



Here we are with our winter newsletter and that means 2021 is upon us! I hope that, however you spent the festive season, it was a peaceful one and that you, your friends and family remain safe and well.

Having entered Tier 4 restrictions from 26th December 2020, and subsequently national lockdown from 5th January 2021, Cambridgeshire continues to see high levels of Coronavirus spread, and at Hundred Houses, we have been following the latest Government guidance and reviewing our services to ensure we all remain safe. While we continue to provide as many services as possible, our office remains closed and we can only undertake essential repairs and safety works while the current restrictions are in place. Please see our website for further details.

If we need to visit you during this time, we will minimise the length of the visit and follow our COVID-19 Secure arrangements. If you would like more details, our leaflet can be found at www.hhs.org.uk or you can contact us and we will send a hard copy to you.

We know that the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has been hard to bear. Not only has this been a time of worry about the health of yourself and those around you, but also the uncertainty of employment and possible financial difficulties have caused stress and anxiety for many people.

Our team are here and, by simply calling or emailing us, you can share your concerns and we will help you access the support you may need.

Whether that's help understanding how to make a rent payment, accessing the benefits or grants you may be entitled to or accessing groups that could help with social isolation, please get in contact.

Planned Works Programme
Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we had to defer the majority of new kitchens and bathrooms during 2020. We will be in contact with tenants who are due a new kitchen or bathroom to hopefully make alternative arrangements for 2021, but if you wish to contact us in the meantime, then please do so.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for the New Year and hope that 2021 brings brighter times for us all.

Tracey Spencer
Executive Operations Director

Changes to Your Rent

The majority of HHS rent charges will increase from April 2021 by 1.5%. This is an inflationary increase based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) of 0.5% plus 1%, and is the maximum increase allowed by the Government.

This additional rental income will generate around £120,000 across the year and will be re-invested to ensure we deliver our Corporate Strategy priorities.

Providing safe and well-maintained homes remains a key priority and, in addition to the £1.2m already earmarked for investment in existing homes, the additional rental income will help us to:

- ✓ Replace an additional 10 kitchens and bathrooms in homes that require them
- ✓ Improve energy efficiency in the homes that are the most expensive to run
- ✓ Increase the frequency of electrical safety testing in homes from 10-yearly to 5-yearly

We will be writing to all tenants over the coming weeks advising of the new charges from April 2021.

If you are worried about making your rent payments or have any other concerns, please contact us on 01223 315036 or email info@hhs.org.uk and a member of our team will help you, whatever your situation.

A message from the HHS Residents' Association

The Hundred Houses Society Residents' Association Annual General Meeting (AGM) is normally held in June each year but, due to COVID-19, it was not possible to have one in 2020. As a result, the Residents' Association Committee has agreed for the accounts to be adopted without holding an AGM.

The accounts have been audited by our accountant, Mike Parks. We now need the involvement of a few residents to check the accounts, agree them as an accurate record of our finances, and to propose them for formal adoption.

If you are willing to be part of this process, please contact us and a copy of the accounts can be sent to you.

Email: hhrefsidentsassociation@hotmail.com
Facebook: [@hundredhousesRA](https://www.facebook.com/hundredhousesRA)
or telephone the HHS Customer Services Team on 01223 315036.

We would really appreciate your support.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for 2021.

Hilary Bayles
Chair of the HHS Residents' Association

Contacting Us

Our office remains closed to customers but all of our team are working remotely and are still available should you need to get in touch.

Call us on
01223 315036
or email
info@hhs.org.uk

08:30 and 17:30
(Mon to Thurs)
and
08:30 to 17:00
(Fri)

Visit www.hhs.org.uk



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Complete the Friends Against Scams awareness session today:
www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/learning/Cambridgehhs

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Better by You...

As we enter 2021 we are adopting the recently launched National Housing Federation's 'Together with Tenants' charter. This charter is a set of six commitments that we are making to help build stronger relationships with residents, improve accountability and trust, and make sure your views are at the heart of our strategic decision-making.

In summary, the six commitments are:

- **Relationships:** making sure we treat all residents with respect and base our relationships with residents on openness, honesty and transparency
- **Communication:** ensuring we provide information which is clear, accessible, timely and about matters which are important to you
- **Voice and Influence:** showing we value your views and use them when making decisions. You should feel listened to and be able to speak up without fear
- **Accountability:** enabling you to independently scrutinise us and hold us to account for the decisions that affect the quality of homes and services
- **Quality:** making sure all homes are good quality, well-maintained, safe and well-managed
- **When things go wrong:** making sure we have a simple, accessible, and timely route for you to raise issues or make a complaint, and that you receive support when things go wrong

You have told us that it is important for us to listen to you and act on what you say.

This is your opportunity to share your views on what the above charter means for you and for Hundred Houses Society. Tell us what you think is important for us to do to meet these commitments. **If you are interested in sharing your views on one or more of the above six commitments then please get in contact and regularly visit our website as there will be opportunities throughout the year to feedback.**

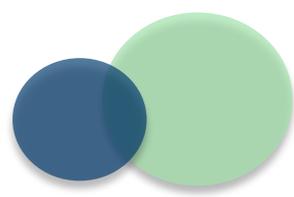
In January, we will be talking with our Scrutiny Panel, which is a group of residents who are committed to helping us improve. They will help us scope the resident-wide consultation over the coming months and will hold us to account on the progress we are making.

You too can help us improve by getting involved. However much or little time you have spare, there are a range of ways you can volunteer and contribute to improving HHS.

To make a difference this year, please get in touch.



Housing Ombudsman Service



In July 2020, the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) issued its new Complaint Handling Code, which sets out good practice to enable landlords to respond to residents' complaints quickly and fairly. The purpose of the Code is to ensure that all social housing landlords resolve complaints in an effective, fair and consistent way and use the learning from complaints to drive service improvements.

As part of the introduction of the new Code, social landlords are required to complete a self-assessment against the Code and share the results with residents. We have published our self-assessment online and it can be found at <https://www.hhs.org.uk/news/complaints-review-1225>

If you would like a hard copy please get in contact by calling us on 01223 315036.

The self-assessment has resulted in five key areas for us to improve and includes:

- reviewing our Complaints policy
- having a designated Complaints Officer to help resolve complaints
- training employees on our new policy
- publishing our policy and raising awareness so it is easy for residents to hold us to account
- proactively contacting customers to learn from complaints

Jackie Trower has taken on the co-ordination of any complaints as part of her role as our Customer Service Team Manager. Jackie will take the lead on ensuring complaints are resolved quickly and fairly, and that we learn when we get things wrong.



If you would like to be involved in reviewing our Complaints policy, we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch and share your views and ideas to help us improve.

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/landlords-info/complaint-handling-code/>

If you need an emergency repair outside of our opening hours, please call us on 01223 315036 and press 1 to be connected to our emergency repairs service.



Alternatively, you can call 0845 303 9717, **although please note calls to this number will cost up to 7p per minute from a landline.**

Charges from a mobile may be significantly higher depending on your mobile provider.

The Government has recently published its Housing White Paper, 'A Charter for Social Housing Residents' which not only looks to strengthen the regulation of social housing landlords, but also supports a more open and transparent relationship between landlords and their tenants. A summary can be found at <https://www.tpas.org.uk/the-white-paper>

