

IMPORTANT NOTICE 2

Even better *together...*

“What
people are
saying about
Arklet joining
Hanover.”



ARKLET
Housing Association Ltd™



Even better **together**...

We wrote to all tenants in May about the plan for Arklet to transfer to Hanover. We've been to tenants' meetings and talking to tenants on their doorsteps. We got some very interesting views and questions and here we are again to tell you about them!



First, people asked; Why?

Arklet board and staff members have been asked about **"why change?"** and **"why Hanover?"**

For a few reasons - We want Arklet tenants' rents to be nearer the Scottish social housing average instead of amongst the highest. We want to see tenants get home improvements when they're due and we'd like to remodel our highly supported residences at Barrland Court and Arnside Avenue.

If Arklet remains independent, rents will remain higher than average. More home improvements would mean increasing rents even more - beyond any usual inflation requirements. We want our tenants to have the benefits that a stronger housing association can bring but with the personal service that they value from Arklet.

Iain Ross Wallace was at the meetings. He is Arklet's volunteer Chairman and is also an Arklet tenant:



"The most important thing for us is that Arklet tenants continue to get a good service and investment in their homes at a rent they can afford. We have taken the time to negotiate the best possible deal with Hanover for the Arklet tenants.

*I encourage everyone to read this, speak to our team, come along to our events, check the website and when the time comes, **cast your vote**. This is a really good offer that will benefit every Arklet tenant."*



"It's Up to You"

Samantha Morton is Arklet's Housing Services Manager. She met tenants at every meeting and was encouraged by the level of interest on the doorsteps about the proposal.



She keeps emphasising:

"Later this summer, all tenants will be asked to vote for Arklet to become part of Hanover. Unless tenants vote, nothing will change. We will let you know when it's time to vote."





People also asked “Why Hanover?”

Philip Mendelsohn was at two tenant meetings as he is Arklet’s Vice Chair. Like all Arklet and Hanover board members, he’s an unpaid volunteer.



He told tenants:

“Arklet’s Board and Tenant’s Forum chose Hanover (Scotland) as the preferred potential partner because Hanover shares our values, a commitment to exceed their customers’ expectations and provide high quality personalised services that enhance tenants’ quality of life. Hanover has homes in the same areas as Arklet as well as throughout Scotland. Together, we can afford to spend more on these services than Arklet could on a stand-alone basis.

Hanover is non-profit making; like Arklet it’s controlled by a Management Board whose members serve without payment. It’s one of Scotland’s largest social landlords specialising in housing and services for older people and it’s celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

We’re confident tenants can trust Hanover which is a household name in managing over 5000 sought-after homes throughout Scotland.”



Hanover is keen to be Arklet’s partner.

Michael Martin is the volunteer Chair of Hanover (Scotland) Housing Association:



“I was delighted when Arklet chose Hanover to be their Partner as it was clear to me we share common values and aspirations. Both organisations could benefit from sharing our skills, knowledge and passion for providing good quality homes with care and support for our residents. I really hope that you, as an Arklet resident or staff member feel comfortable and confident about the proposed merger and like me, are looking forward to our shared future.”





Then – tenants asked “When will I get a new kitchen, bathroom, windows?”

Hanover’s Chief Executive, Helen Murdoch, makes this commitment:

“In the first 10 years after partnership, Hanover will make a minimum investment of £3.5m in Arklet homes. This will cover a wide range of items like 170 kitchens, 143 bathrooms, 225 boilers; and windows for 143 homes. We will also upgrade 3 communal boilers and 2 communal kitchens.”

Only the merger with Hanover will bring this level of investment. If Arklet remains independent it will need new loans for improvements. This will mean extra rent increases to repay the loans – rent increases which are over and above the usual annual rent rises for inflation.



Arklet Tenant’s Forum Chair, Margaret Lynch, agrees:

“Our job is to be the tenants’ eyes and ears in this process and to ask the questions we think you want answered. We understand that Arklet can’t make charges more affordable and spend more on improvements, both at the same time.

Right from the start Tenants Forum members were involved in “mystery shopping” at the offices and housing estates of potential partner housing associations. The Tenants’ Forum is recommending this partnership as the right and best way forward.”



Is it the Right thing to do?

Our staff have been asked this question repeatedly. “What do you think? Do you support Arklet becoming a part of Hanover?”

Our staff are convinced it’s the right thing to do – they want to see affordable rents and new investment for Arklet tenants. Martin Winter is the housing assistant and he often visits tenants.



Martin says:

“I see the partnership as a natural transition for Arklet; we must prevent a deterioration in services and investment. We have a great history and a great track record but it’s what we do next that’s even more important.

I’ve been at meetings and talking to tenants on their doorsteps so that they get the information they need to make a choice about the future. I always say to tenants that the partnership will mean better value for money and that I hope they will choose to vote YES when the time comes.”





Will staff jobs be safe?

That's the other question people ask their housing staff. The answer is yes - not only will their jobs be safe but Hanover will protect their holidays, pensions and career development.



Susan Higgins is a Sheltered Housing Assistant and she's looking forward to the change:

"I like the way Hanover sheltered housing staff can do more for their tenants without having to refer them to the office.

I've worked at Arklet for over 20 years and I want the tenants to see I'm backing this proposal because it's better for tenants and better for me."

Reminder The Partnership in a Nutshell

Tenants have been telling us they like the partnership offer:

£12 a month rent & service charge reduction for all Arklet tenants by April 2020

Rent review to bring Arklet rents into line with Hanover's lower rents; most within 2 years and all within 5 years

Programme of new kitchens, bathrooms, heating and windows as part of a planned maintenance programme

Sheltered housing home contents insurance for £2 a month

Free internet access in sheltered housing lounges

The lower rents and increases are possible because, as part of Hanover, there will be fewer Arklet-specific costs; such as building insurance and computer systems, and operating costs will be spread over a much bigger organisation achieving better value for money.

Hanover will be able to reduce some of the service charge costs and the savings will be passed on to tenants. Because all of Arklet's and Hanover's rent and service charge income goes to providing homes and services, all the savings will benefit tenants.

What Tenants Told Us

We asked for your views and this is what you said:



"I'm really pleased with the proposal to reduce rents by £12 a month"



"I wish Arklet had taken this step a few years ago but it sounds like the right thing to do now"



"Where Hanover services are better, why wait a year to change over?"



"I have a friend in a Hanover sheltered flat and they speak warmly of the service they receive"



"Our development doesn't use the common room much and we'd welcome help from the Hanover Volunteer Coordinator Staff to make the most of it"



"It all looks positive but I need a bit more information before I make up my mind."



"We've had no definite word from Arklet about when we will get bathrooms and windows, so I'm in favour of a programme with dates in it, even if they're a few years ahead."



"I'll be voting yes"



"I'm glad not everything will change because I trust the current staff and I use the welfare benefits advice service"

Our response to these questions and views

Tenants are saying they like the offer and they would like access to additional services right away. Staff are saying they'd like to move to their new jobs sooner rather than later. There's an enthusiasm for moving to some Hanover approaches without waiting until a year after the transfer – as long as this means a better service more quickly. In response, we have added to the partnership offer:



Arklet services will change to the equivalent Hanover service early in the first year, e.g. repairs

New Hanover services will be available right away, e.g. the Volunteer Coordinator to help local groups”

The Giffnock Office opening hours will be agreed in consultation with tenants when services begin to transfer to Hanover's office in Govan.

And, What Happens Next?

We have arranged new events for tenants so you can talk more to Arklet and Hanover. Please come and ask questions and tell us your views. Our staff have details of how the rent changes will affect you individually, so if you missed them when they called, please get in touch.

This document marks the start of a second 4-week consultation process. It's the way we are inviting you to make further representations and tell us your views. You have a legal right to consultation and we really want to hear more from you. We have listened to what we have heard so far and there has been support for this proposal. During the next month, we want to make sure we're hearing you correctly. You have until the 5th of August to tell us more, in many ways:

- Complete the enclosed feedback form and return it in the prepaid envelope
- Attend the event nearest you
- Email us on Partnership@arklet.org.uk
- Call the office on **0141 620 1890**
- Ask us to come and talk to you
- Contact TIS on **0800 731 3772**



Remember - the Tenants Information Service is for YOU

The Arklet Tenants' Forum chose the Tenants Information Service (known as TIS) to be an independent tenant advisor. Its role is to provide Arklet tenants with free advice and information and to check that what Arklet and Hanover are proposing is honest, deliverable and funded.

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TIS Chief Executive Ilene Campbell says:

“We encourage every Arklet tenant to carefully read about the proposal for Arklet and Hanover to merge together and take at least one of the remaining opportunities to share your ideas and views.

As well as speaking to the teams at Arklet and Hanover, you can also speak to a member of the TIS team, for free impartial information and support, on our Freephone number 0800 731 3772.”



After the 5th August, when we are sure all tenants have had opportunities to comment, Arklet and Hanover will decide to proceed with a full tenant ballot. **The final decision about the partnership is Yours.**

Save the Dates

Local Coffee Mornings

Tuesday 23rd July at Maple Tree Court, Cambuslang G72 8GB from 10.30am to 12 noon

Wednesday 24th July at Cartvale Court, Cartvale Rd Glasgow G42 9TB from 10.30 to 12 noon

Everyone is welcome for coffee, tea, cake, souvenirs and chat with the Arklet and Hanover team.

Fun Day

On Saturday 27th July everyone is invited to Fairweather Hall, Barrhead Rd, Newton Mearns G77 6BB from 11am to 2pm. There will be fun for all ages so bring the kids/grandkids for some treats and games as well as another chance to chat to Arklet and Hanover. All adults will be entered into a draw for a £50 shopping voucher!!!



Get involved and have your say

Arklet and Hanover would like to know what you think of the proposal so we can make sure they meet everyone's needs as closely as possible.

Have your say for a chance to **win £20 in shopping vouchers**. Please spare a few minutes to take part in our survey and **return before Monday 5th August 2019 using the FREEPOST envelope** provided:

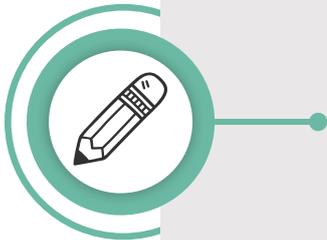
Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

What are your views on the proposal that Arklet transfers to Hanover?



What do you see as the key benefits of this proposal?



We will consider all of the feedback that we receive. The more people who get in touch; the clearer to us your views will be. We will then ask you to cast your vote for a merger between Arklet and Hanover.