



Relaunch of *The Circular*

Welcome to the relaunch of your tenant newsletter *The Circular*. We would love to hear any thoughts and ideas you have on what you would like to see included in the next issue of *The Circular*. We see *The Circular* as a way for us to provide information to you, our tenants, but we would also love this to become a forum for tenants to give their views, ideas and contributions. So if you have something you would like to share, whether it's an article, a poem, a recipe or an image of an event that has taken place in your scheme, please send it to us, marked for the attention of the Editor of *The Circular*.

We would like to give a special thanks to Terry Fagan, one of our tenants in Sean Treacy House, for writing a wonderful article on the history of our national anthem 'Amhrán na bhFiann' and to also thank Marissa Bradley for sharing this issue's Tenant Menu recipe. We look forward to hearing your ideas for your next issue of *The Circular*.



10 Years providing **SOCIAL HOUSING**

An article by Justin O'Brien, CEO

Circle VHA has been providing social housing since April 2006. We started delivering our first homes in Deerpark in West Tallaght and we now have over 1000 homes for families and single persons in 28 different locations across the Dublin Region and in individual dispersed units as well. Some of the schemes that we own and manage are reasonably large ranging from 34 units to 149 units. Our core vision is "Making a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need"

That vision and aspiration remains the essence of what Circle VHA tries to do. We realise the absolute foundation for a family or an individual is having a home that they can live in, that is safe, secure, well maintained and where they can nurture themselves and those around them. All the people that we have housed have come from the local authority waiting list of approved applicants. It is of note that near 14% of the tenants that we currently provide homes to have come from a homeless situation. We are all aware that in 2016 the scale of homelessness has continued to increase with over 1000 families, with 1500 children and over 1500 single adults, in the Dublin area being homeless. There is simply a lack of affordable housing supply in the Dublin area which impacts on the scale of homelessness.

**14% of the
tenants we currently
provide homes for
have come from a
homeless situation**

We know from the Tenant Satisfaction Surveys that we have conducted since 2011 that there is a common thread of satisfaction with the quality of our homes, the conditions of the property and the neighbourhood they reside in. The greatest dissatisfaction for tenants is the experience of antisocial behaviour in their scheme and in the adjoining neighbourhood. This does vary between different locations. This is also a great difficulty for Circle VHA in being able to effectively respond to reports of antisocial behaviour. Some of this is caused by fellow tenants, some by outsiders. For the affected tenants they may perceive us as not responding to such events without realising that we have to have a fair process and gather proof of what has been alleged to have occurred. We cannot do this alone and we have to rely on the cooperation of you the tenant and other agencies such as the Garda, HSE, Tusla. Only then can we take action against the tenant causing the problems for those living around them.

Continued on page 2

Continuation from front page

The external context that Circle VHA has to operate in is now radically different from that of 10 years ago. We had an economic boom of the Celtic Tiger and an economic collapse which has affected everyone especially those on low incomes. For a period, many tenants lost their jobs and it is good to see an increase in the numbers who are now working. New Communities Tenants comprise 20% of our tenant population which is a vibrant cultural mix and opportunity for all. A majority of our tenants have been residing in their homes for over a 6-year period. Tenants and their children have established roots in their street, neighbourhood and local community.

10 years ago we received 100% capital grants for the buying or building of properties, now we have to borrow private finance and pay back the loans over a 30-year period. We have come under the remit of the Residential Tenancies Board for the resolution of landlord tenant disputes. There is a code of regulation for Circle VHA that we have to comply with, that will soon become a statutory code. We have had to establish a 30-year Business Plan and an Asset Management Plan. The Asset Management Plan is really important for you the tenant as it will ensure that your home is upgraded over the next 20-year period on a planned basis. We also have to have the money to finance it hence the importance of rent payments. The scale of social housing need has doubled in the past 12 years. In 2006 we had just 4 employees now we have 23 people employed. Our Board of 10 Directors are all volunteers giving their time and expertise without any payment.

Our vision remains *"Making a difference by providing homes for people in housing need"*. Our challenge is to maintain and enhance the quality of what we do and to provide more social housing for those who need it.



DEERPARK TURNS 10

The tenants of Deerpark in Tallaght celebrated the estate's tenth anniversary in fine style, on Friday 5th August, with a family fun day. The event was very well attended and thronged with young people getting involved in activities organised in collaboration with partner agencies. The day was the culmination in Foróige's youth summer scheme and many young Circle VHA tenants were awarded prizes and certificates for their contribution to the scheme. Shamrock Rovers provided football coaching which was really enjoyed by the young people. This was the second fun day Rovers staff had participated in this year. In addition, there were activities organised by staff from the South Dublin County Partnership and from Tusla, which went down very well. A good number of Circle VHA tenants attended and enjoyed the great BBQ food on offer.

Circle VHA would like to express its sincere thanks to all of the agencies who helped us organise the event and in particular, Foróige, The National Youth Development Organisation, who are active in Deerpark all year round and whose commitment to providing services to young people in the area is much appreciated.

Beautiful planting
in Barnwall Court



Tenant Forums

Circle VHA would like to establish Tenant Forums in all of our schemes where we have 20 units or more. If you would like to represent the views and concerns of all the Circle VHA tenants living in your scheme, or if you have any suggestions on ways we can improve social interaction and sense of community with residents within your area, you might consider joining a tenant forum. For further information on what this involves, please contact your Housing Officer.

The Soldier's Song

An article by Terry Fagan, Sean Treacy House

For over twenty years the North Inner City Folklore Project has been erecting plaques in local areas, commemorating local people who played their part in the struggle for Irish freedom. This year, 2016, marked the 100th anniversary of the Easter Rising and on Easter Monday we unveiled a plaque on Sean MacDermott Street honouring one of the 1916 leaders, Sean MacDermott, who the street is named after.

Of all the commemorations organised by the Folklore Project over the past twenty years, one of them stands out in my mind. It was the day hundreds of people from all over Ireland marched on Easter Monday, from Liberty Hall, the birth place of the Easter Rising, to Railway Street, for the unveiling of a plaque honouring the people behind our National Anthem Amhrán na bhFiann "The Soldier's Song," - Peadar Kearney, Patrick Heeney and Liam Ó Rinn. When the plaque was unveiled, the people gathered sung the National Anthem - it was an amazing sight to see many people from the north inner city honouring their own people.

Background to the song

Peadar Kearney, born at 68 Lower Dorset Street, Dublin in 1883 was an IRB man (Irish Republican Brotherhood member) and the author of many popular political songs and verses. He produced the text of 'The Soldier's Song', working in collaboration with Patrick Heeney who was living in Mecklenburgh Street (renamed Railway Street). Heeney was mainly responsible for the music. The original text of the song was in English and the words and music may well have been written as early as 1907. The text of the song was first published in Bulmer Hobson's Irish Freedom, in September 1912. It became increasingly popular as a marching and rallying song among the Volunteers between 1912 and 1916. The song confirmed that they were 'soldiers' and not 'rebels'. On the belts of their uniforms they proudly wore the words 'Óglaigh na hÉireann', 'Soldiers of Ireland'. In the 1916 Easter Rising Peadar Kearney fought under the command of Thomas MacDonagh, at Jacob's biscuit factory on Bishop Street. He evaded capture after the Rising. He is noted in the 1911 Census as living in Corporation Buildings, which was located on Corporation Street, re-named James Joyce Street in the 1990s. Liberty House Park, off Foley Street, now stands where Corporation Buildings once stood - it was pulled down in 1972 by Dublin Corporation.

The music for 'The Soldier's Song' (later to become Amhrán na bhFiann) was composed in 1907 by Patrick Heeney, who was born in 1881 at 101 Mecklenburgh Street (renamed Railway Street). Heeney never lived to see his music become famous, as he died in abject poverty in 1911 aged 29. He lies buried in an unknown grave in Drumcondra Cemetery in Dublin - a small plaque inside the graveyard marks his presence there.

Liam Ó Rinn, born in Ballybough, was the chief translator to the Oireachtas. His translation of 'The Soldier's Song' from English to Irish around 1926, became the national anthem of Ireland. Liam along with his four brothers: Christopher, Joseph, Leo, and Patrick, all fought in the GPO during the 1916 Easter Rising, as members of the Irish Volunteers. Liam is Uncle to Nial Ring - a Dublin City Councillor for the north inner city.

They will never be forgotten, as today we have two blocks of Dublin City Council housing which bear the names of Peadar Kearney and Patrick Heeney.



At the unveiling in 2011 of the plaque on Railway Street.
From left: Valerie Heeney, Peadar Bourke
and Helen Crowley



STOCKING
WELL
WOOD
FACE
PAINTING
DAY

ACIS REMINDER

It is nearly that time of year again! Annual rent reassessments will be taking place at the start of next year. Please bear this in mind and remember to keep proof of your employment and/or social welfare, to have ready for when this process begins.



Sean Treacy House Family Fun Day - Sept 22nd

The weather was kind on this occasion and the sun shone for the duration of the event. The Residents had organised many activities with giant outdoor games of Connect 4, Snakes & Ladders, Jenga & Operation, penalty shootouts and face painting. The burgers and hotdogs, with all of the extras cooked by residents and friends, along with the popcorn, candyfloss and slushies, kept old and young fully nourished. The music played until the sun began to set and fun was had by all. Many thanks to all those residents who helped make this event such a success.



DESIGN A CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION

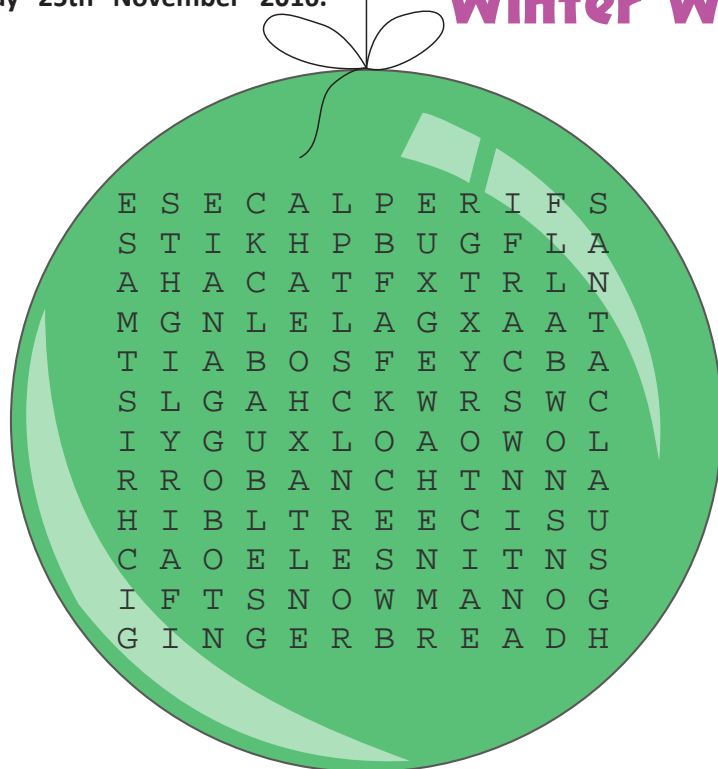
We would like to invite any children who live in properties owned or managed by Circle VHA to enter our 'Design a Christmas card' competition.

There will be a €100 toy store voucher up for grabs for 1st prize and €50 vouchers for both 2nd and 3rd place. The winning entries may feature on the cover of this year's Christmas card from Circle. All entries must be completed by hand and be the child's own work.

Please post all entries to:
**Circle VHA, Phoenix House,
32-34 Castle Street, Dublin 2**

Please ensure to include the child's name, age, address and a contact number with each entry.

Closing date for entry is
Friday 25th November 2016.



Tenant Menu

Marissa Bradley from Deerpark, has kindly provided us with this delicious recipe for Shepherds Pie - the perfect winter warmer. If you have a favourite recipe you would like to share, please send it in to us. With tenants from over 35 different countries we're excited to see what recipes we can share. Happy cooking!

SHEPHERD'S PIE

Ingredients:

2lb lean mince
1 large onion
Carrots
Broccoli
4 beef Oxo cubes
Seasoning
5 large Potatoes

Feeds 4-5 people

Method:

Brown mince in a pan. Peel potatoes and boil until cooked. Cut up Carrots and Broccoli small and par boil. Cut onion up and add to browning mince. When Carrots and Broccoli are done strain and add to mince. Then add seasoning (I add dry garlic, mixed herbs, salt and pepper and the 4 Oxos) and a little juice from the veg or water. Mix together and put in an oven proof dish. When potatoes are done mash until smooth, add butter/milk if you wish and put over the mince. Smooth it down to cover all the mince in the dish, then if you want, with the back of a fork, put lines through the top. Place in a pre-heated oven at 180°C for 20-25 minutes or until the mash starts to brown.



Winter Wordsearch

BAUBLES
CHRISTMAS
FAIRY LIGHTS
FIREPLACE
GINGERBREAD
HOT CHOCOLATE
ICE SKATING
SANTA CLAUS
SCARF
SNOWBALL
SNOWFLAKE
SNOWMAN
TINSEL
TOBOGGAN
TREE
WREATH

Christmas and New Years Opening Hours

The Circle VHA office will be closed from the 24th to the 27th of December and will reopen on the 28th December. We will be closed again from the 31st December until the 2nd January 2017 and will reopen the 3rd of January. In the case of an emergency our out of hours number can be reached on 086 3323724.