



Tenant Newsletter

We would like to wish you all a happy New Year as we move forward into 2024!

We have had a period of challenging weather in the region with flooding in several areas of our operations across the east and with forecasts now predicting much colder weather through January, we expect to be very busy out repairing and maintaining your homes. The time taken to answer your telephone calls or emails may be longer than usual. We will have to prioritise emergencies or those tenants most at risk, but please be patient and we will respond to all queries.

Thank you.

Repairs Line

We introduced a new telephone system earlier this year and hope you have seen the improvement to how we handle your repairs calls. We are pleased that we can now transparently report on how we have performed in the last two quarters in relation to call handling...



Average no of calls per month (excluding out of hours)

407

(last quarter 357)



Average waiting time your call to be answered

**1 minute
19 seconds**

(last quarter 57 seconds)

We will be using this information to plan how we use our staff to ensure your calls are answered quickly.

Empty Homes



If you live in Papworth Everard village you may have noticed a few more empty Papworth Trust homes recently and may be wondering what is happening with them. We wanted to share our plans with the village as whole. The Trust have a great history in Papworth Everard and we are committed to remaining a long term partner in the village and local community. We also have to make sure our homes are fit for purpose to provide housing for the future.

As homes naturally become empty through tenancies ending, we have to explore how we can ensure that our homes remain high quality and affordable as we move towards the national net zero target by 2050 and all our homes to be EPC category C or above for energy efficiency.

Generally, our older and more energy inefficient homes are located in Papworth Everard. Where these homes become empty, we will consider whether it is possible to bring them up to the standard required to achieve net zero or whether it is necessary to do something different with them, including redevelopment.

This process does, unfortunately, take time, but we absolutely want to get it right so that we can provide high quality and sustainable homes for the future and deliver the benefits that this will bring to the wider communities that we work in.

We will provide further updates on this in future editions of our newsletter.

Safety Information Leaflets



You have been sent information on **Fire Safety**. Please read this information carefully and if you require any further information please contact us at: repairsandmaintenance@papworthtrust.org.uk or call **0330 678 0008, option 1**.

Along with our last newsletter you were sent information on **damp and mould** and **asbestos**, we hope you found these useful. Please remember you can access these at any time on our website <https://www.papworthtrust.org.uk/housing/tenants-policies/> IF you do not have internet access or require documents in a different format, please contact us on **0330 678 0008, option 2**.

Cost of Living



We recognise that there remains a continuing struggle with the rising cost of living. We are here to help and if you need advice about paying your rent or if you are worried about your finances then please get in contact with us. You can do this by:

- Calling your Housing Officer on **0330 678 0008, option 2**

- Emailing - housing@papworthtrust.org.uk

Please do contact us if you are experiencing any problems with paying your rent or other household bills. We can arrange to speak to you in a way and at a time that suits you.

Employment Support



A new Work & Health Programme called Pioneer is now being delivered in Cambridgeshire by the Papworth Trust. This exciting new programme is designed to support economically inactive people into work using a method called place and train. If you would like to discuss the support available then please get in contact with:

Scott Twinn

Email: Scott.twinn@papworthtrust.org.uk

Telephone: 07707290969

Time for Tenants



Over the last 2 years the Executive Team have been holding monthly face to face sessions in Papworth Everard where tenants could attend to speak with them directly about absolutely anything. We have received valuable feedback from tenants that attended these sessions and have been able to make some positive changes to our housing service.

For 2024 the Executive Team would like to provide tenants that live outside of Papworth Everard to have the same opportunity therefore the schedule will be a mix of face to face and virtual sessions. The face to face sessions will be from venues in Papworth Everard and the virtual sessions will be held using Microsoft Teams. Details are as follows:

Face to face drop in sessions – tenants can attend any time in the time slot advertised

- Saturday 27 January, 10am to 12noon – Turnhill Room, Southbrook Field,
- Wednesday 27 March, 5pm to 7pm – Bradbury Court, Westfields, Papworth Everard
- Saturday 18 May, 10am to 12noon – Bradbury Court, Westfields, Papworth Everard
- Wednesday 24 July, 5pm to 7pm – The Studio, Pendrill Court, Papworth Everard
- Saturday 28 September, 10am to 12noon – Turnhill room, Southbrook Field, Papworth Everard
- Thursday 28 November, 5pm to 7pm – Bradbury Court, Westfields, Papworth Everard

Virtual sessions, all 6pm to 7pm – tenants will need to book

- Tuesday 27 February
- Tuesday 30 April
- Tuesday 25 June
- Tuesday 27 August
- Tuesday 29 October

If you wish to attend one of the virtual sessions you will need access to a smart phone, tablet, laptop or PC and have an email address. If you would like to book onto a virtual session email Tracey Croucher at tenantengagement@papworthtrust.org.uk or telephone 0330 678 0008 option 2 and you will receive a Microsoft Teams link to join.

Scrutiny Panel



The Scrutiny Panel are an independent team of tenant volunteers who work closely with the Trust to review the housing and maintenance service and the policies and performance in these areas. The Scrutiny Panel play a key role in ensuring that the Trust offers a service that represents good value for money.

There are currently 5 tenant Scrutiny Panel members, 3 of which joined in 2023. The panel have an annual programme of work which includes quarterly meetings, conducting deep dive scrutiny reviews, supporting stage 3 complaint investigations and providing feedback on other service specific areas on an ad hoc basis.

To support the panel members Papworth Trust provides a programme of informal and formal training. We work in partnership with TPAS (external tenant engagement organisation) who support us to provide the panel with training and development to assist them in their roles.

2023 has been a busy year for the Scrutiny Panel

- They welcomed 3 new members but sadly said goodbye to 2 long standing involved tenants who decided to retire from their volunteer roles
- 3 meetings were held in June, September and December
- They have reviewed and made changes to existing housing policies such as the repairs and maintenance policy, mutual exchange policy and pet policy
- They have reviewed and made changes to new policies such as the damp and mould policy which is currently a high priority within the housing sector
- The panel have been involved in reviewing the lettable standards and housing service standards
- The panel continue to monitor the action plan from their first scrutiny deep dive and are working to conduct their second scrutiny review in 2024
- The panel continue to monitor the performance data for the housing and maintenance service and challenge us where we are not meeting the targets

For early 2024 the scrutiny panel have a number of training workshops scheduled with TPAS, a session to conduct a refresh of the tenant handbook looking at what information tenants need and how the handbook can be more professionally presented and a panel meeting in March.

The Scrutiny Panel have a dedicated area on the website where you can find out more about their work, who the current members are, minutes for panel meetings and scrutiny review action plans.

Following feedback from tenants the panel have made some changes to help increase the visibility of their work on this page.

You can view this by going to www.papworthtrust.org.uk select the housing tile, select the tenant involvement tile and click on the scrutiny panel tile or by going to: <https://www.papworthtrust.org.uk/Scrutiny%20Panel/>

If you are interested in joining the Scrutiny Panel and would like more information about the recruitment and application process please contact Tracey Croucher by email at tenantengagement@papworthtrust.org.uk or by calling 0330 678 0008 option 2.

Tenant Involvement



We want you to share your experiences and work with us to help improve services

As you live in our homes and experience the service we provide, you are in a unique position to tell us what works and what doesn't.

Have you thought about how you can use your experience of living in our homes to help improve the services that we provide?

We have volunteer roles available to join our tenant panels where you will be able to work with other tenants and us to contribute, influence and improve the services to our tenants.

Why should you join us?

- You will be able to use your experience, good and bad, to improve Housing Services and leave a legacy for future Papworth Trust housing tenants
- You will grow in confidence and meet new people
- You will receive training from both internal and external sources to help you
- You will be able to make a real difference.

If you would like more information about the volunteer roles available or have any questions please contact Tracey Croucher, Tenant Engagement Officer at tenantengagement@papworthtrust.org.uk or 0330 678 0008 option 2.

Social media



Did you know you can follow Papworth Trust on social media? We use Facebook and Twitter to keep our customers updated with the latest information.

Follow us here:



Rent statement



Please find your quarterly rent statement for the period 2 October to 31 December 2023 enclosed.

A reminder that you can find our video on how to read your rent statement that was created for tenants by tenants on our website here:

<https://www.papworthtrust.org.uk/housing/>

We have also provided the frequently asked questions below to assist you in reading and understanding your statement.

How do I read my rent statement?

Your rent statement shows your weekly rental charge and any payments that have been made on your account between the two dates:

first column - date

second column - details of the payment or charge, e.g. the payment type and for any Housing Benefit/direct Universal Credit any period that the payment covers.

third column - if it is a payment the amount will be shown here

fourth column - if it is a charge the amount will be shown here

fifth column - the balance, a credit will have 'pre' after the amount, an arrears will have an 'arr' after the amount.

Question:

Do I have to do anything?

Answer:

NO, the statement is for your records only. If any further action is required on your account you will be contacted by a member of the housing team. If you do have any queries please either contact the housing team by email at housing@papworthtrust.org.uk or by telephone on **0330 678 0008 (option 2)**.

Question:

Why does the final balance of my statement show an arrear?

Answer:

This may be due to when you pay your rent. Under the terms of your tenancy agreement you are responsible for ensuring that your rent is paid in advance so that there is never an arrear on your account. A member of the housing team will contact you, in due course, if any further action is required on your account.

Question:

My account is showing a credit, can I have a refund?

Answer:

There may be a credit on the account depending on when you pay your rent. You are required to pay your rent in advance so you are not automatically entitled to a refund even if there is a credit showing on your account. If you are due a refund you will be contacted by a member of the housing team.

Papworth Trust is consciously considering our impact on the environment, we will be making an active effort to reduce the amount of paper we use. If we hold a email address for you we will send you future newsletters by email, If you would prefer to receive a hard copy, or require any other adjustments, please let us know at:

tenantengagement@papworthtrust.org.uk

