



March 2017

## Spring Issue

*What you'll find inside:*

Welcome to the Spring edition of your tenant newsletter.

- In this issue we take a closer look at **antisocial behaviour**, an issue that causes a lot of problems and stress for some of our tenants. (pg 1 & 2)
- **Neighbours Day** takes place on 19th May this year - what would you like to see happen in your area to mark the day? (pg 2)
- We pay tribute to a great man - **Paddy O'Duffy** (pg 2)
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## ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

### WHAT CAN YOU THE TENANT DO? WHAT CAN CIRCLE VHA DO?

Antisocial behaviour presents the most difficult problem both for you the tenant and for Circle VHA as your landlord. The main types of antisocial behaviour range from noise disruption, vandalism, dumping, to drug dealing activity to harassment. The scale of antisocial behaviour does vary between the different schemes. Some antisocial behaviour is caused by outsiders/visitors, some is caused by existing tenants. What we do know from our tenants is that antisocial behaviour is disruptive to their lives. This disruption takes many forms. It can range from anxiety and fear over harassment, drug dealing activity to noise disruption and lack of sleep to dismay over the condition of the external areas of your apartment block or local area.

What I have learned over the years is that tenants are often reluctant to report incidents of antisocial behaviour and then usually only report it when they are exasperated or in fear. Tenants often commonly assume that another tenant will have reported an incident to our offices so they do not need to do so. This usually means that the incident is never reported. Tenants often believe that it is pointless to report incidents to the Gardaí as they will not respond to their report or they are afraid that a Garda presence might identify them as being the reporter of an incident. Some tenants, a minority, believe that no such incidents should be reported and that the tenants who do so are rats.

What I do know is that if incidents of antisocial behaviour, ranging from noise disruption to drug dealing, are not reported, the people, either tenants or visitors causing the antisocial behaviour believe that they can get away with it. They have no respect for you - their fellow tenant and neighbour. The tolerance or acceptance of antisocial behaviour is damaging to everyone in a scheme.

**So, what can you do?** Before I respond to that question I believe that the most fundamental question is to remember what you want for yourself and your family as a Circle VHA tenant. All tenants want a home that is safe and secure where you can grow and nourish yourself and your children. You want to live in an estate that is well maintained, clean and tidy.

So, if that is what you want, how should you respond to incidents of anti-social behaviour? Firstly, you need to report it to your Housing Officer, giving details of what has happened and when. This is essential information for us to gather. We are committed to investigating such incidents and to responding to such complaints. We treat all such reports as confidential and we only disclose your name if you have given consent.

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Check with your neighbours regarding their witnessing of the incident. There is always strength in numbers in reporting such incidents. If a serious incident of antisocial behaviour such as vandalism, a fight, drug dealing activity is taking place you should **phone the Gardaí at 999** where your call will be recorded. The Gardaí may not immediately respond, but a critical factor here is that the incident has been reported and that there is a record of it on the Garda intelligence system.

**So, what Can Circle VHA do?** Circle VHA has to respond to antisocial behaviour incidents with confidentiality and with evidence. We rely on you the tenant to provide us with detailed information. If the evidence is confirmed, we are then able to take legal action against the tenant under the Residential Tenancies Board processes. This takes time but it is an action we are committed to. Currently we have issued several NTQ against tenants over antisocial behaviour and they are being progressed by the RTB. We also work with the local Gardaí and other agencies in having good responses to incidents of antisocial behaviour in each local area. If you the tenants have any ideas of how we might better respond to antisocial behaviour, please do write into me with your suggestions.

*An article by Justin O'Brien, CEO*



### Barnardos Christmas Toy Appeal

Circle VHA chose Barnardos as it's charity to support for Christmas 2016. Instead of the annual Kris Kindle, staff members bought toys & placed them under our Christmas tree before they were delivered to Barnardos & distributed to children in need.



### A Tribute to Paddy O'Duffy

Paddy O'Duffy was the founding chair of Circle Voluntary Housing Association in 2003 and was chair for a 7 year period until 2010. Paddy had just retired from being Chair of An Bord Pleanala in 2003. He would have had ample opportunity to offer his services as a planning consultant to developers and local authorities. Instead Paddy gave his time, energy, determination and expertise to the establishment of Circle Voluntary Housing Association as a social housing provider over the next 11 years. He had a distinguished career in the Department of Environment being responsible for housing policy, roads and then for An Bord Pleanala. Paddy then brought all his experience and expertise to the foundation of Circle VHA. He was a man of integrity, probity and a man of his word. His role as chair was fundamental to the foundation and growth of Circle VHA. He was absolutely committed to the delivery of social housing and the vision of Circle VHA **"Making a difference by providing quality homes for people in housing need."** He was determined, focussed and gave considerable time to the organisation. He was meticulous and concerned both with our strategic direction, our business planning, and how we delivered our housing management services. He retired from the Board in 2011 but he remained committed to the organisation by being an external committee member of our Finance and Strategy Committee until his health deteriorated in 2015. I was fortunate enough to have worked under his direction as Chief Executive and he was always supportive, firm and fair. He also had good humour.

**Continuation**

He very much valued what Circle VHA has achieved and delivered to its tenants. He saw his contribution to Circle VHA as continuation of his public service role and his commitment to the provision of social housing for people in need. Paddy was a committed family man and our sympathies are extended to his wife Marie and his children. For Circle VHA he will be missed. He will also be remembered for his contribution and commitment to our foundation, vision and purpose.

*An article by Justin O'Brien, CEO*

### WINNER OF OUR 'DESIGN A CHRISTMAS CARD' COMPETITION

We would like to congratulate Conor, aged 11, from Leixlip on winning our "Design a Christmas card" Competition. Conor won a €100 gift voucher for Smyths toys and his design was chosen for the cover of our 2017 Christmas card. I'm sure you'll all agree he was a worthy winner. We were very impressed by the high standard of all the entries.

### Neighbours Day

Neighbours Day is marked around Europe to encourage people to come together more socially and to get to know their neighbours. This year it will be on Friday 19th May and we would like to actively encourage tenants to organise something on the day. This could be an outside event, party or outing which we could support you in organising or it could simply be inviting a couple of neighbours around for a cup of tea. In some of our larger schemes our housing officers will be talking to people about holding an event and we would be very interested to hear any ideas you have for the 19th May or for any other social activities you are considering organising. Please contact your Housing Officer with ideas or for further information.

## Free Things to do in Dublin

In each issue of The Circular we are going to look at free things to do in Dublin. These may be one off events or ongoing exhibitions, based in your locality or situated in the city centre. From checking out the colourful costumes at the St Patrick's Day parade, to hearing about the history of our capitol city on a free walking tour. If you have any suggestions for free entertainment/events taking place throughout Dublin please let us know and we can include these in the next issue of The Circular.

**In this issue, with St Patrick's day just around the corner - we will look at some of the free events taking place for St Patrick's Festival, which runs from 16th – 19th March.**

#### Thursday 16th March:

##### Festival Céilí

*Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2 (4:30pm)*

Learn some traditional Irish dancing at the world's largest outdoor céilí. Enjoy some traditional live music, learn the steps to céilí classics such as the Siege of Ennis, Shoe the Donkey and the Stack of Barley and soak up the festive atmosphere. No experience is needed to attend this event.

##### GPO Witness History: Meet the Archivist

*GPO, O'Connell Street, Dublin 1 (10am-12pm / 2pm-4pm)*

Experience the events of the 1916 Easter Rising from the perspectives of those who witnessed them. Bring along your letters and photographs that relate to 1916, The War of Independence and the Civil War and meet the in-house Archivist who will digitise your items (up to 3 items per person), provide you with a copy and advise you on storage and preservation. You will have the opportunity to include your items in upcoming online exhibitions at GPO Witness History.

#### Sunday 19th March:

##### Festival Big Day Out

*Merrion Square, Dublin 2 (12 – 6pm)*

Merrion square will be bursting with theatre, performances, workshops and much more. Whether you're interested in making a kite, unwinding with yoga storytelling or watching some beautiful aerial performances, there will be plenty to keep you and/or your family entertained.

For more information on events running as part of the St Patrick's Festival visit [www.stpatricksfestival.ie/events](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie/events).

## St Patrick's Festival

#### Friday 17th March:

##### Parade

*Starting at Parnell Square, Dublin 1 (12pm)*

Check out the pageantry and colourful costumes in this year's St Patrick's Day parade. *Ireland You Are...is* the theme for this year's parade. Watch as street theatre companies and bands from Ireland and around the world bring this year's theme to life. A map of the parade route can be found online at [www.stpatricksfestival.ie/parade](http://www.stpatricksfestival.ie/parade).

#### Saturday 18th March:

##### Festival Treasure Hunt

*City Hall, Dublin 2 (10am)*

Enter in teams of up to four people to win some amazing prizes and visit some of Dublin's historical locations as you navigate this exciting course around the city. The treasure hunt takes about 1 hour & 45 minutes, with a special shorter treasure hunt available for children. For more information and registration visit the St Patrick's Festival website.

### Welcome to new tenants

We would like to warmly welcome the tenants in the new Circle VHA schemes. 17 people moved into Ashley Hall, St Edmund's in Lucan in November 2016 which was completed by NAMA last year. We welcome some new and some existing tenants in Gandon Court in Lucan, also 8 new tenants in various dispersed units in Dun Laoghaire. In addition, there are also 17 people who have moved into various existing Circle VHA units. We extend a warm welcome to them. We will have 30 new units available in the first 3 Months of this year.

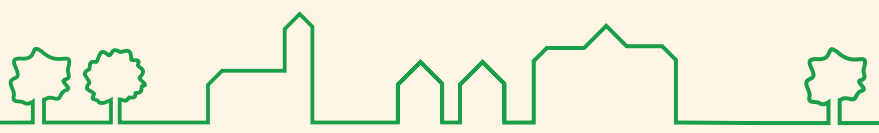
### Annual Rent Assessment 2017

By now tenants will have received the Annual Confidential Information letter, requesting all tenants to return the completed form with proof of income by **March 24th**. It is a legal requirement as per your Tenancy Agreement that you return the ACIS Form with your proof of income so that your rent can be properly assessed and charged for the 2017 period. Your cooperation with the annual rent assessment is really appreciated. If you have returned it a **Big Thank You**. If you have not please complete the form and return it to us.

The failure to return the completed form with proof of income leads to penalty fines of €25.00 per week; it leads to formal warnings because of the breach of a tenancy condition. It means phone calls, meetings, letters.

**So make it simple for yourself and for us by returning the forms.**





## Tenant Menu

### HOMEMADE SPICEBAG

Recipe provided by our new Housing Officer Tracy. Thanks Tracy!

**Ingredients:**

- 1 red pepper, de-seeded and sliced
- Chips
- 1 onion, sliced & separated
- 1 red chili, finely sliced
- 1/4 packet of Old el Paso Smoky Enchilada Mix Powder & same amount of Schwartz Cajun powder, mixed together. (adjust to your taste)
- Chicken breast- you can use leftover roast chicken breast if preferred.

- 1) Place chips in oven to cook.
- 2) When the chips are almost done, get a pan and add a little oil. Throw in the peppers, onion and chili. Stir and cook for a few minutes.
- 3) Add the chicken (if using raw, make sure it's fully cooked before the next step; if using leftover chicken it doesn't need long in the pan), then add your spice mix. Coat everything thoroughly and when everything looks a little softened (but not too much, you want a bit of texture), remove from the heat.
- 4) Take the tray of chips out of the oven and throw the pan of chicken/peppers etc. over the chips. Mix thoroughly so the chips also get coated. Serve & enjoy!

## Pinterest

We are after launching a Pinterest page under the name Circle VHA. On our page you'll find boards with family recipes, kids craft ideas, gardening, home decoration ideas and much more. You will also find seasonal boards for St. Patrick's Day, Easter etc. If you have a Pinterest account you're welcome to follow us; or if you have ideas for boards that you would like to see included, just drop an email to info@circlevha.ie and address it to Editor of The Circular.



## EASTER EGG HUNT

There are 20 Easter Eggs placed throughout this issue of The Circular. Are you able to find all 20?

## Balcony Envy!



Thanks to Peter & Anne for letting us show a picture of their wonderful balcony in Ashtown. Well done on creating such a beautiful space!

## Your Newsletter

Is there anything that you would like us to highlight in The Circular? Maybe there is a fundraising event that you are organising, or something is taking place in your area that you would like to inform people about, or perhaps you would like to acknowledge someone's achievements or great work within your community. Send details to us by letter or email and we'll do our best to include it in the next issue. The Circular will be issued every four months, with the next issue being released at the start of July. The deadline to receive articles to be included in this issue is Friday 2nd June.

**Spring Word Search**

ESHEPOHTDSFSSZP  
 STPATRICKBYSYWL  
 NGARWWMOTMHXGVK  
 OJRLIDOFFADJHCQ  
 WNAPOGSRMLHSIIR  
 DNDGGCSREWHOHSDL  
 RNEERGOWHTCWLZLA  
 OBAWMCLHSJSEESF  
 PWRIKNBYCDFARRX  
 SHPSNLKUUAFTEKV  
 QXGROWCBNAMSFYK  
 RAUOKKYWCNHEXTW  
 DZMGJOBMMBYNJB  
 TLURQSPQTOSTMLY  
 NZMKSAZKLN OXVB

SHAMROCK      SPRIG      DAFFODIL  
 SHOWERS      ST PATRICK      BLOSSOM  
 PARADE      CHOCOLATE      SNOWDROP      BUDS  
 NEST      EASTER      GREEN      BLOOM      EGG  
 BUNNY      FRESH      FLOWER      GROW  
 HATCH      CHICK      LAMBS  
 LEAF