

# HOUSE FIRES

## - STAYING SAFE AND AVOIDING FURTHER DISTRESS

You may be aware that one of our properties went on fire recently. While this is obviously very distressing circumstances for anybody to be in, the family was lucky to escape unharmed. As with the house fire which occurred last year at one of our properties, where the tenant also avoided harm, the outcome could have been very different had they not had a working smoke alarm.

Hard wired smoke alarms with a battery backup are provided by the Association. This means that in the event of a power cut the alarm will continue to work from the power supplied by the battery. This is why it is vital that tenants ensure that they always have a battery in their alarm and don't delay in replacing it. Please check your alarms regularly and contact us should you have any concerns.

We would encourage all our tenants to take up the offer of a free fire safety check carried out by the local fire service. This service includes the installation of additional battery smoke alarms and heat detectors should the fire service deem this to be beneficial. **To book a free Home Fire Safety Visit call Kirkintilloch Fire Station on 0141 7754297/ 0800 0731 999, Text "FIRE" to 80800 or visit [www.firescotland.gov.uk](http://www.firescotland.gov.uk).**



You can also pick up a leaflet from our reception.

### **INSURANCE FROM £1.50 PER WEEK**

Obviously a house fire can destroy or damage many of your home contents which can be expensive to replace. Please note that Hillhead Housing Association does not insure your belongings or decorations against fire (neither does it insure them against vandalism, burst pipes and other household risks).

It is vital that you take out your own House Contents Insurance to protect your belongings. We offer a scheme for all tenants, where the insurance covers most of your household



goods and can also cover you for replacement of external locks if your keys are lost or stolen.

If you would like a leaflet sent out to you regarding contents insurance, please contact our office, or

you can contact Thistle Insurance direct on 0345 4507286 or through [www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk](http://www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk)

We would urge all our tenants to follow the advice given on this page - these photographs show only part of the devastation caused by these 2 house fires.

# GARDENING SEASON

We are sure everyone agrees that tidy gardens add to the appearance of a neighbourhood as well as the enhancement of the properties. Now that the growing season is in full swing we would ask that you keep your garden neat and tidy throughout the growing season as the gardens will be inspected on a regular basis to ensure standards are being maintained.

As highlighted on our Winners Page, we are also currently seeking nominations for our annual garden competition.

If you are having difficulty maintaining your garden, please contact our office for advice and information which will include finding out if you qualify for the Care of Gardens Scheme run by East Dunbartonshire Council.



# PAYING RENT

## Direct Debits – Easy Peasy payments!

**Did you know we can now set up a direct debit for you to pay your rent? It's hassle free and once it is set up you don't need to worry about remembering payment dates!**

Also, if you set up a direct debit, we will change the amount at the time of any annual rent increase process so you don't have to.

Just contact us and we will get it all set up for you. . . . . It's as easy as that!!!!



## Rent Increase/ Universal Credit

**Universal Credit will also deal with any annual rent increase process, however responsibility for ensuring that the information required to do this is provided to the Department of Work & Pensions (DWP) rests with tenants themselves. Furthermore, any delays in providing this information will result in the "housing costs" element and/or the rent increase figure not being absorbed in your Universal Credit payment.**

We are able to help you meet such new obligations, by inviting you in to our office to log in to your journal and update your housing costs.

Under **Universal Credit**, the onus is now on you

to provide evidence of your annual increase, rather than the automatic updating process, which currently applies under the Housing Benefit arrangements.

For any assistance or advice regarding this, please contact our office. Remember if telephoning, please press option 3 for housing management.

# NOISE COMPLAINTS

Unfortunately we occasionally receive complaints about noise. These complaints cover a whole range of issues from loud music/parties, dog barking, washing machine/hover on early in the day or later at night to disturbances caused by children.

We always encourage tenants to speak to the person causing the disturbance in the first instance, as they may not realise that their actions are causing a nuisance. However, if you think that the person may respond in an abusive or threatening manner then you should contact the Police by calling 101. All incidents should be reported to ourselves, and we will provide you with a neighbour complaint form which needs to be completed. If the Police have been called we will liaise with them to confirm the details of the incident and confirm what action was taken.

Previously the Night Noise Team of East Dunbartonshire Council were able to assist with noise related problems, particularly reports of loud music/parties. Unfortunately the team is not operational at this time but we understand that the Council hope to reintroduce the service. We will let tenants know as soon as it is available.



# ARE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS UP TO DATE?

**Changed your landline/mobile number or email address? Let us know!**

In order to give you the best service possible, we need to have up to date contact information - and it is particularly important to let us know if your contact details change

If you want to check or change the contact details we hold for you, please speak to Kieran on reception or email [admin@hillheadhousing.org](mailto:admin@hillheadhousing.org).



# APPOINTMENT - KEEP IT OR CANCEL IT - DON'T WASTE IT!!!



**It is vital to the service that we provide that appointments are not wasted as we want to provide the best service to all our tenants. Tenants who do not attend, do not cancel appointments in advance or arrive late can prevent others who could be in more need of this appointment from seeing someone.**

We are committed to providing appointments

to meet the needs of our customers but cannot replace the appointments lost due to failure to attend.

Please help us to help you by always cancelling an appointment you are unable to make or no longer need, and please make every effort to cancel well in advance so that it may be offered to someone else. This can be done by phone, email, facebook or in person at our office.

# Estate Based Regeneration Strategy

**Almost £40M has been invested in new housing with the demolition of the most unpopular stock, which has been replaced with high quality newbuild homes. All the retained stock has now been improved both internally and externally.**

We have also coordinated some environmental works, which to date includes:

- creation of the community garden and orchard;
- upgrading of the existing residents' garden;
- landscaping improvements to the corner areas along Meiklehill Road;
- backcourt improvements to the tenement stock etc.

We are now turning our attention more fully to the wider environment with a view to carrying out works such as:

- coordinating a fencing programme;
- improving drying facilities; considering options for small, redundant gap sites;
- generally further enhancing the estate through further environmental works.

Our Management Committee has agreed to set aside resources, and we have consulted with the Customer Care Working Group. We are now keen to hear the views of as many tenants as possible and any suggestions you may have. Please feel free to let us know your thoughts by either e-mailing or telephoning us, dropping in to the office or notifying us via our Facebook page.

We have set aside funds to allow such environmental works to take place during this year and next year, and as such, works will be programmed accordingly. We plan to update the Landscape Strategy, originally developed in 2007 to show all the improvements and changes that have taken place to date, including the new housing and environmental projects now within the estate.

## Proposed Cycle Path

Following a successful funding bid by Sustrans Scotland, we are seeking the views of local people into how we can develop our cycle path project. The proposed new path will run east from Banks Road along to the Tintock Tunnel offering access to the south bank of the Canal.

Thank you to everyone who stopped by our display at the recent Kirkintilloch Gala Day (pictured). We had over 50 visitors, and everyone was very positive about our plans. If we are successful in obtaining further financial support then we expect works to start on the project later in the year.



## Braes O'Yetts – New Homes for Rent and Sale

**Negotiations are ongoing with Barratt Scotland, and we hope to receive tender approval for 30 units from Scottish Government during June 2017. As reported in the last newsletter, planning approval has been received for the project and Barratts have confirmed that the building warrant approval is imminent. Subject to all legal issues being resolved over the coming few weeks, Barratts are aiming for a site start during July 2017. As soon as a detailed programme is available, we will make this available to the tenants.**

Also as previously highlighted, the 30 units will include 8 shared equity units. This is a new form of tenure for the Association and we are hopeful that there will be much demand for this subsidised home ownership in the area. Please keep an eye on our Facebook page and website [www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/shared-equity](http://www.eastdunbarton.gov.uk/shared-equity), as well as the Council's website for further information on this housing, including selling prices.

## Craig Douglas – Clerk of Works/Property Services Officer

We are very pleased to announce that Craig was recently elected to the post of Vice Chairman within the Institute of Clerk of Works, Scottish Chapter for the forthcoming year. This is fabulous news for both Craig and the Association. The Institute is a professional and prestigious body, and Craig's membership allows the Association to stay at the forefront of the construction industry.



**WELL DONE CRAIG FROM YOUR COLLEAGUES AT HHA!**

## BROWN TAIL MOTHS

**We have recently identified that brown tail moths are present within 5 trees at Cleddans, Shells Road and the corner of Meiklehill Road. The included photograph shows the presence of these moths.**



The Association has looked into the matter and have requested our Landscape Maintenance Contractor to survey the trees in the estate that can be affected by these moths, so please do not be alarmed if you see the trees being checked. The recommended treatment is to prune the trees affected and treat with insecticide during the autumn or winter months. We will therefore arrange for this to happen later in the year. If you notice the presence of the moths anywhere else, please contact a member of the Property Services team.

# Leaving Us?

**During the last 12 to 18 months, we have experienced an increase in the number of empty properties being left in very poor condition. This results in considerable expenditure for the Association to bring them back to a lettable standard.**

The number of empty properties and

associated costs are monitored on an ongoing basis, and following discussion with the Management Committee on the issue, they requested we make the tenants aware of the condition of some of these houses.

We have therefore included two anonymous photos below to let you see for yourselves the issues being faced by the Association.



# HOW WELL ARE WE DOING?

The 4 tables below let you see how we are performing against some key activities during the period to April 2017.

Remember, we always want to hear from you, whether it is good or bad. We can only improve our service if we hear from you. Please use our Comment Cards which are in our reception area.

## KEY HOUSING MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE PERFORMANCE STATISTICS

### RENT ARREARS

Month	Tenant Arrears	Level of Arrears	Rent Arrears Target
February	118401.61	3.54%	3.25%
March	113531.06	3.41%	3.25%
April	127260.79	3.73%	3.75%

### RENT LOSS

Month	No. of Empty Houses/Flats	Rent Loss as a % of the Yearly Rent Roll	Target Yearly Rent Loss %
February	3	0.58%	1%
March	4	0.62%	1%
April	5	0.05%	1%

### ALLOCATIONS

Month	No. of Lets	Monthly Average No. of Days to Let a House/ Flat	Target Number of Days
February	2	4.5	5 days
March	5	1.2	5 days
April	6	1.83	5 days

### REPAIRS RESPONSE TIMES (excludes gas servicing)

Category/Month	% Completed within time scales		
	February	March	April
Emergency (24hours)	100%	100%	97%
Urgent (3 days)	100%	100%	95%
Routine (10 days)	100%	100%	100%
Voids (7 days)	100%	100%	100%
All Repairs - HHA 2000	100%	100%	96%

## HOW WE COMPARE TO OTHER HOUSING ASSOCIATIONS

We compare our performance against those of 8 other housing associations across Scotland every quarter. The table below lets you see how we are performing against the average of this group at the end of March 2017.

Performance Area	Hillhead	Housing Association Group
Rent Arrears	4.98%	3.51%
Rent Loss for empty houses/flats	0.53%	0.66%
Average time taken to re-let a house	14.86 days	29.29 days
Average number of days to complete non emergency repairs	2 days	3.95 days

# COMPLAINTS

The following table presents complaints resolved between 1 January and 31 March 2017.

Method of Complaint	Nature of Complaint	Complaints resolved within policy timescales?	Outcome	Service Change / Improvement required
Letter (5/1/17)	Complaint regarding letter of warning issued in relation to non access to carry out repairs	No	Letter from Housing Manager advising action taken was in line with policy and procedure	N/a
Phone call (6/1/17)	Complaint regarding standard of new door frame and threshold	Yes	Inspection carried out and consultation with Architect and Contractor. All installed correctly and meets building regulations	N/a
Email (12/1/17)	Complaint regarding staff parking in lay-by	Yes	Following advice from Community Police, letter sent to confirm no law against anyone parking here but agreed staff would park considerately where possible	N/a
3rd Party (24/2/17)	Various issues regarding noise transfer from windows and dampness as well as re-housing situation	Yes	Letter from Director to Councillor advising on each of points raised.	N/a
Phone Call (28/2/17)	Unhappy with rent increase	Yes	Letter from Housing Manager outlining rent increase policy. Appointment made with Welfare Rights Officer	N/a
Phone Call (28/2/17)	Unhappy with rent increase	Yes	Housing Manager spoke with tenant advising of consultation process and appointment made with welfare rights officers	N/a
Letter (22/3/17)	Noise from flat above – thinks floorboards require attention	Yes	Inspection carried out and relevant works issued. Tenant happy	N/a

# TENANT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE WINNERS



Our latest winners of the monthly prize draw are;

**March** – Mrs McElhaney, Meiklehill Road

**April** – Mr & Mrs Clive, Highfield Road

**May** – Mr McKillop, Waverley Crescent

Please remember that returning your tenant satisfaction questionnaires (which are posted to you each time your report a repair) automatically enters you in a prize draw with the chance of winning £100 in High Street Vouchers. Each questionnaire sent to you includes a reply paid envelope which means no need for stamps!

Mrs McElhaney receives her prize vouchers from Marie Savage, Property Services Officer

## TENANTS LOYALTY SCHEME



The April winner of this scheme was randomly selected from those tenants who qualified and the lucky winner was Mr Malcolm of Meiklehill Road. Our congratulations go to him.

**Please note that this scheme operates a prize draw every 2 months – with the chance to win £100 in High Street Vouchers.**

Mr Malcolm receives his prize vouchers at our office

## GARDEN COMPETITION 2017

Our garden competitions over the years have unfortunately not received many nominations, resulting in our housing officers identifying potential prize winners themselves. However we would like the people of Hillhead to be able to nominate prize worthy gardens within their community. If you know of such a garden in

Hillhead, please contact our office and let us know. Our Community Growing Coordinator Robert would be only too pleased to offer any advice on how to get your fingers greener!

Please get any nominations in to us by Friday 21 July - the judging will take place shortly thereafter!



# SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PANEL

The members of the Panel have now viewed 5 of our empty properties both before and after repairs have been carried out.

In order to compare standards, a visit has been arranged for early July to another housing association, based in Lanarkshire.

The Panel is also keen to speak to households who moved into their present homes within the past three years and letters have been sent out to all of them asking whether they would like to take part in a short survey with Panel members, to talk about their experience.

If you moved into your home between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and have not yet returned the form which came with your letter but you would like to take part in this survey, please contact Elspeth Sharkey, Housing Manager; or alternatively, your Housing Officer.



# YOUR SECTION OF THE NEWSLETTER



At a recent meeting of our Customer Care Working Group, it was suggested that a section of the Newsletter could be dedicated to you, our residents.

You may have photos of Hillhead and its residents from years gone by which you would like to share; or useful tips on gardening; or recipes etc. In fact anything which might be of interest to others in the area.

If you have anything you would like to share with others through our Newsletter, please contact Mandy White, Corporate Services Manager or any other member of staff.

## ANTONINE HOUSING ASSOCIATION SEEKS NEW PARTNER TO TAKE IT FORWARD

Our neighbour, Antonine Housing Association has been reviewing its options for how it will progress and offer improvements to its tenants. It recently advertised for a "Strategic Partner" to submit proposals for taking the Association forward and for securing its future.



With just over 330 homes of which 2/3rds are in Hillhead and Harestanes we believe that by joining in with Antonine we can offer Antonine's Tenants the best service which will remain locally based and controlled. By joining Hillhead the tenants of Antonine would benefit from an accelerated investment programme, guarantees on future rent levels, and greater access to better and improved services and opportunities.

Hillhead HA is therefore submitting a detailed proposal which will be assessed along with any other proposals that are received from other regional and national associations. During the next few weeks the proposals will be looked at in detail with a short list of potential partners being selected for further and more detailed review. Antonine expects to have a preferred partner in place by the end of August.

We will continue to update our tenants as to how our Proposal gets on.



# Ceartas

Advocacy: Power, Voice and Choice

### What is Ceartas?

Ceartas is an independent advocacy service for people in East Dunbartonshire.

### What does Ceartas do?

Ceartas can appoint an advocacy worker who can assist you:

- To put forward your views in discussions around your care and support.
- If you are subject to Mental Health or other community care legislation.
- To ensure you have the information required to support you in decision making.
- To plan for the future, e.g. Advance Statements; Power of Attorney.

### How can I get in touch?

Telephone: 0141 775 0433

Email: [info@ceartas.org.uk](mailto:info@ceartas.org.uk)

Web: [www.ceartas.org.uk](http://www.ceartas.org.uk)

Providing Advocacy In East Dunbartonshire

# MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

As you may be aware, our Management Committee includes 2 appointed members of East Dunbartonshire Council. Since 2007 the appointed members have been Councillors Stewart MacDonald and John Jamieson. However, following the Council election last month, the appointees are now Councillors Stewart MacDonald and Susan Murray.

We were also pleased to welcome a new member onto our Committee this month. Stuart Niven lives in Lenzie and works as a Business Development Manager for Charity Aid Foundation. He brings a wealth of beneficial skills and knowledge to our Committee, including financial management. He has vast experience of working with other social landlords and the wider charity sector, and aims to support us in continuing to improve the local community and Hillhead area.



Our new Management Committee Members, Councillor Susan Murray and Stuart Niven



## PETCHECK

Following on from the initial visit from PDSA's community programme PetCheck on 10 April, the return visit will take place on Friday 21 July at Hillhead Community Centre.

PetCheck is PDSA's community programme in which specially adapted vehicles tour the UK offering free wellbeing checks to dogs and advice on the care of other popular pets such as cats and small furries.

Owners receive advice on the health, diet, behaviour, environment and companionship of their beloved pooch and can help reduce health issues by educating about the importance of neutering, vaccinating, regular flea and worming treatment.

## HEALTH AWARENESS

### Look After Your Skin This Summer

Now that summer is here don't forget the 5 simple steps to looking after your skin and avoiding sunburn:

- Stay in the shade between 11am and 4pm
- Slap on some sunscreen with SPF 30 (look for one with at least 4 stars)
- Slip on a hat and loose clothing
- Wear sunglasses (with 100% UV protection)

Too much sun causes sunburn which can be particularly dangerous for children and is a known cause of skin cancer on adult life; it also ages your skin, dehydrates your body and can damage your eyes.

Take these simple steps to enjoy the good weather and look after your skin.

For more information go to [www.sunsmart.org.uk](http://www.sunsmart.org.uk)



## Ladies - are you up to date with your smear test?



### Recent changes to the cervical screening programme now mean:

- Women aged between 25 and 64 years are routinely invited for testing
- Appointments are every 3 years for women aged 25-49 years unless otherwise stated by their doctor
- Women aged between 50 and 64 years are invited every 5 years unless otherwise stated by their doctor

If you are unsure if you are due for a smear test or if you may have missed your last one check with your GP. Cervical screening prevents 75 % of cervical cancers from developing; the test takes 5 minutes and really could save your life.

**Cervical Screening Awareness Week**  
12th – 18th June 2017  
#Be Cervix Savvy #CSAW

# 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

**Antonine 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

**Tel: 0141 578 0200**

**Fax: 0141 578 4817**

Email: [admin@hillheadhousing.org](mailto:admin@hillheadhousing.org)

Web: [www.hillheadhousing.org](http://www.hillheadhousing.org)

Free Phone Number: 0800 0523 188

**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)	<b>01294 468 113</b>
(all other repairs–Rodgers & Johnston)	<b>0844 247 2120</b>
(planned maintenance repairs-CCG)	<b>0141 643 3744</b>
For tenants of new build properties built within one year	<b>0845 6061555</b>

## Public Holidays - Office Hours

**Our office will be closed on the following dates:**

**Friday 14th & Monday 17th July 2017**

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

