

*A Merry Christmas
and a Happy New Year to all!*



We hope you all have a lovely time over the festive period and stay safe.

Our staff will finish up for the Christmas holidays at 12 noon on Thursday 24 December.

Business will resume on Wednesday 6 January 2021.

Staff working from home can be contacted on their direct numbers from 9am, and anyone wishing to make a payment can phone the office number from 10am.

The staff contact list is included again with this newsletter.

Hillhead Housing Christmas Grant

Following the disappointing news that Cash for Kids were no longer able to provide their usual Christmas grants, we have been busy raising funds to have our own Christmas grants **for this year only**. We had to limit

the amount of grants we could award, but were able to raise over £1500 which helped over 30 families who would normally benefit from Cash for Kids grants. Following receipt of their applications, our Welfare Rights Officer Morag Bisset took to the streets of Hillhead to spread some Christmas cheer to those families awarded the grant. And as you can see, she was suitably dressed for the occasion!



Emergency Repairs Service

During the Christmas and New Year period, our contractors will be providing an Emergency Repairs Service. If you have an emergency repair during the days our office is closed, please refer to the contact telephone numbers on the back page.



Christmas Drawing Competition

The Festive Rules

- 1 Like and follow our Facebook page
- 2 Draw a Christmas picture and upload it onto our Facebook page (don't forget to put your name and age on your drawing)
- 3 Upload it onto our facebook page before 3pm on Friday the 18th December 2020. Winners will be notified and announced on Monday 21st December 2020
- 4 **THE MOST IMPORTANT RULE IS TO HAVE LOTS OF FESTIVE FUN!**

Age groups
4-7 years
8-11 years
12-15 years

There will be a 1st prize and a runner up for each age group



PAYING YOUR RENT

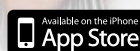
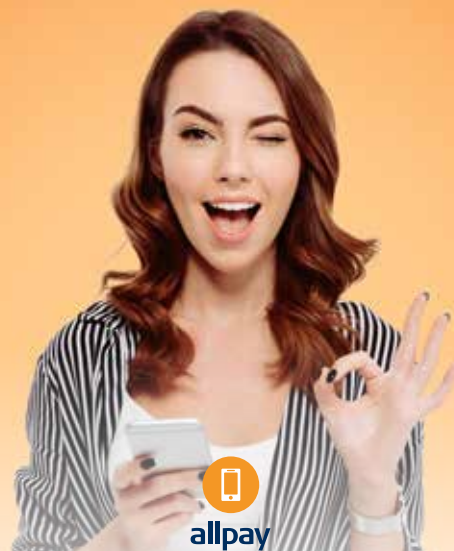
It has been a tough and difficult time for most people over the last few months and we know that many tenants have struggled to pay their rent. The Association has done as much as possible to help tenants. We have provided additional support in a variety of ways including the provision of food vouchers, assistance with energy and back to school costs. This year we have made available the Hillhead Christmas Grant Programme for our families in need and we do hope that this will help ease the pressure on families.

We do however need you to help us. Your monthly rent pays for the services provided by the Association including our repairs service and improvement programmes. If rent is not paid, then this can impact on the services we can provide.

Please continue to pay your rent in December and the coming months. If you have arrears please continue to pay the agreed amount in addition to your rent. If you find that you are unable to pay your rent or rent and arrears payment please contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible. We can discuss options and refer you to our Welfare Rights Officers for benefits advice.

Why not pay your rent using the allpay App?

The allpay App is free to download from your Apple or Android smartphone and enables you to pay your bills quickly and easily at the touch of a button.



Festive Period Refuse Collection & Special Uplifts

We have been advised by East Dunbartonshire Council that the bin collection days for the festive period have not been determined yet nor has the manner in which you can dispose of your Christmas trees. Their website will be updated as soon as the information is available.



As we all know during the festive period there is often more waste from the packaging of food and gifts and we would encourage all tenants to recycle as much as possible either using the kerbside collection or by using any of the Councils' recycling sites throughout the area.

Tenants can find information on the location, opening times and what can be recycled on the Council's website: www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk ; by calling 0300 123 4510; or by emailing recycling@eastdunbarton.gov.uk.

Special Uplifts

East Dunbartonshire Council resumed this service on Monday 16th November and will be fully operational throughout the Festive Period, apart from Public Holidays.

To request a Special Uplift please phone 0300 123 4510 or use the council website: www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk to request a Special Uplift Form.

Please note this service is chargeable and the standard uplift charge is £24.22 which must be paid in advance. If you require a large amount of items uplifted then a visit will have to be carried out to your property and you will be informed of a price. If this is not paid within 4 weeks then your request will be cancelled.



HOUSE CONTENTS INSURANCE

Although Hillhead Housing Association - as your Landlord - insures your property/building, we do not insure any of your contents. This includes things like your furniture, personal belongings or decoration. If any of these are destroyed or damaged in a fire, burst pipes or by accident you will need to pay for them to be replaced if you have no contents insurance.

It is important that you take out your own House Contents Insurance to protect your belongings and replace them if need be. It not only covers your household goods but it can cover things like replacing keys if they are lost or stolen.

If you would like a leaflet sent out or you would like more information regarding contents insurance please contact our office or refer to the Housing Management page of our website.



IMPORTANT- THIS WILL HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU NEED TO DO TO CHECK IF YOU CAN CARRY ON LIVING AND WORKING IN THE UK AFTER JUNE 2021 AS BREXIT WILL CHANGE THE RULES FROM THEN

The United Kingdom officially left the European Union on 31st January 2020, and we have been in a 'transition period' which ends on 31st December 2020.

Official advice is that European (EU, EEA or Swiss) nationals living in the UK before 31 December 2020 who wish to continue to live in the UK after that date will need to apply to the **European Union Settlement Scheme**

(EUSS) to retain their rights under UK immigration law.

You must apply to the EU Settlement Scheme by 30th June 2021 otherwise, you risk losing your entitlement to benefits, as well as being able to access certain services within the UK for free.

(You do not have to apply if you have already been granted 'indefinite leave to remain' or another permanent residence document, or if you have become a British Citizen. Family members who do not hold UK citizenship or permanent residence documents should register for the EUSS)

For further information and how to apply to the EUSS in your native language, please go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/settled-status-for-eu-citizens-and-their-families-translations>

This is a free service, and you can apply through the website above. You can also download the 'EU Exit: ID Document Check' app on a smartphone to speed up your application.

If you have any difficulties applying to the EUSS, you can contact the **EU Settlement Resolution Centre on 0300 123 7379**

If you do not apply to the EUSS by the deadline of 30th June 2021, there is a risk you lose your rights as an EU national living in the UK.



Be ready for the winter weather

Here's some wise advice which could help you stay warm and dry this winter, protect your home and help to avoid emergency repairs.

Outside your home

Don't wait for the freezing weather –

- Check your guttering and report any breaks or leaks now.
- On the roof, keep a look-out for loose or missing tiles and slates and let us know if you see any problems.

Inside your home

- Make sure you know how to turn off the water, gas and electricity. You may need to do this in an emergency
- Keep candles, matches, blankets, a torch and battery powered radio somewhere handy in case of power cuts. A camping stove will be useful too.
- If you notice any leaking taps or pipes, please report these to our team and we will arrange for a repair, as leaks can cause pipes to freeze up.
- If you have an outdoor tap, wrap it up with insulating material or switch off the water supply to it altogether. If unsure please contact the office for advice.

Through the night

- During the night is when the temperature is likely to drop. In very cold weather we recommend that you keep your central heating on at a low setting at least 15 degrees Celsius.

Unoccupied Properties

- If you are planning to leave the house unoccupied then please contact the office and we will arrange for your heating and water systems to be drained

down and re-filled on your return. This will help reduce the possibility of pipes bursting due to extreme cold temperatures and the horrible experience of coming home from holiday to a flooded home.

Central Heating Breakdowns

- Our engineers can be very busy in the cold weather dealing with central heating breakdowns. Very often these faults can be rectified without an engineer attending.
- Before calling an engineer please check your central heating clock and timer is working properly, it is switched on and set at the correct time.
- Ensure your thermostats are set properly. Check all hot taps and ensure they are closed properly – any hot tap running will reduce your radiator temperature.
- Check that the main power switch (spur) often located to the side or below your boiler is switched on.
- Ensure if you have a pre payment meter you have credit in both Gas and Electric supply and the meter is not faulty or a power cut has not occurred.
- On occasions turning your boiler off or to the reset position for a few moments will repair any fault. Guidance for this will be found in your user manual.
- Should your condensate pipe freeze you can sit a hot water bottle on the pipe to help thaw it out or pour hot (not boiling water) over the pipe to help defrost it. Please take extreme care when using boiling water.

For more advice, please get in touch. We'll be happy to help.

CONDENSATION AND DAMPNESS

Problems of dampness in a home are usually caused by condensation. Condensation happens when the air gets colder and it cannot hold all the moisture. Tiny drops of water then appear. If this is allowed to happen on a regular basis, black or green mould can form on walls and furniture, while on clothes and other fabrics mildew appears.

Tips to avoid condensation

- Produce less moisture.
- Cover boiling pans and open a window if you are cooking.
- Don't allow steam from cooking to enter other rooms in the house.
- Dry your clothes outside if possible, or in the bathroom with the door closed and window open.
- Use extractor fans if they are fitted.
- If you use a tumble drier, make sure it is vented to the outside unless it is the self condensing type.
- Wipe up water lying on window sills in the morning.
- Don't use paraffin and portable bottle gas heaters without a flue. Ventilate your home
- Open a small window (or the door a little) when you are using a room.
- Open windows in your kitchen and bathroom when you are cooking and washing, or use an extractor fan if you have one.
- Close the kitchen and bathroom doors when these rooms are in use to stop moisture reaching other rooms.
- Keep air vents unblocked - these are fitted to reduce condensation.

- Keep window trickle ventilators open if fitted.
- Don't overpack your wardrobe.
- Open your wardrobe doors occasionally or cut breather holes in the backs of wardrobes or cupboards.
- Leave space between wardrobe backs and walls
- Position furniture against internal walls

Heat your home

Keeping your home a little warmer throughout helps prevent condensation. During cold weather, ensure there is background heat throughout the day and make sure you don't over ventilate. If you do not have heating in every room, you could keep the doors of unheated rooms open – this will allow some heat into them.



Cleaning mould growth

If you do experience mould growth on walls, it can be cleaned with a fungicidal wash solution. Look out for one which carries a Health & Safety Executive "approval number", available from DIY stores or good paint decorators' shops. Once treated with this solution, walls can be painted with a good quality fungicidal paint.



WINTER GRIT BIN LOCATIONS



During the winter months, we have grit bins located in various locations on non adopted roads. Other grit bins are located throughout the area by East Dunbartonshire Council.

Locations of Hillhead Housing Association Grit Bins

- Ivanhoe Drive
- Border Way
- Mitchell Gardens
- Meiklehill Avenue
- Hardmuir Gardens
- Waterloo Gardens

Smoke Alarm Upgrades

A change to the law has brought in new standards for heat and smoke alarms in all properties. The deadline for the works to be completed is now February 2022, this has been extended from the original deadline of February 2021 due to coronavirus restrictions.

Even if your current smoke alarms are fairly new, you may still need additional alarms to make sure your home meets this new standard. All alarms will be interlinked to ensure that, in an event of a fire, wherever you are in the home, you will be alerted quickly. The faster you are alerted to a potential fire, the higher the chance of making sure you and others in your household remain safe.

We will send out an appointment letter so that you know we are coming to do the work, we will carry out a survey within the home to see what is required and then install the alarms needed to make sure your home meets the standards. This visit should take no longer than half an hour, including the time taken to install the new detectors.



We will install a smoke alarm in each circulation space within your home and within the room you use the most. This usually means hallways and living rooms. We also fit heat detectors in the kitchen and all alarms are interlinked.

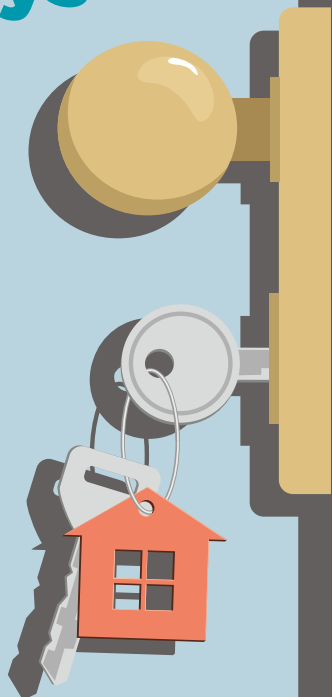
Our operatives will be following strict coronavirus protocols and expect tenants to do the same. Please give our operatives space to

work when they are in your home, keeping to the 2 meters social distance guidelines at all times. If you are self-isolating, shielding, or experiencing any coronavirus symptoms then please get in touch with us and let us know so we can reschedule the works.

We appreciate your help in carrying out these essential works.

Lost Keys

Please note that the Association does not hold spare keys for any houses or flats. Tenants who lock themselves out or who lose their keys and who then require a contractor to force entry to the property will be recharged for this and any subsequent damage to windows, doors, door frames, locks etc incurred in gaining entry. Often these repairs occur out of hours and incur the high costs of an emergency call-out. It is recommended therefore that wherever possible tenants leave a spare set of keys with a friend or relative.



Electrical Periodic Inspections

It is important that access be allowed to carry out Periodic Electrical Inspections within your home. Guidance states that these should be carried out once every 5 years. Our contractor is currently working through this year's programme and all residents whose address is scheduled for an inspection will receive written notification from the Association. Our contractor will ensure the inspection takes place safely and in accordance with current Government Guidelines.



Environmental Works

Our fencing contractor P1 Solutions are back on site working on our Environmental Programme. This phase consists of properties in Redbrae Road and John Street for path and clothes poles repairs/replacements. The P1 fencers are working on Waverly Crescent, Highfield Road and Highfield Avenue. Tenants will be lettered before any works commence and should

note that not all gardens will have identical works carried out. If you have any queries or questions about the works we strongly advise you contact our Property Service Officer Malcolm Macdonald to discuss the works.

We again ask tenants to remain in your home while the operatives are working within your garden area to help maintain social distancing requirements.

COMPLAINTS

The following table presents complaints resolved between 1 July and 30 September 2020

Method of Complaint	Nature of Complaint	Complaints resolved within policy timescales?	Outcome	Service Change / Improvement required
Phone call	Issues with garden and insects in property	Yes	Property Services Officer spoke with tenant and all matters resolved	N/a
3 rd party	Issue re mould in property not having been inspected	Yes	Head of Property Services confirmed inspection had taken place and dampness readings satisfactory. Advice given on condensation	N/a
3 rd party	Dissatisfaction with time taken to carry out work following flooding, and damage to carpet and décor	No	Head of Property Services confirmed all inspections and works carried out satisfactorily. Offer to re-inspect. No further contact from complainant.	N/a

THANK YOU!

Some of you will have received a telephone call recently from our Corporate Services Assistant, Gail Fitzpatrick, inviting you to participate in a phone survey. The purpose of this survey was to find out views on various aspects of our services, particularly over the past 10 months.

These calls went really well, and we were delighted with the positive feedback received from many tenants. Any problems raised were passed on to the relevant department to resolve.

Thank you to everyone who took part, and we hope you welcomed the opportunity to discuss our services, and also just to have a chat when many of us aren't getting the chance to talk to a lot of people this year!

To show our appreciation, we entered everyone into a draw with a chance of winning 2 prizes of high street vouchers which we expect will come in very handy this time of year! The winners were randomly selected as Mr Spence from Cleddans Road and Mrs Bell from Newdyke Road. Our congratulations go to both of them!

The results from this survey will be published in the new year.



Happy 100th Birthday!

When we found out one of our tenants was going to be celebrating a big birthday last month, we agreed we could not let such an occasion go by – regardless of the pandemic.

Elsie Campbell from Redbrae Road turned 100 on 8 November, so we arranged for her to have a socially distanced visit from her housing officer Betty Borland to present her with a card and gifts from the Association.

We hope Elsie enjoyed the rest of her celebrations.



On our Bikes!

As part of developing our green strategy to reduce the impact we make on our environment we are encouraging more of our staff to cycle about the area instead of using cars for short local journeys.

We received a grant award from Cycling Scotland to develop our cycling facilities for staff and local residents.

We have purchased two new bikes, an outdoor secure bike parking storage pod and a community bike pump with the grant that we received from Cycling Scotland.

Please make use of the free air bike pump that is located next to the Association's front entrance.

Our office workers Kieran and Laura try out the new bikes



Bye Bye Betty!

We recently told you about the retirement of our office cleaner Dorothy. And now we have a second member of staff saying goodbye to Hillhead Housing Association.

Our housing officer Betty Borland has been with us since the stock was transferred to us from East Dunbartonshire Council in 2004. And before that she was the housing officer with the Council for Hillhead – so she has been a well known face in the area for many years.

She will be a huge loss for the Association as her knowledge of the stock and tenants has been invaluable to us over the years. And when we eventually get back into the office, her presence will be sorely missed by us all. Unfortunately the current



restrictions prevent us from giving her the send off she deserves but we plan to have a festive farewell via Zoom on her last working day – 18 December.

We wish Betty all the very best and hope she enjoys a well earned rest, although knowing her like we do, we are sure she will keep herself busy!

Stepping into Betty's shoes is someone who will also be familiar to most of you. Heather Robertson has also been with the Association since 2004 and has worked with the housing team for several years. She has carried out the dual role of housing assistant / housing officer since 2017 – job sharing the officer role when Betty reduced her working week at that time. Heather will now take over the officer role full time and we congratulate her in her career progression.



Hillhead Housing Association relaunches its Chair's Fund

Hillhead Housing Association is keen to support and develop young local people through its sponsorship scheme by providing financial support to take part in educational, vocational and character-forming activities. The Association's Chair of our Management Committee has a small budget to help the children and young

adults of our tenants achieve their aspirations and to help promote opportunity. Grants of up to £500 are available.

We have therefore decided to re-launch our Chair's Fund which offers small grants to help and support young people. For example if a young person is struggling to afford the costs associated with an educational, vocational or personal development opportunity (such as having to buy equipment

to attend, travel costs, etc.) the Association may be able to help. The fund can also be used to help participation in such things as the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, overseas scout/guide camps, trips with cadet forces, sporting activities and many other forms of personal development activities.

If you wish to know more please contact the Association or visit our website for more details. www.hillheadhousing.org





Spot the 7 differences



Useful Telephone Numbers

Below is a list of contact telephone numbers that we hope you will find useful

Advice and Response EDC
0141 775 1311

Emergency Housing EDC
0141 578 2133 / 0141 578 8000

Kirkintilloch Integrated Care Centre
0141 232 8200 /
0141 304 7400 / 0141 355 2200

EDC – The Hub
0800 901 057

Housing Benefit
0800 901057

Caledonia Housing, Kirkintilloch
0141 578 0260

Police Station, Kirkintilloch
0141 532 4400 or 101

Special Uplift
0300 1234515

Cleansing and Recycling
0300 1234514

**Environmental Protection
(including dog fouling, dog
barking, antisocial noise)**
0300 1234510

Fire Station
0141 776 6263

**National Grid (formerly Transco)
Gas Emergency**
0800 111 999

DWP (Cumbernauld)
01236 786500

Local MP, Stuart McDonald MP
01236 453 969

Local MSP, Rona Mackay
0141 776 1561

Citizens Advice Bureau
0141 775 3223

Crimestoppers Scotland
0800 555111

How to contact us:

Hillhead Housing Association,
2 Meiklehill Road, Hillhead,
Kirkintilloch, G66 2LA

**Please refer to Direct Dial Numbers for
all staff on enclosed Staff Contact List**

Email: admin@hillheadhousing.org

Web: www.hillheadhousing.org

Free Phone Number: 0800 0523 188

Tel: 0141 578 0200 • Fax: 0141 578 4817

Text Number: 07491 163429

**KEEP US
UP TO DATE!**

Please remember to let us know of any changes in your circumstances, for example change of name, change of number in household etc.



OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY REPAIRS CONTACT NUMBERS:

(Gas Heating repairs–James Frew Ltd)	01294 468 113
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(all other repairs–Rodgers & Johnston)	0800 999 2520
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For tenants of new build properties built within 1 year call NPA	0345 6016 084
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PUBLIC HOLIDAYS - OFFICE HOURS

Our office will be closed on the following dates:

Friday 25 December 2020 – Tuesday 5 January 2021

Please let us know if you require any information within this newsletter in larger print, Braille, cd/tape or in another language.