	**FIRST - TIER TRIBUNAL** **PROPERTY CHAMBER** **(RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY)**
Case Reference	**HAV/45UC/MRA/2026/0009**
Property	**5 Woodcote Cottages** **Woodcote Lane** **Littlehampton** **BN17 7PT**
Tenant(s)	**Ms Efstathia Stavropoulou**
Tenant's Representative	**Barbara Hollingdale**
Landlord(s)	**Miss Petra Briggs**
Landlord's Address	**47 Hogarth Road** **Hove** **BN3 5RH**
Landlord's Representative	**Charters**
Date of Application	**19th June 2026**
Type of Application	**Determination of an Open-Market Rent sections 13 & 14 of the Housing Act 1988**
Tribunal Members	**I R Perry FRICS** **S Johnson**
Date of Decision	**2nd November 2026**
Rent Determined	**£920 per calendar month**
Date of Valuation	**18th July 2026**
Date the new rent takes effect	**18th November 2026**

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REASONS FOR THE DECISION

Background

1. On 14th May 2026 the Landlord's Agent served a notice under Section 13 (2) (as amended) of the Housing Act 1988 which proposed a new rent of £960 per calendar month (pcm) in place of the existing rent of £900 pcm to take effect from 18th July 2026.

2. On 19th 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 18th February 2022 at a rent of £825 pcm. The rental period is monthly.

Validity Of Notice – Section 13B of the Housing Act 1988

4. In her application form, the Tenant has indicated that they consider the Landlord's notice to be valid.

Allocation of Repairs between Landlord and Tenant.

5. 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.

6. Water supply is included in the rent.

Liability for Council Tax

7. The Tenant is 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.

8. None.

Reasons

9. These reasons address the key issues raised by the parties. They do not recite each and every point referred to either in submissions or during any hearing. However, this does not imply that any points raised, or documents not specifically mentioned were disregarded. If a point or document was referred to in the evidence or submissions that was relevant to a specific issue, then it was considered by the Tribunal. The Tribunal concentrates on those issues which, in its opinion, are fundamental to the application.

Hearing

10. Following a number of procedural issues an on-line Hearing using the Tribunal CVP system was held on Monday 2nd November 2026 at 2.00pm. The Landlord and her Agent were present but neither the Applicant nor her representative attended.

11. The Tribunal Office had sent reminders to the Tenant and her representative and attempted to contact them on the day of the hearing but received no response.

12. The Tribunal determined that it had received adequate papers from the Tenant in support of her case and proceeded with the Hearing as arranged.

The Property

13. The Property is a single storey dwelling within a row of similar cottages in a semi-rural location.

14. The accommodation comprises a living room/kitchen, bedroom, inner hall, bathroom with WC and a small utility space. Outside there are shared gardens including a small patio area immediately in front of the Property.

15. Heating is from 2 electric room heaters. Hot water is from an electric boiler. The rear windows are double-glazed, and the front window is single-glazed. There is a nominated parking space and a visitor parking facility.

16. The Landlord supplies flooring, but the cooker and washing machine are provided by the Tenant.

Evidence

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

The Tenant(s)

18. The Tenant(s) made the following comments:

    a) The proposed increase of £60 pcm is significant and concerning. The Property is modest in size and does not benefit from a private enclosed garden.

    b) The Tenant recently provided photographs and videos showing extremely poor flow rates to the washbasin in the bathroom and the kitchen sink.

The Landlord(s)

19. The Landlord(s) made the following comments:

    a) A similar cottage in the same row was recently let for £950 pcm.

    b) The surrounding grounds are maintained at the Landlord's expense.

    c) The Landlord provided photographs taken before the start of the tenancy.

    d) The supply of water to the property costs the Landlord approximately £50 pcm.

    e) The Landlord and her Agent had seen the videos showing the poor water supply but had not taken any action to remedy the issue.

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 Tenant are only considered if an application for hardship has been made.

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

the order of £950 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 including having white goods provided by the landlord.

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

    a) Water charges included in the rent.
    b) Tenants' provision of white goods.
    c) Poor heating/high energy costs.
    d) Poor supply of hot and cold water within the Property.
    e)

    The full valuation is shown below:

Starting Rent		£ 950 pcm
Less		
a)	Items given under a) above	+£ 50
b)	Items given under b) above	- £ 20
c)	Items given under c) above	- £ 25
d)	Items given under d) above	- £35
Open-Market Rent		**£** 920 **pcm**

Undue hardship

23. 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.

24. The Tenant has told the Tribunal that the proposed increase of £60 pcm would cause undue hardship and had provided some evidence of income and expenditure.

25. As a result of the Tribunal's determination, the rent will increase by £20 pcm. Having considered the evidence of the Tenant's income and expenditure, the Tribunal is not satisfied that implementation of the determined rent from the statutory date would cause undue hardship. Accordingly, the Tribunal sets the starting date for the new rent as 18th November 2026.

Decision

26. The Tribunal determines the new rent amount at £ 920 pcm with effect from 18th November 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 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.