

**Island Cottages Limited**



# Spring Newsletter 2024



Easter is approaching and we hope this Newsletter finds you all keeping safe and well.

If you have any concerns that we may be able to help with or signpost you to the correct person do not hesitate to contact us in the office. Numbers for our out of hours repair emergencies are included in this newsletter.

**Telephone:** 741001

**Email:** [islandcottages@outlook.com](mailto:islandcottages@outlook.com)

**By letter:** 1 Taylor Court, The Green, Shorwell, PO30 3LQ

**Website:** <https://www.island-cottages.co.uk/>



## OFFICE OPENING HOURS

Please be aware that the office will be open on Monday 9-4pm, Tuesday 10am until 4pm, Wednesday, Thursday, 9.00am until 4.00pm. and Friday 10am until 4pm.

Occasionally, some of you have not had your call answered on our normal working days. As you are aware, we only ever have one member of staff in the office on a working day and unfortunately if that member of staff is off sick there will be no one available to answer your call.

Also, staff will occasionally have holidays which also means the office will be closed. When holidays occur, we will try to make sure the office has cover or that another member of staff will come into the office to check the answer phone.

General Enquiries: [islandcottages@outlook.com](mailto:islandcottages@outlook.com)

Rent Enquiries: [islandcottagesfinance@outlook.com](mailto:islandcottagesfinance@outlook.com)

Housing Manager Enquiries: [islandcottageshousing@outlook.com](mailto:islandcottageshousing@outlook.com) You can of course contact any of these emails for any issues and we will direct them to the correct person but bear in mind that our Finance Manager only works on a Tuesday and our Housing Manager only works on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

All repairs should be phoned through to any member of staff Monday to Friday.

## Please Read - Changes to Out of Hours

### OUT OF HOURS

When the office is closed, please report **emergency electrical repairs** directly to

**LEMLEC on 01983 294557**

**emergency plumbing** repairs directly to:

**Clarke's Mechanical on 01983 299908**

If you are having difficulty in contacting either of these contractors, you may contact your own contractor for emergencies only. If you do contact your own contractor to undertake works without contacting the above we will require further detailed information from you including times you tried to contact our emergency contractor, circumstances etc.

## RESIDENT CONTACT DETAILS

If you have an email address that you access please can you pop an email to us at [islandcottages@outlook.com](mailto:islandcottages@outlook.com) as this is the fastest, most cost effective and also environmentally friendly way of communication. Thank You.

## Rent Accounts

May we take this opportunity to remind you that your rent is payable in advance. We know our statements can be difficult to understand so we've tried to make them more user friendly but if you have any queries, please contact Annalie. (Finance Manager) in the office or by email [islandcottagesfinance@outlook.com](mailto:islandcottagesfinance@outlook.com)

## 2023 Inspections/Surveys



The 2023 survey is now completed and was primarily for programming future improvements where we must predict potential failures and ensure we have sufficient finance to carry out the work and equally, ensuring that we do not overspend.

**Please find attached our 2023 performance Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for your information. The report also shows the Satisfaction Survey comparison between us and with Vectis House Association. You have already received the full report for the satisfaction survey.**



### ACCESS FOR INSPECTIONS/APPOINTMENTS

We would just like to remind you that it is in your tenancy agreement that access must be given in order for your landlord or your landlord's representatives to carry out necessary works/repairs and inspections. We appreciate there are a number of occasions access is required in order that we may carry out essential maintenance/chimney sweeps/ fire safety

checks etc however I am sure you will appreciate these are essential so we can keep your home in good order.

However, we are aware that in these unusual circumstances some tenants may be reluctant to have Trades people in their homes, If you have any concerns regarding this please contact us so that we can discuss and try to resolve any issues. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued co-operation, however, should you experience any difficulties please do contact us.

**SMOKE & CO ALARMS – Although we carry out annual checks, please remember the Fire Service recommend you check the batteries in your smoke and CO alarms every week to ensure they are working. If you experience any difficulties with either of the alarms including battery replacement, please contact us immediately.**

## Damp and Condensation

We are now approaching the time of year where damp and condensation may become a problem in UK homes, particularly when the temperature drops very low outside.

There are 3 main causes of damp - Rising Damp, Penetrating Damp and Condensation.

**Rising and Penetrating Damp are problems that are fully our responsibility and after reading the attached/enclosed advice article from National Energy Action, (who are a charity offering free advice on energy matters), you think you have a Rising or Penetrating Damp problem, please contact us as soon as possible on 01983 741001.**

Condensation is a joint responsibility. For tenants, you should follow the guidance in the enclosed/attached advice note and for us as Landlords, we should offer advice and consider any improvements that may reduce condensation, e.g. providing extractor fans where you do not have any and help to improve the insulation value of your home.

If you have any queries or worries regarding damp in your home, please contact us.

National Energy Action also offers lots of free energy advice to help with fuel poverty and this can be found on their website [nea.org.uk](http://nea.org.uk).

## **Allocations, Transfers and Exchanges**

All Registered social housing providers must comply with Standards set by the Social Housing Regulator and Government, one of these standards is the Tenancy Standard which includes Allocations and Mutual Exchanges.

There is an expectation within the Standard that Registered Providers, such as ourselves, shall cooperate with local authorities' strategic housing function and their duties to meet identified local housing needs. This includes assistance with local authorities' homelessness duties and meeting obligations in nominating agreements.

In the past, as Island Cottages are a small and relatively unknown social housing provider on the Island, those in need would contact the larger housing associations on the Island and IW Council. We had very few applicants and those that we did have were not in critical need and none were what might be considered urgent.

There are four housing associations on the Island, namely, Southern Housing Group, Sovereign Housing, Vectis Housing and ourselves. All the other housing associations have signed up to what is known as Island Homefinder with the Isle of Wight Council who administer the letting system. The Council operates the Housing Register and will only place applicants that qualify onto the Register/Homefinder. The qualifying process is far more rigorous than ours and ensures that only those in need are housed.

Therefore, we no longer keep our own Housing Register and liaise with Isle of Wight Council as and when a vacancy in our properties occurs.

However, there is an opportunity for our tenants to exchange or transfer into an existing Island Cottages property providing they are eligible and if you are interested in being placed on our internal list, please contact Sarah on 01983 741001 or email any of the staff via the emails provided at the beginning of this newsletter.

**Message from the Housing  
Manager**

# Housing Ombudsman Service

Island Cottages Ltd are members of the Housing Ombudsman scheme. Although we have a Complaints Policy, you can contact them direct if you wish but they may refer you back to us to deal with your complaint through our policy.

Complaints may be difficult to determine as any concern might be a complaint e.g., a repair you are reporting. If, however, the repair has not been actioned within a certain time. (All Island Cottages reactive repairs should have been actioned within 1 month), then it becomes more serious, and you can then commence the official complaint process. We would hope it doesn't get to this stage and will work with you to try and resolve any concerns before they get to this stage, but you can contact the Ombudsman if this is the course of action you want to take.

Attached/enclosed with this newsletter is a guidance note for contacting the Ombudsman, but details are:

- Online complaint form: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/make-a-complaint/)
- Phone: **0300 111 3000**
- Email: [info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk)
- Postal Address: **Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool L33 7WQ**

The Ombudsman Service also has on its website an area where residents can access to see what type of complaints you can complain about and what service you should be receiving from us.

This can be seen by logging onto the following website.

<https://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/residents/>

## On Universal or Pension credit?

Essential Broadband is Here

The same speeds but at a more affordable rate, for those on Universal or Pension Credit.



\*Fibred areas only. To qualify you must be receiving Universal Credit or Pension Credit.



**A low cost full-fibre broadband for the home, available if you're on Universal or Pension credit. Stay connected and enjoy broadband that just works.**

## Who is eligible?

WightFibre Essential Broadband is available to anyone who is currently claiming Universal Credit or Pension Credit. You can apply if you're a new customer or an existing customer. Only the person who is claiming the benefit can apply.

**With all the news of the latest energy price hikes please find some sources of information that may be helpful if you are struggling with rising costs.**

**Applying for or Updating Universal Credit.**

**A few of our tenants have said that when they have applied for Universal Credit or are Updating their existing, they have been told that Island Cottages has not been recognised as a social housing provider. We have also had this conversation with them before as they see Island Cottages as a holiday provider!**

**If you do apply and they query Island Cottages with you, tell them that our registration number is L1815 and we can be found on the Government website for Registered Social Housing Providers.**



We save most households £200 per year on their energy bills. We can help you switch to a cheaper supplier, reduce your energy and water use which will help you stay in budget. We also help people access grants and other assistance. Every year we help over 1000 people including young families, veterans, pensioners and disabled people. We work in partnership with many organisations including Island Cottages.

To book a visit, please email [visits@footprint-trust.co.uk](mailto:visits@footprint-trust.co.uk) or call 01983 822282.

## Help for Households

The logo for 'Help for Households' is a white rectangular box with a thin black border, containing the text 'Help for Households' in a bold, teal-colored sans-serif font. This box is centered within a larger teal rectangular background.

Help for households is a government website explaining how you can gain financial support:

If you claim certain benefits or tax credits, you may be eligible for an extra payment to help with the cost of living. If you're eligible, payments will be made automatically.

<https://helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk>

Turn to us is a national charity helping people in financial hardship to see what benefits, grants and resources that may be available to them.

Turn to us calculator: <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/>



Direct.gov Universal credit information

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/other-financial-support>



<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/universal-credit/>

## **GETTING HELP PAYING YOUR ENERGY BILLS**

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills/>



Support with gas, electric and water bills - Isle of Wight

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/connectforcommunities/supportforfamilies/supportwithbills-overview/utilities-iow>

## Easter Events

Isle of Wight Art & Garden Fair – Northwood House 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> April from 10 – 5pm

Isle of Wight Walking Festival – From 11<sup>th</sup> May – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024

Isle of Wight Steam Railway: -

- The Great Railway Easter Hunt – 29<sup>th</sup> March – 12<sup>th</sup> April 2024
- Real Ale Festival – 4<sup>th</sup> May – 6<sup>th</sup> May 2024
- Model Railway Exhibition – 11<sup>th</sup> May – 12<sup>th</sup> May 2024
- Festival of Transport – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2024



# KPI's ON 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2023

## FINAL FOR YEAR

### Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) - Statistics

- New Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) – Statistical Information
- The following statistics have been collected since January 2023 and have been presented at Board meetings from January 2023. Where coloured red they will be adverse i.e., not meeting targets with an explanation why. The TSM's for Perception Surveys (TP01 to TP12) have now been completed and added to this final set of statistics for the year 2023.
- There is ongoing discussion with the Regulator as to what TSM's should be provided by Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) with under 1000 units such as ourselves which should be decided in 2024. When this has been decided we will switch to the requirements agreed but in the meantime, we will continue with the requirements for RSL's with over 1000 units as we have done so for 2023.
- The TSM's for Management Information will be provided on each Board paper accumulated from January 1<sup>st</sup>, of each year. The perception surveys remain valid for RSL's with under 1000 units for 2 years and another survey will not be undertaken until 2025 unless there is a significant change following the Regulators consultation with RSL's with under 1000 units.
- TSM's Collected from Perception Surveys
  - TP01 – Overall Satisfaction
  - TP02 – Satisfaction with Repairs
  - TP03 – Satisfaction with time taken to complete most recent repair.
  - TP04 – Satisfaction that the home is well maintained.
  - TP05 – Satisfaction that the home is safe.
  - TP06 – Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.
  - TP07 – Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them.
  - TP08 – Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect.
  - TP09 – Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints
  - TP10 – Satisfaction that the landlord keeps communal areas clean and well maintained.
  - TP11 – Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.
  - TP12 – Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling anti-social behaviour
- Results of 2023 Survey - Going forward, we can compare with the results from this survey and the next when we should expect an improvement, but we have included above the results from Vectis Housing's survey for 2023 in comparison.

#### Island Cottages

#### Vectis Housing

- |          |     |     |
|----------|-----|-----|
| • TP01 – | 96% | 91% |
| • TP02 – | 93% | 90% |
| • TP03 – | 93% | 89% |
| • TP04 – | 91% | 93% |

- TP05 – 95% Included in above figure.
- TP06 – 86% 81%
- TP07 – 91% 90%
- TP08 – 96% 89%
- TP09 – 100% 72%
- TP10 – 73% 83%
- TP11 – 80% 80%
- TP12 – 67% 68%

- We will analyse the scores and comments on the questionnaire and speak to our tenants who marked any questions lower than Very Satisfied or Fairly Satisfied to ascertain where they think we are failing.
- We would like to achieve a minimum of 95% plus in all areas, but we need to recognise the difficulty in having skewed results as we have so few properties and if we only have a few answers and a couple are lower than the Satisfied result then results will show poorly.

- TSM's Generated from Management Information

- CH01 – Complaints relative to the size of the landlord
- CH02 – Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code timescales.
- NM01 – Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord
- RP01 – Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard
- RP02 – Repairs completed within target timescales.
- BS01 – Gas safety checks
- BS02 – Fire safety checks
- BS03 – Asbestos safety checks
- BS04 – Water safety checks
- BS05 – Lift safety checks

- From January 1st 2023 to 27<sup>th</sup> December 2023

- CH01 – Complaints relative to size of landlord
- Formal Complaints – Stage 1 = 0% Target 0%
- Formal Complaints – Stage 2 = 2.8% Target 0%

- Complaint refers to (redacted) which Board members are aware of. CLOSED

- CH02 – Complaints responded to within Complaint Handling Code Timescales
- Formal Complaints – Stage 1 = 0% Target 100%
- Formal Complaints – Stage 2 = 100% Target 100%

- NM01 – Anti-social behaviour cases relative to the size of the landlord

- Anti-social cases = 0% Target 0%
- Those involving hate = 0% Target 0%

- RP01 – Homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard

- Failures = 0 Target 0

- The following on RP02 relate to those repairs completed or late to gain the 'within target' statistic. Cancellations and those within timescales are not included.

- RP02 – Completed Repairs within target timescale.
- Emergency (within 24 hours)
  - Within target = 7      Outside target = 0
  - Percentage Within = 100%      Target      100%
  - Average number of days taken = 1      Target      1 Day
  - Average number of visits = 1      Target      2 visits
- All Completed Emergency Repairs Raised to Date = 7
- Urgent (within 5 working days)
  - Within target = 32      Outside target = 1
  - Percentage Within = 97%      Target      98%
  - Average number of days taken = 2      Target      5 working days
  - 1 late order – 2 days late as tenant made appointment after completion due date. Average attendance is 3 working days so within 5 working days target.
- Average number of visits = 1      Target      2 visits
- All Completed Urgent Repairs Raised to Date = 33
- Routine (within 30 working days)
  - Within target = 41      Outside target = 2
  - Percentage Within = 95%      Target      98%
  - Average number of days taken = 9      Target      30 working days
  - Average number of visits = 1      Target      2 visits
  - 2 late orders – One order 7 days late and one order 9 days late. New contractor used but didn't meet target dates set. Average attendance is 9 working days so well within 30 working days target.
- All Completed Routine Repairs Raised to Date = 43

Total Reactive Completed Repairs Raised = 83

- BS01 – Gas Safety Checks (Annual)
  - Percentage Checked = 100%      Target      100%
- BS02 – Fire Safety Checks (Annual)
  - Specifically, this relates to flats and statutory checks. We do not have any flats that meets the criteria mentioned but all our properties have smoke and CO detectors where required and these are checked and serviced annually. We will report on these.
  - Percentage Checked = 100%      Target      100%
- BS03 – Asbestos Safety Checks
  - Percentage Checked = 97%      Target      100%
  - All properties except 1 have been surveyed. Access cannot be gained in the remaining property due to domestic issues but the professional survey in 2015 did not identify any asbestos in the property and the same can be presumed now.
- BS04 – Water Safety Checks (Legionella)
  - Percentage Checked = 100%      Target      100%
- BS05 – Lift Safety Checks
  - Island Cottages do not have any passenger lifts and will not be reporting on this statistic.
- December 2023