



Tenants Newsletter

December 2020

CHISEL Ltd
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Tel: 020 8692 5258

CHISEL wish you a merry and safe Christmas and a happy New Year, despite the coronavirus. We look forward with hope to turning a new page in 2021.

Holiday Opening Hours

CHISEL's office will close on Thursday 24th December at 12:30pm.

CHISEL will re-open on Monday 4th January 2021 at 9:00am.

Our out of hours emergency service will operate while CHISEL is closed - call **020 8692 5258** and you will be connected to it.

Stay safe over the winter break!

If you plan to go away in winter, stop your water pipes getting frozen.

Either:

leave your central heating on very low (eg a frost setting).

Or:

turn your water off at the stop cock and run the taps for a bit to empty out the remaining water in the pipes, so it doesn't freeze.

TIP: Stopcocks are often under the sink or in the front hall cupboard.



Transformation of CHISEL

This year, we commissioned someone to help us by reviewing the whole organisation and how we work. This has led to us embarking on what we're calling the 'Transformation' of CHISEL.

This will include changes in our staffing structure, and in how the staff work. We will have two Housing Officers rather than one, and are creating a new post of 'Governance Officer'. We will be carrying out an internal audit of our management processes and reviewing our policies, comparing CHISEL with other small housing associations and providing training for both our staff and Board, all with the aim of providing a better service for tenants.

Our Transformation Programme is to run from January 2021 to January 2023 – a 24 month plan where we can expect to see some quick changes

over the first few months and more gradual shifts over the coming year and into 2022. It will move us towards a much more efficient and tenant focused organisation.

We want tenants to be at the heart of CHISEL, so will be creating more ways that tenants can be involved in making decisions about the future of the organisation – see elsewhere in this newsletter for more about this.



Message from the Chair

Dear Residents,

There is no escaping that for most of us this has been a very difficult year. Some tenants have lost loved ones during the Covid pandemic; I send my personal deepest condolences to all those who have suffered bereavements. There are those of you too who may be suffering from ill health, perhaps made worse by the stress and worry of the pandemic. In addition, some residents have had their incomes significantly affected being forced into unemployment or by losing self-employment business. All residents have our heartfelt thoughts and our best wishes go out to you all.

Since the last newsletter published in early June this year the Board has carried on meeting behind the scenes to continue to develop and shape CHISEL. The staff have continued to run the organisation providing residents with all the services of repairs and maintenance, housing management, property health and safety, allocation of new tenancies and rent collection. The staff team have continued to run the organisation successfully without a lead managing director in post.



Unfortunately, our facilitated consultation programme which began successfully in January had to halt in March due to the lock down situation. I am very pleased to report that consultation with Jane Eyles will resume again over the coming months.

Before recruiting for a new director or chief officer for CHISEL the Board decided to have an in-depth review of the whole organisation. This was undertaken by social housing adviser Steve McNaughton over the summer during August and September. The main recommendation of the review was to take CHISEL through a carefully planned programme of changes that will address many of the review findings. This Transformation Project is to be put into action by the Board and Staff over the coming months.

Some of the transformational tasks ahead will have a noticeable effect on the delivery of services and we would like tenants to get involved with feedback as they see or feel the changes happen. See Tenant Involvement below. Also see the headline summary of the Transformation Project and some of the changes you can expect to see over the coming months.

To all CHISEL's residents,

On behalf of the Board I wish you the very best over the coming holiday season,

Louise Owen (Chair)

Tenant Survey

As you will have read elsewhere in this newsletter, CHISEL has recruited an additional housing officer. The objective is to improve services to CHISEL tenants. Critical to delivering improvements to services are the views of tenants. To capture our tenants' opinions we have commissioned an organisation called Acuity to coordinate a survey to take place in January 2020. The results of the survey will influence how services are delivered in the future and we are encouraging all tenants to complete the survey.

Tenants at the heart of the organisation

A priority for CHISEL's transformation is to set up a variety of avenues for residents who would like to become involved in shaping CHISEL's future. Are you someone who wants to know what goes on behind the scenes or how decisions are made? Get in touch or answer Yes to the CHISEL texts calling for participants in the different forums that are to be set up or reinstated:

Tenant Scrutiny Committee - examines and comments on strategy and policy

Resident Events - workshops - discussion - sharing skills

Tenant Training - Fire Wardens - Maintenance - Communication skills - Understanding Social Housing

Residents Evening - end of March - this event is in the planning stage and we welcome ideas and suggestions - see the separate item on page 4.

Look out for our Tenants' Survey in January - let us know what you think of our services to you. Tell us what we need to improve and how you think it should be done - make suggestions for events - what do you think of the Newsletter - what else do you want CHISEL to provide? £10 voucher for every tenant who completes and returns the Survey.

Community Chest - groups of tenants can apply for a grant to fund improvements to communal areas and for communal activities that promote togetherness

Resident Competitions in 2021
Photography competitions - at home with CHISEL - what does your home mean to you?

Garden competition - photograph your home.

Resident exhibitions

Photos submitted for the competitions will be displayed on our website gallery.

News & updates - Have we got your email address?

Send it to us and you'll receive updates, news and information digitally to your email. Email involvement@chisel.org.uk

Have you accessed your Tenant Account recently?

If you have had repairs, we welcome your feedback about the quality of repair service - if we don't know you have had a poor service we won't know we need to improve...



Focus Groups

In 2021 we will be organising focus groups for interested tenants to meet the board, staff and other tenants to talk about their experiences at CHISEL and contribute to CHISEL's service improvement plans. The panels will consist of a maximum of 6 tenants. If you would like to participate in one of these meetings please email involvement@chisel.org.uk



Residents Meeting

The next Residents Meeting will be in March 2021 – we will let all tenants know the date closer to the time. We expect it to be a normal Zoom video meeting (not a webinar), with attendees able to speak and ask questions of Board and staff. We plan to have breakout rooms on different topics, as well as everyone together. Topics will include the progress of the Transformation Plan described in the Chair's message in this newsletter, the ongoing resident consultation including with self-builders, and feedback from the upcoming Tenant Survey.

We welcome your suggestions of topics and format – please send them to involvement@chisel.org.uk



New staff member: Tyreke West-Cohen

CHISEL has added a member of staff: Tyreke West-Cohen is working on housing management and repairs, on a fixed term contract till May 2021. Tyreke has been at CHISEL before – he provided cover at CHISEL for 3 months in late 2019.

Many residents met him when he welcomed attendees to our September 2019 AGM and Residents Meeting.

Tyreke is from Lewisham. He studied accounting and management at the University of Essex, and has worked at Phoenix and Clarion housing associations.

Tyreke's email address is tyreke@chisel.org.uk



CHISEL Staff



Operations Manager
Carmen Clarke
operations@chisel.org.uk
(4 days pw, Monday-Thursday)



Finance Manager
Nigel Spice
financemanager@chisel.org.uk
(2 days pw: Monday & Thursday)



Housing Officer
Andrew Logan
andrew@chisel.org.uk
repairs@chisel.org.uk
(4 days pw, Monday-Thursday)



Housing Officer
Tyreke West-Cohen
tyreke@chisel.org.uk
repairs@chisel.org.uk
(4 days pw, Monday-Thursday)



Finance & Income Officer
Shirley Skyers
rents@chisel.org.uk
financeofficer@chisel.org.uk
(4 days pw: Monday-Thursday)



Co-ops & Tenants Officer
Mark Allan
involvement@chisel.org.uk
(2 days pw: Monday & Thursday)