



The way forward to a better future

FIFE Housing Group (FHG) has mapped out the way forward for major improvements to the services it provides to its tenants and customers.

Fife Housing Association and repairs and maintenance service, Prism Property Solutions have been rebranded as Fife Housing Group

FHG has now launched a business plan dedicated to turning round previous poor performance and making a real difference to tenants' lives.

Business planning includes:

- The launch of a new, interactive website
- A focus on getting tenants more involved, understanding their needs and delivering what you want to see
- A repairs and maintenance programme which makes the best use of money and targets properties most in need of work
- The building of 32 new homes in Abbeyview and proposals to develop a further site in Crombie
- Projects to help tenants who need additional skills in computing and IT to access the workplace
- Helping tenants make sure they can access benefits they are entitled to and that they are prepared for next year's introduction of Universal Credit
- A new letting standard for properties so tenants know what to expect when they move into their new home
- A new way of working to allow all colleagues to spend time out and about in neighbourhoods

- A strategy to improve shared areas and the environment around our flats.

FHG Chief Executive Nicki Donaldson said: "One of my priorities for Fife Housing Group over the past year has been to make a real difference and turn around performance which has, for too long, been poorer across many areas than similar landlords.

"We have achieved some significant improvements since I was appointed last May. While this has laid the foundations for the way we want this business to develop, there is still a long way to go.

"I now have a new management team in place with the expertise and experience to deliver this business plan. This will allow us to do what we really need to do – get back to basics and develop the kind of service our tenants should expect and deserve".

For more information on our new Business Plan see pages 4 and 5.



CENTENARY SEEDLINGS

It may not look like much at the moment, but in a few months this piece of wasteland in Rosyth will be planted with fruit trees.



Fife Housing Group is leasing the land to Rosyth Community Council and is working with them to transform it into a community orchard to mark next year's centenary of Rosyth Garden City. See p5 for more information

Digging for victory!

GARDENING

tenants across Fife have been digging for victory ahead of Fife Housing Group's first Garden Competition. Judging is due to take place the end of this month. Find out more details on p7.



Beware legionnaire's

TENANTS returning from holiday are advised to take a few simple precautions to avoid legionnaire's disease. Legionella bacteria are found in water systems but can only survive in temperatures below 60 degrees celsius. While legionnaires disease is very rare, it can cause a serious pneumonia-like illness in the elderly, smokers and anyone with a chronic illness. Anyone who has been away for more than a week is advised to:

- Clean their shower head with a mild disinfectant and blast it with hot water for at least a minute
- Drain your water system
- Flush all toilets at least twice.

Find more information on our website www.fifeha.org.uk



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Su Bramley



Kevin Lynch

NEW DIRECTORS

FIFE Housing Group has appointed two new directors to complete its management team.

Su Bramley has been appointed our new Director of Housing while Kevin Lynch recently took up the role of Director of Asset & Commercial Business responsible for our repairs and maintenance.

Su, currently FHG's Acting Director of Housing, will officially start in her permanent role on 10 August 2015. She has worked for FHG since early 2014 in the posts of both Acting Director of Corporate Services and Finance and Acting Director of Commercial and Asset Management. Su said, "I am looking forward to working as part of the new Business Leadership Team to improve the services we offer and make a real difference for our tenants and customers."

A native of Liverpool, Su graduated with a degree in Business Studies. Having qualified as a chartered accountant in 1999, Su worked on a number of significant audits including for major registered social landlord clients.

Message from your Chief Executive, Nicki Donaldson



Welcome to the summer edition of Fife Housing Group's tenant newsletter. This is the first newsletter to carry our new logo and colours which better represent our aspirations and the kind of housing group we want to be, now and in the future.

In the last newsletter we looked at your satisfaction with our services, which is still well below that of many other social landlords in Scotland. Since then, we have been busy putting in place a plan to make real improvements, particularly in the areas you have raised concerns about.

This has meant literally getting back to basics and taking an open and honest look at what does not work well and has to change. As you will read in this newsletter, we are already starting to make progress. This month we launch our brand new and much improved website and I have also recruited two excellent directors to my management team.

While there is a long way to go, I hope you will start to see a real difference in the months and years to come.

From 1992 – 2000 Su then worked for English social housing regulator, the Housing Corporation in Merseyside and the North West. Prior to joining Fife Housing Group Su was employed by Chester and District Housing Trust, which had around 7000 homes for rent in the Chester area, where she held the posts of Deputy Chief Executive and Group Director of Governance.

Kevin joined FHG from Perth College where he was Estates Director. Kevin started his career as a joiner working for private sector companies. He then went to university where he gained a BSc with distinction in Building Maintenance Management.

He started work with Fairfield Housing Co-operative as a Maintenance Officer in 2000 before joining the University of St Andrews as its Building Manager in 2006. He became a Contract Manager with Logie Building Services in 2008 and Asset Manager at Castlehill Housing Association in 2010.

Kevin said : "I am really looking forward to being part of a successful team which will contribute to taking Fife Housing Group forward."

Final phase of £170 million development nears completion

THE first tenants of Fife Housing Group's newest development are due to move in this month.

A number of the one bedroomed flats in the £3.4 million development off Islay Road in Dunfermline's Islay Road are now ready for their new owners. The two bedroomed flats should be completed next month.

The development – including 28 flats and five cottages – is the final phase of the £17.5 million, 170 home Abbeyview Regeneration Project in which Fife Housing Association has been the lead partner. This phase was developed along with Persimmon Homes and Fife Council.

Darren Albury (pictured) said, "We listened to our tenants and the wider community who told us that, along with family homes, they wanted smaller properties. That demand has increased since the introduction of the 'bedroom tax.'" " These flats will help to meet that demand by providing excellent, energy efficient accommodation for couples and single people.



INVESTING IN YOUR HOMES

WE ARE investing £2.2 million this year in maintaining your homes. Here are the projects on the go at the moment:

Painting - we are planning a programme of work in Dysart, East Wemyss, Cellardyke, Glenrothers, Markinch, Leslie and Kirkcaldy.

Window/door replacement - Work is ongoing at Pentland Terrace, High Valleyfield and is due to be completed this month.

Roofing replacement - Work is ongoing in Rosyth to finish this major contract.

Heating contracts - Tenants with storage and solid fuel heating have been asked if they would like to change to gas. A replacement programme will be drawn up when all tenants have responded. If you are interested in getting your heating changed from storage or solid fuel contact us on 01383 606162



Christine Mulholland, Pentland Terrace, High Valleyfield, is delighted with the new double glazed windows she recently received from us.

SEEKING INTEREST FOR CROMBIE SITE

ARE you interested in a brand new home in the West Fife village of Crombie?



Then don't hesitate to get in touch. We have a piece of land available next to the main A985 Kincardine Road which we are planning to develop. But first, we need to establish the demand for new homes in this area, and particularly what type of housing potential tenants would prefer.

Housing Support Manager Beverley Graham said, "Crombie is in a rural location and is a quiet, attractive village on a main road and with a regular bus service. We are really keen to develop this land to meet the demand for homes in this area. However, we need to create the kind of homes people need."

If you are interested in a home in Crombie, Contact Housing Support on **01383-606162, info@fifeha.org.uk**

at home with...

fife housing group

We are uniting Fife Housing Association and Prism Property Solutions into one company, Fife Housing Group.

We feel this better reflects the way we will be working in the future; as one team pulling together to provide the best services for our tenants.

The separate Fife Housing Association and Prism logos – which we know caused confusion for many of you – have been replaced with a new design. This was developed with our colleagues, tenants and Board to better reflect the progressive and forward looking landlord we plan to be, while capturing the traditions and values we were founded on.

A CHECKLIST of what to expect when you get the keys to your new home has been put in place by Fife Housing Group.

New home checklist

The new Letting Standard means that Fife Housing Group tenants are guaranteed the same standard wherever their new home is in Fife. The new standard was developed along with members of our Residents' Scrutiny Panel.

Director of Housing Su Bramley said, "Moving into a new house should be an exciting time. Some of you have been less satisfied with the condition of your new home and feel that it does not come up to the standard you expected.

"The checklist means that our homes need to meet a certain standard and you know what that will be. We hope that by listening to tenants and meeting your needs you will be more satisfied with your new home."

Building futures through better profiles

WE are building a better profile of our tenants to help those who need help with their computing and IT skills back into the workplace.



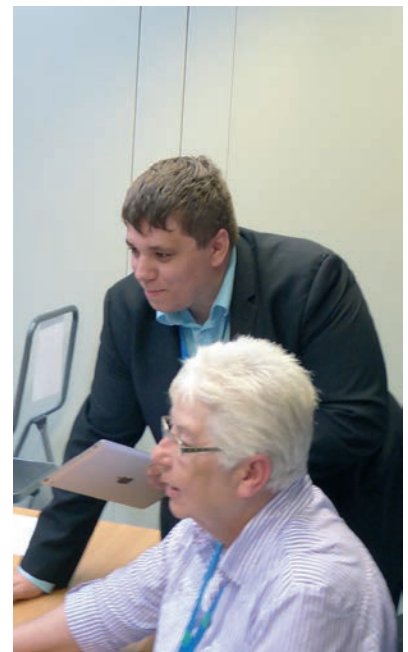
Fife Housing Group project workers Lilian and Michael have been in contact with more than 200 tenants on benefits, particularly those on Employment Support Allowance or ESA claimed by people unable to work through illness or disability.

This has helped us identify tenants who need support with their IT and digital skills. They are then referred to Jobcentre Plus who can

help them gain these skills. The project has been funded through a £50,000 grant from the Department of Work and Pensions.

The project is part of FHG's commitment to make more of its tenants IT savvy. This will be particularly important when Universal Credit is introduced into Fife at the beginning of next year. This will replace most other benefits and can only be claimed by applying on-line. Housing Support Manager Bev Graham said, "Being familiar and comfortable with computers and social media is no longer just convenient.

"Today it is literally a lifeline to gaining employment, other important skills and being able to access benefits. "Our role as a landlord goes beyond providing our tenants with a house. By helping them to gain these important skills we make sure they access opportunities, maintain a successful tenancy and fulfil their potential."



Environmental Strategy

FHG is focusing on making the areas around its flats more appealing. We have launched a new Environmental Impact Group to change for the better common areas of our four-in-a-block flats. It follows feedback from tenants and a recent survey of people living in our flats in the Kennoway area. You told us that while the flats themselves were generally of a good standard, you were unhappy with the paintwork and cleanliness of closes and stairwells along with litter, dumped items and the untidy appearance of grassed areas. Director of Housing Su Bramley said, "From what you told us it is clear that these issues are really affecting your enjoyment of your home. "Some of these problems can be easily resolved. We will work with you to make real difference to the shared areas, challenge the people who make the mess and bring real benefits to your community."

New interactive website is the window into Fife Housing Group



A NEW interactive website has been launched by Fife Housing Group to increase access to services and keep you even better informed.

The new site is designed to be easier to use and more interesting than the previous one, created back in 2004.

Along with a whole range of information on our services it also allows you to pay your rent, find a home and report a repair by simply clicking on a diagram. There will also be regular updates on news and events and local pages that tell you what is on the go in your neighbourhood.

Communications and Marketing Coordinator Liz Higgins said: "One of our most important responsibilities as a landlord is to keep our tenants informed about what is of importance to them.

"A good website is literally a window for our tenants into what is on the go in Fife Housing Group. But the design of the previous site made it difficult to include current news and information.

"We consulted with our tenants before we designed the new site, and you told us that you wanted regular updates, particularly from your area, so that is what we have done.

"I hope you like the new site and I would be really interested in your views so that we can continue to make it even better."

www.fifeha.org.uk

Planting a lasting legacy for ROSYTH



FHG is helping the people of Rosyth to provide a fitting memorial to their town's unique heritage.

We are leasing Rosyth Community Council a one acre area of land which lies between Kings Road, Park Road and Dick Place. We are working with them to create a community orchard to mark next year's centenary of Rosyth Garden City. The orchard will be planted with native fruit trees to provide a harvest for the local people and educational projects for Rosyth's four primary schools.

Housing Support Manager, Beverley Graham said, "We are delighted that this area of land, which has stood unused for years, can be developed into a lasting memorial which everyone can share.

"This is part of our commitment not just to be a landlord, but to provide benefits for the wider community our tenants live in."

Rosyth Community Council Chair Stephen Lynas added, "We are keen to develop the empty spaces in Rosyth for the community and are already growing vegetables and herbs at other sites in the town.

"We are really excited about this project which is an appropriate memorial to the Garden City providing something which is not just functional, but nice to look at."

Rosyth...

Rosyth grew up around its naval dockyard and was the only garden city in Scotland. The movement was pioneered in the 19th Century by English architect and social reformer, Ebenezer Howard who wanted families to thrive in their own house surrounded by gardens, allotments and parks. English examples include Letchworth and Welwyn Garden Cities. Tenants moved into their new homes in Rosyth in 1916, all of which still survive today, many of them now owned by FHG.

A cuppa, cake and chat in High Valleyfield

A CUPPA, cake and catch up for residents of the West Fife Villages were all on the menu when we held our first Community Café of 2015 earlier this month.

Around 40 people attended the event at High Valleyfield Community Centre and enjoyed free refreshments, a raffle and children's face-painting. They also got the chance to talk to colleagues from Fife Housing Group and our partners and learn about some of the projects we are currently working on.

These included a chance to preview our new website, information on tenant engagement, our repairs and maintenance programmes, the new development at Abbeyview and our new Factoring Service.

Housing Manager Drew Nisbet said everyone who attended had enjoyed the day, "It was a really good opportunity for us to talk to our tenants and other residents on their doorstep, find out what is important to them and tell them about what we are working on. Everyone who came had a really good time and I am looking forward to the next event in Lochgelly on 26 August."

**We would like again to thank our partners:
Fife Council, Fife Community Safety Partnership, Frontline Fife,
Fife Advice Partnership and Fife Community Mediation Service.**



Recycling made easy

TENANTS and owners in our flats at New Road, Kennoway have welcomed the new large recycling containers which have replaced multiple recycling bins.

FHG is now consulting other residents in the New Road area with a view to building more stores for multiple recycling bins.

Chris Harrower said, "You have told us that you are really pleased with the new bins which are far neater and easier to use than the previous system.

"We are planning to introduce more large bins in the area. Some flats bring more challenges than others, particularly finding sites for the bin stores. But we are looking at this with a view to rolling it out to more areas of Fife."

In the meantime, Chris urged everyone to make sure they recycle their rubbish in the bins which have been provided by Fife Council.

WHAT YOUR BINS ARE FOR:

Blue bin – landfill rubbish including pet waste and nappies. Emptied every two weeks

Grey bin – paper and cardboard. Emptied once a month

Brown bin/kitchen caddy – food waste and garden waste. Only use proper caddy bags in the caddy. Emptied every two weeks

Green bin – plastic bottles, containers, cans, tins and empty carrier bags. Emptied once a month.



CENTENARY CELEBRATION

MANY happy returns to tenant, Jean Marshall (Pictured with Housing Manager Drew Nisbet) who celebrated her 100th birthday on 25 April.

Mrs Marshall of Methil, was born when George V was on the throne and Asquith was Prime Minister. Originally from the West Coast of Scotland, Mrs Marshall came to Fife when her husband started work at the Wellesley Colliery.

Mrs Marshall said, "My secret to a long life is good living. I also like to wake up in the morning knowing I am still here."



Exchanging made even easier

IT'S now even easier to find a new tenancy – thanks to the introduction of the Fife Homeswap system.

While Fife Housing Group tenants have always been able to exchange homes with other tenants, they can now do the same with partners on the Fife Housing Register (FHR).

These are Fife Council, Ore Valley Housing Association, Kingdom Housing Association, Glen Housing Association and Ochil View Housing Association. All you need to do is register your details on Fife Council's website and wait for someone to contact you.

There have already been more than 600 swaps since the system was launched last year. Housing Support Manager Beverley Graham said, "It is important to us that we work with our FHR partners to make sure tenants have access to the homes which are right for them. This will make finding the right home in Fife even easier for not just our tenants, but everyone on the Fife Housing Register."

To register on Homeswap go to www.fifedirect.org.uk/homeswap.



Garden competition 2015

WE HAVE been impressed with the green fingered skills of our tenants who have put their names forward for the new Fife Housing Group Garden Competition.

Judging is due to take place at the end of July with a host of really good prizes on offer donated by local businesses including £500 of garden vouchers, an oak bench, plants and gardening equipment.

With thanks to our sponsors:

Jewsons, Rogersons, RB Grant, Keepmoat, Grahams, Dobbies, Lovely Trees, Steven Ogg Landscape Design and the Plant Market.



SUMMER SURPRISE

Fruity Fajitas

Here is delicious recipe from Fife Community Project

Ingredients

- 1 or 2 packets of wraps cut in half
- 2 apples
- 2 large carrots
- Lemon juice
- 1 Iceberg lettuce
- 4 tablespoons of raisins
- 1 -2 packs of low fat cream cheese (200g)
- 1 -2 tubs of mild salsa



What you have to do:

Core the apples using the apple corer, cut the apples into small chunks place into the bowl and mix with a wee drop lemon juice (this stops them turning brown). Cut a wee bit off each end of the carrots and peel the carrots. Grate the carrots and put into the bowl with the apples. Add the raisins and mix well. Cut the stump off the lettuce and pull leaves apart, wash through in colander, shake well to dry. Tear the leaves into small pieces and put into a bowl. Assemble the wraps. Spread wraps with cream cheese, leave a space at side. Put some lettuce leaves on. Place a spoonful or 2 of carrot and apple mixture on top of lettuce. Top with a spoonful of salsa. Turn the side of wrap to keep filling from oozing out and roll up carefully and enjoy.

Let's go WALKABOUT...

Estate walkabouts are your opportunity to tell us what we could improve in your community. These are the remaining walkabouts for 2015. To join one, contact us on **01383 606162** or e-mail info@fifeha.org.uk



July 2015

29th: Kennoway with Housing Officer, Greg Turner.

August 2015

5th : Pentland Terrace, High Valleyfield with Housing Officer, Angie Munton.

14th: Rosyth, Old Town, Backmarch Road with Housing Officer, Lynn Mather.

20th: Kirkcaldy, Cairnwell Place/Cheviot Place with Housing Officer, Alison Young.

25th: Hill of Beath with your Housing Officer.

26th: Buckhaven with, Housing Officer, Greg Turner.

September 2015

24th: Cowenbeath, Johnston Park with your Housing Officer.

24th: Dunfermline, St Leonards with Housing Officer, Stephanie McCulloch.

October 2015

6th : Kirkcaldy, Sauchenbush with Housing Officer, Alison Young.

7th : Leven with Housing Officer, Greg Turner.

14th: Rosyth, Primrose with Housing Officer, Angie Munton.

20th: Rosyth Queensferry Road and Admiralty Road with Housing Officer, Lynn Mather.



Enter our SUMMER competition and you could win a £25 ASDA gift voucher

To enter: Complete the wordsearch, cut along the dotted line and send your entry to the address below by 31st August 2015.

P R E L E P H A N T L G O
 D O H G O R I L L A N A E
 C L R E P I P A R B E Z L
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| Buffalo | Giraffe | Monkey |
| Chimpanzee | Gorilla | Parrot |
| Cougar | Hippopotamus | Porcupine |
| Crocodile | Hyena | Rhinoceros |
| Eagle | Leopard | Tiger |
| Elephant | Lion | Warthog |
| Gazelle | Mongoose | Zebra |

Name

Address

.....

.....Tel

We had a bumper number of entries in our spring competition. Thanks to everyone who entered and congratulations to our winner, David Bell of Queensferry Road, Rosyth, who receives a £25 Asda voucher

Our opening hours are:

Monday-Thursday....8.30am - 5.00pm Friday....8.30am - 4.30pm

General number **01383 606162**

For any emergencies contact us on **08000 274 007**

For Gas emergencies contact us on **0800 281 856**

Electric heating emergencies, Ochilview, Lumphinnans **0845 241 5513**

Text us on **0771 771 3666**

at home with...



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

www.fifeha.org.uk