

Talkback

Newsletter of Keniston Housing Association

Winter 2024

Christmas competition

We are giving away £25 Love2Shop vouchers to two winners of our 2024 Christmas competition.

Send a picture of your Christmas decorations and we will enter you into a random prize draw.

How to enter

- You must be a Keniston resident.
- Submit ONE photo only.
- Include your full name and address (in case you win).
- Your photo should showcase your festive decorations, whether they are indoors or outdoors. The photo you submit must be of your own display. (We will check the images to make sure they have not been copied from the internet!)
- Don't include humans in the photos – displays only.
- You can send your image by Whatsapp on 07713 388010, by email to lynnruss@kenistonha.co.uk, or in the post to Keniston HA, 13 Artington Close, Orpington, BR6 7UL.

We will use an online generator to select the winning photos. The



prizes are not transferable and cannot be exchanged for cash.

Be aware that we may use the photos on our Facebook page, on our website, and/or in the pages of our newsletter.

Closing date

The competition closes on Tuesday 31 December 2024. We will contact the winners in early January 2025.

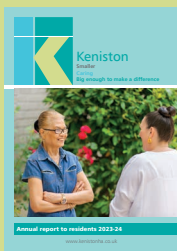
Christmas opening hours

Our office phone lines will close at 5pm on Tuesday 24 December 2024 and re-open at 9am on Thursday 2 January 2025. Our staff will not be available while our lines are closed.

Our contractors will only carry out emergency repairs. To report an emergency repair, phone 01689 889700. A recorded message will direct you to the out-of-hours service.

Please do not report your emergency repair by text or via our website during this period, as we will not be monitoring these channels until we return from our break.

Annual report figures updated



In September, we sent copies of Keniston's annual report for 2023-24 to all of our residents.

Unfortunately, we have since spotted some minor errors with numbers in the finance section.

We've corrected these figures in the website version, which you can view and download here: www.kenistonha.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Keniston-HA-Annual-Report-2023-24-WEB-EMAIL-v3-R-1.pdf



4 winter tips

- Heating your home in short bursts uses more energy than using your thermostat and timer to keep a constant temperature between 18 and 22 degrees.
- Letting your home get too cold can add to the moisture that causes damp and mould.
- You should keep window trickle vents open to improve air circulation and lessen condensation.
- If you don't have vents, be willing to lock open your windows until condensation has cleared – you may not want to do this in cold weather, but it's important to avoid damp or mould.

Please report any problems to Property Services.

Anti-social behaviour evictions

In November, we evicted two residents for serious anti-social behaviour.

The first resident was evicted for using their Keniston home for illegal and immoral purposes.

Working in partnership with the local Safer Neighbourhood Team, we went to court to get a Closure Order under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Being granted a Closure Order of more than 48 hours meant that the court also, automatically, had to grant us the right to evict.

We evicted the second resident from a sheltered housing scheme, after a lengthy period of serious anti-social behaviour. This included: threats to harm Keniston staff;



vandalism; criminal activity; excessive noise; and poor pet ownership.

In both cases, we relied heavily on evidence provided by residents, which made action possible.

As a social landlord, eviction is always our last resort. However, we are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour so that our communities feel safe. Where perpetrators refuse to stop their behaviour, and it is proportionate for us to do so, we can and do take action against tenancies.

Complaints made: update

Between April and September 2024, we received seven, formal, stage 1 complaints.

We did not uphold six complaints at stage 1 relating to housing management. We partially upheld a complaint about repairs.

We also received two complaints at stage 2 about our housing management service. We did not uphold these complaints.

We responded to all the complaints within the timescales set by the Housing Ombudsman Service.

How to complain

You can complain by email, phone or letter, meet us face to face, use our social media or the contact form on our website. Or you can call the office to ask for a form – on paper or by email. If, at any stage, you aren't happy with our responses, you can contact the



Housing Ombudsman Service in the following ways:

- **Go online to:** www.housingombudsman.org.uk
- **Email:** info@housingombudsman.org.uk
- **Phone:** 0300 111 3000
- **Write to:** Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 1484, Unit D, Preston, PR2 0ET

The complaints section on our website includes our complaints performance and service improvement report for 2023-24, along with the Board's response. Contact us if you need more details about our complaints process.



Keniston staff awards for 2024



Who should win a staff award for excellent customer service this year? It's time to let us know!

Shall we hold a residents' conference?

Would you like us to host a residents' conference in 2025? The conference could be in person or online.

If you like the idea, please contact Lynn Russ and say whether you would prefer a conference in person, online, or a choice of both.

You can contact Lynn by phoning 01689 889700, sending a WhatsApp message to 07713 388010, emailing lynnruss@kenistonha.co.uk, or by writing to her at the office.

Let us interview you!

Would you like to feature in a Keniston YouTube video or in our *Talkback* newsletter?

We would love to do some interviews where you tell us what it's like being a Keniston resident, you talk about your hobbies, or you share a good news story.

Contact Lynn Russ to volunteer. Phone: 01689 889700, or email: lynnruss@kenistonha.co.uk,



Our annual staff awards scheme allows you vote for a Keniston staff member who, in the last 12 months, has given you great customer service.

It might be a member of staff you met with face to face, or someone who helped you over the phone. They might have gone above and beyond to help you on just one occasion, or have consistently given you great service.

You can only put forward one



member of staff and we will only consider your suggestion if you give your reasons for choosing this person. This is because we will be judging on merit, not on the number of votes staff get.

We need to hear from you by 31 January 2025. Our Resident Panel and Management Team will then make a shortlist.

We will present a certificate and prize voucher to the winner and publish the results in the next issue of *Talkback*.

Please send your nominations to Lynn Russ. You can contact her by phoning 01689 889700, sending her a WhatsApp message to 07713 388010, emailing lynnruss@kenistonha.co.uk, or by writing to her at our office.

Making a claim for Pension Credit

If you are over state pension age and you live alone, or with a partner who is also over state pension age, you can claim Pension Credit to top up your weekly income to the guaranteed level of £218.15 if you are single and £332.95 if you are a couple.

If you get Pension Credit, you will qualify for Winter Fuel Payments. If you are severely disabled, you might also get an additional £81.50 in Pension Credit premium. To apply for pension credit, go online to gov.uk/pension-credit and for



advice call the Pension Credit claim line on 0800 99 1234.

Please note that If you are in a mixed-age couple, where one of you has not yet reached state pension age, you cannot get Pension Credit, but you may, as a couple, get Universal Credit instead.

Board member profile: Marcia Gillings

We recently caught up with Board member Marcia to find out how she has found her time with Keniston, since joining us in July.

Marcia is a Chartered Surveyor, with over 30 years' experience of working for local authorities, housing associations and Homes England. Newly semi-retired, she is now beginning a consultancy and non-executive career.

Talkback: How has it been so far?

Marcia: I have been to a few meetings and am planning to get around to all the estates. It is early days, but I am enjoying it and glad to be doing it.

Talkback: What brought you to us?

Marcia: I am nearing retirement, but want to keep my hand in with the housing sector and continue

to contribute. I have a lot of experience and it would be a shame to waste it. I was impressed with Keniston's high satisfaction rate with residents and liked that it is a small organisation.

Talkback: What is your biggest achievement to date?

Marcia: In 1991, I qualified as a Chartered Building Surveyor and there were very few women in the field at the time. It was quite an achievement to have done that being a black female. I am now on the committee of the Women in Property group, which is a support network for any woman in the property profession.



Pictured: Marcia (left) as Chair of 'Women in Property' supporting a student awards event.

Talkback: Do you have interests outside of work?

Marcia: I am a member of my local Toastmasters club. We practice public speaking and it helps me to come out of my shell, as I am quite reserved. Being a confident speaker is a useful skill for your career. The Toastmasters International website is where you can find your local club – see www.toastmasters.org

Board member profile: Simon Hague

We got in touch with Board member Simon to ask about his work with Keniston.

Simon has worked in social housing for more than 30 years. Starting as a housing officer, he has worked for several housing associations and local authorities, including in senior positions. Simon is passionate about customer service and making a positive difference to both individuals and communities. He joined the Keniston Board in July.

Talkback: How has it been so far?

Simon: I have loved it so far. All staff and Board members have been supportive and welcoming. I have joined the Board Mentoring

programme and like that it covers all aspects of board work. Being relatively new, I thought it would be useful to cover all angles and gain any knowledge and experience.

Talkback: What brought you to us?

Simon: I am passionate about social housing and want to help in any way that I can as a Board member. It sounds like a cliché, but I want to give something back to make a difference to people's lives.

Talkback: Do you have any interests outside of work?

Simon: I love sport, especially football and cricket, which I used to

play a lot. I stopped playing due to rheumatoid arthritis. I am also a keen chess player. I used to play in tournaments, but now play online against people all over the world.

Talkback: What is your biggest achievement to date?

Simon: When I was eight years old I climbed Mount Snowdon and got the bug for mountain climbing. Since I have received treatment for the arthritis, I have managed to climb a couple of mountains, even if they were smaller than I am used to.



Cyclical redecorations

Since April, we have completed redecorations at Nethewode Court, Southwood Close and Tarling Close.

We will let Sunningdale Court residents know when we have a date for work at their scheme.

What you told us

- "All the works that have been completed, have been done really well and make the place look really clean and fresh."
- "The finishing is excellent and a big improvement."

Before and after: redecorations at Southwood Close.



Major repairs update

So far, in 2024-25, we have:

- completed heating upgrades to 79 homes at Darrick Wood and Foxley Hall
- begun work on 44 kitchen refurbishments at Darrick Wood, for completion by March 2025
- replaced windows to seven Darrick Wood homes
- begun work on kitchen and bathroom refurbishments at Whites Meadow, and heating upgrades to 22 homes, for completion by March 2025, and
- got ready to replace pumps to 34 homes at Burnhill, with work due to start in January 2025.

Estate walkabouts in 2025

Join us for an estate walkabout and share your local experience.

During 2025, our Management Team, Housing Officers and Board members will be visiting each of our schemes for a walkabout – and you are invited. Walkabouts last about an hour and offer real benefits for you and us.



- Our office-based staff and Board members get the chance to get to know each site, and meet residents and site-based staff.
- Walkabouts offer a fresh look at things for our local managers – and better understanding of your views and priorities.
- They help to build trust between our managers, residents, staff and Board members. We can demonstrate that Keniston is a visible, listening, responsive and accountable landlord.
- We may spot improvements we could make to communal areas, using our Better Homes, Better Neighbourhoods fund.
- We can check the quality of estate services first hand.
- We can look out for repairs that need to be ordered for communal areas.

Estate walkabout dates

(Always on a Wednesday)

11am	5 Mar	Hornsey Road/ Tollington Park
12.30pm	5 Mar	Silver Court/ Byers Court
10.30am	2 Apr	Lyham Road
10.30am	23 Apr	Foxley Hall
10.30am	7 May	Nethewode
4pm	11 Jun	Tarling Close
10.30am	25 Jun	Bickley
4pm	9 July	Burnhill
4pm	6 Aug	Darrick Wood
2.30pm	10 Sept	Dromore
4pm	10 Sept	Pound Green
10.30am	8 Oct	Marrow Street
12.30pm	8 Oct	Hayles Street/ Elliotts Row
10.30am	5 Nov	Perryfield House
12 noon	5 Nov	Sunningdale Court

New boilers, good feedback

Our boiler replacement project is going well with residents.

- "I am very satisfied about the information Keniston provided regarding the boiler installation



... the quality of job done, and the wonderful cordial friendly attitude displayed by the engineers."

- "Always kept in touch about appointment times and were very punctual. 10 out of 10."
- "Clairglow were always here when promised and the work was done with consideration and efficiency."
- "From first letter... to the work being carried out, could not be happier."
- "Thank you Keniston for the new system. Looks great. Works well and more efficient."

Reporting bad behaviour

People who break the rules can make life more difficult for everyone else. Here's some action you can take.

Vehicles with no tax or MOT:

We only allow vehicles to be parked on our land if they are roadworthy and have full documentation. If you think a vehicle has been dumped, tell your Housing Officer.

If you suspect that a vehicle parked on the public highway is untaxed, you can check this out at: www.gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax and report an untaxed vehicle here: www.gov.uk/report-untaxed-vehicle

Dog nuisance: Dog owners are responsible for ensuring their pet does not cause a nuisance. Contact your Housing Officer about excessive barking, dangerous dogs, dogs off leads, dogs fouling at your scheme and overflowing dog waste bins.

Dumped bulky rubbish: At some schemes, people often dump unwanted bulky items like fridges or mattresses. The cost of removing these items is added to the service charge for residents at the scheme. If you see someone dumping, tell your Housing Officer. We can then recharge the culprit for the cost of removal.

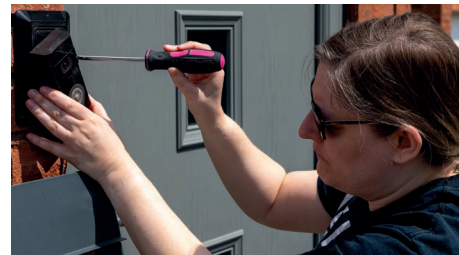


CCTV: know your rights and responsibilities

We are happy for residents to use home security systems – providing you check out your rights and responsibilities first.

Many people are installing items like CCTV and smart doorbells now they are more affordable. If you decide to use a security system, remember the following.

- You must put up clear signage if you are using CCTV.
- Your CCTV should only cover your home and garden.
- If your smart doorbell looks out onto a communal area, it should ideally be set to record only when it is pressed. It should not be sense-activated.



- You should not use a smart doorbell as a form of CCTV – or to monitor or eavesdrop on others. (To protect your privacy when you are out, be aware that smart doorbells can capture private conversations.)

The Information Commissioner's Office gives a full description of your rights and responsibilities at: ico.org.uk/for-the-public

Look after your trees



You are responsible for all trees inside your garden – whether you planted them, inherited them from a previous resident, or the tree self-seeded.

You must maintain your tree, and not allow it to overhang your property, unreasonably restrict light, or risk damage to nearby buildings. Otherwise, we will insist you remove it.

If you fail to keep your garden in reasonable order, your tenancy agreement allows us to carry out the work and charge the cost back to you.

Leaving X

We have decided to delete our X (formerly Twitter) account.

The increase in unfiltered and inappropriate content on X means that we no longer feel that using this platform is in line with our values.

During the 10 years we have been on Twitter/X, none of our residents have engaged with us there – while many of our residents are regular users of Facebook.

We are confident that removing our X account will not affect your choice of ways to communicate with us.



Keniston Housing Association

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