

TANT

TENANTS ASSOCIATION OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

**TANT NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2014- CHAIRMANS CHAT.**

First let me take this opportunity to wish all Tenant- Custodians a Happy & Healthy New Year. It's always a temptation to list the year's highlights and there are some significant waymarks in TANT's journey to making our organisation stronger and increasingly effective.

This time I'd rather concentrate on what lies ahead. We find ourselves in interesting times with our landlord and the position at this moment is frankly, that these are the headline agenda items we want action on.

**Complaints Procedure.** This basic tool of good governance is not being followed.

**Rent levels.**

**Stock condition.**

**Stock repair programmes.** There is insufficient consultation with tenants about repairs, tenant displacements and there are even evictions during them.

**Tenants Handbook.** It's still not fully distributed and often lacks the vital local emergency contacts.

**Tenant Custodian Membership.** The Trust agreed to membership for tenants but has refused to give tenants voting rights.

**Going Local.** This is simply not working.

**Communication.** The Trust refuses to provide us with even very basic data for contacting its tenants.

In general we want to add pace. A time span of many years may seem a pragmatic management scale for implementation of changes but that's little comfort to a Tenant-Custodian whose pressing issues are now. If you wish to talk about any aspect of your NT tenancy in complete confidence... we're very friendly, just call us on our Helpline. We want to make TANT even more widespread. In our busy lives Pop-up Tenant Associations are a really positive idea. The next stage is to make these simple to start, small but effective and easy to run. I would like to hear from anyone who can help us design a starter pack and work on a national roll-out plan. Call me through the Helpline 0845 224 2986.

Keep warm and remember; don't shiver in silence, we may well be able to help.

Andrew Turner-Cross

Chairman.

A Pledge & Thank you from Cristina George

*Cristina George, TANT Committee Member was re-elected onto the National Trust Council in October 2013 to serve another 3 year term by gaining the second highest number of NT member votes.*

Cristina says: 'In 2010, I was the first ever tenant to be elected onto the Council since the Trust was established over 100 years ago and it has been really interesting being a volunteer at this high level of Trust governance. In recent years the running of the Let Estate and the issues surrounding the Trust's relationship with its tenants have been rising to the top of the Council agenda. As a tenant of 15 years of a property that is open to the public and with a growing understanding of the Let Estate gained through my service on the TANT committee, I feel I can make a valuable contribution to these discussions. The Trust recently took my husband and me to court because of long term, major tenant landlord disagreements. This was a very stressful and unnecessary action and I am pleased to report that the case was dismissed. However, this experience makes me even more determined to help the Trust as it shapes its role as a landlord in the 21st century. The Let Estate falls outside the Trust's core purpose; the organisation is now realising the significant amount of resources required for the upkeep and standardising of these often, very old properties. We all know what an excellent job the Trust does in so many areas, like conservation and public access, and it now needs to ensure that this is matched in the running of its tenanted properties and land.'

**Do you have a suitable venue in your area in which to hold the 2014 TANT AGM?**

TANT would like to hold its AGM on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2014 and would like to invite tenants to suggest possible venues for this event.

Ideally the space will

hold at least 50 seated people

be a convenient distance from a number of Trust tenants

have some catering facilities and equipment.

Light refreshments are served at the AGM and the contact details of someone who could provide these at the venue is also desirable.



So if you would like your area to host this occasion and know of an appropriate local hall or barn please let us know. TANT officers will be present at the meeting and will be available to respond to local tenant issues and offer support and advice. Please contact Linda Baharier (01883744378 or [LRBAHARIER@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:LRBAHARIER@yahoo.co.uk)) with your suggestions.

TANT and the COUNCIL of the NATIONAL TRUST.

TANT achieved another major step forward when it was elected as an appointing body of the Council of the National Trust in November, 2012. Our appointed representative on the Council at the moment is Peter Bate and because of another NT systems quirk, he was only allowed to take up his place in July 2013.

Council meetings are held quarterly so Peter has now been able to attend his first two meetings. They have broad agendas covering many aspects of the Trust's activities, one of which is what is known as The Let Estate- land, farms and our houses and cottages. TANT works at all levels with the Trust seeking to improve housing conditions, maintain communities, improve communication, and to keep rents affordable. Much has been achieved since TANT was formed at the beginning of this century but a great deal more remains to be done.

We need representation at every level and as many volunteers as possible both locally and nationally. If you think you can help or would just like to have a preliminary chat please ring Peter Bate on 01643 704063 or email him at [peterbate.tant@btinternet.com](mailto:peterbate.tant@btinternet.com) or just ring the Helpline number 0845 224 2986.

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#### Data Base and Funding

When sending your donation, (suggested donations £ 10 per household or £ 5 for concessions) could you please return this slip with your cheque and provide the following details:

Name:

Address:

Telephone Number:

Email address:

I authorise TANT to retain my details on its electronic database. These details will not be disclosed to third parties.

Signed:

Date:

Cheques should be made payable to "TANT" and sent to Alan Limb, TANT Treasurer, BRI, Enterprise House, Ocean Village, Southampton SO14 3XB

Alternatively, please send your payment direct to the TANT Bank Account and provide the above details by email to [alimb@briuk.co.uk](mailto:alimb@briuk.co.uk)

TANT Bank Account Details:

Account Name: TANT

Branch: NatWest, Oxted

Sort Code: 60-16-09

Account Number: 75514834

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#### **Do not Shiver in the Cold this Year or Be Flooded out – There is Help out there**

Check with us on the Helpline 0845 224 2986 as you may not be claiming all the benefits you can or the wrong rules may have been applied to you.

Aside from the landlords legal responsibilities to keep your homes in good repair free of damp and drafts – otherwise they could be legally liable for an health problems lack of this has caused.

There is also Government help for you to keep you homes warm and safe:

The Warm Home Discount Scheme up to £ 135 of your electricity bill if you qualify

<https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/overview>

Tel: 0845 603 9439

<https://www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator> Energy Grants that you may be entitled to so improvements can be made even if the National Trust has not go the Budget for them.

If you have not had your loft insulated or can have cavity wall insulation this could be done free, contact your energy supplier or if they cannot answer you British Gas – even if you are not with them – as this is a Government backed scheme to make homes more energy sustainable.

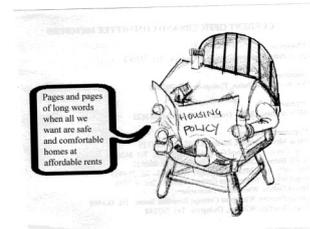
Is your Boiler more than 5 years old? Well with the National Trusts permission there is a Government scheme to replace these boilers for free if you are eligible. They may be some cost if the location needs to be moved or more radiators are required, but find out first. The criteria is complex, so a quick way to check if you qualify is to call the Energy Saving Advice Service and answer a few basic questions on 0300 123 1234 (England), 0800 512 012 (Wales), or go to the line on energy grants above.

#### Power Loss

Did you suffer from Power loss due to the storms from before Christmas and onwards? If so aside from any claims on your house insurance you are able to claim compensation from your Electrical distributor. This is not the supplier but the company responsible for the lines etc that transport the power.

How do you know who this is? Ring your supplier and ask who the distributor is in your area or check your phone book. The compensation is varying from company to company but starts at around £ 27.50 for each 12 hours without power to up to some talking about £ 75 pound over the Christmas period. Here is a link to a BBC article on this <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-25590636>

<http://www.ssepd.co.uk/Goodwill/#> This is for Scottish and Southern Distributors



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#### **You may contact TANT Committee members as follows:**

**Andrew Turner-Cross, Chairman (07741) 053 764 | Peter Bate, Development Officer (01643) 704 063**

**Linda Baharier, National Organiser (07815) 842 133 | Alan Limb, Treasurer (07717) 823 101**

**Leo Stevens, President (0845 224 2986) | Gordon Harris, Secretary**

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