



the wellhouse news

WELCOME TO YOUR AUTUMN NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Chair



Welcome to your Autumn 2020 newsletter, I trust this finds you all well. In the last newsletter, I updated you on the office closure due to the Covid 19 lockdown. Unfortunately, as you are all aware the public health measures are still in place and therefore, we are continuing with our default toward home working. I was very pleased to report in the last newsletter that you are content with our Covid service delivery and our efforts to keep up our activities, including estates, gas servicing, maintenance and allocations. I am delighted to report that over our most recent 2 resident surveys you gave us 100% satisfaction rates in three areas - for estates services, for keeping you informed and for opportunities to participate in the association, with an overall 97% customer satisfaction rate: thank you for this feedback.

Cathy McGregor said to us that the “estate wardens are doing a fantastic job and that we have given Wellhouse its dignity back” and Mr & Mrs Hagan commented that “that Alex Hogg (our maintenance officer) is a great guy who does a fantastic job”- I am genuinely appreciative of this feedback and can assure you of the continued commitment of all staff and committee. We will continue to work hard to deliver excellence.

We will also see articles in this newsletter confirming the outstanding results of our income advice officer and the

funding she brought to Wellhouse to manage food & fuel issues and digital exclusion.

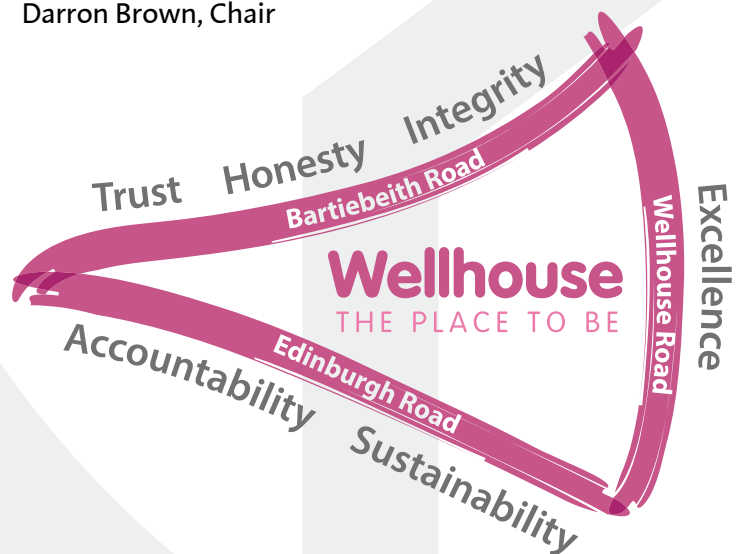
Finally; you will see a report on your new committee following our first ever remote AGM – we hope to see you all face to face as soon as is practical.

Don't forget our Christmas lights competition! See details on page 20.

Regards,

Darron Brown

Darron Brown, Chair



THE AGM HIGHLIGHTS ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YEAR FOR WELLHOUSE

The Association held its first 'virtual' AGM of Wellhouse Housing Association where members approved the Management Committee Election Results. This was a new and unusual experience for us but, due to the unprecedented situation arising from the 2020 Covid 19 global pandemic.

Under Rule 41.1, 3 members who were appointed as co-optees in the course of the preceding year; were required to seek election at the AGM, these being;

- Shona McKenna – Co-optee
- Carol Torrie – Co-optee
- Stewart McIntosh- Co-optee

They did not require nomination.

Under Rule 38 the following 2 members stood down and sought re-election, they did require nomination. Because there were fewer nominations than places on the committee, all those seeking re-election were properly elected; these being:

- Darron Brown
- Michelle Harrow

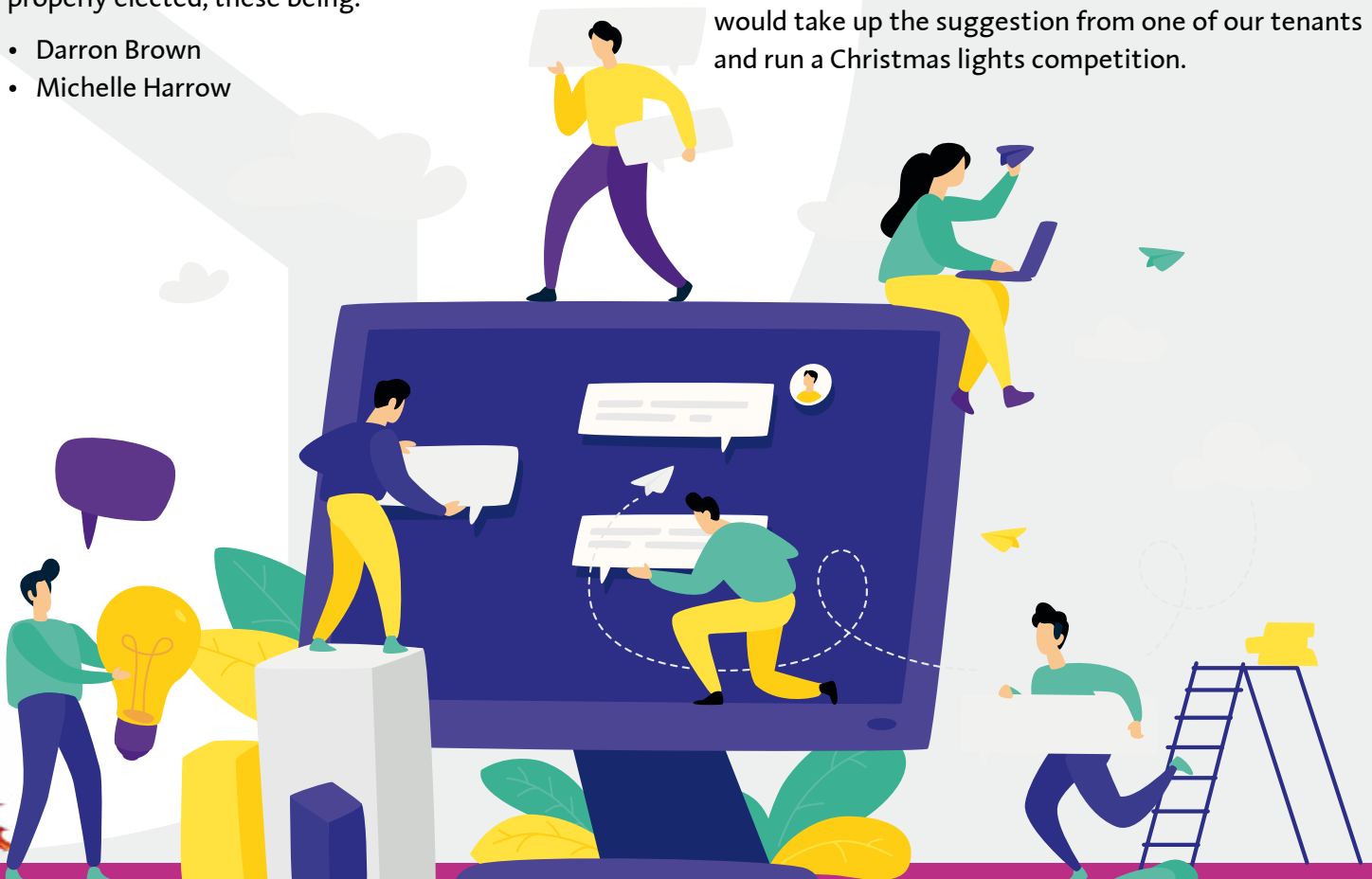
Congratulations to all those that were elected.

Your new committee is:

- Darron Brown – Chair,
- Maureen Morris – Vice Chair,
- Clare Monteith; Elected Member
- Michelle Harrow; Elected Member
- Jane Heppenstall; Elected Member
- Sarah Morris; Elected Member
- Shona McKenna; Elected Member
- Carol Torrie; Elected Member
- Stewart McIntosh; Elected Member.

The business of the meeting included a report from the Chairperson, Darron Brown, which included a showcase of achievements/activities during the year and a financial report from our External Auditors.

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He highlighted that the garden competition would be back up and running in 2021 and that in the interim we would take up the suggestion from one of our tenants and run a Christmas lights competition.



YOUR COMMITTEE NEEDS YOU!!!



Wellhouse Housing Association is governed by a volunteer board of Trustees, if you would be interested in joining our team – please call us on 0141 781 1884.

There are 3 vacancies to co-opt to the committee. If you are interested in joining the Management Committee of Wellhouse Housing Association, we are very keen to hear from you if you are enthusiastic supporters of Social Housing aims and principles and have an understanding of Wellhouse HA's activities.

What's in it for you? / What can you expect?

- Making a difference to the people of Wellhouse
- Personal development opportunities and training
- Use your skills where they are really needed
- Meet new people
- Help support the work of Wellhouse
- Contribute to decision making processes involved in the development of Wellhouse Housing Association

What's in it for us? / What can we expect?

- Your skills & enthusiasm
- New ideas for Wellhouse
- Your attendance at approx. 10 meetings per year (6-8:30pm)
- Increase in support for the Management Team & Staff

If you would like an informal chat and an application pack please contact Linda Logan (Corporate & Governance Officer) 0141 781 1884 or email: linda@wellhouseha.org.uk

Easterhouse Housing and Regeneration Alliance reaches across Europe!



As a proud member of EHRA, we are delighted to say that we recently attended the Scottish premiere of the EHRA film, 'Easterhouse, past-present-future.' The film was launched at an SFHA webinar on 30 September with a panel made up of Linda Cameron of Provanhall HA, Ciaran McQuaid Of Easthall Residents Association and Pauline Barr of Calvay HA (with guest appearance by her grandson Nathan!).

The film explores the outstanding work by all the community activists and volunteers who have been

instrumental in transforming greater Easterhouse over the last few decades and calls for continued involvement from younger members of our communities who can take this great work forward. The film was also shown as part of Housing in Europe conference on 15 October 2020 to 250 participants across Europe with Linda Cameron, who is also EHRA's chair, presenting and taking part in a panel session. The feedback from the film has been outstanding and we encourage you all to have a week look at it – you will find it in the upcoming EHRA YouTube site.

Notice of Annual Gas Safety Inspection

As you will be aware, it is vital that all gas systems and appliances are checked on an annual basis. This is to ensure the safety of yourself, your family and your neighbours.

As your landlord, Wellhouse Housing Association has a legislative duty (under regulation 36 1-12 GSIUR) to ensure that an annual safety inspection is carried out on all gas appliances and flues within their domestic properties. Please note you must ensure that you have adequate supply of gas and electric within your meters to allow the gas safety check to be carried out.

Saltire our Gas Contractor, in conjunction with Wellhouse Housing Association, are continuing to monitor and follow guidance in relation to COVID-19 and your annual service has been deemed as essential work during this time.

We would therefore ask you to call at your earliest convenience if you are self-isolating, showing any symptoms, have been confirmed to have contracted COVID-19 or if you would like to re-arrange the appointment for any other reason at this time. Please contact either Saltires Servicing Team on **0330 202 0444** or Wellhouse HA on **0141 781 1884**

Please note that our call handlers will ask the relevant screening questions when you call in and the Engineer will also ask these prior to entering your property.



Saltire are complying with guidance in relation to PPE for their operatives and all are supplied with gloves, masks and hand sanitisers.

Should you require any further information regarding your annual service, this can be found on Gas Safe website: www.gassaferegister.co.uk/help-and-advice/covid-19-advice-and-guidance/

Our engineers are complying with the social distancing guidelines. We do appreciate that your house may be busier than usual during lockdown being enforced, however, this is in the best interest for all of you. Ideally, we would ask you to vacate the room the operative is working in and they will then let you know when they have finished. The inspection will take approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour.

There are a number of **AM** and **PM** slots available so please contact us on one of the above numbers if you wish to request one.

Bill Black

Bill Black – Assets & Maintenance Manager

Please Note

“5:11 We have the right to come into your house to **inspect it and its fixtures and fittings or carry out repairs to it, or adjoining property, during reasonable time of the day. We will give you at least 24 hours’ notice in writing.** We have the right of access to your house in order to lay wires, cables and pipes for the purpose of telecommunications, water, gas and electricity, providing we give you reasonable notice in writing. We have the right of access to the common parts at any reasonable time. If you refuse us entry, we will have the right to make forcible entry provided we have given you every reasonable opportunity to let us

in voluntarily. If we have to make forcible entry, in this situation, you are liable for the costs of any damage reasonably caused and you hereby agree to pay for the cost of such damage. In an emergency, we have the right to make forcible entry to your house without notice.”

If the forced access goes ahead you will be recharged. PLEASE NOTE: You will need to arrange to collect your keys from Shettleston Police Station, opening hours 07:00 – 00:00.

Thank you for your assistance with this.

CYCLICAL MAINTENANCE

Gutter Cleaning and Roof Anchor Testing

This Tender was advertised on Public Contracts Scotland and the returns are currently being evaluated by our Consultants Ewing Somerville Partnership Ltd, we hope to appoint the successful Contractor Shortly and have them on site before winter.

Electrical Safety

The Scottish Government clarified in April 2020 that, in order to demonstrate compliance with Element 45 of the Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) – Safe Electrical Systems, landlords must organise electrical safety inspections by a competent person at intervals of no more than five years. Wellhouse HA has an ongoing dedicated programme of Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) our Contractor G.E.S. Ltd will be in contact to make arrangements for Access with those involved in this year's Inspections. These inspections are undertaken to ensure that the electrical system in your home is, and continues to be in a safe condition. As part of this inspection, the electrician may require to carry out essential electrical repairs which are identified. This will also include upgrading of smoke, heat & carbon monoxide detectors in line with the Scottish Governments new fire safety legislation. It is essential that you allow access for this work to be carried out as it not only protects you and your family but also your neighbours, should any serious electrical issues occur.



Reporting A Repair to Central Heating and Gas Appliance

If there is something wrong with your heating in between services, you should report this to **Saltire** 24hrs a day by telephoning **0330 202 0444** and our gas contractor will attend and repair the fault.

If you smell gas in your property:

1. Let fresh air into your home by opening doors and windows.
2. If it's safe to do so, make sure you cut the gas supply off straight away – move the handle a quarter turn, until it's at 90 degrees from the pipe. This is usually located next to your gas meter. But if it's in the cellar, it's usually best to leave it.
3. Leave your property.
4. Call the National Gas Emergencies number 0330 111 999. It's free of charge, and lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
5. Listen to the advice provided by the emergency adviser and follow it
6. Wait outside your property for the gas engineer to arrive.
7. If you feel unwell, go to your GP or your local hospital straight away. Inform them that you think you've been exposed to a gas leak or carbon monoxide poisoning.

Don't:

- light a match, smoke, or use any other naked flame
- touch any electrical switches; don't turn them on or off.
- use mobile phones, doorbells or any other electrical switches that could spark.

BALCONY ROOF WORKS

The Association instructed Ramsay McMichael Consulting Ltd, to obtain competitive tenders for the Balcony Roof Works at properties in Wellhouse Gardens & Balado Road which have been experiencing water ingress through the Balcony.

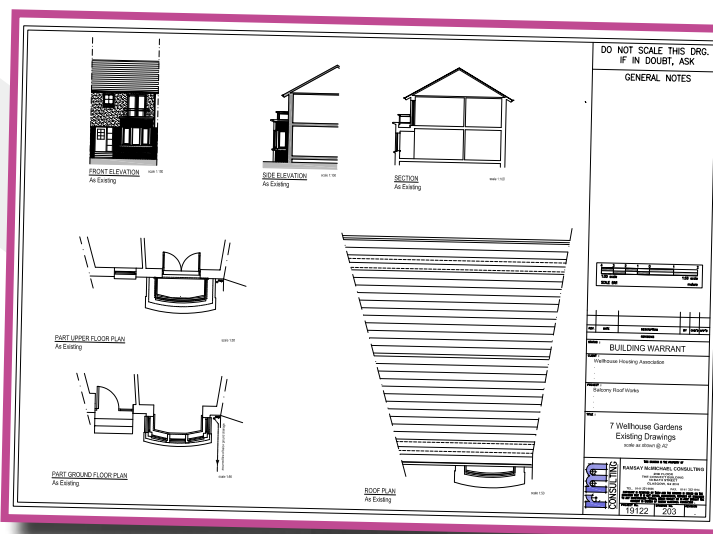
Contract documentation was prepared and issued to tender with a return date of 6 March 2020. The Contract was won by Total Reinstatement Services Limited but due to Lockdown we were unable to progress with the Contract. With the lifting of some of the restrictions, Total Reinstatement Services Limited, started on site in late August and work is progressing well. The contract duration is expected to be for 12 weeks.

Mr. and Mrs. Adamson have stated that they are “delighted with the standard of works and with the service of the contractor who are carrying out the repairs. They are happy that the Association is now resolving this historical issue at the veranda.”

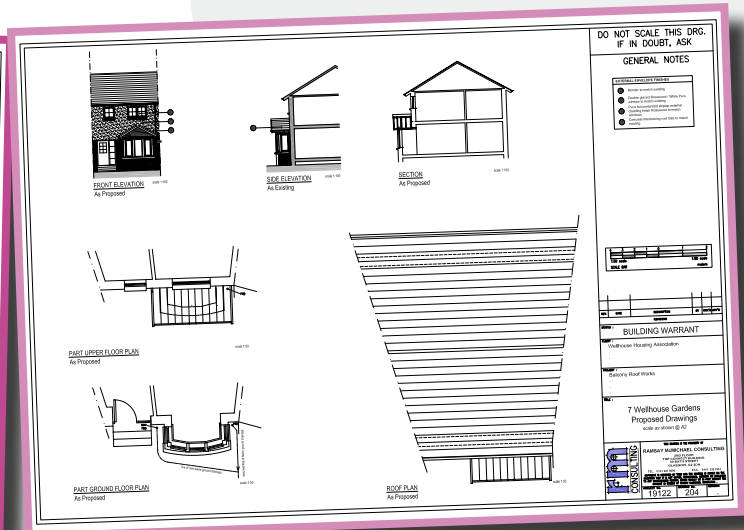


Bill Black

Bill Black – Assets & Maintenance Manager



Before



After





Wellhouse to invest more than £1m in housing stock

Published 16 September 2020

Wellhouse Housing Association has today unveiled plans to invest a further £1.1 million in its housing stock over the next 12 months.

The investment follows £1m of works carried out across 280 homes from Sept 2019 to Sept 2020, a programme which included almost 100 new kitchens, more than 60 bathrooms and 37 boilers being installed as well as gas checks being carried out on every property.

Wellhouse said it is firmly focused on continual improvement across its 800 homes and the organisation has increased its investment levels by 10% every year since 2014.

Chair Darron Brown said: "It is important to Wellhouse Housing Association that this is a place where people feel safe and happy, where they have a good home and where they are proud to be part of a vibrant community.

"Investment in our properties is a key priority and we know how important this is to our tenants and how much they value a new kitchen or replacement windows in their home. We will continue to ensure that these upgrades are carried out."

Plans for the next 12 months include 77 kitchens 15, bathrooms, 17 boilers, new windows for 92 properties, new doors for 64 properties, continuing upgrades to smoke detectors and back court improvements.

The housing association is also planning for the procurement of gutter cleaning and roof anchor inspection.

Darron added: "COVID-19 has changed all of our lives and we are clearly aware that this may also have an impact on the delivery of these improvements. We are working closely with our existing contractors as well as reviewing updates and advice from the government, regulator and housing sector to ensure we obtain the best quality and value for money for our tenants and prioritise which contracts we pursue as we move forward.

"Although COVID-19 may bring changes to the timeframe, we remain committed to delivering these improvements for the benefit of our tenants."

Residents unanimously satisfied with neighbourhood management at Wellhouse

Published 16 September 2020
– Scottish Housing News

Wellhouse Housing Association (WHA) has received a 100% satisfaction rating for its “contribution to the management of the neighbourhood” for the first time in an independent survey of its residents.

The quarterly Continuous Monitoring Global & Health Check survey carried out by MI Housing Services assesses the quality of services provided by nine housing associations across the West of Scotland.

All seven measures of satisfaction have gone up in the survey for the second quarter of 2020 with 96% of Wellhouse tenants satisfied with the overall service and 93% satisfied with the quality of their home.

Wellhouse’s senior management team and management committee took the decision in March 2020 not to place any estates staff on furlough to allow for ongoing maintenance work to continue throughout the year.

WHA is focused on ensuring that Wellhouse is a vibrant community where people feel safe and happy and estate wardens Daniel Healy, Jordan French, Dale Russell and Stephen Fotheringham have ensured that a full programme of work has been carried out.



(from left) Stephen Fotheringham, Daniel Healy (supervisor), Jordan French and Dale Russell

WHA chair, Darron Brown, said: “On behalf of everyone on the Wellhouse management committee, I would like to offer our thanks to the estates team at the housing association for their continued hard work. The results of the survey confirm what we already know – Wellhouse staff go over and above for our tenants.

“What makes these findings even more remarkable is that the survey was carried out during a particularly difficult time when council services had begun being



Before and after



Before and after

reduced because of COVID-19, and fly-tipping was seeing an increase. The residents of Wellhouse have shown a great deal of patience and understanding during this challenging period.

“Many organisations throughout the country have had to take difficult financial decisions, but it was our view that we could not place any of our vital estates staff on furlough if we were to complete all essential maintenance work. Thankfully, with the necessary PPE and social distancing guidelines, they have been able to continue providing a first-class service for Wellhouse tenants.”

Darron added: “We will always use these results to look for ways to continually improve and we will give further consideration to the best methods to communicate the services we have to offer and to update on any decisions we take.”

Advisor raises £2.4million in benefits for residents in Wellhouse

By Glasgow Times Reporter

WELLHOUSE Housing Associations' income advice officer has secured more than £2.4 million in financial gains through her work in advocacy and income maximisation.

Laura Reilly – who joined WHA in 2018 – is credited with helping more than 420 residents in the north-east Glasgow area with benefits and debt-related issues by determining all the payments they are entitled to.

For one tenant, her work resulted in successfully overturning their son's Personal Independence Payment and Carer's Allowance application rejection.

The tenant will also receive their own disability premiums that leave the family £2200 better off every month.

In another case, Laura helped a tenant secure a housing benefit refund of more than £4000 and for them to continue receiving housing support payments.

Laura's work also sees a Wellhouse resident's income increase by £291.17 every month after having their Universal Credit allowance

reassessed to include disability and carer payments.

Laura said: "I am proud that I have been able to provide a much-needed service for our tenants, particularly with fuel debt and fuel grants, and it is important to me that I help as many people as possible to secure what they are entitled to.

"It can be a daunting process, but I can help throughout the process from form filling, applying for crisis support to providing guidance on appeals."

Laura also saw a local renter having a £4000 energy debt written off through back billing adjustments and grants.

WHA's chairman, Darron Brown, said many more tenants could benefit from the service and is urging them to get in touch.

He said: "We understand that the benefit system can be complex and challenging so our income advice service is a real lifeline for so many of Wellhouse's residents.



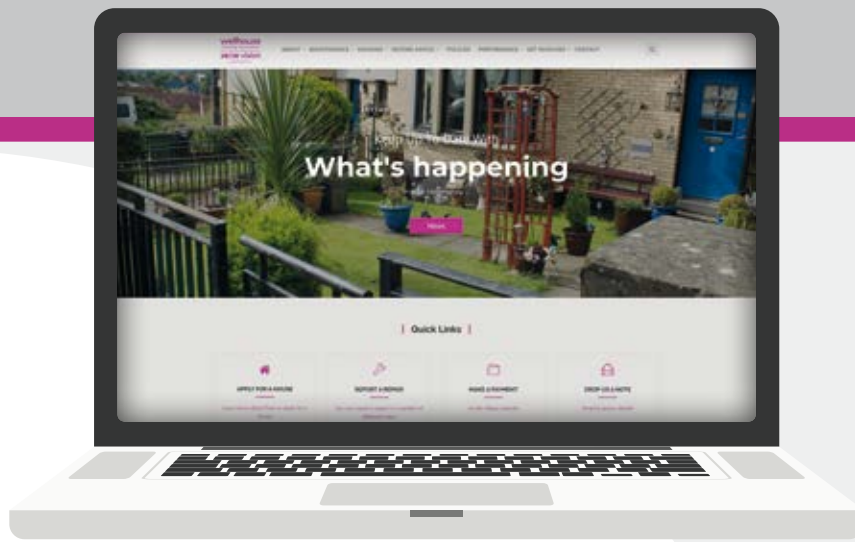
Laura Reilly

"In Laura we have the hardest working and most dedicated income advice officer in Scotland who is delivering a vital service to our tenants.

"Securing £2.4m worth of welfare money over two years is no easy task."

Any WHA tenant who would benefit from this support can contact Laura on 0141 781 1884.





DO YOU NEED INTERNET ACCESS?

If you don't have access to internet at home or you have internet access but don't have access to a suitable device, Wellhouse Housing Association may be able to help you.

We have a lending library of tablets available for our tenants, the tablets have a 10-inch screen and come with internet access. See article on page 14.

You can borrow a tablet for an agreed period of time.

You can use the tablet for things like:

- Keeping in contact with family and friends online
- Using online shopping/ Prescription services

- Accessing online benefits such as Universal Credit
- Job searching
- Accessing digital courses
- Accessing coursework or homework
- Learning how to use social media and much more

For more information contact the office on 0141 781 1884. Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm.

Benefit assistance & crisis support

If you find yourself in a financial crisis due to the Coronavirus outbreak please contact our Income Advice Officer Laura Reilly on 0141 781 1884.

We can still offer you telephone appointments or email advice and support to:

- Check benefit entitlement and apply for relevant benefits
- Assist with form filling
- Apply for crisis support and refer to local support agencies.
- Provide benefit advice and appeal representation.



Warm home discount schemes are now open for 2020 to 2021

You could get £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2020 to 2021 under the Warm Home Discount Scheme.

The 2020 to 2021 scheme will open on 12 October 2020.

The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March.

You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out.

If you are receiving benefits or are on a low income you may be eligible to apply.

Not all energy suppliers take part in the scheme, so please check directly with your energy supplier.

The discount will not affect your Cold weather payment or Winter Fuel payment

Further information & eligibility criteria can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme>

For more information contact the office on 0141 781 1884. Monday to Thursday 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm.

Laura Reilly

Laura Reilly, Income & Advice Officer

New Grant for those self-isolating on a low income

People on low incomes will be eligible to receive a new £500 grant if asked to self-isolate.

The new Self-Isolation Support Grant will help those who would lose income if they needed to self-isolate, such as those unable to carry out their work from home.

This grant is for those who will face financial hardship due to being asked to self-isolate and will be targeted at people who are in receipt of Universal Credit or legacy benefits, with some discretion to make awards to others in financial hardship.

Applications are due to open from 12 October and will be delivered through the existing Scottish Welfare Fund, which is administered by local authorities.

New £10 child payment for families in Scotland

The new £10 Scottish Child Payment will open for applications from November with payments to start from the end of February.

Families on certain tax credits or benefits with a child under six will be able to apply for £10 per child, per week to assist with living costs.

Check our web page for more information on the Scottish Child Payment application process throughout October.

Looking after your mental health during COVID-19

The Scottish governments “clear your head” campaign highlights practical things you can do to look after your mental health and wellbeing while continuing to stay at home. Visit <https://clearyourhead.scot/> for tips resources and support.

If you need to talk someone about your mental health you can contact:

- **NHS 24 on 111**
Monday to Sunday 6pm to 2am.
- **Breathing Space on 0800 83 85 87**
Weekdays Monday to Thursday 6pm - 2am.
Weekends Friday 6pm – Monday 6am
- **Samaritans on 116 123 Free from any phone.**
Open 24 hours a day 365 days a year.

Find out what you can do if you are struggling because of coronavirus (COVID-19)

The UK government has launched a GOV.UK online service to find out what help you can get if you are affected by coronavirus. You can use it for yourself or someone else.

You can find information about:

- feeling unsafe
- going in to work
- paying bills or being unemployed
- getting food
- having somewhere to live
- mental health and wellbeing

Please visit <https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support.gov.uk> for further information

Useful support links:

- **Citizen’s Advice Helpline Scotland**
0800 028 1456 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm.
<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/about-us/get-advice-s/>
- **Easterhouse Citizens Advice Bureau**
0141 771 2328
<https://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux/glasgow-easterhouse-citizens-advice-bureau>

JOB START PAYMENT Fact Sheet



Social Security Scotland
Tèarainteachd Shòisealta Alba

What is Job Start Payment?

It's a one off payment of £250 available to young people in Scotland who are on certain benefits, and need help with the costs of starting a new job. If the person has a child, they could get £400.

Who can get it?

A person must meet all of the criteria below to be eligible:

- are 16 to 24 years old; or are a care leaver aged 16 to 25
- live in Scotland on the day of the job offer
- they have a job offer for paid employment
- the job must average 12 hours or more per week, over a 4 week period. It doesn't need to be a permanent job
- be out of paid work and in receipt of a qualifying benefit* for 6 months or more, or if a care leaver out of paid work and in receipt of a qualifying benefit at the time of the job offer (care leavers do not need to be in receipt of a qualifying benefit for 6 months)

*Qualifying benefits are:

- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income Support
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Universal Credit (UC)

How long does someone have to apply?

They have up to 3 months from getting their job offer to apply.

What evidence will be required?

A confirmation of the job offer. This can be a text message, a letter, or an email from the employer. We'll accept photocopies or screenshots of these and they can be uploaded online or provided by post.

@SocSecScot Social Security Scotland 0800 182 2222

This information can be provided in alternative languages or formats by calling 0800 182 2222.

What if they are a care leaver?

We will only request evidence of the person being a care leaver if they:

- are 25 years old when they were offered the job
- have been in receipt of a qualifying benefit for fewer than 6 months
- have been out of paid work for fewer than 6 months.

Who is a care leaver?

A person is a care leaver if they've spent time in care but stopped being looked after on, or after their 16th birthday.

This could have been either a foster, residential, secure or formal kinship care placement.

How long after applying will it take to get a payment?

We will aim to give a decision by letter within 21 working days of receiving their application form and evidence. If their application is successful, payment should follow a few days later.

How do they get the money?

We pay it directly to their chosen account.

Do they need to pay this back?

No.

What can they use the money for?

It can be spent on anything for starting work like clothing, travel or lunches.

Will this affect other benefits?

Depending on circumstances, Job Start Payment or their new job may affect other benefits. People should get independent advice.

How often can someone apply?

If someone has had a payment, they will not be able to get another one until two years have passed.

How can someone apply?

Visit mygov.scot/benefits to apply online or call freephone on 0800 182 2222 to complete the application over the phone or to request a paper application form.

Housing association launches tech fund

27th August 2020
by Gareth Jones

Tenants at Wellhouse Housing Association are being supported to access digital technology

A housing association is helping its tenants to access digital technology.

Wellhouse Housing Association in Glasgow has launched a digital support fund to help tenants and local community groups to connect with families and friends and to access online welfare and education support.

A grant from the Supporting Communities Fund is helping the organisation to invest £9,750 in internet ready tablets which can be borrowed and smart phones which will be gifted.

The Digital Support Fund can also be accessed by individuals and community groups in Easterhouse where WHA wants to help improve the lives of local people by giving them access to video calls with friends and family, online shopping, prescription services, accessing benefits online, job searches and online education.

The successful application which allowed the fund to be created was submitted by income advice officer Laura Reilly who is responsible for securing £2.4m in financial gains for Wellhouse residents through her skills in income maximisation, advocacy and advice in her two years in the post.

WHA chairman, Darron Brown, said: "Life in lockdown has been difficult



for all of us, but especially those who cannot connect with loved ones or access information and services on the internet.

"Seeing the faces of friends and family on smartphone or tablet screens can make a real difference to how people cope during this time and I would encourage anyone without a smart device in the Wellhouse and Easterhouse areas to sign up for our Digital Support Fund.

"There are so many benefits to being online and this fund will provide a lifeline to those who

cannot afford an electronic device with internet access. We have also found some great online learning resources in case anyone needs help to use them effectively.

"Importantly, we hope this new stock will help as many of our shareholding residents as possible to attend our 2020 virtual AGM on 23 September."

Tenants can find out more by phoning 0141 781 1884 from Monday to Thursday between 9am to 5pm and Friday 9am to 4.30pm

ARE YOU STRUGGLING? – WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

Did you know that your rent pays for all of the services we provide as well as investment in your home? This includes new kitchens, bathrooms, windows and heating replacement as well as repairs and the upkeep of the estate. We don't receive any other funding to help with this investment so it's really important that rent is paid on time.

Sadly, we are owed almost £317,000 in rent arrears which is a huge concern. This is just over 10% of our annual income and it seriously affects the amount of improvements we can carry out. This amount of money would allow us to install 90 extra kitchens and 115 bathrooms or various other improvements.

We will not carry out these types of improvements in properties if there is money owed to the Association for rent arrears, repair recharges or court expenses.

Like most social landlords, Wellhouse Housing Association is able to provide lots of support for those who are struggling to pay their rent. Our officers are always on hand to help with financial advice, making affordable payment arrangements and assisting tenants to apply for benefits. We have our own Income Advice Officer who is second to none at accessing backdates and extra income for those who are finding it difficult to make ends meet.

While we have very few evictions here in Wellhouse, very often some tenants find themselves in an endless cycle of reducing their rent arrears, breaking payment arrangements and then facing the prospect of legal action as the debt increases once more. We understand that some tenants have reduced income due to Covid-19 and we are especially keen to help anyone who is struggling to pay in these circumstances.

Sometimes, for various reasons, some tenants simply stop talking to us and they bury their head in the sand, hoping that somehow or other the problem will disappear. While we fully recognise the impact on families when they are faced with the prospect

of losing their home, it is very important that tenants know that other Organisations can help too. We recognise that partnership working is key to preventing many evictions.



Even when we provide details of the wonderful support that is available, tenants often wait until the last minute, often after a Sheriff has granted an eviction decree, before they seek that vital assistance.

We had one such case recently, where a family were about to lose their home after many years of broken arrangements and increasing debt. Just days before the arranged eviction, a family member finally contacted Shelter Scotland for advice. The results were amazing. Shelter were able to contact other charitable Organisations who stepped in to help with the debt. In addition, they assisted the family to make arrangements for paying their rent in the future as well as securing support from Loretto Care to ensure that the family can settle into a positive pattern of behaviour to allow them to adhere to their tenancy obligations.

We are committed to ensuring that eviction is always a last resort and we recognise the value of Partnership working. Our website has details of lots of support networks that can assist our tenants and their families with various difficulties – not just financial support!

We are unable to take cash payments as the Hub is closed to the public just now but there are many other ways you can pay your rent. Your Housing Officer will be happy to help you choose the best method for you.

Carol Hamilton

Carol Hamilton
HOUSING & CUSTOMER SERVICES MANAGER

SGM/AGM QUESTIONS

23 SEPTEMBER 2020



Martin Wilkie-McFarlane

Martin Wilkie-McFarlane,
DIRECTOR

1. I agree in principle to the new model rules however some clauses may be open to abuse. I do not approve the Rules.

Thank you for your comments on the New Model Rules in which you state some clauses may be open to abuse and you, consequently, did not support their adoption. If you outline for me the specific areas you have concerns with, WHA would be happy to respond.

In the meantime, rest assured, the Rules are designed to offer maximum protection to the Housing Association, which is why your management committee recommended them to you as a shareholding member. You will be aware that all committee members sign a code of conduct which is rigorously enforced and, in addition, we are heavily regulated as to our governance requirements.

2. I require information on the trends in our accounts on a year-to-year basis.

A. It may be that the presentation by our auditor covered this at the AGM, however the accounts will be added to the last 5 sets of accounts which are presently on the website in due course and this will give you all the information you need. Of course, please let us know if it does not. We look forward to hearing from you

3. I do not approve the adoption of the new model rules 2020. My concerns are related to clause 39.3 relating to grounds on which the committee can reject a member's nomination.

A. Thank you for your feedback on the New Model Rules. You advised me that you do not approve the adoption of the new model rules 2020, with your concerns being in connection with clause 39.3 relating to grounds on which the committee can reject a member's nomination. These grounds are:

39.3	A nomination for election to the Committee can be rejected by a decision by not fewer than three quarters of the Committee Members on one or more of the following grounds:	
	39.3.1	where election to the Committee would be contrary to the Association's Rules or policies; or
	39.3.2	where a conflict of interest may exist which, even allowing for the disclosure of such an interest may adversely affect the work of the Association; or
	39.3.3	where there is clear evidence of relevant circumstances from which it is concluded that election to the Committee would not be in the best interests of the Association.

Rest assured, the Rules are designed to offer maximum protection to the Housing Association, which is why your management committee recommended them to you as a shareholding member. The rules explicitly state that 75% of the committee would need to support such a rejection and that it would need to be based upon clear and demonstrable evidence, not supposition or opinion. You will be aware that all committee members sign a code of conduct which is rigorously enforced and we take our equalities, diversity and human rights responsibilities seriously. In addition, we are heavily regulated as to our governance requirements. I remain absolutely resolute that the elected committee of Wellhouse HA take these responsibilities seriously and that we act to the highest ethical standards and operate in line with our vision and values – this rule would, if ever, only be used in exceptional circumstances. It is our intention to encourage membership of the Association and interest in the committee, not the opposite. It is worthwhile noting that, under the current rules, the Committee has absolute discretion in deciding on applications for membership. Subject to the provisions of Rule 7.2 of the Association’s Model Rules, we are able to reject applications for membership where the Committee considers that membership would be contrary to the Association’s Rules and policies, that there may be a conflict of interest which may adversely affect the work of and would not be in the best interest of the Association.

Rest assured of our good intentions at all times and our aim to make Wellhouse Housing Association an organisation which is fit for the future and complies with all regulatory requirements. We will be holding another SGM in due course to seek adoption of the Rules: they will bring us into line with our peers in the sector who are adopting them too. A copy of your comments and my reply will be kept on file. Should you require anything further please let me know.

4. I would like to ask why when everything was affected by Covid 19; meaning people losing their job or furloughed including yourselves did you not help the people of Wellhouse by at least postponing

the rent increase as it’s allegedly to help with home improvements that you weren’t able to carry out? Instead I received a text message from WHA to remind me to pay my rent including the proposed increase. I felt your organisation let tenants down very badly.

.....

The 2020/21 rent increase was approved in January 2020 following tenant consultation, ahead of the lockdown and, consequently, we had set our budgets and spending plans on that basis. In addition, our rent accounting system and the housing benefit schedules had been updated by the end of February. We would not have been able to have applied a retrospective change to the rent increase and the 5-year financial plan at that time. Any improvements have been delayed, not cancelled, and will require to be fully funded.

5. Do the association employees plan to undertake any walk rounds/drive through of the community while the office is closed to see any issues arising around fly-tipping, litter, general upkeep etc? I am aware the estate wardens are out and working but in my opinion it’s far too big a job to rely on them alone to upkeep the entire area.

.....

The estates wardens have been working throughout the entire lockdown and our maintenance manager and officer have been in the office regularly since June and have inspected Wellhouse. We carry out regular inspections and significant effort has been put in place by the estates team to keep on top of the environment, bulk uplifts, etc in absence of council provision. We have attempted to set up socially distanced inspections with Glasgow city council, but this has not been possible due to their conflicting priorities and the number of staff they have on furlough. I had a meeting with Councillors Ballantyne, Morgan and Kelly on the 16th of September and they assured him that bulk uplifts will be restarting soon and at that time, we should be able to have a joint inspection. Mr McKee and Mr Mason, MSP’s were also present at this meeting. We will keep you updated. Thank you very much for your continued interest in the area. If you require anything further, please let me know.

6. During the AGM the committee members were read out and those that had to stand down were named and as there were no nominations, they were able to stand again. But then the chair read out a full list of all committee and Stuart Macintosh is now a member of the committee, how did he get elected if there were no nominations.

As presented by the Chair at the AGM and as outlined in your AGM pack: a new Committee has been elected in accordance with the Rules. Because there were fewer nominations than places on the Committee – all those seeking election have been properly elected. Under Rule 41.1 members who were appointed as co-optee’s in the course of the preceding year were required to seek election at this AGM, these being Shona McKenna, Carol Torrie and Stewart McIntosh. They did not require nomination. All three were duly elected. Your committee now has 9 fully elected members.

7. As you have said in the newsletter that Easthall will be coming to wellhouse to provide services can you advise what services they will be as CCT are still providing the services they have been previously provided so I really don’t see a need for this. Also, how much is it costing for their services and did the tenants get a say in this as obviously it will be tenants rent money that is being used for this.

Rest assured that Wellhouse HA remains committed to the provision of community services as we have made clear in the newsletter article from December 2019 and other communications, and we have, indeed, consulted residents on their expenditure priorities. We remain confident that our proposals are supported. Of course, we will seek to ensure that duplication is avoided in any service provision and that we continue to apply good governance and financial controls – the needs and wants of the community of Wellhouse remains, as always, our primary aim.

8. Why haven’t the residents been involved in the decision making via a ballot as to who and what organisations provide whatever community services the residents decide they need. This is not a decision WHA should be making. They should or shouldn’t decide on funding.

The membership delegate the operational running of the RSL to the elected management committee to make operational decisions. Whilst we routinely consult on issues such as rent increases or very large reinvestment programmes; we do not on matters such charitable grants. Notwithstanding, we did consult with tenants on expenditure priorities including community activity in 2019. Rest assured, your committee are committed to supporting community activities and to operate to the highest standards of governance and financial controls.

9. When did WHA become a Limited company and when were the residents informed and balloted to arrive at this decision?

We are governed by the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act and have been since the legislation changed in 2014. This change would have been brought to the membership at that time.

10. How much has it cost the rent payers in lawyers letter to evict CCT from its premises?

CCT were not evicted from Newhills Road nor from the Hub.

11. What are the plans for the now empty shops at Newhills Road.

A. All empty properties are marketed as appropriate in line with our approach to commercial lets and wider business plans. This will happen once we have full vacant possession.

Beat the chill this winter with support from Home Energy Scotland



If you're worried about your bills, or finding it difficult to keep warm at home, Home Energy Scotland can help you access support to improve things.

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If you are, or someone you know is worried about energy bills, call **0808 808 2282** or email **adviceteam@sc.homeenergyscotland.org** and a friendly advisor will be in touch. Calls are free and lines are open Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday from 9am to 5pm.

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If you're looking for advice and funding to help you make your home warmer, cheaper to run and more energy efficient, give them a call free on 0808 808 2282 or check out the website below.

To take the quiz please go to the following link.
<http://bit.ly/energy-bills-quiz>

Christmas display competition

It's nearly that time of year again and everyone is starting to think about Christmas and all that comes with it.

Sadly, we weren't able to hold our annual garden competition this year due to Covid 19 but one of our tenants has suggested that we can do a Christmas lights competition instead. We think this is a great idea!!

We know that many of you enjoy decorating your garden and windows for the festive season for everyone to enjoy. During the month of December, we will keep an eye on all of those lovely displays and we will announce the winner in our winter newsletter.

The lucky householder will be contacted before we close for the Christmas holidays and they will receive a £50 gift voucher. Good luck!!!



Wellhouse: the Place to Be



wellhouse
Housing Association

Trust Honesty Integrity Excellence Accountability Sustainability

How to contact us

We are open in the hub daily from 9am

We close at 5pm Monday to Thursday and at 4.30pm on Fridays

Call us on 0141 781 1884.

Email us direct, e.g. Pat@wellhouseha.org.uk if you know who you want to contact, or info@wellhouseha.org.uk

TRUST • HONESTY • INTEGRITY • EXCELLENCE • ACCOUNTABILITY • SUSTAINABILITY

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Scottish Charity No. SC036552



Wellhouse Housing Association has the following registrations: Scottish Charity – SC036552 • Scottish Housing Regulator – HAC281 • Co-op & Community Benefits Societies – 2469R (S) • Property Factors – PF000109 • Financial Conduct Authority - 2469R (S).
Registered office: The Hub, 49 Wellhouse Crescent, Easterhouse, Glasgow, G33 4LA.