



FORTH

housing association Ltd.

SpeakingForth

The newsletter of Forth Housing Association Ltd

Spring 2021

Inside:

My Home	P2	Advice Hub	P8
Rent Increase	P4	PO Accounts For Benefits	P8
Connecting Scotland	P5	Universal Credit Housing Payments	P9
Messy Gardens	P6	Covid 19-NHS Inform	P11
Garden Competition	P7	Close Cleaning and Landscape Maintenance	P12

Happy Easter!

The Committee and Staff would like to wish you all a very Happy Easter! We would also like you to note that our offices will be closed for the following public holidays:

Office Closes: Thursday 1st April at 5.15pm.

Office Reopens: Tuesday 6th April at 9am.

In addition please note the following office closures in May :

Office closed Monday 3rd May, Friday 28th May and Monday 31st 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 other emergency repairs (excluding gas heating and hot water) outwith office hours please telephone The McDougall Group on Tel No: 0333 123 1011.

Forth Housing Association Limited

Kildean Business and Enterprise Hub, 146 Drip Road, Raploch, Stirling FK8 1RW

Tel: 01786 446066 • Fax: 01786 445846 • E-mail: info@forthha.org.uk

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



“My Home”

New Service Coming to Tenants Soon

In our recent Digital and Communication survey 64% of our tenants said that they would like access to their rent account, have the ability to report a repair and make a complaint or compliment via a secure platform.

We are always striving to improve and meet the needs of our tenants. Therefore, we are currently in the process of building an easy online tool for you to access information about your tenancy.

“My Home” is secure and confidential and is available to you 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

To use this tool via our web page (when up and running), you are required to have an email address, and you will be set up with an account that is unique to you and Forth only.

We will be available to help you if you require any assistance getting this up and running.

The portal is free and easy to access. Prior to









going live with it, we will be in touch with more information to get you signed up.

On the portal you will be able to:

- Update your personal details
- Report repairs
- Pay your rent
- Access your rent account
- Make a complaint
- Report anti-social behaviour
- View any letters/documents that have been sent to you
- Complete online forms with any tenancy changes or requests for alterations/improvements or pets
- Access information on your tenancy, Forth news, updates and corporate information



When you register for My Home you will see your tenant dashboard. This is an example of what this may look like:

 My Messages	This area is where we will leave you a message or important information.
 My Household	This is where you can tell us about changes in your household.
 My House	See your repair history or report a repair.
 My Account	View your rent account and make secure rent payments.
 My Tenancy	Information on your tenancy such as your tenancy start date.
 My Documents	See a copy of all letters and messages between you and Forth Housing.
 My Feedback	Give us your views by completing surveys and questionnaires.
 Useful Forms	This is where you can apply for permission, e.g. alterations to property, keeping a pet. You can also find other useful forms in this area.

Z360

Ideas on How To Reuse, Repair and Recycle



Unwanted items cluttering up your home or are you looking to up your recycling game? Are you in a pickle about whether you can reuse, repair or recycle your unwanted stuff?

There's a whole host of knowledge, opinions

and ideas out there – but where can you find them and what does it all really mean?

For everything you've ever wondered, and more. Log on to the Zero Waste Scotland www.zerowastescotland.org.uk for handy 'how to' guides that help.

Rent Increase – Keeping Rents Down By Providing Low Increase!

After consultation with our tenants, we are increasing our rents by 1% with effect from 1st April 2021. Our approach has been possible by keeping a tight rein on our costs.

The current economic climate is tough for all tenants, but we are doing what we can to keep costs reasonable and providing value for money.

The tenant returns were:

- 57% for 1%
- 12% for 0.7%
- 31% for 1.3%

Thanks to everyone who took part in our Rent Consultation survey.





In our last Newsletter we advised you that we had been successful in our application to Connecting Scotland for tablet devices and Mi-Fi (portable wi-fi) devices for some of our tenants that are currently digitally excluded.

We have now received 30 iPads and Mi-Fi devices. We have identified 30 tenants that qualify to receive these and we will distribute the devices over the next couple of weeks.

Housing Services Officer, Elaine Shepherd, and Assistant Housing Services Officer, Ann Gordon, have both been trained up as Digital Champions to help tenants receiving devices to get them set up, and they will offer ongoing advice.



Forth's Digital Champions!

Messy Gardens – **Breach of Tenancy!**

Due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic, it may be difficult to dispose of excess rubbish.

Please be reminded however, that dumping / disposing of rubbish is illegal and when items are dumped in your own garden it is a breach of your tenancy conditions. Dumped rubbish attracts vermin, birds and other unwanted visitors.



Polmaise Waste Centre

Stirling Council's Household Recycling Centre is open to Stirling Council residents for disposal of household waste or recycling.

Lower Polmaise Waste Management Centre, Fallin, FK7 7FG

Site Opening Hours: Monday to Sunday, 9am until 4:30pm (last entry).

Garden Competition

- Will You Be A Winner?

We are again holding our annual garden competition. Last years was closely fought and this year we are sure that there will be just as many green fingered tenants who are making great efforts to brighten up their garden areas. A guest judge will choose the winning gardens over the Summer period. Last year there were 3 sets of winners who each won vouchers.

The 3 categories will be £40 for best garden, £25 for best basket/pot display and £50 for best scheme.

The exact date of the judging is a closely guarded secret. However, the winners will be announced in our Autumn Newsletter together with photos of the winning gardens. If you have a neighbour you would like to nominate for having a beautiful garden, please telephone our office or e mail angela@fortha.org.uk. Just give the name and address of the neighbour that you are nominating for the garden competition.

Gardening is a healthy, fun activity so happy gardening and good luck!!

Advice Hub

What is advice.scot?

Advice.scot is an Advice Hub. All of the services they provide are completely free at the point of use. They offer a multimedia service: their aim is to help customers using the access channel of their choice.

advice.scot is the online identity of Advice Direct Scotland.

Why do they exist?

Their mission is to connect advice and information with the people who need it. They believe technology will allow us to address the huge unmet need for help and advice in Scotland.

Impartial advice should be available to everyone in Scotland, at no cost, regardless of personal circumstances.

Who do they help?

They are helping people to find out if they have rights and how to exercise them. If they don't, they will show them how to mitigate their current circumstances. They provide advice to everyone in Scotland, regardless of age, background or circumstance. Their advice is impartial and free of prejudice.

Log on to: <https://advice.scot/> for more information.



Post Office Accounts For Benefits

The Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) have announced that Post Office accounts will be closing soon. DWP are writing to all benefit claimants who are currently receiving their monies into a Post Office account to advise that these accounts will be closing and DWP will no longer be able to pay monies into a Post Office account. Please do not ignore this letter.

Most banks/building societies are able to set up accounts and you can have your benefits paid directly into the bank account instead of the Post Office account.

Should you have any difficulties setting up a bank account, please contact Tracy Doran, Income Maximisation Officer on 01786 446066 or e mail tracy@forthha.org.uk.

Get your Universal Credit Housing Payments paid direct to landlord

When Universal Credit was first introduced, it was designed to have the housing cost element paid direct to the claimant. This was an option many tenants did not feel comfortable with.

Payments for housing costs could still have been paid direct to the landlord however these were delayed, sometimes by up to 2 months after the claimant received their Universal Credit income benefit. Again, many tenants were not comfortable with the delay in their housing costs payments being made and the impact this had on their rent account.

We are pleased to advise that the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has now resolved these issues. Therefore, any housing costs paid direct to landlord will now be received by the Association on the same day that the claimant is paid their Universal Credit income benefit.

So, if you would prefer your housing cost element of Universal Credit to be paid direct

to your rent account, please put a note in your journal requesting that “housing costs be paid direct to your landlord – Forth Housing Association” and advise us that you have requested this to be done. If you require any advice or assistance with this, please contact the office on (01786) 446066 or e mail info@forthha.org.uk

UC *Universal
Credit*



Are you or a member of your household an EU/EEA or Swiss citizen?

You and your family can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue Living in the UK after 30th June 2021. If your application is successful you will be awarded settled or pre-settled status. The deadline for applying to the scheme is 30th June 2021. It is free to apply to EU Settlement Scheme.

Members of your family might also be able to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme – even if they're not from the EU, EEA or Switzerland.

You will usually get settled status if you:

- started living in the UK by 31 December 2020
- lived in the UK for a continuous 5-year period (known as 'continuous residence')

Pre –Settled Status

If you do not have 5 years' continuous residence when you apply, you'll usually get pre-settled status. You must have started living in the UK by 31 December 2020.

You can then apply to change this to settled status once you have 5 years' continuous residence. You must do this before your pre-settled status expires.

Your rights with settled or pre-settled status

You will be able to:

- work in the UK
- use the NHS
- enroll in education or continue studying
- access public funds such as benefits and pensions, if you're eligible for them
- travel in and out of the UK

For further information and eligibility visit: <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>

If you are an EU/EEA or Swiss citizen and do not apply to the EU settlement scheme then as from 30th June 2021 you will be unlawfully resident in the UK.



COVID-19 information on NHS inform

NHS inform has a significant amount of information on COVID-19, in English and in alternative formats, as well as a self help guide: www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-coronavirus-covid-19 to check your symptoms and find out what to do next.

This is being regularly updated with the latest clinically approved guidance in partnership with Public Health Scotland. Visit: www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus

Alternative Formats

They are providing alternative formats to help people with communication differences access COVID-19 information:

- translations in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Farsi, Hindi, Polish, Punjabi, Romanian,

Slovak, Spanish and Urdu are available. Visit:

www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus

- British Sign Language (BSL) translations are available on NHS inform: www.nhsinform.scot/BSL and on their YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/nhsinform
- audio versions: www.nhsinform.scot/translations/formats/audio
- easy read documents: www.nhsinform.scot/translations/formats/easy-read

The Browsealoud tool helps users access information on NHS inform by: reading this aloud, highlighting and magnifying text, creating audio files. Find out more here: www.nhsinform.scot/accessibility

Close Cleaning and Landscape Maintenance



We have recently had to tender for our Close Cleaning and Landscape Maintenance Contracts due to the current contracts coming to an end.

We are pleased to announce that SG-Pro Cleaning will be taking over the Close Cleaning contract from the 1st April 2021.

idverde Landscaping and Grounds Maintenance Services will be taking over the Landscape Maintenance contract from the 1st April 2021.

Our recent tenant annual satisfaction surveys of the Close Cleaning and Landscaping showed that there was generally a high level of satisfaction with the services. 90% of tenants that responded to the surveys thought that

the quality of close cleaning was satisfactory and 80% of tenants that responded to the surveys thought that the quality of landscape maintenance is satisfactory.

We hope that our new Contractors will provide us with a service that will improve on the current satisfaction levels. We need to ensure that our tenants are receiving services that represent value for money and we will therefore be closely monitoring the work of the new Contractors to make sure that they meet their requirements when the contracts switch over in early April. If you have any concerns about either of these services at any point during the year, just pick up the phone and let a member of staff know.

You Said – We Did!

Keep the Comments Coming!

We received
13
compliments

You said: Unhappy with some landscaping issues.

We did: Discussed issues with Contractor to improve landscaping standards.

Housing Officers monitoring grass cutting, weed control and pruning of shrubbery and will also ensure that contractors are meeting the contract specification.

We received
40
complaints

You said: Unhappy that information given to contractor was out of date.

We did: Ensure change of tenants details are passed to Contractor.

77%
of complaints
were upheld

You said: Unhappy with some close cleaning issues.

We did: Housing Officers discussed issues with Close Cleaning Contractor.

Housing Officers will ensure contract specification is being met.

All complaints
were responded
to in full and
within *SPSO
timescale

Maintenance Matters – Planned a

Please note owing to the Pandemic the dates in the table are indicative and we will advise each tenant regarding the specific start date, prior to the works commencing.

Should you have any questions, please contact Paul Fraser, Senior Property Services Officer, at the office Tel No: 01786 446066 or e mail paul@forthha.org.uk.



PLANNED	STREET	TOTAL NO OF PROPERTIES	Envisaged Start Dates
Bathroom Replacement	Bruce View		Summer 2021
	Myles House		
	Gillespie Terrace		
	Colliers Road/Hirst Cres	90	
Window Replacement/ Close Doors	Barn Road (3-31) Colquhoun Street (32-36)	26	Subject to planning permission
Gas Boiler Replacement	Waulker Avenue		May- July 2021
	Huntly Crescent (2)		
	Cordiner Close (4)		
	Auld School Wynd	47	
Kitchen Replacement	Waulker Avenue		May- July 2021
	Huntly Crescent (2)		
	Cordiner Close (4)		
	Auld School Wynd	47	
CYCLICAL			
External Painting	Flint Crescent		May- August 2021
	Old Doune Road		
	Clement Loan		

and Cyclical Maintenance 2021/22

	Muirend Road		
	Gillespie Place		
	Vorlich Place		
	Wallace Gardens		
	De Moray Court		
	Cowane Street		
	Barn Road (33-39)		
	Myles House		
	Milton Brae		
		123	
Electrical Safety	Barn Road (3-31)		Throughout year
	Colliers Road/First Cres		
	Archie Bone Way		
	Cultenhove Road		
	Cultenhove Cres		
	Chapelcroft		
	Muirend Road		
		199	
Gas Servicing		856	Throughout year
Emergency Lighting	29 closes		Throughout year

EICR (Electrical Installation Condition Report) – Electrical Safety 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.

If your home has been identified for a test

this year you will receive a letter from us. 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 will offer piece of mind to you.

Estate Management Visit From Your Housing Services Officer

Normally your Housing Services Officer would be due to carry out estate management visits during the months of March and May. Due to current Covid-19 restrictions, only essential visits are permitted to be carried out. The visits programmed for March will therefore not be able to be carried out. In the event that restrictions are lifted and visits are permitted again, your Housing Services Officer will carry out visits programmed for May.

Our 2 Housing Services 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.

Elaine will be carrying out an estate visit to your area week commencing: 17th May 2021



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

Kelly will be carrying out an estate visit to your area week commencing: 10th May 2021

If you have any issues or concerns about estate management please contact your Housing Services Officer.



Useful Contact Details...

Forth Housing Association Limited

Kildean Business and Enterprise Hub,
146 Drip Road, Raploch, Stirling FK8 1RW
Tel: 01786 446066 Fax: 01786 445846

E-mail: info@forthha.org.uk Website: www.forthha.org.uk



When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.