

at home with...



CORONAVIRUS – SERVICE UPDATE

The health and safety of our tenants, other customers, contractors and colleagues remains paramount and we are committed to following the guidance issued by the Scottish Government and Health Protection Scotland.

Our office is now open for business and we have implemented a new 'hybrid' working model, offering colleagues the opportunity to continue working from home for part of the week and adopting more flexible hours, allowing us not only to extend our hours of operation to better meet your needs but also to reduce our carbon footprint as we look to adapt our practices in light of the climate emergency. This does, however, mean that the person you need to see may only be in the office on certain days and so, if possible, we recommend you book an appointment so we can do our best to ensure the person you want to see is available.

Our festive office opening hours can also be found on page 5.

Please do not come into the office if you are showing any symptoms of Coronavirus or you have been exposed to someone who has. If you need to contact us during this time you can reach us on 08000 274 007 or via info@fifehg.org.uk

We are continuing to deliver our services whilst taking all possible precautions to safeguard against the risk of infection and, to this end, ask that you advise us in advance if we are due to visit your home and you are self-isolating or have been diagnosed with Coronavirus.

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REPORTING EMERGENCIES

Please note that you can continue to report emergencies outside of normal office hours and throughout the festive period, by calling **08000 274 007**.

For gas central heating emergencies please call the contractor for your area directly:

East Fife (Hill of Beath to Ceres) – Kingdom Gas – 0800 389 9463

West Fife (Dunfermline to High Valleyfield) – City Technical – 0333 202 0708

READABILITY

Can you read our other articles ok? If not, you can ask for your newsletter to be provided in a large print format. Or, if you know of a tenant who does not have English as their first language and might struggle to read information from us, did you know that we can arrange to have it translated for them?

Just contact our newsletter editor, **Alex McCue**, on **01383 607549** or via **alex.mccue@fifehg.org.uk** to request a large print copy or to enquire about alternative copy formats.

PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU USE THE CORRECT PAYMENT REFERENCE

Whether you are making a payment to us via a bank transfer, direct debit, Universal Credit or your allpay card, it is essential that you use the correct reference so that we can ensure the money is allocated to the right place and your account balance is accurate.

The reference you should use for rent payments is your tenancy code followed by /01 e.g. 1010100/01. If you are paying for a recharge or a legal fee you will have been informed what reference to use or supplied with an allpay card.

Next time you are making a payment, please double-check the reference you are using and update it if necessary. If you are unsure what the correct payment reference is, please do not hesitate to contact your Housing officer or a member of our Finance Team who will be able to confirm this for you.

COULD YOU BE ELIGIBLE FOR ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE?

Every year hundreds of thousands of pounds worth of benefits go unclaimed so it's important to ensure that you're receiving everything you are entitled to.

Attendance Allowance is payable to people over 65 years of age who have a physical/sensory disability or mental disability (or both) and who need help caring for themselves, or need someone to supervise them for their own safety.

If you think you, or someone you are caring for, may be eligible to apply for this benefit, please check online at gov.uk/attendance-allowance or phone the Attendance Allowance helpline 0345 605 6055 for further details.

HOUSING OFFICER VISITS



During 2022, Housing Officers will be visiting all tenants to confirm the household details we currently hold are up-to-date and, as part of our wider project to ensure services are relevant and affordable, we will also be asking for some information regarding your income and the cost of services. Additionally, during this visit, we would like to take the opportunity to inspect your property and make sure the conditions are still of high quality.

With three lockdowns behind us, we are keen to get out and about and look forward to seeing you all soon.

NEW WEBSITE AND CUSTOMER PORTAL COMING SOON!

Restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic really emphasised the benefits of being able to transact and interact with businesses online. With shops, offices and surgeries closed we had to adapt to a new virtual world and although things have started to return to something resembling 'normal' we are keen to retain and develop the digital practices which could continue to be useful for customers going forward.

With this in mind, we have begun working towards delivery of a new interactive website and customer portal, which will enable you to engage with us at your own convenience. Linking directly to your account and offering the ability to make payments, see statements, report repairs, update your details and raise issues, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, having to wait for the office to open to get the information you need will soon be a thing of the past.

We're excited about the opportunities these new tools will offer and hope to have more information regarding the official launch date to share with you soon!

If you would like to help develop and test these new services then please get in touch with our Communications and Engagement Manager, **Karen Begg**, directly on **01383 607549** or via **karen.begg@fifehg.org.uk**.



25TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Held on Monday 13 September, this year's AGM was once again a virtual event with shareholding members invited to participate in proceedings via ZOOM.

Our rules state that a third of our Board Members must stand down at the AGM each year and in this instance, the three Board Members required to stand down were Miss Boath, Mrs Barr and Mr Boles all of whom confirmed that they were willing to stand for re-election.

As the number of members standing for election did not exceed the vacant spaces available, the members standing again were elected without a vote.

In addition, we were delighted to welcome two new members to the Board - Brian Gallacher and Esther Robertson, as well as Ricky MacAulay as a PACT Board member – all of whom bring with them a wealth of skills and experience.

In a vote at the Board meeting which followed the AGM, Helen Boath and Sandra Stock were both re-elected as Vice-Chair for another year.

Therefore, our Board members for the coming year are as follows: Helen Boath (Chair), Sandra Stock (Vice-Chair), Stephen Clark, Derek Adam, Fiona Barr, Martin Fleming, Laurie Boles, Colin Miller, Ronald Eldridge, Lynne Pascal, Esther Robertson and Brian Gallacher.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS



BRIAN GALLACHER

Brian works as Programmes Director in the delivery of vehicles and equipment for the global defence market. In this role, he manages complex high-value programmes on a day to day basis, which saw him travel and live across the UK and Europe for several years.

He relocated to Fife in 2013 to be closer to ageing parents and finally lay down roots back in Scotland. In his early career, he was a soldier in the British Army where he served as a helicopter crewman.



ESTHER ROBERTON

Esther has recently been appointed as Chair of OnFife and was most recently chair of NHS Lothian. Previous roles include Senior Governor at the University of Aberdeen, Chair of NHS 24, non-executive director with Scottish Government and the Scottish Ambulance Service and Chair of NHS Fife and the Scottish Further Education Funding Council. She also served as an independent member of the Press Complaints Commission and as Chair of SACRO, the community justice charity.

Esther was actively involved in the campaign to secure Scotland's Parliament as Co-ordinator of the Scottish Constitutional Convention, and as a member of the Consultative Steering Group that developed the standing orders for the Parliament. She is also a Fellow of the Scottish Council for Development and Industry and the RSA.

Festive Opening Hours 2021/22

Friday 24 December: 8:30am - 3:00pm

Monday 27 December: Closed

Tuesday 28 December: Closed

Wednesday 29 December: Closed

Thursday 30 December: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Friday 31 December: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Although our office remains closed on 30 and 31 December colleagues will be contactable and providing services as normal on these dates.

Monday 3 January: Closed

Tuesday 4 January: Closed

Wednesday 5 January: Closed

Thursday 6 January: 8:30am - 5:00pm

GIVING SOMETHING BACK

In our last newsletter, we announced that we had chosen Andy's Man Club as our Charity of the Year for 2021/22.

We kicked off our fundraising in 'Stepember' when a small team of Fife Housing Group colleagues set themselves the challenge of walking a collective 3 million steps over the month, a target which they exceeded and we are very proud of their efforts.

We are now finalising ideas for other challenges and events to help raise vital funds and awareness for the incredible work this charity does in our local communities.

Andy's Man Club aims to support good mental health and wellbeing in men and, by doing so, help to reduce the number of suicides, which are considerably higher amongst men and have a devastating and life-altering impact on their family and friends.

The charity has four locations across Fife – Dunfermline, Glenrothes, Kirkcaldy and St Andrews – and offers a friendly and supportive environment for any man who wants to improve their life in some way.

To find out more about your local club visit their website - andysmanclub.co.uk

STEPTEMBER 3 MILLION STEPS CHALLENGE



3 million

2 million

1 million

zero

SMASHED IT!!

Total steps:

3,152,628

Roll of honour
(in order of contribution):

Greg
Audrey
Laura
Nicki
Drew
Kerrie
Gavin
Lynn
Karen

GIVING SOMETHING BACK GRANTS

This year, we launched our Giving Something Back Grants to recognise and support some of the incredible individuals, organisations and local projects in our communities. These grants were made possible by the generosity of the contractors who have signed up to our charitable framework, donating 2% of their invoiced costs to benefit good causes and enabling us to award **£15,500** worth of grant money to local groups working to improve their communities.

We were delighted to be able to award make awards to the eight groups below

- EATS Rosyth
- Fife Gingerbread
- LoveOliver
- Lumphinnans Tenants, and Residents, Association
- Pink Saltire – The Hive LGBT+ Centre
- Pitreavie Primary Parent Council
- The People's Pantry Leven Centre
- Viewfield Baptist Church Drop-in Centre



We were lucky to be able to visit these groups to present them with their grants and hear about the amazing work they do. You can read a selection of their stories below - keep an eye on our social media and spring newsletter for more of their stories.

If you are involved with a group that could do even more good with a little extra investment then please apply for a Giving Something Back Grant. We award one round of grants each year and will let you know when we are accepting applications for 2022.

LOVEOLIVER

Our first visit to deliver a Giving Something Back Grant was to the LoveOliver shop in Glenrothes where we met founder, Jennifer Gill, and her hard-working team of volunteers.

LoveOliver was set up by Jennifer and her husband, Andy, in 2011 after the passing of their son, Oliver, at just 24 weeks old from a rare malignant rhabdoid tumour.

LoveOliver's mission is to improve the quality of life for children diagnosed with cancer and their families in Scotland. They aim to do this through the provision of both financial and practical assistance, whilst also supporting the development of new treatments through research.

Despite being a small charity, the team have accomplished a huge amount in their ten years of operation, raising over £1 million to fund a lab technician and two PhD students at Newcastle University.

The practical support they provide includes supermarket vouchers, financial grants, quality digital thermometers, healthy meals for parents during hospital stays and therapy supplies, toys and games for the oncology ward.

The LoveOliver shop opened in May 2021 in the Kingdom Shopping Centre in Glenrothes – not only does the shop raise vital awareness and funds for childhood cancer, but it



also provides an invaluable service to the local community, as well as an affordable and eco-friendly approach to buying items for children and babies.

The team plans to use the Giving Something Back Grant of £1,500 to help make the shop system more organised, efficient and safe.

We spoke to Jennifer to find out a little bit more about the project and their longer-term goals and here is what she had to say:

Where did the idea of opening a LoveOliver shop come from?

Right from the start a children's charity shop had always been a dream of ours however, with myself and my

husband (Andy) working full-time as teachers and going on to have two more boys (Oliver's little brothers), it never seemed achievable.

So we settled for pop-up shops and organised these twice a year, most of the later ones being in the Kingdom Shopping Centre. They were really successful so the demand was there.

Our relationship with the Kingdom Centre and the local community grew and grew and, just before lockdown, we looked into taking on a unit. We eventually took over a large unit which we were worried was going to be too big but our supporters have proved us wrong with the volume of donations. People have been extremely generous and we are so grateful.

When restrictions allowed, we got to work giving the shop floor a makeover and getting the upper floor and basement ready for the stock and we were proud to be

How has the shop made a difference?

Having the shop has been such a positive project for LoveOliver. We have an amazing team of volunteers and there are usually around ten of them in each day helping to clean, steam and tag items and make sure everything is safe and working properly. It means they can come in and help out as much as they want and build a routine out of it as there is always so much to do.

We have a few oncology parents and grandparents on the team as well which is lovely as the cause has a real personal meaning to them. Being able to give them, and all of our volunteers, a regular opportunity has been beneficial as they are all so dedicated!

There has been so much positive feedback from the local community which has been brilliant. We get such high-quality items and are overwhelmed by everyone's kindness and generosity. We also have a team of supporters who knit beautiful cardigans, hats and toys too. It means so much to us that they would use their time in this way to support the LoveOliver shop.

What are the next steps for LoveOliver?

Over the next few years, we would love to be able to turn the shop's basement into a meeting space for families whose child is battling cancer. That is our ultimate goal.

At the moment we aim to get the shop more organised behind the scenes and maintain the high standards on the shop floor.

The local newspaper reported that this is LoveOliver's 'first' charity shop – so you never know, maybe that was prophetic, although one feels like enough to be going on with for now!

In terms of the charity, we want to be able to continue providing the services we do for families and we would love to be funding multiple research projects at a time.

The shop is giving us a regular stream of income which is a first for us and it is allowing us to plan ahead which is exciting!

Research into childhood cancer is so vital and falls on smaller charities, like ourselves, to champion the need for it.

Children and their families facing childhood cancer deserve better. They deserve gentler treatments and for people to be focussing on finding a cure. LoveOliver wants to continue to give these children and their families hope through research and practical support.

This year has been such a positive one through opening the shop and we want to do our best to make sure it continues to grow and develop so we can do more for our local communities.

We are delighted to have secured this grant from Fife Housing Group as it is going to make such a difference to the running of the shop so thank you. The shop is a massive contribution to helping LoveOliver do its best for children and their families facing cancer, and we cannot thank everyone enough for their support!

You can find out more about the fantastic work LoveOliver do on their website -loveoliver.org.uk - they're also looking for volunteers to help out in the shop either sorting donations or assisting with renovations. If anyone would be keen to get involved please contact Jennifer Gill at jennifer@loveoliver.org.uk



Our thanks to the contractors whose generosity makes this possible MAC Roofing, Rogerson Plumbing, QAPM, Moffat Electrical Projects, Bell Decorating Group, Eurojet (Scotland), Pankhurst Decorators, Saltire Facilities Management, Kingdom Gas, City Technical, Shine Cleaning Services, Belac, Virtue Services Group, RB Grant, Forth Plasterers, Mitie Property Services and Metro Rod.

EATS ROSYTH

Another recipient of one of our Giving Something Back Grants is EATS Rosyth. Founded in 2015, EATS Rosyth aims to grow and share food, reduce waste, help the environment and improve food education, providing a vital local service for the local community.

EATS Rosyth consists of a Community Garden, Community Hub and Centenary Orchard and encourages people to get involved to make the town a better place. They organise many events including open days for those who are interested in gardening, children's school holiday lunches, over 55s drop-ins and Friday night takeaways.

The Community Hub is where food is shared with customers from the community and beyond. They share the surplus food five days a week and offer items including bread, fruit and vegetables, tinned goods, meat, dairy and toiletries. Also available is fresh produce from the EATS Garden and Orchard. We visited Lorraine Mayne, Volunteer Development Coordinator, and her team of volunteers at the Community Hub for a chat and to see the project in action.

When did you get involved in the project and what does your role as Volunteer Development Coordinator involve?

I came to the project more than three years ago as a volunteer and a little while later I joined the team of permanent staff at EATS.

I am a lifelong volunteer and so I was delighted to get the position of Volunteer Development Coordinator. In my role, I am responsible for the recruitment, support and development of our volunteers.

What have been some of your highlights as a member of the EATS Rosyth team?

There have been so many highlights for me so far but a couple of them do stand out.

Being able to do something to recognise the contributions and hard work of the volunteers was a real privilege. In the summer, when restrictions lifted, we had a barbeque for the volunteers in our Centenary Orchard. It was lovely to see all our volunteers from across the project come together, laughing and relaxing in the beautiful outdoor space that is our community orchard.

Christmas is another special time for me and a real highlight. It is the time of year where the generosity of the community shines through and we receive incredible donations and support.

At Christmas time, we work with our partners in social work, schools and other community groups to make sure the most vulnerable families are supported through the festive season. We are always pleased when we know we are helping to make Christmas the enjoyable occasion you hope it will be for everyone.

What will you use the Giving Something Back Grants award for?

The grant money will go towards the renovation of our new premises – the former Clydesdale bank on Queensferry Road. The renovations and alterations needed are substantial and we need grants like this to build up the pot. Every pound we receive is a big help and we make the money go a long way!

What are the biggest challenges the project faces?

Our biggest challenge right now is our departure from the church premises we are in right now and moving back into the Community Hub on Aberlour Street which is a lot smaller and will create issues for us in terms of storing food and being able to serve our customers.

The renovation of the new premises may be pushed back due to lead times on supply materials and increasing costs, which is why grants like these are so important.

The other obvious challenge is keeping Covid-19 out of our service! We want to make sure we are always able to open to move on surplus food and, particularly, to help those who are struggling.

How can people support EATS Rosyth?

People can help to support the project by volunteering, shopping with us first, donating their surplus foods, attending our events, following us on social media, telling others about our work and, as always, donating to help us to help those in need.



CONSIDERING COMPLAINTS

We continue to use complaints as an effective tool to identify service improvements, and the importance of implementing such learnings is a key priority for all of our colleagues. Implementing change following a complaint, can improve our processes and ensures that our actions are both fair and reasonable, whilst ensuring we continue to meet the expectations of you and your fellow tenants.

Below are a couple of examples of recent changes made following complaints that came into the business:

Example 1

Complaint

Having obtained approval for an alteration request to erect fixed fence panels, the work was duly undertaken by the tenant. However, following completion of the work, we advised that they should have maintained existing access rights for their neighbour.

Investigation

Our alteration approval letter failed to refer to the legal requirement to ensure access was maintained when undertaking this work. When the tenant erected the fence, the existing access was blocked and, as such, we had to take action to have this situation rectified at our cost.

Learning

We need to ensure that when issuing approval letters for alterations all of the requirements attached to the specific alteration are clearly documented. It was also recognised that the alterations process should be followed in full, ensuring this is documented, for audit trail purposes.

Example 2

Complaint

One of our tenants made a complaint relating to an appointment they had made with one of our colleagues. The tenant had arranged an appointment with the colleague at a specific time which had been approved by their employer. After leaving work early, the tenant got home to discover the colleague had attended earlier than planned meaning that he missed the appointment.

Investigation

Having discussed this with our Maintenance Officer, it was apparent we had failed to make clear in their work diary that attendance should be at a specific time. Had this been made clear, our Maintenance Officer would have waited until the agreed time to visit the tenant.

Learning

We need to ensure that appointments with tenants that need to be at specific times are highlighted in colleagues' diaries. Diary etiquette is now also a key part of our communications with all colleagues which is included in our new hybrid working processes.

Over the years, we have worked hard to develop a robust and fair complaints process. We accept that, unfortunately, sometimes things do go wrong and in these instances, we will continue endeavouring to ensure lessons are learnt and the right outcome for our tenant is achieved, in the quickest possible timeframe.

ESTATE INSPECTION PROGRAMME

Conducting inspections is an effective way for us to identify any management or maintenance issues in our estates.

Over the last year or so, we have seen higher levels of fly-tipping in public areas, which in some cases can also be a fire hazard, especially if the items are left in stairwells or communal areas. Estate inspections enable us to take action to address these types of issues and, as such, we are continuing to deliver this programme.

The table below highlights the estate inspections which are scheduled to take place over the coming months:

Date	Location
September 2021	
Tuesday 2 November @ 2pm	Buckhaven - Bird Scheme
Friday 12 November @ 10am	Dunfermline - Allan Crescent
Tuesday 23 November @ 2pm	Methil - Maple Gardens, Lilac Bank, Kirkland Walk, Cedar Avenue, Birch Grove, Laburnum Road, Methilhaven Road and Rowan Crescent
December 2021	
Monday 6 December @ 10am	High Valleyfield – Pentland Terrace
January 2022	
Wednesday 19 January @ 10am	Kinghorn
February 2022	
Wednesday 9 February 10am	Culross
Wednesday 23 February @ 2pm	Kirkcaldy – Benarty Street, Lomond Gardens and Pantland Place
March 2022	
Tuesday 1 March @10am	Rosyth – Pinkerton Place and Park Road

UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE

Tenants claiming Universal Credit (UC) will see a reduction in their ‘Standard Allowance’ this month. The temporary £20-per-week Coronavirus UC uplift will end on 6 October 2021 and payments are expected to stop after 13 October 2021.



ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION CONDITION REPORTS (EICR) AND SMOKE DETECTOR UPGRADES

We have been carrying out electrical tests and upgrading the fire detection systems in many of our properties since the Scottish Government passed regulations to make it a legal responsibility for the homeowner to provide a suitable fire detection system. All homes will need to have one smoke alarm in the most frequently used room, one in every circulation space on each storey and a heat alarm in each kitchen. The alarms must be interlinked so that when one alarm is activated all of the other alarms will sound as well.

You must allow access to your property so that we can check the condition of the electrical supplies in your home to ensure these are safe and establish if any alarms are required.

It is a legal requirement for us to carry out these smoke detector upgrades by February 2022. All reasonable efforts will be made to make appointments that are most convenient for you, however, failure to provide access for us to do so may result in a forced entry being arranged.

Our electrical contractor will contact you directly to arrange an appointment and we request your co-operation in providing access to carry out these works.

If you have any questions regarding these works, please do not hesitate to contact us on freephone 08000 274 007 or via info@fifehg.org.uk

PAYING YOUR RENT OVER CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR



Are you ready for Christmas? Read on to check how your wages or other expected payments might be affected over the festive period.

Benefit payment dates - Where your payment is due to be received on a weekend or bank holiday, you will receive your payment early.

Don't forget to leave any money for your rent payment in your account at the start of January as bank holidays mean this payment will be taken later than normal, even if your benefit payment is received early.

Wages paid early - Most employers will pay their staff early at Christmas and this means you will have a longer period to wait before your bills are paid from your bank account where you pay by Direct Debit or regular Standing Order. Make sure you leave enough money in your account to cover your bills - we recommend setting a budget for the Christmas period to help you do this. If you are receiving Universal Credit (UC) and you receive your wages early, this may reduce your next UC payment. If this happens add a note to your journal advising UC that your wages were paid early and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) should then review your award. If this doesn't change anything then seek advice as soon as you can.

Christmas bonuses and overtime - Any additional payments that you receive from your employer, either because of bonuses, overtime or something similar, are classed as income for Universal Credit and other benefits so, you should expect to see a reduction in the next payment if you do receive any extra money and we advise you to prepare in advance for this.

Direct Debit payments - During the Christmas period, some Direct Debits will be taken from your bank account later than the agreed payment date; this is where dates fall on the weekend and on or around bank holidays.

You can contact your Housing Officer on 01383 606162 to discuss any concerns you may have regarding paying your rent. Please note our office closes on Christmas Eve at 3 pm opening again on Thursday 6th January. Staff will be available by telephone on Thursday 30th and Friday 31st December but will be working from home.

PAYING YOUR WINTER BILLS

Winter bills

Please be aware that gas prices are expected to rise this autumn. For energy-saving tips or for impartial advice and information for dealing with your energy supplier, you can refer to Home Energy Scotland's website-

homeenergyscotland.org

What is a Cold Weather Payment and am I entitled?

A Cold Weather Payment is made if the average temperature in your area is, or is forecast to be, 0 degrees Celsius or below for seven consecutive days. There is a £25 payment available for every seven days of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March.

You will be eligible for a Cold Weather Payment if:

- You get Universal Credit (UC) and are not employed or self-employed.
- You have limited capability for work.
- You have a child under five on your award.
- If you receive Pension Credit.
- Income Support
- If you receive Income-related Jobseeker's and Support Allowance
- If you receive income-based Jobseeker's Allowance

If you have the disabled child element on your award you will qualify for the scheme even if you are employed.

Please note that Cold Weather Payments are different to Winter Fuel Payments.

Winter Fuel Payment

The Winter Fuel Payment is a payment to help you pay your heating bills during the winter.

You will receive a Winter Fuel Payment automatically - you don't need to apply - if you meet the following criteria:

- You receive the State Pension or another social security benefit (but not Housing Benefits, Council Tax Reductions, Child Benefits or Universal Credit).
- You were born on or before 5 October 1954.
- You lived in the UK for at least one day during the week of 21 to 27 September 2020 - this is called the 'qualifying week'.

If you don't get the State Pension or another benefit, or if you live abroad, you might need to make a claim.



RESIDENT VOICES REVIEW

During the restrictions placed upon us by the pandemic, our Resident VOICES members rose to the challenge of continuing to support and improve the services we offer by coming together for virtual meetings. After 18 months of online get-togethers, we are delighted that we are now able to reintroduce in-person meetings.

Our first in-person meeting took place in September and members helped celebrate Scottish Housing Day, which this year focussed the focus was on highlighting the climate emergency and the positive steps the housing sector can take to help to address this global issue.

The main objective for the first in-person meeting was to choose a new scrutiny topic, with climate change a subject at the forefront of everyone's mind. Conversations around building energy-efficient properties, solar power, recycling and battery-powered homes made for a highly topical meeting.

It became clear that everyone was passionate about the issue and so it was the obvious choice for the group's upcoming scrutiny topic.

We always welcome new members so, if you too would like to influence our response to the climate emergency, now would be an ideal time to get involved. You do not need to have any specific experience, we simply ask that you are happy to share your views on a range of services, many of which can have a direct impact on tenants. If Resident VOICES is not for you, we do have a range of other opportunities available which will allow you to have an input into how we deliver our services, so please do get in touch with our Engagement Officer, **Helen Miller on 01383 608127 or via helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk**.

RESIDENT
VOICES
resident.voices@fifehg.org.uk

CHRISTMAS TREE PHOTO COMPETITION

Everyone is hopeful that this year's Christmas celebrations will be free from pandemic restrictions so we can all enjoy the festive period with our families and friends. and, to start getting into the spirit of things, we are introducing our Christmas Tree Competition.

To enter all you need to do is take a photo of your Christmas tree and send it to us via email or Facebook messenger. Over the years we have seen some beautiful Christmas decorations throughout our tenants' homes and would love to showcase your fantastic Christmas trees, both inside and out.

Our competition is open to all tenants, please send your email entries to helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk no later than **13 December** and you could be in with a chance of winning a selection of Christmas goodies to share with your loved ones over the festive period.



Planned maintenance update – Roofing contract

Over the past three years, we have worked alongside our roofing contractor partner, MAC Roofing, to replace the roofs on our homes. This is the final year of our contract with them and, to date, we have replaced eighty roofs, with seventeen still to complete this year.

Our roofing programme involves replacing the entire roof structure including the sarking boards, the roofing membrane, the timber batons and the principal roof covering that tends to be either concrete tiles or slate. The works also include the replacement of any of the leadwork, the soffits and fascias, and the rainwater goods, including gutters and downpipes. We also make assessments on the condition of any chimney on the property to ensure that these are in a safe and secure condition or if they are now completely redundant. In such instances, we may decide to remove the chimney to avoid any future maintenance or health and safety issues.



Our partnership with MAC Roofing has also seen us undertake a variety of wall repairs and upgrades when on-site, making good use of the existing scaffolding. This includes rendering repairs and replacements and some external wall painting.

This contract has made a significant improvement to our stock over the last three years and we are now looking at the next phase of roofing replacements with a view to tendering for this contract before the start of the next financial year.

Glen Albyn development update

October saw a landmark event for Fife Housing Group with commencement of work on the site of our new forty-nine unit development at Glen Albyn in Kirkcaldy. The project is the start of a significant development programme which was approved by the Baord following extensive improvements and changes to the business.

The early stages of the programme involve large scale earthmoving, site establishment and connection of the main services for the area.

We are delighted to finally be making significant and positive progress with our contractor, The JR Group, and are looking forward to taking the first steps in providing fantastic new energy-efficient homes in a beautiful location.

The project is part-funded by the Scottish Government and will make a significant contribution to achieving their ambitious new build social housing targets. As part of the community benefits and planning requirements we will be upgrading the existing play park, and hope to also enhance the natural environment around the new development and have a positive impact on local employment.

There will be a photographic progress record available too as we intend to share drone footage that will allow everyone to see the development progress, stage by stage.



Post Office Card Accounts closure extended until November 2022

The Post Office Card Accounts (POCa) scheme was previously set to end in November this year. Following the disruption caused by the pandemic, it has now been extended for 12 months to ensure everyone has the time to make alternative arrangements.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is writing to all customers who currently receive payment into a POCa, telling them the service is ending and encouraging those who can open a bank account to do so. Those who remain unable to access such services will be migrated onto a new Payment Exception Service, which allows them to choose how they receive their payments.

This extra time means people can move to the payment method that will suit them best – even if that means making sure they can still get cash via the Post Office using a card from the new Payment Exception Service.

Under the new Payment Exception Service, pensioners and benefit claimants can choose how they receive their payments. These methods include the delivery of digital vouchers via:

- an SMS
- an email
- a unique barcode displayed on a mobile phone

In addition, all customers who are migrated from POCa to the new service will receive a reusable mag stripe plastic card, which can be used to receive their benefits in cash from more than 28,000 PayPoint retail outlets or 11,500 Post Office branches.

Extensive work has been undertaken to identify those most at risk to provide vulnerable claimants with additional support before the move to the new system.

More information about the Payment Exception Service can be found here -

gov.uk/payment-exception-service

Preventing frozen and burst pipes



Frozen and burst pipes are often an issue during the winter months, and we all know the inconvenience and damage that they can cause. Follow the advice below to prevent these problems from occurring in the first instance, or to manage the issue should these measures fail to be effective.

Prevention is better than a cure:

- Keep your heating on at a low setting rather than turning it off
- Make sure all taps are turned off and are not dripping
- Know where your stopcock is to turn off the water in an emergency
- If you are taking a winter trip, turn off your water, drain the system and leave a key with

someone who can check your property regularly

- Call us if you need any additional information or advice

If you do find a frozen pipe:

- Turn off the water at the stopcock as soon as possible
- Turn on all cold taps to drain the system – never turn on a hot tap
- Thaw out the frozen pipe using a hairdryer or warm cloth on the pipe - do not use an open flame
- Call us for advice

If you have a burst pipe:

- Turn off the water at the stopcock as soon as possible
- Call our emergency plumber on freephone 08000 274 007

If you are planning a winter break please make sure you let us know and make sure we have an up to date number for you in case we need to get in touch while you are away.

We would also like to remind you not to flush toilet wipes, toilet paper or sanitary pads down the toilet, even if the packaging states they are flushable. Several blockages have been reported recently due to these items.

RENT CONSULTATION

We are about to begin our rent consultation process and will be contacting you shortly for feedback on the rent increase options being proposed for 2022/23 - look out for the information leaflet and survey arriving in November.



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SIMPLE STEPS TO HELP YOU STAY SAFE DURING SEVERE WEATHER

With winter officially on the way and snow likely at some point, it's worth taking a few minutes to do a little preparation BEFORE any potential severe weather hits.

As well as creating a household plan for emergencies we suggest taking these five simple steps to help to keep you and your family safe.

1. Keep a mixture of salt and sand and a shovel handy to put on steps or paths in icy weather
2. Stock up on your basic cold, flu and sore throat remedies and order repeat prescriptions in plenty of time
3. Store three days-worth of water and basic food items in the cupboard or freezer in case you cannot get out to go shopping
4. Ensure you have a battery-operated radio, torch and spare batteries handy in case there's a power cut
5. Have a list of emergency numbers, such as your utility companies, by your home phone or store them in your mobile

You can find lots more advice about preparing for and dealing with emergencies, such as severe winter weather, on the Ready Scotland website ([readyscotland.org](https://www.readyscotland.org))



KEEP COSY THIS WINTER WITH THESE TOP TIPS

Everyone would like their home to be warm and cosy this winter, particularly as many of us will find ourselves staying in a lot more than usual, but, increasingly expensive energy bills can make this difficult.

There are, however, steps you can take to help reduce these costs and our partners at free and impartial energy and debt advice service Cosy Kingdom, have kindly shared their top ten tips to help you stay warm and save money this winter.



1. USE YOUR HEATING CONTROLS

When using your heating this winter, using your heating controls can help you warm your house efficiently and save you money. Turning your thermostat down by just one degree can save up to £85 a year and using all of your heating controls, can cut your fuel use by up to 42%, ensuring you're getting the benefit of your heating when you need it most.

2. CONSIDER THERMAL CURTAINS

It's tricky trying to keep the heat in, especially as it can escape through our windows. Thermal curtains have a thick lining that acts as an extra layer of insulation. Make sure you close them at dusk when the temperature starts to drop and roll up the bottoms onto the windowsill to remove any draughty gap.

3. DO SOME DRAUGHT-PROOFING

Draughts account for around 10% of heat loss in our homes. Consider using draught-excluders at your doors, you don't even need to buy one, you can easily make one out of old clothes, find out how on the Cosy Kingdom website - cosykingdom.org.uk

4. SWITCH YOUR FURNITURE AROUND

Moving furniture out of the way of radiators is an easy way to help your home heat more efficiently as it lets the warm air circulate.

5. SHUT DOORS BETWEEN ROOMS

Shutting the doors (after you switch the lights off!) when you leave a room helps keep the heat where it's needed most.

6. OPT FOR A SLOW COOKER

A slow cooker is an energy-efficient alternative for cooking a meal, costing an average of 10p per day, as opposed to around 40p for an oven.

7. LOOK AT YOUR LIGHTING

Lighting accounts for around 18% of the average electricity bill. If you haven't already, get some low-energy lighting (LEDs) which use 90% less energy and can last up to 25 years! Remember to switch lights off after you leave a room as well.

8. WRAP UP WARMLY

Wrapping up in blankets and wearing multiple layers of clothing can help keep the chill off and save a bit on your heating costs too.

9. APPLY FOR THE WARM HOME DISCOUNT

If you haven't done so already, check if your supplier offers the Warm Home Discount. This is a grant for £140 towards your electricity bill if you're on qualifying benefits or struggling with your heating costs.

10. BOOK A HOME VISIT WITH COSY KINGDOM

Anyone in Fife can book a free and impartial home visit with a Cosy Kingdom energy advisor by visiting their website (cosykingdom.org.uk), **01592 807930**, emailing info@cosykingdom.org.uk or texting 'COSY' then 'YOUR NAME' to **88440**. You can also find them on Facebook and Twitter - @CosyKingdom.



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free (or very cheap) ways to create Christmas magic for children

If you look back on your favourite Christmas childhood memories, the chances are that finest-range turkeys, the most expensive tree or even that year's must-have toy aren't what you think of. It's the wonderful memories of time with loved ones and those little magic touches that made your family's Christmases so unique. It's the experiences we remember as adults...not how much your mum spent on presents.

We have gathered some top tips and ideas from moneysavingexpert.com to ensure Christmas with your little ones (or any family member) is a memorable event, proving you don't have to spend a lot to make Christmas truly magical.

1.

Host an old-fashioned Christmas singalong

Get the family together and have a Christmas singsong around the living room complete with mince pies and hot drinks. Encourage the kids to perform and make up dance routines to perform to grandparents for a truly joyous evening.

3.

Snowman soup

Kids love snowman soup – hot chocolate, marshmallows and some chocolate chips, what's not to love?. See our recipe on page ?? to find out how the snowmen turn it into soup! Or for a naughtier sweet treat, make reindeer poo – chocolate fudge balls that are guaranteed to make your children giggle. Recipes for this can be found online.

2.

Leave some clues to show that Father Christmas has been

Creep past their bedrooms with jingly bells, leave mince pie crumbs in the living room or the classic trail of floury boot-prints (you can find free stencils online for this) to mark Santa's visit. Place something heavy on the couch overnight to make a dent where he plonked his big bottom or leave a sleigh bell and half-eaten carrot in the garden and see your kids' excitement come morning.

4.

Christmas movie marathon

Enjoy a cosy night in with your little ones and snuggle up on the sofa with plenty of snacks and a movie or two. Enjoy favourites such as It's a Wonderful Life, Home Alone, Elf or the more recent Christmas Chronicles.

5.

Balloon box

Fill a large box with lots of balloons and wrap it – it's sure to provide hours of fun and shouldn't cost more than a fiver. (Please supervise very young children as balloons can be a choking hazard).

6.

Chocolate slabs

Chunky chocolate slabs are a very popular Christmas gift but the ones you buy in the shops can be very expensive. So why not make your own and get your kids involved. Melt different kinds of chocolate and decorate with fudge pieces, popcorn, dried fruit and nuts, or whatever you fancy. It's a great way to get your children involved in the gift-giving this year, plus they will love licking the bowl and finishing up all the leftovers!

7.

Drive past twinkly streets after dark

From multi-coloured lights to inflatable Santas, people go all out with outdoor lights and decorations at this time of year. Why not make a night of it? Pop in the car and do a tour of all the displays. It's worth checking Facebook and the local papers for tips on the most festive areas.

8.

Read 'Twas the night before Christmas

A lovely tradition is cosying up with this celebrated poem, which you can find for free on Kindle or print off at TeacherVision.com. We also adore the Jolly Christmas Postman.

9.

Gift wrap a doorway so they can burst through it on Christmas morning

Simple but effective. On Christmas Eve tape wrapping paper over the living room or kids' bedroom doorways. Your little ones will get a thrill bursting through it in the morning to get to the presents under the tree.the local papers for tips on the most festive areas.

10.

moneysavingexpert.com/team-blog/2018/11/16-ways-to-sprinkle-christmas-magic-for-free--or-very-cheap-/

Buy one special decoration each year...or make your own

A fun Christmas day out is heading to the shops on a mission to buy this year's special bauble or ornament for the tree. Something that you can make an annual tradition that doesn't cost a fortune. Or why not make your own? There are hundreds of ideas online for those who enjoy being creative.

11.

Camp out under the Christmas tree

Putting your tree up is a very special moment. Why not make it even more special by camping out in the living room under the twinkle lights? Set up a makeshift camp with sleeping bags, cushions and cuddly toys. Don't forget plenty of snacks for a midnight feast!

13.

Spot Santa's sleigh whizz through the stars...thanks to NORAD

Each year NORAD (North American Aerospace Defence Command) has an annual Christmas programme that simulates the tracking of Santa Claus as he travels around the world, delivering presents to children. Santa's journey starts at midnight on 23 December but you can visit the website as early as December 1 to find out more about Santa's plans.

15.

Wrap up for a winter forest walk

Don your gloves and scarves and head out for a festive winter walk in the woods. Collect fir cones to paint and then decorate the house with them. If you live near the beach why not do the same with shells and pebbles?

12.

Attend a carol concert

There is nothing more joyous than a Christmas sing-song. Check out Facebook and local newspapers to see where carol concerts are being held this year, you might find some virtual concerts for those who would prefer to stay at home.

14.

Build a gingerbread house

Whether you buy a ready-made kit or do it yourself, building a Hansel and Gretel style gingerbread house will delight kids (and adults) of all ages. Some of the supermarkets have kits for less than a fiver and you can load up on dolly mixtures, Smarties and colourful icing for an afternoon of fun.

TOP TEN TIPS TO SAVE AT CHRISTMAS

The festive season is an expensive time of year and a lot of us feel pressure to spend more than we can afford in the hope of creating the 'perfect Christmas' and spoiling our loved ones.

Having a shopping plan and budget in place ensures you won't get yourself into debt or generate a lot of waste. There are also plenty of ways to save cash without sacrificing any of your Christmas joy.

We have gathered some of the best tips from Money Saving Expert to help you avoid having a Christmas debt hangover this year – moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/christmas-savings

1. DON'T PLAN THE 'PERFECT CHRISTMAS' – WORK OUT WHAT YOU CAN AFFORD AND BUDGET

A typical family spent £528 on Christmas presents and celebrations in 2020. So before you start planning, ask yourself 'What can I afford to spend without borrowing or breaking the bank?'

Use Money Saving Expert's budget planner to make a plan you can stick to and keep you financially healthy – moneysavingexpert.com/banking/budget-planning/

Christmas is one day – don't ruin the whole of next year for it.

3. CHECK FOR UNNECESSARY GIFTS

Consider not giving to certain people this Christmas. We aren't talking about gifts for parents or grandchildren, but the ever-widening glut of friends, colleagues and extended family.

Telling someone you aren't buying them a gift this year can be quite daunting but be upfront, explain your reasons, and tell them in plenty of time before they start their Christmas shopping.

If that seems too stressful then try softening the conversation by suggesting a present-free Christmas or plan meet-ups instead of presents.

Above all, don't feel guilty! You will be amazed at how well people respond to not giving a gift. They will probably be relieved, after all, it's one less gift for them to buy this year.

2. MAKE A LIST...AND CHECK IT TWICE

Christmas shopping on impulse is dangerous. Make a good old fashioned list before you hit the shops or go online. Shops spend a fortune on targeting your spending impulse, you will feel proud of yourself for not falling into the trap.

4. CUT THE COST OF FOOD

Don't assume you need or will prefer the higher brand foods. Taste with your tongue, not the label. There are lots of (award-winning!) supermarket own brand goodies for your Christmas feast. Aldi wine anyone?

Shop around, compare prices and don't forget about local butchers, fishmongers and markets for deals.

5. MAKE SACRIFICES NOW

Challenge yourself to give up your daily meal deal, takeaway coffee or afternoon chocolate bar from the local shop and see how much money you can save in time for Christmas.

Small sacrifices go a long way. Use the Quick Cash Finder to give you the motivation you need to get started - moneyadvice.service.org.uk/en/tools/quick-cash-finder/calculators

7. GO DIY

Make your own candles, bake some Christmas cookies, put together a memory box or whip up some homemade body butter...the list is endless.

DIY gifts are a cost-effective and thoughtful way to spread joy this season.

9. DE-CLUTTER

Look up your local car boot sale and make some Christmas cash flogging your old clothes, accessories and knickknacks.

Earn money and free up cupboard space: it's a win-win!

6. DO SOMETHING NICE GIFTS

Presents don't have to equate to lots of money. Offering to babysit for a friend, take an elderly neighbour to the shops or offering to wrap someone's gifts for them are great ways to show you care.

These acts of kindness won't just save you money on buying gifts, they will make you feel a little bit richer in other ways too.

Make your act of kindness pledge a little more official with these Christmas gift cheques - moneysavingexpert.com/shopping/xmas-gift-cheques/

8. GO ECO-FRIENDLY

Sending Christmas cards is a lovely tradition but it's costly, both for your bank balance and for the environment.

Why don't you go online and send an e-card instead? There are hundreds of designs to choose from and it takes no time to send them out.



10. DON'T BORROW! BUT IF YOU MUST GET A 0% INTEREST CARD

It's far better to make a budget and stick to it, but no matter some people may choose to borrow. If you do decide to go down this route make sure you sign up for a 0% interest credit card so you aren't hit with high rates come the new year.

Visit Money Saving Expert for the best offers on interest-free cards for periods of up to 24 months.

CHRISTMAS CRISIS CONTACTS

Lots of people find the holiday period difficult so we have pulled together a list of contact numbers that you may find useful to ensure you have the support you need over the festive break:

HELP AND SUPPORT

Emergency - 999

Police - 101

Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111

Fife Council Public Protection Team - 03451 55 55 50

HOUSING ISSUES

Homeless Emergencies - 0800 028 6231

Housing Information/Advice - 03451 55 00 33

Frontline Fife (homelessness service) - 01592 800430

Fife Council - 03451 55 00 00

Scottish Gas Networks (gas leak) - 0800 111 999

Power cuts and safety helpline - 105

DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE - In an emergency call 999

Fife Women's Aid - 0808 802 5555

Shakti Fife (ethnic minority women) - 01383 732289

Scottish Domestic Abuse & Forced Marriage Helpline - 0800 027 1234

Abused Men in Scotland - 0808 800 0024

FearFree (Men, LGBT+ and BME communities) - 0131 624 7270

Revenge Porn Helpline - 0845 6000 459

National Stalking Helpline - 0808 802 0300

Rape Crisis Scotland - 08088 01 03 02 or text 07537 410 027

Fife Rape and Sexual Assault Centre - 01592 642336

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

NHS 24 - 111

NHS Inform - 0800 22 44 88

Samaritans - 116 123

Support in Mind - 01592 268 388

Sexual Health Fife - 01592 64 79 79

Touched by Suicide - 01294 274 273

Survivors of bereavement by suicide - 0300 111 5065

Adult Protection - 01383 602200

Social Work - 03451 55 15 03 (Out of hours emergencies - 03451 55 00 99)

Fife Gingerbread (supports lone parents) - 01592 725 210

MONEY

Scottish Welfare Fund (Crisis and community care grants) - 0300 555 0265

Citizens Advice and Rights Fife - 0345 1400 095

Tax Credit Helpline - 0345 300 3900

Money Advice Scotland - 0141 572 0237

Universal Credit Line - 0345 600 4272





Recycling centres in Fife are now open to cars without the need to book a slot beforehand, however, anyone using a commercial vehicle, van or trailer will still need to book an appointment.

We would like to remind everyone that you can report repairs online. To do this simply visit our website (fifehg.org.uk) and select 'Report a repair'.

Likewise, you can make rent payments from the comfort of your home. Just download the allpay app from the Apple or Google Play stores, completely free of charge.

Alternatively, if you would prefer a payment card, please contact the office or your Housing Officer and this will be ordered and delivered to your door.

We know that the winter months are going to be even more challenging than usual for many tenants this year. If you have any concerns about heating your home or paying your energy bills please contact your Housing Officer who will be able to provide a referral for advice and support.

Kirkcaldy

We would like to remind tenants again that storing items or dumping rubbish in communal stairwells, on balconies and at the front and rear entrances are prohibited. This is a breach of your tenancy agreement, posing both a serious fire hazard and a health and safety risk.

We are seeing a particular issue with this at some of the blocks in Dunearn Drive and want to reiterate that it is also unacceptable to dump rubbish/household items outside your flat door, rear bin store areas or in communal drying areas. Please be aware that, where possible, individual tenants will be recharged if it becomes necessary for us to organise the removal of these items.

If you require an additional landfill bin, due to the size of your household, you can request one by telephoning Fife Council on 03451 550022. You can also use this number to arrange a special uplift for £15. Recycling bins are available at Templehall Community Centre or any Fife Council recycling points.

If you know of anyone who is dumping items within

your block, please contact your Housing Officer, Karen Gilruth or Lynn Mather, in confidence to allow them to take appropriate action and avoid any communal recharges in the future.

Additionally, we would like to encourage tenants to report anti-social incidents, as we can only deal with issues if we are made aware of them. In some circumstances, it may also be advisable to contact the police when the incident is taking place.



Crombie

Recently, we have received several enquiries regarding the new development currently being built in Crombie. Although we have no involvement in the development and no information as to how many will be made available to those on the Fife Housing Register (FHR), if you are interested in being rehoused in Crombie then you should complete an FHR housing application so that you can be considered for these in future.

Hill of Beath and Cowdenbeath

Please refer to internal communication boards for details about your bin collection days and how to report any issues with your central heating or general repairs. If there is anything else you would like to see placed on the communication board, please contact the office or discuss it with your Housing Officer, **Audrey Cameron**.



Lumphinnans

The Lumphinnans Tenant and Residents Group would appreciate any assistance from local residents to maintain the community garden, located at the end of Furnace Place. Lockdown has had an impact on the progress with the garden this year and the group have a busy time ahead to get it back into shape.

Please let Housing Officer, Audrey Cameron, know if you have any availability to assist the group. If you have access to Facebook, you can also 'Like' the page for updates.

Likewise, if you have any items you would like to donate, such as plant cuttings, or unused items that can be upcycled, the group would be most grateful.

Some residents had been experiencing parking issues in the spaces allocated for the higher number blocks in Ochilview. We are pleased to say that new signage has now been installed highlighting the parking is for the residents in the block only and not for those living in surrounding streets and we are hopeful that this will alleviate the issues.

Methil

Over the last few months, there has been an increase in the amount of rubbish and large items being left in people's gardens. With things slowly getting back to normal, we encourage you to dispose of your waste appropriately on normal bin days or by using local recycling centres. If you need a hand to remove items perhaps you could ask a neighbour for assistance? Unfortunately, this is not a service we can provide but if you're struggling, please contact your Housing Officer, Greg Turner, who will see if there is anything we can do to help.

Also, a reminder that if your financial circumstances change or if you're just looking for some general guidance and support, please do not hesitate to contact Greg directly. We know that is a difficult time for many people, so please do reach out to us or seek independent money advice at the earliest opportunity, if you have any concerns about paying your rent, dealing with an issue early makes it much easier to resolve and remember, we are here to help.

Rosyth

We would like to remind you again that it is not acceptable to keep any rubbish, bikes, pushchairs or any other bulky items in the following areas:

- The close in a block of flats
- Front or back shared gardens in a block of flats
- Any communal area
- Your balcony
- Your front door
- The landing

This is a major fire and safety hazard and a breach of your tenancy agreement.

Fife Council, Environmental Services also have a website where you can book and pay for an uplift which will cost £15.00 for 18 units. There is a list of items that show how many units for each item. Alternatively, you can phone them on **03451 55 00 22**. If you have booked an uplift, please do not put the items outside until the night before the uplift.

We would also like to remind tenants how important it is to report anti-social issues, as there are incidents that are not being reported. It is important to report the issue to the police at the time the incident(s) is taking place and then phone your Housing Officer to report the matter.

Leven and Buckhaven

Please remember to advise us of any changes to your household or circumstances as soon as possible as it is important to ensure that the information we hold is up-to-date. We can also offer advice and support if there have been any changes to your income.

Tenants with gardens are also reminded that it is your responsibility to keep these tidy, even over the winter months, and that checks will be undertaken to make sure that the appropriate maintenance is taking place. Failure to do so can result in recharges if we need to arrange for these to be maintained on your behalf.



Lochgelly

Please take the time to plan appropriate disposal of unwanted items if you intend to replace any household furniture and remember that stairwells must be kept clear at all times, with any dumping a serious breach of Fire Safety Regulations. Dumping rubbish in the stairwells also prevents the cleaning contractors from carrying out a proper clean of the stairs which is a service that you and all your fellow residents pay for.

We would also discourage anyone from storing items in their garden, or shared communal areas until plans for disposal are arranged.

If anyone would like to report any other resident for illegal dumping, please contact your Housing Officer, **Audrey Cameron**, confidentially on **07747 895965** or via **audrey.cameron@fifehg.org.uk**.



Valleyfield

In our last newsletter, we detailed the recent enforcement action in Pentland Terrace in response to fly-tipping. We would like to remind tenants residing here and in other areas that, if you see anyone dumping rubbish or acting in an inconsiderate manner, you should continue to let us know so that those responsible can be recharged for any clean-up. If we cannot identify who is responsible, then we must use rental income, to cover the cost of removal which would be better spent on new kitchens or bathrooms for our properties.

Oakley

As services continue to return to normal, we understand that the local Fife Council office on Station Road is now open by appointment only. To comply with Covid restrictions, if you have any Council-related queries that cannot be resolved online then please contact the Council to arrange an appointment before visiting them as you may be refused entry otherwise.

Dunfermline

Anyone looking for a move should check out Fife Council's new home swap website. Many of our tenants are already using this and finding it to be a great service. Anyone can now browse some of the available properties, although you do need to register to see them. Many applicants have uploaded photos as well so it's easy to get a virtual look around a property. fifehousingregister.org.uk/homeswap/public/
Thank you to everyone who has provided feedback regarding gardening maintenance over the summer, we are working hard to bring all areas to the expected standard.
Sadly we have seen several recent house fires in Dunfermline. With this in mind, we would urge everyone to consider what could pose a fire risk in their home and what could be done to minimise these risks. If you need assistance with this, please contact the Fire Service on 0800 0731 999 to book a free Home Fire Safety Visit.

Kennoway

We are aware of an issue with dog fouling in the communal garden areas and would ask that tenants contact us as soon as possible if they see any of their neighbours failing to pick up after their pets. We would also advise contacting Safer Communities, who have the authority to issue fixed penalty notices for this offence, directly on **0345 155 0022**. Safer Communities have already received some reports and issued warnings, please continue to report this to ensure this is being dealt with accordingly.

Please take care to recycle properly in the bin store areas as contamination here continues to be an issue.



Housing officer	Contact Details
Ross Glancy	t: 07970 804740 e: ross.glancy@fifehg.org.uk
Audrey Cameron	t: 07747 895965 e: audrey.cameron@fifehg.org.uk
Gavin Waddell	t: 07771 776679 e: gavin.waddell@fifehg.org.uk
Greg Turner	t: 07811 393822 e: greg.turner@fifehg.org.uk
Karen Gilruth	t: 07825 855224 e: karen.gilruth@fifehg.org.uk
Lynn Mather	t: 07973 827628 e: lynn.mather@fifehg.org.uk
William Earnshaw	t: 07525 260447 e: william.earnshaw@fifehg.org.uk
Stephanie McCulloch	t: 07811 439905 e: stephanie.mcculloch@fifehg.org.uk

Welcome

We are delighted to welcome six new colleagues to our team at Fife Housing Group.

Completing our Operations Team are Joiners, Stephen Joslin and Michael Cook, Electrician, Zack Thomson, and Skilled Labourer, Callum Cook.

Monica French also joins us from the Link Group as our new Asset Management Officer and Alex McCue takes on the role of Communications and Marketing Officer, having previously worked at the University of Edinburgh.

Welcome to the team!

CHRISTMAS RECIPES



Prep Time
5 mins

Ready In
10 mins

Serves
4-6

Ingredients

- 600ml milk
- 142ml pot double cream
- 100g chopped chocolate (70% dark chocolate or milk chocolate works well)
- Whipped cream, marshmallows and chocolate chips or sprinkles for serving

SNOWMAN SOUP

Recipe from Delish - delish.com/uk

Kids and adults will love this chocolatey treat. Indulge with our classic hot chocolate recipe below or save time by using instant hot chocolate - both work great.

Method

Pour the milk, double cream and chopped chocolate into a pan. Bring gently to the boil, whisking until smooth.

Serve topped with whipped cream, marshmallows and chocolate chips and present to kids as snowman soup.



Prep Time
Less than
30 mins



Ready In
10 - 30 mins



Serves
6

SNOWMAN PANCAKES WITH ORANGE AND SPICE

Recipe from BBC Food - bbc.co.uk/food

Add some festive spice to fluffy pancakes with cinnamon and orange zest. The perfect breakfast for Christmas morning.

Ingredients

- 1 mug self-raising flour (200g/7oz)
- 1 mug milk (300ml/½ pint)
- 1 large free-range egg
- 3 oranges, zest finely grated (fruit cut into wedges for serving)
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- pinch salt
- 1 tsp butter
- 2 tbsp runny honey or maple syrup, for drizzling

Method

Tip the flour and milk into a large bowl, crack in the egg and whisk well. Add the orange zest, cinnamon and salt and whisk again.

Melt a little butter in a heavy-based frying pan. Add a small ladleful of batter and fry for 4 minutes, or until golden brown. Turn over and fry the second side for 3 minutes, or until golden brown.

Serve with a drizzle of honey or maple syrup and orange wedges for squeezing over. Increase the ingredients proportionately to serve more people.

WORDSEARCH

Enter our WINTER competition and you could WIN a **£25 gift voucher**.

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R L R I I L M T V I N S T E N
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B A N C E M C A T J S V S R I
U O X V X J P Q F U E T I O W
N I K P M U P I A S A F O F K
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Wordsearch winner

Thanks to everyone who entered our summer-themed wordsearch competition!

Congratulations to our lucky winner, Mrs Jacqueline Young of Kirkcaldy, who received a £25 supermarket gift voucher and will be able to treat herself to something nice online or in-store.

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