



FORTH

housing association Ltd.

SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Autumn 2018

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Director Leaving

Forth's Director, John Cameron, has given notice that he will be retiring at the end of the year. As a result, the Management Committee have appointed an external consultant to carry out a review of the options available to Forth, and any recruitment of a new Director will follow the outcome of this review.

John joined Forth in 2008 and has led the staff team during a 10 year period which has seen the Association almost double in size but at the same time maintain very high standards of service delivery.

The next Newsletter will provide an update regarding the appointment of any successor and in the meantime it is business as usual for the staff team.



Forth Housing Association Limited

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30 Years Of Success!

The 5th of September saw members of the Association meet to mark its 30th AGM.

This provided an opportunity to not only receive the latest set of annual accounts but to look back briefly over 30 years of achievements. The Association was formed back in 1988 when a small group of local people realised that Stirling needed new homes for rent and a locally controlled Association was their preferred way to achieve this.

The AGM heard that over the years Forth has built well over 900 homes for rent or sale, via Shared



Ownership or Shared Equity, and now owns homes worth over £34 million. Not only has it built these homes but it has developed a reputation for providing good quality services and maintaining its homes to a high standard.

The latest set of accounts showed that a healthy surplus was set aside for investment in future homes. Also, the meeting heard that in the coming year a further £4 million will be spent building new homes and improving those already built.

All Go At Howlands Road



The Associations Building Contractor, JB Bennett, has made great progress on the next development of rented homes in the Howlands Road area of Cultenhove, Stirling.

Bringing 35 new homes to the area these homes will be available for rent from the Autumn of next year. The development, which will look very similar to previous phases of development in the area, will redevelop the last of the demolition sites earmarked for Forth.

Giant Hogweed In Your Area?



Giant hogweed is a highly invasive plant spread by seed. The plant has a chemical in its sap which had the potential to cause injury. It can also look similar to the harmless cow parsley plant. If hogweed is reported it is up to the landowner to remove it.

Stirling Council has a Giant Hogweed eradication strategy. If you do see this plant please report to Stirling Council on Tel 01786 404040.

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:**

28th November 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:**

12th November 2018

Glorious Gardens

It seems strange that in a Summer which will be remembered for its hot dry weather the judging of the Forth garden competition was dogged by rain! Every time we set off from the office to view the gardens the rain came on.

Still we bravely persisted and were rewarded, as ever, by some beautiful displays of colour and fragrance. This year saw more tenants than ever doing their bit to brighten their community and the winners are:

- Mr & Mrs Duff, Riverside – Best Garden
- Mr & Mrs Lyon, Dunblane – Best Basket/Pot
- Monument View, Raploch – Best Scheme

Our winners will each receive a gardening voucher.

Its great to see so many of our tenants enjoying this healthy, fun activity that enriches not just your own area but the wider community.



Good Neighbour Award 2018 – Win a £25 Supermarket Voucher

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.

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 **prior to 30th October 2018**. Alternatively, e mail angela@forthha.org.uk.

A screenshot of a computer monitor displaying a performance report announcement. The monitor has a blue background with white text. The title is "Our Performance Report" in a large, bold, white font. Below the title is the subtitle "– Available To Read From End of October!". The main text is in a smaller white font, stating that the detailed Performance Report will be available on the website from the end of October 2018. It mentions a Tenants View Forum that meets quarterly and discusses performance throughout the year. It asks if the reader would like to become a member of the Tenants' View Forum and provides contact information for Angela Laley at the office. At the bottom, it says "If you would like a hard copy of the Report posted out, please phone the office." The monitor's taskbar at the top shows "Finder File Edit View Go Window Help" and the date "Mon 10:23 AM".

Our Performance Report

– Available To Read From End of October!

Following on from the Annual Report, our detailed Performance Report will be available on our website from the end of October 2018. Our Tenants View Forum that meets quarterly discusses our performance throughout the year. If you would like to become a member of the Tenants' View Forum, please contact Angela Laley at the office.

If you would like a hard copy of the Report posted out, please phone the office.

Housing First for Stirling



Most people will remember the charity sleep out in Edinburgh organised last December by Social Bite.

This raised several million pounds to allow Social Bite to progress initiatives designed to tackle homelessness in Scotland and some of that money is now coming to Stirling.

Working in partnership with Forth, Social Bite will be providing support to individuals who require additional assistance to get established in a new home, following a period of homelessness. The funding will initially provide support services for a 2 year pilot period and the support will be provided by Loretto Care. The project is also being supported by Stirling Council.

New Annual Report & Calendar

Along with your Newsletter tenants should have received a copy of their Annual Report and Calendar. This highlights the main achievements of the past year and allows you to get an idea of how we have been performing.

The Calendar section also allows you to keep track of key issues over the course of the year, with highlights to remind you when rent payments are due, what landscaping schedules are planned, office closures etc.

We would appreciate any feedback on this Report and any ideas on how to improve it in the future. So please just give Angela Laley our Project & Communications Co-ordinator a phone at the office with your ideas.



It's A Gas (Or Not?)



Gas safety enforcement is a joke isn't it?

Forth makes all sorts of efforts to access your home to carry out the annual gas safety check and we still don't get in to some properties. We hand deliver final notices to warn that a failure to give access will result in the gas supply being shut off and then we simply walk away and pretend there is no problem. No we don't!

Sadly too many tenants do think gas safety is a joke and at present one tenant a month ends up with no gas because they failed to give our engineer access.

A gas safety check is a legal requirement and is designed to keep you and your neighbours safe, because a faulty boiler can result in carbon monoxide poisoning or explosion. Our engineers will visit homes at least twice before

passing a no access to Forth staff. Our staff then make attempts to phone or email and will issue further letters by post and through hand delivery. If you respond with a date and time that suits you for a visit we can normally plan around that and get an engineer to you.

If access isn't achieved however your gas supply will be capped, leaving you with no gas for heating or cooking. Once this happens the gas can only be reinstated if you pay a fee of £43, required to pay for the engineer who must carry out the safety check, before reinstating the gas.

Gas safety is no laughing matter so help us to avoid the grief of a capped supply and a £43 reconnection charge.

Your safety is of paramount importance to us.

Disability Hate Crime

– How To Keep Safe



Disability Hate Crime is one of the most under reported crimes in the UK, with an estimated 97% going unreported. There are 1 million people in Scotland registered as disabled or with a long term illness. Many incidents go unreported. This is for many reasons such as fear of repercussion, unsure how to report incidents, and worried about not being taken seriously. Sadly many disabled people have come to accept abuse and harassment as part of daily life.

I Am Me is a community charity that aims to change attitudes and behaviours so that disabled and vulnerable people in Scotland feel safe in their communities.

The charity has two key initiatives; I Am Me and Keep Safe.

I Am Me is an innovative and engaging range of resources which aims to educate young people and the wider community about disabilities, bullying exclusion and hate crime. The resources were developed with children, young people, disabled people and disability organisations. A primary school

pack has been designed for children from primary one through to primary seven and arranged into interactive lessons. The lessons are normally delivered on a Cinebus. The Cinebus is a mobile cinema and education unit which visits schools and disability groups to talk about I Am Me and Keep Safe.

Keep Safe is an award winning partnership initiative which works with local communities to create a network of places where people can 'Keep Safe'. Keep Safe places are checked and approved by Police Scotland and staff within are trained. All Keep Safe places can be found on the website or the free Keep Safe Scotland phone app.

Keep Safe cards are available for anyone who may feel lost, scared or vulnerable when out in the community. The cards have information about any communication requirements, medical concerns and who to contact in the event of an emergency. Keep Safe cards can be downloaded from their website or can be requested by e mailing iame@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

<http://www.iammescotland.co.uk/>

Minister Marks 800th Home

The Scottish Government's Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart, recently visited Forth's latest development at Johnston Avenue, Cornton to see for himself how Forth has spent the Governments grant funding.

Whilst he was there he met with a number of Forth's new tenants. This included Forth's 800th home for rent. Presenting a bouquet of flowers to mark the occasion Mr Stewart said it was: "Great to visit Forth Housing Association's new Johnston Avenue development in Stirling and a pleasure to meet the tenants in the 800th home."

Joining Mr Stewart on the day Gordon Mason, Forth's Chairperson said: "It's great to see Forth complete its 800th home in this our 30th year. We're already working on the next batch of homes and look forward to the future with confidence."



Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart, pictured with Gordon Mason, Chair presenting flowers to tenants

Winner of Drawing Competition – Year of Young Person 2018

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, and 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.

As part of this, we ran a drawing competition for all children living in a Forth home, under the age of 16 years. The drawing was to be of your home. We are pleased to announce that A Lavery, Stirling won the competition receiving a £25 voucher. This drawing is featured on the front cover of the annual Calendar that each tenant receives.



year of young people
bliadhna na h-óigridh
2018



Alterations & Improvements – **Right To Compensation**

Tenants have the right to carry out certain alterations and improvements to their homes, for which they may receive compensation, when they end their tenancy. However, should you wish to carry out such work you must first receive written permission.

We will not refuse permission without good reason. Alternatively, approval may be

given but certain conditions might apply i.e. materials to be used or standard of work.

We have information and a form available to anyone thinking of carrying out alterations and it is important to read this information before proceeding with any work.

More details are available from our website: <https://www.forthha.org.uk/repairs/alterations-and-improvements/> or by contacting the office.

Tenant Participation Round-Up

Tenants View Forum

The next Tenants View Forum meeting is on Thursday 27th September at 11am at our offices. This meeting will discuss an update on performance for the year, a performance comparison and the anti-social behaviour policy. So come along and have your say. You will be made very welcome and refreshments will be provided.

De Moray Association

De Moray have been hard at work over the last few months. Over the Summer the group arranged a trip to the Safari Park and a fun evening with a bouncy castle. The weather was kind and a good time was had by all. The Group will be organising future community events and need your help. So please keep supporting by attending any meeting or events, if you live in De Moray Court.

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. In addition, the Regulations make provision for compensation to be paid to the tenant should a qualifying repair not be completed, without good reason, within a maximum period.



Reporting a Repair

When reporting a repair you will be advised whether it is our responsibility and if it is a qualifying repair.

If the repair does qualify under “Right to Repair” you will be advised:

- If an inspection is required
- Of the maximum period allowed to carry out the repair
- The last day of that period

- Of your right under “Right to Repair”
- Of the name, address and telephone number of a listed contractor (the “*primary contractor*”, who will be instructed to carry out the repair), and details of one other contractor (the “*secondary contractor*”).

For more information log on to : [/www.forthha.org.uk/repairs/category-of-repair-response-times/](http://www.forthha.org.uk/repairs/category-of-repair-response-times/)

Qualifying Repairs

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

Repair	Maximum Period in 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 Partial loss of electrical power	1 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	1
Water supply: Loss of water supply Partial loss of water supply	1 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

THE “RING” DOORBELL – PERMISSION REQUIRED

Following on from our previous article on permission being required for CCTV installations, we have become aware that some tenants have installed the new “Ring” video doorbell.

We would like to remind tenants that the Ring doorbell must be used in a way that respects the privacy rights of others and to request our permission in advance of its installation.



We believe that use of the Ring doorbell can be particularly privacy invasive, given the high quality of the video (with sound) and the long range and broad field view of the camera. This can allow for images of neighbouring properties and persons within those properties to be captured. The use of motion sensors to

trigger alerts to mobile devices and the ability to save photos and video (with sound) means that the Ring doorbell can interfere with the privacy rights of neighbours.

If there is an interference, a tenant may be regarded as a “data controller” and may need to comply with data protection legislation when using it – in the same way as a commercial organisation using CCTV. Failure to do this could lead to action from the Information Commissioner and neighbours making claims for breach of privacy against the tenant.

Tenants wishing to install the Ring doorbell must first submit a request for approval to our Maintenance Officer. As part of the approval process, staff may visit to inspect where it is to be installed / located. We may also ask questions to understand why you wish to use it, as, like CCTV, we regard the Ring doorbell to be highly privacy intrusive and a measure of last resort, and will work with tenants to find other ways of addressing any concerns.

Should you require further information, please contact Paul Fraser, Maintenance Officer, Tel 01786 431026.

ATTENTION!

Save £140 - The Warm Home Discount Scheme

What You Could Get:

For Winter 2018 to 2019, 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 or credited to your electricity prepayment meter, usually paid before end of March 2019.

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.

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 our Income Maximisation Officer, Tracy Doran, Tel: 01786 446066. Tracy can help you complete the application in your home or at the office.

Office Closures Due To Public Holidays

We would also like you to note that our offices will be closed for the following public holidays:

Office Closes:

Thursday 20th September at 5.15pm.

Office Reopens:

Tuesday 25th September at 9am.

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.

Information Updates

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

Find Out What Is Happening

Speaking Forth is written for you. We want to bring you the latest news about developments here and in the housing world that might be of interest to you. If there is anything specific you would like us to include in future editions please e-mail us at info@forthha.org.uk or telephone Angela Laley at the office.



Useful Contact Details...

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