



Yoker Housing News

(also available online at www.yokerha.org.uk)

Winter 2020

21 December 2020

Seasons Greetings from the Committee and Staff of Yoker Housing Association

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Office Closure

The Association's offices remain closed to the public due to the Covid-19 pandemic except by prior arrangement. Staff continue to provide telephone access.

All staff will be on annual leave from 5:00pm on Wednesday the 23rd of December when the office will close for the festive season.

Staff will return on Monday the 4th of January 2021 at 9:00am.

Please refer to the back page for emergency contractor telephone numbers.

Development News

Blawarthill Hospital Site



An artists impression of the new build element of the development.

The new build element of the Association's re-development of the site of the old Blawarthill Hospital was given a boost with the granting of a Stage 2 Building Warrant just before the Covid-19 lockdown in March.

The contractor hopes to start on site with the new build bungalows and cottage flats in early 2021. As part of the project, it was agreed that the contractor would provide employability training to local young people aged 17 to 24. If you would like to apply for a position for employability training, please contact the Association on 0141 950 9051 and we will pass your details on to the contractor.

We were pleased to tell you last year that work had started on the conversion of the Category "C" listed building to transform it from the former hospital administration block into four flatted dwellings. Down takings revealed the building to be in a very poor state of repair. The crumbling internal stone walls had to be removed and rebuilt in timber. Just as progress was being made, the site had to close for three months during the Covid-19 lockdown.

(Continued on page 2)

Development News

(Continued from page 1)



However, since re-opening in June, the contractor has made swift progress and the excellent standard of workmanship has been praised by the design team.

The conversion work is due to be completed in the spring of 2021.

Yoker Primary School Site

The Association's proposals for the site have now gone through the full planning process and an approval decision is awaited. The building warrant application was submitted in December 2020.



The works have been priced and the tender submission is with our funder, Glasgow City Council, for assessment.

The costs are high, and we cannot be certain at this stage if the project will be approved. The proposed development is for a housing mix of twenty-nine highly insulated terraced and semi-detached

houses, bungalows, and cottage flats to accommodate varying household needs.

Condensation In Homes

The Scottish Government has produced information that explains how condensation forms and ways in which you can keep it to a minimum. This reduces the risk of dampness and mould growth.

You can view the information online at the Scottish Government's website at:

www2.gov.scot/Publications/2005/05/10103020/30224

Maintenance Performance Feedback

The Association continually monitors the maintenance service provided to residents by way of Performance Feedback Questionnaires issued randomly on a monthly basis. We would be grateful if you would take the time to complete these questionnaires noting any comments you may have and returning them to the office.

These questionnaires can also be forwarded and returned by email. Please contact the Association with your email address if you would prefer to receive the form by this method.

If you wish to respond to this survey using Survey Monkey please input the following address to your web browser on your mobile, tablet or computer and complete the questionnaire on-line:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BHWWPV2 [Please be sure to input the repair order number detailed on the front of your survey.]



The Association acts as a referring agency for Glasgow North West Foodbank.

We can issue vouchers for the foodbank to tenants in need.

To find out more information about the foodbank or to request a voucher please contact a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052.

The address of the foodbank is:

Glasgow NW Foodbank
Blawarthill Parish Church
Millbrix Avenue
Glasgow
G14 OEP

The foodbank is normally open on Tuesdays and Fridays from 12.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.

Development Policy Reviews 2021

During the course of 2021 the following policies will be reviewed by the Association.

- Tendering Policy
- Approved List of Development Consultants
- Greening Our Workplace Policy
- Sustainability Policy
- Sustainable Housing Design Guide
- Development Policy
- Recovery of Other Owners' Costs
- Procurement Policy

A copy of these policies can be obtained upon request by calling a member of the property services team on 0141-950-9051. These policies can also be viewed or downloaded from our website at www.yokerha.org.uk.

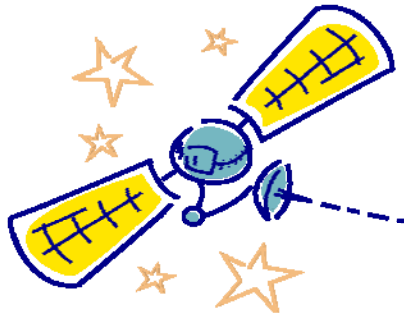
Having reviewed a policy or policies, if you wish to discuss further or provide any feedback or suggestions you can do so by telephoning a member of the property services team on 0141-950-9051 or by e-mailing your comments to

maintenance@yokerha.org.uk.

Satellite Systems

In order to receive television digital signals you need to have either a freeview television, freeview digibox or subscribe to either Sky through satellite or through Virgin Media or equivalent.

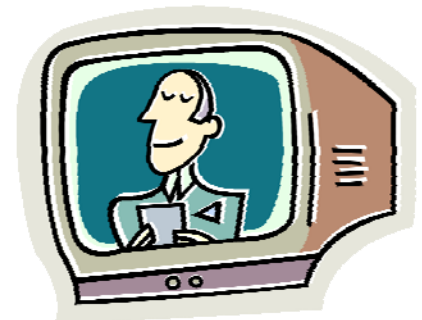
As you should be aware it is the Association's policy to disallow the siting of individual satellite dishes on its buildings. These will be removed and the resident recharged the cost of removal. However there is a communal



satellite system fitted on all tenements, which is capable of serving all flats in each block. The system provides residents with the opportunity of receiving satellite television channels. A con-

nection charge of **£70.00** is levied to those who are interested in connecting onto the system.

Please note that this charge is for **connection only** to the satellite system and is payable to the Association. A

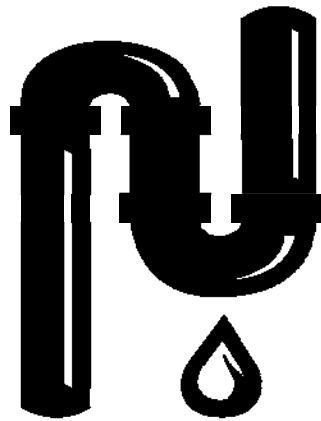


Avoid Burst Pipes this Winter

During cold weather it is advisable to keep your central heating on at all times to prevent burst pipes. Burst pipes can cause considerable damage to your house and that of your neighbours below.

If you are going to be away from your home over the festive period your radiator valves can be turned to the frost setting.

If you notice any damp patches appearing on your ceiling, whether it is during the festive period or throughout the year, please report this to the Association immediately. It is im-



portant that you do not paint over it if you think it has dried out. The initial cause has to be traced and rectified even if it is only that your neighbour has let a bath, wash hand basin or sink overflow.

contract will then have to be entered and any installation charges paid to Sky (or their agents) to receive satellite television channels. Please note all tenements have only one cable per flat and both Sky Plus and Sky Q require additional cabling. It is the resident's responsibility to find out if it is possible to fit additional wiring for these services as it will depend which floor you reside on. The cost of any additional wiring will not be met by the Association.

We would remind all residents who are attached to the communal satellite that during bad weather (wind, rain or snow) it is possible that the sky dish may be damaged and you will lose your signal. Should this happen this will be repaired only when it is safe for the engineers to go onto the roof.

Blocked Backcourt Drains

Unfortunately the Association's contractors have been called to clear numerous blocked and overflowing backcourt drains at considerable cost to the Association's maintenance budget over the last year.

We would once again remind you that the following items must not be flushed down the toilet:

Sanitary towels / condoms / face wipes / toilet wipes / baby wipes / nappies / kitchen roll

We would also request that

when emptying or cleaning pots, frying pans or chip pans which have had oil, fat or grease in them, please ensure that this is wiped off with kitchen towel or



emptied into a sealed container which can then be placed in the bin. All nappies, sanitary items etc. should be placed in sealed bags and binned.

The drains simply cannot cope with such items being flushed into them and that is why they are continually blocking. The Association now charges all residents their share of the cost of clearing the drains affected.

Rechargeable Repairs

It is the Association's policy to re-charge tenants for works carried out which are not covered by the Association's repairs policy. These include:

- (a) Damage that has occurred as a result of neglect or abuse on the part of a tenant, a member of the tenant's household, visitors to a tenant's home or forced entry by the Police;
- (b) Work carried out at the request of the tenant and the Association is not responsible for the cost (e.g. where a tenant wishes locks to be changed; installation of electrical appliances or where an appliance has caused the electricity to fail or water to leak etc.);
- (c) The repair is the tenant's responsibility under the terms of their Tenancy Agreement;
- (d) The cost of forced entry to a property where a tenant is locked out of their home and has no other means of access;
- (e) Call-out charges where a tenant fails to allow access to a contractor for pre-arranged repair works; and
- (f) Forced entry costs where essential works are required and the resident has failed to communicate or agree access.

Pest Control

The Association is not responsible for dealing with pest problems such as wasps, bees, fleas, spiders, bedbugs, carpet beetles and pigeons etc.

Residents experiencing problems with pests can seek advice on treatment from Glasgow City Council on 0141-287-1059 (option 4) or alternatively visit their website at www.glasgow.gov.uk for further information.

Tenants are advised to report mice or rats directly to Glasgow City Council's Public Health Department on 0141-287-1059 (option 4) or at www.glasgow.gov.uk/pestcontrol who will send out an officer to inspect and treat affected areas.

During early 2021 the Association's Management Committee will be making decisions regarding the level of rent increase that should be applied from 1 April 2021. When considering its decision, the Management Committee looks at the affordability of current rent levels, how our rents compare to those of other landlords and the financial viability of the Association.



As part of the review process the Management Committee also takes into account the views of tenants. In order to collect feedback and opinions from tenants the Association consulted with 604 tenants during November and December.

As part of the consultation, tenants were asked to confirm whether or not they considered their current rent charge to be affordable. We also asked their opinion regarding the level of rent increase that should be applied from 1 April 2021.

Of the 604 surveys issued, the Association receive responses from 75 tenants representing a response rate of 12.4%. The results of the tenant consultation are shown below:

Of the seventy-five tenants who responded, 84.0% considered their rent level to be either very affordable or fairly affordable.

In terms of what rent increase should be applied next year, 72.0% of those who responded agreed that a rent increase should be applied next year. Of those who agreed that a rent increase should be applied, 29.6% agreed with an increase of 0.5%. This was followed by 20.4% of respondents agreeing with an increase of 1.0%.

The Association would encourage as many tenants as possible to respond to the survey. This can be done by completing the questionnaire and returning it to the Association's office or online at [//www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YFG2G83](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YFG2G83)

What rent increase should be applied next year:			How affordable do you consider your current rent?		
	Responses	%		Responses	%
No rent increase	21	28.0	Very affordable	32	42.7
Increase of 0.5 % (CPI)	16	21.3	Fairly affordable	31	41.3
Increase of 0.7% (CPIH)	7	9.3	Neither affordable nor unaffordable	11	14.7
Increase of 1.0%	11	14.7	Fairly unaffordable	1	1.3
Increase of 1.1% (RPI)	7	9.3	Very unaffordable	0	0.0
Increase of 1.5% (CPI plus 1%)	4	5.3	Question not answered	0	0.0
Increase of 1.7% (CPIH plus 1%)	0	0.0	Total	75	100.0
Increase of 2.0%	4	5.3			
Increase of 2/1% (RPI plus 1%)	5	6.8			
Questioned not answered	0	0.0			
Total	75	100.0			

2021 Tenant Reward Scheme

Over the course of the past ten years since introducing the scheme in 2011, the Association has rewarded tenants with over £410,000 in tenant reward payments.

A total of £39,334.44 was paid out in rent rebates for tenant reward year 2020. Reward payments were made to a total of 201 tenants. The amount of the reward depends on how long you have stayed in your current home and the amount you pay in rent. The average payment was £195.69.

To qualify for tenant reward year 2021 you must meet the qualifying criteria by the 1st of March 2021.

The reward is based on the tenanted property that you are in at the end of the tenant reward year.

For most tenants the reward amount will be the difference between your annual rent at the 31st of March 2021 and your annual rent at the 31st

of March 2018.

Tenants who comply with the terms of the scheme will therefore be paying the same rent in the tenant reward year as they were paying in 2018 or when they first entered their current property—whichever is the later.

The tenant reward is not paid out for nothing—it **is for the tenant to take responsibility** for ensuring rent is correctly paid on time and that repayment arrangements for other outstanding arrears are maintained.

“ To qualify ... you must meet the qualifying criteria by the 1st of March 2021 ”

If you are in any doubt about your account then contact a member of staff for the up-to-date position.

The easiest way to ensure you qualify is to set up a direct debit or standing order for pay-

ment of your rent and any outstanding re-chargeable arrears. That way you will be sure that the correct amount is paid at the correct time.

You will not qualify unless you pay your rent with your rent card or by direct bank transfer. Those who pay by cash or cheque at the Association's offices will not be eligible.

However, remember to ensure that you have enough money in your bank account to meet your rent payment—if your bank rejects the standing order or direct debit request you will lose your reward!

For full details of the qualifying criteria contact a member of staff at the Association's offices on 0141-950-9052 or email: housing@yokerha.org.uk.

A full copy of our Tenant Reward Scheme Policy is now available online at www.yokerha.org.uk.

Smoke Alarms

All Association properties now have smoke alarms that are wired directly to the mains electricity supply, they do however have a battery back up in the event of a mains failure. These batteries can either be a normal 9v battery or a special rechargeable type. When the battery requires replacing the alarm will make a beeping sound. When this happens please replace the battery as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of the tenant to replace the battery and you should check which type of battery is nec-



essary for your type of smoke alarm.

Please note that if an electrician has to call to your property because a new battery is required and you are unable to carry this out by yourself, the cost will be recharged to you in full.

Magnetic Fobs for Door Entry Doors

Should you require a replacement key fob these can be purchased from the Association at a cost of £15.00 per replacement fob.

Please check availability by contacting the Association in advance.

Gas Servicing—A Free Essential Service to Tenants

The Association's annual gas servicing is carried out over the year on a rolling programme, ensuring that each service is carried out by its anniversary date.

The Association gives 28 days notice of the anniversary date. Please contact us immediately on receipt of your letter as the service can be booked well in advance.

Also, if you know you may be going away on holiday etc. at the time it's due, please contact us well in advance to arrange to have this carried out before you go.

If there is no response from our initial letter a reminder letter is sent 7 days later. Should there still be no response after a further 7 days a letter will be sent out with an arranged appointment. If there is no access and still no response the Association



will have no choice but to force access on an arranged date with all costs being recharged to the tenant.

This is an important ser-

vice the Association is required to carry out under Gas Regulations. Access must be gained prior to the anniversary date ensuring the continued safety of tenants and surrounding residents. Access not given is a breach of your tenancy terms and forced access will be carried out as a last resort.



Smoke, Heat and Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms

The Association must meet new standards of fire safety which have been set out by the Scottish Government in the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 (Tolerable Standard) (Extension of Criterion) Order 2019 which includes a new element covering heat and smoke alarms and carbon monoxide alarms.

To meet the standard, the Association must provide the following:

- One smoke alarm to be installed in the room most frequently used for general daytime living purposes (the living room);
- One smoke alarm in every circulation space on each storey, such as hallways and landings;
- One heat alarm to be installed in every kitchen;
- All smoke and heat alarms to be ceiling mounted;
- All smoke and heat alarms to be interlinked.
- CO detectors to be fitted in all rooms where there is a fixed combustion appliance (excluding an appliance used solely for cooking) or a flue

The Scottish Government expected all landlords to meet the requirements by 1st February 2021. However, due to the impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the date will be extended by 12 months. Our installations are currently ongoing. If you have received a letter to arrange to have this work carried out, we would encourage you to contact the Association as soon as possible to get a date booked in.

In the meantime, for those whose new installations have not yet been carried out, please remember that although smoke alarms are wired directly to the mains electricity supply, they do however have a battery backup in the event of a mains failure. When the battery requires replacing the alarm will make a beeping sound. When this happens, please replace the battery as soon as possible.

It is the responsibility of the tenant to replace the battery and you should check which type of battery is necessary for your type of smoke alarm. These batteries can either be a 9v battery or a special re-chargeable type of battery.

Please be aware that if an electrician has to call to your property because a new battery is required and you are unable to carry this out by yourself, the cost will be recharged to you in full.

Keep Your Rent Account Up-To-Date - We Are Here To Help



Under the terms of your tenancy agreement, you are required to ensure that your rent is paid monthly, in advance, on or before the first of each month.

If you receive Housing Benefit paid directly to the Association, it is still your responsibility to ensure that you manage the rent account in accordance with your tenancy agreement. You can request a statement of your rent account at any time.

We do appreciate that people can experience difficulty in meeting their financial commitments and that you may get into rent arrears as a result of a change in circumstances, such as unemployment or less income. However, the implications of not paying rent have a direct impact on the Association's financial ability to maintain properties and provide services to residents. It is therefore important that you act quickly if you are getting into difficulty—we are here to help.

If you require money or welfare advice then we would encourage you to seek assistance as soon as possible. You should contact Housing Services on 0141-950-9052 to discuss your circumstances and arrange a reasonable repayment plan. You can also get independent money / welfare advice and assistance from Drumchapel Money Advice Centre on 0141-944-0507 (admin@d-mac.org.uk).

Housing & Maintenance Policy Reviews 2021

Tenants have a right to be consulted on any proposals that affect them significantly. The Association both welcomes and encourages the constructive views of tenants and other service users.

During 2021, we plan to review the following housing policies:

- Allocations to Governing Body / Staff Members Policy
- Arrears Management Policy • Complaints Policy • Estate Management Policy
- Housing Renewal Area Policy • Mutual Exchange Policy • Particular Needs Policy
- Privacy Policy • Rent Setting Policy • Tenant Mobility Policy
- Tenant Participation Strategy

During 2021, we plan to review the following maintenance policies:

- Maintenance Policy • Repair Response Times and Categories
- Tendering Policy • Alterations and Improvements Policy • Legionella Policy
- Quotation for Minor and Small Works Policy • Pest Control Policy
- List of Approved Maintenance Contractors • Planned Maintenance Policy
- Repair Standards to Unimproved Stock Policy • Emergency Policy and Procedures
- Selection and Performance of Maintenance Contractors Policy

A copy of any of these policies can be obtained upon request by calling a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052. These policies can also be downloaded from our website at www.yokerha.org.uk. Having reviewed a policy or policies, if you wish to discuss further or provide any feedback or suggestions you can do so by telephoning a member of the housing services team on 0141-950-9052 or by e-mailing your comments to housing@yokerha.org.uk or maintenance@yokerha.org.uk.

Local Access to Money Advice Services

Drumchapel
Money Advice
Centre

Drumchapel Money Advice Centre (DMAC) is an independent money advice service who can provide assistance to tenants of the Association.

DMAC holds a surgery for tenants at the Association's office on a Thursday afternoon. The service is free of charge to those attending and will be tailored to tenants' specific needs. DMAC can assist tenants with the following issues:

- Rent Arrears
- Council Tax Arrears
- Welfare Benefit Entitlements
- Housing & Council Tax Benefit
- Appeals against benefit decisions
- Working and Family Tax Credits
- Debt counseling
- Benefit overpayments
- Representation at benefit tribunals

To arrange an appointment with an advisor please contact DMAC on 0141 944 0507 or alternatively, a member of our housing services team on 0141 950 9052 to arrange an appointment on your behalf.

"Next Steps" Programme



The Association is currently participating in the Scottish Government funded "Next Steps" Programme that is delivered by the Tenant Information Service (TIS) and the Tenant Participation and Advisory Service (TPAS). "Next Steps" is a programme aimed at registered social landlords who wish to further develop their tenant participation and scrutiny arrangements.

After working closely with the Association over the last year, TIS have developed an action plan for the Association to implement. The following activities are included within the action plan:

- Review of the Association's Tenant Participation Strategy;
- Review existing communication methods with tenants; and
- Advise tenants of consultation and participation opportunities over the coming months.

Tenant Participation Strategy

The Association is reviewing its Tenant Participation Strategy with a view to launching the new Strategy in March / April 2021.

As part of the review process the Association wishes to establish a tenant / staff group in order to obtain opinion and feedback from tenants regarding the existing Strategy and information on how this can be further developed. Given the Scottish Government's guidance in relation to Covid-19 any meetings would be carried out online using the Zoom application.

Review of Communication Methods

The Association will be reviewing how we communicate with tenants. The review will look at how the Association currently engages and communicates with tenants and how tenants would like to be communicated with in the future.

As with the strategy review mentioned above, participation in a tenant / staff group would be online using the Zoom Application.

If you wish to participate in a tenant / staff group please provide the Association with an email address that would allow you to access meetings.

Emergency Contact Numbers

The Association's automated telephone service can be used to access emergency contractors when the office is closed. Please dial (0141) 950 9050 and follow the instructions to access an emergency contractor.

This service is for emergencies only—non emergency call-outs will be recharged to tenants.

If you wish to contact an emergency contractor directly, please use the following numbers:

Gas Central Heating / Plumbing			
HiFlow Heating & Plumbing	(0141) 944 6060		
Joiner / General Builder			
MCK Joiners & Builders Ltd	07947 276 328		
Electrician			
Clyde Electrical Solutions Ltd	07711 167 955		
Close Door (No Entry / Exit Only)			
Clyde Electrical Solutions Ltd	07711 167 955		
Gas Leaks			
Scottish Gas	0800 111 999		
		Loss of Power	
		Scottish Power	0800 092 9290
		Stair & Backcourt Lighting	
		Glasgow City Council	0800 595 595
		Loss of Water	
		Scottish Water	0800 731 0840
		Police	
		Police Scotland	101
		for emergencies dial	999

Resident Satisfaction and Equalities Surveys

The Association will be commissioning an independent tenant satisfaction survey in the New Year.

The main purpose of the survey is to obtain feedback on levels of tenant satisfaction with the services provided by the Association. We remain committed to improving services where we can and introduce new processes and further services where these might be of benefit to tenants and other residents.

The survey will be covering things such as our approach to tenant consultation, how we currently engage with tenants and new ideas for improving our approach.

Due to the current environment, it is unlikely that these surveys will be carried out on a face-to-face basis. You are therefore likely to be provided with a written questionnaire or on-line questionnaire which will be followed up by a telephone interview.

A detailed survey such as this is only carried out once every three or four years. Please help us to help you and make the survey as relevant as possible by investing a little of your time in responding to the survey staff.

You will see from our Annual Performance Report that tenants of Yoker Housing Association benefit from some of the lowest rents and highest levels of tenant satisfaction in the country. We can only continue to do this with your ongoing co-operation ... please be sure to respond.

Thank you for your help.

