



RMHS Newsletter

Retired Ministers' Housing Society (RMHS)

Summer 2024

Welcome to our Summer 2024 edition of the RMHS newsletter.

We hope that you are enjoying the sunshine and rain and everything in between. It's been rather a mixed bag so far this summer weather-wise. Hopefully we will have some more sunny days before the days grow shorter.

Our Repairs and Maintenance Coordinator, Sharon Acers, who many of you will have come to know, left us in July. I am sure you will join everyone at RMHS in wishing her a happy retirement. Please continue to report routine and urgent repairs to us via telephone **020 7520 2716**, or email **rmh@urc.org.uk**. For emergency repairs please contact Spire on **01384 884 040**. Please see page 2 for further information on categories of repairs.

We continuously strive to improve the service you receive from us, and we would be grateful if you can help us to do this by letting us know who you would like to have permission to contact us regarding any tenancy matters or other issues you may be having.

Should you wish to, you can request an 'Allowing Others to Speak On Your Behalf Form' from the Tenancy Manager or any of the RMHS team by telephone or email. Please also let us know if you have a power of attorney in place. These measures will have the positive impact of greater protection of your personal data and improve our communications with you. Our contact details are on the back page of the newsletter.

If you have any good news stories, or suggestions for articles you would like to share with us in a future newsletter, please email **rmh@urc.org.uk**. We wish you all an enjoyable summer and send good wishes from everyone here at RMHS.

Repairs Priority Categories

RMHS has a legal duty to keep our tenants safe and secure in their homes. One way we can do this is to provide you with a responsive repairs service. You can tell us about repairs by calling us or sending an email. If you are unsure which category the repair you need falls within, please just ask. Further information is also available on our website: www.bit.ly/URCrepairs

Discount for RMHS members

Use the coupon code **RMHS** on the checkout page at www.urcshop.co.uk for a discount on any URC bookshop product.



REPAIRS PRIORITY CATEGORIES	Who to contact:		Examples include, but are not limited to:
EMERGENCY (24 hours)	SPIRE	01384 884 040 (You will hear a recorded message with options to follow.) The staff at Spire will ask for your name, date of birth and address.	Burst water pipes. No heating and hot water. Ceiling collapse. Blocked external drains. Broken windows. Defective WC (if there is only one WC in the home).
Urgent (7 days)	RMHS	020 7520 2716 rmh@urc.org.uk	No gas supply. Electrical fittings. Leaking WC. Roof leaks or defects. Central heating not working (in colder months).
Routine (21 days)	RMHS	020 7520 2716 rmh@urc.org.uk	Moss removal. Major roof repairs.** Damaged fencing, paths or garden walls. Renewing paving slabs. Repairs to external rendering, pointing or brickwork. Doors, windows and joinery. Renewal of doors and windows.**

**To comply with statutory obligations for landlords RMHS is required to undertake planned maintenance and some repairs may be included in this programme. You will be kept informed if this is the case.



Hello from the Tenancy Manager

The spring edition of the RMHS newsletter, announced that 'our new Tenancy Manager, Judith Williams, starts on 15 April'. This is displayed near my desk as I write this article. Since that date I've met the RMHS team, my URC colleagues at Church House, and spoken to or corresponded with a number of retired ministers and their families. Thank you for your warm welcome to me!

I'm delighted to be working with RMHS as the Tenancy Manager as this brings together my faith and values. I was brought up in the Church of England, and more recently settled in an Elim Church which has a passionate heart for Jesus and for social action. In 2012 I embarked on a Certificate in Theology



at Trinity College, Bristol (pictured above) and as part of this undertook a practical placement at inHope.uk, a Christian charity supporting people who are experiencing homelessness, mental health needs, addiction and hunger. The placement changed the course of my working life and I took up a full-time role in the homeless sector, working in supported housing. I am hugely grateful to the talented colleagues I've previously worked with and who taught me so much.



Living in London is something of a change, brought about when I married in 2020. My childhood was spent in Suffolk and Lincolnshire where my parents continue to live. My Dad is also a retired minister, although not a URC one. As a parent I'm blessed with four 'children', who are all adult and making their way in life. They are a source of great joy!

Can you find all the words in this puzzle that relate to **SUMMER HOLIDAYS**?

L	E	T	O	H	F	L	I	P	F	L	O	P	S	A
C	H	A	L	E	T	E	S	T	I	V	S	A	N	D
I	C	E	C	R	E	A	M	U	L	P	E	F	T	V
G	D	A	O	R	B	A	S	M	N	W	A	E	A	E
I	F	S	R	E	H	T	R	O	P	S	S	A	P	N
N	E	I	V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	H	C	A	T
R	S	W	I	M	M	N	A	E	C	O	E	I	S	U
D	C	S	A	R	O	N	G	R	L	A	L	Y	N	R
U	I	E	T	D	J	S	E	V	A	W	L	Z	T	E
T	T	O	U	R	I	S	M	E	S	U	N	T	A	N
Y	N	V	S	E	T	L	C	U	R	R	E	N	C	Y
F	B	I	N	G	O	T	P	A	L	M	T	R	E	E
R	H	S	I	F	Y	L	L	E	J	B	E	A	C	H
E	S	U	I	T	C	A	S	E	S	I	U	R	C	N
E	N	T	E	R	T	A	I	N	M	E	N	T	H	A

Vacation	Passport	Sunshine	Flipflops
Ocean	Icecream	Suntan	Abroad
Entertainment	Waves	Sand	Tourism
Duty free	Jellyfish	Swim	Adventure
Bingo	Sarong	Hotel	Tapas
Seashell	Resort	Cruise	
Palmtree	Chalet	Suitcases	
Currency	Beach	Mojito	



Annual gas safety check: ensuring safety in your home

An annual gas safety inspection is a legal requirement and a crucial safety measure for all residents and their neighbours. Even if your property only has a gas meter without any appliances, this check must be completed annually.



Scheduling your gas safety check

Government regulations allow for the gas servicing to be completed any time between 10 and 12 months after the last check without changing the original expiry date. If the check is done outside this window, the new deadline will be 12 months from the recent check.

What does a gas safety check involve?

During each annual inspection, a Gas Safe engineer will ensure the following:

- Appliances are working at the correct pressure.
- Appliances are burning gas properly.
- There's adequate air supply to the appliances.
- Flues and chimneys are clear so gases and fumes can safely discharge.
- Safety devices on appliances are working as they should.
- The installation is safe and suitable for its location.

Making an Appointment

Most inspections will be carried out by our appointed contractor, Gas-Elec. However, some properties may be serviced by different companies if Gas-Elec has no engineers in your area. When contacted to arrange a service appointment, please do so promptly. If you have any doubts about the contractor's legitimacy, contact RMHS for verification before proceeding.

Understanding the gas safety certificate

A gas safety certificate proves that a property is gas safe and includes:

- Details of tested appliances and pipework, including their locations.
- Results of the safety checks.
- Any identified safety issues.
- Required remedial work or actions.
- Landlord/letting agency and property address details.
- Gas Safe engineer's details, check date, and signature.

How long does a gas safety check take?

A gas safety check typically takes around 30 minutes but can last up to an hour. To help the engineer complete their work efficiently, please ensure your boiler and any airing cupboards are clear of clutter.

Additional inspections

Engineers will also check the functionality and expiration dates of your smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.

Checking the Engineer's ID

We encourage residents to ask for the engineer's ID before allowing entry. Only Gas Safe registered engineers can fix, fit and service gas appliances. The back of their Gas Safe card will detail their qualifications. If in doubt, do not let the engineer in and contact RMHS for further advice.

Your cooperation ensures not just compliance with legal requirements but also the safety and wellbeing of everyone.





Getting a check on a car is something people do routinely. Booking in for a check up at a doctors is an appointment that gets booked in, sometimes with reluctance. But checking our finances may be something we are less likely to do.

During retirement, income levels change, and entitlement to allowances may become possible, giving financial support not previously available, including free prescriptions and eye tests for over 60s.

Financial support can include pension credit, housing benefit, support with travel costs, single person reduction for council tax and help with other costs such as a free or discounted TV licence. Where health needs exist, financial support may be available by claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Carer's Allowance or the Disabled Facilities Grants.

Further information is available from:



Cost of Living support
if you're 60 or over:

www.gov.uk/cost-of-living/60-or-over



Benefits and entitlements for
pensioners – Age UK:
www.bit.ly/3VZThlj

Age UK Advice: **0800 678 1602**
(8am-7pm. 365 days per year)

Age Scotland Advice: **0800 12 44 222**
(9am-5pm. Monday to Friday)

Age Cymru Advice: **0300 303 44 98**
(charged at local rate)

Cooking with gas and the environment

Next time you are shopping for a replacement for your gas cooker, oven, grill or hob consider switching to electric appliances.



When we think about our use of fossil fuels and caring for the environment, we rarely think about the humble gas cooker and the impact that has on the environment. Cooking accounts for around 3% of energy consumption in the typical family home.

While, in the past, with gas it was easier to stop something boiling over on the hob, modern electric hobs provide instant heat, which is more controllable and provides a similar experience to cooking with gas. Modern electric cooking appliances are also more energy efficient than their gas equivalents.

Like most things, cooking appliances have a limited life and will need to be replaced eventually. One way we can accelerate our transition away from fossil fuels is to think electric when replacing our current gas cookers, hobs, ovens and grills. Doing this takes us a step closer to eliminating fossil fuels from our energy supply.

Eventually we will also need to replace our central heating boilers with greener electric boilers. At this point it makes sense to remove gas completely from our homes rather than continue to pay a standing charge of £115 just to cook.

Further information on the energy efficiency of domestic appliances can be found on the Energy Saving Trust website: www.energysavingtrust.org.uk

Reflection

By the Revd Peter Flint

I guess I am one of the newest residents of a Retired Ministers' Housing Society property having moved into a bungalow with my wife on 1 May this year. This means that the process of retiring is fresh in my mind. I retired from ministry on 31 October, 2023, and remained in the manse in New Malden until the move. During this interim period, I had to decide where I was going to worship and decided to visit different churches. I took the opportunity to worship at St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey and Hampton Court Chapel as well as URC, Methodist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic churches. The experience was challenging at times, but I always found something significant to reflect on. It did however make me concerned about how I was going to find a church to worship in regularly when we moved to Cranleigh.

I was keen to worship in the village, which has four churches, though not a URC. Having tried one church that didn't feel right for me, the next Sunday I worshipped

at the parish church and, much to my surprise, came away feeling this was the church I could worship in. In fact, I found I was looking forward to worshipping there the next Sunday and, while it is still early days, that feeling has continued.

When I thought about why this was, I realised that a key reason was because I knew most of the hymns and worship songs along with the tunes as well. This was not the case in the churches I visited in the months prior to the move. The words of a couple of hymns I didn't know really spoke to me, and I was delighted to find on the last projected slide that they were both Iona hymns. I have since found out that the vicar draws on a lot of Iona material and has organised regular pilgrimages from the church to Iona. The other aspect of worship that I found helpful was the liturgical calendar, which I have generally followed in my ministry, and so the readings were familiar. I am praying that this new experience for me will be a lasting one and that I might look forward with excitement to attending worship each Sunday as a member of the congregation.



My passion for cake decorating

Ever since I was a little girl, I've had a passion for baking. Some of my fondest memories are of helping my mother prepare cupcakes for school bake sales, where they were always a hit. About eight years ago, my journey into cake decorating truly began in a rather unexpected way. My sister, in a moment of panic, asked me to make a Versace cake for her friend. Despite having never decorated a cake before, I accepted the challenge with only 48 hours to deliver. YouTube quickly became my best friend, guiding me through the process.



The positive feedback and the joy on my friends faces sparked a newfound passion in me. Since then, I've dedicated countless hours to perfecting my skills, experimenting with different techniques, and staying updated with the latest trends in cake decoration.

Cake decorating is more than just a hobby for me; it's a form of art that brings joy to both myself and those who enjoy my creations. Each cake is meticulously crafted with love and attention to detail, reflecting my dedication and passion.

I love the entire process, from conceptualising the design to the final touches. It starts with a vision – perhaps



inspired by a season, a special occasion, or a beloved character.

The next step is the baking, ensuring the cake itself is delicious and has the perfect texture. Once baked and cooled, the real fun begins: the decoration. Using tools like piping bags, fondant, and edible glitter, I bring my designs to life. My favourite part is learning new techniques and seeing my vision become a reality.

Cake decorating allows me to combine my love for baking with my creative flair. It's a wonderful way to unwind and express myself. Seeing the delight on someone's face when they see their personalised cake makes all the effort worthwhile.

Through cake decorating, I've found a fulfilling way to share happiness and celebrate special moments with others. It's more than just dessert; it's a piece of art that adds a touch of magic to any occasion.

By Kathleen Benjamin, Housing Officer



Answers to
Wordsearch:



Ted's top tips: how to maintain a healthy boiler



Q: Ted, how can I keep my boiler healthy?

A: **By regularly turning the heating on (Yes, even in summer!)**

A common reason why boilers pack up in the winter is that they are unused in summer for long periods of time. Not only does regular use of your heating system prevent your pipes from freezing, it also reduces the strain on your boiler when it is required to fire up in the winter, while any problems that are detected by starting your boiler in the summer can be dealt with before the winter freeze kicks in.

Q: Running my heating in the summer? Really Ted, why should I do that?

A: **It is widely recommended to keep all parts of your boiler functioning and to reduce any build up of sludge, soot or corrosion.**

Over 20% of RMHS heating repairs are due to boiler breakdowns and seized up parts. Running your central heating system in the summer months can prevent the internal workings from seizing up through lack of use. It doesn't take a lot of effort, but it is likely to save you a lot of stress and money in the longer term. Consider the alternative – a boiler that breaks the first time you go to use it in the autumn.

Q: Okay, how often should I do this?

A: **Once a week for about 20 minutes should do the trick.**

Running the central heating for about 20 minutes each week won't incur too much extra expense in terms of energy or cost, and could keep the central heating system ticking over all year round.

The RMHS staff team

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