	**FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL** **PROPERTY CHAMBER** **(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**
Case Reference	**HAV/29UC/MRA/2026/0050**
Property	**3 Victoria Mews, Regent Street, Whitstable, Kent CT5 1FH**
Tenants	**Nina Mäklin and Lyndon Douglas**
Tenants' Representative	**None**
Landlord	**Andrew and Caroline White**
Landlord's Address	**c/o 143 High Street, Rochester, Kent ME1 1EL**
Landlord's Representative	**Caroline Meek, RedDoor Homes**
Date of Application	**26 July 2026**
Type of Application	**Determination of an Open-Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988**
Tribunal Members	**Judge D Gethin** **Mr M Ayres FRICS**
Date of Decision	**9 October 2026**
Rent Determined	**£1,500.00 per calendar month**
Date of Valuation	**4 August 2026**
Date the new rent takes effect	**4 November 2026**

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REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 20 May 2026, the Landlord served a notice under Section 13 (2) (as amended) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £1,737.50 per calendar month (pcm) in place of the existing rent of £1,325.00 pcm to take effect from 4 August 2026.

2. On 26 July 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 4 August 2023. The rental period is monthly.

Allocation of Repairs between Landlord and Tenant.

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

Services Charges or furniture provided by Landlord (other than carpets and curtain and white goods specified below) and the costs relating to the same.

5. The property is let unfurnished. No services are included within the rent. No furniture is provided. Certain kitchen appliances are provided by the landlord, excluding a fridge and freezer.

Liability for Council Tax

6. 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.

7. None.

Hearing

8. A hearing was held on 9 October 2026 by video platform. The Tribunal has considered this case on the basis of an oral hearing, the papers provided by the parties and its own knowledge and specialist expertise.

The Property

9. The Property is a modern three-bedroom townhouse within the Victoria Mews development close to Whitstable High Street. It has three bedrooms, two bathrooms and an allocated parking space.

10. The Tenants describe the property as having central heating, double glazing, tiled bathrooms, carpets upstairs and laminate flooring downstairs, together with a small patio garden.

11. The location is highly central and within walking distance of Whitstable High Street, beach, harbour and railway station.

Evidence

12. The parties completed the relevant MR1 (tenant), MR2 (landlord) and MR3 (tenant's reply).

The Tenant

13. The Tenants contend that the proposed rent of £1,737.50 exceeds the market rent:

    a) alleged lack of external maintenance and redecoration;
    b) weathering to timber cladding;
    c) staining of the bedroom ceiling from a leak from the second-floor bathroom that has not been redecorated;
    d) defective bathroom lighting;
    e) proximity to a holiday let; and
    f) pedestrian traffic owing to a route to the High Street.

14. The Tenant provided eight 3-bedroom comparables between £1,400 pcm and £1,800 pcm but principally relied upon the following:

    a) Freeman's Yard, Belmont Road – new build townhouse with garden, garage, en-suite and parking for two vehicles underneath advertised at £1,500 pcm.

    b) Millstrood Road – recently redecorated end of terrace with a larger garden and dedicated parking, advertised at £1,595 pcm.

15. The Tenants' proposed a valuation figure of £1,500 pcm having regard to the current condition of the Property.

The Landlord

16. The Landlord maintains the proposed rent of £1,737.50 pcm. The Landlord relies upon the Property's central location, modern specification, two bathrooms and allocated parking. The Landlord also contends that the Tenants have underestimated the significance of parking and floor area.

17. The Landlord's valuation evidence places the Property within a market range of £1,650 to £1,850 pcm and concludes that £1,737.50 falls close to the midpoint of that range.

18. The Landlord's agent provided five 3-bedroom comparables between £1,350 pcm and £1,700 pcm, including Freeman's Yard, but only provided links to the listings which the Tribunal will not open for reasons of IT security. We had no photographic evidence and limited other data beyond an incomplete description of the number of bedrooms and bathrooms, parking facilities and a short narrative description.

19. The Landlord's agent had also conducted a wider analysis of properties across the town, including properties within its own managed portfolio, with rents ranging from £800 pcm for 1-bedroom flats to £2,700 pcm although we were only taken to a selection of six of these. The Landlord's agent had also conducted an exercise comparing the cost per square metre. Such an analysis ignores the condition, character, specification and location compared with the Property and, in our experience, is not a useful measure when comparing 3-bedroom houses with 1-bedroom flats.

Determination and Valuation

20. Under section 14(1) of the Housing Act 1988 (as amended), the Tribunal is required to determine the rent at which the Property might reasonably be expected to let in the open market by a willing landlord at the beginning of the new period specified in the Landlord's notice. Relevant tenant improvements or failure of the tenant to comply with the terms of the tenancy are to be disregarded. Historic issues relating to the tenancy or the personal circumstances of the Landlord are not taken into account. The personal circumstances of the Tenants are only considered if an application for hardship has been made.

21. The Tribunal accepts that the Property enjoys a strong central Whitstable location and benefits from three bedrooms, two bathrooms and an allocated parking space. Those are features which place it above many traditional three-bedroom terraced properties relied upon by the Tenants.

22. The Tribunal also accepts that the Property should be valued in its actual condition at the valuation date. The evidence demonstrates some disrepair and decorative shortcomings, including external weathering, the failure to redecorate the damp stain and unresolved bathroom lighting issues.

23. The Tribunal places greatest weight upon the evidence relating to comparable three-bedroom properties in Whitstable close to the town centre rather than broader town-wide averages, stretching from Seasalter to Tankerton, or comparisons with significantly smaller units which we found added no useful insight. None of the Landlord's particularised comparables exceeded £1,700 pcm, the most expensive being a semi-detached house rather than mid-terrace, that would support a proposed rental value of £1,750 pcm.

24. The Tribunal considers that Freeman's Yard on Belmont Road (a new build advertised at £1,500 pcm) and Millstrood Road (recently redecorated and let at £1,595 pcm) are particularly useful because they are modern properties with superior accommodation, larger floor areas and additional amenities. Both were marketed below the rent proposed by the Landlord for the subject property. Neither are as centrally located as the Property which has close proximity to the town centre and local shops.

25. The Tenants noted the use of the adjoining property for holiday lets, but that is not a relevant consideration, and they referred to the footfall outside their home as it is located on a local cut through to the High Street, but again that does not represent a factor which we consider would significantly affect the rental value given its location.

26. Relying on its own expertise and general knowledge of rental values in the area, and the comparables provided by the Landlord and the Tenant, the Tribunal considers that the market rent of the subject Property modernised and in good order would be in the order of £1,550.00 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.

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

    a) external weathering, the failure to redecorate the damp stain and unresolved bathroom lighting issues.

The full valuation is shown below:

Starting Rent			£1,550.00 pcm
Less			
a)	Items given under a) above	£50.00	£50.00
Open-Market Rent			**£1,500.00 pcm**

Decision

28. The Tenants did not seek the Tribunal to exercise its discretion to fix a later starting date up to two months after it makes its determination.

29. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £1,500.00 per calendar month with effect from 4 November 2026 which is the beginning of the first new period of the tenancy which begins on or after the date of the determination.

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 after 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.