

**Island Cottages Limited**



# Summer Newsletter 2024



Summer is just around the corner, 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.

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 Friday 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.

# TRANSFER TO VECTIS HOUSING ASSOCIATION

The transfer of engagements with Vectis Housing is on-going and we will keep you advised of major milestones as and when they occur. At the moment, we are about to enter into due diligence discussions which is when both organisations need to legally answer questions about their respective companies.

You will have already received the report and results of the survey which all residents received and disappointingly, only 16 replies were received (44%), but all were in favour to transfer to Vectis Housing except 1 who abstained.

Although all were invited to the AGM when representatives of Vectis Housing were in attendance we are willing to arrange and have another meeting with all residents to discuss any issues/concerns you may have. Please could you contact the Administrator on [islandcottages@outlook.com](mailto:islandcottages@outlook.com) or contact the office 01983 741001.

## 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)



## 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.**

## 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 co-operate 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.**



**The  
Footprint  
Trust**

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

A green rectangular box with a white border containing the text "Help for Households" in white, bold, sans-serif font.

Help for Households

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/>

A pink square containing the text "turn 2US" in a bold, sans-serif font. "turn" is in orange and "2US" is in black.

turn  
2US

Direct.gov Universal credit information

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

A blue speech bubble containing the text "citizens advice" in white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

citizens  
advice

<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>

### Summer Events

- IOW Festival – 20<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2024
- Highdown Inn Beer Festival, Totland – 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> July 2024
- IOW County Show – 13<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024
- Cowes Week 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> July 2024
- Ventnor Fringe – 19<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> July 2024
- The Chale Show – 3<sup>rd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> August 2024
- Jack Up summer Party – 10<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> August 2024
- Sunset Sessions – Blackgang Chine – 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> August 2024
- The Wight Proms – 11<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> August 2024
- Isle of Wight Garlic Festival – 17<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> August 2024