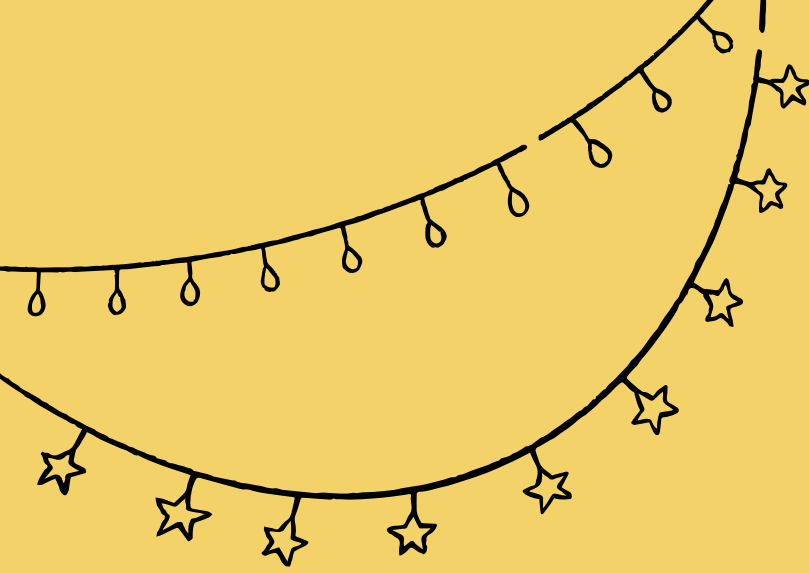




Winter Newsletter



December 2025



Dear Residents,

I am delighted to introduce the Winter edition of the Oaklee Resident Newsletter. My name is Sarah Louise Grey, and I am the interim Resident Engagement Officer for Oaklee.

With a background in Social Care and Housing, I am passionate about tenant engagement and about bringing communities together to ensure everyone feels included and heard. Over the coming months, I look forward to meeting more tenants, hearing your stories, and learning about the activities and initiatives that are important to you. I am excited to work alongside you and to support community events and projects that help foster a sense of belonging for all Oaklee residents.

As we approach the end of the year and the cold winter months set in, there is much to look forward to including a festive visit from Santa Claus himself, which is sure to bring joy to our community's younger members. I hope you find the content of this newsletter both informative and relevant to your daily life as an Oaklee resident. This edition is particularly special because it has been jointly produced by the Editorial Panel, which is made up of resident representatives, in collaboration with the Oaklee Communications Manager and myself as Resident Engagement Officer. By working together in this way, residents have a greater voice and a more prominent role in shaping not only this newsletter but also future publications. Your input and feedback help to ensure that the newsletter addresses topics that matter most to you.

With winter fast approaching, it is reassuring to see that this edition includes helpful and practical advice for residents. These tips are designed to support you in keeping safe, warm, and well-prepared as the weather changes. From energy-saving measures and home safety checks to guidance on staying connected and looking out for vulnerable neighbours, we hope these insights will be useful to you and your household during the colder months.

If you would like to get more involved with the work of the Tenant Forum or editorial panel, just email us at tenantengagement@oaklee.ie with your details and I will be in touch. We would love to hear from you.



Sarah Louise Grey
Interim Resident Engagement Officer



Getting Involved In Your Community

At Oaklee, we are always seeking ways to engage more effectively with our residents and to provide opportunities for you to become more involved with us, helping to deliver the best possible services to our neighbourhoods. Here are some of the options available to you:

Tenant Forum

After a long and successful period representing tenants' views in the last few months numbers attending our forum have dwindled. And in September our Chair made the judgement that he would resign and for the moment disband the Forum. We thank Robbie for his years of hard work and effort on all things Oaklee! However, we are keen to use this as an opportunity to revitalise and rethink our tenant engagement work. If you'd be keen to help us work on creating a new Tenant Engagement Strategy through to 2028 and beyond we'd be keen to hear from you, please contact Sarah Louise Grey at tenantengagement@oaklee.ie.

Editorial Panel

The Editorial Panel consists of Oaklee residents, the Oaklee Communications Manager, and Resident Engagement Officer Sarah Louise Grey. The panel works together to produce Oaklee newsletters and contributes to other publications throughout the year. If you are interested in writing articles, photography, design, or editing, then this is the opportunity for you. The panel meets about six times per year, either in person or virtually, to discuss content.



Could you be our next Housing Services Committee Member?

With Robbie's resignation it means we have a current vacancy on our Housing Services Committee, and our Board very much still want a customer voice influencing our decision making. If you're interested in applying for the role, it involves approximately six meetings a year mainly done by video link! We'd offer a level of training so you can get up to speed about all things to do with Oaklee and we'd make sure you were well supported while working alongside a great team of board members. You'll need to be a Tenant. And you'd also need;

- A positive and enthusiastic outlook.
- A desire to help improve Oaklee's customer facing services.
- Ideally (but not essential) experience working with a committee or something similar.

It's a voluntary role, but we'd make sure out of pocket expenses would be covered. We'd love to hear from you. Please respond with a short message that summarises your experience or alternatively attaches a CV to tenantengagement@oaklee.ie.

Focus Groups

If you are not keen on joining the Forum or Editorial Panel but would still like to get involved, we also offer opportunities to participate in our focus groups. These are informal virtual meetings to discuss specific themes with Oaklee staff. It is a great way to have your perspectives and views heard.

Community Groups

You may want to get involved in making your neighbourhood a great place to live, and a good place to start is by joining a community group. The Oaklee Resident Engagement Officer can support you by linking you with an existing group or helping you and others from your community start one up. The community voice is always stronger when we work together. There are many benefits for your neighbourhood, including better engagement with Oaklee staff, assistance with organising local events, reducing anti-social behaviour, community clean-ups, and much more.

Would you like to be more involved in any of these opportunities? If so, contact tenantengagement@oaklee.ie and Sarah Louise will follow up with you directly with more details.

Oaklee Autumn Events



→ Harbour Fest

This Autumn, Oaklee residents enjoyed a range of activities, including family fundays, day trips, and Halloween celebrations.



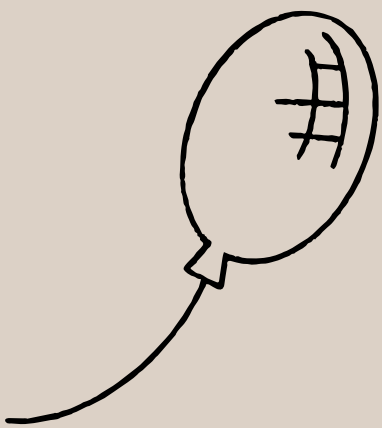
Harbour Fest
Oaklee kicked off the season with support from the Housing Agency's Social Investment Fund for The Harbour, Athy, delivering "Harbour Fest" in partnership with Kildare County Council (KCC), Sláintecare, and Kildare Sports Partnership. This event provided a valuable opportunity to bring the community together and strengthen connections. During Harbour Fest, children enjoyed activities such as paddle boarding, face painting, Jenga, and Connect Four.



→ Working in Partnership Award

Working in Partnership Award
The group's success was recognised with the Working in Partnership Award at the All-Ireland Supporting Communities Awards in October. We celebrated the award in November with all stakeholders, including the tenants who have invested their time in collaboration with the partners mentioned above. Through meaningful resident engagement and practical initiatives, The Harbour has made significant strides in both safety and reputation, demonstrating how partnership and empowerment can foster positive change.

Abbey Village Autumn Outing
Abbey Village residents began their autumn outing with a local breakfast before heading to the Ulster Folk Park, where everyone thoroughly enjoyed their day out.



Halloween Across Oaklee Schemes

Oaklee brought some festive fun to residents by introducing a Halloween colouring competition, which was shared across several schemes. But the creativity didn't stop there, residents also had the chance to take part in a range of other spirited competitions.

These competitions included;

- **Best Dressed House:** Residents transformed their homes with spooky decorations and festive flair.
- **Best Carved Pumpkin:** Creative pumpkin designs stole the show, showcasing both traditional and imaginative carvings.
- **Best Costume:** Residents of all ages dressed up in their best Halloween outfits, adding extra excitement to the festivities.

These competitions brought neighbours together, spread lots of smiles, and helped make Halloween a memorable occasion across Oaklee communities. Thank you to everyone who participated and showed off their creative spirit!



As the nights draw in and the jumpers come out, we turn to the tradition of Samhain, or Halloween. Celebrated on the 31st of October each year. It marks the end of the harvest season and the dawn of winter.

It is thought that at this time of year, the veil between the living and dead is at its thinnest and spirits can roam.

Hailing from times of Druids, people wore masks and gathered around bonfires to protect against malevolent souls and honour ancestors.

Far from pumpkin carving was turnip carving. Originating from lore, a blacksmith named Jack was cursed by the devil and bound to wander Ireland with a flame inside a hollowed-out turnip as his only light of way. To this day there is a 'ghost turnip' from circa 1900 on display in the National Museum of Ireland in Castlebar, Co Mayo reflecting the tradition. Happy Holidays everyone.

— Written by Deirdre Fawcett



→ Tadhg McMahon Aged 6



→ Navaeh Brennan Aged 8



→ Alanna Harvey Aged 9



→ Maja Cierzniewska Aged 13



→ Amber Duggan Aged 14

Festive Recipe



Christmas Cake

from Betty Joyce,
Hawthorn Court resident



INGREDIENTS

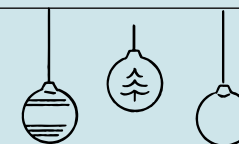
230 grams sultanas
230 grams raisins
170 grams currants
100 grams glace cherries,
rinsed and quartered
100 grams dried apricots
quartered
50 grams chopped mixed peel
6 tablespoons brandy
250 grams plain flour
½ teaspoon cinnamon
½ teaspoon mixed spice
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
50 grams flaked almonds
50 grams ground almonds
50 grams mixed chopped nuts
1 orange zest
1 lemon zest
250 grams softened butter
250 grams dark brown soft sugar
4 large eggs
4 table spoons black treacle.
Cake tin – deep 20cm round
or 18cm square, lined with
greaseproof paper base and
sides, 1 inch over top.

COOKING METHOD

1. Place all the fruit into an oven proof bowl and pour brandy over and mix well. Place in oven at 60 degrees for 2 hours. Remove and set aside.
2. Reset over to 140 degrees
3. Sieve flour and spices into a large bowl. Stir in almonds, mixed nuts, orange and lemon zest.
4. Place butter and sugar in another large bowl and whisk until soft and fluffy after about 8 minutes, scraping down the sides as you go. Beat in the eggs one at a time, then mix in the treacle mixing well.
5. Gradually fold in the flour, spices and fruit mixes over 3 or 4 instances. Mix well.
6. Spoon the mix into prepared tin and smooth the top.
7. Loosely cover with a double sheet of greaseproof paper and place in centre of oven at 140 degrees for 1 hour.
8. Reduce over to 120 degrees and bake for a further 2 ½ to 3 hours.
9. Remove from oven, cool for 15 mins and poke holes in top and pour in 2 tablespoons brandy. Allow to cool in tin overnight.
10. Next morning remove from tin and remove lining paper. Wrap cake in a double layer of greaseproof paper and then tin foil. Store in dark cupboard start the maturing process.
11. Feed it every 3 weeks with 2 tablespoons of brandy or rum or whiskey poured over the top to stop it drying out.
12. Don't feed it 2 weeks before icing so a crust can form and makes it easier to ice.



The Wonders of Christmas: Santa Claus is Coming!



Dear Children,

The most magical time of year is upon us!
Very soon, the man in the red suit Santa
Claus will be flying all the way from the
North Pole to visit you on Christmas Day.

As he and his trusty reindeer travel across the
world, they get quite peckish, so it's always
a wonderful idea to leave out a tasty treat for
Santa and a crunchy snack for Rudolph and
friends. Santa is truly incredible, but even
he can't remember every wish without a little
help. So, grab your favourite pens and paper
and write your Christmas list, then send it
to Santa Claus, North Pole. His cheerful elves
will be waiting to read your wishes and get
your presents ready for that magical
journey on Christmas Eve.

Wishing you all a sparkling, joyful
Christmas filled with laughter,
surprises, and wonderful memories.
Remember to be kind, spread cheer,
and enjoy every festive moment!



Oaklee's Hat-trick of Awards



→ Margaret O'Leary Award

Oaklee has recently achieved a remarkable hat-trick of award wins, underscoring the organisation's continued commitment to excellence, collaboration, and community impact.



→ Working in Partnership Award

The first accolade, the Working in Partnership Award, was received in conjunction with Kildare County Council at the All-Ireland Supporting Communities Awards, for its transformative work at The Harbour in Athy, Co. Kildare. This achievement recognises the positive impact of a collaborative, multi-agency approach bringing together Oaklee Housing, Kildare County Council, An Garda Síochána, Sláintecare, local projects, and most importantly, tenants themselves.

Through genuine resident engagement and a series of practical initiatives such as improved security, community events, and targeted outreach, The Harbour has seen significant improvements in its reputation and sense of safety, though there is still work to be done. Tenants now play an active role in shaping their community, and the award celebrates how partnership and empowerment can drive lasting change in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.



→ Medium Housing Award

Next, we were delighted to accept the Medium Family Housing Award at the Irish Council for Social Housing (ICSH) Awards. This recognised the success of the Kearney's Drive scheme in Tullamore, Co. Offaly—a project delivered with Offaly County Council, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Housing Finance Agency, MCOH Architects, Coolsivna Construction Ltd, Downes Associates, MJ Turley & Associates, and Mitchell & Associates.



→ Margaret O'Leary Award

Completing the trio, Gerardine Corkey received the prestigious Margaret O'Leary Achievement in Community Housing Award at the ICSH Community Housing Awards 2025, recognising her outstanding leadership and dedication to the housing sector. Together, these awards reflect Oaklee's focus on partnership-driven housing and our strong commitment to building vibrant communities for all residents.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2025

Thank you for sharing your views! Your feedback helps us shape our services and make Oaklee communities even better places to live.

Neighbourhoods

87% feel safe in their neighbourhood and are happy with the appearance and cleanliness of communal areas.

This reflects the hard work of our Housing and Property Services team and your pride in your communities.

Overall Satisfaction

85% of tenants are satisfied with Oaklee's services.

75% are 'very satisfied' – a fantastic endorsement!

Customer Service

90% are satisfied with ease of contact and staff service.

We're committed to being here when you need us.

Your Home

95% are happy with the upkeep of their homes.

80%+ are satisfied with the quality of their home and safety.

We're proud many of you feel comfortable and secure where you live.

Listening & Improving

While the results are very positive, we know there's more to do. We're working on your feedback:

- Improvements in how we handle anti-social behaviour and complaints.
- Looking at ways to boost tenant involvement, so more of you can have your say and help shape the future of Oaklee.

Repairs & Maintenance

Most tenants praised speed, quality, and communication.

Oaklee are listening to your suggestions and working to make repairs even more efficient.

Thank You Again

Your voice matters, and your feedback is helping us build stronger, safer, and more welcoming communities for all.

Energy Saving Tips



These tips can help further reduce energy usage, lower bills, and make your home more comfortable, especially during colder months.



→ Recommended temperature for sitting rooms and bathrooms is 18-21°C.



→ Lowering your thermostat by one degree can reduce your heating bill.



→ Avoid blocking radiators with large furniture to ensure heat distribution.



→ Use thermostatic radiator valves in occupied rooms and turn them off in unused ones.



→ Heat all rooms occasionally to prevent condensation and mould.



→ Close curtains and blinds when it gets dark to retain heat.



→ Draught excluders at doors help keep rooms warm.



→ Unplug devices to save energy as they consume power on standby.



→ Consider using LED light bulbs, which use less electricity and last longer than traditional bulbs.



→ Use appliances such as washing machines and dishwashers on eco or low-temperature settings whenever possible.



→ Only boil as much water as you need in the kettle to avoid wasting electricity.



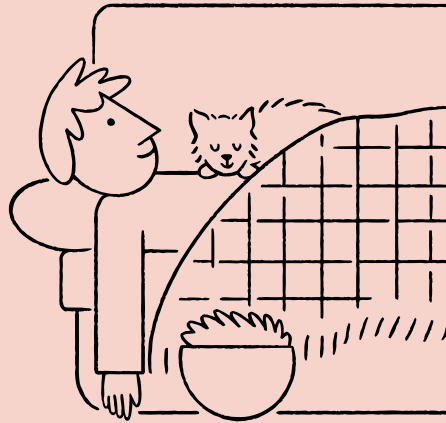
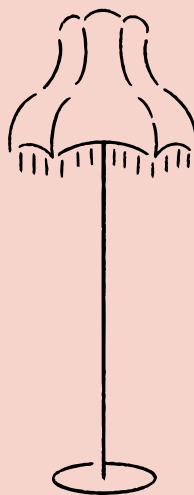
→ If possible, dry clothes outdoors or on a clothes rack instead of using a tumble dryer.



→ Turn off lights in rooms that are not in use.



→ Defrost your fridge and freezer regularly to keep them running efficiently.



Winter Tips

As the days grow shorter and the evenings turn colder, we spend more time indoors. Let’s keep our homes safe and cosy by following these fire safety tips for the colder months. Fires can happen to anyone, but a few simple steps make all the difference.

Smoke & carbon monoxide alarms

- Your landlord is responsible for fitting and maintaining alarms.
- Test alarms weekly by pressing the test button.
- Report any faults or missing batteries to your Housing Officer or landlord immediately.
- Vacuum alarms every six months to remove dust if you can safely reach them.
- If you have hearing difficulties, let your Housing Officer know, specialist alarms are available.

Kitchen & cooking safety

- Never leave cooking unattended, especially chip pans or frying pans.
- Keep a fire blanket handy in the kitchen.
- Avoid using chip pans if possible, try safer alternatives.
- Clean cookers and extractor fans regularly.
- Never use the cooker to dry clothes.

Candles & Winter decorations

- Place candles in sturdy holders, away from curtains, decorations and electrical appliances.
- Never leave candles burning unattended or near draughts.
- Try battery-powered candles for extra safety.
- Use only CE-marked fairy lights and decorations.
- Switch off all lights and decorations before bed or leaving home. Don’t forget to turn off Christmas tree lights and decorations during the festive period.

Sockets, heaters & electrical safety

- One plug per socket, never overload or daisy chain extension leads.
- Turn off and unplug appliances at night (except fridges/freezers).
- Check electric blankets for wear or damage; always turn off before sleep.
- Don’t use heaters near furniture, curtains, or beds or to dry clothes.
- Report any faulty appliances or wiring.



Open fires, stoves & chimneys

- Your landlord arranges chimney cleaning and heating system servicing.
- Use only recommended fuels; never burn rubbish or household waste.
- Always use a spark guard with open fires.
- Dispose of ashes in a metal bucket with a lid, outside and away from buildings.
- Never use petrol or paraffin to light a stove or fire.

Nightly safety check

- Unplug electrical appliances (except fridge/freezer).
- Turn off gas appliances.
- Put out candles and naked flames.
- Place spark guards in front of open fires.
- Empty all ashtrays and run contents under the tap before binning.
- Keep escape routes clear.
- Close all doors (internal and external).
- Make sure keys to doors and windows are nearby.

If a fire starts

- Get out, stay out, and call 999 or 112.
- Never go back inside for any reason.
- If you can’t get out, stay by the window, seal the door with towels, and call for help.
- Give your address and county and only hang up when told.

For older tenants

- Take extra care with heaters and electric blankets.
- Some medications can make you drowsy, make your home fire safe before taking them.
- Ask for help with smoke alarms or escape plans if needed.

Flats & communal areas

- Keep exits and communal areas clear, no bikes, furniture, or storage in hallways.
- Never wedge open fire doors.
- Know your building’s fire alarm system and escape routes.

Helpful Numbers and Information

Service name	What they offer	Contact
PIETA HOUSE	Ireland’s leading suicide prevention charity, offering free, confidential support to individuals experiencing thoughts of suicide, engaging in self-harm, or bereaved by suicide.	Contact Pieta on 1800 247 247 or text HELP to 51444 . www.pieta.ie
SAMARITANS	Offer free emotional support to anyone in distress, feeling suicidal, or struggling to cope.	24-hour support at 116 or 123 . www.samaritans.org
50808 TEXT SERVICE	An anonymous, free and 24/7 text messaging mental health service for any age group. From calming chats to immediate support during a mental health or personal crisis – big or small.	Text HELLO to 50808 to start a conversation. www.text50808.ie
MONEY, ADVICE & BUDGETING SERVICE (MABS)	MABS will advise and help with all money matters including budgeting, debt and dealing with creditors. Contact for general support or due to a specific financial difficulty.	National Helpline: 0818 07 2000 (Monday to Friday, 9am – 8pm). WhatsApp: 086 035 3141 . Or contact the local MABS office to make an appointment. www.mabs.ie
FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE’S	Family resource centres provide family support services, often including individual and group programmes.	Go to the website to find your local Family Resource Centre and details of the services they provide. www.tusla.ie
SAGE ADVOCACY	Sage is a support and advocacy service for older people, vulnerable adults and people with disabilities. They will meet with you, assess your needs and provide support, advocate and signpost to other services.	Go to the Sage website or contact the Information & Advice/Rapid Response Service on 1850 71 9400 (365 days per year, 8am – 10pm) www.sageadvocacy.ie

Service name	What they offer	Contact
FRIENDS OF THE ELDERLY	A national, free and confidential ‘Friendly Call Service’. Regular phone calls from a trained volunteer to listen, share conversations and offer support.	Call 01 873 1855 or contact via email: info@friendsoftheelderly.ie www.friendsoftheelderly.ie
ENABLE IRELAND	Enable Ireland is a national children and adult disability service providing support and advocacy.	Call 01 872 7155 or e-mail: hello@enableireland.ie to see what services are available in your region. www.enableireland.ie
ALONE	ALONE is dedicated to supporting older people to age at home. ALONE provides a range of services to address issues such as loneliness, ill health, poverty, and housing challenges.	National Support & Referral Line: 0818 222 024 www.alone.ie
WOMEN’S AID IRELAND	Women’s Aid is Ireland’s leading national organisation supporting women affected by domestic violence. They offer free, confidential, and non-judgmental services.	24-Hour National Freephone Helpline: Available seven days a week at: 1800 341 900 www.womensaid.ie
MEN’S AID IRELAND	Men’s Aid Ireland is a national support service dedicated to assisting men, their children, and families experiencing domestic violence and coercive control.	A confidential support line available Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm. 01 554 3811 (National Helpline) hello@mensaid.ie
CHILDLINE BY ISPCC	Childline is a free, private, and confidential 24-hour helpline and online support service for children and young people up to the age of 18. Operated by the ISPCC, Childline provides a safe space where young people can talk about anything on their minds, without judgment.	Phone: 1800 66 66 66 (available 24/7) Live Chat: Accessible via the Childline website. www.childline.ie



GET IN TOUCH

Oaklee, Brunel Building,
Heuston South Quarter,
Saint John's Road West,
Dublin 8, D08 X01F

T: 01 400 2650

E: enquiries@oaklee.ie

oaklee.ie