

Tuath Housing Residents' Magazine



Dun Daire, West Meath – Multicultural Celebration

Tenant Engagement: The way forward for Approved Housing Bodies

Tuath Housing adopted and implemented a wide-ranging set of measures and policies in September 2018 to improve tenant engagement and procedures. At the heart of these new measures was the promotion of ownership, a process whereby communities begin to feel the community is theirs, and participation, whereby communities begin to engage with each others to collectively improve the community for all. The organisation has been working with 13 communities that expressed interest in this initiative and we are beginning to see excellent results and benefits of working in partnership with residents. Equally the resident

groups are experiencing the same benefits of this process and feedback from all stakeholders has been positive. Five months into this new initiative for Tuath and it's safe to say that we are extremely proud of the progress made to date. We are confident that from the interest and positive feedback it will continue to grow. We want to thank all resident groups for supporting and rolling in behind our new initiative. The beginning of 2019 has seen targets reached, new priorities set and an appetite for progress and development with other schemes around the country. See inside for more...

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Tenant Engagement Update

Leas Na Mara, Galway Winter Party



It only feels like yesterday when Tuath Housing announced its new Tenant Engagement Co-ordinator, Mick Mooney. Fast forward to March 2019 and things could not be any better for this new initiative. We have made huge advancements in this area in such a short space of time and this is down to the commitment of the resident groups and their willingness and commitment to create sustainable communities.

It is no great secret to what we want to create. We want to create sustainable communities, we want communities that engage with the organisation, residents that engage with each other and communities that engage with each other. It's that simple. However, ultimately Tuath Housing will only create the conditions for this process and it is entirely up to the residents to take ownership over it and drive it to its potential.

Regardless of the how successful this new initiative has been for Tuath Housing, Mick is quite adamant that the credit lies with the various resident groups determination to work on improving their communities. This according to Mick is "the recipe for success." He fundamentally believes that "Tuath Housing could roll out this initiative to every scheme in the country, but unless residents take ownership of it, it will unfortunately fail."

In 2018, Tuath Housing in partnership with resident groups and other schemes held over 40 various tenant events nationwide. This is a remarkable achievement for any organisation and shows our commitment to increasing tenant engagement and developing sustainable communities. This clearly demonstrates our commitment to working collectively with communities and not just viewing communities as bricks and mortar. This new praxis for Tuath Housing will shape how the organisation grows, changes and adapts to the needs of our residents.



To date we are working with 13 different developments, this process is primarily based on capacity building, ownership, collective action and empowerment. We have established 12 successful resident groups with the remaining to be created March 2019. These groups have selected their committees, developed communication strategies, registered with their local authority Public Participation Network, making provisions for the needs of their community, planning for the year ahead and seeking autonomous funding.

We are conscious that some groups at this stage maybe more advanced or progressive than others. This is not a sign of failure, but more an opportunity for these groups to learn from other resident groups' experiences. It is this precise reason that in the second half of 2019 there will be a greater emphasis placed on creating a shared platform for representatives for these groups.

We are currently developing a national tenant forum; this forum will be used for the equal benefit of residents and Tuath Housing. The forum will be used in several ways such as help Tuath Housing improve its service by getting feedback and input into the organisation's current policies and procedures, create new policies and procedures in consultation with the national tenant forum, provide better engagement amongst resident groups and the organisation and work collectively on addressing community issues that will ultimately assist Tuath Housing in providing an engaging clear and transparent service for all its tenants.

I hate to use the cliché, but I can't think of a better way of summarising the new initiative. "There is a lot done but more to do." This describes the successes but more importantly our commitment to rolling out this strategy as a means of providing a professional and progressive service for our tenants.



Knocknacullen, Cork – Resident Committee Meeting



Dun Daire, West Meath – planning meeting for multicultural event



Abbot Court, South Dublin – Christmas Party



Abbot Court – Wider resident meeting



Tir Cluain, Cork – Wider resident meeting



Tir Cluain – Christmas Party



Castleguard, Ardee Christmas Party



Knocknacullen, Cork – Christmas Party



An Radharc, Cork – Christmas Party

Repairs

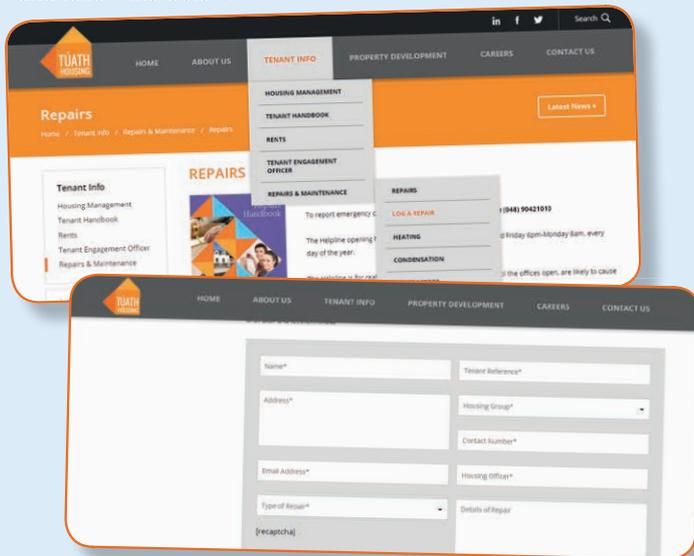
During normal office hours (9am-5pm Monday to Thursday, 9am-4.30pm Fridays) the following numbers should be contacted:

Dublin	01 676 1602
Cork	021 427 3508
Galway	091 393 280
Dundalk	042 942 3400
Out of hours emergencies	048 9042 1010

For other issues such as power outages etc. please call:

Gas leaks BORD GAIS	1850 20 50 50
Power outages ESB Networks	1850 372 999

Did you know you can also log your repair through our new and improved website? Just simply log onto to: www.tuathhousing.ie and follow the below.



When you contact us, we will require the following information to determine your repair and for GDPR purposes:

- ▶ Your full name and address
- ▶ Your rent account number if possible
- ▶ Contact phone number(s)
- ▶ Full details of the repair needed

We are fully aware that during a repair reporting process these questions can be frustrating and may appear unnecessary, but under new legislation we must carry out this process before advancing to logging your repair.

We also understand that it is your home and you may think it is an emergency, but the majority can be dealt with under a routine repair. We currently have a preselected 28 day turnover for routine repairs. However, it is very rare that our contractors will take 28-days, the majority are completed in 3 - 10 days. Please note this if a work order has been logged for your repair.

Emergency Repairs

An emergency is defined as something which could not have been foreseen and which could cause danger to health, residents' safety, or serious damage and destruction to property. Emergency call out contractors will make things safe and correct repairs will be undertaken during normal office hours.

The types of work they attend include:

- ▶ Severe roof leaks
- ▶ Dangerous walls, chimney stacks, floors
- ▶ Burst pipes
- ▶ Complete loss of electrical power or light
- ▶ Loss of gas, where it is not a payment issue
- ▶ Loss of heating in cold weather where there is no other form of heating available
- ▶ Loss of immersion heater if this is the only source for hot water.
- ▶ Warden call systems, lifts, fire alarm systems and communal lighting (Where Tuath manage)

Emergency repairs will be carried out within 24 hours.

Urgent repairs

These are repairs which materially affect the comfort or convenience of the resident. In certain circumstances these repairs could be treated as emergencies. The list includes:

- ▶ Partial loss of electrical power or light
- ▶ Unsafe power, lighting socket or electrical fitting
- ▶ Partial loss of water or gas supply
- ▶ Loss or partial loss of space or water heating
- ▶ Blocked or leaking drains, or soil stack
- ▶ Leak from water or heating pipe, tank or cistern
- ▶ Leaking roof
- ▶ Insecure external window, door or lock
- ▶ Loose or detached banister or handrail
- ▶ Rotten timber floor, or stair tread
- ▶ Faulty door entry systems
- ▶ Extractor fan not working in a kitchen or bathroom with no other venting
- ▶ Failure of central heating pumps and boilers

Urgent repairs will be completed within 4 working days (this excludes weekends and public holidays).

Routine Repairs

These are less urgent repairs which will be completed within 28 days and include minor problems with toilets, baths, sinks, doors or windows sticking, plaster repairs, brickwork, and other non-urgent internal and external repairs

Key Performance Indicators & Tenant Satisfaction Surveys for 2018



2.9% voids on all our housing stock



Over 40 cases taken to the RTB for rent arrears & tenancy breaches



Delivered 801 new homes in 2018

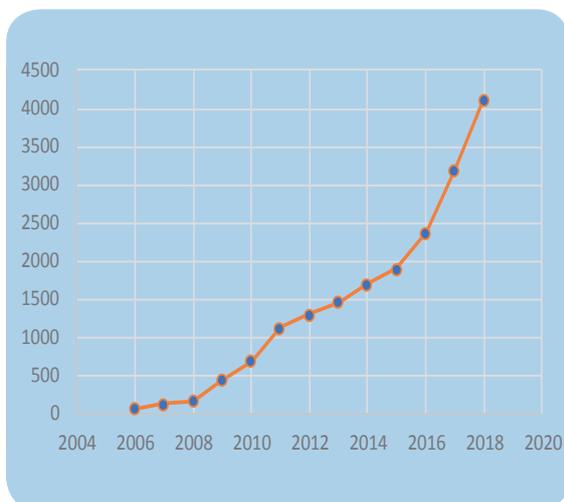


Tuath Housing now employ 72 people with a turnover rate of only 9%

Results of Tenant Satisfaction Survey



4,136 families in occupation, housing over 10,000 people as of the 31st December 2018



90% response rate on all emergency calls in 2018



9 complaints received about our service in 2018



Over 4,900 repairs reported in 2018 with an average response time of 3.3 days

A week in the life of a Housing Services Co-ordinator (HSCO)

The role of your HSCO is varied, they deal with voids, allocations and letting of new properties, logging and following up with repairs, working with management companies and working with local authorities, carrying out development reports, fire safety checks, and unit inspections. The majority of HSCOs are now managing patches of units averaging 300. On top of this your HSCO could be interviewing 20 families for new properties or could be signing up 20 new families to properties.

Your HSCO needs to carry out unit inspections, development reports, fire safety checks, log work orders and process invoices, deal with anti-social issues and answer phones for one day of the week. HSCOs need to meet Key Performance Indicators each month and as a result can be out on-site a lot. The role of a HSCO is not an office-based job and therefore they are out on-site over half their week. If you can't get through to your HSCO we would urge tenants to log work repairs with any HSCO – not just your HSCO. We have also introduced a new customer service tab on our system that is tracked and managed. This new system notifies the HSCO of the request and they have a set amount of days to deal with it before closing it off.

We caught up with HSCO, Kevin Fox (Dundalk Office) for this issue and here's what he had to say:

Q1. What is your typical week like?

Kevin: "My week can vary and because I work in the Dundalk office we generally have set days for office cover. Monday's I can either be in the office or on-site, but we try to be present first thing Monday morning for an inhouse meeting to discuss the week ahead and then possibly carry out inspections or be on phone duty."

"Tuesday I am on phones and deal with calls from tenants, local authorities and other governmental agencies requesting information. I also process work repairs and co-ordinate between different contractors."

"Wednesday I am on-site all day carrying out development inspections, fire safety checks and unit inspections."

"This Thursday I am doing interviews for the whole day with new tenants – I'm really excited about it to be honest. And Friday I am back in the office covering phones for the day, again it will be the same as Tuesday."

Q2. What are the rewarding parts of the job?

Kevin: "The allocation of properties has to be the best part, it's great to see families making a fresh start and starting on a new chapter of their life. It is also great to see communities starting to develop now and positive neighbours working together."

Q3. What are the frustrating parts of the job?

Kevin: "Sometimes I can have a lot of calls to return and e-mails to reply to and these can be very busy days especially if I have been out of the office the day before, but I generally find people understand that we are busy."

Q4. How do you find the new customer care tab on our system?

Kevin: "I find it very useful to track tenants requesting to speak with me. It also helps to give the correct feedback to tenants now."



Fire Safety Tips for Residents

Tuath is committed to providing a safe environment for our residents, staff and any person occupying a property that we manage. Part of this safety responsibility is in the provision and management of fire safety systems and procedures; however, it is important residents and any person occupying a property do their part to ensure fire safety is achieved. For more information on fire safety in the home, visit: https://www.hsa.ie/eng/Publications_and_Forms/Publications/Construction/Guide_for_Homeowners.html

Fire Action Plan

In the event of a fire, remember that every second counts, so you and your family must always be prepared.

- ▶ Tenants should be familiar with the main means of escape from their home.
- ▶ Every Tuath apartment has been provided with a 'Fire Action Plan'. The Fire Action Plan should be mounted at eye level on the back of the main entrance door or in an alternate suitable location.
- ▶ Evacuation drills are practiced regularly in apartment blocks. Tenants should be familiar with the evacuation drill process in their apartment block.

Means of Escape

- ▶ Escape routes should always be kept clear of obstruction.
- ▶ Exit doors in Multi Unit Developments should be easily accessed and never locked.

Fire Doors

- ▶ Internal fire doors are fitted with self-closers. Self-closers should not be disabled or wedged open.

Note: If you note damage to fire doors or that doors have been tampered with, please contact our office immediately.

Fire/Smoke Alarm System

A working smoke alarm will significantly increase your chances of surviving a deadly home fire. All Tuath properties are provided with a smoke detection system. It is imperative that these systems are kept in working order.

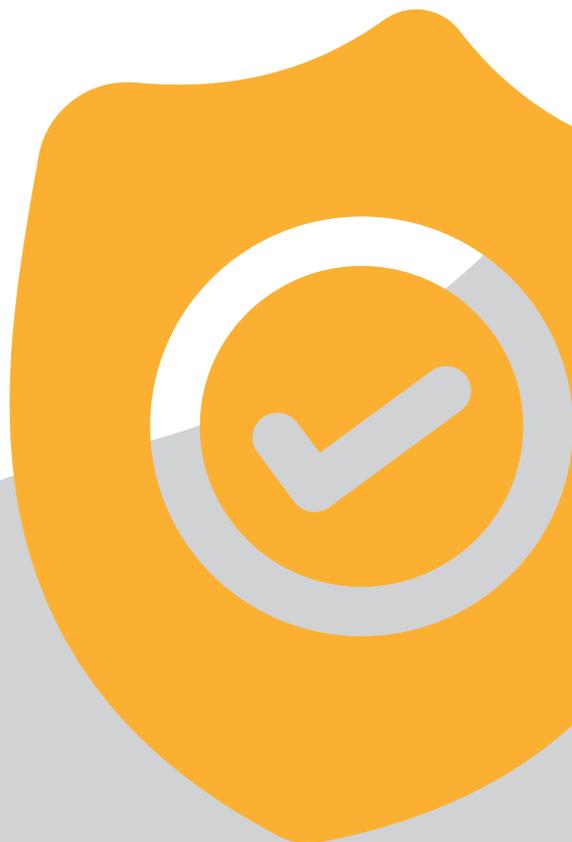
- ▶ Test and ensure fire detection system is in full operation. If you suspect that there is a problem with the system, please contact our office immediately.
- ▶ Ensure batteries in battery-powered and hard-wired smoke alarms are replaced at least once a year (except non-replaceable 10-year lithium batteries).
- ▶ Never disable a smoke alarm for any reason. A smoke detector will sometimes beep as an indicator that the battery power is low and requires replacement. Please replace batteries and never disconnect detector head.

Fire Fighting Equipment

- ▶ Fire Blankets – A Fire Blanket is provided to each Tuath Unit. The Fire Blanket should be wall mounted in the kitchen area in a conspicuous and readily accessible position. The blanket should not be located in a position where access could present a hazard to the potential user.

Note: If you are missing a Fire Blanket, please contact our office immediately.

- ▶ Fire Extinguishers - Extinguishers are provided in a small number of our Multi Unit Developments. Extinguishers should be inspected and certified annually. Extinguishers should never be tampered with. If you suspect that a Fire Extinguisher has been tampered with, please contact our office.



Fire Action Plan

IF YOU DISCOVER A FIRE

- ▶ Operate the nearest fire alarm immediately
- ▶ Call the fire service (Dial 112 or 999 and ask for the fire service)
- ▶ The warning sound for a fire in this building is a **Siren**

WHEN YOU HEAR THE FIRE ALARM

- ▶ Leave the building by the nearest available exit
- ▶ Assemble at your designated Assembly Point and wait for roll call
- ▶ **Do not delay** leaving the building by collecting personal items
- ▶ **Do not use lifts**
- ▶ **Do not re-enter the building** until told to do so by the fire service

All fires and suspected fires must be reported to the fire service

Tuath Policy and Guidance notes for Tenants with open fires, stoves, gas coal affect fires and pellet stoves.

- 1** Before starting a fire, clean out ashes thoroughly before every use.
- 2** Use dry seasoned fuels i.e. wood and turf.
- 3** In relation to pellet stoves, buy pellets from a reputable supplier and store in a dry place away from the stove to prevent a fire. Tenants shall be held responsible for any call out and/or repairs to a stove if it is found that the quality of pellets is poor, or the pellet water content was high. As with point 1 above where the stove is poorly maintained (clean out ashes from the stove thoroughly before every use).
- 4** Burn recommended fuels ONLY. NEVER use your fire for waste disposal. Never burn cardboard boxes, waste paper, household rubbish or Christmas trees. This may start a chimney fire, by setting fire to soot or tar in the chimney which also produces toxic chemicals.
- 5** The fire grates are the responsibilities of the tenant and If not replaced when damaged (i.e. burnt out) and it is found to have caused damage to the fire base.
- 6** Never place flammable items onto a gas coal effect fire.
- 7** Never stack logs or place clothes driers too close to your stove.
- 8** Don't hang anything combustible above your stove, it is possible it could fall on it.
- 9** Failure to comply with the above may result in a recharge for the tenant.

Woodstream, Castlerea, Co Roscommon

"They have made Ireland their home and Woodstream their family."

Woodstream is a beautiful little housing development conveniently situated on the edge of Castlerea town, just off the main road that leads to the west of Ireland. There it was, a beautiful stone carved out with the estate name and surrounded with beautiful plants. I continued up a slight hill and began to see a glow of street lighting. As I continued forward there was a beautiful green area to my left, surrounded with different style houses. This development is made up of one, two- and three-bedroom homes. Two storey houses and bungalows make up the types of houses that surround the beautiful green area.

After taking in my surroundings I pulled in and rang my contact, Elisha. Her instructions were very clear, "Ah hiya Mick, sure just drop up to the house we're all here waiting on you." I entered the Kitchen area and will never forget it. The room was bursting with people, a table full of treats, coffee, tea was pushed against a wall to allow room for everyone. Elisha welcomed me to Woodstream, introduced me and offered me to "sit down there and fill us in on this plan of yours so." I asked the room to introduce themselves and from that it was clear we had a room of people from many different cultures, backgrounds, countries etc. etc. and I had a smile from ear to ear with happiness as I have always wanted to work with such a diverse group of people. It was also established that we had mixed tenure tenants present in the room and again I smiled as this is a particular community I wanted to work with.



The meeting went well and there was a lot of enthusiasm and passion. It was quite evident that this community had all the right ingredients to run a positive and inclusive residents' group. For me it was about adding structure, progression, inclusiveness and strategic development. To be fair to Woodstream, they have absolutely run with this concept and are progressing extremely well. At the heart of this group in a natural open and welcoming ethos, there is no preconceived prejudices and equality is very much at the fore. This precise attitude and ethos are setting an example to the rest of us. The community comprises of Roscommon County Council tenants, Tuath tenants, private renters and owner occupiers. It also boasts nationalities of Poland, Syria, Irish, China, Brazil and many more.

The resident group are really going above and beyond its duties and making serious advancements. They have engaged with the wider community, which is really important, they have engaged with their local authority, engaged with the local Gardaí and other community organisations. The benefits are beginning to show for Woodstream as they continue to hold their annual Halloween party that raises funds for Temple Street Children's

Hospital, they held their first Christmas extravaganza party, they have set their first women's group, in the process of setting up their first men's group, have created a second chance Facebook page. This page allows members to offer unwanted items to others in the groups for free. It has been a real success and has taken off.

I caught up with some of the newest residents in Woodstream to try find out how they were settling in. Hani explains: "I love Tuath Housing, they have met me many times, Mick (Tenant Engagement Officer) has helped us to meet our neighbours and now we talk all the time and our children play all the time, we go to meetings and plan events together. Our lives have really changed, and we love the Woodstream area, they and Tuath Housing have really helped us to feel welcomed and part of the community."

I spoke to John who recently moved to Woodstream in December with his wife and three children, he told me: "he loved the area, he and his family are settling in nicely and it's grand for the kids, I really like that people take the time to organise things for the area."

Community Profile continued

Another resident, Lemi also echoed this by saying: "we love how good our neighbours are and how helpful they are, we love looking at our children playing with lots of other children."

Elisha finally went onto to say that "Woodstream is like one big family, we are a close-knit community and like to consider that we are here to help all our neighbours. We all get on well and

are very open to new neighbours, new experiences and cultures. Everyone is treated the same here in Woodstream and that's the way it's going to be going forward. Our doors are always open for a cuppa and a chat." Elisha finally summarised the diversity in Woodstream in the most elegant of ways: "They have made Ireland their home and Woodstream their family."

The Woodstream community now have their formal residents' committee elected, have registered with their local Public Participation Network and are looking forward to 2019. The big item agenda will be to hold their first multicultural event this summer and planning is well and truly underway. Keep up the good work Woodstream!



If you or your community would like to find out more and maybe start your own group. Please contact Mick Mooney on...

01 676 1602

OR

m.mooney@tuathhousing.ie

Development Update

New Homes for the people of Meath, Louth, Carlow & Donegal

Castleguard, Ardee, Co. Louth

Tuath acquired 102 units in the new development just outside the village of Ardee. To date 80 units have closed with the remaining 22 due to close for the end of February 2019. The development consists of 3 and 4 bed semi-detached homes all equipped with solar panels. These homes were funded using Capital Assist Leasing Facility (CALF). They are ideally located within walking distance of local amenities and transport links, with the scheme being located not far from the motorway, making it easy to get to Drogheda or Dublin.



Barnwell Woods, Hansfield, Dublin 15

Tuath have acquired 24 Part V Units in the newly built development Barnwell Woods in Finglas. These units were funded using 100% Private Finance. Fingal County Council have nominated all families from the general needs housing list for these 2,3 and 4 bed properties. The development lies close by a host of amenities including sporting, recreation and shopping facilities, as well as excellent education provisions. There are also excellent links into Dublin City via Dublin Bus and railway links to the rest of Ireland.

Hampton Wood, Finglas, Dublin 11

Tuath plan to lease a number of properties from Dublin City Council in Hampton Wood, Finglas, Dublin 11. The scheme comprises of a mix of 1,2,3 and 4 bed apartments, duplexes and houses. The first phase and second phase, including 30 units, will be let in February with the remaining properties due for lease on a phased basis up until June 2019. The scheme is ideally located close to the M50, IKEA and the Charlestown Shopping Centre. The local Centra shop incorporated into the scheme serves all residents at Hampton Wood. There is also great links into Dublin City Centre via Dublin Bus and railway links to all over Ireland.



Fenton Green, Kilcock, Kildare

Tuath have acquired 63 units with this new development in Kilcock village. To date, 18 units have been delivered with the remaining units to be delivered throughout 2019. The development comprises of a mix of 1 and 2 bed apartments, 2 bed duplexes and 3 and 4 bed houses. Kilcock village has much to offer including schools, retail, sporting facilities and good public transport links to Dublin City Centre, as well as motorway access to Dublin.

Cois Cuain, Dundalk

28 Units have been acquired by Tuath within this new development on the Upperpoint Road, which has close proximity to Dundalk Town Centre. To date, 13 units have closed with the remaining units due to close before the summer of this year. These units lie close by to a host of local facilities such as DKIT, Primary and Secondary Schools, Shopping Centres and sporting facilities, which makes them the ideal family homes.



Community Champion

As part of Tuath Housing's new tenant engagement strategy, we will be carrying out community profiles on various schemes throughout the country and getting to meet the people behind these great communities. The idea behind the community champion section is to highlight the work of others in their area. We all know that one person who goes above and beyond, the person who thinks of the community, the person out organising, the person pulling the strings and most of all, the person who gives up their time for others. These people are the backbone of their community so therefore going forward we will be featuring a community champion in every issue of our Newsletter to recognise and thank these individuals for their contributions and hard work.

In this issue we caught up with Carmel Ward who is a resident in French Mullen House, I met Carmel in her beautiful apartment and discussed community issues at length over a cup of tea. We first discussed the transition from the old Charlemont flat complex that makes up the majority for French Mullen residents. She explained that, it was a big change for us all, it was a very nervous time, but we are settling in great now. It was a big change from the old flats, but we are now using the community centre for coffee mornings and have our women's group every Thursday morning".

Carmel stressed the importance of these groups because, "we had open balconies in the old flats and people could see each other more and chat, we haven't got that here, you come in and up you go into your apartment, they are beautiful homes but we needed to get use to it and that's why these groups are helping people and particularly older people from isolation." She would also like to see more happening with residents that did not come from the flats and how she would like to see all residents "mix together and work together for a great community." This is not uncommon and the precise reason that Tuath Housing is trying to develop its tenant engagement strategy, as we recognise that we need to build both quality affordable homes and sustainable communities.

We then spoke about what makes Carmel the person she is, and she looks on it as this, "I like to think I'd help someone if they're vulnerable." This is very clear when you meet Carmel, she has a warm presence that is infectious and will go out of her way to help. She uses her community to self-medicate in a



way that is inspiring, "there's times when I'm not alright, but by getting out there and working in the community helps me. I've always been a helper."

Carmel then spoke about young people in the development and we both agreed that young people are the future in any community and that we need to nurture them to become positive role models too. She would like to see more done and we will be prioritising this in 2019 with the help of other residents. She is also excited about the future and, "will always be pushing and trying to get things done."

As we wrapped up the interview I was keen for Carmel to give advice to other communities that may want to begin in starting up a similar process and community. She said, "people need to get on board and volunteer their time for their community, young people in any area need to see that getting involved in the community sets a standard, I done it when I was younger and still continue to do it. I would also encourage young people to ask their parents to get things organised or help out more."

I want to thank Carmel for giving up her time for this interview and it certainly provided some food for thought. I have seen first-hand the importance of residents engaging with each other and how this improves a community in the short and long term. We encourage more residents to take ownership over their communities and look forward to meeting you soon.

Thank you, Carmel.

TUATH HOUSING ASSOCIATION

Changing Housing for the Better

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E info@tuathhousing.ie

W www.tuathhousing.ie

CORK OFFICE

24 Marlboro St
Cork

T 021 427 3508

F 021 427 3509

DUBLIN OFFICE

33 Leeson Street
Dublin 2

T 01 676 1602

F 01 676 1603

GALWAY OFFICE

4th Floor Heritage Hall
Kirwan's Lane, Galway

T 091 393 280

DUNDALK OFFICE

17 Church Street
Dundalk, Co. Louth

T 042 942 3400