



Prospect Manor Residents Association

February 2014 Newsletter

Dear Neighbour,

We hope you find this newsletter useful and informative. Should you wish to obtain more information regarding the Estate, contribute items for the next newsletter or have any feedback, please contact a Committee Member or visit the website www.prospectmanor.net. Alternatively, you can email info@prospectmanor.net.

2014 Calendar:

Annual Subscriptions

The 2014 Annual Subscriptions will commence in April. This €50 funds Estate maintenance & landscaping projects, all grass cutting, pays for the annual Fun Day, regular newsletters, website maintenance, SMS messaging alert service, annual cleanup day and all other administration costs in relation to the estate. Please play your part and support the Association. Remind your Landlord if you are in a rented house. The Subscription is fully tax deductible.

Clean Up Day

We will hold our Annual Estate Clean-up Day on Sunday 23rd March, from 12noon – 4pm. This is an opportunity to clean all the public areas within the Estate. Without your support we won't be able to tackle as many areas within the estate as planned.

Fun Day

The Annual FunDay will be on Sunday 29th June. All residents welcome. Usual events such as bouncy castles, refreshments & face painter, etc.

AGM

This will be held in November and further details will be provided nearer the date.

Prospect Manor Walking Club:

If like me you want to try to get fit and healthy but don't have time for the gym then this is for you. Walking with a group is much more motivational than walking on your own. Walks would be around one hour long. Meet on the main green at 8pm every Monday & Thursday.

Regular walking can give you more energy, help relieve stress, help manage weight and it reduces your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Walking is the most popular form of activity; it's free, suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels and it can be done almost anywhere. The risk of injury is low because it doesn't put pressure on your joints. [Irish Heart Foundation]

It might be a good idea for those taking part to wear a high-vis jacket if they have one, as it will probably be dark coming back.

If this sounds like something you would be interested in, please contact: Donna on 0876505254

OnLine Newsletter Service:

Would you like to ensure you don't miss any of our Newsletters amongst all of the junk-mail that comes through your letterbox? If so you can now subscribe to a new service that will email a copy of the Newsletters direct to your email inbox. You could then read the newsletter on the bus or at your leisure, even if you are not at home. Now how useful is that !!



Driving within the estate

Some residents have highlighted that a small number of motorists (both residents and visitors) could take more caution when driving within the Estate. Please be extra cautious when driving past parked cars in case anyone steps out. We have highlighted the issue of speeding motorists in previous newsletters and at the AGM the issue was raised with our local Councillors. We expect the Council's Traffic Department will review traffic calming measures within the estate as soon as possible.

Saving Money is common sense but we thought it might be helpful to list some suggestions in case this will remind you of something you have overlooked. There's perfectly good science behind these ideas but if you think number 10 is a better idea than number 1, I won't argue. And of course, if you have any of your own to add, please let us know through the prospect manor website, so we can notify other residents.

1. Use your dishwasher!

It's true! Your dishwasher is more efficient than you. In fact, a full dishwasher uses less than half the energy you do when washing dishes by hand and uses gallons less water too. In fact, a dishwasher is so much more efficient than a comparable person doing the same job that you should pop the pots and pans in as well - and know that you're not just saving money; you're doing your bit for the environment too!

2. Don't settle for estimates, provide your own readings

The ESB reads all electricity meters regardless of whether you have Bord Gais, Airtricity or ESB as your supplier. The thing is, they'll only come out to read your meter four times a year. And if your meter isn't read or the ESB can't get to it because you're not home, you'll get an estimated bill. It's easy to tell if your bill has been estimated - it'll have a big "E" after your meter reading.

Providing a meter reading to your supplier is easy - you can do it online or over the phone and your bill will be automatically adjusted. You usually have two weeks to provide a reading if your bill is an estimate. There's no point in paying for more than you've used. This is especially helpful if you've been away or you're using less than you usually do.

3. Find out how much you use

The average household in Ireland spends about €1000 on electricity and standing charges per year, or 5590 units. Of course, nobody is average so it's a good idea to find out how much you use. The easiest way to do this is call your supplier and ask. Read your meter before you call and they'll be able to tell you how many units you've used in the last year. Once you know how much your household uses, you have a benchmark you can measure against if you plan on reducing your consumption. And then...

4. Get an electricity monitor and find out which gadgets are the biggest energy hogs

Electricity monitors are becoming more and more popular and their manufacturers reckon you can knock at least 10% off your bill if you know which gadgets and appliances are using the most energy. They are pretty simple - a little clip goes around the mains cable at your meter and tells the monitor how much electricity you're using in real time. If you turn on the kettle or the dryer, you can see the numbers on the monitor jump. What surprises most people is the other stuff that uses lots of energy.

The biggest surprises were the electric shower (by far the biggest electricity hog in the house), the microwave, and all the stuff connected to my TV. Now if I'm not using the Xbox, it stays off, and if I'm not watching TV, I turn everything connected to it off at the mains. Standby can use as much as 10%-60% of the electricity that would be used by the device if it were switched on. Also don't forget to turn your Computer monitor off, as it too wastes electricity if left on

You can get wireless electricity monitors cheaply in electrical shops or online, and I've had lots of fun walking around the house with it while switching stuff on and off. Owl is the most popular brand and they sell for about €30. I think mine has paid for itself already.

5. Get online billing

I love online billing for everything because if you're like me, you get mountains of post and rarely have time to go through it all. Bord Gais and Airtricity have online billing and offer discounts if you don't get your bills in the post - but that wasn't the only selling point for me. Online billing is simple, your bills are archived, you can see charts of your consumption, and you can enter meter readings online. Easy, less hassle, and the discounts save you money.

6. More efficient appliances

If it's time to replace a fridge or washing machine, it's a good idea to look at energy ratings. Most modern appliances are more efficient than older models, but the rating will help you choose the most efficient model. The ratings, which are compulsory now, range from A to G with A being the most efficient, but I think the most valuable piece of information is the actual amount of electricity that is used per cycle or per hour. Some modern washing machines and dishwashers can do a full load for less than one unit. If you wash a load a day, it could save you €60 per year compared to older models - which should pay for your new washer in just a few years!

7. Consider a Nightsaver meter

If you think you can shift more than 20 per cent of your electricity consumption from the daytime to the middle of the night a Nightsaver tariff is a great way to save money. You'll need to get a Nightsaver meter, which the ESB will install for free, and then you'll get half price electricity at night. You'll pay a little more for your daytime unit rates and your standing charge will be a little higher, but if you use more than 20 per cent at night you'll rack up the savings.

A few easy ways to shift some usage overnight is to get plug timers for your dishwasher, washing machine and dryer and make sure that your immersion is well insulated and set to heat water overnight. Just those items will shift enough of your usage to the cheap rate to make it worthwhile.

8. Make sure your immersion is properly insulated

We all know this, but it's a biggie. Heating water uses more energy than anything else in your home and can account for half of your annual electricity costs. You can reduce your water heating costs by up to 30% just by properly insulating your tank. A good 3-inch thick lagging jacket will pay for itself in no time and save you a bundle.

9. Low energy light bulbs

Like the immersion, we know that they'll save us money but most of us don't know exactly how much of an impact they will have. A low energy bulb uses more than five times less electricity than a standard bulb. If you're spending a euro a day on lighting, it'll cost you 20 cent with low energy bulbs. If you use a particular light for an average of four hours or more a day, then replace it with an energy-saving equivalent - which will use around a quarter of the electricity and last up to 12 times longer. Each energy efficient bulb fitted could give you an estimated saving of €10.50 off your energy bill per year.

10. Switch!

If you've managed to dismiss Bord Gais's "Big Switch" campaign, and Airtricity's "5 Weeks Free" offer has fallen on deaf ears - I'll throw in my two cent - switching is still the quickest and easiest way to reduce your electricity bills. Why pay more than you have to for something you have to pay for anyway? In the current rising trend of energy prices it could well be worth shopping around to save money on your energy bills, further discounts are available if you switch both gas & electricity to the same supplier. It is a simple process and there is no disruption to your existing energy supply.

11. Hot Water

Of course it should be hot, but it doesn't need to be scalding. For most people, setting the cylinder thermostat at 60°C/140°F is fine for bathing and washing. This can save up to €15 per year.

12. Kettles

Heat the amount of water you really need and if you're using an electric kettle, make sure you cover the elements. More modern kettles have no visible element so you use less water, you could also try to fill a cup and use it as a guide to fill the kettle, so that you boil the right amount of water.

13. Curtains

At night, pull the curtains to stop heat being lost through the windows.

Take care not to drape curtains over radiators, as this will funnel heat straight out of the windows.

14. Heating

Turning the thermostat down by just 1°C can cut as much as 10% off your heating bills.

You can also save on running costs by heating your home for an hour less each day.

15. Appliances

When purchasing kitchen appliances such as fridges, freezers, dishwashers and washing machines, opt for a more energy efficient appliance. An EU Energy Label should be displayed (A to G Scale) on appliances for sale in order to help you make a choice, "A" being the most efficient and "G" being the worst guzzler for energy.

16. Tumble Dryers

Tumble driers are energy guzzlers so try to use washing lines or airers. Don't put very wet clothing into the dryer; make sure you wring clothing out or spin dry again to help use less energy.

17. Fridges/Freezers

These are the most hardworking appliances in the home.

Avoid putting Warm or Hot Foods in the fridge, let them cool down first.

Don't leave the Fridge or Freezer door open, this means the fridge uses more energy to cool itself back down due to the cool air lost opening the door.

18. Insulation

Upgrading loft and, where possible, cavity insulation, will save energy in your home by reducing energy losses through the building fabric.



Local Services Database:

Help us build a Prospect Manor 'recommended Tradesperson & Service Database' If you were happy with a company or an individual tradesperson who did some work for you, please send us their details. Email the website.

Mobile Phone Apps Wanted

In our next Newsletter we would like to include any clever money savings Apps. If you have any suggestions please email these to via the website. In the meantime checkout **What's APP**, **Voucher Cloud**, **Hailo Taxi App**, **trivago** and **Spotify** .

How to keep your Bin Lid closed:

We were notified of a new product that fits to the lid of your bin, preventing the lid blowing open and littering the estate. Please checkout **www.binstrap.ie** This is an excellent product and very useful.

Dog Litter:

An increasing number of residents have contacted us to remind pet owners, that if your pet poops, please make sure you scoop!! Thank you.

