

Entries invited for flower show plant exhibit competition

The Hong Kong Flower Show (HKFS) 2024 will be held at the Victoria Park from March 15 to 24, with the colourful angelonia as the theme flower this year, featuring "Floral Joy Around Town" as the theme of the show. The plant exhibit competition, one of the major activities of the HKFS, is now open for application. Application is free of charge and will remain open until January 31. Members of the public are invited to join. A quota is set for each section of the competition, and entrants will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis.

The competition will be divided into 13 sections including orchid, Chinese cymbidium, potted plant, cactus and succulent, foliage and carnivorous plant, African violet, bonsai-type plant, floral arrangement in Western style and Oriental style, floral art by school children, primary and secondary school potted plant growing/nursing, and a school garden plot competition.

Participants can enrol through the HKFS webpage at www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/hkfs/2024/exhibits.html or download the entry form and submit the completed form in person or by post to the Secretariat of the Show Committee of the HKFS 2024 (11/F, Leisure and Cultural Services Headquarters, 1-3 Pai Tau Street, Sha Tin) or by fax (2691 7264) on or before January 31. For enquiries about the competition, please call 2601 8260 or visit the HKFS webpage.

The HKFS is organised by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust is supporting the HKFS for the 12th consecutive year and has been the major sponsor of the HKFS since 2014.

Hong Kong enters winter influenza season

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 11) announced that according to the surveillance data as at January 6, local seasonal influenza activity has continued to increase and exceeded the baseline thresholds, indicating that Hong Kong has entered the winter influenza season. Influenza activity is anticipated to further increase in the coming weeks. All sectors of the community should heighten their vigilance and enhance personal protection measures against influenza.

Following the higher-than-baseline level of influenza admission rate in public hospitals recorded in the last week of last year, the percentage of detections testing positive for seasonal influenza viruses among the respiratory specimens received by the CHP's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch and the Hospital Authority also reached 11.77 per cent during the week ending January 6, which was above the baseline. The majority of positive detections in that period were influenza A(H3) (around 77 per cent).

The influenza admission rate in public hospitals also increased to 0.68 case per 10 000 population in the same period. Separately, the number of reported influenza-like illness (ILI) outbreaks started to increase after the Christmas and New Year holidays, with a total of 11 relevant institutional outbreaks reported to the CHP in the week ending January 6, affecting 47 persons in total. The 11 outbreaks included two in primary schools, three in residential care homes (RCHs) for the elderly, three in RCHs for persons with disabilities, two in hospitals and one in a special school. The outbreak figures substantially increased between January 7 and 10, during which 91 persons were affected in the 21 institutional outbreak reports received by the CHP, including 13 in primary schools and two in pre-primary institutions.

As ILI outbreaks may happen in a number of schools during the influenza season, schools are reminded to take additional measures to lower transmission of influenza in schools, including actively checking the body temperature of all students every day when they arrive at school to identify those with fever. Students and staff members with fever, regardless of having respiratory symptoms or not, should not attend school. In addition, schools should promptly make a report to the CHP in case an increase in fever or respiratory illnesses among students or staff members is observed for epidemiological investigations and appropriate control measures. The CHP has issued letters to schools to draw their attention. Letters will also be sent to doctors, hospitals, and institutions to appeal for heightened vigilance and appropriate actions to fight against influenza together.

The influenza season in Hong Kong usually lasts for eight to 12 weeks. A spokesman for the CHP said that based on previous surveillance data, after entering the influenza season, the virus activity will continue to rise for a period of time before reaching its peak. Members of the public, especially those with higher risks of influenza infection and its complications, such as the elderly and children, should receive seasonal influenza vaccination as soon as possible to lower the risks of serious illness and death. High-risk persons should wear a surgical mask when visiting public places, and the public should also wear a surgical mask when taking public transportation or staying in crowded places. Persons with respiratory symptoms, even if mild, are reminded to wear a surgical mask, refrain from work or attending classes at school, and seek medical advice promptly with a view to lowering the risk of transmission.

For the latest information on influenza activity, please visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#). As for vaccination, the public may visit the CHP's [Vaccination Schemes page](#).

Postal services to Japan subject to delay

Hongkong Post announced today (January 11) that, as advised by the postal administration of Japan, mail delivery services to Japan for areas with the postcodes listed below are subject to delay due to the earthquake.

Postcodes
9200000 – 9299999 and 9400000 – 9594636

Government posts notices of land resumption and acquisition for remaining phase development of Kwu Tung North/Fanling North New Development Areas

The Lands Department (LandsD) today (January 11) posted resumption notices and acquisition notices in accordance with relevant ordinances to resume about 109 hectares of land for the implementation of the remaining phase development of the Kwu Tung North/Fanling North New Development Areas (KTN/FLN NDA).

Section 4 of the Lands Resumption Ordinance (Chapter 124), section 4 of the Land Acquisition (Possessory Title) Ordinance (Chapter 130), section 14 of the Roads (Works, Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Chapter 370) and section 14 of Chapter 370 as applied by section 26 of the Water Pollution Control (Sewerage) Regulation (Chapter 358, Subsidiary Legislation AL) will be invoked. In addition, a one month notice of the intention to make an order directing the removal of human remains from seven graves in accordance with section 119(1) of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Chapter 132) will be gazetted on January 12. The Government will continue negotiating with the claimants for voluntary removal of the human remains from these graves before making the order.

A total of 1 690 private lots with an area of about 109 hectares will be resumed, and the land being occupied by 40 graves and 17 urns with an area of government land of about 2 180 square metres will be acquired. The said land will revert to or vest in the Government upon the expiry of a period of three months from the date of affixing the notices (i.e. April 12, 2024). The Government will release ex-gratia land compensation to the relevant land owners after land reversion.

The abovementioned land reversion date is the date of vesting of the ownership of the land in the Government. It is not the departure deadline of the affected households and business undertakings. According to the information obtained earlier from the freezing survey, there are a total of 1 065 affected households and 313 affected business operators within the remaining phase development of the KTN/FLN NDA. According to the project schedule, they are scheduled to depart in batches from the third quarter of 2024 to the first quarter of 2026. The LandsD sent letters to the affected households and business undertakings from November to December 2022 informing them of the scheduled departure dates and the compensation and rehousing arrangements for their reference and early preparation for moving out. The LandsD and its appointed Compensation and Rehousing Service Teams will maintain communication with the affected households and business undertakings, and provide updated information when necessary, including the posting of notices by the LandsD three months before the departure deadlines of the affected households and business undertakings in relevant areas in accordance with the applicable procedures. Based on the current situation, it is estimated that the first batch of 780 households and 207 business undertakings will have to move out as early as the third quarter of 2024.

The Government is handling the compensation and rehousing matters of the relevant land owners, households and business undertakings at full steam, and will endeavour to arrange rehousing or release compensation for all eligible persons before the clearance commences. In response to affected households' concerns about living near the construction site, households affected by the remaining phase development can apply for early departure and receive rehousing and compensation. As of November 30, 2023, 889 households have applied, of which 336 eligible households have been rehoused, 11 eligible households have received ex-gratia cash compensation, and the applications of 447 households are being processed or the households have yet to submit supplementary information, and 95 households are not eligible based on the existing information (the main reasons include: households move into the development area after the freezing survey, living in unauthorised structures, or holding domestic property). The LandsD will continue to process relevant applications and contact the affected persons, particularly those households to be moved out in the first batch so as to follow up with their rehousing and compensation matters.

The KTN/FLN NDA is the first new development area project commencing construction in the Northern Metropolis, which will supply land for housing, commercial, community and other developments. The first phase of site formation and engineering infrastructure works commenced in 2019. The

remaining phase of site formation and engineering infrastructure works (including roads, drainage, sewerage, water mains, landscaping works, slope works and electrical and mechanical works, etc) are planned to commence in the middle of this year.

Upon full development, the KTN/FLN NDA will provide about 86 200 housing units accommodating a population of about 226 700, and will also provide about 1 275 000 sq m gross floor area for economic activities while creating about 53 100 job opportunities.

HA approves implementation arrangements for sale of GSH flats 2023 and two housing schemes to encourage childbearing

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) Subsidised Housing Committee (SHC) today (January 11) approved the average selling prices and sales arrangements for the sale of Green Form Subsidised Home Ownership Scheme (GSH) Flats 2023 (GSH 2023) and the implementation arrangements for two housing schemes to encourage childbearing as stated in the 2023 Policy Address.

GSH 2023

"The HA expects that applications for GSH 2023 will be invited in the first quarter of 2024, with balloting to be held in the second quarter of the year. Flat selection is expected to start from the third/fourth quarter of 2024. Unlike previous GSH sale exercises, the new GSH flats put up for sale under this exercise will no longer include Type A flats of a smaller size. Moreover, the HA has endorsed the relaxation of mortgage arrangements, allowing purchasers to have a longer mortgage default guarantee period and repayment period," a spokesman for the HA said.

Details of the sales arrangements for GSH 2023 are as follows:

Flats for sale

The following three categories of flats will be put up for sale under GSH 2023:

(1) New GSH flats for sale

A total of 2 359 flats from the new GSH development, Lai Yuet Court in Cheung Sha Wan, will be put up for sale. As responses of past GSH sale exercises clearly show that applicants prefer buying larger flats, and the Chief Executive announced in the 2022 Policy Address that the saleable area of all subsidised sale flats (SSFs) completed from 2026-27 onward will be no less than 26 square metres in general, the saleable areas of the flats in Lai Yuet Court will range from about 26 sq m to about 60 sq m (about 280 square feet to about 646 sq ft). There will be no Type A flats of smaller size in Lai Yuet Court but 77 Type E flats of a larger size with a saleable area of about 60 sq m (about 646 sq ft).

(2) Unsold or rescinded GSH flats

Around 180 unsold or rescinded flats as at November 30, 2023, from Kai Chuen Court (in Diamond Hill) sold under GSH 2020/21; Ko Wang Court (in Yau Tong) and Kam Pak Court (in Ma On Shan) sold under GSH 2022; and any additional rescinded flats from these three GSH developments identified up to about two months before commencement of flat selection; and

(3) Recovered Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) flats

A new batch of recovered TPS flats. The final number and detailed flat list is to be drawn up around three months before the flat selection of GSH 2023.

Prices

(1) New GSH flats (see Annex)

(2) Unsold or rescinded GSH flats

Under the prevailing pricing mechanism, GSH flats will be sold at a discount of 10 per cent more than that of the preceding Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) sale exercise. Since the discount rate for Sale of HOS Flats 2023 (HOS 2023) was set at 38 per cent, the discount rate for all GSH flats offered under this sale exercise will be set at a 48 per cent discount from the assessed market values. The selling prices of flats in Lai Yuet Court range from about \$1,540,000 to about \$4,610,000. The selling prices of unsold and resale flats range from about \$870,000 to about \$3,300,000 (as at November 30, 2023). The final price range will depend on the resale flats that will be put up for sale under this sale exercise.

(3) Recovered TPS flats

The existing pricing mechanism for sale of TPS flats to sitting tenants (Adjusted Replacement Cost approach) will be adopted for the sale of recovered TPS flats to Green Form (GF) applicants. As at November 2023, the list prices of the unsold flats in the 39 TPS estates range from about \$140,000 to \$1,230,000, and the discounts range from 80 per cent to 85 per cent of assessed market values. The final price range will depend on the recovered TPS flats that will be put up for sale under this sale exercise.

Eligibility

Eligible GF applicants may submit paper applications either in person or by post, or submit an online application. The application fee is \$270. Applicants should not have owned domestic properties in Hong Kong during the period from 24 months preceding the closing date for submitting the application up to the time of purchase. In addition, valid GF applicants under the HOS 2023 who indicate in the application forms their consent to carry over their applications to GSH 2023 and fulfil the application eligibility of GSH 2023 will be automatically included in this GSH sale exercise. They do not need to submit applications nor pay the application fee again. If they have successfully purchased a flat under the HOS 2023 (flat selections are scheduled to commence in the first quarter of 2024), their application for GSH 2023 will be cancelled.

The HA will notify valid applicants that their HOS 2023 applications have been carried over to GSH 2023 and provide them with the GSH 2023 application numbers before the application commences. If an applicant submits the application for GSH 2023 again, his/her application will be regarded as duplicated, and the application will be cancelled.

Priority for flat selection and quota

The HA will follow the current order of priority for flat selection and the flat selection order of eligible applicants will be determined by the application category, quota allocation and ballot results.

A quota of 700 GSH flats will be set for family applicants applying under the Priority Scheme for Families with Elderly Members (Priority Elderly Scheme) who have priority over other family applicants. If the applicants fail to obtain a quota, they will still have the opportunity to purchase flats under the Other Families Applicants category.

The HA will set a quota of 200 GSH flats for one-person applicants, allowing them a reasonable chance to purchase flats. They are allowed to buy any remaining GSH flats or recovered TPS flats under GSH 2023 irrespective of flat size.

Mortgage arrangements

The SHC endorsed in November 2023 the relaxation of mortgage arrangements for SSFs. For SSFs sold on the primary market, the maximum mortgage default guarantee period will be extended from 25 years to 30 years for TPS flats; and the maximum mortgage repayment period from 25 years to 30 years for new HOS/GSH projects and TPS flats sold on the primary market. The relaxation will be applicable to all flats put up for sale under GSH 2023.

Publicity arrangements

Doll houses of typical flats and project models on the new GSH development, virtual videos of samples of GSH flats, virtual reality tours of the interior of samples of GSH flats, virtual reality tours and photos of the interior of samples of recovered TPS flats, exhibition panels and other information on the GSH developments and TPS estates will be provided at the GSH Sales Office in Kwun Tong and on the HA/Housing Department (HD)'s designated websites starting seven days before the commencement and up to the end of the application period.

Sales brochures for new and unsold/rescinded GSH flats covering greater details of the GSH developments (and sales pamphlets for recovered TPS flats) and price lists will be available for public collection and viewing on the HA/HD's designated websites starting seven days before the commencement of the flat selection period. During the flat selection period, photos and video clips of the interiors of all recovered TPS flats for sale will be provided at the GSH Sales Office in Kwun Tong and on the HA/HD's designated websites.

Childbearing incentive housing schemes

The SHC today (January 11) also approved the implementation arrangements for two new housing schemes as announced in the 2023 Policy Address to encourage childbearing by giving incentives to family applicants of Public Rental Housing (PRH) and SSF sale exercises.

The HA will launch the Families with Newborns Allocation Priority Scheme (Priority Allocation Scheme) starting from April 1, 2024. Under the scheme, PRH family applications with babies born on or after October 25, 2023 and aged 1 or below will be credited with a waiting time of one year. The relevant applicant must add the eligible newborn to his/her PRH application on or before the day when the relevant newborn turns 1 year old. For PRH applications which are simultaneously eligible under the Harmonious Families Priority Scheme and the Priority Allocation Scheme, only a credit waiting time of one year will be given in order to mitigate the possible impact on other PRH applicants not eligible for either scheme.

In addition, the HA will launch the Families with Newborns Flat Selection Priority Scheme (Priority Flat Selection Scheme). Starting from HOS 2024, the HA will reserve a quota of 40 per cent of flats for balloting and priority flat selection by eligible applicants of the scheme and the Priority Elderly Scheme in each SSF sale exercise. Family applicants of SSF sale exercises with babies born on or after October 25, 2023, will be eligible if their children are aged 3 or below on the closing day of the application of a particular sale exercise. This arrangement will increase the chances of the eligible families to purchase flats successfully.