



FORTH
housing association Ltd.

SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Spring 2018

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Forth Reaches Another Milestone By Turning 30 Years Old!

The 14th of March 1988 isn't one of the great days in world history. One of the few recorded events from that day was a small naval battle involving China and Vietnam.

However, closer to home it was the day when Forth Housing Association officially came into being and now 30 years on we are celebrating our 30th birthday.

Much has happened in the 30 year period with Forth building or purchasing 858 homes, with 788 of these being for rent. Our annual turnover is currently around £3 million and we spend around

£0.5million each year maintaining our homes, with most going to locally based companies.



We continue to operate as one of Scotland's best performing landlords and our tenant satisfaction ratings have never been higher. However, we are not resting on our laurels. In our 30th year we're aiming to complete another 47 homes, we are relocating our offices to our own Business and Enterprise Hub at Kildean, Raploch and at the same time continuing to keep our tenants at the centre of our plans.

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Forth Housing Association Limited is a Registered Scottish Charity, No. SCO03550



Transition Stirling

– Need to Borrow Some Equipment?

Transition Stirling is an environmental charity focusing on improving awareness of and providing a positive local response to climate change. They now have a Tool Library.



HOW The Tool LIBRARY WORKS

A Tool Library works just like an ordinary library, except instead of borrowing books you can borrow all sorts of equipment. There are over 300 items in the tool library; from sewing machines and drills, saws to mechanical tools, gardening tools and cooking equipment.

There is also a repair cafe, where tools and electronic equipment can be repaired and there are workshops on furniture refurbishment, sewing, mending, growing, cooking, foraging and more.



For further information log on to www.transitionstirling.org.uk
Visit: Unit 12 Stirling Arcade, Stirling FK8 1AX
Telephone: 01786 357171
E Mail: info@transitionstirling.org.uk

Don't Drop Your Cigarette Ends – You Could Face a £80 Fine!

Cigarette ends are time-consuming and expensive to clean-up because of their small size, as well as being unsightly where they are allowed to accumulate. You could also be fined £80.

It is an offence if any person throws down, drops or otherwise deposits litter in such a way as to cause, or contribute to, or lead to, the defacement of any place.

- In the UK, 120 tonnes of cigarette related litter are discarded on our streets every day

- Cigarette ends can take up to 12 years to degrade
- Cigarette ends leak toxins that contaminate water and harm marine life and the environment
- Every day UK smokers throw away about 200 million ends
- Cigarette ends have been found in the stomachs of fish, birds, whales and other marine creatures, who mistake them for food

Forth will also arrange removal of cigarette ends and will recharge the tenant responsible.

Happy Easter!

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

Office Closes: Thursday 29th March at 5.15pm.

Office Reopens: Tuesday 3rd April at 9am.

In addition please note the following office closures in May :

Office closed Monday 7th May, Friday 25th May and Monday 28th May.

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

**Gas Central Heating - 0800 048 2710 (Saltire)
Gas Leaks – 0800 111999**

For genuine emergency repairs (excluding gas heating and hot water) outwith office hours please telephone The McDougall Group on Tel No: 0333 123 1011.



Young Scot National Entitlement Card



— Handy All Year Round!

This card is available free of charge to everyone aged 11-25 years living in Scotland. Use it for the money-off things you love, exclusive rewards, proof of age and lots more. If you're 16, 17 or 18 years (or a full-time volunteer) you can get special deals on travel using your Young Scot card, including 1/3rd off bus journeys and up to 50% of train travel within Scotland.



If you are in School and don't have a Young Scot Card please contact your School Office and they should be able to arrange a new one for you. Alternatively, if you are no longer at School you will need to complete an application form and take it to a validation point with relevant identification.

You can get an application form by:
Phoning Youth Services - Stirling Council on **01786 233 562**
Emailing: **stirlingyoungscot@stirling.gov.uk**



Year of Young People 2018

— Enter our Drawing Competition!

The Scottish Government has made 2018 The Year of Young People. This programme aims to inspire Scotland through its young people, celebrating their achievements, valuing their contribution to communities and creating new opportunities for them to shine locally, nationally and globally.

EventScotland will deliver a programme of events for all ages. Young Scot, Children in Scotland, the Scottish Youth Parliament and YouthLink Scotland will lead youth participation and involvement in the Year.

Log on to <https://childreninscotland.org.uk/year-of-young-people-2018/> for more information.



year of young people
bliadhna na h-óigridh
2018

As part of this, we are running a drawing competition for all children living in a Forth home, under the age of 16 years. The drawing is to be of your home. Entries should be no larger than A4 and should be returned to our office by 27th April 2018, clearly marked with entrants name, address and age.

All successful winners will be featured in our Annual Report/Calendar for 2018/19 and will also win a voucher for £25 if the drawing is published.

Attention!

Universal Credit Claimants

Tenants in receipt of Universal Credit must update their Journals with their new monthly rent, as advised in the letters sent to your home, from the 2nd April 2018. If you do not do this you will have to pay the difference.

If any tenant has any difficulty please call into Forth's office and we will assist with the necessary changes.

For further details, please contact Tracy Doran or your Assistant Housing Officer at the office Tel: 01786 446066.

Need Help to Get On-line and Apply for Benefits etc – Try this Free Service!

With the introduction of Universal Credit in the Stirling area it has never been more important to get on-line and be able to complete on-line benefit applications. It does not matter how much or little you know already.

Craig McNicol or Ian Brown can visit you at your home or use a local venue, whichever is convenient for you. By the end of their sessions you should be able to apply for Benefits and jobs, shop for deals, e mail and engage with social media.

To contact Craig or Ian, please phone our office and we will arrange an appointment on your behalf.

Gas Servicing

Every 10 to 12 months we must carry out a service at your property if you have gas central heating. This is not an option but a requirement by law under The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.

This is to ensure the safety of our tenants in their home.

We appreciate that people work or have other commitments but you must allow access. You can phone Saltire (our gas engineers) direct to arrange a time. However, if no access is possible we will gain entry.

If we cannot gain entry or there is no credit

in the meter, the gas supply will be capped. We do not want to do this but it is a legal responsibility. If we do cap your meter, you will require to pay £45 in advance to uncap your supply and ensure there is a credit in both the gas and electricity meters.



Thankfully this only affects a few tenants and we would encourage you if you are facing any difficulties to contact Tracy Doran or Paul Fraser, at our office. We cannot extend the date of service. It is important to read the letters that are sent to your home and take action before it's too late.

Your safety is of paramount importance to us.

Office Move Approaches

Our plans to relocate our office to Kildean are well in hand with the refurbishment work to the former hospital building progressing well.

At present the plan is that our office at Wallace House will close at 5.15pm on Thursday 17th May and we'll open for business at Kildean at 9.00am on Tuesday 22nd May. This will allow us to pack up, move and unpack over the long weekend.

We will write to all tenants nearer the time, to confirm our final plans, and it is likely that all tenants will get the chance to attend the Kildean site shortly after we take up residence.

No one should worry that our office will become more remote. There is a good bus service to Kildean and there is free parking at the office door. Most importantly, our staff are always very happy to come to you if you have any issues requiring attention.

Maintenance Matters

Planned and Cyclical Works Programme

The following works will be undertaken during 2018/19:

Planned & Cyclical Works	Development
Kitchen Replacement	Monument View / King Robert Court Raploch. Baker Street / Morris Terrace / Crosbies Court Stirling.
Window Replacement	Bruce View, Whins of Milton.
External Painter Work (inc any closes)	Winchel Place / Gordon Square / Fisher Row. Cordiner Close/Walker Ave / Huntley Crescent / Cordiner Close (older developments) Raploch. Bruce Street, Banockburn. Bruce View, Whins of Milton.
Gas Boiler Replacement	Monument View / King Robert Court, Raploch.
Bathroom Replacement	Barn Road, Stirling.(older development) Barnsdale Rd, St.Ninians. Colquhoun Street, Braehead.
Electrical installation condition report (EICR)	Monument View / King Robert Court, Raploch. Walker Ave / Huntley Crescent / Cordiner Close (older developments) Raploch. Milton Brae / Bruce View, Whins of Milton. Auld School Wynd, Cambusbarron. Old Doune Road / Clement Loan Dunblane. Barnsdale Rd St.Ninians.

EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) – Electrical Checks

We carry out electrical checks to our housing stock to identify any faults within the electrical circuits of the property. It is also for your safety within your home and although this test is not mandatory it is a recommendation that the test be carried out every 5 years.

If your home is identified for a test this year you will receive a letter. We would ask that you work with us and allow the Contractor access to carry out the test. This will ensure your home is electrically safe and offer piece of mind to you.

Fuel Switch – You Haven't Missed The Boat to Change to Gas From Electric!

The majority of our properties are enjoying the benefits of gas central heating. However, if you still have electric heating it is not too late to change to gas. Forth will pay the cost of installation etc.

Should you have any questions please give Paul Fraser, Maintenance Officer, a call at the office Direct Dial Tel No: 01786 431026.



POLICIES UNDER REVIEW – Have Your Say!

The following are under review and will be considered by our Committee over the next year:

Tenants Handbook – July

Estate Management – July

Anti-Social Behaviour - October

We would love to have your views. You can become a member of the 'E' Group who receive a short survey by e mail. Or attend the Tenants' View Forum who meet quarterly to examine Forth's performance and obtain views on policies.

If you have an interest in any of the above policies or would like to join any of these groups, please contact Angela Laley at the office. We want to hear your views as this helps to improve our services to you – our customer.

Recycling Bins

Putting your bins out for collection

- Please ensure your bins and boxes are presented in a safe and responsible manner no later than 7am on collection day. Please keep walkways passable.
- Please make sure your bin lid is closed and recyclables covered. Items placed inside your wheelie bin will be collected but any excess waste/side waste presented outwith the bin will not be collected.
- In very windy weather, boxes and caddies can blow away if not secured. Assess the situation carefully and do not put out recycling if it's too windy or if high winds are expected overnight.
- Please take your bin and box(es) back in as soon as possible after they have been emptied.
- For bulky items, a **special uplift** can be arranged. There are charges for this service depending on the type of material being removed. Contact Customer First on 01786 40 40 40 for further information.



Think your bin may have been missed?

Firstly, please ensure:

- You have checked your **bin collection date**.
- It should have been out before 7am.
- The lid on the bin must have been closed and not containing contaminated items.
- You have waited until after 10pm on your collection day to report it.
- For further information contact Customer First on Tel 01786 404040.

If you contaminate your bin the Council won't uplift and it becomes a nuisance. Forth will arrange removal but you will be recharged the cost.

Free Course - NCFE Level 2 Digital Promotion for Business



This nationally accredited course is completed through Distance Online Learning of approximately 8 weeks and is available to any Adult in Scotland aged 16 and over.

The course consists of the following units:

- Digital Promotion for Business
- Understanding Search Engine Optimisation for Business
- Coordinating the use of Digital Media for Business
- Coordinating Offline and Digital Media for Business
- Producing Digital Promotional Content for Business
- Data Protection and Digital Media for Business
- Understanding Social Media

- Measuring the Effectiveness of Digital Promotional Activity for Business

There are 2 key requirements in order to be eligible for the full funding of the course:

- Learner must be over 16 years of age
- Must be a resident of Scotland & resided within any EU country over the last 3 years

To register for the course the following details are required:

Full Name, Contact Email Address and Contact Telephone Number.

If you are interested in enhancing your job prospects or gaining a Certificate to add to your CV, please contact Angela Laley at the office with your details.

Food Train – Stirling

Local volunteers provide weekly deliveries of fresh groceries to older people experiencing difficulties doing their weekly grocery shopping, ensuring they can eat well, live well and age well.



How Does It Work?

- The shopping delivery service is a simple process.
- Customers complete a blank shopping list which is collected by our volunteers; a blank shopping list is left with customer for next time.
- Shopping is completed and delivered by our volunteers at local shops on a nominated day.
- Shopping is delivered in a box which is unpacked by volunteers. Volunteers will also put things away if needed.
- Customer pays for shopping and the £4 delivery charge, cash or cheque is acceptable.

Who Can Use The Food Train?

- Customers must be 65 and over.
- Customers must be unable or have difficulty getting their grocery shopping.

How Much Does It Cost?

- £1 for one year's membership – this is paid when beginning the service and provides access to extra services as well.
- £4 per delivery – this is paid alongside the cost of the shopping at the point of delivery.
- To receive the Food Train Service please **fill in a referral form at thefoodtrain.co.uk**, or if you'd like to speak to someone please Tel: 01786 450536.



The Big Lunch 2018 – Sunday 3rd June 2018

Fancy the chance to make a positive impact where you live with The Big Lunch?

Last year, a whopping 9.3 million people took part in The Big Lunch! Together, communities celebrated with street parties and picnics, bunting and balloons, and, of course, a fair few tasty treats. But best of all, we celebrated each other and what we have in common, creating connections that have lasted long after The Big Lunch was cleared away.

Whether you're new to The Big Lunch and don't yet know your neighbours, or have joined in before, make it this year's resolution to come together on Sunday 3 June to help

create lasting community connections and make where you live a happier place to be. We hope 2018 will be the biggest and best Big Lunch year yet, so get involved by signing up for your free Big Lunch pack. The recipe for a Big Lunch is simple: good food, good company and good fun, and the pack is full of resources and advice to help you get started.

So this year, join in the simple act of sharing a meal with your neighbours and see what a difference it can make in your community.

Log on to: <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/thebiglunchhomepage> for a free pack.

Alterations and Improvements

As a tenant you must seek permission to alter and improve your home either internally and externally. We will assess your request and ensure it complies with current legislation and poses no risk to the household or future households.

If you do not ask for permission we will remove any alteration and recharge all costs back to the tenant. We do not want that to happen. Recently we have discovered unapproved work that is unsafe and poses a risk. It is our legal duty to remove this immediately. Alternatively, we can provide you with a short period of time to rectify and will re-inspect afterwards. We will explain what is required in the letter we send to you.

Please avoid doing any approved works without asking. Most of alteration and improvement requests are approved.

If you have any questions please contact Paul Fraser, Maintenance Officer, Tel: 01786 446066.



Texting For Repairs Satisfaction

Further to a successful trial we are texting our tenants to rate our service when they have had a repair carried out.

This is carried out by responding:

- 1 – very satisfied
- 2 – satisfied
- 3 – neither satisfied or dissatisfied
- 4 – dissatisfied
- 5 – very dissatisfied

Please reply with only one of the above options by texting your response with the corresponding number. The system cannot decipher wording and wording will not be recorded. Eg if you are satisfied with the repair, text back with the number 2. All completed texts will be entered in to a quarterly prize draw and you could win £25 in vouchers.

Please call Angela Laley at the office should you have any questions.

Newsletter Spring 2018

Zero Tolerance To Abusive Behaviour Against Our Staff

Unfortunately, abusive behaviour towards our staff is on the increase. We have a strict policy to deal with customers who are abusive:

What We Expect from Our Customers:

- We expect customers to treat staff with respect and politeness.
- We will not tolerate abusive or threatening behaviour towards staff.
- Staff may terminate any conversation or interview with a customer who is behaving in an abusive or threatening manner.
- Threats made against staff will be reported to the Police and legal action taken.
- In extreme circumstances we may seek to restrict an individual's access to our office and/or access to individual staff members.

Beat Doorstep Crime – Police Scotland

Think - Expecting Someone?

- Keep front and back doors locked.
- Only let callers in if they have an appointment and you have confirmed they are genuine.
- Always ask for ID.
- Don't keep large sums of money at home.
- Ensure your windows and doors are locked.
- Look out for those in your community.
- Report any suspicious activity immediately.
- Tel: **999** and ask for the police if you feel scared or threatened.

Question – If in doubt, keep them out!



Estate Management Visit Dates From Your Housing Officer

Our 2 Housing Officers cover the following areas:

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



Elaine will be carrying out an estate visit to your area **week commencing: 21st May 2018**

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



Caroline will be carrying out an estate visit to your area **week commencing: 7th May 2018**



Useful Contact Details...

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Tel: 01786 446066 Fax: 01786 445846

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