



Landscaping Newsletter May 2023

Landscaping Services Invoice for the period 01 April 2022 to 31 March 2023

Dear Owner,

2022/23 Landscape Contract

The 2022/23 landscaping contract with John O'Connor (JOC) was procured via the Official Journal of the European Journal (OJEU) in line with the procurement guidelines and thresholds at the time. The Association is legally bound to procure via this method due to the size and cost of the services provided. The OJEU is open to all contractors who must be registered on the site in order to compete for available contracts. JOC was appointed as their tender costs were the most competitive from all the returns that were received.

As you will appreciate, market conditions fluctuate and costs can vary from year to year and this is a matter out with the Association's control. Consequently, some owners' costs have increased in this contract and this is not unusual as it reflects the current market conditions, in which the Association has no control over.

If you would like to obtain more information on the works undertaken in your development, please review our documents published on our website under the owner's section for common repairs. The documents are:

- 'Landscape Programme Schedule of Visits': This indicates which week the landscaping crew will be in your development during the month.
- 'Specification for Landscape Activities': This provides information on the works undertaken and the frequency of visits.

As well as the general landscaping contract, the Association will undertake varied jobs, as and when they occur, and these are charged out separately from the contract. The varied jobs can be, for example, removing a dead tree or crown reducing a tree. All these works are inspected by our Clerk of Works, a quotation is provided and depending on the costs, owners are notified in advance of the works proceeding. Before and after pictures are recorded for verification purposes.

2023/24 Landscaping Contract

We have year on year procured a specialist contractor to undertake this service. However, increasingly the management of the service has been more difficult and service levels have been difficult to maintain.

The contract was due to be re-tendered for 2023/24 and it was anticipated that costs would increase by at least the current inflation figure of 10.5% for next year, and potentially significantly higher for future years.



OAK TREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION LTD, 40 WEST STEWART STREET, GREENOCK, PA15 1SH
Tel: Enquiries - 01475 807000 Direct Repairs - 01475 807001 www.oaktreeha.org.uk e-mail: info@oaktreeha.org.uk
@OakTreeHA

Registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator No. HCB137
Property Factor Registration Number PF000264; Financial Conduct Authority No. 2232 (S)
VAT Registration No. 393 1879 55

Oak Tree Housing Association Ltd is a registered society under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014
Registered Charity Number SC045300

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An option to bring the service in house (known as in-sourcing) was considered by our Management Committee (MC) in February 2023, following a grant funded project that has been running for the last 2 years being due to come to an end in March 2023. The proposal being we keep the project manager from the current project and employ an additional four staff to take on the landscaping contract for Oak Tree.

The MC approved this decision as a two-year pilot, on the agreement that costs for the service will be frozen at the 2022/23 rates for two years.

The timing and detail of the grass cutting and pruning works will remain the same, details of which can be found on our website: <https://www.oaktreeha.org.uk/owners/>

If you have any queries about the landscaping service from April 2023 onward please contact Robert Dowds in the first instance, on 07918581040.

Queries & Complaints

I trust this information will be helpful to you, however, should you have any queries regarding the service from April 2022 to March 2023, please email us at the email address: plannedmaintenance@oaktreeha.org.uk and a member of staff will respond to you in line with our Customer Care Policy.

Owner Portal

The Association are currently working on an online portal for owners and in order to prepare us for registering you on the portal we are asking you to provide an up to date mobile number and email address. We would be grateful if you could email these details to info@oaktreeha.org.uk and we will update our system. Please provide your address at the same time so that we can identify you.

The portal will allow you to view your bills and landscaping drawings. We will develop the portal further as time progresses and utilise the portal to update owners on regular news items. Once the portal is up and running we will plan to move away from sending out written correspondence and utilise the portal and emails for all communication with owners. This will be a phased process and paper copies of any documents can still be provided upon request.



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Ways to Pay

On the reverse page of your invoice you will find details on ways to pay. If you are emailing or phoning in to pay please include/have the following details available:

- Full name
- Address
- Contact telephone number
- Invoice Number
- Reference Number
- Request; i.e. I wish to pay my landscaping invoice, query on invoice, query on work complete/charges etc.

Financial Concerns

The Association appreciates that due to circumstances out with our customers' control, prompt payment of the invoice may not be possible, and we are therefore keen to alleviate these concerns where possible. If you have any concerns about paying your invoice please email finance@oaktreeha.org.uk (including your invoice number and reference number in the subject line) and someone from the finance team will be in touch to discuss payment options. For example, we can arrange for the payment to be made over 12 months via Direct Debit. We appreciate these are difficult times and we don't want anyone to be worried about paying an invoice.

Payment methods: We are encouraging customers to use online banking to pay wherever possible, as we are no longer accepting cheques or cash, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

There is also a service run by our partners called Financial Fitness who are available to help with any financial worries you might have during these difficult times. Their contact details are:

Telephone: 01475 729239

Email: finfittesteam@yahoo.co.uk

Website: <https://financial-fitness.uk/>

Yours sincerely

B Robertson

Brian Robertson

Senior Maintenance Officer (Planned & Cyclical)

For and on behalf of Oak Tree Housing Association



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