

Issue 79: Summer 2018

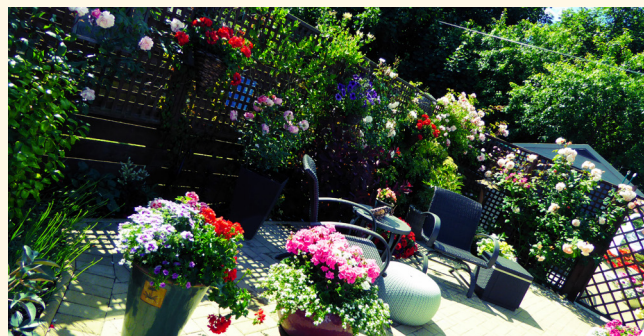
## GORGEOUS *Gardens*

Our annual garden competition aims to reward tenants who, by taking pride in their garden, make a real difference to the communities they live in, and this year's event was hailed another blooming success with additional categories, including a children's award, attracting more entrants than ever.

Congratulations to all of the winners in, what was once again, a very hard fought competition showcasing some incredibly impressive gardens. In fact, the standard of entries was so high that our judges insisted on runners-up prizes across almost all of the categories.

A huge thank you goes out to everyone who took part, as well as our two judges; keen gardener and Resident VOICES Chair John Bell, and Michael Gourlay, Chairman of the Dalgety Bay Horticultural Society and Caley Medal Winner.

Both John and Michael did an absolutely fantastic job in what proved a really difficult competition to judge, given just how fantastic so many of the entries were.



Winner - McClelland Crescent



Winner - Tweed Street



Winner - Oakvale Road

**Without further ado we are delighted to announce the following lucky winners:**

### **Best Private Garden**

First Place – Leslie McKinney (McClelland Crescent, Dunfermline)  
Second Place – Kieran Coll (Montgomery Drive, Leven)  
Third Place – John McGair (Rowan Crescent, Methil)

### **Best Other Display**

First Place – Lorna Paterson (Pentland Terrace, High Valleyfield)  
Second Place – Jennifer Moffat (Ochilview, Lumphinnans)

### **Best Communal Garden**

First Place – Mr and Mrs Mitchell (Cairnwell Place, Kirkcaldy)  
Second Place – The Residents (25 Leven Road, Kennoway)

### **Best Horticultural Garden**

First Place – Robert Cowan (Oakvale Road, Methil)  
Second Place – Krystyna Lubinska (Dunearn Drive, Kirkcaldy)

### **New Garden Award**

Magda Cichocka-Calder (Tweed Street, Dunfermline)

### **Best Children's Display**

Ten children entered this year and they were all so good that we couldn't pick just one winner so each was awarded a goody bag filled with sweets, seeds and gardening tools/gloves to help them get a head-start on next year's event.

Cont. page 3

## Contents

1	Gorgeous gardens	8	New legislation
2	Attendance allowance	8	Halloween community café
2	New fire safety regulations	9	Keep your stairwell safe and secure
3	Gorgeous gardens (cont.)	9	Charity of the year update
3	Free IT training for Fife Housing Group tenants	10	A Fine Vintage - Afternoon Tea in Fife
4	Performance update	11	Lumphinnans community garden
4	Getting to grips with your garden	12	Together we can make a difference
4	Team news	13	Considering complaints
5	Making alterations and improvements	14	An engaging experience
5	Taking the time to get in touch	15	Universal Credit update
6	New website provides advice and easier access to affordable housing in Fife	15	Resident VOICES review
7	Pet protection	16	Local news and views
7	Estate inspection schedule	19	Planned maintenance update
8	Have your say on...rents!	20	Recipe
		20	Wordsearch

### 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, Karen Begg, on 01383 607549 or via [karen.begg@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:karen.begg@fifehg.org.uk) to request a large print copy or to enquire about alternative copy formats.

### 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](http://gov.uk/attendance-allowance) or phone the Attendance Allowance helpline **0345 605 6055** for further details.

## NEW FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS

New fire safety regulations for social housing are expected to come into effect during 2019. These new regulations dictate that Registered Social Landlords (RSLs), such as Fife Housing Group, must install smoke detectors in the main living area and hallway, as well as installing a multi-detector (smoke and heat detector) in the kitchen. These installations must be completed within two years of the legislation being passed.

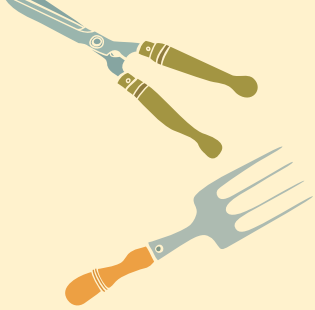
We have already installed these systems in over 300 homes and plan to have a further 500 completed by the end of the current financial year. All other properties will be on a rolling programme to have the new systems installed by 2021 and, if you haven't been notified already, you will receive a letter regarding this work closer to your own installation date.







# GORGEOUS Gardens



Winner - Pentland Terrace



Winner - McClelland Crescent

Our thanks also to the following businesses who kindly donated prizes for the winners and helped to make this event possible; your support is much appreciated:

- The Plant Market / Growforth
- Joe's Gardening Services
- Pankhurst Decorators
- INTONA
- RB Grant
- Continental Landscapes Scotland
- Magnet Kitchens
- Logie Builders
- Moffat Electrical Services



Winner - Cairnwell Place

## FREE IT TRAINING FOR FIFE HOUSING GROUP TENANTS

Thanks to a new partnership with our neighbours, the Scottish Schools Education Research Centre (SSERC), we are now delighted to be able to offer tenants FREE IT training.

With more and more services, including Universal Credit, moving online, being able to navigate the internet safely is an increasingly useful skill to have.

We can help you learn how to find out information, fill out forms, send emails, shop securely and much, much more.

So, whether you're a complete novice who wouldn't even know how to switch a computer or tablet on, or are looking to build on the basic skills you already have please get in touch with our Engagement Officer, Helen Miller on



01383 608127 or via [helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk) so we can arrange whatever training will suit you best.

SSERC are a not-for-profit company and Registered Scottish Charity set up for the benefit of Scottish Education and wholly owned by the 32 Scottish Local Authorities. They offer a broad portfolio of services, principally in support of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) area of the curriculum, which are not available from any other source, and have kindly offered us use of the computer suite at their Dunfermline location as well as access to their colleagues' expertise.

# PERFORMANCE UPDATE QUARTER 1-2018/19

at home with...  
fife housing group

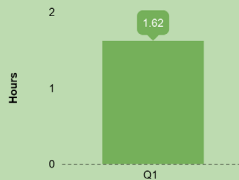
At or exceeding target  
 Below but with 5% of target  
 Below target

## Repairs

Time taken to complete emergency repairs



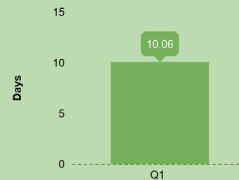
Target = 4 hours or less



Time taken to complete non-emergency repairs



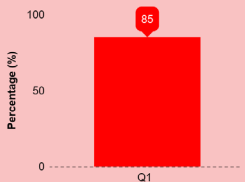
Target = 15 days or less



Percentage of repairs completed 'right first time' (RFT)



Target = 92% or better



Percentage of repair appointments made and kept



Target = 95% or better



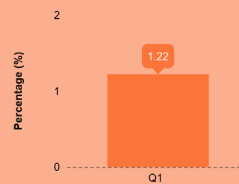
We believe that our 'right first time' statistics are being adversely affected by contractors failing to supply an accurate completion date and have taken steps to rectify this. We hope that this will lead to our performance in this area improving significantly during Q2.

## Voids

Percentage of rent lost through vacant properties



Target = 0.9% or less

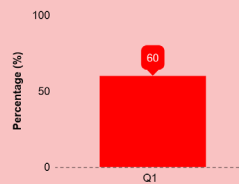


## Anti-social behaviour

Percentage of anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases resolved in target



Target = 80% or better



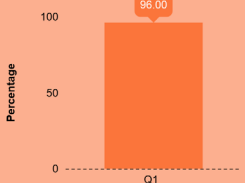
The disappointing anti-social behaviour results for Q1 can be attributed to a number of complex cases which required involvement from several external parties before a resolution could be reached. As such, we would expect to see performance in this area improve during Q2.

## Complaints

Stage 1 - Percentage of complaints responded to within 5 day target



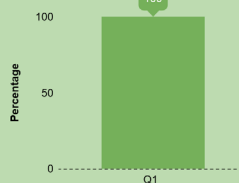
Target = 100%



Stage 2 - Percentage of complaints responded to within 20 day target



Target = 100%



powered by  
**PIKTOCHART**

# Getting to grips with your garden



We would like to take this opportunity to remind tenants with private gardens that, as per your tenancy agreement, you have full responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of these, as well as that of any trees situated within the boundaries of your property. As such, you are expected to ensure that they are cut regularly in order to limit their growth and ensure they do not become overgrown, blocking out neighbours' light or overhanging pathways, and should be aware that we will only provide assistance with this in exceptional circumstances.

If, for any reason, you are unsure exactly where your garden boundary lies then please contact us directly and we will arrange for a Maintenance Officer to visit and confirm on site.

Although it is our responsibility to maintain common boundary fences, it is up to you, the tenant, to maintain and replace any dividing fences between your garden and any neighbouring gardens.

If there is not currently any fencing around your garden then it is intended to remain open, as per the planning permission received when the houses were built.

Should you wish to erect a fence, or indeed add a patio or decking area to your garden, then you must contact us to request an Alterations Form, complete and return this, and then await a decision as to whether it is approved or not. Please note that if approval is granted then any new installations will have to meet our specifications.

## TEAM NEWS

### Welcome

We are delighted to welcome new Finance Assistant, Pamela Sneddon, to the Fife Housing Group team.

### Farewell

We will be sorry to say goodbye to our Director of Finance and Governance, Fiona Nicholl, when she leaves us on 8 August, and wish her all the best in her new role.



# MAKING ALTERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS

If you wish to carry out significant alterations or improvements to your home you **must** obtain our permission in writing before work commences. Alterations which require permission include, but are not limited to:

- Erecting a fence or decking area
- Installing a driveway or parking space within the boundary of your property
- Installing new external windows/doors
- Installing internal doors
- Adapting your bathroom/s or installing a new bathroom/shower
- Adapting/installing a kitchen
- Installing/replacing an electric fire
- Replacing/installing radiators

When you contact us to request permission for an alteration you will be advised of the specific requirements for the work but the area you intend to adapt will usually need to be inspected prior to any work commencing. This being the case, we will arrange an appointment with one of our Maintenance Officers who will request details of the alteration you are planning and give you specific advice on what you need to do to ensure that the work meets our standards, however, our general guidelines state that:

- All work must be completed by a competent and qualified person
- You must contact us to arrange for our Maintenance Officer to inspect the work after completion
- Any gas or electrical works will require a new safety certificate, which must be provided by the time our Maintenance Officer attends to post inspect and approve the work

- Fencing heights are restricted, with different heights depending on whether this is at the front or rear of the property
- The ongoing maintenance of any major installations i.e. bathroom, kitchen, doors and windows will be your responsibility after the work has been completed

Please contact us on 08000 274 007 or email [info@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:info@fifehg.org.uk) for further information or to request an Alterations Form.

## Compensation for improvements

**If you undertake major home improvements which have been pre-approved, you may be able to get compensation for them when you move out.**

**In order to be eligible for compensation the improvement must:**

- **Increase the value of the property**
- **Meet the necessary standards for safety and workmanship**
- **Not affect our ability to let the home to other tenants**
- **Be on our list of approved improvements**
- **Have received our written approval prior to work commencing**

**Please see our website for further information regarding this - [fifehg.org.uk/tenant-area/repairs/alterations-improvements/](http://fifehg.org.uk/tenant-area/repairs/alterations-improvements/)**

## TAKING THE TIME TO GET IN TOUCH

Many of our tenants are happy in their homes, paying their rent on time with no real reason to contact us regularly and while this is great, we are keen to ensure that everyone is receiving the same high level of service. As such, we are currently getting in touch with anyone we've not heard from in a while to arrange a quick visit where we can check everything is ok, identify any outstanding repairs, establish if any upgrades are required and arrange any additional support which may be beneficial.

Should you receive a letter then please give us a call to confirm the appointment and your Housing Officer will pop out to see you. Alternatively, if you know someone, perhaps a neighbour or a friend, who you think might find such a visit useful, then please do not hesitate to get in touch and we can arrange to call around for a chat.



# New website provides advice and easier access to affordable housing in Fife



A new website to help people searching for social housing in Fife has been launched by Fife Housing Register partners – Fife Housing Group, Fife Council, Kingdom Group, Glen Housing Association and Ore Valley Housing Association.

The site will make it easier for people to find out about the housing options available to them in Fife, as well as offer advice to those in different housing situations such as:

- Preparing for a new home
- What you can do if you have too many or too few bedrooms
- Dealing with rent arrears
- Leaving the armed forces
- Moving from outwith the UK

The website also allows you access to:

- Complete a housing options assessment to see what housing options suit your needs
- Apply to the Fife Housing Register for housing
- View other relevant information online

Councillor Judy Hamilton, Convenor of Housing and Communities Committee said: 'This is an important step forward in providing a better service for people looking for Council or Housing Association housing in Fife – and making it more accessible is going to give people the opportunity to try and find a home that is right for them. All of our teams have been working on this system for a few weeks and I'm delighted that we're able to launch this new way of working, which helps tenants to know all of their Housing options across all the Fife Housing Register partners'.

Andrew Saunders, CEO of Ore Valley Housing Association and Chair of the Fife Housing Register Executive is enthusiastic about the new service and commented – 'The completion of this website, designed to make it much easier for people to find out more about their housing

options in Fife, is a fantastic example of what can be achieved when partners work together to achieve a common goal. We hope that the new website will become the place to go for information and support for everyone with an interest in housing in Fife'.

The website can be accessed at [fifehousingregister.org.uk](http://fifehousingregister.org.uk)



**Photo Caption: (L-R) Matthew Busher - Kingdom Group, Andrew Saunders, Ore Valley Housing Association and Chair of FHR Executive, Beverley Graham - Fife Housing Group, Anne Dickie - Glen Housing Association, Gavin Smith - Fife Council and Colin McInnes - Ore Valley Housing Association**

## Did you know that there are less than 150 days until Christmas?!

We know at this time of the year the last thing you want to think about is Christmas BUT it's never too early to think about how you are going to ensure that your rent is paid over the festive period.

Start saving now and, if you're struggling, contact your Housing Officer TODAY to discuss an affordable plan so you can make sure your Christmas is housing debt-free.



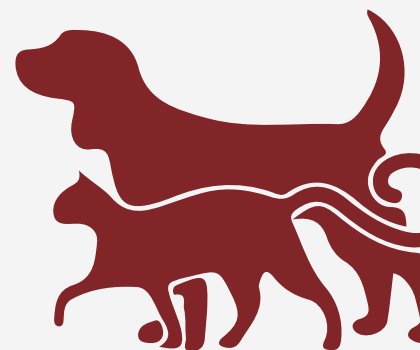
## PET PROTECTION

It is not uncommon for concerned tenants or residents to contact us and highlight concerns regarding the welfare of a neighbour's pet. We take such concerns seriously and will contact the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA), with a view to having the animal rescued by them, if we believe this to be necessary. Permission to keep any pet can also be refused if you fail to take responsibility for it.

As an owner you must ensure that your pet:

- Has a proper diet and fresh water
- Has somewhere suitable to live
- Is allowed to behave normally
- Is protected from, and treated for, illness and injury

This can be significant financial commitment and even the most conscientious of owners may find themselves in a situation where they are unable to care properly for their pet, however, there is help available to anyone who is struggling to cover these costs. Organisations such as PDSA, Blue Cross, Dogs Trust and Cats Protection can all offer advice and assistance to anyone who finds themselves in this position, however, if you have concerns over any animal, please contact the SSPCA directly on 03000 999 999 (7am to 11pm).



## ESTATE INSPECTION SCHEDULE

Our Housing Team recently received training from our Insurers on the need for us to more effectively gather information regarding the condition of our estates, highlighting why recording the findings of these inspections is a priority for insurance purposes. This training confirmed that we need to improve the way we record the condition of our estates as the estate walkabouts previously undertaken did not allow us to gather the quality of information required. The estate walkabout programme has now, therefore, been replaced by a much more meaningful estate inspection programme, the current schedule for which can be seen below:

Date / Time	Location	Housing Officer
<b>August 2018</b>		
Wednesday 15 August - 2.00pm	Methil - Dubbieside	Greg Turner
Friday 24 August - 9.00am	Kirkcaldy – Cairnwell Place, Morven Grove and Sidlaw Street	Lynn Mather
Tuesday 28 August - 2.00pm	Kennoway – Leven Road	Gavin Waddell
<b>September 2018</b>		
Monday 10 September - 2.00pm	Hill of Beath – Allan Park	Audrey Cameron
Wednesday 19 September - 2.00pm	Methil – Maple Gardens, Lilac Bank, Rowan Crescent and Methil Brae	Greg Turner
Wednesday 26 September – 2.00pm	Burntisland – McRae Crescent, Leith Avenue and Livingstone Drive	Karen Gilruth
<b>October 2018</b>		
Thursday 18 October - 2.00pm	Buckhaven – ‘Bird Scheme’	Gavin Waddell
Wednesday 24 October - 2.00pm	Rosyth - Kings Crescent, Kings Place, Norval Place and Backmarch Crescent	Greg Turner
Wednesday 31 October – 2.00pm	Culross	Heather McIlroy

If you would like to come along to any of the inspections detailed above, please give us a call on freephone 08000 274 007 or email [info@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:info@fifehg.org.uk)



## HAVE YOUR SAY ON...RENTS!

The income we receive from rent pays for all of the maintenance and management services we provide to you. This year we are investing heavily in a programme of essential improvements to homes across Fife, including replacement roofs, upgrades to central heating systems, smoke and heat detection systems, and kitchen and bathroom renewals. In 2019/20 we plan to continue delivering these improvements for the benefit of the tenants living in our homes, but, this can only be achieved if sufficient income is collected in rents.

Each year we must decide what rent increase to apply from 1 April for the following year. It may seem a long way ahead, but, before making that decision for the year 2019/20 our Board are keen to hear your views on what the rent increase should be, and to ensure that we take into account any comments that you may have regarding your rent. We do this in a number of ways, including holding two rent consultation sessions - one during the day and another in the early evening. In previous years these have been held during winter and it may be that the darker nights and colder weather result in lower attendance so we've decided to bring these events forward this year in the hope that more people will choose

to come. As such, two sessions will be held on 5 September, one between 2.00pm and 4.00pm and the other between 6.00pm and 8.00pm. Light refreshments will be available at both times and all tenants are welcome to attend.



Have your say...

If you would like further information regarding these rent consultation sessions, or you would like to register your interest in attending, please contact:

Helen Miller (Engagement Officer) on: 01383 608127 or [helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk)

Melissa McManus (Engagement Assistant) on: 01383 608105 or [melissa.mcmanus@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:melissa.mcmanus@fifehg.org.uk)

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## NEW LEGISLATION - HOUSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2014



Almost four years after the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 received its Royal Assent, the Commencement Order for the changes has finally been published, meaning that the various changes to housing management law and practice now have dates set for their introduction.

The Act will make changes to a variety of areas and as a result, we will be taking steps to review and revise our Allocation Policy. One of the major amendments which will need to be addressed deals with the categories of applicants who should receive 'reasonable preference' in housing allocations and will come into effect on 1 May 2019.

Additional changes to the rules on succession, assignation, subletting and joint tenancies will come into effect on 1 November 2019. This delay is designed to allow time for housing associations to advise tenants of these changes.

The changes to the rules on succession and assignation will mean those obtaining tenancies in this manner will require to have lived in the house for 12 months before they become the tenant and

we must have been in advised in advance in writing that they were living there for that period. The only exception will be succession by those who are the spouses or civil partners of the deceased.

Similarly, requests to add a joint tenant or to sublet will only be allowed once the applicant has been living in the house for 12 months.

We will be writing to you before 1 November 2018 to further advise you of any effect these changes may have to your tenancy.

## HALLOWEEN COMMUNITY CAFÉ

Our next Community Café will take place in Methil towards the end of October – keep any eye out in the local area and on our website and social media channels for more details closer to the time.

# KEEP YOUR STAIRWELL SAFE AND SECURE

## Closed doors can be a hassle can't they?

Security doors, for blocks of flats in particular, can be difficult to open if you're carrying shopping or struggling with a buggy, are often heavy for those with mobility issues, and can be an annoyance if you want to let visitors in, however, propping open secure entry doors compromises the safety of everyone within the block.

Despite the risks of doing so, residents often wedge doors open with all manner of dangerous items such as bricks, rocks, petrol cans, poles and bits of metal. As well as posing a serious trip hazard and allowing anyone access to the stairwell, these items regularly cause considerable damage to the door frame and mechanisms and, with replacements now costing hundreds of pounds each time that is money which could be better spent on improving our properties but which ends up being used for these needless repairs instead.



We strongly discourage people from jamming doors open and do our best to make sure this doesn't happen. Please play your part in making sure your communal close is safe and secure by doing the following:

- Removing and disposing of any item being used in this manner, as long as it is safe to do so
- Speaking to your neighbours and asking them to be more mindful of everyone in the block
- Reporting any neighbour persistently jamming the door open (anonymously if you would prefer) so we can take action
- Contacting us to request more fobs if required

## CHARITY OF THE YEAR UPDATE

As you may have read in previous newsletters, or seen on our website and social media channels, we have been fundraising for our charity of the year, Scottish Autism, since last June with a number of events, including bake sales, a colleague BBQ, a themed lunch, Christmas Jumper Day, 'Wii Wimbledon' and 'Strictly for Autism'.

Scottish Autism was nominated to be our charity of the year by Housing Officer, Stephanie McCulloch, whose son has autism and who has personal experience of the fantastic work they do providing invaluable emotional and practical support to families like hers, at the times when they need it the most. Stephanie has been the driving force behind all of our fundraising activities and was one of four colleagues who took part in an abseil from the Forth Rail Bridge in June raising over £1,200. Her husband was also keen to help raise as much money as possible for the charity and recently completed a 50-mile trek from Rosyth to Lochearn in under 17 hours, raising in excess of £2,000.

These events, combined with a donation of £100 from Westfield Health's Charitable Trust, have helped us smash our original target of £1,000 and instead raise a grand total of **£4500.11** for this very worthy cause, a sum which we're hoping to improve even further on this year as we begin fundraising for our new charity – the Little Princess Trust.

The Little Princess Trust are a small charity who provide real-hair wigs free of charge, to children and young adults up to the age of 24 who have sadly lost their own hair

# Scottish autism



through cancer treatment and other medical conditions. They were nominated to be our new charity of the year by Trade Supervisor, Adrian Lister, whose daughter sadly lost her own hair to alopecia. Fundraising has already begun in earnest, with a tombola at our colleague conference and FHG World Cup Table Fussball tournament raising over £200 so far, and a number of colleagues also planning to donate their own hair to this great cause.

For more information on the fantastic work the Little Princess Trust do please check out their website - [littleprincesses.org.uk](http://littleprincesses.org.uk)



Scottish Autism Abseil



Wii Wimbledon

## A Fine Vintage - Afternoon Tea in Fife

Following on from the success of last year's 'Remembering Rosyth' Afternoon Tea event, we are working in partnership with Fife Housing Association Alliance (FHAA) to host a similar event on a much larger scale, at the Vine Conference Centre, in Dunfermline.

'A Fine Vintage Afternoon Tea' is an over 60's event which will take place on Wednesday 22 August from 12 – 4pm. Tenants of Fife Housing Group, Kingdom Housing, Ore Valley and Glen Housing who qualify should all have received their invites by now and plans are well underway to ensure this event is both enjoyable and entertaining whilst also providing a platform to share information on support services, many may be unaware exist.

During this free event, attendees will be served afternoon tea whilst enjoying live performances from Fife Ukulele Band, Sing in the City Choir and a prize bingo session run by Carlton Bingo. In addition to the entertainment, there will be a mini exhibition of images from 'Old Dunfermline' and a range of partner agencies offering advice and support regarding accessible services on offer throughout Fife. These include Therapets, Fife Shopping and Support Services, Cosy Kingdom, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and the British Red Cross, to name but a few.

The opportunity to win will not just be limited to the prize bingo; a Scottish-themed quiz and a raffle will also ensure there are a few more lucky winners during the event. For those who may like to take the opportunity to pamper themselves, free manicures will be available throughout the afternoon and the popular book swap will also be making a return. We would encourage tenants to bring along any books they wish to donate and swap them for some new titles.

If all this wasn't enough to guarantee a great afternoon, each tenant will also receive a free goodie bag, full of items we think will come in handy, including a lovely pair of new slippers.

This event has been made possible due to the tremendous support from our suppliers and local businesses and, with their help, we are sure this will be an

afternoon to remember. To assist you in making your way to and from the venue, free transportation is also available, if required.

We are very much looking forward to sharing this afternoon with some of Fife's finest.

Should you wish to find out more about this event or if you have any questions please feel free to contact Helen Miller on 01383 608127 or Melissa McManus on 01383 608105.

**Please note that booking is essential in order to ensure that we are able to cater for everyone who will be attending.**





# See the Lumphinnans community garden grow

Lumphinnans locals may have noticed a few changes taking place in the previously disused garage site at the side of Ochilview flats. This is as a result of the Lumphinnans Tenants' and Residents' Association taking it upon themselves to transform this particular area of land into a community garden, in the hope of boosting community spirit.

Their progress so far, is inspirational. Not only have they secured the purchase of a container, which has now been delivered on site, they also made arrangements to have the land cleared to make it more manageable. This was a mammoth task which included the whole area being sprayed with weed-killer and then, with the help of a JCB from The Purvis Group, scraped to remove all the moss and weeds that had accumulated over the years.

Along with the support from local businesses and successful funding applications, the group are delighted with the other donations they have received recently and are currently considering how to put to use a trailer and external paint from Fife Recycle Centre, as well as other items including children's outdoor toys, tables, chairs, tyres, plant pots and other gardening materials. Unfortunately not everything is free but, with the help of trade prices for soil and plants from local business, Cartmore, there is no denying that things are moving in the right direction.

The next step for the community garden is to focus on building planters and injecting a bit of colour into the area, with the planting of flowers and different types of vegetables. There are also big plans for a community BBQ to celebrate the achievements so far and the Lumphinnans Tenants' and Residents' Association would like to welcome everyone, young and old, along to this event.

The group are keen for more people to become involved and take an interest in the development of the community garden. Should you wish to get involved, throw some ideas

into the pot or offer a strong pair of hands, please do not hesitate to pop down to the site if you see them there or alternatively head along one of their meetings, which take place at Lumphinnans Bowling Club from 6pm on the last Tuesday of every month.



# Together we can... make a difference

at home with...  
fife   
housing  
group

## Would you like to see improvements within your community and to the services we provide?

- Short Surveys
- Mystery Shopping
- Resident Inspectors
- Walkabouts
- Residents' Association
- Resident VOICES

### Then why not help us to start changing things for the better?

Getting involved is easy and there are lots of flexible options available so, let's work together to improve both our services and your community - you'll be amazed what we can achieve!



Got an idea that would  
make a difference  
in your community?  
Tell us how we can help!



 08000 274 007

 [feedback@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:feedback@fifehg.org.uk)





# CONSIDERING COMPLAINTS



Regrettably, things do sometimes go wrong; however, when they do we work hard to ensure we reach an acceptable outcome for the tenant, in the quickest possible timeframe. It is, however, equally important to learn from the complaints, in the hope that we can prevent any reoccurrence of these instances, in the future.

We continue to focus on continuous improvement in an ongoing effort to improve our service and below are a few examples of how recent complaints have helped us to do this.

What happened?	What did we learn?
<p>A tenant was waiting for a Maintenance Officer to arrive for a pre-arranged appointment, however, no-one arrived. The tenant was inconvenienced and had to make further contact with us to question why this had happened.</p>	<p>When booking in the repair, we had failed to specify the exact address to the Maintenance Officer; this resulted in him visiting the wrong address. The process for making appointments in colleagues' diaries has now been amended so that the full address is always quoted along with the tenant's telephone number for contact, should there be any problems.</p>
<p>A tenant took annual leave to allow for a pre-arranged appointment with our tradesman, to take place. The tradesman arrived as scheduled, however, he was unable to source the materials required to carry out the job that day. This meant that the job could not be completed and had to be rescheduled for a later date, once the required materials had been obtained. The tenant was then inconvenienced by having to take further time off work.</p>	<p>This situation occurred as having ordered the required materials, we assumed these materials had been received and were being held within our warehouse however, regrettably, this was not the case. A new process has been introduced whereby no appointments made until after the materials required to carry out the work, are confirmed as available.</p>
<p>A rechargeable repair had been agreed between a tenant and ourselves, however, the cost of this repair was not made clear at the outset. The tenant made an assumption about the approximate cost, however, the amount the tenant was recharged worked out at more than double what they had anticipated.</p>	<p>Additional training was provided to relevant colleagues in regards to the procedure for rechargeable repairs. Furthermore, a more in-depth review of this process was undertaken by our Property and Business Support Managers which resulted in more upfront information being available to tenants prior to the rechargeable repairs being carried out.</p>

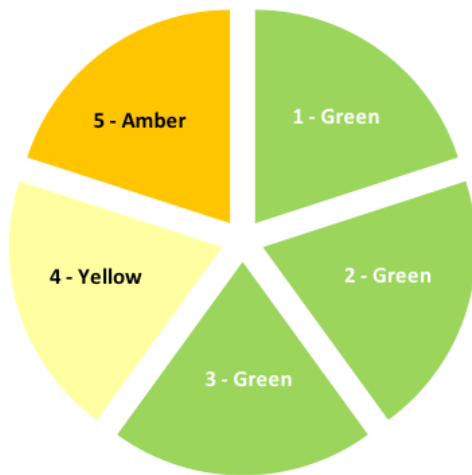
Our proactive approach with regard to learning from complaints is not just something we focus on internally; we also ensure we take action when complaints involve any of our contractors. In all instances, feedback is provided directly to our contractor which often allows them to improve and streamline the services they offer on our behalf.



# AN ENGAGING EXPERIENCE

Earlier in the year, independent auditors Scott-Moncrieff carried out review of the ways we engage with you, our tenants, with the key findings from their report highlighted below:

## KEY FINDINGS



- 1. The policies and procedures in place for communicating and engaging with customers are aligned with best practice.
- 2. Processes are in place for gathering and reporting customer satisfaction in line with the Charter requirements.
- 3. Complaints are dealt with within the Scottish Public Ombudsman Services (SPSO) timescales and guidelines.
- 4. A range of methods are in place to facilitate participation and lessons learned are communicated to customers.
- 5. The annual Rent Review Consultation is carried out in line with statutory requirements and guidance.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very high risk exposure - major concerns requiring immediate senior attention that create fundamental risks within the organisation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High risk exposure - absence / failure of key controls that create significant risks within the organisation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderate risk exposure - controls are not working effectively and efficiently and may create moderate risks within the organisation.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited risk exposure - controls are working effectively, but could be strengthened to prevent the creation of minor risks or address general housekeeping issues.</li> </ul>

These results indicate their assurance that we have robust controls in place to ensure effective customer engagement and satisfaction arrangements, with an Engagement Strategy in place which is linked to both our strategic objectives and the outcomes of the Scottish Social Housing Charter (often just referred to as 'the Charter'). They are also comfortable that this strategy aims to encourage open communication and provide all customers with the opportunity to become involved and participate in decision making.

They did however highlight the following areas for improvement:

- Provision of regular feedback to customers on the lessons learned as a result of complaints including service improvements and policy changes.
- Development of a specific rent setting policy which sets out the process to be followed when setting rents and consulting with tenants over proposed increases, in line with the requirements of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001.

Both of these recommendations have now been implemented.

# UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE



A number of you will already be claiming Universal Credit (UC) and, although we hope this was a smooth transition for you, we know there have been some teething problems.

If you are about to submit a claim for Universal Credit, the tips below may help to simplify the process:

- Remember to notify your housing officer of your payment date if you make an application for Universal Credit. Your housing officer will be able to give you advice on how to minimise the risk of falling into rent arrears. Also make sure that we have up to date contact details for you.
- If you are making an application for Universal Credit please remember to apply for the **housing cost element**. If you do not you will only be paid the personal allowance and your rent account will fall into arrears.
- If you are not sure how much your monthly rent is please contact our office and a colleague will be able to tell you. You will also need to update your 'Journal' every April with your new rent charge or your rent will continue to be paid at the old rent charge.
- If you are asking for your housing cost element to be paid directly to us please make sure that you indicate **Fife Housing Association** (in full, do not write 'Fife Housing' or 'FHA' for example) as your landlord, however, remember that the first payment you receive

will include your housing element even if you have indicated 'pay to landlord'. This first payment should then be paid by you to us.

- You must use your online Journal to report any changes in your circumstances e.g. starting work, people leaving or moving into your home, changes to income etc.
- If you have been receiving a **Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP)** from Fife Council's housing benefit department, you will have to make them aware of your application for Universal Credit or they will stop paying the DHP. Universal Credit will not pay for the under-occupancy (bedroom tax) and you will have to re-apply to Fife Council for this along with your Council Tax Benefit.

We understand that there may be difficulties as you make your initial claim and wait for your first payment, however, support is available. For advice on managing money, looking for work and accessing help, please talk to your housing officer or contact Citizens Advice and Rights Fife (CARF) directly on 0345 1400 095 or via their website - [cabfife.org.uk](http://cabfife.org.uk)

Further help, guidance and information can also be found at [gov.uk/universal-credit](http://gov.uk/universal-credit)

## Resident VOICES Review

Resident VOICES continue to work closely with Fife Housing Group to improve services for tenants and have developed a workplan to help them achieve this.

They are currently looking at the processes and procedures in place to let empty properties, known as 'void'. This scrutiny review covers the void period from the date the keys are received from tenants terminating their tenancy to the date the property becomes ready for re-let; with the new lettings standard forming the focus of this review.

Following the review, any recommendations as to how the void processes might be improved will be presented to the Board for approval and, hopefully, subsequent implementation.

Members John Bell (Chair) and George Allan are also in the process of undertaking the CIH Level 3 Qualification in Scrutiny, as part of this year's wider development and training plan for the group.

Learning together with other members of the Fife Housing Association Alliance, who are also participating in the

course, offers a fantastic opportunity to share knowledge and best practice and, having already submitted their first assignment, the group are now working hard on their second.

We wish everyone good luck in this project and look forward to establishing how the learning points can be put into practice in the near future.



John Bell (centre back) and George Allan (front right) with the other members of the Fife Housing Association Alliance



## DUNFERMLINE

### Abbeyview

It was great to see some Fife Housing Group tenants turn out for the BASICSIM Tenants' and Residents' Association (TRA) Estate Walkabout in May (which includes our properties 20-90 Allan Crescent, Islay Road and Shields Road). The event was also attended by Fife Council tenants, Housing Officers, Safer Communities Officers, and local Councillors. Issues raised included:

- Inconsiderate parking - Fife Council have advised that a proposal is being made to increase parking at the shops on Allan Crescent
- Potholes - these were reported to the Roads Department
- Green spaces - the TRA want to look into the possibility of getting local residents and children involved in planting in some areas

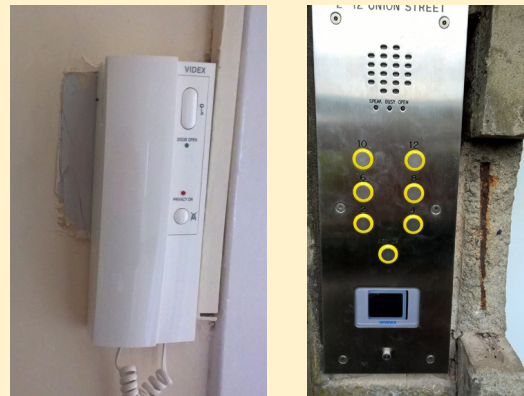
If you live in the TRA catchment you can attend the monthly meetings held on the third Wednesday of the month at 1.30pm in The Tryst Centre. You can also contact the group directly via [basicsimtra@yahoo.com](mailto:basicsimtra@yahoo.com)



## Lochgelly

Lochgelly was selected as one of the first areas to benefit from replacement door entry systems with more attractive, slim-line, door entry handsets now installed. These are encouraging occupants to use the door entry system effectively by ensuring the external door is kept closed at all times.

Internal notice boards have also been installed in the ground level of all our blocks of flats in this area. These provide an additional channel for communication and you will already see a bin calendar for refuse collection dates, fire safety information and instructions on how to report repairs, as well a business card containing contact details for the housing officer for the area, inside.



## Oakley

Fife Council have begun building much-needed bungalow accommodation on the site of the old primary school.

## Kennoway

Work continues in Leven Road with most tenants now having a gas meter and supply to their properties. If you have not had a gas meter installed or a survey carried out by Saltire for the central heating, then please contact a member of our Engagement Team on freephone 08000 274 007 so this can be arranged as soon as possible.

We will also shortly be carrying out Estate Inspections in Leven Road and New Road - if any residents have

any issues that they would like us to look into when we are there, please get in touch with Housing Officer, Gavin Waddell on 07771 776679 or via [gavin.waddell@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:gavin.waddell@fifehg.org.uk). We are already aware of the issues regarding refuse collections in this area and are working closely with Fife Council's environmental colleagues to ensure it is resolved.





### Lumphinnans

We're sure everyone will agree that the Lumphinnans Tenants' and Residents' Association are doing a fantastic job in transforming the old Fife Housing Group garage site at the end of Ochilview, and Housing Officer Audrey Cameron, is already looking forward to her invite to the summer BBQ they have planned.

We're sure that the group would appreciate any offer of assistance, or indeed any contributions to aid the transformation of the area so please do not hesitate to contact them directly if you would like to get involved.

The flats at Ochilview and Hilton View have also benefited from new door entry systems and tenants are encouraged to ensure the doors are kept closed at all times for health and safety purposes.

### Camdean

Following on from the TRA in Dunfermline, Housing Officer, Stephanie McCulloch is keen to get a Tenants' and Residents' Group set up in the Camdean area.

This would be an opportunity for residents to come together to make the neighbourhood a better place to live, boost community spirit, have your say on housing services and protect local interests, whilst improving standards in your area.

If you would like to register your interest in joining a group like this please contact Stephanie on 07811 439905 / [stephanie.mcculloch@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:stephanie.mcculloch@fifehg.org.uk) or our Engagement Officer, Helen Miller, on 01383 608127 / [helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk)

### Hill of Beath

We are currently looking at alternative measures for bin collection at the flats which are located between 71 and 105 Allan Park. The bin stores at the rear have now been demolished, having been identified as no longer 'fit for purpose', and further details on the new proposals be supplied to tenants as soon as more information is available.

The flats at Allan Park will also be the next area that will be supplied with notice boards and these will be installed later this year.

On a separate note, Housing Officer, Audrey Cameron, would like to thank all the tenants who have been making a real difference to their garden areas this year.



### Crombie

Building work on our new houses is ongoing as a result of delays in the utilities being installed; however, we are hopeful that these issues have now been resolved, allowing the build to complete by early September. Fife Council are also building on the plot next to ours and between the two sites 33 new homes will be added to the village. The Fife Housing Group homes have all now been allocated but if you would be interested in being considered for one of the Fife Council properties please apply through the Fife Housing Register.

### Rosyth

Our Housing Officers who covering the Rosyth area were delighted to donate money from their budget to sponsor this year's Rosyth Gala programme, an event enjoyed by an estimated 8,500 people.

One of our properties was even given a magic touch for the day in honour of the Gala Queen, Kaysie-Leigh, pictured below with her cousin Caiden and in her gala gown.





### Kirkcaldy

We would like to remind tenants again that the dumping of rubbish in stairwells is prohibited as it is a breach of tenancy and poses a health and safety risk. Any issues with regard to this should be reported directly to your Housing Officer.

Please arrange for the proper disposal of bulky items. Fife Council provide a special uplift service which includes furniture, fridges, freezers, etc and charge £15 for a limited number of items. If you require their uplift service, please contact the Recycling Helpline on 03451 55 00 22. You can book an appointment from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

Please also ensure you take responsibility for moving your bins back to their blocks once they have been emptied, and not leave them on the street as this becomes unsightly and allows others to use the bins that don't belong to them. If any of your bins are overflowing, please take your refuse to the local recycling centre situated at Templehall Community Centre.

We are working with Fife Council to resolve the issues with contaminated bins in our flatted stock with tenants in Cheviot Road and Valley Gardens being contacted to discuss recycling. If you would like to speak to Housing Officer, Lynn Mather, regarding this issue, please contact her on 01383 608125 or via [lynn.mather@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:lynn.mather@fifehg.org.uk). You can also contact Lynn directly if there is any additional information you would like to see displayed in the new notice boards in these blocks.

New door entry systems have been installed at some of the blocks in Kirkcaldy and we would like to remind all residents to keep the front and back doors closed at all times. Failure to do so causes a fire hazard but means that the blocks are not secure from any unwanted visitors. If there is an issue with fobs or the doors not locking, please do not hesitate to contact us directly on 08000 274 007.

A number of properties in Kirkcaldy are also benefitting from the installation of new central heating systems.

### Methil

After a lengthy discussion about where responsibility for doing so lay, Fife Council have arranged to cut down some of the trees in Lilac Bank. We are awaiting confirmation of the timing for this but it should hopefully be of huge benefit to the estate and all of its residents.

Housing Officer, Greg Turner, would also like to take this opportunity to remind all tenants that if you have a garden you have responsibility to maintain it, ensuring that the grass is cut regularly and any rubbish is disposed of correctly. There are an alarming number of gardens not currently being maintained and, as such, Greg will be increasing number of garden inspections to ensure that this is done.

Housing Officer	Contact Details
Angie Munton	t: 07811 439939 e: <a href="mailto:angie.munton@fifehg.org.uk">angie.munton@fifehg.org.uk</a>
Audrey Cameron	t: 07747 895965 e: <a href="mailto:audrey.cameron@fifehg.org.uk">audrey.cameron@fifehg.org.uk</a>
Gavin Waddell	t: 07771 776679 e: <a href="mailto:gavin.waddell@fifehg.org.uk">gavin.waddell@fifehg.org.uk</a>
Greg Turner	t: 07811 393822 e: <a href="mailto:greg.turner@fifehg.org.uk">greg.turner@fifehg.org.uk</a>
Karen Gilruth	t: 07825 855224 e: <a href="mailto:karen.gilruth@fifehg.org.uk">karen.gilruth@fifehg.org.uk</a>
Lynn Mather	t: 07973 827628 e: <a href="mailto:lynn.mather@fifehg.org.uk">lynn.mather@fifehg.org.uk</a>
Stephanie McCulloch	t: 07811 439905 e: <a href="mailto:stephanie.mcculloch@fifehg.org.uk">stephanie.mcculloch@fifehg.org.uk</a>
William Earnshaw	t: 07525 260447 e: <a href="mailto:william.earnshaw@fifehg.org.uk">william.earnshaw@fifehg.org.uk</a>

# PLANNED MAINTENANCE UPDATE

## Stock Condition Survey

Our three-year stock condition survey programme is now in its second phase. These surveys will give us essential information regarding the energy efficiency of our properties, as well as confirming the remaining lifespan of major components such as kitchens, bathrooms, roofing and electrical installations. The results from the first tranche of surveys is complete and indicate that 86.9% of the properties surveyed comply with the required standards. The remaining 13.1% will have works carried out towards the end of this financial year, with a view to ensuring that these properties are also fully compliant with the standard.

Some properties require smaller works, such as extra kitchen electrical sockets, whereas other properties require full installations of new kitchens, bathrooms or central heating. All tenants will be written to once procurement on the works is complete and ready to be progressed.

## Heating Programme

The central heating programme this year includes 35 properties being switched from electric storage heating to modern gas combi boiler heating systems at Leven Road in Kennoway. Some systems have already been installed but not quite as many as we would like at this stage, largely due to delays in having gas meters fitted. All outstanding properties are currently being revisited, with tenants being given advice on getting their new meters fitted. The rest of the programme is made up of properties with back boiler systems that are old and inefficient and, unfortunately, the level of access to properties we have had so far means that, again, we have been unable to install as many new systems as we would like. Further appointments are now being made with tenants who still have these out-dated and costly to run systems to arrange for their properties to be surveyed in order to progress their installations.

## Roofing Programme

The roofing programme is progressing as planned at Findlay Street, Rosyth with seven roofs already completed



and a further 37 planned across Rosyth and Dunfermline. We have also fitted 14 one-off new roofs to date.

When we install a new roof to one of our properties, the installation is of a very high specification and ensures that we have a product that is future-proof and energy efficient. If required, we also top-up the levels of insulation and paint the property exterior.

## Kitchen Upgrades

To date, we have installed 20 new kitchens with a further 10 planned on the current contract. These are kitchens that our Maintenance Officers have identified as requiring replacement over the past year. There will be more kitchens renewed as they are identified from the Stock Condition Survey, as well as those continuing to be identified by our Maintenance Officers on inspection.

## Bathroom Upgrades

We will shortly be commencing the bathroom replacement programme with our appointed contractor CCG. 98 bathrooms will be replaced across Fife, including all our properties in Parkside Street, Rosyth. To date, we have installed a new bathroom at one pilot property with the rest of the programme commencing on 20 August 2018. All properties on this programme have been surveyed and letters will be delivered shortly confirming installation dates.

## Windows and Doors

13 properties still require to have their new windows and doors fitted. Sidey windows and doors have been appointed to carry out this work and will commence fitting the new windows in August.

Tenants in properties affected by any of these works will be notified individually of expected start dates and timescales.





# HERB AND PEA SUMMER SOUP

 **Prep**  
15 mins

 **Cook**  
15 mins

 **Serves**  
4

(Recipe from Greener Kirkcaldy – more recipes available at [greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk](http://greenerkirkcaldy.org.uk))

Soup needn't be confined to the winter months when there are quick and easy recipes like this, using cheap seasonal vegetables to make a healthy meal, perfect for serving over summer.



## Ingredients

- 1 x medium white onion or 3 x spring onions
- 2 x cloves garlic
- 200g frozen peas or fresh peas, still in pods
- 1 x large handful of either mint or parsley
- 1 pint of vegetable stock
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- Salt and pepper to taste



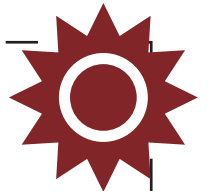
## Optional

- 1 handful of left-over chopped green vegetables (e.g. spring greens, broccoli stalks, kale, courgette or marrow) - these will help to produce a soup of a thicker consistency
- 100ml of crème fraiche or cream

## Method

1. Chop the onion and garlic.
2. Heat the olive oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan.
3. Add the onion and cook lightly for 2 minutes, then add the garlic and cook for a further 2 minutes.
4. Make up around a pint of vegetable stock.
5. Add your chosen optional vegetables (if using) and peas to the pan, season to taste and cover with stock.
6. Add a lid to the pan and simmer on a low heat for 5-7 minutes.
7. Roughly chop the herbs, add to the pan, and simmer for a further 2-3 minutes.
8. Take the pan off the heat and blend the soup into a smooth consistency using a blender or electric hand-blender.
9. For a creamier soup, add 100ml of crème fraiche or cream, or add a tablespoon to the soup when serving.

## SUMMER WORDSEARCH



Enter our SUMMER competition and you could WIN a **£25 ASDA voucher**.

To enter: Complete the wordsearch, cut along the dotted line and send your entry to the address below by 15th Sept 2018.

BARBECUE	HAT	POOLSIDE
BRIGHT	HOLIDAY	SUNBURNT
CHEERFUL	HOT	SUNSHINE
GRASS	OUTDOORS	SWEATY
HAPPY	PICNIC	SWIMMING

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ TEL: \_\_\_\_\_

## Wordsearch winner

Thanks to everyone who entered our Spring competition and congratulations to our lucky winner, Ellen Hogg of Rosyth, who received a £25 Asda gift voucher and will be able to treat herself to something nice next time she's in store.



## Contact us

Freephone: 08000 274 007  
Gas emergencies: 0800 281 856  
Text: 0771 77 3666 Email: [info@fifehg.org.uk](mailto:info@fifehg.org.uk)

**Our opening hours are:**  
Monday to Thursday 8:30am - 5:00pm  
Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm

at home with...



[fifehg.org.uk](http://fifehg.org.uk)

**Fife Housing Group** | 7 Pitreavie Court, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline, KY11 8UU

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