

GORGEOUS Gardens

The interest in our annual gardening competition, which aims to reward tenants who take pride in their garden and make a real difference to the communities they live in, was really encouraging again this year with entries offering a variety of colourful and imaginative outdoor spaces.

All of our competitors deserve recognition for their hard work and commitment to developing their garden areas, as a little splash of colour can make the world of difference in improving the overall presentation of an area.

Judging took place at the end of June, and it was clear that we have some very talented tenants, displaying excellent gardening skills, innovative ideas and a real flair for creating an attractive, welcoming garden space.

In fact, the standard of entries was so high that our judges couldn't pick just three winners and ended up with two gardens taking joint second place.

So, without further ado we are delighted to announce the following lucky winners, who each received a certificate of recognition and a selection of gardening vouchers.

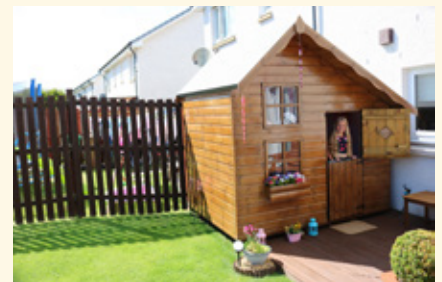
Congratulations to all of the winners in, what was once again, a very hard fought competition showcasing some incredibly impressive gardens.



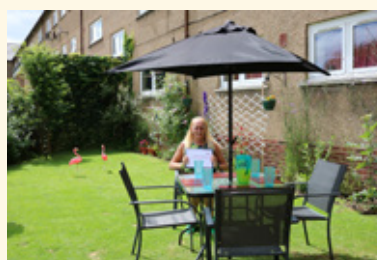
First place:- **Annette Tullis (Cameron Drive, Dysart)**



Joint second place -
Jean Lilly (Valley Gardens, Kirkcaldy)



Joint second place -
Leanne Burnett (Tweed Street, Dunfermline)



Third place -
Bill Mitchell (Cairnwell Place, Kirkcaldy)

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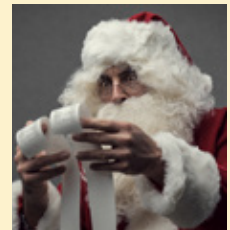
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🔍 Readability

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, 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 to request a large print copy or to enquire about alternative copy formats.

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 consider how you are going to ensure that your rent is paid over the festive period.

Although we are still regularly asked if there is a rent-free period during the festive season, this is not the case, with normal monthly payments due as usual between now and 1 January 2020.

As such, we advise that you start saving for this expensive time of year now and, if you find yourself struggling, contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible to discuss an affordable plan to make rent payments your priority and ensure that your Christmas is housing debt-free.

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.



NEW FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS

Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in June 2017, a Ministerial Working Group on Building and Fire Safety was established to review Scotland's building and fire safety regulatory frameworks. As part of this work, the group agreed that a consultation on fire and smoke alarms, originally planned for late 2019, should be prioritised, leading to the introduction of new minimum standards for smoke and fire alarms in February of this year.

These new standards require the fitting of ceiling mounted, interlinked smoke and heat alarms in all homes, with carbon monoxide alarms also required in

properties with gas/carbon-fuelled appliances

To date, we have upgraded fire and smoke detection in around 40% of our stock and are well on course to complete the remaining installations by the deadline of February 2021.

It is a legal requirement that we arrange for compliant alarm systems to be fitted in all of our properties before this date so, if yours hasn't been done already, we will be in touch over the coming months to arrange for this mandatory upgrade to take place.

UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE



Are you in receipt of Universal Credit?

Have you changed your rent charge on your Journal?

If you have not updated your Journal with your rent increase from 1 April 2019 please do so immediately.

The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) will have sent

you a notification via your 'to do list' to remind you to report any changes in your rent.

If you fail to notify them of the change in your rent then the amount of housing cost element they pay will be affected and you may start to accrue arrears, which could lead to us taking recovery action. All of this may be avoided if you ensure your Journal is always kept up-to-date.

FREE IT TRAINING FOR FIFE HOUSING GROUP TENANTS



Thanks to our partnership with the Scottish Schools Education Research Centre (SSERC), we are 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 608 127 or via 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.



Taking action against anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour covers a wide range of unacceptable activities that cause harm to an individual, their community or their environment. This could be an action that leaves you feeling alarmed, harassed or distressed and includes fear of crime or concern for public safety, public disorder or public nuisance.

Examples of anti-social behaviour include:

- Nuisance, rowdy or inconsiderate neighbours
- Vandalism, graffiti and fly-posting
- Street drinking
- Environmental damage, including littering, dumping of rubbish and abandonment of cars
- Misuse of fireworks
- Inconsiderate or inappropriate use of vehicles including parking, noise, speed and driving style

The police, local authorities and other community safety partner agencies, such as the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service and social housing landlords, all have a responsibility to deal with anti-social behaviour and to help people who are suffering from it.

If you are experiencing problems with anti-social behaviour, or have concerns about other community safety issues, you should contact us on freephone 08000 274 007 or call the Police on 101 to report non-emergency situations. In emergency situations, please call 999.

Early intervention is the key to reaching an amicable resolution and you may wish to consider the following steps.



Keep a diary

It's useful to make a record of everything that is happening, including:

- what time it happens at
- how frequently
- the names/identity of the people involved

You should also keep a note of all the behaviour that is upsetting you so you can form a full picture of what has been happening.

Your diary will help you to show your neighbours that there is a pattern to what they are doing if you decide to approach them. It will also be useful as evidence of what's been happening if you end up reporting the matter to your Housing Officer.

You might not realise it but the behaviour that has been disturbing or upsetting you may also be affecting other people. If you keep a diary, you will have a record of what has been happening so it can support what other people are saying if things go any further.

Please take into consideration that, if the case is taken to Court, you may be asked to attend as a witness.

Consider mediation

Mediation is an option which can be used in an attempt to resolve a dispute. Fife Community Safety Support Service (FCSSS) provide this service independently and your Housing Officer can refer either or both the complainant and the perpetrator.

Community Mediation provides a safe, structured and positive environment for people in dispute to come to agreements and better understanding.

Many neighbourhood disputes, even seemingly minor ones, can escalate if not dealt with at an early stage, and mediation has an excellent track record in assisting people to find positive solutions.

The mediator has no power to decide or impose their solution upon you, they are simply there to help you negotiate your own settlement and facilitate the process in an impartial and non-judgemental manner. If an agreement cannot be reached you are still free to pursue Court or other formal processes to resolve your dispute.

USE OUR NOISE APP

We can also provide you with access to our Noise App. The App can be downloaded onto your mobile phone or tablet, by following the step-by-step guidance supplied.

The App will record 30 seconds of noise, you then complete the form to identify your location and submit it to the office, so it can be heard by your Housing Officer.

This can then be used to support your diary notes if the case escalates to legal proceedings.

We will ensure that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), equal opportunities and confidentiality are adhered to in all cases.



Contact Police Scotland

If you are not in immediate danger, the Police may not necessarily be the best people to contact. However, if you have been the victim of a crime or if you are in danger, you should contact the Police as soon as possible. You can also contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 to report a crime or give information anonymously.

The Police have lots of powers to stop anti-social behaviour. Some of these involve working closely with the local council and other services in your area, such as social work. The Police can also:

- close down places which are, for example, drug or drinking dens or places in which continuous anti-social behaviour is happening
- break up groups of people hanging about if the group is causing, or is likely to cause, alarm and distress
- issue on-the-spot fines for low-level anti-social offences such as breach of the peace
- arrest someone who has an anti-social behaviour order against them if they are found to have breached the terms of this

If you need additional support you can also contact Victim Support Scotland on 0800 160 1985 for help and advice.

Take legal action

If mediation and other forms of early intervention fail to resolve the situation your Housing Officer will collate all of the evidence obtained from the complainant, other residents, the police, or any other relevant agency and discuss the possibility of legal action with the Housing Manager.

Where appropriate, this will include seeking an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) to tackle the behaviour of tenants who are causing anti-social behaviour problems.

This will take the form of an interim Anti-Social Behaviour Order in the first instance but may escalate to a full Anti-Social Behaviour Order if the behaviour continues.

The ASBO will provide clear instruction on what would be classed as a breach of the agreement and we will have the authority to bring the tenancy to an end if this happens.

Some types of nuisance behaviour will satisfy grounds for repossession without the need for an ASBO, however, once court action is initiated we are bound by Court timescales and the Sheriff will make the final decision regarding any eviction.

Case Studies

Case study 1 - We recently had a case where numerous children were playing together, in and out of each other's houses and gardens, however when they fell out (as kids do) the parents got involved and started arguing with each other. This then escalated to Facebook threats and verbal threats in the streets, with other neighbours feeling pressured to choose sides. By this time, the children had moved on but the adults continued to prolong the argument, calling the Police three or four times a week to report threatening behaviour and make accusations of bullying which, in turn, affected their children's behaviour at school, becoming something of a vicious circle.

In this case it took a while for all parties to see that children will argue and fall out, make up and then fall out again, very rarely holding grudges for too long. We did eventually manage to get all parties to agree to mediation and, while things may never be as friendly again, an agreement has been struck that allows the tenants to live peaceably together in the same area and ultimately let the children be children.

Case Study 2 - Our tenant lived next door to an owner-occupier who began making complaints to us about their alleged anti-social behaviour, which included loud music, harassment, shouting, fighting and swearing. We investigated further and, despite assurances from our tenant, the complaints of anti-social behaviour continued.

Police became regular visitors to the property and the volume of complaints increased. Mediation was discussed but our tenant did not wish to participate. Eventually the tenant's behaviour, and that of the guests who were invited to socialise at the property, became such a concern that, working alongside Police Scotland, we successfully applied for an ASBO.

We were able to use this ASBO to convert our tenant's lease to a six-month Short Scottish Secure Tenancy (SSST) which gave us the option of ending the tenancy, without a lengthy Court process, if the tenant's behaviour did not improve. Sadly, in this case there was no improvement and the tenancy was brought to an end at the expiry of the new tenancy agreement, meaning the tenant lost their home.

Key to securing the outcome of this case was evidence gathering by other residents in the street, who continued to complete and submit diaries of anti-social behaviour at the property. This, coupled with most incidents being reported to the Police, allowed us to corroborate the complaints and build a case.

It is unusual for a tenant to completely ignore the many warnings and opportunities they have to avoid losing their home, however, in this instance they continued to show a complete disregard for both their landlord, neighbours and the other residents of the street and ending the tenancy, therefore, became inevitable.

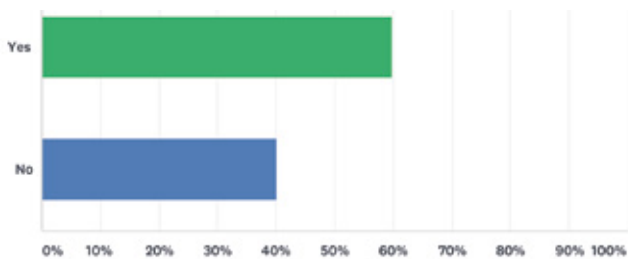
PETS IN PROPERTIES

We recently took the opportunity to consult with tenants regarding our policy on pets in properties and, as a result the feedback received, have changed our Tenancy Agreement to allow dogs to be kept in upper flats.

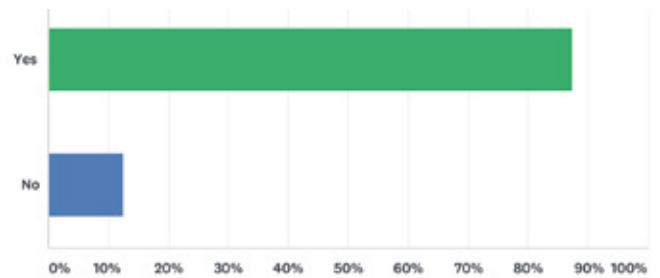
We are now in the process of introducing a new Pet Policy which will provide specific information on the keeping of all pets in our homes and the information received from tenants during the consultation will help shape this policy. The policy will aim to ensure that, whilst pets will be permitted, their presence will not have an adverse effect on other residents or the property itself.

The outcomes from the survey we undertook can be seen below:

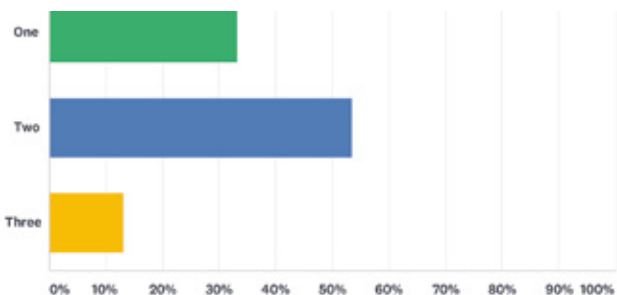
Q1. Do you think Fife Housing Group should allow dogs in upper flats?



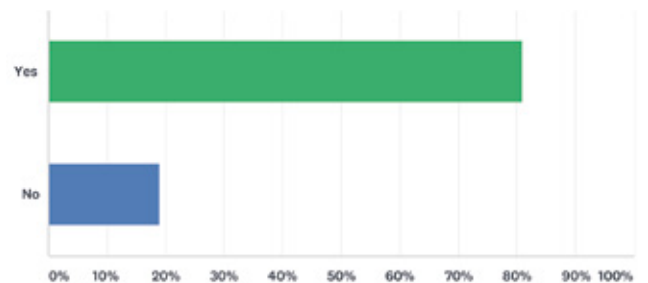
Q2. Do you think there should be a limit on the number of dogs allowed in a property?



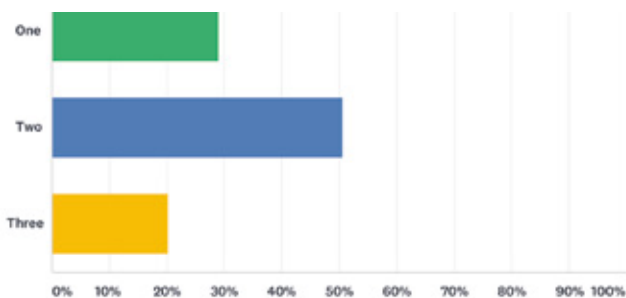
Q3. If you answered 'Yes' to Question 2, what do you think this limit should be?



Q4. Do you think there should be a limit on the number of cats allowed in a property?



Q5. If you answered 'Yes' to Question 4, what do you think this limit should be?



FREE SCHOOL MEALS AND SCHOOL CLOTHING GRANTS

You can now apply for free school meals and school clothing grants for 2019/2020 if you are in receipt of one of the following:

- **Income Support**
- **Job Seekers' Allowance (Income Based)**
- **Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related)**
- **Child Tax Credit only (with a total annual income below £16,105)**
- **Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit (with a total annual income below £6,900)**
- **Support under Part VI of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1999**
- **Universal Credit (including those with a maximum take-home pay of £610 per month)**
- **Child and Working Tax Credit (with a total annual income below £16,105 - School Clothing Grant only)**
- **Long Term Incapacity Benefit (School Clothing Grant only)**
- **Widows' Allowance (if not in full time employment - School Clothing Grant only)**

All children in primaries one to three can receive a free school meal without making an application, however, an application is still required to receive free milk and a school clothing grant. If you wish to apply please visit fifedirect.org.

uk/schoolbenefits to complete an application form.

If you don't have access to a PC or mobile device with an internet connection, self-service PCs are available at any Fife Council community library. If you need help completing the application form you can visit your nearest local office or make contact via the website.

You must provide evidence of your income to support your application. This must be your current award letter for any of the above benefits. You can upload this evidence electronically when you complete your application or this can be handed in to your nearest local office. If you already receive Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction you do not need to provide this evidence.

To allow you to receive a school clothing grant you must have a Bank or Building Society account as payment will be made by bank transfer.

If your child is aged 16-19 years and is staying on in full-time education, they may be able to get an Education Maintenance Allowance (household income thresholds apply). For more information, please visit fifedirect.org.uk/ema.



ESTATE INSPECTION CALENDAR

In the next three months, estate inspections will be carried out in the areas detailed below. Following each of these inspections, an action plan will be put in place to address any identified issues. If you would like any further information regarding these, please do not hesitate to contact your Housing Officer directly.

Date / Time	Location	Housing Officer
August 2019		
Wednesday 21 August @ 10am	Rosyth - Whinnyburn Place and Webster Place	Laura White
Thursday 22 August @ 10am	Dysart - Fitzroy Street, Fitzroy Square and High Street	Karen Gilruth
September 2019		
Tuesday 3 September @ 2pm	Rosyth - Selvage Street, Selvage Place and Fairykirk Road	Lynn Mather
Thursday 12 September @ 3pm	Cowdenbeath - Johnston Park	Audrey Cameron
Wednesday 25 September @ 10am	Dunfermline - Walls Place, Norton Place and surrounding areas	William Earnshaw
October 2019		
Thursday 10 October @ 2pm	Leven - Mountfleurie Street and surrounding areas	Ross Glancy
Tuesday 22 October 2019 @ 2pm	High Valleyfield - Pentland Terrace	Gavin Waddell

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

HAVE YOUR SAY ON...RENTS!

The income we receive from rent pays for all of the maintenance and management services that we provide to you. This year we are continuing to invest heavily in a programme of improvements to homes across Fife, including replacement roofs, upgrades to central heating systems, boiler replacements, smoke and heat detection systems and kitchen and bathroom renewals.

Having completed our new Crombie development late last year, we are also about to embark on an exciting new development to ensure a continued supply of good quality homes for the community.

In 2020/21 we plan to continue delivering these improvements for the benefit of tenants, 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 this decision for the next financial year, our Board are keen to hear your views on what any increase should be, and to ensure that we take any comments that you may have regarding your rent into account. This year we will be seeking your feedback in a

number of ways, including via consultation sessions which will be held during the day and in the early evening in local venues across Fife. We will let you know nearer the time where and when these consultations events will be taking place 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

Drew Nisbet (Engagement Manager) on: 01383 608121 or drew.nisbet@fifehg.org.uk

FANCY STEPPING UP FOR A SECRET MISSION?

Mystery Shopping is a useful way to test the services being offered to tenants, particularly when contacting us by telephone. It involves tenants making telephone contact with our office, equipped with a pre-determined scenario, and assessing how well their enquiry was handled, considering all things from the length of time taken to answer the call, to the accuracy of the information provided and the professionalism of the call-handler.

Our Mystery Shopping programme gives us an insight into the actual customer experience and allows us to identify areas of good service and areas in need of improvement and, as a tenant receiving a service from us, you are the best person to test whether we are achieving an acceptable standard of customer service.

We are always keen to increase the number of Mystery Shoppers involved in our programme so, if you feel this is something you would like to get involved with, please contact Helen Miller on 01383 608127 or via helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk for more information on our plans for 2019.



Lock-up garages available for rent

We have a number of lock-up garages for rent in the following areas:

- New Aberdour Road (Dunfermline)
- Boswell Drive (Kinghorn)
- St John's Court (Inverkeithing)
- Camdean (Rosyth)

These are priced at £37.65 per month for Fife Housing Group tenants and £45.18 for anyone else. Please contact Laura White on **07825 855223** or via laura.white@fifehg.org.uk if you would be interested in renting one of these or would like more information.



DOMESTIC ABUSE

Did you know that legislation which criminalises psychological domestic abuse and coercive and controlling behaviour came into force in Scotland on 1 April 2019?

Coercive and controlling behaviour can include things like your partner isolating you from friends and relatives, controlling your finances or access to your mobile phone, making you think that you're worthless, choosing what clothes you can wear, wanting to know where you are all the time or threatening you or your children.

Whether or not someone is physically violent, this is all still abuse.

If you are experiencing domestic abuse in any shape or form you can contact the following agencies for advice and support:

Fife Women's Aid – 0808 802 5555;
info@fifewomensaid.org.uk

National Domestic Abuse helpline – 0800 027 1234;
helpline@sdafmh.org.uk

Police Scotland – 101 (non-emergency); 999 (emergency)

Improving the way we work

Fife Housing Group are proud to be one of the partners involved with Women's Health Improvement Research. If you would like more information or advice regarding this, please contact your Housing Officer directly.



Improving The Way We Work



WHIR (Women's Health Improvement Research)

Fife Housing Partnership are currently working to improve services that are offered to victims of domestic/sexual abuse within Housing Services in Fife.

This project has been funded by the government to ensure services and information provided meet the needs of domestic/sexual abuse victims and their families.

Do You Know Your Options?

Short Term Options:-

- Staying within your own home with the support available from Safe, Secure and Supported at Home (SS&SH).
- Emergency Accommodation with Fife Council, Women's Aid or Fife Housing Partners.

Long Term Options:-

- Support to keep you and your family in your own home.
- Resettlement Support if you have to move into a new home.

For more information on these matters please contact Fife Council on 03451 550033 or your own Housing Association for advice



Last year we made a commitment to 'Giving Something Back' to our tenants and local communities through an initiative empowering teams of colleagues to develop and deliver their own projects, designed to make a difference.

These are just some of the projects our colleagues have been working on since then...

Charity of the Year

As you may already be aware, last June the Little Princess Trust was nominated to be our Charity of the Year by a colleague whose daughter had lost her hair as a result of alopecia.

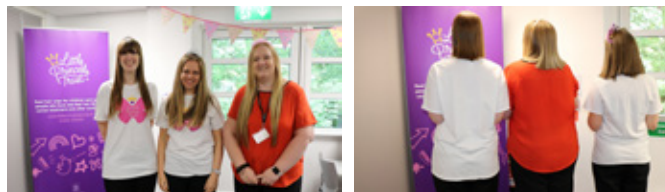
Over the past year, the efforts colleagues have made to raise funds to help them provide real hair wigs for children and young people who have lost their own hair through cancer treatment or other conditions, has been truly inspiring, with raffles, tombolas, baking, a futsal tournament, sponsored walks and a 125 mile cycling challenge being just some of the events which have taken place.

Our final fundraising event saw three colleagues brave the big chop to donate a massive 36 inches of hair to be made into wigs, as well as raising £890 in sponsorship to help with the manufacture.

Local hairdresser, Natasha McOuan of McOuan's Hairdressing in Dunfermline, kindly agreed to donate her time free-of-charge and the rest of the team got involved by hosting an 'Afternoon Tea and Tiaras' party to coincide with the main event – raising a further £278 to put towards our fundraising total.

It has been an absolute pleasure raising money for such a worthwhile cause and, although we still have some donations to bank, we expect our final fundraising total to be in excess of £4,500!

Watch this space to find out who colleagues choose as our next Charity of the Year...



Give a kid a coat

We told you about our 'Give a kid a coat' campaign in the last newsletter. This was a simple concept, whereby we invited donations of pre-loved coats and jackets from families whose children had grown out of them, or in some cases never worn them, and then made these available, free-of-charge, to the many families living below the poverty line in Fife, for whom such items may be an unaffordable luxury.



We were absolutely blown away by the response we received to this initiative and, thanks to the overwhelming generosity of the people of Fife (and beyond), were able to help keep almost 500 children warm over winter!

We were also absolutely thrilled to be shortlisted for a Dunfermline Press Community Champion Award, in the Charity Champion of the Year category, for this campaign and, although we didn't win, would like to say a big thank you to whoever was kind enough to put us forward for this!

Cycling for fitness and fun

Focusing on cycling as an activity which promotes fitness and fun, we also ran two FREE prize draws in the last newsletter, offering the opportunity to win some bike equipment to help you 'get on your bike' and are delighted to announce the following winners:

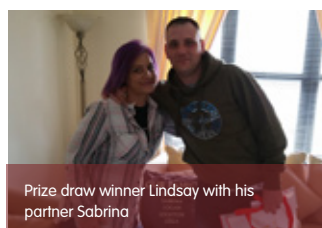
Prize Draw 1 – Three bike accessory packs including a £30 voucher towards a cycle helmet, set of bike lights, puncture repair kit, bike pump, bell and water bottle and a Fife Cycle Park Family Day Pass for two adults and up to three children.

Winners – Lindsay Young (Dunfermline), Marie Brown (Dunfermline) and Mrs White (Oakley)

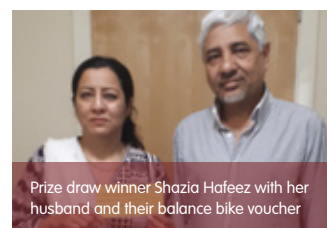
Prize Draw 2 - Two £60 balance bike vouchers from The Bike Shop Scotland

Winners – Shazia Hafeez (Rosyth) and Derek Hannon (Cowdenbeath)

All of the winners were delighted with their prizes and are looking forward to getting out and about to make use of their new equipment.



Prize draw winner Lindsay with his partner Sabrina



Prize draw winner Shazia Hafeez with her husband and their balance bike voucher

DIY FIFE

One of our properties in Kirkcaldy is currently undergoing a major adaptation to make it more wheelchair friendly for the family who live there. These works are being undertaken to help improve their child's quality of life and to enable his needs to be met in a way that works better for his family.

The adaptation itself is being funded by a grant from the Scottish Government and resources from Fife Housing Group, with the build being undertaken by Logie Building Services - but there will be a significant amount of redecoration and landscaping required which this will not cover.

As such, a team of colleagues are planning a project, in the style of a well-known TV show, to help the family redecorate and re-landscape the garden, focusing on designing the child's new bedroom and laying a pathway from the new room down to a patio area so that he can access the garden easily in his wheelchair.

The group have already sourced garden furniture and received a selection of towels in the child's favourite bright colours from CF Services, with the next step being to obtain



laminated flooring, posters of the child's favourite cartoon character, picture frames and curtain fabrics to match.

Although the team have been awarded money for this from our 'Giving Something Back' fund, they are keen to do as much as possible for this family and would welcome donations of materials and accessories from any local businesses who might be interested in getting involved in this great project.

Keep an eye on our social media channels for further updates on how this project is progressing!

Rosyth residents offered the opportunity to get their hands dirty

Inspired by the impressive results achieved by the Lumphinnans Tenants' and Residents' Association on a similar piece of unused land, one of our community teams is hoping to transform a vacant area behind the properties on Holborn Road in Rosyth into allotments.

Following a consultation with residents, the group are now in discussions with Fife Council to develop a partnership to deliver 20 plots which would then be made available for the local community to rent.

The benefits of having an allotment extend far beyond the opportunity to get your hands dirty growing your own fruit and vegetables, with studies showing a number of health and wellbeing benefits, not least the opportunity to socialise with your fellow gardeners, and we are delighted to be in a position where we can again support a project which will have such a positive impact, both individually for the leaseholders and collectively on the neighbourhood.

Keep an eye out for further updates in future newsletters and through our social media channels.

Helping the community to 'get on their bikes' in Gallatown

A group of colleagues recently visited the Gallatown Bike Hub in Kirkcaldy to donate a number of pre-loved bikes collected from other colleagues and their families, along with some additional equipment from The Bike Shop Scotland and a further £100 from our 'Giving Something Back' fund.

They also spent the afternoon volunteering at the Hub, learning how to check if a bike is roadworthy and helping to repair some of the equipment, while some of the younger members of the community made use of the cycle track.

Team member and bicycle enthusiast, Claire Ross, explains why they were so keen to get involved with the cycling initiative in Gallatown, 'The Hub is a fantastic facility for the local community, offering everyone the opportunity to give cycling a try and to learn about basic bike repairs and maintenance, just like we did! The team here do an

amazing job and we're really happy to have been able to help out'

'Link Up' Community Development Worker with Kirkcaldy YMCA, Shuggy, who volunteers as a mechanic at the Hub, was delighted with all of the donations 'We're a Social Enterprise so donations are always welcome, with any profits re-invested into the community work we do. It was great to have the guys from Fife Housing Group here and we'll certainly make good use of everything they were kind enough to bring along'.



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



CONSIDERING COMPLAINTS



We keep a close eye on the complaints we receive so that we can identify any trends or recurring issues. Monitoring common complaints allows us to understand where service problems are occurring and, most importantly, to take a proactive approach in learning from these and determining what preventative measures can be introduced to reduce these issues.

As you may be aware, we often outsource repairs to our approved contractors, however, the ability to control how quickly the work is carried out and how well the contractor communicates with tenants, is less than if the repair was being carried out in-house.

Below are a few examples of common themes identified amongst contractor-related complaints and the steps taken to improve this experience and ultimately prevent unnecessary inconvenience for our tenants.

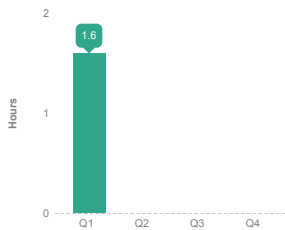
Common Complaint	What did we notice?	What did we do?
Delay with contractor carrying out repair	Through complaints monitoring it was identified that at times, tenants were experiencing a less than acceptable service, particularly in regards to repairs raised with our contractors.	To ensure we have a greater control over our contractor repairs, each of our Operations Advisors have been allocated specific contractors and given responsibility for monitoring the completion of their repairs on a weekly basis. Contractors with any late/outstanding repairs are then contacted to confirm an update on progress and expected completion timeframe.
Contractor failing to turn up to carry out the repair/complete the repair		
Contractor failing to keep tenant up-to-date on progress of the repair		

The above changes were introduced in April and should help to avoid any repeat of these types of complaints. This also demonstrates how we are keen to adapt and change our processes to continuously drive service improvements.

PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2019/20

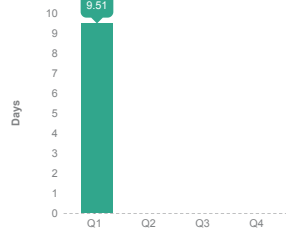
■ At or exceeding target ■ Below but within 5% of target ■ Below target

TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE EMERGENCY REPAIRS



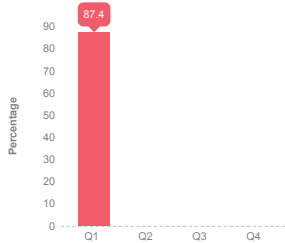
TARGET = 4 HOURS OR LESS

TIME TAKEN TO COMPLETE NON-EMERGENCY REPAIRS



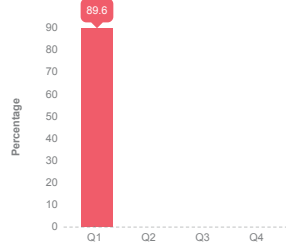
TARGET = 15 DAYS OR LESS

REPAIRS COMPLETED 'RIGHT FIRST TIME'



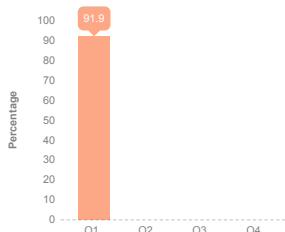
TARGET = 93% OR BETTER

REPAIR APPOINTMENTS MADE AND KEPT



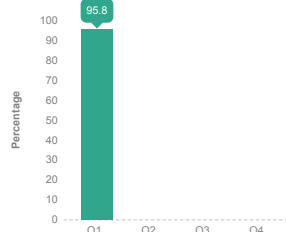
TARGET = 95% OR BETTER

TENANTS SATISFIED WITH REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE



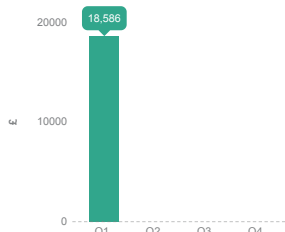
TARGET = 92% OR BETTER

NEW TENANTS SATISFIED WITH STANDARD OF PROPERTY



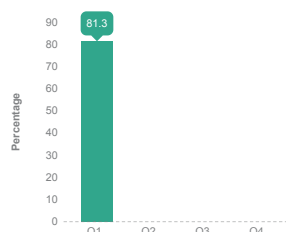
TARGET = 90% OR BETTER

RENT LOST THROUGH EMPTY PROPERTIES



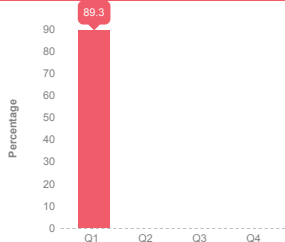
TARGET = £26,920 OR LESS

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CASES RESOLVED IN TARGET

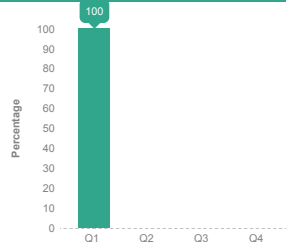


TARGET = 80% OR BETTER

STAGE 1 COMPLAINTS RESPONDED TO WITHIN 5 DAY TARGET



STAGE 2 COMPLAINTS RESPONDED TO WITHIN 20 DAY TARGET



Preventing pest infestations



In the vast majority of instances the responsibility for dealing with pest infestations lies with the tenant of the property affected. As a landlord our responsibility is to the fabric of the property, which means that we have an obligation to deal with any disrepair which is contributing to the problem, such as gaps or holes in the wall or floors. If you believe that this is the case then we can arrange for an inspector to attend and assess areas in question and have them filled or repaired as appropriate, however, as stated in your Tenant Handbook, we will not arrange or pay for the removal of any form of infestation e.g. wasps' nests, ants, mice.

If you do have a problem with pests, traps, sprays and pellets are readily available from supermarkets, DIY stores and the like at minimal cost. Alternatively Fife Council's Pest Control team charge £66 per treatment and can be contacted on 03451 55 00 22 – please note that if you do arrange for the Council to deal with your infestation you will be liable for this full cost.

They say, however, that prevention is better than a cure, so follow the simple precautions below to help to keep your home pest free

- Make sure your home, especially the kitchen, is always clean, by wiping down surfaces and sweeping or vacuuming floors regularly to remove any trace of food
- Store food in sealed containers
- Don't leave uncovered food out in warm weather as it attracts flies, ants and wasps
- Clear up any water spillages or leaks, as these can encourage pests
- Keep the kitchen bin closed and empty it regularly
- Put rubbish out in properly sealed bags or bins
- If you have a garden or yard, don't let it become overgrown or dump old furniture, mattresses or other rubbish there, as this provides a good home for mice and rats
- If you feed garden birds, don't put food out in the evening and always use a bird table rather than just putting bird food on the ground as this can attract rats
- If you have a compost heap, don't put cooked food on it as, again, this can attract rats

Need a new home that fits 'just right'?

If you want to move because your house is either too big or small for your current needs, the first thing you should do is ensure that you have an application registered with the Fife Housing Register and that this is up-to-date with details of everyone who would be moving into a new property. This will ensure that you are awarded the correct number of points and increase your chances of finding a new home.

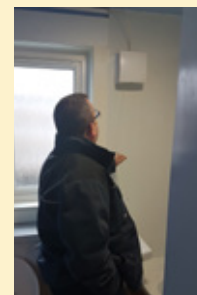
If you are a current tenant of any of the Fife Housing Register partners, you should also contact your Landlord who may be able to assist with finding another property more suited to your needs.

You can also register with 'Homeswap' on the Fife Council website (fifedirect.org.uk). This is a facility where those who want to move house can register their property as available for exchange with another tenant in the area whose property may be more suitable for you.



Resident Inspectors' update

Our new Resident Inspector Programme launched in February and is already proving extremely beneficial in gaining an insight into the views of our tenants in respect of our ready-to-let properties. The programme asks tenants to assess the standard of our properties, including cleanliness and property maintenance, before they are let to any prospective tenant.



So far, our Resident Inspectors have carried out 11 inspections, over a wide geographical spread, including properties in Leven, Methil, Oakley, Rosyth, Hill of Beath and Kirkcaldy. Their keen eye for detail and enthusiastic approach has prompted some fantastic feedback, whilst also highlighting some areas where service improvement is a real possibility.

Once all the inspections have been carried out, our Resident Inspectors will consider the results, and summarise their findings, both positive and negative. The collated results will then be shared with our Operations Team to determine any potential improvements and to recognise the areas in which we are performing well.

Resident Inspectors represent a voice for you. Should you wish to find out more or get involved in this programme please contact our Engagement Officer, Helen Miller, on 01383 608127 or via helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk

Resident VOICES review

June marked the end of the Resident VOICES review into how we currently engage with tenants during our annual rent consultation. During this review, Resident VOICES took the opportunity to work alongside their contemporaries from Kingdom Housing Association who, as it turned out, were scrutinising the same topic. This opportunity allowed both groups to compare how each organisation gathers tenants' views, considering which methods were proving successful and what more could be done to achieve a greater level of tenant feedback.

The findings have been gathered and each scrutiny group has produced their own report highlighting recommendations which they believe would enhance the existing rent consultation process. The next step is for Resident VOICES to present their findings to the Board for consideration and possible implementation.

In August, the group will be agreeing the scope of their next topic and are keen to attract new members. They are a friendly bunch and you don't have to have previous experience in housing to join, the most important thing you can offer is your open and honest viewpoint. This is a great

opportunity for you, as a tenant, to influence how services are delivered in the future and to help make improvements to the existing services we provide.

We are planning to hold the next Resident VOICES meeting on Tuesday 6 August and thereafter, meetings take place once a month, with lunch included. Should you wish to find out more or come along to one of our meetings, please contact Engagement Officer, Helen Miller on 01383 608127 or via helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk.





Dunfermline

We would like to take this opportunity to remind tenants with private gardens that they have full responsibility for the upkeep and maintenance of any trees situated within the boundaries of their property and, as such, are expected to ensure that they are cut regularly in order to limit their growth.

Around this time of year we are regularly asked if we provide a garden maintenance service, sadly we do not. As such, when accepting a tenancy with a private garden, it is important to ensure you will be able to maintain it as failing to do so is a breach of your agreement.

Oakley

During a recent estate inspection, Housing Officer for the area Gavin Waddell, noted a number of potholes. These were reported to Fife Council and work has now been completed to address these. If any resident sees faulty street lighting, a dangerous pothole or any other road-related defects, you can also contact Fife Council directly at any time on 03451 55 00 11 or report these issues online at fifedirect.org.uk/lagan/roadfault/

Lochgelly

The new door-entry systems appear to be working well, however, tenants should check their fobs and note whether they have an A, B or C on them as we will require this information in order to re-programme a replacement, should a fob be lost or damaged. If you do require a new fob, please contact our office directly.

Recently, the rear individual brick built bin stores were removed as these were no longer fit-for-purpose due to the increase in the number of bins required for recycling. Housing Officer for the area, Audrey Cameron, is, however, disappointed that some residents continue to expect others to put their bin out for collection as it is each households' individual responsibility to do so. There is a bin calendar in the communication board located in the bottom hallway of each close and, therefore, no excuse not to know the dates of collection.



Hill of Beath

Bin stores are something which we continue to assess, especially in areas with a high concentration of flatted stock and Housing Officer, Audrey Cameron, is looking for ideas as to how to improve these areas around our homes in Hill of Beath. If any residents have any practical suggestions as to how this might be done she would certainly appreciate your input. Please do not hesitate to contact her directly on 01383 608 128 or via audrey.cameron@fifehg.org.uk

Kennoway

The installation of new gas central heating systems in this area is coming to an end so it is important that anyone who has not yet made arrangements to provide access for this work to proceed, contacts our office on freephone 08000 274 007 as soon as possible.

We continue to reiterate that leaving rubbish in communal stairwells or on verandas is a direct breach of your tenancy agreement and that household rubbish must be disposed of appropriately in the bins

provided, taken to the local recycling centre or uplifted by Fife Council.

Please report any items left or stored in your stairwell directly to your Housing Officer, Ross Glancy on 07456 841943 or 01383 608 117.

Ross will also be conducting regular checks on all private gardens in the area so please ensure that you are keeping on top of maintenance at this time of year.



Lumphinnans

Our replacement kitchen and bathroom programmes have commenced in the area with addresses in Ochilview, Furnace Place, Gallacher Place and Gagarin Way already benefiting from upgrades.

Meanwhile, we're sure everyone will agree that the Lumphinnans Tenants' and Residents' Association are doing a fantastic job transforming the old garage site gifted by Fife Housing Group and they recently held a BBQ in the new community garden to thank everyone who has supported them so far.

If you would like to offer any assistance or contributions

to aid the transformation of the area, please either contact Housing Officer for the area, Audrey Cameron, on 01383 608 128 or, alternatively, contact the group direct via their Facebook page.



High Valleyfield

Following recent inspections, can we remind all residents in Pentland Terrace that communal closes must be kept completely clear of all household items and rubbish. This is to ensure the safety and security of all residents in each block, as well as members of the emergency services, should they ever need to visit, and is the responsibility of every resident; failure to do this constitutes anti-social behaviour

Crombie

We continue to work closely with ESH Construction to ensure that any remaining snagging within our new-build



properties at Central Road and Main Road are resolved. If residents have new items to report or would like an update on outstanding work, then please contact either your Housing Officer, Gavin Waddell, or ESH directly.

Rosyth

This month saw the start of our estate management inspections in this area. Estate management helps us to create and maintain an attractive, safe and secure environment for all those living in the area.

During our visit to parts of Camdean, we found the area to be generally in a good and a well maintained condition. We did, however, identify some closes with items stored in them and some gardens which require cutting back. We have contacted those concerned and asked that they address these issues as soon as possible.

We regularly find a variety of items, such as plants, storage units, bikes and prams, stored in communal closes. For health and safety reasons, your tenancy agreement does not allow for items to be stored within

the common close. Advice from the Fire Service on this issue is available on their website at firescotland.gov.uk. They provide information on the importance of keeping common closes clear and advise that even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a whole stair.

Please consider the safety of yourself and your neighbours and keep your close clear.

We also ask that everyone keeps their gardens in good order. This is again a requirement of your tenancy agreement, but also creates a pleasant environment and enhances the appearance of the estate, helping to minimise the risk of anti-social behaviour occurring in the area. Over the summer months we carry out extra visits to ensure that gardens are maintained over the



Kirkcaldy

We would like to remind tenants again that the dumping of rubbish in stairwells is prohibited as it is a breach of your tenancy agreement, posing both a health and safety risk and a serious fire hazard.

Please report any items left or stored in your stairwell directly to your Housing Officer in order to avoid any communal recharges in the future.

We would also like to ask tenants that, in the good weather when they are enjoying festivities in their garden, they consider their neighbours and keep noise levels to a minimum in order to avoid any anti-social issues. We operate a zero tolerance approach to excessive noise at any time of the day as, if it is a nuisance to other residents, it is deemed to be anti-social.

Methil

Whilst out in the Methil and Methilhill areas recently, Housing Officer Greg Turner, has noticed that there are a number of gardens which are not being properly maintained. Greg would like to take this opportunity to remind all tenants that, if you have a garden with your home, it is your responsibility to maintain this as part of your tenancy agreement. We expect as a minimum, that your garden is clear of all rubbish with any grass cut regularly. Failure to do this may result in us undertaking any work required and recharging you with the cost of doing so.

There has also been an increase in anti-social behaviour across Methil, with neighbours falling out over quite minor issues which have subsequently escalated to become major problems. Please do try having a conversation to resolve any issues amicably in the first instance, however, if this approach fails you can approach Greg for further assistance and advice. If necessary, we can refer you to a mediation service which has had fantastic results with resolving issues in the past. As always, however, if you have serious concerns you should contact Police Scotland on 101, or 999 in an emergency.

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
Stephanie McCulloch	t: 07811 439905 e: stephanie.mcculloch@fifehg.org.uk
William Earnshaw	t: 07525 260447 e: william.earnshaw@fifehg.org.uk
Laura White	t: 07825 855223 e: laura.white@fifehg.org.uk

Dysart

In our last newsletter, Housing Officer, Karen Gilruth, asked for a volunteer to water and maintain two hanging baskets in Fitzroy Street/Square. Pictured with the new hanging baskets is Mr Ian Duff, who kindly volunteered to do this.



PLANNED KITCHEN AND BATHROOM PROGRAMME

Unlike previous years, where our kitchen and bathroom replacements were carried out by approved contractors, this year we took the decision to bring the delivery of our planned kitchen and bathroom programmes in-house, allowing us greater control over both the process and the end product, in addition to offering increased employment opportunities in the local area and significant cost saving benefits, which can then be ploughed back into... installing even more kitchens and bathrooms.

Having successfully recruited a number of new colleagues to join our existing in-house team, the installations are now underway, with 23 kitchens and five bathrooms completed since and proving to be extremely well-received by our tenants.

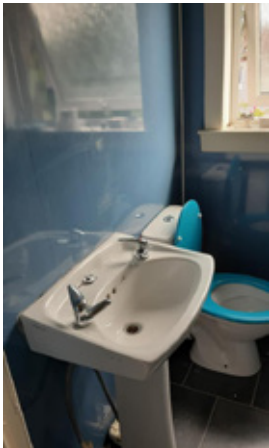
The feedback has been outstanding and it is fantastic to learn that despite the unavoidable disruption during the installation, the whole experience is proving to be a really positive experience for our tenants. Here are just a few of the comments received, so far:

'Thank you so much. Brilliant quality and amazing team doing the work. Couldn't rate the job any higher, 10/10 for customer experience'

'Very efficient and well mannered. It was very well managed. Well Done'

'Over the moon with the new kitchen. Workers were really pleasant and helpful'

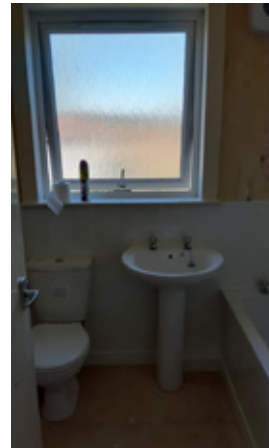
'All the workmen were professional and there was no waiting for people to turn up to do their particular jobs. Very happy with the finished work. Thank you for a job well done'



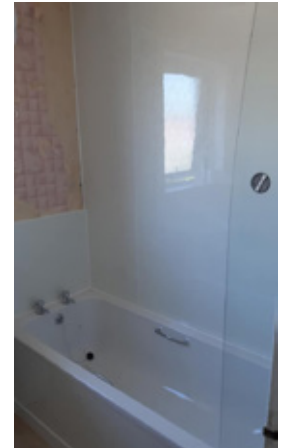
Before



Before



After



After



Furniture Plus are the largest furniture re-use, recycling and repair organisation in Fife, operating from two locations in Dysart and Dunfermline. Their main aim is to combat poverty and social exclusion (especially homelessness) by offering low-cost and discounted household items which may otherwise have gone to landfill, to those in need, whilst simultaneously providing opportunities for some of the people furthest removed from the job market to acquire more skills, knowledge and confidence.

Furniture Plus is a completely self-sustaining charity which is why donated items are sold in their shops. All surpluses generated are re-invested into the Charity, with a significant

amount set-aside each year to provide furniture and other household items free of charge to those who are in most need.

If you think you might benefit from the services they offer, or would like to donate any items (to save on special uplift costs), then you can call them on 01592 654 546; 01383 720 131 or e-mail enquiries@furnitureplus.org.uk.

You can also find out more about the fantastic work Furniture Plus do on their website furnitureplus.org.uk or through Facebook (FurniturePlusFife) and Twitter (@FPlusFife).

TASTY BBQ SKEWERS

 **Prep** 20 mins
 **Cook** 10 - 15 mins
 **Serves** 4

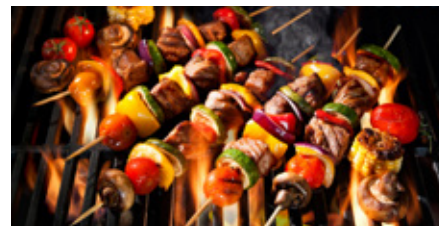
These quick and easy kebabs are perfect for summer BBQs. In the unlikely event that you have any leftovers, they are ideal for lunch the next day.

Ingredients

- 300g meat (chicken, beef, pork or lamb all work well)
- 400g of vegetables (onions, potatoes, aubergines, courgettes, peppers, tomatoes and mushrooms are all good options so just choose a selection of your favourites - pineapple is also a delicious alternative)
- 12 x skewers (soak wooden skewers in cold water for 30mins to prevent burning)

Marinade (Optional)

- 2 x tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 2 x tbsp sweet chilli sauce
- 1 x tbsp soy sauce

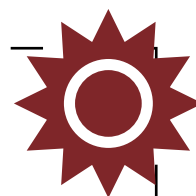


Method

1. Chop vegetables into bite-sized pieces (if using potatoes boil for 7 to 9 mins first)
2. Cut meat into bite-sized pieces
3. Thread the vegetables and meat onto skewers.
4. If making the marinade, mix the mustard, sweet chilli sauce and soy sauce together and brush mixture over skewers before cooking.
5. BBQ for approx 10-15 mins, turning regularly until meat is cooked and vegetables are tender.

B	E	Z	B	R	V	K	H	V	D	C	O
H	C	D	R	M	Y	L	S	M	R	N	G
G	W	S	I	E	U	C	E	B	R	A	B
N	M	A	G	S	U	B	X	V	R	W	Y
I	A	N	H	Z	L	A	I	D	A	A	S
P	E	D	T	O	L	O	E	K	D	R	V
M	R	C	C	E	T	N	O	I	I	M	T
A	C	A	R	V	I	V	L	P	F	N	V
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C	Q	L	A	R	O	U	T	S	I	D	E
E	F	E	S	U	N	N	Y	Q	E	E	M

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 31st August 2019.

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| BARBECUE | HOLIDAY | POOLSIDE |
| BIKINI | HOT | RELAX |
| BRIGHT | ICE CREAM | SUNNY |
| CAMPING | OUTSIDE | SANDCASTLE |
| GARDENING | PICNIC | TRAVEL |

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL: _____

Wordsearch winner

Thanks to everyone who entered our spring competition and congratulations to our lucky winner, Elizabeth White of High Valleyfield, 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

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

at home with...


fife housing group

fifehg.org.uk

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

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