



HOUSING NEWS

Lower Oldpark

February 2024. Lower Oldpark Community Association, 9-23 Avoca Street, Belfast BT14 6EN. Tel: 028 96928293. Email: loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com

New Lower Oldpark Street Named

The new street being created as part of the social housing scheme at Alloa Street has been named.

The developer, Clanmil Housing, notified LOCA recently that Belfast City Council (BCC) has decided that the new street will be called Annalee Street.

LOCA carried out a community consultation on what street name should be used. The most popular choice among residents was 'Annalee'. BCC selected 'Street'. It is good that BCC took on board the views of local people.

Some residents will recall that the previous name of the street that existed before the houses were demolished was 'Annalee Court'. Before Annalee Court was built in the 1980s, there



were rows of old terraced housing streets, one of which was called 'Annalee Street'. The naming of the new street restores an old street name.

We're all looking forward to seeing Annalee Street brought back to life.

Building work is progressing well and on target for completion in September 2024.

Housing Advice Service

Help with housing problems is available from the LOCA Housing Project Worker, Gary Hughes.

Days: Monday to Friday.

Times: 8.30am-11.30am & 1.00pm - 3.30pm.

Phone: 028 96928293 or 077 13990976.

Email:
loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com

Facebook Message:
[@loweroldparkhousing](https://www.facebook.com/loweroldparkhousing)

Find Out More

Lower Oldpark Community Association has lots more information on its housing website and Facebook page.

Website

<https://loweroldparkhousing.co.uk>

Our website includes the latest news, back copies of this newsletter, a brief history of the area, details of regeneration plans and much more.

Facebook

[@loweroldparkhousing](https://www.facebook.com/loweroldparkhousing) Please follow and like.

Disability Adaptations

For information about getting disability adaptations in your home, go to:

<https://www.nihe.gov.uk/my-housing-executive/adaptations>

New Lower Oldpark NIHE Patch Manager

Martin Coney is the new NIHE Patch Manager for Lower Oldpark. He took over the role in October 2023 replacing Andrea McAleenan.

Martin has spent the last couple of months learning the job and getting to know many of the Lower Oldpark NIHE tenants.

NIHE Patch Managers provide tenancy and estate management services to NIHE tenants and the communities in which they live.

Patch Managers are a single point of contact in a specific geographical patch e.g. Lower Oldpark. They deal with

things like:

- New tenancy sign-ups.
- Transfer and mutual exchange applications.
- Rent account matters.
- Planned maintenance schemes.
- Payments from the NIHE.
- Tenancy succession and assignment and joint tenancies.
- Anti-social behaviour and community safety issues.
- Managing empty NIHE homes.

Martin can be contacted by calling 028 95982748.

NIHE Heating Adaptations

If you, or someone in your household, has a disability and live in a NIHE property, it can assess any heating changes you may need.

This might involve replacing an open fronted fire or glass fronted solid fuel fire with gas, oil or electric fire heating.

Initial Enquiry

If you would like to be considered for a heating adaptation in your home, the first thing to do is to contact the NIHE by ringing 03448 920900. If you would like help with this, you can contact the LOCA Housing Project Worker on:

- Phone: 028 96928293.
- Email: loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com
- Facebook message: @loweroldparkhousing

Initial Checks

The NIHE Area Office staff will carry out some checks to ensure that you live in the property and that you have not applied to buy your home or for a transfer. They will also check what heating system is in the property and whether or not it is included in a heating replacement programme.

If your home has been included in a

heating replacement programme, you will be advised of the start date.

Heating Evaluation Form

The NIHE Area Office staff will send you a heating evaluation form. This form must be completed and returned to your local Housing Executive Area Office. The form will then be checked before being sent to the Area Welfare Officer.

Client Need Assessment

The NIHE Area Welfare Officer will check your change of heating request against the following criteria:

- You must usually be over 18 years of age.
- You must have a permanent and severe disability and problems using the heating system.

This may involve a home visit from the Area Welfare Officer.

Priority of Case

If you meet the criteria and have been approved by the Area Welfare Officer, your case will be given a priority rating.

You will be told of the priority of your

case by letter. The categories are listed below:

- Standard

The person with a disability has an able-bodied person at home for most of the day.

- Standard Plus

The person with a disability does not have an able-bodied person at home for most of the day.

- Urgent

The person with a disability does not have an able-bodied person at home for most of the day and is:

- Unable to be released from hospital, residential care or will have to go into care until heating is changed and/or;
- Is at risk, creating danger to themselves or others unless the heating is changed to a non-manual system.

Urgent cases will be dealt with on an individual basis as quickly as possible.

You will be told when the work to fit your new heating system will start.

Problem With Mortgage Arrears

Most people will buy a property by means of a mortgage, which is a loan taken out to buy a house or apartment, from a bank or building society. The amount borrowed is secured on the property. This means that the lender can go to court to obtain possession of the property if the borrower fails to make the required repayments.

Affordability

One of the big issues facing homeowners is affordability. In recent

years there has been a dramatic increase in the number of home owners in Northern Ireland under threat of losing their homes because of debt.

Possession

Non-payment of the mortgage on a property may lead the lender to seek possession of the property.

Help

Anyone facing difficulties in paying their mortgage should seek specialist

advice as soon as possible.

Belfast based Housing Rights Service (HRS) provides such specialist advice. You can get in touch with HRS in the following ways:

- Phone helpline: 028 9024 5640.
- Online: <https://www.housingrights.org.uk/contact-us>

Don't delay. Do it today.

NIHE Tenant Rent Arrears – What To Do?

If you don't pay your rent, or pay it late, the money that you owe is called rent arrears. If you are in arrears you should contact the local NIHE Patch Manager, Martin Coney (028 95982748), right away.

The NIHE can help by:

- Having your rent paid from other benefits.
- Having your arrears paid alongside your weekly rent payments. The NIHE will offer constant support during this time.
- Having your rent paid directly from your salary.

The NIHE can set up an arrangement to help you monitor your payments and notify you if you don't make a payment.

Help

Making Your Money Work Service

The NIHE offers its tenants free benefit checks, help with making a budget and tips on making the most out of household income. You can speak to a Financial Inclusion Officer by calling 03448 920 900 or make an appointment through the local NIHE Patch Manager, Martin Coney.

Vine Centre (Crumlin Road)

The Vine Centre, at 193 Crumlin Road, offers free, confidential welfare benefits advice including benefit checks, and debt and budgeting advice. Appointment necessary. Phone 02890351020/ email info@vinecentre.org.

Advice NI

Advice NI provides free, confidential and impartial debt and money advice. Areas covered include:

- Benefits.
- Debt and money.
- Business debt.
- Tax credits and HMRC products.
- EU settlement scheme.

Phone 0800 915 4604 or email advice@adviceni.net.

Step Change Debt and Money Management (SCDMM)

SCDMM offers free and impartial advice on debt and money management. Call 0800 138 1111.

Anti-social Behaviour

Anti-social behaviour (ASB) covers a wide range of unacceptable activity that may cause harm to an individual, to their community or to their environment.

This could be an action by someone who leaves you feeling alarmed, harassed or distressed and impacts your quality of life.

Anti-social behaviour might include:

- Violence or threats of violence.
- Hate behaviour that targets members of identified groups because of their perceived differences e.g. race, religion, political affiliation, disabilities or sexual orientation.
- Noise nuisance e.g. rowdy parties, loud music/TV, dogs barking etc.
- Arguing and slamming doors.
- Environmental issues e.g. litter, dog fouling, graffiti, fly tipping, nuisance vehicles.
- Offensive drunkenness.
- Using a dwelling for unlawful

purposes e.g. using/selling drugs.

- Intimidation and harassment.

Reporting ASB To Landlord

NIHE Tenants.

Ring the NIHE Lower Oldpark Patch Manager, Martin Coney on 028 95982748 or email: information@nihe.gov.uk or;

Visit the NIHE Area Office at The Housing Centre, 2 Adelaide Street, Belfast BT2 8PB.

Radius Housing Tenants.

Ring the Radius Lower Oldpark Housing Officer Karl White on 0330 123 0888 extension 4583 or;

Complete an ASB report form at <https://www.radiushousing.org/tenant-s/tenant-support/anti-social-behaviour-toolkit/asb-form>

Clanmil Housing Tenants.

Ring the Clanmil Lower Oldpark

Housing Officer, Christopher Donnelly on 028 90876000 or;

Report using the ClanmilConnect tenant portal at <https://www.clanmil.org.uk/help-and-support/antisocial-behaviour>.

Choice Housing Tenants.

Ring the Choice Lower Oldpark Housing Officer on 0300 111 2211, during normal office hours or;

email enquiries@choice-housing.org.

Report ASB To the PSNI

If the anti-social behaviour is serious or criminal, you should also contact the PSNI by phoning 101 for non-emergency calls and general enquires (if you are a Tesco mobile or giffgaff user call 028 9065 0222). Phone 999 in emergencies.

The police are responsible for dealing with complaints about:

(continued on Page 4)

Anti-social Behaviour

(continued from Page 3)

- Assault.
- Criminal damage.
- Disorderly behaviour.
- Drink/drug related offences.
- Harassment.
- Breach of the peace.

If you report an incident to the police, remember to ask for an incident number. You may need this later if the ASB means that you feel you can no longer live in your home and want to be rehoused by the Housing Executive.

Belfast City Council (BCC)

If you encounter anti-social behaviour in your area, you can contact BCC Anti-social Behaviour Officers.

The BCC North Belfast ASB Officer is Paul Cleary (Phone 028 9032 0202 (extension 3394) or mobile 078 2514 0523.

During normal office hours, you can also email envhealth@belfastcity.gov.uk or call 028 9027 0469.

NIHE Finally Tidies New Planted Areas

New planted areas provided as part of the Department for Communities Courts' Project have, after a very long delay, been tidied up by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE).

Despite requests from LOCA, the NIHE allowed the planted areas to become overgrown with weeds and covered in litter.

It is good to see new grass, bark ground cover and plants in place. Let's hope NIHE Grounds' Maintenance look after it in the future.

Oldpark Road Public Realm Scheme Progress Awaited

Details of whether, or when, public realm improvements on the Oldpark Road frontage from near its Crumlin Road junction to Cliftonville Circus are still awaited.

The planned improvement, which date back to 2017, received planning approval in 2019 but were put on hold. They were revived last year and it is hoped work starts before April 2024.

LOCA contacted the Department for Communities, which is responsible for the scheme, for an update. A representative said that, 'DfC is

currently consulting with DfI regarding their active travel requirements (cycle lane provision) for this area. The outcome of these discussions will then dictate the way forward for the Lower Oldpark Public Realm scheme and subsequent work programmes and start dates etc.'

A summary of the main improvements affecting the Lower Oldpark part of the Oldpark Road are available on the Lower Oldpark Housing website at <https://loweroldparkhousing.co.uk/useful-info>. Also available are plans of the proposed improvements.

NIHE Patch Manager To Hold Monthly Advice Surgery

NIHE Patch Manager, Martin Coney, will be holding monthly advice surgeries for NIHE tenants in Lower Oldpark.

The surgeries will be held on the last Friday of each month between 11.00am and 1.00pm at Lower Oldpark Community Association

premises at 9-21 Avoca Street. The first surgery was held on Friday 26th January 2024 and the next will be on 23rd February. People will be seen on a first come first served basis. For more information, contact NIHE Patch Manager, Martin Coney on 028 95982748.

Private Tenants – Help With Housing Problems

Tenants of private landlords with properties in Lower Oldpark can contact the LOCA Housing Project Worker, Gary Hughes, for help with housing problems.

Help is available with a wide range of private tenant problems, including:

- Tenancies.
- Harassment and unlawful eviction.
- Notices to Quit.
- Deposit protection.
- Landlord registration.
- Repairs.
- Rent payments.

For help with a private tenancy issue, contact the LOCA Housing Project Worker on:

- Phone: 028 96928293.
- Email: loweroldparkhousing@gmail.com
- Facebook message: @loweroldparkhousing

Benefit and Budget Calculator

The NIHE offers a free online Benefit and Budgeting Calculator to help you make sure you're claiming all the benefits you're entitled to.

The calculator also shows how changing the number of hours you work will affect your income.

This service is online at <https://www.nihe.gov.uk/my-housing-executive/advice-for-housing-executive-tenants/avoiding-debt>