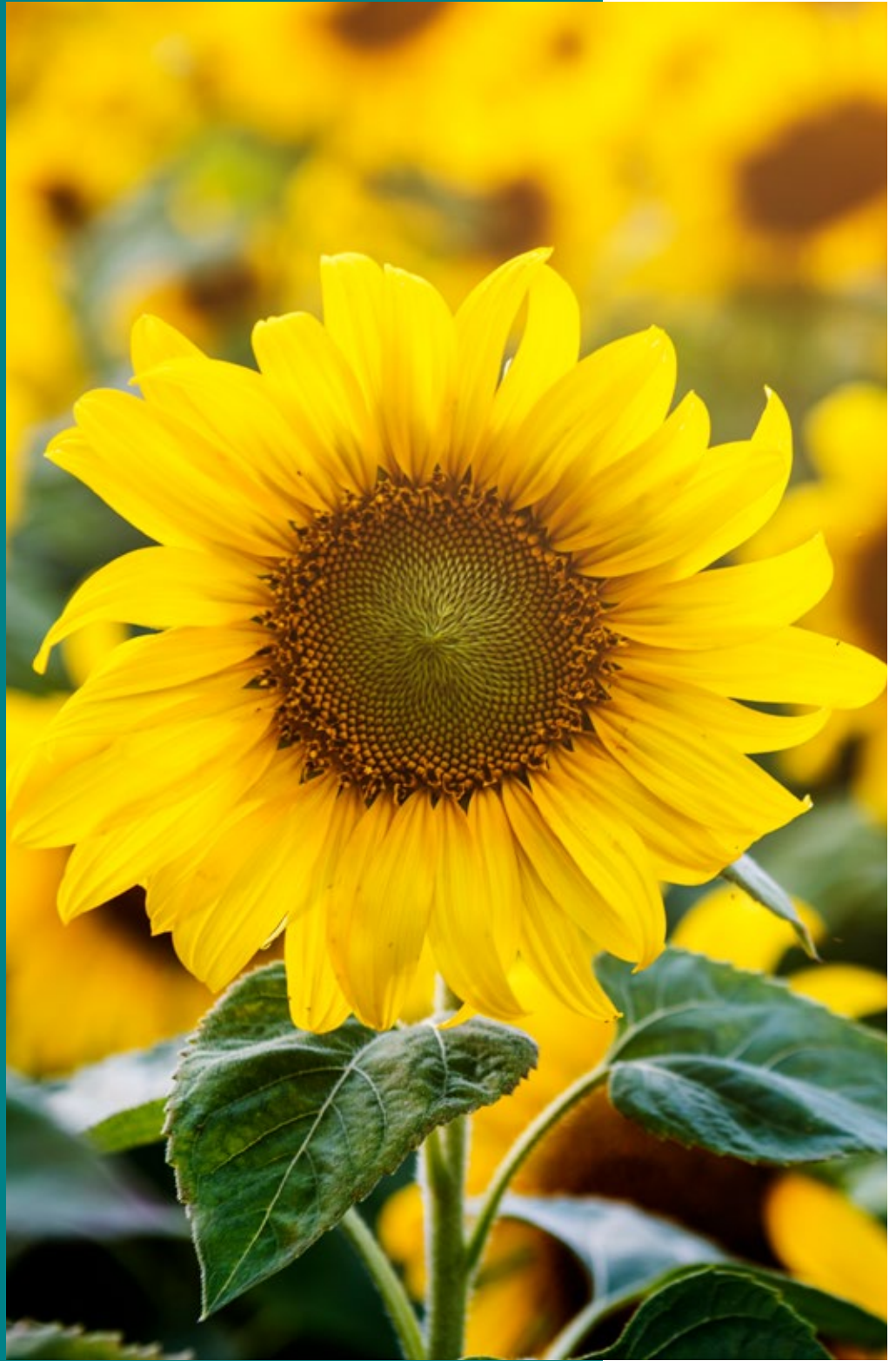


NEWSLETTER

Fife Housing Group | Issue 85 Spring 2022



Getting involved

We are committed to providing our tenants and residents with plenty of opportunities to get involved to help shape, influence and improve our services.

Continue reading on page 3

at home with...

fife 
housing
group

Contents

In this issue...

05



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 translate it for them?

Contact our newsletter editor, Alex McCue, on **07970 801007** or via **alex.mccue@fifehg.org.uk** to request a large print copy or enquire about alternative copy formats.

- 3 Speaking to our colleagues
- 3 Become a member
- 3 Getting involved
- 4 Resident VOICES
- 5 Beautiful Fife – Photo Competition
- 6 25 years of Fife Housing Group
- 7 Tenant stories - John
- 8 Tenant stories - Karen
- 10 25 years: 25 acts of kindness
- 12 Considering complaints
- 12 Be the first to try out our new website and Home Hub
- 13 Gardening gloves at the ready – Garden Competition
- 14 Giving Something Back Grants 2022
- 16 Glen Albyn update
- 18 Using drones
- 19 Dementia Framework
- 19 Team news
- 19 Investors in People Platinum Award
- 20 The importance of home contents insurance
- 21 TV licensing scams
- 22 Fife Voices Housing Advocacy Project
- 24 Estate Inspection Calendar
- 24 Our new normal – hybrid working survey
- 26 Social Housing Fuel Support Fund
- 27 Local news and views
- 32 Wordsearch and wordsearch winner
- 32 Recipe
- 32 Contact us



13

Speaking to our colleagues

Our colleagues work hard to provide you with safe, affordable and comfortable homes. In turn, we ask that you treat them with courtesy, kindness and respect.

The Fife Housing Group team have faced many verbally abusive calls, messages, and face-to-face interactions over the last few months. Please be aware that this type of behaviour is in breach of your Tenancy Agreement and will not be tolerated.



Become a member

Anyone can become a member of Fife Housing Group, as long as you are aged 16 and over if you are a tenant, and over 18 if you are not a tenant. All you need to do is purchase a £1 share in Fife Housing Association Ltd and have your application agreed by our Board of Management as meeting the essential criteria detailed in our Membership Policy and aligning with our Model Rules, copies of which are available on request.

Membership entitles you to attend our Annual General Meeting. It is also an excellent first step to becoming a Board Member or a member of other groups such as Resident VOICES.

Should you be interested in finding out more about becoming a member or any other opportunities that we offer, please do not hesitate to contact a member of our team directly on **01383 606162** or via **info@fifehg.org.uk**.

Getting involved

We are committed to providing our tenants and residents with plenty of opportunities to get involved to help shape, influence, and improve our services. Your knowledge and understanding of the issues affecting you, your families, and your neighbours could be invaluable in ensuring we focus our attention and efforts on what matters most to you.



Resident VOICES

Resident VOICES have recently been delighted to welcome some new tenant members who are keen to have their say and shape the services offered by Fife Housing Group.

Towards the end of 2021, the group decided to review the support being offered to tenants in the effort to reduce our carbon footprint and reach net-zero emissions by 2045. Many of us have heard terms such as 'climate change', 'carbon neutral' and 'global warming', but do we fully understand the easy steps we can take to help prevent climate change? Whilst it may seem like a daunting challenge, we can all play our part in achieving this pledge.

With this in mind, the group are keen to evaluate our responsibilities in educating and informing tenants on this subject, hoping to understand what we could, and perhaps should, be doing to make people aware of the positive changes they can make to help improve the environment we live in for ourselves and future generations.

As part of the information-gathering stage, Resident VOICES carried out a questionnaire with our Housing Officers to determine

their views on the level of support currently being offered to tenants regarding this topic. Together, they also considered the existing communication channels available to Fife Housing Group and how these are being utilised at present.

Many other aspects were discussed, such as the opportunities we have at our existing external events and what support other Housing Associations are offering their tenants to help reduce their carbon footprint.

The group are now nearing the final stages of this review. They will shortly be compiling a report to submit to our Business Leadership Team, highlighting recommendations and suggestions of good practice to better support and educate our tenants on this environmental emergency.

Resident VOICES continues to welcome new members. If reading the above has sparked your curiosity and you feel you would like to become involved with the group, please contact Helen Miller on **01383 608127** or by email at helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk for further information.



Beautiful Fife

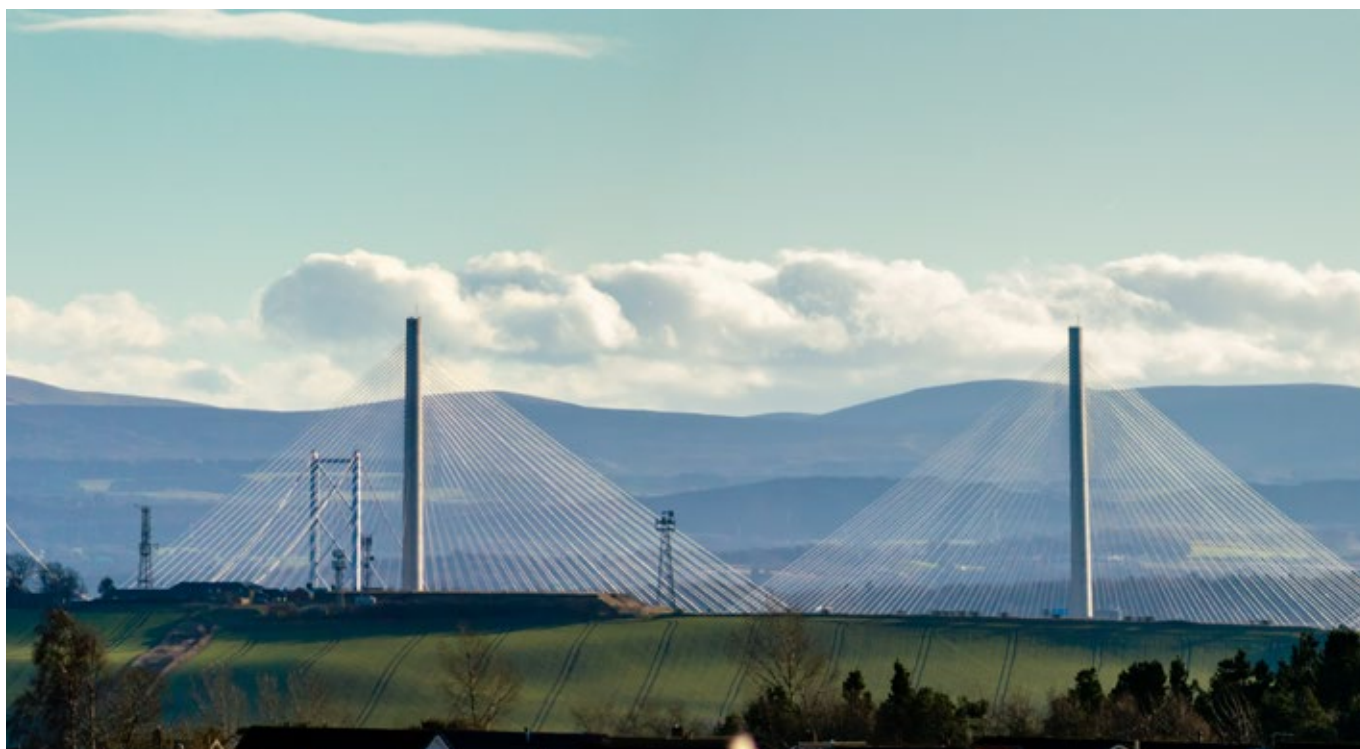
We love Fife and think the Kingdom is a beautiful place to live. Yes, we may be biased, but, what is not to like? You have a beautiful coastline with stunning beaches, plenty of culture and good food, charming villages to explore, heaps of history and much more.

We captured some charming shots ourselves recently and would love for you to share your own photographs of Fife with us. Your photo can be of anything – from one of the Kingdom’s well-known landmarks to your back garden at sunrise, the view from over the golf course or some wildlife you spot out on your daily walk – the only condition is that it must have been captured in Fife.

The winner will receive a £25 gift voucher, and their photo will be showcased in the following newsletter.

To enter, please email your photograph to alex.mccue@fifehg.org.uk by **30 June 2022**, providing your full name, address and a brief description of your photo.

Good luck!





25 years of Fife Housing Group

This year Fife Housing Group turns 25!

Established in 1997, we have become one of the largest independent housing associations in the east of Scotland, with approximately 2,500 properties in Fife. We employ 70+ colleagues out of our office in Dunfermline and have been recognised as one of the Top 10 Housing Organisations to work for in the UK, as well as receiving our Investors in People Platinum accreditation last year.

To mark the occasion, we have created a book that celebrates our people, homes and various milestones over the years.

One chapter of the book includes interviews with some of our tenants. We visited six of them to learn more about their lives, stories and experience of being Fife Housing Group tenants.

Here are the first two stories. We will continue these throughout the year in our Summer and Autumn newsletters, so watch this space.

Tenant stories

John – Inverkeithing

I have lived in this flat for over nine years now. It's in a great location, just next to the train station and very central. I am a very private person and, despite where my flat is situated, it's pretty quiet. I have good neighbours who mostly keep to themselves. Plus, because I am on the top floor, walking up and down the stairs every day keeps me fit!

Before living here, I lived in two private let flats, which I didn't feel settled in; as you know, the landlord can ask you to leave at any time if their circumstances change. Being a tenant of Fife Housing Group has provided me with the stability I wanted. I feel secure living in this flat, so it feels like my own home.

With Fife Housing Group, you know you always have that backup if anything goes wrong or breaks, and you can pick up the phone at any time, which is a good feeling.

The other great thing is I have been able to decorate the flat and make it my own. I am happy as I have my big coffee table and my modern bathroom, which is all I really wanted. It's great to put your stamp on the property you rent as it makes it feel like home.

I have had some good memories here over the years. One that comes to mind, and I don't know if it is a bit sad to say this, is when I got my new bathroom installed by Fife Housing Group. Having an electric shower has been brilliant.

Christmas 2021 is also a time I will never forget. After graduating from university, my daughter moved to London, so I don't see her that often. She came up with her partner to spend Christmas with me last year. After two years of the pandemic, it was great to spend the holidays together, and I will never forget it and the laughs we had.

I became more involved with Fife Housing Group when I signed up to become a volunteer. There are always things going on



for tenants like myself to participate in. Eight years ago, I was at one of their events when I was approached by the then Engagement Assistant and Engagement Manager to join Resident VOICES, a scrutiny panel made up of tenants and other local residents.

Joining Resident VOICES has been game-changing for me. It has given me confidence, and I now want to speak up and have my opinions heard, something I never did before. I have been a regular member ever since joining the group, and now I am the Chair, which I am pretty proud of.

It's great to get involved and Fife Housing Group encourage you to volunteer and take advantage of their opportunities. You feel like you are doing the right thing, and you are the voice of the tenants. It's fulfilling to contribute to big decisions and changes within the organisation.

Tenant stories

Karen – Kirkcaldy

I moved into this house just over twelve years ago and I love my home. It's a good family home with big rooms, unlike the new builds you get now where the rooms are much smaller. The family-friendly size allows me to host family events and socialise with friends and loved ones. Our lovely, big garden allows us to utilise the space for barbeques and relaxing in the warmer months.

The garden was a godsend throughout the pandemic as it gave us a safe space to see people, when allowed, and we took the time to improve it, adding plenty of plants and garden furniture to make it our own space to enjoy.

I feel very lucky as I have had such great enjoyment and positive experiences from living in my home, the cul-de-sac and with my neighbours.

I love living in a cul-de-sac too. It's quiet as it's off the main road, there are plenty of spaces to park, I have great neighbours and I think we have that good old-fashioned community spirit as we help each other out and are there for one another.

Since moving in twelve years ago, so much has happened, mainly family growth. My eldest daughter moved out and into her own house and has her own family now. I am a Nana to her son Lyall, born in February 2013. My son still stays here with his two-year-old Golden Retriever, Bella, and I have my nine-year-old Golden Labrador, Kendal.

When permitted during the pandemic, we had small informal celebrations for my son's 21st in 2020 and another for my 50th in 2021. I love celebrating, and we had much larger parties for my 40th, and my daughter celebrated her 18th and 21st birthdays in style, but again due to Covid-19, her 30th was a much smaller, low-key celebration here at the house.

Travel has been so limited in the last couple of years because of the pandemic, and I look forward to getting some sunshine again. I have great memories of trips to Spain and the USA. We are a very close family, so spending time together for celebrations, holidays, or family dinners is important.

I am a manager in the local branch of a large entertainment company. I enjoy my job because every day is different and I love getting to know the regular customers, they provide plenty of banter, plus the team I work with is excellent. It's very people-centric. I love people and socialising, so I am looking forward to more normality in the coming months as the weather improves.

One significant change in my life that has affected myself and my family over the last few years is the deterioration in my health. I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia which meant a change in my career. I worked in the care industry for many years and loved it, but, my condition meant that carrying out the job's physical demands was too much for me. I am also still recovering from breast surgery carried out in November 2021. I am very fortunate as initially, they suspected it could be cancerous, but thankfully it wasn't, so I am feeling very positive. The medical team have given me a good prognosis.

I cannot fault Fife Housing Group, and I have enjoyed being a tenant all these years. Any issues I have had with the property have been resolved promptly. The communications process is excellent, I have never had a bad experience on the phone and my queries always get answered quickly. The repairs team are great and all of the colleagues I have spoken to have been friendly and approachable.

I cannot fault Fife Housing Group, and I have enjoyed being a tenant all these years

I feel very lucky as I have had such great enjoyment and positive experiences from living in my home, the cul-de-sac and with my neighbours.

My greatest joy and my biggest release is decorating. I am known by my friends and family for always having a paintbrush in hand,

and I take great pride in it. I love creating rooms that reflect my style and I change them regularly. My son comments that my passion for decorating is like painting the Forth Rail Bridge in that it just keeps going. I have even heard a comment that the Queen would be at home here as it's always got the smell of fresh paint!



25 years: 25 acts of kindness

To celebrate our 25th anniversary, our team were keen to give something back to our tenants, communities, local charities and colleagues. So, we decided to undertake 25 acts of kindness to celebrate the milestone.

The programme was launched on Random Acts of Kindness Day, 17 February 2022, when we surprised two of our tenants with gifts. Our visits started in Methil with a gentleman who began his tenancy 25 years ago as one of the newly established organisation's first tenants. He was delighted with his hamper of various treats. We then surprised our longest-standing tenant, who has been with Fife Housing Group and its predecessors for almost 60 years, with a bouquet and chocolates.

Since launching, colleagues have been keen to prepare, plan and deliver many more acts of kindness. We have enjoyed the introduction of a book swap within our office to allow books to be passed on once read. Many of our colleagues have also brought in breakfasts, lunches, hot drinks, homemade cakes and desserts to share with others in the office.

Fundraising has also been underway for our charity of the year, Andy's Man Club, with proceeds from our recent 'Guess the teddy bear's age' activity going towards this fantastic cause, and we have continued our programme of skip days throughout Fife, offering tenants the opportunity to get rid of their rubbish for free.

Additionally, colleagues have improved the gardens outside our office by taking time out of their day to make and hang bird feeders to encourage and support the natural wildlife and ecosystems.



One colleague donated horse supplies and riding equipment to the charity Riding For the Disabled after her horse sadly passed away at the start of the year. We also marked Global

Recycling Day by donating unwanted clothing to our local Cash for Kids campaign while other colleagues have been cycling to work and buying local to support independent Fife businesses.



There are many more exciting acts of kindness to come, including the introduction of a befriending programme, giving blood, volunteering at local food banks and picking up litter in our communities, to name just a few.

Completing these 25 acts of kindness throughout 2022 seems an appropriate way to mark 25 years of providing social housing services to the people of Fife as we continue to pay it forward and create more memorable moments with our tenants and local communities.

Considering complaints

Our Leadership Teams meet quarterly to review any learnings identified from complaints and to discuss the performance of our complaints handling process.

As part of the Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) developed by SPSO (Scottish Public Services Ombudsman), Fife Housing Group must respond to Stage 1 complaints within five working days and Stage 2 complaints within 20 working days.

Whilst we have consistently achieved 100% in responding to Stage 2 complaints within the 20-day timeframe, it was identified that there were some instances where we were failing to respond to Stage 1 complaints within the anticipated five-day timeframe. Whilst this percentage is small (less than 10% of all Stage 1 complaints), it is vital to understand the reasons for this and, therefore, a review of all complaints which had fallen outwith timescales between April 2021 and December 2021 was undertaken.

It is sometimes the case that the ability to respond to a complaint within five days is out of our control. This can often be due to tenant availability, however, we were keen to pinpoint any areas within our process that were negatively impacting our complaints handling performance and identify what changes were required to improve on this.

Following a review of complaints that fell outwith timescales, a number of learnings have been identified, as detailed below:

- **In instances where further clarity is required, we need to ensure contact is made with the complainant as soon as possible after the complaint is received**
- **Ensuring the complaint is acted upon on the same day we receive it is crucial to ensure delays are kept to a minimum**
- **Colleagues must ensure they utilise the 'out of office' function and re-route their workflows during periods of annual leave**
- **Colleagues must record the complaint on the system accurately to ensure that the necessary actions can commence as required**

Applying greater focus to the above areas will help improve our performance in responding to Stage 1 complaints within a five working day timeframe. Our complaints performance statistics for 2021/2022 will be shared in the next newsletter, allowing you to see this year's performance compared with previous years.

Would you like to be one of the first to try out our new website and online Home Hub?

Development of our new interactive website and online Home Hub is almost complete and we're looking for people like you to help us do some final testing before they launch.

Feedback from our tenants is key to ensuring we deliver a service that meets your needs and we'd be hugely grateful if you would consider participating in this trial.

So, if you'd like a sneak preview of how you will soon be able to make payments, see statements, report repairs, update your details and raise issues online at your own convenience, please email our Communications and Engagement Manager, Karen Begg, directly via karen.begg@fifehg.org.uk to register your interest in taking part.

Gardening gloves at the ready

The nights are getting lighter, the flowers are starting to bloom and the sun is shining longer so, what better time to launch our eagerly anticipated 2022 Garden Competition.

The last two years have been challenging for so many. Our gardens became a hobby to help pass the time during lockdown, with lots of us discovering our green fingers. They turned into our space to socialise when restrictions prevented us from meeting up indoors, becoming an even more beloved part of our homes. With this in mind, our judges are keen to see the impact all of your love and attention has had.

This competition aims to reward tenants who take pride in presenting their outdoor spaces and recognise these attractive garden areas' positive impact on the broader community. So, whether you have a shared garden area with your neighbours, a private garden or even a potted area within your veranda, we welcome your entries and look forward to seeing all of your efforts bloom.



Entry for the competition is open **NOW**. The closing date for entries is **1 July 2022**, with judging due to take place mid-July.

If you would like to enter the competition or find out more about how it all works, please get in touch with our Engagement Officer, Helen Miller, on **01383 608127** or via helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk

2022 Garden Competition - Entry Form

Please talk to your Housing Officer or contact Helen Miller on **01383 608127** or via helen.miller@fifehg.org.uk to register your interest.

Alternatively fill in your details below and return this form to Fife Housing Group, 7 Pitreavie Court, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline, KY11 8UU.

Judging will take place in mid-July, with prizes awarded to the top three gardens.

Name:.....

Address:.....

Phone:.....

Email:.....

Closing date for entries - Friday 1 July



Giving Something Back Grants 2022

Last year, we launched our Giving Something Back Grants to recognise and support some of the organisations and local projects doing fantastic work across Fife.

These grants were made possible by the generosity of our contractors who sign up to our charitable framework, which means they donate 2% of their invoiced costs to benefit good causes. This allowed us to establish the grants, and last year, we awarded £15,000 to local groups working to improve their communities.

Successful applicants included Fife Gingerbread, a charity that provides support to lone parents and families in need all over Fife, Pink Saltire, Scotland's community voice for LGBT+ people and EATS Rosyth,

a community-led charity that grows and shares food, aiming to reduce waste, help the environment and improve food education.

The grants are back for a second year and we are delighted to be able to support even more local charities and projects and the fantastic work they do.

Our thanks to the contractors who have made this possible Rogerson Plumbing, Mite Property Solutions, TB Mackay, Shine, Eurojet, McGill's/Kingdom Gas, RB Grant, City Technical and MAC Roofing.

To enter, all you have to do is fill in the application form on the following page or on our website and return it to us by post or email before Monday 20 June.

Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to pitch their ideas at our Dragon's Den style community event on Thursday 25 August.

The grants are part of our ongoing commitment to making a difference in our local communities, and we cannot wait to see what this year brings.



We are delighted that our Giving Something Back Grants are returning this year with a further **£20k** available to distribute amongst groups working hard to improve our local communities.

So, if you are involved with a local project or charity that could do with a little extra investment, please submit an application for one of our Giving Something Back Grants using the form below or the electronic version available on our website.

Please note that these grants cannot be used to fund employment opportunities and that priority will be given to local groups and projects working within our Fife communities.

Applications should be submitted by the end of the day on **Monday 20 June**. Shortlisted applicants will then be invited to come and present their submissions at our Dragon's Den style community event on **Thursday 25 August**.

Giving Something Back Grants 2022 Application form

Name:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Name of group:	
Charity no. (if applicable)	
Size of grant requested:	
Please tell us what you would like to use the Giving Something Back Grant money for:	
Please tell us who would be the beneficiaries of the project should you receive the grant:	
Please provide a specific breakdown of how the funds requested will be spent:	
Please detail any barriers or limitations that your project faces:	

Please provide additional details on a separate piece of paper.

Meet Cody! He belongs to the site manager down at Glen Albyn. He is only a young puppy but is already learning lots of tricks.



Glen Albyn update

Despite recent challenges with the rising costs of fuel, availability of materials and a general shortage of labour, progress on the Glen Albyn site continues to be excellent. The main work elements continue to be ground level. We have recently seen the road be established to provide reasonable access throughout the site, the drainage and utility works continue and retaining walls have been formed. Further progress has been made in foundation formation, substructure blockwork and the casting of floor slabs to a number of the blocks. The last month has also seen the first timber kits put up and these are now being erected in succession across the site, following the completion of the floor slabs. The project remains on programme and on budget and the site continues to be accident-free.

The first completed kit (March 2022)





Colleagues (L-R): Monica, Owen, Dougie and Helen delivered chocolates and 'thank you' cards to residents living on our Glen Albyn development boundary.

Act of kindness at Glen Albyn

As part of our acts of kindness to commemorate 25 years of Fife Housing Group, we delivered goodies and handwritten thank you notes to residents living on the boundary of our Glen Albyn site. We wanted to acknowledge their patience and understanding during the development and decided gourmet chocolate pizzas were the way to do that!



Additional kits being built last month

Using drones

Over the last 12 months, we have started using drones to help us deliver our workload, which has proven to be a great asset. We have used a drone to monitor the works at Glen Albyn, which has allowed us to see and record time-lapse footage as the works progress. The drone is programmed to follow an exact route every time to provide the same footage. The route follows the site's boundary and then flies up the new road we have created. It is a great tool to monitor the progress and see the development as the works progress.

We have also trained three colleagues to be able to use drones for some of our day-to-day activities. Our roofer has been able to safely inspect some of our roofs and high places from the ground without needing ladders or other access equipment, which means that we can record footage from the ground and make efficient inspections. Recently, this has been particularly useful while inspecting some

of our buildings' more challenging aspects, such as awkward chimneys. We can also use the drone to examine some of our areas of land that are overgrown or difficult to access, meaning we can record footage now and use this to check on any differences or identify issues we need to address when we return to re-inspect and update our footage.



Drone photo of Glen Albyn from February this year

Dementia Framework

Over 90,000 people in Scotland live with dementia and this number will increase significantly as our population continues to age. The housing sector is uniquely placed to play a role in helping tenants and their families to live as best they can with dementia.

In light of this, we have signed up to the Chartered Institute of Housing Dementia Framework. This move will allow us to assess what we are already doing to support people with dementia and highlight what more we could do. For example, providing dementia awareness training to colleagues and ensuring our tenants can access information and advice if they need it.

When reviewing our policies, creating links with local services or groups for people with dementia and thinking about how to ensure the needs and views of people with dementia are reflected, are just some of the steps we will take.

Investors in People Platinum

In December, we successfully achieved the prestigious Investors in People (IIP) Platinum accreditation.

For almost three decades, Investors in People has been acknowledged internationally as a leading people accreditation, assessing over 50,000 organisations in 66 countries. With a framework designed to help leaders, employees, and companies work together to create an effective environment, the Platinum Award represents a genuine commitment to best practice and a recognition that investing in your people is the right thing to do essential to deliver sustainable results.

Team news

Farewell

We have recently said farewell to several members of the trade team; Stephen Joslin (Joiner), Kevin MacRury (Plumber), James McGregor (Plumber), David Morrison (Joiner), Paul Ross (Plumber) and Jordan Barclay (Skilled Labourer).

Melissa McManus from our Communications and Engagement team has also left the organisation within the last few months.

We wish them all the best in their new adventures.

Welcome

We welcome to the trade team Gordon Clarke (Joiner), Danny McCool (Plumber) and Rodger Pirie (Plumber).

We're also delighted to have Jen Ferguson join us as HR Officer.

Our Chief Executive, Nicki Donaldson, commented 'This accreditation recognises our understanding that our colleagues are our most valuable asset and acknowledges our commitment to investing in supporting and developing the people and teams within the organisation who make a difference for our tenants and other customers every day.

'We're very proud to be one of the few Housing Associations to have achieved IIP Platinum status. However, our journey is not over, and we look forward to building upon this amazing achievement in the coming years.'

Next year, we hope to augment this further by working towards achieving the Investors in People Wellbeing Award.

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Platinum

The importance of home contents insurance

There are two types of home insurance: buildings insurance and contents insurance:

- **Building insurance** - covers anything that is the material of the building, the walls, the roof, the windows etc.
- **Contents insurance** – is anything you take into your home – floor coverings, sofas, televisions, beds, jewellery, computers etc.

If you live in a Fife Housing Group property, you can trust that we have insurance for the building and that we will carry out any repairs to keep your home wind and watertight.

Contents insurance is not our responsibility, and it's up to you as a tenant to decide if you want to take out contents insurance or not.

Although contents insurance is not mandatory, we strongly encourage everyone to consider purchasing contents insurance. The cost of insurance can be as low as £1.80 per week.

Many of us think that 'it won't happen to me' and perhaps it won't, but many of our tenants live in

flatted accommodation, terraced houses or semi-detached homes and if a neighbouring property has a flood, you might be affected. Fires also can spread quickly and accidents can happen at any time.

It is worth thinking about how affordable it would be to replace all of your personal belongings if you were the victim of a fire, theft or flood.

As contents insurance is an individual choice for each tenant, we are not liable for the costs of replacing any of your belongings.

Regrettably, we have seen an increase in fire-damaged and flooded properties over the past six months and some tenants have been left without any belongings as a result of opting not to take out contents insurance.

You don't have to take out home contents insurance, however, it's a good idea to do so because if any of your contents are lost, stolen or damaged, you will have to pay to replace them.



TV Licensing scams

There has been an increase in scammers targeting TV Licensing customers lately. The scammers use different means of communication, including text messages, phone calls and emails, to imitate the communications sent out by the TV Licensing authority. They aim to gather your personal information and bank details and tell you you are owed money or a refund.

Communications can look and sound very authentic and realistic and it is often hard to spot a scam unless you know what you are looking for.

Before you give over any personal information, please stop and take a moment to check the communication is legitimate. If something doesn't seem right, then please stop and report the information on how to do this can be found to the right of this article.

Scammers may also visit your home. You can check whether the officer is a genuine TV Licensing employee by asking to see their personalised ID card, or you can call **0300 790 6071** so that TV Licensing can verify the visitor's credentials.

TV Licensing has put together detailed information on how to spot a scam which can be found on their website here:
tvlicensing.co.uk/scams

Reporting a scam

To report a suspicious email:

Forward the email to **report@phishing.gov.uk** and they will investigate

To report a suspicious text message:

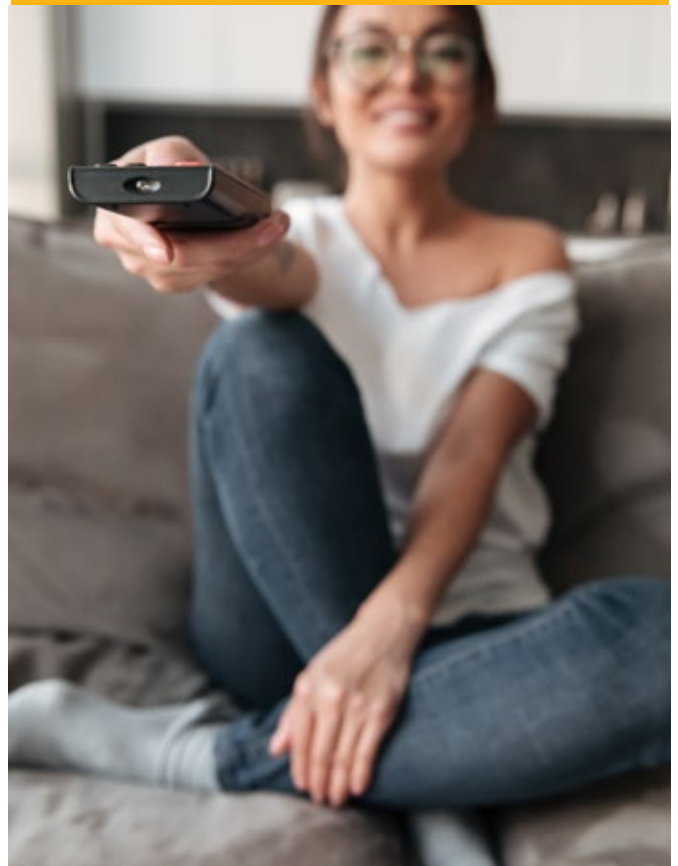
Take a screenshot of the message and send it to **textscam@tvlicensing.co.uk**

If you think you have been scammed already:

You need to report the incident to Action Fraud immediately

Visit **actionfraud.police.uk** or call **0300 123 2040**

If you have provided your card or bank details, then you also need to contact your bank as soon as possible.



Fife Voices Housing Advocacy Project

The Fife Voices Housing Advocacy Project, or 'Fife Voices,' is a partnership between Kingdom Housing Association, Fife Housing Group, Ore Valley Housing Association and Glen Housing Association, collectively known as the Fife Housing Association Alliance. It has been funded through the Scottish Government Homelessness Prevention Fund.

The project provides advocacy for vulnerable tenants of the participating housing associations. It will help tenants access vital services, promote tenancy sustainability and attempt to break the cycle of homelessness.

Included in the service

- Benefits
- Council Tax
- Budgeting/Debt
- Welfare/Crisis Support
- Access to grants
- Bills and utilities
- Correspondence support
- Assistance with gas and electricity issues



Fife Voices Advocacy Project continued...

The Fife Voices team work with current and new tenants of the partner landlords to help them access essential support services, claim grants or benefits and assist service users in achieving personal goals in areas like health, employment and training.

The project is a positive example of the continued collaborative working between the partner Housing Associations. It will help deliver a meaningful contribution to broader

strategic efforts to reduce homelessness in Fife. The Fife Voices Project is a welcome addition to the services available to new and existing tenants of the Fife Housing Association Alliance.

Those looking to access the service can get in touch with their Housing Officer or by contacting our office on info@fifehg.org.uk or by calling **01592 632 517** or **08000 274007**.

Furnished Social Tenancy Project Taking Off

Fife Voices recently launched their Furnished Tenancy Pilot, a scheme that will break down barriers that prevent customers from taking up a tenancy offer due to furniture poverty. Through the project, Fife Voices aims to provide over 30 furnished tenancies during the coming months.

The long term goal of the work is to show that there is a better way of providing furniture solutions than the current discretionary schemes in place, one that places dignity and respect at its core.

The Furnished Tenancy Pilot has been gathering pace recently, helping a further three customers through funding received from the National Lottery.

The below case study is from a tenant who was able to take up a tenancy primarily due to the help she received through the project:

'Miss A was referred to the service when she was allocated a property for herself and her young son. She was told to leave her family home by her parents as they were not supportive of her pregnancy and for the last few months, she had been living with a family friend. This living arrangement was very difficult for Miss A to deal with, significantly impacting her mental health.

When the young woman was allocated a property, she was initially very excited. Still, that excitement was short-lived when she realised that apart from their clothing, the family had nothing.

The Furnished Tenancy Project was able to help her with brand new floor coverings, window coverings, a washing machine, cooker, fridge/freezer, bed and sofa. All the items were in place through The Furnishing Service within three days of the referral being made, and this meant she didn't have to wait over 60 days for a discretionary Community Care Grant.

Since receiving the items, Miss A has been able to move into the property and her mental health has dramatically improved. She now has family support and is looking forward to making her house into a home.

Miss A is very appreciative of the help from the Furnished Tenancy Project and will continue to engage with the Housing Advocacy team to help her settle in. The furniture cost works out at just over £34 a month and, as Miss A receives benefits, this is covered by her Universal Credit Housing Costs Element as an eligible service charge.'

Estate Inspection Calendar

Date	Location
May 2022	
Thursday 2 May @ 10am	Kirkcaldy - Carnethy Crescent and Cheviot Road
Thursday 12 May @ 2pm	Camdean - Brankholm, Forker Avenue, Gillway and Daniel Place
Tuesday 17 May 2022 @ 10am	Kirkcaldy - Almond Place and West March Street
June 2022	
Thursday 9 June 2022 @ 2pm	Methil – Maple Gardens, Lilac Bank, Kirkland Walk, Cedar Avenue, Birch Grove, Laburnum Road, Methilhaven Road and Rowan Crescent
Thursday 16 June 2022 @ 2pm	Kennoway – New Road, Kenmount Drive and Myreside Avenue
Wednesday 22 June @ 2pm	Dunfermline - Allan Crescent, Duncan Crescent and Inchgarvie
July 2022	
Tuesday 12 July @ 1.30pm	Lumphinnans
Thursday 21 July @ 2pm	Methillhill and Methil - Dubbieside

Our new normal

Last spring we asked you to tell us what you think about how and when we provide our services and, taking your feedback into account, re-opened our office on 13 September with a new 'hybrid' working model in place.

Offering colleagues the opportunity to continue working from home for part of the week and adopt more flexible hours, has allowed us not only to extend our hours of operation but also to reduce our carbon footprint as we look to adapt our practices in light of the climate emergency.

We are, however, keen to understand whether our tenants and other customers believe that our service delivery has been impacted either positively or negatively by this new approach and so, would appreciate anyone who has been in contact with us over the past eight months taking a few minutes to tell us about your experience by completing the survey below and returning it to us using the pre-paid envelope provided.

Completed surveys returned by **Friday 27 May** will be entered into a prize draw to win £25 of shopping vouchers.

Your details

Name:	
Address:	
Contact number:	
Email:	
How did you make contact with us?	<input type="checkbox"/> Phone Call <input type="checkbox"/> Text Message/WhatsApp <input type="checkbox"/> Form on website <input type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Visit to office <input type="checkbox"/> Social media

Why did you contact us?

- To make a payment/discuss arrears
- To request a statement or query your account
- To report or follow up on a repair
- To schedule an appointment or inspection
- To report an issue or make a complaint
- To update your information or make a request
- To speak to a specific colleague
- Other (please specify)

How satisfied were you with how your contact was handled?

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Fairly dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Roughly when did you make contact with us?

Weekday

- Morning (8am – 12pm)
- Afternoon (12pm-5pm)
- Evening (5pm–8pm)
- Overnight (8pm–8am)

Weekend

- Saturday
- Sunday

How does this compare to your experience of making contact with us prior to the introduction of our new 'hybrid' working model on 13 September 2021?

- Much better
- Slightly better
- No change
- Slightly worse
- Much worse

Please tell us the reason(s) for your answer above. You can also use this space to share any other comments regarding your experience of our new 'hybrid' working model.

Social Housing Fuel Support Fund

Since the beginning of this year, we have been working in partnership with Ore Valley Housing Association, Glen Housing Association and Greener Kirkcaldy to deliver energy advice and assistance following an award of £54,700 from the Social Housing Fuel Support Fund and the Communities Recovery Fund.

The project offers tenants struggling with rising energy costs, information on the tariffs available, assistance corresponding with utility providers, fuel vouchers, financial assistance and practical energy-saving equipment, such as thermal curtains and radiator reflectors, for their homes.

Over 160 households were helped during the project either financially, practically or to claim previously unclaimed benefits. Although the project has now come to an end, we hope to continue working with Greener Kirkcaldy to provide energy advice using some of our Giving Something Back funds.

Below is just one example of the success of this project:

Situation

When discussing a small rent arrear, Miss T was referred for energy advice by her Housing Officer, who discovered she was struggling with fuel debt. She lived alone with her young son and was claiming Universal Credit.

Support

When contacted by the Energy Advisor, Miss T explained she had fallen into arrears of £579 with her energy supplier. She had been paying a regular direct debit but, having been at home more during COVID, her usage had begun to exceed her payments. She increased her payments to cover her ongoing usage but struggled to clear the outstanding balance,

which impacted her household budget. Miss T was referred to the Home Heating Support Fund to help clear this debt and provided advice to enable her to budget her gas and electricity and save energy around the home. She was also advised to apply for the Warm Home Discount again next year and offered support to install free energy efficiency measures in her home.

Miss T had discussed other general money concerns, she was also referred to Citizens Advice & Rights Fife (CARF) for a benefits check and money and debt advice.

Outcome

The advice provided enabled Miss T to make small changes to how she used energy at home, such as adjusting heating controls and switching appliances off standby. She was also provided with thermal curtains to reduce heat loss, and low energy LED bulbs to help cut her electricity bill.

Miss T's application to the Home Heating Support Fund was successful, and she was awarded £725. This was enough to clear the debt and put her in around one month's worth of credit, enabling her to gain more control over her finances. Coupled with advice from CARF, it meant she would be able to decrease her direct debit to help her deal with other issues such as her rent arrears.

When she was told the good news, Miss T said: 'I'm sitting here smiling my face off, my mums sitting across from me wondering what's going on. Honestly, you don't know what this means for me, I've been lying awake all night worried about this debt, and I think I'll finally be able to get a good night's rest. Thank you so much.'

Local news and views

Oakley

Fife Council have asked us to remind tenants that the office on Station Road is currently open by appointment only. If you require any assistance for Council-related matters, they have asked that customers call ahead using their main contact numbers, which can be found on their website; otherwise, you may be turned away.

High Valleyfield

Housing Officer, Gavin Waddell, has been in the village carrying out several estate inspections as part of our commitment to making improvements to the surrounding environment this year – feel free to give him a shout and share your thoughts on this if you see him out and about.

As spring is here, inspections of communal areas will become much more regular. Please remember to dispose of rubbish considerately and keep shared spaces clear throughout the village. If you require a special uplift, you can contact Fife Council for this. Recent months have again seen an increase in residents using the stairwells to store cycles, prams and shoes. Please note that the stairwells are not an extension of your home and that this is a severe breach of both your Tenancy Agreement and Fire Safety Regulations, as the area must be kept clear at all times.



Methil

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

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

Also, a reminder to all tenants in Lilac Bank that the grassed area is not a shortcut for you to drive your car across. There have been many near-misses with individuals driving over this communal grassed area. Please stop immediately as this is dangerous.

Kennoway

A reminder that closes should be kept clear of all items and that main entry doors need to be kept shut and not wedged open with random objects.

Any anti-social behaviour issues you have need to be reported as soon as possible to enable us to deal with them accordingly.

There are also ongoing issues with flytipping at our bin stores on Leven Road. This is illegal and if you witness this happening, please get in touch with your Housing Officer, Ross Glancy, and Fife Council for investigation.

Leven and Buckhaven

A reminder that garden checks will be commencing again shortly, so tenants must ensure these are being tended to and kept clear of all rubbish. If not, you risk being charged for us to do this on your behalf.

If you wish to make any alterations to your property or your garden, you must seek permission from us.

Rosyth

Please remember that it is not acceptable to keep rubbish, bikes, pushchairs or any other bulky items in communal areas within in your block of flats. These areas include the stairwells, gardens, at your front door and on the landing. It is a health and safety issue and also a fire hazard. Please also do not store items on your balcony or in any garden area or out on communal paths if you live in a house.

If you need items removed, Fife Council Environmental Services have a website where you can book and pay for an uplift which will cost £15.00 for 18 units. They have a list that explains how many units each item takes up. Alternatively, you can phone them on **03451 55 00 22**. If you have booked an uplift, please do not put the things out until the night before it is due to take place.

Your local recycling centre should also be open now for you to dispose of items without having to make an appointment.

Please do report any anti-social issues to us to ensure aware of them. We know of some incidents that have not been reported to us, making it hard for us to get involved or help. It is essential to report the issue to the Police when it is occurring and then to phone us to report the matter.

Stephanie McCulloch is looking forward to getting back to her Housing Officer role and engaging with her tenants.

Her first estate inspection will be in the Camdean area in May, but if there are any areas of concern in either the Camdean, Kings Road or Castlandhill Road areas of Rosyth, please do not hesitate to contact her directly.

Kirkcaldy and Dysart

Please remember that it is not acceptable to keep rubbish, bikes, pushchairs, furniture or any other bulky items in any communal area in your block of flats. These areas include the stairwells, gardens, your front door and the landing area. Please also do not store items on your balcony or in any garden area or on communal pathways if you live in a house. This breaches your tenancy agreement, posing a severe fire hazard and a health and safety risk.

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

If you need anything, Fife Council Environmental Services have a website where you can book and pay for an uplift which will cost £15.00 for 18 units. A list of items shows how many units for each item. Alternatively, you can phone them on **03451 55 00 22**. If you have booked an uplift, please do not put the things out at the front until the night before it is due to take place. If you are struggling to obtain a bulk uplift, please speak to your Housing Officer and arrangements can be made for a contractor to remove the items. You will have to agree on the removal costs beforehand and a repayment plan can be set up and agreed on by your Housing Officer. If you require an additional landfill bin due to

the size of your household, you can request one by telephoning Fife Council on **03451 550022**. Recycling bins are also available at Templehall Community Centre or any Fife Council recycling points.

If you know anyone dumping items within your block, please contact your Housing Officer, Karen Gilruth or Lynn Mather in confidence to allow them to take appropriate action and avoid any communal recharges in the future. There have been reports of tenants using other tenants' bins without their permission. If you are experiencing this, we advise you to add a padlock to your bin to prevent it from happening again. If you know who is dumping rubbish in your bin, please report it to your Housing Officer.

Additionally, we would like to encourage tenants to report anti-social incidents, as we can only deal with issues if we are made aware of them. In some circumstances, it may also be advisable to contact the Police when the incident occurs and then phone your Housing Officer to report the matter.

In Dysart, we have once again arranged hanging baskets for the commemorative 'Tron' structure in Fitzroy Street and would like to extend our thanks to the tenant who has volunteered to look after them. These floral displays are donated annually, so if anyone would like to put their name forward to take care of them next year, please advise your Housing Officer, Karen Gilruth, who can be contacted on **07825 855224** or via karen.gilruth@fifehg.org.uk.



Dunfermline

Now that recycling centres are fully operational again, please take time to assess the condition of your garden and what you could do to improve it. Remember, the upkeep of any private garden attached to your tenancy is not optional, it is part of your tenancy agreement. Regrettably, we have had several evictions in the area over the last year and failure to maintain garden grounds has been among the tenancy breaches involved. If you cannot remove your rubbish yourself, please arrange for an uplift from Fife Council. Proper usage of existing kerbside recycling services should prevent the need for such measures in the future.

We have secured the services of a new contractor for the upkeep of shared outdoor spaces and look forward to a high standard of grounds maintenance in the months to come.

As the weather improves, we want all of our tenants to be able to enjoy the sunshine from their gardens. For this to happen, we all need to take responsibility and ensure our behaviour is not to the detriment of other residents' right to enjoy their own outdoor space. Any concerns about anti-social behaviour should be reported to both the Police and ourselves.

Finally, a reminder that Housing Officers in all areas of Fife will be looking to visit every one of our properties over the coming months to carry out a customer profiling exercise. This will also give you the opportunity to meet your Housing Officer, if you do not already know them.

Lumphinnans

The Lumphinnans Tenants' and Residents' Group is currently going through a change of constituent members - please keep an eye out on our Facebook page for updates on this.

Some residents had been experiencing parking issues in the spaces allocated for the higher number blocks of flats in Ochilview. We're pleased to confirm that, new signage has now been installed highlighting the parking is for the residents in the block, not the surrounding streets and, hopefully, this has now resolved the parking issues.

Please also be considerate to your neighbours if you have a dog and use the shared garden area. We have had to install additional signage as a reminder to clean up after your dog. Permission to have a pet can also be removed.

Did you know you can report repairs online? Visit our home page and select 'Report a Repair.' Similarly, you can also make rent payments from the comfort of your living room; simply download the AllPay app; it's entirely free to use. Alternatively, if you prefer a payment card, please get in touch with the office or your Housing Officer, and this will be ordered and delivered to your door.

The recycling centres are now open to cars without booking a slot. Anyone using a commercial vehicle, van or trailer will still need to book an appointment.



Lochgelly

The recycling centres are now open to cars without booking a slot, so please get rid of your rubbish and not let it build up. Anyone using a commercial vehicle, van or trailer will still need to book an appointment.

Please take the time to plan if you intend on replacing any household furniture. Do not store any furniture or other items in your garden or shared communal areas until plans for disposal are confirmed.

If you would like to report illegal dumping, please contact your Housing Officer, Audrey Cameron, on **01383 608128** or **07747 895965**.

Audrey has arranged to have the rear shared area at Grainger Street, Union Street and Russell Street cleared of moss and a litter pick will take place shortly to tidy the area up.

A reminder that the stairwell is not an extension of your home and this area must be kept clear. Failure to do so is a severe breach of Fire Safety Regulations and prevents the stair cleaning contractors from properly cleaning the stairs, which is a service that all residents pay for.

Did you know you can report repairs online? Visit our home page and select 'Report a Repair.' Similarly, you can also make rent payments from the comfort of your living room; simply download the AllPay app; it's entirely free to use. Alternatively, if you prefer a payment card, please get in touch with the office or your Housing Officer, and this will be ordered and delivered to your door.

Hill of Beath and Cowdenbeath

Sadly, many residents are not taking responsibility for their household waste, which has a detrimental effect on your fellow tenants. Please clear up your rubbish and, in turn, make your community a better place to live.

The recycling centres are now open to cars without booking a slot, so there is the opportunity to clear up all of your household waste. Anyone using a commercial vehicle, van or trailer will still need to book an appointment.

Please take the time to plan ahead if you intend to replace any household furniture. Do not store any furniture or other items in your garden or shared communal areas until plans for disposal are confirmed.

Please remember that the stairwell is not an extension of your home and must be kept clear. Failure to do so is a severe breach of Fire Safety Regulations and it also prevents the stair cleaning contractors from carrying out a proper clean of the stairs. This is a service that all residents pay for.

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

Did you know you can report a repair? Visit our home page and select 'Report a Repair.' Similarly, you can also make rent payments from the comfort of your living room; simply download the AllPay app; it's entirely free to use. Alternatively, if you would prefer a payment card, please get in touch with the office or your Housing Officer, and this will be ordered and delivered to your door.

WORDSEARCH

O B C C X B P M E V B U C E S
P L O S I I N R R A D Z K E E
W O V R L J K A Q S S F U Z V
K S D U T N I W C O S T C R A
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F X I S N I Q R O N E D O B D
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Enter our SPRING competition and you could WIN a **£25 gift voucher**.

To enter: Complete the wordsearch, cut along the dotted line and send your entry to the address below by **30 June 2022**.

SPRING
FLOWER
SUN
LEAVES
SUNSHINE
BEES
BUNNY
BLOSSOM

BIRDS
BRIGHT
GRASS
WARM
TULIP
SEASON
EASTER

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

_____ TEL: _____

Return this form to Fife Housing Group, 7 Pitreavie Court, Pitreavie Business Park, Dunfermline, KY11 8UU.

WORDSEARCH WINNER

Thanks to everyone who entered our winter competition and congratulations to our lucky winner, Isabella Mandley of Rosyth, who received a supermarket voucher and will be able to treat herself to something nice online or in-store.

SLOPPY JOES

(bbcgoodfood.com)

Ready in 35 mins

Serves: 6 (499 kcal per serving)

Method

Step One:

Start by heating the oil in a deep frying pan, then fry the onion, pepper and garlic for 8-10 mins until softened. Add the mince, break it up with a wooden spoon as it cooks, and stir until it browns. Tip in the tomatoes and chipotle or barbecue sauce, and add a little seasoning. Simmer for 10-15 mins until the sauce has thickened.

Step Two:

Put the cheese slices on top of the mince and cover with a lid for 2 mins to let it melt into the sauce. Pile the Sloppy Joe mixture into the buns with the crispy onions and lettuce on the side for scooping up the extra sauce.



Ingredients

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 small red peppers or yellow peppers, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 400g minced beef
- 2 x 400ml cans of chopped tomatoes
- 2 tbsp chipotle or smoky barbecue sauce
- 4 cheese slices
- 6 burger buns
- crispy onions, to serve
- iceberg lettuce, to serve

at home with...

fife
housing
group

fifehg.org.uk

Contact us

Freephone: 08000 274 007

East Fife - Kingdom Gas: 0800 389 9463

West Fife - City Technical: 0333 202 0708

Text: 07520 632 740 Email: info@fifehg.org.uk

Our opening hours are:

Monday to Thursday 8:30am - 5:00pm

Friday 8:30am - 4:30pm

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