



FORTH

Housing Association Ltd.

SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Autumn 2015

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LITTLE RAY OF SUNSHINE GARDENS 2015

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A Little Ray of Sunshine In Our 2015 Garden Competition

There has once again been fierce competition amongst tenants in our annual garden competition. Despite the wet Summer a huge number of tenants have pulled out the stops to make their gardens a little ray of sunshine.

Thanks to a huge effort by a number of tenants the standard of gardening was extremely high which made the judges' job extremely difficult. We are therefore delighted to announce that the winners are:

Lynda Neilson, Cowie –
Best Garden

Heather Arthur, Cornton –
Best Basket

Monument View, Raploch –
Best Scheme

The winners have all received vouchers for their choice of Garden Centre.

Furthermore, we have issued a number of commended Certificates to households who have made a massive effort to brighten up and improve their garden areas. Also, if you did not win this year don't worry as we will be running the competition again next year and the prizes will be £40 Best Garden, £25 Best Basket and £50 Best Scheme. Happy Gardening!



Some of our winning gardens!

FLY TIPPING - A COST TO ALL

Fly tipping has increasingly become a problem over the years within some of our developments. Not only is it unsightly but often can become a health hazard.

We will endeavour to identify the persons responsible for fly tipping however sometimes this is not possible without the assistance of tenants. Where the culprit is not identified, the cost of uplifting these items has been previously covered by the Estate Management budget. However from now on, any future uplifts required to be carried out, will be directly recharged to the tenants.

If you reside in a flatted dwelling the cost of the uplift will now be recharged equally to all tenants within the block of flats concerned, unless tenants are prepared to identify who is responsible.

In order to prevent being recharged the cost of these uplifts, we would ask all tenants to become more proactive in identifying the



persons responsible in order that we can take the appropriate action against them.

Tenants should ensure that they securely place all refuse in their own wheelie bin and that they make arrangements for any bulk up lift items to be removed immediately. If you are having difficulties with other tenants using your bin, we suggest that you attach a lock to your bin.

If you require any advice regarding recycling or require additional bins, please contact Stirling Council on 0845 277 7000.

Another Fine Performance



We are delighted to report that this year's analysis of Forth's performance shows that we've had another very successful year.

Our Annual Return on the Charter (ARC) showed that in many areas Forth's performance repeated or improved on the great results from last year. In areas ranging from reletting homes to responding to repairs we were able to meet almost all our targets. Moreover, comparison with other Scottish landlords shows that again our performance is in the premier league status.

If you would like to see the full details of how we performed and compare this with other landlords in the Stirling area you'll find our Annual Performance Report on our web site at **www.forthha.org.uk/get-involved/performance-and-scrutiny**. If you would like to receive a printed copy of this report please contact our office to ask for one.

Annual General Meeting

By the time you receive this Newsletter we will have held our Annual General Meeting, to review the last year's business, agree the accounts and elect next year's Management Committee.

A copy of our Annual Report was delivered with this Newsletter. From this you'll see that we had another very successful year, building 40 new homes, taking in more rent than

ever before and investing in our homes by upgrading kitchens.

At the time of writing it looks like there will be at least 2 new people elected onto the Management Committee. If you want to find out more about this please go to our website at **www.forthha.org.uk/about-us/management-committee/management-committee-members**.

Development Update...



Adamson Place, Cornton.

The world of development at Forth remains a hive of activity.

At present we have one development on site and these 16 homes at Adamson Place, Cornton are progressing very quickly. We only started work at the end of March but already we are planning for the first phase of tenants to move into these, in October.

During the last couple of months we have also received Planning Permission to allow us to build new homes at Cultenhove and Dunblane. A

further planning application is being considered for further homes at Huntly Crescent, Raploch.

These 3 developments will keep us busy building for the next couple of years but we're not stopping there. Plans are already in production for new homes at Johnston Avenue, Cornton and Earlsburn Avenue, Cultenhove.

For more details log on to: www.forthha.org.uk/developments

Estate Management Visit Dates

Our 2 Housing Officers cover the following areas:

Elaine Shepherd – Raploch, Cambusbarrow, Dunblane, Riverside, Stirling Town – Cowane Street, Myles House, Tannery Lane/ Queen Street, Crosbies Court, Victoria Place.

Elaine will be carrying out an estate visit to your area week commencing:

16 November 2015.

Caroline Stevenson – Bannockburn, Braehead, Fallin, Cornton, Cowie, Plean, St. Ninians, Whins of Milton, Stirling Town - Baker Street/Morris Terrace, Barn Road.

Caroline will be carrying out an estate visit to your area week commencing:

9 November 2015.

Forth's Firewalkers



Have you ever wanted to give Forth's Director a roasting? Would you like to turn the heat up on our Maintenance Assistant? If so you may be interested to know that **Angela Laley, Project and Communication's Co-ordinator, Calum Carberry, Maintenance Assistant and John Cameron, Director, are going to walk across burning coals for charity.**

The 3 brave souls (fools?) will be joining a "firewalk" on 25th September 2015, to raise funds for Start-Up Stirling, a local charity that provides help and support to those who've suffered homelessness and/or are facing financial crisis.

The funds raised will provide food and other household essentials to individuals and families who are needing a bit of extra support and if you'd like to sponsor "Forth's Firewalkers" you can do so by making a donation on line at <http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/forthfirewalkers>.

Fancy Getting FITT?

Do you feel lost when it comes to computing? Do you get left behind when it comes to the internet? Would you like to be more computer confident?



If the answer to any of these questions is yes our FITT project might be the answer. This stands for Forth's IT Training and, thanks to Big Lottery funding, we will shortly have someone who can work with tenants to improve their computer skills and internet abilities.

It doesn't matter if you use a PC, laptop or tablet and you don't even need to have your own internet connection. If you'd like to become a more confident user our FITT coach will be able to work with you on a one to one basis to help.

The FITT coach will come to your home or can use a convenient local venue. They will aim to boost your confidence, no matter whether you're a complete beginner or someone who wants to learn more.

By the end of the FITT sessions you should be able to browse online, make the most of internet deals and feel confident enough to use emails, fill out forms or apply for things online.

If you would like to find out more or would like to be added to our waiting list for FITT sessions, contact our office and let us know.

Forth Good Neighbour Award 2015

– Win a £25 Supermarket Voucher!

We can all appreciate the benefits of having a good neighbour. As part of looking after our neighbours, we are holding our Annual Good Neighbour Award competition. If you would like to nominate your neighbour for going that extra mile please let us know.

This could be for doing your shopping, nipping in for a cup of tea and a friendly chat, clearing your path of snow, making you feel welcome when you moved in, helping to tidy up your garden etc.

The winner will receive a £25 voucher for a local supermarket of the winner's choice and will be featured in the Christmas Newsletter.

Last year there were 4 sets of winners:

- John and Rona Duff, Riverside
- Christine McBride, Raploch
- Margaret and Jimmy Wells, Cowie
- Grace Robertson, Cowie

Grahame Cairns, our Tenant Services Manager, said: "There are many unsung heroes in our communities and we are delighted to give credit to these tenants and focus on the positive action that takes place. It is these



Mr & Mrs Duff, some of our 2015 winners from Riverside.

people that make such a difference to people's lives and their communities. "

To nominate your neighbour, who requires to be a Forth tenant, just explain in no more than 100 words why they deserve Forth's Good Neighbour Award.

To enter please phone or write to Angela Laley, 4th Floor, Wallace House, 17-21 Maxwell Place, Stirling, FK8 1JU, Telephone: 01786 446066, prior to 24th October 2015. Alternatively, e mail angela@forthha.org.uk.

Chance To Be Heard For Scots Who Spent Time In Care As Children

Scots who spent time in institutional care as children can have their experiences heard and acknowledged by taking part in the National Confidential Forum.

Anyone who spent time in institutional care as a child can come to the Forum. They must be over 16 years old and no longer in care. Institutional care means residential care or the health service. The service could be run by a local authority, health board, a private provider or a charity and can include:

- A children's home
- A short or long term hospital stay in a children's ward
- A residential unit
- A boarding school at public or private school
- A school trip or summer school

For more information on the National Confidential Forum Tel:0141-352-2333 or log on to: www.nationalconfidentialforum.org.uk

STAFF CHANGES?

Staff changes at Forth are a bit like buses. You wait forever and as soon as one appears a second follows on quickly behind.

Last newsletter we introduced you to our Customer Services Assistant, Ann Gordon, and this time we're introducing our new Maintenance Officer.

Iain Stirling, who had been with Forth since 2003, decided to take an early retirement package and he is now a man of leisure. This allowed us to look for new talent and following a recruitment exercise Barry Lees will be joining the Forth team.

The new role of Maintenance Officer (Planned Works) sees an increased focus on planned tasks, ranging from gas safety checks to contracts for upgrading kitchens etc. This will involve a fair degree of "getting out there", to inspect homes and identify what our future work priorities should be.

If you see Barry out and about, or he arranges to inspect your home, please do make him feel welcome and let him know what you think about Forth and the condition of your home.

The Allpay App – The Easy Way To Make Rent Payments



The Allpay App - The app is available for Apple iPhone and Android Smartphones. The App works in much the same way as an Internet Browser on a desktop computer or tablet. The App provides a user interface to the data

services hosted at allpay which allows you to create an account, store your payment related information and make payments. For further information about the Allpay app please visit <http://www.allpay.net/app>.

Get on Your Bike?

Benefits of a Bike

Did you know that if you replaced short car trips with a bike you are likely to see the following benefits?:

- The average cost of travel per mile for a car is 79p. The average cost of travel per mile for a bike is 4p!
- Cycling for half an hour every day can half the risk of heart disease.
- Depending on your speed you can burn between 375-600 calories per hour.
- Medical studies have shown that if you cycle regularly, you're likely to live about 5 years longer and enjoy the health benefits of a person around 10 years younger.
- People commuting in vehicles breathe in 25% more pollution than those cycling.

Stirling Cycle Hub encourages people to get on their bike. They have a permanent presence in the Hub at Stirling



Train station. They have wall maps available to help with route planning and the facility to print off routes to take away. They are always keen to speak to anyone about events taking place. Log on to: www.stirlingcyclehub.org

ATTENTION! Save £140 - The Warm Home Discount Scheme

What You'll Get:

For winter 2015 to 2016, you could get £140 off your electricity bill through the Warm Home Discount Scheme. The money isn't paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, usually paid between September and March.

The discount won't affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

The discount is normally if you are on benefits or on a low income but please check if you are entitled.

Pre-pay or Pay-as-you-go Meters

You can also qualify for the discount if you use a pre-pay or pay-as-you-go electricity meter. Your electricity supplier can tell you how you'll get the discount if you're eligible, eg a voucher you can use to top up your meter.

The criteria for each of the energy suppliers is different and further information can be obtained by following the link <https://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/eligibility>. Then scroll down the page and follow the link for your electricity supplier.

All of the energy suppliers have a limit on the number of applications for Warm Home Discount and when this limit is reached they will take no more. So please complete the application as soon as possible if you are eligible.

If you have any problems or queries regarding Warm Home Discount or have no access to the internet please contact Tracy Doran, Income Maximisation Officer, Forth Housing Association, Tel 01786 446066. Tracy can complete the application on your behalf.

Tracy Doran,
Income
Maximisation
Officer



Universal Credit

If you are claiming Universal Credit either for the first time or if you are already in receipt of Universal Credit please contact Tracy Doran, Income Maximisation Officer 01786 446066 to help guide you through the process.



Tenant Participation Counts

Tenants View Forum and E Group

A successful meeting was held at the beginning of September. This discussed our performance over the last year, the website and the anti-social behaviour policy.

We also have an E Group which considers changes to policies by e mail. E Group members are sent a short questionnaire when our policies are under review. So E Group

members also have a real say in proposing changes to our policies.

If you would like to examine our performance or have a say in changing policy, please phone Angela Laley at the office or e mail **angela@forthha.org.uk**. All new members will be made very welcome and travelling expenses to meetings are paid.

Tenants' Groups

De Moray Association:

At their last meeting the group discussed the community garden, bike sheds and estate management. The group agreed that a survey of all residents would take place to confirm if they would like the area behind the bungalows to become an orchard instead of a community garden. So if you live in the De Moray Court area please return the survey reply slip when it drops through your door, giving your views on this area of ground. The group's next meeting will take place on Tuesday 20th October at 6.30pm at Cornton Primary School.

Cambusbarron Forth Tenants:

The residents have been planning a family Autumn planting day and an event for the children. So Cambusbarron tenants will shortly receive a flier providing more details.

For details of all Tenants Group meeting dates log on to www.forthha.org.uk click on Tenants' Zone/ Participation/Tenant Group Meeting Dates. Please continue to support your local group. Without your support these groups would cease to exist.

Office Closure Due To Public Holidays

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

Friday 25th September and Monday 28th September 2015.

If you have a **genuine** emergency repair over this period please contact:

Gas Central Heating - 0800 048 2710 (Saltire)

Any Other Genuine Emergency Repairs –

Please phone the McDougall Group

Tel: 0333 123 1011.

New Tenants Only - For Genuine Emergency Repairs:

New tenants at **Raploch** should report **genuine** emergency repairs to Cruden Construction:

Electrical Emergency Tel: 07917 507 402 • Gas Emergency Tel: 07917 436 272.

New tenants at **Cultenhove Road**, should report genuine **emergency** repairs to Marshall Construction Tel: 01259 219500.

If you have called out a Contractor as an emergency, please advise us as soon as the office opens again.



Useful Contact Details...

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