	**FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL** **PROPERTY CHAMBER** **(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**
Case Reference	**BIR/00GL/MRA/2026/0016**
Property	**3 Nile Street, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST6 2AF**
Tenant	**Mr Aaron Reeves and Miss Anna Preston**
Tenant's Representative	**None**
Landlord	**D & S Wright Limited**
Landlord's Address	**27 Piccadilly, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire ST1 1EN.**
Landlord's Representative	**Goodchilds Estate Agents & Lettings**
Date of Application	**28 June 2026**
Type of Application	**Determination of an Open-Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988**
Tribunal Members	**Morgan Williams FRICS – Chair** **Amanda Usher**
Date of Decision	**27 August 2026**
Rent Determined	**£940.00 per calendar month**
Date of Valuation	**29 May 2026**
Date the new rent takes effect	**26 September 2026**

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REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 29 May 2026, the Landlord served a notice under Section 13 (2) (as amended) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £950.00 per calendar month(pcm) in place of the existing rent of £900.00 pcm to take effect from 26 August 2026.

2. On 28 June 2026, under Section 14 (A3) of the Housing Act 1988, the Tenant referred the Landlord's notice proposing a new rent to the Tribunal for determination of an open-market rent.

3. The tenancy commenced on 26 April 2025. The rental period is monthly.

Allocation of Repairs between Landlord and Tenant.

4. As per section 11 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1985.

Liability for Council Tax

5. The Tenants are responsible for the payment of Council Tax in respect of the Property. The rent determined is exclusive of Council Tax.

Any other terms of the tenancy taken into consideration in determining the rent.

6. All the terms of the tenancy agreement generally.

Hearing

7. Neither party requested an oral hearing. The Tribunal has considered this case on the basis of the papers provided by the parties and its own knowledge and specialist expertise.

The Property

8. The Property is a semi-detached house offering the following accommodation:

   Hall, W/C, kitchen, lounge / Diner, and upstairs two bedrooms, and a bathroom with full suite including shower.

Outside: Garden to the rear.

The Property benefits from gas fired central heating and double glazing. The property is carpeted throughout with vinyl flooring in the kitchen, w/c and bathroom.

The Property is situated in the Burslem area of Stoke-on-Trent within close proximity of amenities. Stoke-on-Trent railway station is approximately 2.6 miles to the south.

Evidence

9. The Tenant completed the relevant MR1 form, the Landlord did not complete the MR 2 form or provide any substantive responses.

The Tenant.

10. The Tenant made the following comments:

    a) They contend that the Property suffers from several unresolved issues, including a hazardous rear garden containing holes and construction debris, drainage difficulties and a defective heating thermostat.

    b) They state that they removed glass, bricks and other debris from the garden themselves.

11. The Tenants refer generally to Rightmove and Zoopla searches and state that comparable properties were available at around £850 pcm.

12. They include the details of a 2-bedroom end of terrace property, in Chatterley Street, available from 3 July 2026 at a rent of £850 pcm.

13. They do however accept that their neighbouring property, 5 Nile Street (an identical property), was on the market to let for £950 pcm at the time of their application.

The Landlord

14. The Landlord did not provide the Tribunal with any comparable properties or submissions in relation to the proposed rent.

Determination and Valuation

15. The Tribunal considers the comparables provided by the Tenant are relevant to this matter.

16. None of the properties supplied by the Tenant were let comparables, they were only those available to let on the market.

17. 5 Nile close provides the closest comparable as it is the adjoining semi, constructed by the same developer to same standard.

18. Relying on its own expert, general knowledge of rental values in the area, and the comparables provided by the Tenant, the Tribunal considers that the market rent of the subject Property modernised and in good order would be in the order of £950.00 pcm. This is the rent we would expect the property to let for in the open market at the valuation date and if it was in the same general condition as the comparable properties.

19. From this level of rent, the Tribunal has made adjustments in relation to the following:

    a) Improvements: Works relating to improving the garden, which go above and beyond that which could be construed as general tenant maintenance. Those works to include removing the construction debris left post construction.

The full valuation is shown below:

Starting Rent			£950.00 pcm
Less			
a)	Items given under a) above	£10.00	£10.00
Open-Market Rent			**£940.00 pcm**

Decision

Undue hardship

12. The new rent takes effect from the date which is the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy which begins on or after the date of the determination unless that would cause undue hardship to the tenant. In cases of undue hardship, the Tribunal has a discretion to fix a later starting date up to two months after it makes its determination.

13. The Tenant has asked the Tribunal to fix a later starting date in this case. The Tenant says he will be caused undue hardship for the following reasons:
    a. They have already incurred additional expenditure relating to dog care arising from condition of the garden.
    b. The Tenants have suffered a family bereavement.
    c. One of the Tenants is currently signed off work.

14. The Landlord did not respond to the Tenant's application for postponement due to hardship.

15. The Tenant supplied evidence of one of their Fit notes; however, this note expired in June 2026. Furthermore, they failed to supply any financial information as to the impact of this on their financial affairs and the resulting hardship that the rental increase would cause.

16. As a result of our decision the rent will increase by £40.00 per month. On the basis of the evidence supplied by the Tenant, the Tribunal considers that the increase will not cause undue hardship and the application is therefore refused.

Decision

17. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £940.00 per calendar month with effect from 26 September 2026.

APPEAL PROVISIONS

If either party is dissatisfied with this decision, they may apply for permission to appeal to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber) on any point of law arising from this Decision. Prior to making such an appeal, an application must be made, in writing, to this Tribunal for permission to appeal. Any such application must be made within 28 days of the issue of this statement of reasons (regulation 52 (2) of The Tribunal Procedure (First-tier Tribunal) (Property Chamber) Rules 2013) stating the grounds upon which it is intended to rely in the appeal.