rats coming to look for food in your garden. Obviously, you don't want to stop providing food for birds. This

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cycle break should only take a few weeks to stop the rats returning.

The following advice was received from David Roff at Ferbies Close, who has had great success with stopping the squirrels that frequented his bird feeders. Birds don't have the same taste or smell receptors as rats, squirrels and other mammals have, so mixing a small amount of hot chilli powder to your bird food is harmless to the birds and it won't deter them from feeding, however rats and squirrels don't like the taste of hot chilli powder so will not be attracted to the food you're putting out for the birds.

ADVICE ON CONDENSATION AND MOULD

Every home will be affected by condensation at some point. It is completely normal and expected during certain activities and humidity levels. Cooking, washing, drying clothes indoors even breathing creates moisture in the air. The average water vapour that one person will put into the air in their home each day is equivalent to 10 glasses of water. This is just a normal day without the activities that exasperate condensation forming. Drying clothes indoors can add 10-15 litres a week. This water vapour will only be seen when it reaches a cold surface and turns into condensation. The amount of water vapour within a home depends on how warm or cold the property is, how much ventilation there is, how much water vapour is created and the humidity levels.

- It is really important to heat and ventilate all homes, finding the right balance of heating and ventilation is imperative in stopping and preventing condensation which leads to mould formation. Heating and ventilation must be balanced with each other to solve the issue. By opening windows it's easy to feel you are losing heat but what you are actually doing is changing the air within the property. Warm moisture laden air is more expensive to heat than cool dry air. Just 30 minutes to 1 hour of ventilation a day is adequate. This is even more effective when split to 3 or 4 times during the day. Either use trickle vents on the properties that have them or open the windows just a small amount. This air change is crucial for reducing condensation and providing a better air quality within the home. Whenever possible open windows on opposite sides of the property to allow a through flow of air. Always open bedroom windows first thing in the morning as sleeping creates about half a pint of water vapour per person. Replacing that moisture laden air is better for the property and for your health. Just 10-20 minutes is adequate. Even better if you could sleep with the window in the bedroom open.
- Heat the property to a background ambient temperature. A low background temperature of 16 degrees will be more effective at stopping condensation than short bursts of heat when you are in the property and feeling cold. The ideal temperature for a property is between 18-21 degrees. However, it is better to have a cooler temperature constantly than a warmer temperature occasionally. Heating just one area or room is almost certain to cause excessive condensation as it creates greater disparities in temperature creating the perfect conditions for condensation to form and mould to grow. This is one of the biggest contributors to black mould in properties. An even background temperature is essential.
- Keep all furniture away from outside walls, leaving a gap for air to circulate behind.
- Avoid excessive clutter around cold walls and surfaces. Air needs to be unobstructed to circulate freely.
- Remove as much moisture as possible by wiping any moisture from windows and sills in the morning away.
- If you have a shower, use a squeegee to remove as much moisture as possible from the glass screen and tiled areas. Always keep the door closed when showering.
- If your bathroom extractor fan is powered with the light, please use the light when showering to boost the fan. This will also allow the fan to overrun afterwards to expedite clearing the moisture laden air. If not open the bathroom window after showering for 10-15 minutes with the door closed.

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- Dry clothes outside whenever possible, if you absolutely must dry clothes inside, dry them in the bathroom with the door closed and the extractor fan running or window open.
- Always cover pots and pans when cooking.
- Do not block over extractor fans and vents in the property, they are there for a purpose and need to be unobstructed at all times.
- The undercut on internal doors is required to help ventilation within a home, do not block this with draught excluders. The gap beneath the doors should be unobstructed at all times.
- When running a bath put the cold water in first, this will significantly reduce the condensation created.
- A thick carpet with a thermal underlay always helps with condensation.
- If you are physically able, wash down any black mould that appears with a mould killer fungicidal wash. It is important to use a product that kills the mould as well as preventing it. Mould spores spread so washing down any that forms will reduce how much you get. If you are not physically able to wash the mould off and you have black mould forming, please inform the Trust of this. Try to use a specialist cleaner rather than bleach or vinegar. Mould has deep roots (hyphae) on porous surfaces that bleach can't reach. Bleach may be able to eliminate the mould on the surface, but it doesn't affect the membranes underneath which will cause the mould to return over time and actually worsen the condition. Vinegar can penetrate deep into the pores of the surface, killing around 82% of mould but vinegar does not penetrate every material very deeply, and so often leaves behind some mould spores and roots deep in the material. Specialist mould killers and fungicidal cleaners will penetrate the mould and prevent reoccurrence. A few examples of appropriate cleaners are:
 - Dettol antibacterial mould & mildew remover spray
 - Zinsser mould killer and remover spray
 - Ronseal 3 in 1 mould killer spray

PENSION CREDIT

Please see below the advice downloaded from the Government Website on claiming for Pension Credit at <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim>

How to claim - You can start your application up to 4 months before you reach State Pension age. You can apply any time after you reach State Pension age but your application can only be backdated by 3 months. This means you can get up to 3 months of Pension Credit in your first payment if you were eligible during that time.

Information you'll need - You'll need the following information about you and your partner if you have one:

- National Insurance number
- Information about any income, savings and investments you have
- Information about your income, savings and investments on the date you want to backdate your application to (usually 3 months ago or the date you reached State Pension age)
- You'll also need your bank account details. Depending on how you apply, you may also be asked for your bank or building society name, sort code and account number.

Apply online - You can use the online service if you have already applied for your State Pension.

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Apply by phone - A friend or family member can call for you if you cannot use the phone.

Pension Credit claim line

Telephone: 0800 99 1234

Textphone: 0800 169 0133

Relay UK (if you cannot hear or speak on the phone): 18001 then 0800 99 1234

British Sign Language (BSL) video relay service if you're on a computer

Apply by post - To apply by post, print out and fill in the Pension Credit claim form or call the claim line to request a form.

Send the claim form to the Pension Service at Freepost DWP Pensions Service 3

Consider contacting a voluntary organisation like Citizens Advice or Age UK if you need help with the form.

GENERAL ADVICE

Refuse/Recycling: The recycling and waste service from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (for the properties at Lady Vane Close) enables households to recycle more materials from home. Please contact Tunbridge Wells Borough Council or Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council directly if you require any further information.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council also both offer an assisted waste collection service if you experience difficulty moving your recycling boxes or wheelie bins. To register for this service contact Tunbridge Wells Borough Council directly on 01892 526121 or Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council on 01732 876147.

Cleaning of communal areas: the cleaning of the communal areas is the tenant's responsibility, which can be carried out by the tenants between them, or by engaging the services of a cleaner, with any costs to be paid by the tenants directly to the cleaner.

Food for the birds: at some sites we have had problems with vermin attracted inside by food left on the ground. So please use feeders if you wish to feed the birds.

Hanging out washing: A gentle reminder that, under the terms of your tenancy agreement, tenants should ensure that any clothes should be hung out to dry in the mornings only, as far as reasonably possible. **Tenants should not be removing other tenants' items of clothing from the washing lines unless permission has been given.**

Keeping the drains clear: each year the Trust spends a considerable amount of money on unblocking the drains. Please do not put any wipes etc. down the toilet but dispose of them responsibly in the general waste bin. Please do not flush anything other than toilet paper down the toilets. The Committee may consider charging tenants who continue to block the drains in the future.

Wallpaper: The Trust request that if you plan to decorate that you do not use vinyl wallpaper and if you redecorate at a later stage, please ensure that the existing wallpaper is removed.

Salt/sand bins: are provided at each of the Trust's sites and are topped up in the autumn, however, do let us know if these are running low

Noise: some of us are very light sleepers so please do not use washing machines or have other loud machines on after 11pm or before 7am. Please ensure that all guests or visitors are considerate when visiting.

Spare keys: most tenants now keep a spare key with a friend or the Trust Representative. In case emergency access is required please do let us know the name of the keyholder.

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Going away: if you are planning to be away for more than a day or so then please do let the Trust Representative know and leave a contact telephone number.

Parking: many of our sites have on-site parking but none have unlimited space; please also ask your visitors to be considerate when they park and to limit the spaces being used.

Repairs: Please let the Trust Property Manager know if you are still awaiting completion of repairs after a reasonable period has passed, so that the matter can be followed up with the relevant contractor.

Electricity supplier: The Trust has compiled a list of each tenant's electricity supplier. You are under no obligation to stay with the current electricity supplier, and many of our tenants shop around for energy savings and switch suppliers. If you do change your electricity supplier, we would ask that you inform Claire Mitchell so that she can keep a note of the new supplier.

Key holders/Emergency Contact: The Trust keeps a list of key holders and emergency contacts for each of our tenants and it is important to remember to notify Claire Mitchell if these change.

Key boxes: tenants who have key boxes should check with their insurance companies to make sure that they are covered. Also, one of the Trust's tenants had their key box broken into and the key was used to gain access to the block. Therefore, it is essential that if any key box is fitted, it conforms to your insurance company's specifications.

Insurance: please ensure that you have adequate insurance to cover the contents of your property against usual risks as the Trust's insurance does not cover household contents. An event happened at a trust property last year that caused some damage requiring a claim under the Trust's building insurance. The damage was accidental and no one was at fault. It did cause the Trustees to consider for the first time who can and/or should bear the excess on the Trust's insurance policy. Clearly each claim has a knock on effect on the level of premium the Trust has to pay. And each excess payment the trust makes reduces the funds the trust holds to carry out maintenance and improvement works on all the flats. Bearing this in mind the Trustees have decided that if accidental damage causes the Trust to have to claim under their insurance, then the Trust will bear the cost of any excess. However, the Trust may consider asking tenants to contribute towards the excess in the case of repeated or reckless damage.

Tenants are reminded that the front and any rear doors to each block should be secured when not actually in use.

Tenants are also reminded that the garden areas are designed for communal use and tenants should not plant trees, hedges or erect any garden structures, including fences, archways or gates, without the Trust's prior permission in writing.

Please note that the cupboards in the communal areas do not form part of your tenancy. However, the Trust will allow, at their discretion, the storage of non-combustible items **only** in the communal cupboards, (excluding the electrical cupboards). The Trust reserve the right to withdraw this permission at any time.

Storage of items in the communal loft area of a block is not permitted as this constitutes a fire hazard.

In the event that any Tenant uses security cameras or other recording devices please note any recording from such a device is not to be shared other than with recognised law enforcement agencies unless such sharing is required in the case of an emergency.

In order to avoid accusations of financial abuse the Trust cannot and will not provide financial advice, assume power of attorney, handle residents' money or accept gifts from Tenants.

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CHANGE IN PROPERTY MANAGER



After seven years of working for the Trust, Lucy Robinson left at the end of May 2024. A dinner was arranged with all the Committee members present where Lucy was thanked for all her hard work and presented with flowers from the Chairman, Colin Barber.

As you are all aware, Jess Stevens was appointed the Trust's new Property Manager from 1 June 2024 and deals with all maintenance or repair work for the Trust. Many of the tenants knew Jess Stevens and have welcomed her on board.

RENT INCREASES

The Trust are committed to ensuring that rents are kept as low as possible, but each year have applied a rent increase as operating costs increase year on year and the Trust need to retain sufficient reserves to maintain the properties and upgrade to the latest regulations.

Each year the rent increase applied is considered in great detail by the Management Committee and, in most years, well below the rent increase recommended by The Regulator of Social Housing.

We thought it may be interesting for our tenants to see the rental increase percentages recommended by the Regulator versus the percentage increase applied by the Trust.

YEAR	Recommended Increase	Hatton Housing Trust Increase
2021	2.7%	2%
2022	1.5%	2%
2023	4.1%	3%
2024	11.1%	4%
2025	7.7%	3%

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Hatton Housing Trust is managed by a Management Committee. The Committee meet approximately every six weeks. All Committee members give up their time voluntarily and without any cost to the Trust. Operating costs are kept to a minimum ensuring that our rents are kept as low as possible and any surplus funds are ploughed back into improving the stock.

The current Committee Members are:

Colin Barber (Chairman)
Diana Barber
Jane Clay (Vice Chairman)
Amanda Harris
Debs Manley
Marcus Mayne
Victoria Meredith
Philip Packer
Viv Packer

HATTON HOUSING TRUST LIMITED

CONTACT DETAILS

Hatton Housing Trust Limited
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Kent TN9 1BL

Tel no: 01732 770660

Website: www.hattonhousingtrust.co.uk

Claire Mitchell is the main point of contact for all the Trust services. She works for Warners Solicitors who in turn act as Secretary to the Trust. Claire deals with all administrative and financial matters, as well as all the regulatory matters. Claire works Monday to Friday (meetings by prior arrangement) and you can contact her on 01732 375305 and her email address is c.mitchell@warners.law.

Jess Stevens deals with any maintenance or repair work for the Trust properties. She works for JDPM Property Services Ltd who act as Property Manager for the Trust. You can contact her during office hours on 07887 096281 and her email address is jdpmproperty@aol.com

Our Trust Representatives deal with many of the day to day questions and problems encountered by tenants. They provide an invaluable service to the Trust and each site has a Trust Representative.