



AUTUMN MAGAZINE 2023



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MARTYN'S COLUMN



It's beginning to feel a lot like Christmas... well almost. Maybe it's an age thing, but the year has passed quickly.

It has been really eventful for us at Vectis. We have completed our new build schemes at Branstone and Brighstone and Island households are enjoying the benefits of high-quality homes at affordable costs. At a time when housing has been at a premium on the Island, these new homes have been very welcome.

We have seen a fair few changes, at Board-level and among the staff. See the article elsewhere in the newsletter for details of the Board changes. But a key change has been the standing down of our chair for the past six years, Malcolm Groves. He has been a major asset over that time. Long-standing Vectis officers Carol Coleman and Steve Barnes have retired, and Sharon Harvey has left for pastures new. We have welcomed Vikki Lawrence and Aaron Wright who have both already made a big difference.

At long last we have started to see costs level off a bit and inflation coming down. That is good news for us and you, but prices still remain very high in comparison to previous years. Unfortunately, this is likely to be reflected in the service charge bills you will be receiving shortly. But, just to remind you we only charge what it costs to provide the particular service and many of the charges are covered by Housing Benefit.

It has been a challenging year to balance our ability to provide the levels of service we would want with the costs involved, so some things have had to be put back or even scrapped. But we remain committed to properly supporting you and maintaining your home.

We know that there are further challenges to come in the coming months and years. The cost-of-living crisis does not appear to be significantly reducing anytime soon. So, if you have any concerns over your ability to cope, please contact us and we will try to help where we can. Covid also seems set to make another return over the winter months, so please take care.

Lastly, although I am a bit early, can I wish you all an enjoyable festive season and new year. Stay safe and be merry!

Martyn Pearl
Chief Executive, Vectis Housing



HOW DO YOU WANT TO HEAR OUR NEWS?



Your opinion counts.

As we all inevitably move toward using our technology to access information, Vectis is considering its options on how to deliver our magazine. Your opinion matters to us and we would like to ask you how you would prefer to read our publications.

Would you like us to continue to post you a paper format or would you rather be sent an email/text with a hyperlink? This link will then direct you automatically to our company website where you can find the latest news and information.

We would love to hear your views on this. Please feel free to email us on **enquiries@vectishousing.co.uk**.

We will be sending everyone a text soon so please feel free to let us know what you think by return.

Our latest annual report is on the website for everyone to access but if you would like us to send you a paper copy please let us know either by emailing us on **enquiries@vectishousing.co.uk** or calling us on **01983 525985**.



A WARM WELCOME TO TWO NEW MEMBERS OF STAFF:



AARON WRIGHT

In August, Property Services welcomed Aaron Wright as Senior Property Services Officer to the team. Aaron takes over from Steve Barnes who retired after over 15 years at Vectis! Aaron has a wealth of technical and practical property knowledge and is already making a positive impact to the team. If you see him out and about at our schemes and you have any questions, do ask him, alternatively please just say hello.

VIKKI LAWRENCE

We would also like to offer a warm welcome to Vikki Lawrence who is our new Community Welfare Officer. Vikki has a wealth of experience working with charitable organisations in the past and will be providing financial and welfare advice as well as community involvement opportunities to Vectis residents across the Island.

If you need welfare or financial support/advice or are interested in becoming involved with your community, please contact Vikki by calling **01983 525985** or by email to **Vikki@vectishousing.co.uk**.



HELP AND ADVICE FROM OUR PROPERTY SERVICES TEAM

TURNING YOUR BOILER BACK ON AFTER THE SUMMER

Although we're currently enjoying warm weather in some places around the UK, it won't be long until the weather turns and we're having to switch our heating back on. 1st October marks the start of Boiler Switch on Month when we start to think about the colder months ahead.

If you've had your boiler switched off for the summer months, you might find when you come to switch it back on that your system could have developed faults or in the worst-case scenario, not work at all. If you have any problems, just let us know by calling the repairs telephone line **01983 520353** or email us at **enquiries@vectishousing.co.uk**

TENANT REPAIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Here is a quick reminder of the repairs you, as residents, are responsible for in and around your home. Please note that you may be recharged if these works are undertaken by our contractors!

- Drain blockages within the property boundary.
- Bath, wash basin, toilet, and sink blockages.
- Sweeping of chimneys/flues.
- Minor plasterwork repairs – such as cracks along wall and ceiling joints.
- Keys (replacement or additional) including gaining access if required.
- Broken glass to both windows and doors.
- Toilet seats and fittings.
- Bath, sink, and wash basin plugs and chains.
- All aerals excluding communal facilities.
- Replacement lightbulbs and tubes.
- Replacement batteries.
- Hat and coat rails and hooks.
- Floor coverings (other than supplied nonslip flooring in bathrooms, toilets and kitchens).
- Blinds, curtains, curtain tracks, window battens.
- All repairs required to fixtures and fittings owned by you the resident, both fitted as "new" by you the resident or "gifted" by the Association.
- All works to remove pests, including wasp and bee nests and ants.
- Clothes post or lines and rotary driers (other than where provided by the Association).
- Taking all reasonable precautions to prevent water pipes being damaged by frost.

CONTROLLING CONDENSATION

As we head into the colder months, our homes can suffer from excessive condensation, which can lead to problems such as damp, mildew, and black mould.

When warm, humid air inside your home becomes trapped, and unable to escape, it hits the colder surfaces (such as windows and walls) and condensation forms. It's important to understand that it is not caused by damp outside which is trying to get in. Main sources of warm air which can contribute to condensation are:

- Cooking
- Baths and showers
- Boiling a kettle
- Using a tumble dryer or washing machine
- Drying clothes inside



There are some simple steps that we can all take, to reduce the levels of condensation indoors, as the weather starts to turn chilly:

USING EXTRACTOR FANS

Extractor fans are a great way to suck moisture out of key rooms such as the kitchen and bathroom; they even work on assisting with unpleasant or unwanted smells. Extractors should be switched on and they often engage with the lighting (they will remain on after the lights have gone out for a set time). Other types of extractors detect moisture and will come on and set their own levels of extraction based upon the levels... clever hey?

When showering or cooking, doors should be shut to contain the moisture, allowing the extractor to work its magic. Extractors are low energy users, costing pennies to run for the month whilst saving lots of future costings by reducing cleaning, defects and damage to plasterwork, walls, and ceilings.



DRYING CLOTHES INDOORS



If you need to dry clothes indoors, avoid drying them on radiators as this adds greatly to the amount of moisture in the air. Tumble drying is effective but can be expensive and can contribute to condensation levels. Instead, hang your clothes on a drying rack in a well-ventilated room (ideally with the window open), and direct a standard household fan towards the rack. Running a standard fan for 8 hours costs around 5p, compared to £1-£1.50 per hour to run a 3kw tumble dryer.

USE LIDS ON SAUCEPANS:

Boiling water for pasta, vegetables etc. on the hob releases water vapour into the atmosphere, which then condenses on cooler surfaces, such as windows or walls. Keeping a lid on your saucepans is not only more energy efficient and cost efficient (as less heat is lost) but it also reduces the amount of moisture released into your kitchen. If you have a lid, use it, your cooking will be sped up, and you'll save money in the process!



AIR FLOW AND VENTILATION



Allowing air to circulate around your home is vital to reduce condensation, so leave internal doors open during the day, and if you have trickle vents on your windows, keep them open. Sleeping with the bedroom door ajar reduces the buildup of humidity from our breathing and perspiration when we sleep. It's also important to leave space between furniture and the wall, as this aids air flow prevents black mould

and mildew from forming. Likewise, be aware of how you store your belongings; where possible, place cupboards / wardrobes / storage against internal walls, with some space behind and try to avoid piling and stacking items directly against a wall.

BLACK MOULD (CLEANING)

We've all seen it and probably even have our own, found in kitchens and bathrooms; the annoying, unsightly, and persistent black mould. Unfortunately, this little menace is a normal occurrence in warm, wet environments around the home. To reduce the likelihood of black mould, surfaces should be dried (where possible) after use such as showers, bathtubs, and sinks. These areas should also be included in regular cleaning schedules, using specific products to target black mould- HG Mould Remover is one such item, available from Hurst at £6.99.



REPORT ANY STRUCTURAL DEFECTS

We are still on hand and rely on your vigilance to report defects and issues. If you spot a slipped tile on the roof, a leaking pipe or an extractor not working, please let us know: Vectis Housing Repairs **01983 520353**. It is the collection of small things that make the big difference and hopefully make our property a place you can proudly call home.


An advertisement for Hurst First. It features a blue background with various home products and their prices. The central text reads "TRY HURST FIRST". Products include:

- Dehumidifiers from £1.25
- Mould & Mildew from £6.99 (with an image of HG Mould spray)
- Heating from £9.99 (with an image of a wood-burning stove)
- Heated Abers from £59.99 (with an image of a clothes rack)

The website www.tryHURSTfirst.co.uk is listed at the bottom. A logo for "FREE ISLAND DELIVERY When you spend £20 or more" is also present.

FIRE RISKS: LITHIUM-ION BATTERIES

Lithium-ion batteries are found in all types of domestic electrical equipment including e-cigarettes, mobile phones, tablets, laptops, power banks, e-scooters, mobility scooters and electric bikes. The fire risks associated with lithium batteries are regularly circulated on social media. Such violent fires risk serious injury or death and homes being destroyed by fire - people are particularly vulnerable if these batteries are charged overnight whilst they are asleep. By following some simple tips, you can reduce the risk of this happening to you.

SAFETY TIPS FOR HOUSEHOLDERS

DO

- ☐ Only use electrical products that have the UKCA or CE mark.
- ☐ Use the correct charger designed for the device/battery.
- ☐ Regularly check the device, charger plugs and cables for signs of damage and overheating.
- ☐ Dispose of charger plugs and cables immediately if found to be damaged in any way or there is change in colour or appearance.
- ☐ Charge devices in a well-ventilated area, free of materials that could easily catch fire e.g., a kitchen work surface with no cupboards above.
- ☐ Charge devices during the day when there is the opportunity to spot faults early.
- ☐ Charge in an area where there is automatic smoke detection on the ceiling.
- ☐ If you find a device or battery starting to overheat, move it to a safe location outdoors.
- ☐ To extinguish a lithium battery if it starts smoking, rapidly cool it using water. For example, drop a small battery in a cup of water.

DON'T

- ☐ Don't use cheap alternative chargers – they are not subject to rigorous testing and certification.
- ☐ Don't expose batteries to high temperatures or heat sources directly or for extended periods of time e.g., direct sunlight. (Whilst in use: maximum 60°C. During storage: maximum 70°C)
- ☐ NEVER charge devices on soft furnishings, such as beds or sofas.
- ☐ Don't use temporary extension leads and adaptors.
- ☐ Don't place lithium-ion batteries in your normal waste bins/chutes, damaged or undamaged. Contact your local council for guidance on safe disposal.

SERVICE CHARGES

Our costs to provide services to communal areas are increasing and this will be reflected in your service charge from April 2024.

Our contractors, like all businesses, have seen an increase in costs. To maintain a level of service, an increase is necessary, so we wanted to communicate this to you in good time.



The service charge only reflects the cost of the service provided to you. Vectis Housing Association is committed to providing an excellent service that is valued by our residents and represent great value.

If you have to pay a service charge as part of your rent, a detailed breakdown will be sent out in March along with your rent increase notification.

- Cleaning
- Grounds Maintenance
- Refuse Collection
- Electricity
- Fire Equipment Servicing
- Management Fees
- Repairs & Maintenance
- Administration



ALL CHANGE ON THE BOARD



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Following a number of unexpected resignations on the Vectis Board, we have been recruiting new blood. In addition to Malcolm Groves standing down at the end of his allowable six years, we also lost Eileen Green during the year, which followed some other members stepping down at the last AGM. In their place, we have three new members, Tom Norris, who has extensive housing experience, Fiona Gwinnet, who has worked supporting women suffering domestic violence for many years, and Andrew Burroughs who comes with much commercial experience and has been close to our work supporting vulnerable young Islanders.

Finally, Graham Cooper, who is an existing member of the board has become the new Chair.

My usual invitation, if any tenant wishes to become involved in inputting their views and perspectives to Vectis, please get in touch, we would be delighted to hear from you.



BECOME A RESIDENT BOARD MEMBER

The board of Vectis Housing Association is a group of people who volunteer to direct and control the affairs of the organisation. Their job is to ensure that Vectis is financially stable, is solvent, well run and delivers positive outcomes for tenants and communities.

It is good practice for all housing associations to have at least one tenant on their board. This is because residents bring a unique perspective to housing association boards by offering direct service user experience.



Image by 8photo on Freepik_9426579

Board members come from all walks of life. They are expected to have some interest, experience or skill which relates to the association's work and volunteer to carry out tasks like those listed below:

- Setting future strategic direction for VHA
- Deciding which groups of people the association will house
- Deciding what and where to build new homes
- Setting the budget and approving the accounts
- Setting the rents
- Appointing the Chief Executive
- Ensuring that the organisation is well run



If you are interested in being considered for a Resident Board member role there are just five easy steps:

Step 1: Register an interest by emailing us at enquiries@vectishousing.co.uk or calling us on **01983 525985**.

Step 2: Once you register an interest, you'll be asked to attend a 'Resident Board Member - what's it all about?' information session.

At this informal session you'll learn about Vectis H.A, the principles of governance (controlling and directing the Association and balancing the many interests of all stakeholders), the way in which the Board works and the time commitment needed etc. This session is free to attend and refreshments will be provided. We can also reimburse you for any travel costs you may incur getting to the meeting.

Step 3: If you are interested in the role following the information session, you'll be asked to fill in a form registering your interest in becoming a Resident Board member.

Step 4: Once we have received it, you may then be invited to meet with us for an informal interview based on the role. They will discuss with you the role and responsibilities of being a Vectis Board member and the skills and experience you think you could bring.

Step 5: If we feel that you have suitable skills and experience for a Resident Board member position, you will be formally appointed and asked to join one of the Board committees. You will also be fully supported to take on the role through an induction process. Once you have built up some knowledge and confidence on a Board Committee, you will be asked to join the main Board. If we have more candidates than places available, we will keep your application on file until another Resident Board member vacancy comes up.



VECTIS DROP-IN LAUNCHED IN EAST COWES



Here at Vectis Housing, we are dedicated to offering support to all our residents, not just in matters of housing, but with day to day issues, worries and concerns which may arise.

With the cost-of-living crisis, and with additional pressure on households, getting through a day, a week or a month can sometimes feel like a real challenge, it is important to us that we can support our residents through these difficult times.

As such, our new Community Welfare Officer (Vikki) is on hand to support you with any questions, concerns or struggles you might be having. Whether you are battling with your fuel bills, are unsure about who to speak to about a difficult situation or are feeling a little lonely as the autumn begins to draw in, we'd like to encourage you to get in touch with Vikki, for a chat.

Vikki has set up regular drop-ins at The East Side Curve, in East Cowes, where she'll be on hand for anyone who would like to pop in for a chat. You don't need an appointment, she'll be there on the first and third Friday of the month between 10am - 11am, alternatively, you can call her on **01983 525985** or email her on vikki@vectishousing.co.uk

Vikki is planning on setting up similar drop-ins at other locations around the Island very soon, so keep your eyes peeled for more updates.



THE ISLE OF WIGHT FOODBANK: YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

How much do you know about the Isle of Wight Foodbank? Maybe you've donated to it, maybe you've used it, or maybe you'd like to know more about what they do and how they help Islanders during this challenging time.

I was lucky enough to chat with the Isle of Wight Foodbank's Manager recently, who gave me an insight into the great work that the Foodbanks do across the Island, how they are working with people in crisis, and preventing Island households from going hungry.

WHAT IS THE ISLE OF WIGHT FOODBANK?

The Isle of Wight Foodbank is part of The Trussel Trust's network of 428 foodbanks working to tackle food poverty and hunger across the UK, here on the Island there are 5 Foodbanks (or Cafés) plus a clothing and textile foodbank.

The Isle of Wight Foodbank provides food parcels for between 450 - 600

people each month, via their Cafés across the Island. Donations of both food and money come from the public, this might be via schools, churches, local businesses, or from the generosity of individuals via the supermarket donation points.

Food donations are distributed to the Cafés across the Island and are then provided to those who are in food crisis, in the form of a food parcel of 3 days of emergency food.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO IF I NEED HELP?

If you are struggling to put food on the table, the most important step is to get a foodbank voucher, (you will need this before you go along to one of the Cafés).

Here at Vectis Housing, we are a registered referring agent for the Foodbank, so get in touch with us on **01983 525985**, and we can help you with this step, alternatively, you can obtain your voucher through Citizens Advice, Salvation Army, Two Saints Outreach, Barnardo's or a number of other agencies.

Once you have your voucher, you can go along to your chosen Café during their opening hours to collect your package of 3 days of emergency food.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I GET THERE?

When you first arrive, a Foodbank volunteer will greet you, and get you a cuppa (and some biscuits I'm reliably informed!) and will stay with you throughout the whole process. It's a sociable and informal environment; the volunteer will answer any questions you have and will support you on the selection of your parcel of emergency food.

If you have any food allergies, the Café will accommodate as best they can (based around what they have available). In addition to items of emergency food, you will be able to collect toiletries, cleaning products, pet food, and some treats such as crisps and chocolates etc.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT THE FOODBANK?



The foodbank couldn't continue its brilliant work without its team of 100+ volunteers, or without the kind generosity of those who donate money or food items. If you would like to support them, you can do so by becoming a volunteer, donating food items, donating money or donating unwanted clothing, shoes and textiles. More details can be found on their website **www.isleofwight.foodbank.org.uk** or by calling them on **01983 292040**.



EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

TRANSGENDER AWARENESS - WHAT DOES IT MEANT TO BE TRANSGENDER?

Being transgender is a term used to describe a person whose gender identity does not match the sex they were assigned at birth. It is a gender identity that is independent of biological sex and it may be accompanied with a strong desire to transition to the gender with which one identifies. Transgender people may identify as female, male, non-binary, gender non-conforming, or another gender identity that is not binary.

Transgender Awareness Week is annual event that takes place during the week 13-19 November. It leads up to Transgender Day of Remembrance, which is held on 20 November annually.

Transgender Awareness Week is dedicated to raising the visibility of transgender and gender non-conforming people, as well as addressing the issues the community faces. During this week, people come together to celebrate, educate, and advocate for transgender rights and acceptance.



THERE'S PLENTY OF SUPPORT COVERING ALL AGES:

Both Out on An Island and Isle of Wight Citizens Advice provides further links to a variety of support groups:

<https://www.citizensadviceiw.org.uk/news/lgbt-support>
<https://outonanisland.co.uk/support/>



CHRISTMAS OPENING 2023
Seasons Greetings to all!

*Please note during the Christmas period
our offices will be closed from
5pm on Thursday 21st December 2023 and
will reopen 9am Tuesday 2nd January 2024*

Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience caused.

For **emergency repairs** please telephone: **01983 520353**

Home Swapper

The mutual exchange solutions for tenants and landlords

Want to Move Home?

HomeSwapper.co.uk's local & national service means mutual exchange is better than ever. It's the UK's largest community of social housing tenants looking to swap homes.

- Tenants from over 1,000 landlords are registered
- 2 out of 3 matched to potential swaps in 24 hours
- hundreds of households move every month

How it works:

1



Join the website

2



...we find you potential swaps

3



You get match e-mail or SMS alerts

4



Find your new home!

HOME SWAPPER

If you have an assured tenancy with Vectis you have free access to the services offered by HomeSwapper. The system is easy to use and has already helped many residents find a new home better suited to their needs.

VISIT US:

www.facebook.com/VectisHousing
www.vectishousing.co.uk

CONTACT US:

Emergency Repairs
Phone Vectis Repair Line:
01983 520353



Chapel House operates on an appointment basis. If you would like to speak to a member of staff face to face, please call 01983 525985 so that we may book a suitable date and time for you to visit us.

Please call this number to report emergency repairs. Inappropriate use may result in any additional costs being re-charged to you.

*Please do not use the text service for emergencies, especially over bank holidays as we will not receive them out of hours. Please phone these through on the maintenance line **01983 520353**.*

All other enquiries: **01983 525985**
enquiries@vectishousing.co.uk