



FORTH

housing association Ltd.

SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

September 2010

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Tenant Participation Counts



De Moray Association Summer Fun Day

Forth Housing Association Limited - 2 Viewfield Place, Stirling, FK8 1NQ
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 Forth Housing Association Limited is a Registered Scottish Charity, No. SCO03550





Successful Joint Tenants Conference Unites Tenants and Landlords

Many of our tenants recently attended a successful Joint Tenants Conference at Forth Valley College, Falkirk.

Tenants from 4 Housing Associations came together with tenants from 3 Councils.

William Fleming, Head of Tenants Priorities, Scottish Government, opened the conference with a presentation on The Social Housing Charter. Tenants also attended housing related workshops throughout the day and had the opportunity to attend an Information Market, where Citizens Advice Bureau, Forth Valley Healthy Living Project etc were on hand to provide advice.

Stephen Harland, Chairperson of De Moray Association and tenant of Forth Housing said: *"I enjoyed the variety of workshops. It was also great meeting tenants of other areas and sharing ideas."*

Pictured: P Maramba, De Moray Court asking question at conference

Moving Office to Wallace House, Maxwell Place, Stirling

After carrying out some building works to make the space suit our needs, we will be moving office to: 4th Floor, Wallace House, 17-21 Maxwell Place, Stirling, FK8 1JU. Our telephone and fax numbers will remain unchanged.

Our office at 2 Viewfield Place will therefore be closed on Friday 29 October and Monday 1st November, to allow us to move. During this period our normal emergency repairs service will be provided. When we reopen in our new office, on Tuesday 2 November 2010, we will be able to provide tenants with a more comfortable and effective service - we'll even have a reception area and a proper interview room!



Invite To Stirling Tenants Assembly Conference – Sat 2nd October 2010

Stirling Tenants Assembly is holding a tenants conference on Saturday 2nd October in the Mayfield Centre, St Ninians, Stirling from 10am till 3pm. Lunch and refreshments will be provided. Speakers from the Scottish Government will discuss :

- Scottish Social Housing Charter – a chance to influence a new policy known as the Tenants Charter.
- the 'Fresh Thinking' discussion paper - the Government discussion paper on the way forward for housing in Scotland.

To reserve your place please contact our office for a booking form.

Gardenshare Stirling

Do you have an unused corner in your garden that you would be happy to share with someone who would love to grow some fruit and vegetables but has no garden of their own? Or perhaps you are keen to grow some of your own food but have no land. Gardenshare Stirling is a new scheme that aims to match budding gardeners with people who have a garden that they cannot manage themselves, perhaps due to lack of time or ill-health.

The benefits to garden owners include having a keen gardener keeping the weeds under

control, seeing things growing in the garden again, meeting new people and sharing some of the delicious produce. There are now so many people who want to grow fruit and vegetables that it is a major problem finding enough land for them all. There are often long waiting lists for allotments and many modern homes have very small gardens or no garden at all.

Schemes such as this are now running successfully in other parts of the UK. If you have some spare land or would like to grow your own veggies please contact Philippa Cochrane on 07577816262 or email gardensharestirling@gmail.com

There is also a website that has information about the scheme: <http://gardensharestirling.wordpress.com>



False Start At Fallin

Unfortunately the main contractor for our new development at Dry Pow Park, Fallin went into receivership shortly after starting work on our 42 new homes.

The two factors were totally unconnected and the receivership was simply a sad reflection of the difficult economic times which we all face.

Fortunately, we were able to step in very quickly to secure the short term safety of the site and to put plans in place to get back on track. This was done by directly employing

the security firm to ensure that public safety was maintained. We were also able to carry out some work to make the site safe enough to allow easier access for the football team to the nearby pitches.

These situations are never easy but we are hopeful that we will soon have a new builder working on badly needed homes.

Rumours that the homes will never be built are not true!



Torbrex Homes Head For Completion

Our latest new homes are rapidly heading for completion.

Ogilvie Homes are currently building 23 new flats at Gateside Road/Wordie Road and we expect that the new tenants will be moving in during October. This will be another milestone event for us as the development will include our 600th home for rent.

The homes are all two bedroom flats and are

situated around three sides of a square, with the central area set out with a mixture of car parking and landscaping.

Sadly, as is ever the case, the demand for these homes is far greater than the number available, but we are confident that the lucky tenants will enjoy their new start in what will be very economical and efficient homes to heat.



Annual Service of Smoke detectors and Electrical Safety Checks

We carry out an annual safety/service check of all smoke detectors in our properties. We also carry out electrical safety checks. It is obviously in your best interest as these visits can save lives.

Last year Stirling Electrical Services Ltd gained access to 382 of our 513 homes.

Unfortunately, there was no access to 131 of our homes. We would like to improve on these statistics and would

encourage you to provide access when these checks come round again in October – November 2010.

You will receive notification by letter of these visits. It is important that you contact us to arrange an alternative date if these don't suit. Should you have any questions please contact Iain Stirling at the office.

Raploch Tenants

Would you be interested in joining a Tenants Group in Raploch? This Group could look at ways to fund raise, hold community events such as fun days for the children or any other issues you may wish to discuss. These meetings would be informal and give you a chance to meet other residents, to chat about ideas to make Raploch an even better place to stay!

If you are interested in attending a meeting please contact Angela Laley at the office to register your interest. We will then contact you to arrange a mutually convenient date and time for a meeting.





Struggling Due To The Credit Crunch?

Money Newsround Can Help!

With the cost of credit and fuel bills soaring, whilst wages and benefits barely rise, you like many others might find paying bills is more of a struggle.

Our Money Adviser, Tracy Doran, can meet with you to offer free and confidential advice about any credit/finance/debt issues. This service can help by:

- Making sure you are receiving all benefits/tax credits due to you
- Working out a household budget

For more information on any of the benefits noted below please contact Tracy Doran at the office or log on to www.forthha.org.uk.

Child Benefit

When your child is 16 years old and leaves school child benefit will normally stop on the 31st August after the 16th birthday. However,

in some circumstances child benefit can be extended, for as long as a further 4 years. To see if your child is eligible contact Tracy.

Pensioners – Winter Fuel Payments and Energy Rebate Scheme

Winter Fuel Payment -Age 60-79 years - £250 single/couple

Winter Fuel Payment - Age 80 years and over - £400 single/couple

Pensioners in receipt of pension credit should receive an one-off energy rebate of £80 on household electricity bills, commencing July 2010.

Lone Parents

As from 25 October 2010 the government plans to reduce the age to 7 years old where a lone parent can claim income support.

Clothing Grants

Children from P1 to age 16 before 30 September 2010.

Free School Meals (School Age Children)

Forms for both clothing grants and free school meals from Stirling Council Tel 0845 277 7000. Forms must be received by 30 September 2010.

Educational Maintenance Allowance

This can be as much as £30 per week, depending on your household income.

If your child is 16 years old or over before 30th September 2010 and still at high school they will be eligible from start of school year (ie August 2010).

If your child is 16 years old between 1st October 2010 and 28th February 2011 they will be eligible from January 10th 2011. Forms available from Stirling Council 0845 277 7000 or www.stirling.gov.uk/emaform.pdf

Forms must be received by 31st March 2011.



Frequently Asked Questions (Benefits)

For the answers to these commonly asked questions please contact Tracy Doran, Money Advisor.

I have just lost my job. What benefits am I entitled to?

What are tax credits and how can I get them?

I am pregnant. What help can I get for my baby and myself?

I receive a pension and have heard that I may be entitled to some other benefits. Where can

I get more information?

I am too ill to go to work. Can I get any benefits?

I am on Income Support and would like to go back to work, but I'm worried about being able to make ends meet if I come off benefits. Can I get any extra help towards living expenses?

Tracy would love to hear from you – so pick up the phone and she will do her best to help you!



De Moray Court Summer BBQ – Sizzling Success!

Our registered tenants organisation (RTO), De Moray Association, held a summer barbeque and bouncy castle for the children of De Moray Court.

A great time was had by all, as you see from the photo on the front cover. Tescos are thanked for providing the food and Sainsburys for the juice, for this event.

If you would like to start up your own RTO please contact Angela Laley, Project & Communications Co-ordinator, at the office.

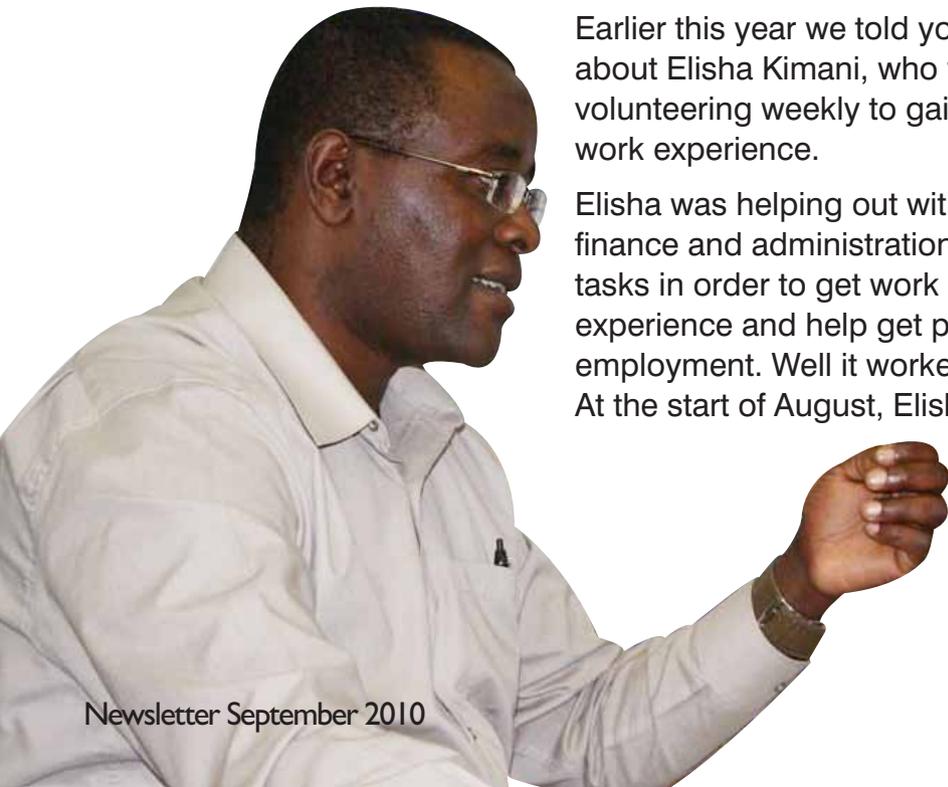


Tenant Participation Policy Sealed With Approval

Following extensive consultation with a Focus Group of volunteer tenants, E Group, Committee and staff, the revised Tenant Participation Policy has now been adopted. The main feedback was that it was easy to read and understand, and that it put tenants at the centre of our business. Thanks to everyone that was involved in the consultation process. Should you wish a copy of this policy please contact the office.

CONGRATULATIONS!!!
To Margaret Lowe
for winning the £25
shopping voucher
for returning her
'Points of View' card
during April-June!!!

Elisha Moves On...



Earlier this year we told you about Elisha Kimani, who was volunteering weekly to gain work experience.

Elisha was helping out with finance and administration tasks in order to get work experience and help get paid employment. Well it worked! At the start of August, Elisha

was appointed as Finance Officer with the Council for the Voluntary Sector in Falkirk.

We wish Elisha well in his new job and are delighted that we have been able to help him. On leaving he said: "I wish to thank you and the staff for all the assistance I have received. That was fabulous".

As our first work experience volunteer of this type, Elisha will be a hard act to follow, but we look forward to a new person joining us soon.

Quality Homes at Clayhills

We were delighted earlier this summer to celebrate the completion of our new homes at Clayhills Drive, Cambusbarron.

Bruce Crawford MSP marked the completion of our 48 homes at Clayhills Drive by planting a tree and visiting some of the happy new tenants. The day also saw Central Scotland Police present the Association with a Secured By Design award. This was given in recognition of the design and specification of our new homes which meet the highest standards of crime prevention.

The old saying states that “prevention is better than cure” and by working closely with the police at the design stage we have been able to reduce the opportunities for crime in the Clayhills Drive area. This is a standard that we are seeking to achieve on all our new developments.



Clayhills Drive, Cambusbarron

Estate Management

It is proposed that estate management visits and close cleaning checks will be carried out during the weeks beginning:

Month	Estate management	Close cleaning
October	4th & 18th	11th & 25th
November	1st, 15th & 29th	8th & 22nd
December	13th	6th & 20th

If you have any enquiries or comments relating to these activities please contact the office. We want to get your feedback!

The RSVP Handy Person Service - a helping hand where its needed!

This scheme offers help to those with a disability, the elderly or those not presently able to do things for themselves.

Who are RSVP?

They are Community Service Volunteers aged fifty plus. They may be former tradesmen, retired people or have time and skills to help others. Their common link is that they are "Handy Persons".

How much does it cost?

RSVP's services are FREE OF CHARGE. However, if any parts are needed, these should be paid for by the householder.

What can RSVP do?

Normally the jobs take less than 2 hours to complete and include eg:

- rewiring plugs
- unblocking sinks
- fitting new light bulbs
- hanging curtains

Longer tasks can be discussed with the Handyperson Co-ordinator.

The scheme does not replace the services of trades people and is not meant to tackle major jobs.

To find out if you are eligible for the scheme, contact the Handy Person Co-ordinator on (01786) 475800.



The Right To Repair

The Scottish Secure Tenants (Right to Repair) Regulations 2002, entitles a Scottish Secure tenant to have a qualifying repair carried out to their home. Furthermore, the Regulations allow for compensation to be paid to the tenant should a qualifying repair not be completed, without good reason, within a certain timescale.

Qualifying Repairs

The following defects are deemed qualifying repairs. We will pay for the work completed in respect of any single qualifying repair up to a maximum of £350:

Qualifying Repairs	Maximum working days from date immediately following date of notification or inspection
Blocked flue to open fire or boiler	1
Blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Blocked sink, bath or drain	1
Electrical power: Loss of electrical power	1
Partial loss of electrical power	3
Insecure external window, door, lock	1
Unsafe access path/step	1
Leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns	1
Loss or partial loss of gas supply	1
Loss or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available	1
Toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house	1
Unsafe power or lighting socket, or electrical fitting	
Water supply:	
•Loss of water supply	1
•Partial loss of water supply	3
Loose or detached banister or hand rail	3
Unsafe timber flooring or stair tread	3
Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working	7

For further information please contact Iain Stirling at the office.

Office Closure



Please note that our offices will be closed for the following public holidays:

Office closes Thurs
23rd September at 5.15pm

Office re-opens Tuesday 28th
September at 9am

We are also closed for the office move on Friday 29th October and Monday 1st November 2010 (refer to Page 3).

If you have a genuine emergency repair during these dates please contact the appropriate contractor noted below:

Existing Forth Housing Association tenants contact Stirling Council on Telephone: 07715 004 265.

New tenants at Raploch: Winchel Place, Gordon Square, Fisher Row and Drip Road,

contact Cruden Homes (East) on Telephone: 0131 442 3862.

If this office is closed please contact:

- Electrician 07917 507 402
- Plumber/Heating 0141 766 0100
- Joiner 01506 468888

New tenants at Clayhills Drive, (Phase 2), Cambusbarron: nos 20-38, Flats 35A-35J and 37A-39J contact Persimmon Customer Services on Telephone: 0870 060 5520.

Should you be in any doubt please refer to the Tenant Handbook which you were given when you signed your Tenancy Agreement.

Notices



Help Us
Reduce Our
Carbon
Footprint...

If you would prefer to receive your copy of Speaking Forth via e-mail please e-mail your name, postal address and e-mail address to info@forthha.org.uk

Dates to Remember:

September Weekend	Office Closed: Friday 24th September 2010 Monday 27th September 2010
Stirling Tenants Assembly Conference	2nd October 2010 At 10am At Mayfield Centre
De Moray Association Next Meeting	4th October 2010 At 6.15pm At 25 De Moray Court
Smoke Detector & Electrical Safety Checks	Various Dates Oct-Dec 2010 All tenants will receive a letter confirming date and time.
Move to New Forth Office 4th Floor Wallace House 17-21 Maxwell Place STIRLING FK8 1JU	Office Closed For Office Move: Friday 29th October 2010 Monday 1st November 2010 Office Reopens: Tuesday 2nd November 2010

For Emergency Numbers
During Office Closures
refer to page 15 of the
Newsletter.

For further information
and updates please refer
to our website,
www.forthha.org.uk
under News.



Useful Contact Details...

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