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Protecting your Possessions

Last Thursday (16th June 2016), we experienced heavy downpours across the City which resulted in some flash flooding on Bentilee. Unfortunately, this meant that some of our tenants homes were flooded which has resulted in temporary loss of their home, damage and loss of some of their belongings and flooring.

As a landlord, we will ensure that in these cases that alternative accommodation is found for our tenants, and ensure that any structural or health and safety repairs are carried out, such as ensuring the property is dried out by supplying dehumidifiers, helping with the clean up operation and replacing damaged doors etc. However, EPIC are not responsible for your belongings. Any furniture, clothes, bedding, carpets or electrical equipment damaged or lost as a result of an incident like this (or other risks including theft, fire, or vandalism) is your responsibility. It is for this reason we stress the importance of ensuring that your belongings are appropriately insured.

Home Contents insurance can be obtained for as little as £30 to £40 per year, just over £3 per month. This is even less if you are aged over 60. If you would like more information on how to insure your contents, then please visit the office and pick up a leaflet about the 'My Home' Contents Insurance Scheme run by the National Housing Federation. Alternatively you can visit the website at www.thistlemyhome.co.uk or contact them on 0345 450 7288 for more information.



Universal Credit has been introduced in Stoke-on-Trent for **single** people who would have made a new claim for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA).

The main differences to the old benefit systems are:

You have to claim Universal Credit online.

You may not get any money for up to 6 weeks from the date you claim.

You get your payments monthly rather than fortnightly.

Universal Credit also replaces Housing Benefit – any payments towards your rent will be made to you – **you must then pay your full rent over to EPIC!**

If you make a claim for Universal Credit **PLEASE LET US KNOW**

Tel: 01782 252581

Email: mailbox@epichousing.co.uk

Mobile: 07838906952

Our Enforcement Successes

During 2015/2016, 435 tenancy breaches were reported to our Housing Officers. Of these reports, 301 were found to be proven.

Thankfully, the majority of the reports we receive continue to be what we deem as low level. We dealt with 125 cases of rubbish or fly tipping, 64 cases of tenants not allowing access to the property for gas services or other reasons and 57 complaints of noise nuisance.

During the past 6 months however, our Housing Officers have had to deal with a number of serious tenancy breaches which have included two cases of drug dealing/use and the use of violence.

EPIC is committed to ensuring that our tenancies are conducted properly and that residents can enjoy the use of their home without disturbance. Therefore, due to the serious nature of these breaches, EPIC secured a possession order (eviction) through the County Court for one tenancy and we served legal notices to end the tenancies of two other tenants.

If you are aware of any tenancy breaches or you would like to speak to your Housing Officer about a neighbour complaint, please call our office on 01782 252575. You can also contact us via our website at www.epichousing.co.uk.

Gas Safety

Gas Safety in your Home

We have a legal requirement to complete a gas check to your home each year and we therefore need access to complete this work. This is to help ensure your safety and you should receive a letter informing you of the appointment. If this time is not suitable for you please call the number on the letter to rearrange.

If we attend and are unable to complete the service then it will affect you receiving the full EPIC Tenant Reward which is due later in the year.

What we do to ensure your safety?

We will carry out a gas service to your home every year, this is currently done by Brenden Fern Ltd.

During a gas service we:

- Check and service all gas appliances (such as the gas fire, if there is one) including flues and ventilation to ensure they are safe to use
- Check smoke alarms are working and show you how you can check them
- Test your gas pipes to ensure there are no leaks
- Advise you how to use your system most efficiently

We are also the only landlord we know who will fit your gas cooker for free to ensure that it has been done safely.

What can you do to ensure your safety?

What to do if you smell gas:

- Switch off the gas at the meter
- Ring **National Grid** immediately on Free Phone **0800 111 999**
- Ventilate the room by opening windows
- Do not use a naked light or any electrical equipment
- Contact us on 0800 6940434.

You must not;

- Tamper with the gas meter or any associated pipework.
- Use a gas appliance if you think it is not working properly.
- Cover an appliance or block air vents or flues.
- Connect your gas cooker, please contact us and we will fit it for you.

A big thank you from EPIC to those customers who have improved their gardens

We have noticed that more of you are enjoying the garden areas and have improved them for your enjoyment.

Your efforts are noted and very much appreciated. Provided below are some examples of improvements completed by our customers and we are aware that there are many more of you who have put in extra planting and purchased garden furniture.

We hope that you continue to enjoy the garden space throughout what is hoped will be a glorious summer.



38-44 Brundall Oval



23-33 Calvary Crescent



233/235 Ubberley Road



222/224 Wellfield Road

Grass Cutting

The grass cutting programme recommenced for the year at the end of February and we will continue to complete this on a fortnightly basis. It has been difficult this year to maintain the grass as the weather has been perfect for the growing of the grass with a lot of sun and rain and some of you may have experienced longer grass than previously. We hope that the weather has now improved so that the grass grows at a slower rate that it makes it easier for us to maintain.

We aim to keep the gardens in a good condition and would ask that you do not padlock gates and ensure that all dog fouling is removed promptly as your grass will not be cut if you do not do this.

We recognise that times are difficult at the moment and this year we were pleased that once again we managed to freeze the cost of this service to you, this is now three years without an increase in the cost to you.

If you have any concerns about your garden please contact the Asset Management Team on 01782 252577 who will discuss the options available.



Website: www.epichousing.co.uk

Did you know EPIC has a Facebook page? If you would like to keep up to date with what's going on at EPIC please 'Like' our page at www.facebook.com/EPICHousing for news and information.



Common Pests

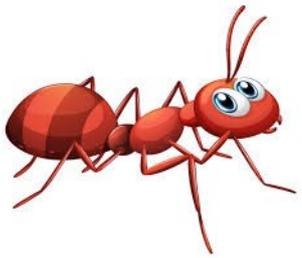
We are receiving a small number of calls about problems with pests such as slugs, ants, wasps and bees.

While we can attend to resolve any problem with the building, such as filling holes in brickwork, we do not attend to treat the pests themselves.

Solutions are available from most good household supply shops and you can call us if you would like any further advice.



If you think you have a problem with rats then the Council provides a free of charge service and they can be contacted on 01782 234234.



The John Flock Bentilee Empowerment Fund

The John Flock Bentilee Empowerment Fund can award you a grant of up to £200 to help you to kick start a business or even further your career opportunities by funding a laptop, block of driving lessons, a training course and much, much more.

To qualify you just need to live on Bentilee or Berryhill, and be on an income of less than £15,000 per year or in receipt of benefits.

The next round of funding is due to be allocated in July 2016, so get moving and contact Lisa Dulson on 01782 222369 or l.dulson@epichousing.co.uk for more information or for an application form.

epic
Empowering People.
Inspiring Communities.

Staffordshire
Community Foundation

Achieve your full potential with the
John Flock Bentilee Empowerment Fund.

Going to
College?

Learning
to Drive?

Applying
for Training?

We can help you achieve your dreams!