

# Newsletter

## Summer 2018

### IMPORTANT...

Future editions of this newsletter will only be available on our website.

Do contact us if you would prefer a hard copy.

## Repairs – Taking it Back

As many of you will know, Keniston have managed our repairs service for many years—it's been a long and successful relationship!

Now, following discussions about how we can best serve you – our tenants – and look after our properties, we've made the decision to take repairs back in-house from September onwards.



**The aims of this change include:**

- Making it easier for you to report and follow up on repairs
- Having more day-to-day contact and building stronger relationships with our tenants
- Helping us to monitor the quality of repairs and improve the service
- Having better control over our properties and their condition.

This will in turn support our vision and values and our objective to create homes we can all be proud of.

We will be using many of the same contractors, so the only practical difference for you is that you'll only have one number to remember!

We are currently working hard to take the repairs back from Keniston on **Monday 10th September**. There is a lot to be done, so we will be giving you regular updates.

## Workshops

We will be running two workshops (repeated) so we can get your views on the future repairs service. These will be held on **Tuesday 21st August**, with venue to be confirmed. **SAVE THE DATE!** The first session will run from 3–4.30pm and the second from 6–7.30pm so you can come to whichever suits you best. In between, we will be providing refreshments and entertainment for the children. We hope you can make it!



# Contractors Code / Repair Categories

We are also in the processing of reviewing our agreement with contractors and we want your input about what matters to you. We have included a copy of the Contractor Code of Conduct with this newsletter. We want to know the following:

- Is the Contractors Code about right? Is there anything missing?
- In terms of the day to day repairs service, what matters most to you?
- What one thing would you like to see stay the same?
- What one thing would you like to see change?

In addition, we are proposing some changes to the repair response categories as you have told us that what matters to you most is getting repairs done in a way that is convenient to you. Therefore, we are proposing the following categories:

1. **EMERGENCY** – 24 hours (make safe in 4 hours)
2. **URGENT** – 3 working days
3. **BY APPOINTMENT** – agreed with you. Call to make the appointment within 3 working days and generally the repair to be completed within 30 days.
4. **PLANNED** – non urgent work or major works normally within 90 days.

In terms of these:

- Do you think these categories are fair and reasonable?
- What would you like to see in terms of appointments?

**You can give us your feedback either by visiting our website at [www.pengechurchesha.org.uk](http://www.pengechurchesha.org.uk) and following the link to our online survey, by calling the office on 020 8659 3055, or by coming to one of our workshops.**

We are recruiting some new staff and making some changes to the office to enable us to offer you the best possible repairs service.

**In the meantime, please keep reporting repairs to Keniston in the usual way.**

# Meet Our New Staff

We are delighted to welcome two new members of staff to our team. Mark joined PCHA in April and Cassandra in May 2018. Here's a bit more about them—so you can put faces to names!



## **Mark Stenning, Maintenance Operative**

As Maintenance Operative, Mark is responsible for the upkeep and small repairs of our properties, as well as making sure we're complying with our health and safety responsibilities.

Mark has a wealth of experience and knowledge in the building and maintenance sector and holds various qualifications that support him in the field. Mark spent the last five years working in a small charity based in Bromley in the role of Assistant Property Manager.

We asked Mark a few 'searching' questions to find out a bit more about him.

### **What's your favourite thing about your job at PCHA?**

The variety! I don't like being stuck in one place and like this job because I'm doing different things every day.

### **What do you like to do in your free time?**

I love fishing because it's relaxing. I go sea fishing and coarse fishing. I'm taking a week off in October to go fishing with some friends in Chichester.

### **What's your favourite sport?**

Football. I used to play when I was at school, and played a couple of times for Croydon. Now I like watching it! I support Crystal Palace, because I grew up in Croydon and now live in Bromley. I also like watching the rugby nationals and the PGA golf.

# Meet Our New Staff

## **Is there a sports person who's particularly inspired you?**

That's difficult – so many Palace players and England players. Perhaps Stuart Pearce, and Ian Wright because he played at Palace.

## **What's the best place you've ever been on holiday?**

Las Vegas – I've been there five times! Also Melbourne. I've travelled quite a bit, especially around America – San Francisco, Reno, Orlando, New York, Coco Beach and South Lake Tahoe.

## **Lastly, what's your favourite food? Favourite restaurant?**

Chinese! But it's hard to choose a favourite restaurant as there are so many great choices in Bromley and they all do different things.

## **Cassandra Barns, Finance & Admin Officer**

Cassandra manages PCHA's day-to-day finance admin, which includes processing rent payments, processing invoices to make sure our contractors are paid on time, and keeping our accounting records up to date.

Cassandra lives in Penge and loves the local area so is looking forward to getting more involved in the community.


Prior to joining PCHA, Cassandra was a nutritionist and health writer. She decided she wanted a change of career, and as a self-confessed numbers geek, finance was the ideal choice! Outside of PCHA she's also a fitness instructor and teaches exercise classes several times a week. She loves going to the gym, walking and baking healthy cakes.

Interview to follow in the next newsletter!



# GDPR

GDPR is here! You will have received two information leaflets in the post from us: **Privacy Notice** and **Data Protection and Your Privacy**. These explain what GDPR is, what it means for you and what your rights are. You can also find copies of these leaflets on our website – [www.pengechurchesha.org.uk](http://www.pengechurchesha.org.uk) – under **Our Publications**. If you need another hard copy, please contact us.




## Data Protection and Your Privacy

*There are new changes in European privacy law which means that all businesses now have to take greater care of your personal information and this includes how they collect, use and protect it. There have always been laws around data protection and on the 25th May, the current regulations are being replaced by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR for short). At its heart, GDPR wants to better reflect the modern world we live in and make sure our personal information is kept safe and secure by businesses that use it. It's a good thing for all of us. It is designed to protect your details from being used inappropriately or sold on for marketing purposes without your consent. This will also stop you from being continually bothered by organisations you gave your details to for a 'one-off' reason such as buying something. In future, they will need your explicit permission to keep those details.*


**What is personal data?**

From your name and address to unique account numbers, any information that can identify you can be classed as personal.

This information is used by a vast array of organisations from PCHA to your employer storing your personal details at work, to how your shops target you with their promotional offers. Under the new rules, businesses, including PCHA, are now required to take greater care over your personal information and how it's used.



Providing good quality homes and housing services in the local community



## Privacy Notice

**Penge Churches Housing Association (PCHA) is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information.**

This privacy notice describes how we collect and use personal information about you during and after your working relationship with us, in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

**Who we are and contact details**

PCHA is a Registered Society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014 (19080R), registered with the Social Housing Regulator (L1243) and a member of the National Housing Federation.

For further information, please contact our Data Protection Officer at the following address:

**The Data Protection Officer**  
Penge Churches Housing Association  
99 Maple St  
London SE20 8LN

**The information we collect**

We will make every effort to collect only the personal information we need from and about you in order to effectively manage the tenancy services we deliver.

Most of the information we hold will be collected directly from you, but we may also obtain information from another person or organisation if you have given permission for them to share it with us. This could include a local authority, your previous landlord, your doctor or other health professional. We may also obtain your information from available public sources.

We will collect, store, and use the following categories of personal information about you:

- Full name (and proof of your identity / photo ID).

V1.0 May 2018

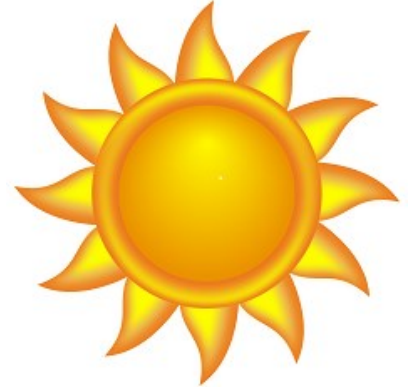




# Communal Barbecues

The sun is out and it's a great time to make the most of our outdoor space. And what could be better to celebrate the long summer evenings than a barbecue?

However, barbecues can cause a lot of disturbance to other tenants – especially due to the smell and the smoke.



For this reason, barbecues in communal areas – including communal gardens, paths and car parks – should only be carried out if:

- **You have the agreement of all the tenants who use that area**  
and
- **All tenants are invited.**

Please be considerate to your neighbours!



# Tenants Annual Performance Review

On the 26th June we held our first **Tenants Annual Performance Review**. We were delighted that a number of you were willing to ditch the sunshine and take the time to look at our performance with us!

Karen, our Chief Exec, gave an overview of the past year and talked about the Strategic Review and our decision to bring repairs back in-house.

Jennifer, our Housing Manager, gave the group an outline of our performance in terms of arrears, voids, complaints, repairs and ASB.

One of the key questions was about how we make decisions about replacing kitchens and bathrooms. Karen explained that whilst we do have a stock condition survey that helps us make these decisions, we do not simply replace kitchens and bathrooms due to their age. We will always inspect their condition and decide whether they are beyond economic repair.

**We are hoping to hold another Performance Review in the autumn, so watch this space for more details.**





# Your Rent – Cash Payments

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to pay your rent. However, we are trying to move away from taking cash payments so we can avoid keeping cash in the office.

We offer a variety of other ways to pay your rent:

- By debit card over the phone or by coming into our office. The simplest alternative to cash! Give us a call on 020 8659 3055 or come in to the office between the hours of 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.
- Via your Allpay card at any Paypoint outlet or Post Office in the UK.
- Via the Allpay app (visit [allpayments.net](http://allpayments.net) for more information).
- Set up weekly or monthly internet payments at [allpayments.net](http://allpayments.net).
- By standing order from your bank. Please contact us for a standing order form.
- Via your bank account by using the online or telephone banking facility. Please quote your tenancy reference and surname. Our account number is 00018269 and sort code is 405240.



**We can still accept cash if necessary.** But please do use one of these alternative methods if possible.

# Universal Credit – a reminder!

By now you should be aware of Universal Credit. This is the single benefit payment that is replacing the following benefits:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance



From 25 July 2018 almost everyone making a new benefits claim or reporting a change in circumstances will need to apply for Universal Credit.

If you're already claiming benefits and your circumstances do not change, you will be moved over to Universal Credit some time between July 2019 and March 2022. You do not need to do anything until you hear from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) about moving to Universal Credit, unless you have a change in circumstances.

## Paying your rent

When you switch over to Universal Credit, you will no longer receive separate Housing Benefit payments. Instead, you will need to pay your rent yourself from your Universal Credit payment.

This is why it's important to be prepared. On the next page you will find some tips to help ease the transition.



# Tips to prepare

## Here are some tips to prepare for universal credit:

### 1. Open a bank account

You will need a bank account to claim Universal Credit. Most major banks will help you to set up a basic bank account as long as you can provide the required forms of identification. A basic account will allow you to pay your bills by Direct Debit, but they won't let you go into an overdraft, so next time you're in the high street pop into the banks and see what they can offer you.

### 2. Budget

Being responsible for your own rent payments and being paid monthly in arrears will probably mean you'll need to make some changes to the way you budget. If you need help with this, please contact us.

### 3. Get your payments on track

You need to think about how you will pay your rent and other bills. The best way would be to set up automated payments (such as Direct Debits) so that you can pay your bills as soon as you receive your monthly Universal Credit payment.

### 4. Get ahead with your rent

Universal Credit and Housing Benefit payments are paid in arrears, but your rent is due in advance. To minimise the amount of debt on your rent account there is no better time to start making some extra payments on your account. Please contact us for help and advice with this.

### 5. Don't be afraid to ask for advice or help

This is new for everyone (including us!) and it will take a while to get used to. If you need help with any of the above please talk to us and we will always do our best to support you.

**Contact us straight away if you start to have problems paying your rent.**



# Enjoy the Summer and Stay Safe!

It is rare for us to issue such warnings, but it is unusually hot this year, so make an extra effort to keep yourself and your pets cool.

- Keep hydrated (you and your pets)
- Slip, slop, slap!
- Don't over-exert yourself
- Stay in the shade
- Take a cold shower or foot bath.



## Keep mirrors out of sunlight

With the hot temperatures and beaming sunshine expected to last into next week, the Fire Brigade is also urging people to keep mirrors and shiny objects out of sunlight as sun rays can refract through them and cause fires.

The London Fire Brigade have stated that: "These sort of fires are not as rare as you would think and these types of fires are not an urban myth. Crystals, glass ornaments and items such as dressing table mirrors should be kept out of direct sunlight."

Indeed, we had one such fire in 2016, so take a minute to check your home and stay safe!

## CONTACT US:

**T: 020 8659 3055**

**E: [housing@pengechurchesha.org.uk](mailto:housing@pengechurchesha.org.uk)**