



FORTH

housing association Ltd.

# SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Autumn 2019

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## Satisfied Customers!

**Earlier this Summer independent consultants, Research Resource, completed a satisfaction survey with our tenants and the results are in.**

We're delighted to report that our tenants have remained consistently satisfied with the overall service provided by Forth, with us achieving 94%, which is the same as our result in 2016.

Some figures have slightly decreased and this has provided us with areas to improve on but overall the results are very positive. Satisfaction with how good Forth is at keeping tenants informed about service decisions has risen from 96% to 98%. Also, satisfaction with how Forth listens to the views of tenants increased from 89% to 93%.

You'll find more detail of the results in the centre section of this newsletter and if anyone wishes more information this can be obtained from our office.

We are currently undertaking an Allocations Review – Have your say! – see article on Page 2

### Forth Housing Association Limited

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# Review of How We Allocate Our properties – We Need Your Input!

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2014 introduced a number of changes regarding the allocation of social housing in Scotland. As a result, all Social Landlords are required to review their Allocations Policy to ensure it complies with the Act. We are therefore currently reviewing our Allocations Policy and are consulting with tenants, registered tenants' organisations and applicants on our proposed changes to the Policy.

It's really important that we find out what you think, so please complete and return the enclosed questionnaire to us in the stamped addressed envelope that is provided by 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019. Alternatively, you can go to our website [www.forthha.org.uk](http://www.forthha.org.uk) and click on the link to an anonymous survey through SurveyMonkey. This should only take around

5 minutes to complete and will be live from the 16<sup>th</sup> September - 14<sup>th</sup> October 2019. We're also holding a couple of sessions at our office at 146 Drip Road, Stirling where you can share your views and hear more about the review. These will be on: **08 October 2019 from 11.00 – 13.00 and 17.00 – 19.00**

For those of you that complete the survey and provide your personal details, you will be entered into a prize draw for a £50 voucher. Your personal information will only be used to enter you into the prize draw and we will destroy the information when the winners have been drawn. Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

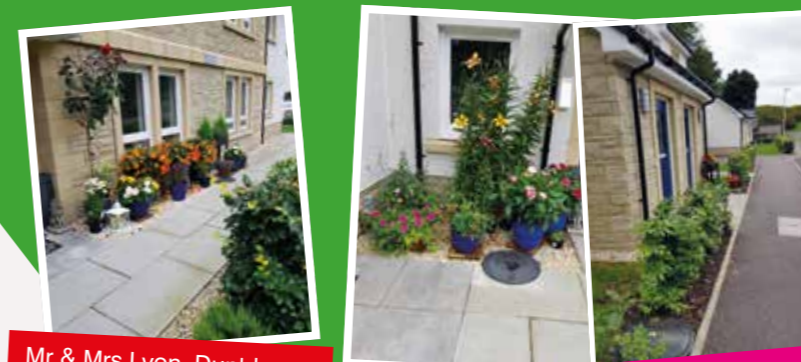
# Blooming Good!

It hasn't been the best of summers but still our green fingered tenants have excelled themselves. We recently judged the garden competition and after some hard deliberation as competition was fierce, prizes have been awarded as follows:

- Best garden** Mr & Mrs Duff, Riverside
- Best pot/basket** Mr & Mrs Lyon, Dunblane
- Best scheme** Bogside, Dunblane



Mr & Mrs Duff, Riverside – Best Garden



Mr & Mrs Lyon, Dunblane – Best Pot/Basket

Bogside, Dunblane – Best Scheme

## Highly commended by the judges are:

27 Clement Loan, 2 & 38 Archie Bone Way, Bruce Street, 2D Culterhove Crescent and Monument View.

When you view the photos, we hope you'll agree these were worthy winners and if you think you can do better, there is always next year!

We would like to encourage more developments to participate in their surrounding areas and from 2020 we will provide a grant of up to £100 to assist with any improvements to the communal areas. If interested contact your Housing Officer to discuss your proposals.

# Annual General Meeting Reports Success!

By the time you read this newsletter our Annual General Meeting will have taken place. This meeting receives a report on the last year and in particular considers our accounts for 2018/19.

After another successful year in which we exceeded many of our performance targets including building 47 new homes, and finishing the year with a healthy financial surplus. This will allow us to finance the future

improvements planned to every tenant's home in the years to come.

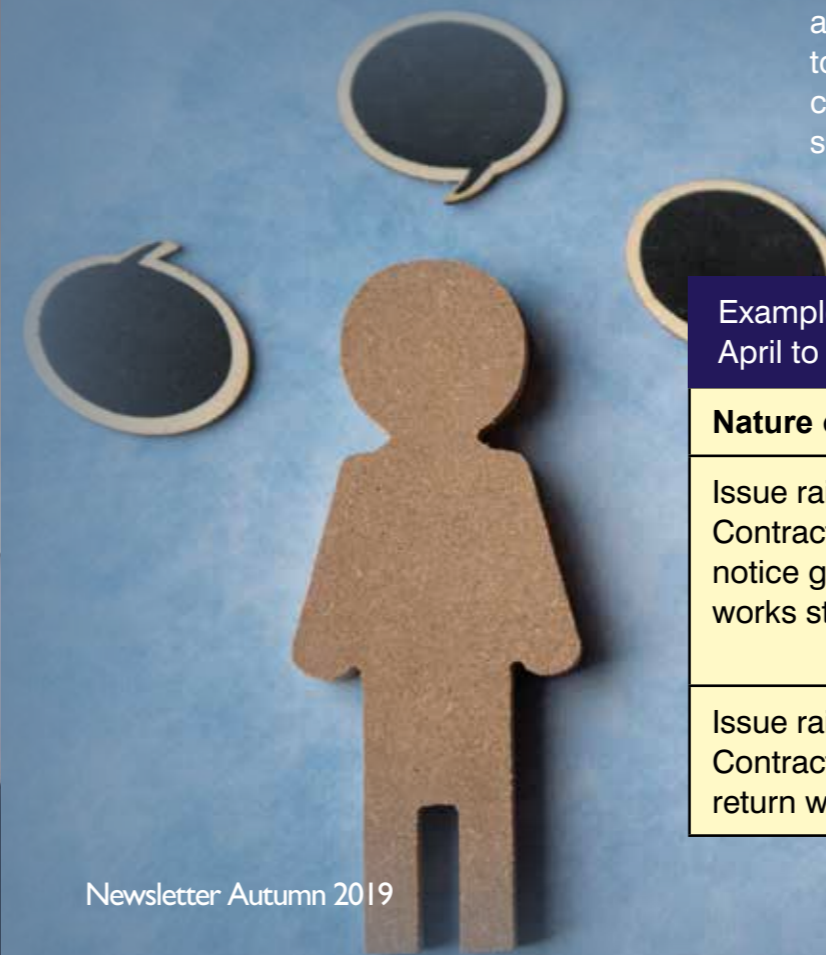
The meeting also considered the election of Committee Members for the coming year and indications at the time of writing are that this is likely to involve a number of new faces. If you'd like to check out what happened, visit the news section of our web site at [www.forthha.org.uk](http://www.forthha.org.uk) or contact Grahame Cairns, Director, at our office.



# Valuing Customer Complaints To Improve Our Service To You!

Between 1st April and 30<sup>th</sup> June we received 26 complaints regarding a variety of issues. This is a similar number of complaints to the previous period with 22 complaints being received between January and March 2019.

In line with the Complaints Handling Procedure, every complaint received is either classed as Stage 1 (frontline resolution) or Stage 2 (more detailed investigation). After investigation, if the complaint is upheld (ie found to be valid) then we will implement any necessary changes so that our services to our customers can be improved: we use complaints and feedback to improve our services whenever we can.



Examples of complaints and improvements for April to June 2019 are noted below:

Nature of Complaint	Learning Outcome
Issue raised with Contractor due to no notice given to tenant of works starting.	Contractor reminded to phone tenants prior to attending to avoid similar situation and to avoid further complaints.
Issue raised with Contractor as failed to return with part.	Contractor reminded to follow-up on works.



# Staff Contact Details – Improving Customer Service

We continually aim to improve our customer service. As part of this, when you phone the office please advise our reception staff why you are calling, in order that we can direct you to the correct person eg repairs, rent account etc.

If you wish to contact our staff direct please use the following direct dial numbers and e mail addresses:



**Grahame Cairns**  
Director

01786 431924  
grahame@forthha.org.uk



**Nicola Stobie**  
Tenant Services Manager

01786 431925  
nicola@forthha.org.uk



**Elaine Shepherd**  
Housing Officer

01786 431927  
elaine@forthha.org.uk



**Caroline Stevenson**  
Housing Officer

01786 431928  
caroline@forthha.org.uk



**Tracy Doran**  
Income Maximisation Officer

01786 431921  
tracy@forthha.org.uk



**Paul Fraser**  
Maintenance Officer

01786 431026  
paul@forthha.org.uk



**Calum Carberry**  
Assistant Maintenance Officer

01786 431929  
calum@forthha.org.uk



**Ann Gordon**  
Assistant Housing Officer

01786 431025  
anngordon@forthha.org.uk



**Kevin Milne**  
Assistant Housing Officer

01786 431926  
kevin@forthha.org.uk

*You may wish to cut out this list and keep it safe, for future reference.*

# You Said It!

In the early Summer independent researchers interviewed around one third of our tenants. This was to find out exactly not only what you think of Forth as a landlord but also our homes, staff and services. Over the next few pages we've summarised the findings for you.



## Overall Satisfaction

When asked "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by Forth as your landlord" 94% of our tenants said they were satisfied or very satisfied. This is the same result as both 2013 and 2016 so it would appear we're pretty consistent.

When asked which things Forth should give most priority to the top 5 choices were:

- **Repairs and maintenance**
- **Listening to tenants views and acting upon them**
- **Keeping tenants informed**
- **Making improvements to existing homes**
- **Maintaining the neighbourhood where you live**

This is useful information to have and we'll try to reflect these priorities as we plan ahead. Annually, we program our planned works for improvements to your homes. In 2019/20, kitchen replacements to 4 developments will be complete. Three developments will have new bathrooms with the majority having over bath showers installed. Upgrading the fire detection devices in our stock is to be completed by February 2021.

## Keeping You Informed, Getting Involved



98% of those surveyed said that they were satisfied with how good Forth is at keeping tenants informed about services and decisions and 94% were satisfied with opportunities to get involved in decision making.

90% of people said they found the Tenants' Handbook useful. 84% of tenants read Speaking Forth and 98% of those think it is

good at keeping them informed.

90% of tenants are happy just to be kept informed about Forth's work. However, 7% said they would like to have a say or be involved in making decisions. **If you are one of those 7% please contact Angela Laley at our office to chat about how we can involve you more.**

## The Quality Of Your Home

90% of tenants indicated that they are satisfied with the condition of their home.

88% of our tenants were satisfied with the allocations process. The allocations policy review is now being undertaken and staff would welcome any tenant feedback. There is a questionnaire in the Annual Report. Please complete and return to the office. See page 2 of this Newsletter for more information.



90% of tenants were satisfied with the last repair they had carried out, with 97% satisfaction with the attitude of workers, 96% satisfaction with keeping dirt and mess to a minimum and 88% satisfaction with the repair being done 'right first time.' These all show that our maintenance contractors are doing a good job.

## Quality of The Neighbourhood

95% of tenants are satisfied with the maintenance of open spaces and 91% with common areas such as drying greens, common closes etc. Both of these are slightly down on 2016. These results are particularly pleasing given the changes to our landscape maintenance service during 2018.

Whether tenants were asked about rubbish and litter, noisy neighbours or general crime in their neighbourhood satisfaction results were similar to 2016. It is important tenants continue to provide feedback on their neighbourhood to their Housing Officer and report any issues as they arise.

## Value For Money

In 2016, 94% of tenants stated that they were satisfied that their rent represented good value for money. This has decreased to 81% this year. We would ask tenants to contact our staff with any concerns. We continue to improve homes and we will also continue to publish the detailed program so that tenants can see where we are spending money.

## Conclusions

We are delighted to hear that by and large our tenants are satisfied with the services we provide and the way they are delivered. That doesn't however mean that there is no room for improvement. Therefore, staff and Committee will be doing a number of things in the months to come:

Looking at the results in more detail, in an attempt to identify developments or groups of tenants who may be less satisfied than others.

Coming up with plans to further improve things, particularly in the areas with lower satisfaction.

Trying to ensure that in 3 years' time the satisfaction levels will be just as high, if not better.

**If you have any specific thoughts or would like to be more involved in working with us do contact Angela Laley at our office.**

# Tenants' View Forum –

## Calling all Tenants!!

**The next meeting of the Tenants View Forum will take place at our offices on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> October at 11am. This will discuss the Allocations Review, the results of the Joint Tenants' Satisfaction Survey and the Performance Report.**

We are also holding an additional Tenants' View Forum meeting on Wednesday 13/11 from 6.30pm until 8pm at the office. This is to enable any tenants who work etc to attend to discuss the results of the Joint Tenants' Satisfaction Survey, performance and any other issues that tenants wish to raise. This will be a drop-in session.

We hope that you will be able to join us at one of the above sessions. You do not need to have attended a previous session to attend. Refreshments will be served and any out-of-pocket travel expenses. Just bring a receipt. Our Director and Tenant Services Manager will

be in attendance to hear your views. So please come along – you will be made very welcome.



# Good Neighbour Award 2019

## – Win a £25 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 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, Forth Housing Association, 146 Drip Road, Stirling, FK8 1RW **prior to 31st October 2019**. Alternatively, email [angela@forthha.org.uk](mailto:angela@forthha.org.uk).

## Pre Loved School Clothes

Donated school clothing will be available soon on Stirling Council's new Preloved website. All donations will be laundered and anonymised prior to dispatching and clothes will be posted directly to the recipient's home address.

The preloved clothing online platform is to be carried out in 3 phases:

- School session 2019/2020 including nurseries and primary schools

- School session 2020/2021 extending to high schools
- School session 2020/2021 begin to include prom dresses and prom suits.



For more information log on to Stirling Council's website:

<https://www.stirling.gov.uk/learning-education/schools/school-meals/school-uniforms-free-meals-ema/preloved-school-clothes/>

## 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.

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



Caroline and Elaine will be carrying out estate visits to your area during November 2019.

# ATTENTION! Save £140 - The Warm Home Discount Scheme

For Winter 2019 to 2020, you could be eligible for £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 2020.

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>.

[gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/eligibility](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 please contact our Income Maximisation Officer, Tracy Doran, Direct Dial No: 01786 431921.**

## Post Office Card Account Update

Dept of Works and Pensions (DWP) can pay benefits into a Post Office card account for those unable to open or manage a bank account. The Post Office card accounts are coming to an end, which is likely to be in November 2021. This means that from this date no benefits will be paid into a Post Office account. DWP will be writing to Post

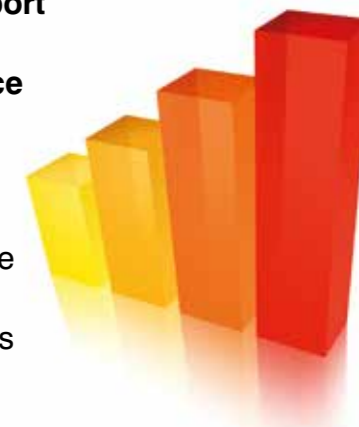
Office card account users in the next few months to encourage them to switch to a Bank, Building Society or Credit Union Account. If you are having problems opening a bank account, please contact Tracy Doran, Income Maximisation Officer, Direct Dial Tel: 01786 431921.

POST  
OFFICE

## 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 2019. 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. The Tenants' View Forum have also agreed the format of the Report.

If you would like a hard copy of the Report posted out, please phone the office. Also if you have any feedback on the Annual Report/Calendar or Performance Report, please let Angela Laley, Project & Communications Co-ordinator know. E mail: [angela@forthha.org.uk](mailto:angela@forthha.org.uk).



## About Universal Credit – We Can Help!

**Universal Credit is a welfare support that working age people may be able to claim if they are on a low income or out of work. For further information and to apply for Universal Credit log on to:**

**[www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk](http://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk)**

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment and you may have to wait for around 5 weeks for your first payment. You may be able to get a Universal Credit advance if you are unable to manage during this period. Remember that the advance will have to be

paid back from your future payments. You will receive the first rent payment direct into your own bank account. After which you can ask Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) to pay your rent direct to Forth.

Contact Tracy Doran our Income Maximisation Officer if you are applying for Universal Credit. Tracy can discuss how you can manage your rent payments and can arrange for you to receive additional benefit, money and debt advice. Contact Tracy on direct dial: Tel 01786 431921 or e mail [tracy@forthha.org.uk](mailto:tracy@forthha.org.uk).

**UC** *Universal  
Credit*



# 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 26<sup>th</sup> September at 5.15pm.

**Office Reopens:** Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> October 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.**

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**We are pleased to announce the following winners who each won a £25 voucher:**

- Repairs - A Smith, Raploch
- Gas Service – K Arnold, Braehead

We value tenant feedback as it is this feedback that helps us improve our services to you. So please keep texting your responses.

Also, if you have any ideas on how we can improve our customer service contact Angela Laley at the office. Any tenant idea that is used to improve our service will win a £25 voucher.

Survey  
Winners!



Useful Contact Details...

**Forth Housing Association Limited**

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